

>> SINGING: GOOD NEWS TODAY. NO MATTER WHAT ELSE IS HAPPENING IN THE WORLD, THERE IS ALWAYS GOOD NEWS TODAY.

>> WELCOME TO GOOD NEWS TODAY, THE PROGRAM WHERE YOU WILL ALWAYS FIND GOOD NEWS, NO MATTER WHAT ELSE IS HAPPENING IN THE WORLD.

>> I'M MARK TESKE, YOUR HOST FOR GOOD NEWS TODAY. I WANT TO THANK YOU FOR JOINING US. WE'VE GOT A GREAT PROGRAM, AND HERE'S WHAT'S COMING UP. WE'RE GOING TO BEGIN WITH OUR DEVOTIONAL TIME, AND THAT CONSISTS OF OUR SCRIPTURE, READING, BEAUTIFUL SINGING, AND A BRIEF STUDY OF OUR SCRIPTURE. TODAY WE'LL BE LOOKING AT PROVERBS 27:6, WHERE WE LEARN ABOUT A FRIEND THAT HURTS OUR FEELINGS. GET OUT YOUR BIBLES, TURN TO PROVERBS 27. I'LL MEET YOU THERE IN JUST A MOMENT. FOLLOWING OUR DEVOTIONAL TIME, WE HAVE A CHANCE TO VISIT WITH JOE GUY ON THE PASTIME PORCH AS HE TALKS TO US ABOUT AN ANCIENT LETTER. JIM DEARMAN WILL JOIN US WITH SOME SOUND WORDS ABOUT OUR GREATEST FRIEND. FREDDIE CLAYTON THEN TAKES HIS SPOT ON THE PASTIME PORCH, AND HE'S HELPING US UNDERSTAND THAT SOME PEOPLE WILL WANT TO SEE IT BEFORE THEY HEAR IT. CHAD DOLLAHITE JOINS US FOR JUST A MINUTE AS HE EXPLAINS TO US WHAT AN ABNER GIFT IS. IN OUR FINAL SEGMENT, WE HAVE A BIBLE QUESTION FOR ANTHONY DISMUKE AND TROY SPRADLIN: DOES IT REALLY MATTER IF WE BELIEVE THAT THE STORIES IN THE OLD TESTAMENT ARE JUST FABLES? WELL, I HOPE YOU HAVE YOUR BIBLES OPENED UP TO PROVERBS 27, WHERE WE READ VERSE NUMBER 6, FAITHFUL ARE THE WOUNDS OF A FRIEND; BUT THE KISSES OF AN ENEMY ARE DECEITFUL.

>> (SINGING)

>> OUR TEXT FOR TODAY COMES FROM THE BOOK OF PROVERBS. AND THE PROVERBS ARE SAYINGS OF GENERAL WISDOM. AND THE SECTION WE'RE IN BEGINS BACK IN CHAPTER 25, VERSE 1. THESE ARE SOME OF SOLOMON'S PROVERBS THAT WERE WRITTEN DOWN BY HEZEKIAH'S SCRIBES. THE PROVERBS ARE GREAT PASSAGES FOR US TO PUT TO MEMORY. SPEND SOME TIME THINKING AND DWELLING ON THESE THINGS. AFTER A WHILE, SOME OF THAT WISDOM WILL START TO SINK IN. OUR TEXT FOR TODAY BEGINS, FAITHFUL ARE THE WOUNDS OF A FRIEND. THAT WORD FAITHFUL, I THINK SOMETIMES WE UNDERESTIMATE THE EXTENT OF THAT WORD. AND IT HELPS ME TO UNDERSTAND IT WHEN I THINK OF THE FAITHFULNESS OF A SPOUSE. IF YOUR SPOUSE IS 99 PERCENT FAITHFUL TO YOU, WELL, THAT JUST ISN'T GOOD ENOUGH. WE EXPECT A TOTAL FIDELITY: IN SICKNESS AND HEALTH, RICH OR POOR, TIL DEATH DO US PART. YOU SEE, FAITHFULNESS IS A COMPLETE DEDICATION. IN MARRIAGE, DESPITE THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF LIFE, I WILL BE FAITHFUL TO YOU. AND THAT'S THE TYPE OF ATTITUDE A REAL FRIEND IS GOING TO HAVE. A REAL FRIEND IS GOING TO HAVE THAT COMMITMENT TO YOU TO DO WHAT'S IN YOUR BEST INTEREST. THE PASSAGE TALKS ABOUT THE WOUNDS OF A FRIEND. GENERALLY, THESE WOUNDS ARE HURT FEELINGS. YOU SEE, A FRIEND'S GOING TO KEEP US FROM DOING SOMETHING THAT WE SHOULDN'T DO, OR THEY'RE GOING TO ENCOURAGE US TO DO SOMETHING THAT SOMETIMES IS DIFFICULT FOR US TO DO. NOW, WHEN SOMEBODY IS HAVING TO CORRECT US, THAT'S NOT SOMETHING THAT'S PLEASANT WHEN IT HAPPENS; BUT A FRIEND IS GOING TO DO THAT WHEN IT'S FOR OUR ULTIMATE GOOD. AND WE STEP BACK AND SEE THE BIG PICTURE, WE CAN UNDERSTAND THAT. YOU SEE, THIS IS BASED UPON THE TRUE LOVE FOR SOMEBODY ELSE, LOOKING OUT FOR THEIR BEST INTERESTS. THE GREEKS USED THE WORD AGAPE TO DESCRIBE THIS TYPE OF LOVE, A JOHN 3:16 KIND OF LOVE: FOR GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD THAT HE GAVE HIS ONLY BEGOTTEN SON. THAT MUST HAVE BEEN A PAINFUL PROCESS FOR THE FATHER TO ENDURE, BUT HE DID IT ANYWAY. YOU SEE, THAT AGAPE LOVE, THAT'S A

DECISION TO DO WHAT'S IN SOMEONE ELSE'S ULTIMATE BEST INTEREST DESPITE WHAT IT COSTS US. AND WHEN WE APPLY THAT AGAPE LOVE TO OUR FRIENDSHIP, IT BRINGS OUR FRIENDSHIP TO A HIGHER LEVEL. YOU SEE, SOMETIMES WE DWELL TOO MUCH TALKING ABOUT SPORTS, WEATHER, TRIVIAL THINGS, BUT DEEPER FRIENDSHIPS GET INTO THE WEEDS OF LIFE. CONSIDER JAMES 5:16 THAT BEGINS, CONFESS YOUR TRESPASSES TO ONE ANOTHER AND PRAY FOR ONE ANOTHER, THAT YOU MAY BE HEALED. THAT'S THE TYPE OF FRIENDSHIP WE NEED TO HAVE. WE NEED TO DEVELOP THESE IN OUR LIVES. BUT YOU SEE, THE KISSES OF AN ENEMY ARE DECEITFUL. WE HAVE THAT CONTRAST THERE. THE KISS, A PLEASANT FORM OF DELIVERY, BUT IT'S IGNORING SOMETHING UNDERLYING THAT'S EVEN MORE IMPORTANT. NOW, WHAT'S IMPLIED HERE IS IF YOU BRUSH SOMETHING IMPORTANT UNDER THE RUG, YOU'RE ACTING LIKE THAT PERSON'S ENEMY. AT TIMES, WE NEED TO SET ASIDE OUR FEELINGS TO DO WHAT'S RIGHT. IF YOU'RE NOT MAKING THOSE TOUGH DECISIONS FOR SOMEONE ELSE'S ULTIMATE BEST INTEREST, YOU'RE REALLY THEIR ENEMY, NOT THEIR FRIEND. LIKewise, IF THOSE AROUND YOU IGNORE YOUR ULTIMATE BEST INTEREST, THOSE ARE NOT YOUR FRIENDS; THEY'RE YOUR ENEMIES. SO LET ME ASK YOU, ARE YOU THE KIND OF FRIEND THAT OTHERS NEED YOU TO BE? ARE YOU WILLING TO SAY WHAT NEEDS TO BE SAID, EVEN IF IT'S NOT PLEASANT, EVEN IF IT MIGHT HURT THEIR FEELINGS, BUT IT'S SOMETHING THEY NEEDED ANYWAY? NO, WE DON'T GO OUT OF OUR WAY TO HURT SOMEBODY BEYOND WHAT'S NECESSARY; BUT SOMETIMES THE TRUTH STINGS A LITTLE BIT, SOMETIMES IT STINGS A LOT. BUT IT STILL NEEDS TO BE SAID. SECONDLY, DO YOU ALLOW YOUR REAL FRIENDS TO HELP YOU, OR DO YOU GET DEFENSIVE AND FIGHT BACK INSTANTLY, DON'T CONSIDER THEIR MESSAGE? YOU SEE, THIS IS A DIFFICULT PROCESS. IT TAKES MATURITY ON OUR PART. AND WE NEED TO REALIZE THAT GOD IS OUR BEST FRIEND. HE CORRECTS US. HE DOES THAT THROUGH HIS WORD. THE QUESTION IS, ARE YOU LISTENING? DO YOU CHANGE YOUR ACTIONS BASED UPON WHAT YOU READ IN THE SCRIPTURES? YOU SEE, THE HEBREW WRITER TELLS US IN HEBREWS CHAPTER 12 BEGINNING VERSE IN VERSE 9 THAT WE HAVE FATHERS ON THIS EARTH THAT CORRECTED US. WE GAVE THEM RESPECT. HOW MUCH MORE SHOULD WE RESPECT WHEN GOD CORRECTS US? WE NEED TO REALIZE THAT HE, LIKE A TRUE FRIEND, WANTS WHAT'S IN OUR BEST INTEREST. AND THAT'S GOOD NEWS FOR US TODAY. NOW, JOE GUY IS WAITING FOR US ON THE PASTIME PORCH, AND HE'S GOT ANOTHER TRUTH FROM THE TIMELESS TEXT. HE'S GOING TO TALK TO US ABOUT A LETTER.

>> WELL, HELLO. I'D LIKE TO SHARE A LITTLE STORY WITH YOU ABOUT A LETTER, A VERY, VERY OLD LETTER. IT'S CALLED THE LETTER TO DIOGNETUS. NOW, WE DON'T KNOW WHO DIOGNETUS WAS EXACTLY, ALTHOUGH SOME HISTORIANS THINK THAT HE MAY HAVE BEEN A TUTOR TO THE LAST GOOD ROMAN EMPEROR, MARCUS AURELIUS, WHO REIGNED FROM 161 TO 180 AD, LESS THAN 100 YEARS AFTER THE DEATH OF THE LAST OF THE APOSTLES. BUT SOMEONE NAMED MATHETES WROTE DIOGNETUS A LETTER SOMETIME DURING THE MIDDLE PART OF THE 2ND CENTURY THAT WE HAVE COPIES OF TODAY. IT'S A LETTER ABOUT CHRISTIANS, AND IT'S VERY INTERESTING. A SIMPLE ONLINE SEARCH WILL PRODUCE A COPY FOR YOUR OWN READING. TO SUMMARIZE THE LETTER, MATHETES, WHICH IS REALLY A PSEUDONYM MEANING DISCIPLE OF THE APOSTLES, TELLS DIOGNETUS ABOUT CHRISTIANS, OBVIOUSLY A NAME OF A GROUP THAT THEY BOTH RECOGNIZED. MATHETES NOTES THAT CHRISTIANS ARE UNIQUE, THE PECULIAR PEOPLE OF 1ST PETER 2:9, AS THEY DO NOT SERVE PAGAN IDOLS, NOR DO THEY FOLLOW THE JEWISH RELIGION. MATHETES COMMENTS ON THE CHRISTIANS' WONDERFUL AND CONFESSEDLY STRIKING METHOD OF LIFE, HOW THEY LOVED EVEN THOSE WHO PERSECUTED THEM, JUST AS JESUS HAD COMMANDED IN MATTHEW 5:43-44; SHARED WITH OTHERS AND ENDURED THE SAME TRIALS AS PEOPLE AROUND THEM, AS IN ACTS 2:44-45; AND HOW THEY WERE CITIZENS OF THE EARTH, YET CONSIDERED THEMSELVES CITIZENS OF HEAVEN, JUST AS PAUL HAD SAID IN PHILIPPIANS 3:20-

21. HE DESCRIBES CHRISTIANS AS BELIEVING IN THE EXISTENCE, THE EXAMPLE OF, AND THE SACRIFICE OF CHRIST. MATHETES ALSO DESCRIBES WHAT CHRISTIANS WERE NOT. THERE WERE NO SEEKING RICHES, SEEKING POWER OVER OTHERS, NOR BEING VIOLENT TO OTHERS, AS THE POWERFUL APOSTATE CHURCH WOULD SOON BECOME. RATHER, THEY WERE KNOWN TO TAKE ON THE BURDEN OF OTHERS, TAKING CARE OF THE NEEDS OF OTHERS, AS IN GALATIANS 6:2; AND IMITATING THE LOVING GOD THAT THEY BELIEVED IN, JUST AS PAUL HAD COMMANDED IN EPHESIANS 5:1. WHY IS THIS OLD LETTER IMPORTANT? BECAUSE THERE IS NO REFERENCE TO ANYTHING RESEMBLING DENOMINATIONS, DIVISIONS, OR THE TEACHINGS OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH OR THE POWER AND WEALTH ASSOCIATED WITH IT, WHICH MANY HISTORY BOOKS ERRONEOUSLY CLAIM WAS THE FIRST CHURCH. NO, MATHETES GIVES US A GLIMPSE OF CHRISTIANS WHO WERE STILL FOLLOWING THE PATTERNS OF THE FIRST-CENTURY CHURCH, DOING THINGS DECENTLY AND IN ORDER, AS IN 1ST CORINTHIANS 14:40. THIS SAME ORDER IS STILL BEING PRACTICED WITHIN 100 YEARS OF THE DEATH OF THE APOSTLES. UNFORTUNATELY, THINGS WOULD SOON TAKE A TERRIBLE TURN, AND CHURCHES WOULD EMERGE THAT NO LONGER FOLLOWED THE PATTERN OF THE FIRST CENTURY AND TRY TO DESTROY THOSE THAT DID. IT'S AMAZING AND SOBERING WHEN HISTORY SUPPORTS THE TRUTH OF THE TIMELESS TEXT OF THE BIBLE. SHOULDN'T WE TAKE NOTE OF GOD'S OWN PATTERN FOR HIS CHURCH? I'M JOE GUY. THANK YOU FOR VISITING.

>> IF SOMEONE WAS WRITING A LETTER ABOUT YOU AND YOUR CONGREGATION, WOULD THE LETTER DESCRIBE THE SAME CHURCH THAT MATHETES DESCRIBED IN HIS DAY? IT SHOULD. THANKS, JOE. HERE AT GOOD NEWS TODAY, WE'RE ALWAYS WANTING OUR AUDIENCE TO SPEND MORE TIME IN THE BIBLE, SEE THINGS FOR YOURSELF. ONE WAY YOU CAN DO THAT IS BY ENROLLING IN OUR FREE BIBLE COURSE. IN JUST A MOMENT, WE'LL GIVE YOU OUR CONTACT INFORMATION SO YOU CAN SEND US YOUR CONTACT INFORMATION. THEN JIM DEARMAN IS GOING TO JOIN US.

>> YOU MAY HAVE QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS ABOUT GOOD NEWS TODAY. WE'D LIKE TO HEAR FROM YOU. OR IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO RECEIVE FREE BIBLE STUDY MATERIALS, PLEASE CONTACT US. OUR MAILING ADDRESS IS GOOD NEWS TODAY, P.O. BOX 206, DUNLAP, TENNESSEE, 37327. AGAIN, THAT'S GOOD NEWS TODAY, P.O. BOX 206, DUNLAP, TENNESSEE, 37327. YOU MAY PREFER TO E-MAIL US AT GOODNEWSTODAYTV@GMAIL.COM. THAT'S GOODNEWSTODAYTV@GMAIL.COM. OR CALL US TOLL-FREE AT 1-877-384-7221. THAT'S 1-877-384-7221. WE'D LIKE TO HEAR FROM YOU. HEARING FROM OUR AUDIENCE IS ALWAYS GOOD NEWS TO US.

>> THE EASIEST WAY TO ENROLL IN OUR BIBLE COURSE IS ON OUR WEBSITE AT GNTTV.ORG. JUST CLICK WHERE IT SAYS BIBLE COURSE, FILL OUT THE INFORMATION, AND WE'LL MAIL IT TO YOU. YOU CAN HEAR GOOD NEWS TODAY ON TRUTH.FM, WHICH IS A GROUP OF INTERNET RADIO STATIONS THAT STREAM 24/7. THEY HAVE A CHANNEL THAT PLAYS NOTHING BUT GOOD NEWS TODAY, AND YOU CAN LISTEN ANYTIME THAT YOU'D LIKE. NOW HERE'S JIM DEARMAN WITH SOME SOUND WORDS FOR US ABOUT OUR GREATEST FRIEND.

>> FRIENDSHIP. THAT'S A PRECIOUS WORD. AND MANY WORDS HAVE BEEN WRITTEN ABOUT THE BLESSING OF HAVING FRIENDS. FOR EXAMPLE, CONSIDER THESE POETIC LINES: I THINK THAT GOD WILL NEVER SEND A GIFT SO PRECIOUS AS A FRIEND; A FRIEND WHO ALWAYS UNDERSTANDS AND FILLS EACH NEED AS IT DEMANDS; WHOSE LOYALTY WILL STAND THE TEST WHEN SKIES ARE BLUE OR OVERCAST; WHO SEES THE FAULTS THAT MERIT BLAME, BUT KEEPS ON LOVING JUST THE SAME; WHO DOES FAR MORE THAN CREEDS COULD DO TO MAKE US GOOD, TO MAKE US TRUE. EARTH'S GIFTS A SWEET CONTENTMENT LEND, BUT

ONLY GOD CAN GIVE A FRIEND. YOU KNOW, ONLY GOD COULD GIVE US THE GREATEST FRIEND WE CAN EVER KNOW, THE ONE WHO LOVINGLY AND WILLINGLY LAID DOWN HIS LIFE FOR US, THE ONE WHO SAID, GREATER LOVE HAS NO ONE THAN THIS, THAN TO LAY DOWN ONE'S LIFE FOR HIS FRIENDS, JOHN 15:13.

>> THANKS. I HOPE THAT YOU HAVE TRUE FRIENDS LIKE JIM DESCRIBED. OUR APPS ARE AN EXCELLENT PLACE TO GET A DOSE OF GOOD NEWS TODAY OR ANY DAY. WE HAVE MATERIAL THAT YOU'LL SEE ON OUR PROGRAM AS WELL AS SOME EXCELLENT MATERIAL FROM YEARS GONE BY. THOSE APPS ARE AVAILABLE FOR YOUR PHONE, YOUR TABLET, OR YOUR TELEVISION. JUST LOOK FOR GOOD NEWS TODAY IN THE APP STORE AND DOWNLOAD IT FOR FREE. WE HEAD BACK OVER TO THE PASTIME PORCH, WHERE FREDDIE CLAYTON NOW JOINS US. AND HE'S HELPING US UNDERSTAND WHAT NEEDS TO COME FIRST.

>> BEFORE SOME PEOPLE WILL HEAR IT, THEY WANT TO SEE IT. IN AN ADDRESS DELIVERED ON MAY THE 28TH, 1893 TO THE YMCA OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI. J.W. MCGARVEY, A TREMENDOUS BIBLE SCHOLAR, AUTHOR, AND GOSPEL PREACHER OF THE 19TH CENTURY, RELATED THE FOLLOWING STORY ABOUT A GENERAL A.W. DONIPHAN, A CONSPICUOUS OFFICER IN THE MEXICAN WAR, AN EMINENT LAWYER, AND FOR MANY YEARS THE LEADER OF THE WHIG PARTY IN MISSOURI. UNTIL HE WAS ABOUT 60 YEARS OF AGE, DONIPHAN WAS INDIFFERENT TO ALL CREEDS, AND HE HAD NEVER BECOME A BELIEVER IN JESUS CHRIST. BUT WHILE IN ATTENDANCE ON THE CIRCUIT COURT AWAY FROM HOME, HE DROPPED INTO A CHURCH ON THE LORD'S DAY TO HEAR A SERMON. AS HE STATED AFTERWARD IN TELLING THE STORY, THERE WAS NOTHING IN THE SERMON TO ESPECIALLY INTEREST HIM, BUT HE FOUND HIS ATTENTION DRAWN TO THE MANIFEST EARNESTNESS OF THE SPEAKER, AN EARNESTNESS AND AN AIR OF SINCERITY WHICH PROVED HIM TO BE A PROFOUND BELIEVER IN THE LORD JESUS CHRIST. AS HE REFLECTED ON THIS, THE QUESTION CAME INTO HIS MIND, IF THIS PLAIN MAN WITH MODERATE INTELLECTUAL POWERS HAS FOUND EVIDENCE TO SO THOROUGHLY CONVINCED HIM OF THE CLAIMS OF JESUS, MAY NOT THE SAME EVIDENCE BE WITHIN MY REACH ALSO? AND MAY I NOT BE GUILTY OF A SERIOUS NEGLECT IN NOT PAYING ATTENTION TO IT? THE THOUGHT TOOK POSSESSION OF HIM, AND HE RESOLVED THAT ON RETURNING HOME, HE WOULD TAKE THE NEW TESTAMENT IN HAND, HE WOULD EXAMINE IT CAREFULLY TO SEE IF IT SETS FORTH A CASE IN FAVOR OF JESUS OF NAZARETH THAT HE AS A LAWYER DESIGNED TO KEEP UP HIS REPUTATION AS SUCH WOULD UNDERTAKE TO DEFEND IN A COURT OF JUSTICE. HE DID SO. AND HE SAID THAT BEFORE HE HAD GONE THROUGH THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW, HE WAS FORCED TO EXCLAIM, THE CASE IS A GOOD ONE. WITHIN A FEW WEEKS AFTERWARD, HE WAS BAPTIZED, AND THE REMNANT OF HIS LIFE WAS DEVOTED TO THE SERVICE OF GOD. NOW THINK ABOUT THIS ACCOUNT FOR A MOMENT. INITIALLY, IT WAS NOT A MESSAGE OR EVEN THE CONTENT OF THE MESSAGE THAT CAUGHT THIS MAN'S ATTENTION. IT WOULD BE LATER WHEN HE TOOK HIS NEW TESTAMENT IN HAND AND HE EXAMINED THE EVIDENCE FOR HIMSELF. BUT THE MESSAGE OF JESUS WAS NOT THE INITIAL DRAW. WHAT WAS IT? IT WAS THE MANIFEST EARNESTNESS AND THE AIR OF SINCERITY IN THE PREACHER THAT CAUSED THEM TO LOOK UPON THIS MAN; AND BY THE EXAMPLE THAT HE SAW BEFORE HIM, IT PROVED HIM TO BE A PROFOUND BELIEVER. FRIEND, DO YOU HAVE A MANIFEST EARNESTNESS OR AN AIR OF SINCERITY REGARDING YOUR FAITH? WHEN OTHERS LOOK AT YOU, IS IT OBVIOUS TO THEM THAT YOU'RE A PROFOUND BELIEVER IN THE LORD JESUS CHRIST? BEFORE THE MESSAGE OF JESUS TOUCHES A PERSON'S HEART, MANY NEED TO SEE

THAT MESSAGE GENUINELY REFLECTED IN THE LIVES OF CHRISTIANS AROUND THEM. WHAT DO THEY SEE WHEN THEY LOOK AT ME AND YOU? THIS IS FREDDIE CLAYTON, WALKING AND TALKING IN THE LIGHT.

>> AN IMPORTANT ASPECT OF OUR FREE BIBLE COURSE IS TO DEVELOP THAT MANIFEST EARNESTNESS AND SINCERITY IN OUR CHRISTIANITY. IF YOU WANT TO DEVELOP THOSE QUALITIES, ENROLL IN OUR COURSE TODAY. THANKS, FREDDIE. WE'VE GOT A GREAT WAY FOR YOU TO START EVERY DAY, AND THAT'S WITH THE GOOD NEWS TODAY PODCAST. JUST SEARCH FOR GOOD NEWS TODAY DAILY DEVOTIONAL TIME WHEREVER YOU GET YOUR PODCASTS, AND START EVERY DAY WITH YOUR DAILY DOSE OF GOOD NEWS. NOW CHAD DOLLAHITE JOINS US FOR JUST A MINUTE AS HE TELLS US ABOUT ABNER GIFTS.

>> MAY I HAVE JUST A MINUTE OF YOUR TIME? MY GRANDMOTHER DOLLAHITE USED TO KNOW A MAN NAMED ABNER, WHO WOULD WRAP A PRESENT EVERY YEAR AND PUT IT UNDER THE CHRISTMAS TREE. THE LABEL WOULD READ, TO ABNER FROM ABNER. IT BECAME A JOKE IN OUR FAMILY TO TALK ABOUT A TO ABNER FROM ABNER GIFT TO YOURSELF, WHETHER AT CHRISTMAS TIME OR ANY OTHER TIME. AND SINCE MY GRANDMOTHER WAS NOTORIOUSLY DIFFICULT TO SHOP FOR, HER FAVORITE GIFTS WERE, AS SHE PUT IT, ABNER GIFTS. BUT REALLY, WE ALL NEED TO GIVE OURSELVES SOME ABNER GIFTS AS WELL. I'M NOT TALKING ABOUT PHYSICAL PRESENTS YOU PLACE UNDER THE TREE OR ACTUALLY GIVE TO YOURSELF IN THAT SENSE; I'M TALKING ABOUT INTANGIBLE SPIRITUAL GIFTS. I HOPE YOU GIVE YOURSELF GREATER FAITH IN THE PROVISION OF GOD, GREATER HOPE IN THE PROMISES OF GOD, AND GREATER LOVE FOR THE PERSON OF GOD. LIKE ABRAHAM OF OLD, WHEN WE TRULY BELIEVE GOD IS ABLE TO DO WHAT HE'S PROMISED, WE WILL NATURALLY LOVE HIM. AND WHEN WE TRULY LOVE HIM, WE WILL TRUST AND OBEY HIM. AND HE ULTIMATELY WILL TAKE CARE OF THOSE WHO DO SO. NOW, THOSE ARE SOME GIFTS THAT KEEP ON GIVING. I'M CHAD DOLLAHITE, AND THIS IS JUST A MINUTE.

>> IN JUST A MOMENT, WE'LL GIVE OUR BIBLE QUESTION TO ANTHONY DISMUKE AND TROY SPRADLIN.

>> (SINGING)

>> NOW WE HAVE A BIBLE QUESTION FOR ANTHONY AND TROY: DOES IT REALLY MATTER IF WE BELIEVE THAT THE STORIES IN THE OLD TESTAMENT ARE JUST FABLES?

>> THE QUESTION THAT WE HAVE TODAY IS, DOES IT MATTER? DOES IT MATTER IF WE BELIEVE THE OLD TESTAMENT STORIES?

>> DOES IT MATTER? ABSOLUTELY IT MATTERS.

>> YES, IT DOES.

>> BUT I THINK I UNDERSTAND WHERE THE QUESTION IS COMING FROM, BECAUSE THERE ARE THOSE WHO THINK THAT WE DON'T NEED THE OLD TESTAMENT OR THAT THE THINGS THAT WE READ IN THE BIBLE SOUND LIKE STORIES OR FABLES OR SOMETHING LIKE THAT.

>> RIGHT. AND I THINK THAT'S KIND OF WHERE WE GET INTO OUR ISSUE, RIGHT? I THINK THAT'S KIND OF WHERE WE GET INTO OUR PROBLEM IS THE WORD STORY.

>> YES.

>> WHERE SOME PEOPLE DON'T REALLY UNDERSTAND, BECAUSE THEY HEAR OTHERS SAY STORY AND USE IT IN THAT WAY, THEY THINK OF IT AS FABLES, RIGHT?

>> YEAH, OR SOMETHING FICTIONAL.

>> SOMETHING FICTIONAL. BUT NOT UNDERSTANDING THAT THERE'S THREE USES OF THAT WORD. THERE'S THREE USES OF IT. YOU HAVE THAT WHICH IS FICTIONAL, AN EVENT OR A STORY OF SOMEBODY'S LIFE, BUT IT'S A FICTIONAL CHARACTER. YOU HAVE AN ACCOUNT, RIGHT, WHICH IS OF SOMEBODY'S ACTUAL LIFE. SO THAT'S YOU TELLING SOMEBODY'S STORY, THEIR LIFE. AND THEN THERE'S ALSO THAT OF A BUILDING STRUCTURE. THREE STORIES. YOU HAVE THREE STORIES, THREE LEVELS TO A CERTAIN BUILDING AND THINGS LIKE THAT. SO THERE'S THREE USES.

>> YEAH. IN FACT, THAT'S WHAT YOU SEE A LOT OF TIMES, IT SAYS THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW, OR GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK. AND SO IT'S SHOWING THAT LIFE STORY OF JESUS.

>> RIGHT. EXACTLY. REALLY, WE LIKE TO USE THAT WORD ACCOUNT, RIGHT?

>> YES.

>> WE REALLY LIKE TO USE THAT WORD ACCOUNT, BECAUSE THAT LETS US KNOW IT'S WITHOUT A SHADOW OF A DOUBT A FACT.

>> EXACTLY. AND THE FACT IS, THESE ARE REAL PEOPLE AND REAL EVENTS. AND IT'S IMPORTANT THAT WE UNDERSTAND THAT. AND HERE'S ONE OF THE REASONS I THINK WHY, BECAUSE IN ROMANS CHAPTER 15, VERSE 4 SAYS, FOR WHATEVER THINGS WERE WRITTEN BEFORE WERE WRITTEN FOR OUR LEARNING, THAT THROUGH THE PATIENCE AND COMFORT OF THE SCRIPTURES, WE MIGHT HAVE HOPE. THESE THINGS ARE WRITTEN FOR US SO THAT WE WILL KNOW THAT THESE ARE REAL PEOPLE WHO HAVE PROBLEMS JUST LIKE YOU AND I DO.

>> ABSOLUTELY. AND 2ND TIMOTHY 3:16-17 LETS US KNOW THAT THIS IS GOD-BREATHED.

>> THAT'S RIGHT.

>> THAT THIS WORD IS INSPIRED BY HIM, IT IS GIVEN BY HIM; SO ALL OF THESE THINGS HAVE TO BE TRUE, BECAUSE GOD IS TRUTH.

>> THAT'S RIGHT.

>> AND THERE'S NOTHING THAT'S FALSE ABOUT HIM. AND SO WE HAVE TO BE ABLE TO COME TO THAT CONCLUSION. AS YOU SAID, THESE THINGS ARE WRITTEN FOR OUR LEARNING.

>> THAT'S RIGHT. AND IF YOU BELIEVE IN JESUS, THAT'S WHAT THIS IS ALL ABOUT, IS THAT WE WANT TO HAVE FAITH IN JESUS. WELL, JESUS HIMSELF EVEN VERIFIED PEOPLE, LIKE, FOR EXAMPLE, NOAH. HE MENTIONS NOAH, WHICH SAYS THAT'S A REAL PERSON. HE TALKS ABOUT JONAH BEING IN THE BELLY OF THE FISH THREE DAYS. SO IT'S MORE THAN THE ABOUT THE FISH, YOU KNOW, IT'S A REAL PERSON. BUT WE CAN HAVE FAITH IN THE BIBLE BECAUSE NOT ONLY ARE THESE REAL PEOPLE AND REAL EVENTS, BUT THERE'S ALSO THINGS THAT SHOW THE PROOF OF THE BIBLE. LIKE YOU LOOK AT SOME OF THE

CHRISTIAN EVIDENCES THAT WE LIKE TO USE, FOR EXAMPLE, THE TEL DAN INSCRIPTION THAT TALKS ABOUT THE HOUSE OF DAVID.

>> ABSOLUTELY.

>> YOU'VE GOT THE PILATE INSCRIPTION, SO IT SHOWS THAT PILATE WAS A REAL PERSON. THERE'S A TON OF THAT TYPE OF STUFF THAT LETS YOU KNOW YOU CAN TRUST THE BIBLE.

>> RIGHT. AND I THINK THAT ONE OF THE MAIN PURPOSES IS FOR US TO SEE JUST HOW FAR WE'VE COME.

>> AMEN. THAT'S RIGHT.

>> WHEN WE BEGIN WITH THE OLD TESTAMENT, YOU SEE FROM THE VERY BEGINNING IN THE BOOK OF GENESIS, THE BOOK OF BEGINNINGS, RIGHT, YOU SEE THE CREATION, AND YOU JUST COME ON THROUGH, AND YOU GET TO SEE THE HISTORY OF HOW IT ALL BEGAN AND HOW GOD DEALT WITH MAN AND HOW WICKED MAN WAS AND HOW GOD HAD TO CONTINUOUSLY TRY TO REINVENT MAN AND TRY TO FORGIVE HIM AND TRY TO GET HIM ON THE RIGHT PATH.

>> THAT'S RIGHT.

>> SO IT BRINGS US ALL THE WAY THROUGH THE SCHEME OF REDEMPTION, YOU KNOW. IT BRINGS US ALL THE WAY THROUGH LEADING UP TO CHRIST AND JUST HELPING US TO HAVE THAT FULL PICTURE AND HELPING US TO KNOW JUST HOW FAR WE'VE COME.

>> THAT'S RIGHT. SO IS IT IMPORTANT THAT WE BELIEVE THAT THE BOOKS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT AND ALL THE STORIES WE READ ARE TRUE?

>> YES, 100 PERCENT.

>> DID YOU NOTICE THAT MY DEAR FRIENDS, ANTHONY AND TROY, ANSWERED THAT QUESTION USING THE SCRIPTURES? YOU SHOULD DEMAND THAT FROM EVERYONE WHO TRIES TO TEACH YOU SOMETHING BIBLICAL. WE HOPE THAT TODAY'S PROGRAM HAS ENCOURAGED YOU TO MAKE SURE YOU HAVE FRIENDS THAT ENCOURAGE YOU IN YOUR CHRISTIAN WALK. IF THERE'S SOMETHING WE'VE SAID THAT YOU NEED TO HEAR AGAIN, DIDN'T HAVE TIME TO WRITE IT DOWN, YOU CAN HEAR IT AGAIN THROUGH OUR WEBSITE, THROUGH OUR APPS, OR THROUGH OUR PODCAST. MAYBE IN LISTENING TO IT AGAIN, YOU HAVE A QUESTION. CONTACT US. WE'D LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU. MAYBE WE'LL EVEN ANSWER THAT QUESTION ON OUR PROGRAM. ANTHONY AND TROY ARE ALWAYS LOOKING FOR THOSE QUESTIONS. WELL, THANKS FOR JOINING US. WE LOVE YOU, WE'RE PRAYING FOR YOU, AND WE WANT YOU TO MAKE IT TO HEAVEN.

>> SINGING: GOOD NEWS TODAY