

Our Sabbath Scripture Stories



FAMILIES RECLAIMING SUNDAY

Read aloud: 2 Kings 4:8-11, 14-16a

Romans 6:3-4, 8-11

Gospel: Matthew 10:37-42

Summer was here! It seemed like it was already going by so quickly! In a few days, it would be the Fourth of July celebration—and the annual Pauline pilgrimage to the park to see the huge fireworks display.

"I love fireworks!" Vincent stated. "I wish they were around all year 'round!"

"Well, they are, Vincent!" Dad answered.

"Huh?" his son replied.

Dad smiled. "Sure, Son! Every time we read our Gospel readings, it's like fireworks going off! The Gospels are illuminating ... and dynamic ... and full of sparkle and life!"

"That's not exactly what I meant!" said Vincent, rather sheepishly.

Dad could only laugh. "Well, you'll see that our Gospel reading for this morning has some real fireworks for everyone who hears it!"

Mom and Dad brought the family into the kitchen for the Sunday Sabbath reading. Already in the middle of the kitchen table were six sheets of paper. The papers were folded in half and numbered from one to six.

"Okay, now, Kids," Mom instructed them. "Dad is going to read our passage out loud first and then afterwards, in order, we will pick up one of the numbered sheets. Each sheet tells of one of the themes of today's Gospel. You, then, will tell us how we can apply that theme to our own lives. Any questions?"

They all seemed eager to begin.

Dad opened his Bible to Matthew, Chapter 10, Verses 37 to 42. He read the passage clearly and firmly.

Soon it was time to begin with the numbered theme cards.

"Peter, you take number one." Mom instructed.

Peter opened it up and read, *"Love God above all else."*

"This is a really important theme," Peter stated, thinking back to a few college theology classes. "Jesus tells us, in today's reading, that *'Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.'* (Matthew 10:37a) Jesus isn't setting up any opposition between the first and the fourth

commandments! Jesus is giving us a blueprint for our priorities! God deserves our love above all else!"

"Excellent, Peter!" Dad said, knowing the college tuition money was paying off.

Then Mary Clare picked up card number two. It read, "Take up your cross."

Mary Clare began, "In our reading today, Jesus says that anyone who doesn't take up their cross and follow Jesus isn't worthy of being one of His followers. I think that Jesus is telling us that we have to endure hardships and trials for the kingdom of God."

"Another excellent answer!" Dad smiled. "Now to number three."

Vincent opened up his card. He looked at it for a second and then read, "Whoever finds his life will lose it, whoever loses his life for my sake will find it" (Matthew 10:39)

Vincent sat there juggling some thoughts around. "This is what I call one of those 'teeter-totter' lessons that Jesus is giving us!"

"What?" they all asked.

"Sure," Vincent went on, using his hand in a flipping motion. "He who finds his life loses it, and he who loses his life finds it. It figures like a 'teeter-totter'! If this world is your heaven, then heaven won't be your heaven! If you're in this world, you're out of the next! If your life is too selfish here, you won't have an eternal life there! If you're ... "

"All right, Vincent! We get your point!" Dad laughed. In fact, Dad was quite impressed by how Vincent could turn a phrase!

It was Lucy's turn to explain theme number four. The card read, "Receive prophetic words."

"I think that Jesus wants us to believe in all His teachings!" Lucy said simply.

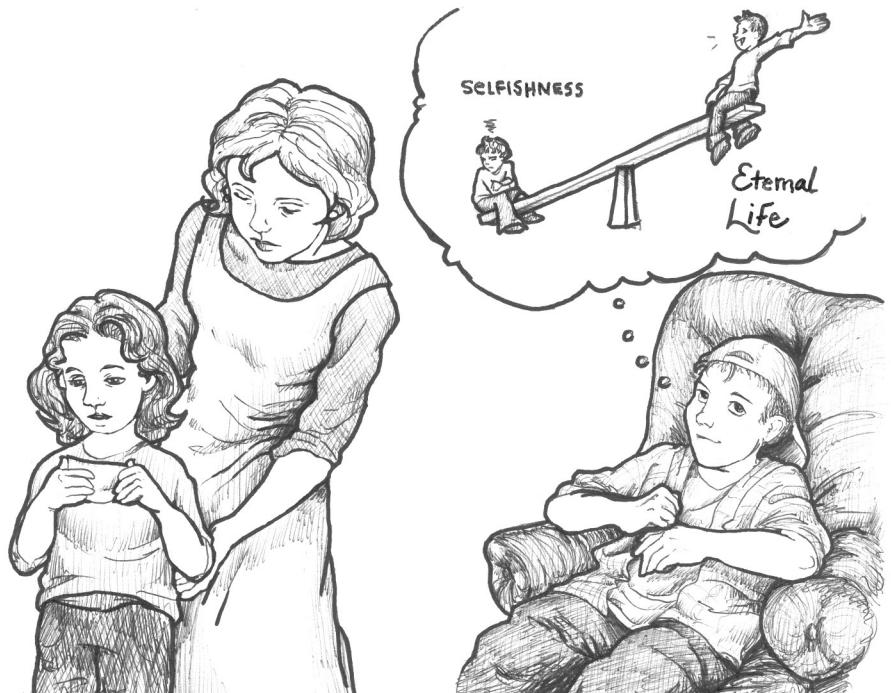
"Wonderful!" Mom said. "That's exactly true, Lucy! A prophet's role is not mainly announcing future events, but spreading the Word of God!"

Mom and Dad both felt proud of their children. It was clear they were really understanding today's message.

Now it was Hillary's turn. Mom helped her with the card that read, "Receive righteous men."

After Mom whispered to Hillary what the word "righteous" meant, Hillary began, "I think that Jesus likes it when holy people are around!"

"Very true, Honey!" Dad answered. "Showing Christian hospitality and friendship to all God's people will gain us an eternal reward!"



And last, but not least, Baby Ben reached over and fingered card number six. Mom helped Ben hold it up, and he squealed with delight. The card read, *"Receive God's little ones."*

"How appropriate!" Dad commented. "Jesus tells us that when we receive God's little ones and the less fortunate among us, we will not lose our heavenly reward! Seeing God in the *least* of His disciples makes us *more* of His disciples!"

"That sounded a bit 'teeter-totterish' to me!" Vincent laughed. "Hey, maybe I'm rubbing off on you, Dad!"

The comment caught Mr. Pauline off guard and stopped him in his tracks. Poor Mr. Pauline could only widen his eyes in wonderment at the prospect of becoming more like Vincent!