

=THE CONVERSION=

Lesson 9

Sergius Paulus

Objects to have:

The objects that represent the past eight stories: A square of fabric, a pitcher, the two-sided black and white heart, the HIDE-AND-SEEK sign, a hammer, the completed jigsaw puzzle picture, a letter from the high priest, and the drawing of the ear

A glass of water

A large sheet of paper tacked to the bulletin board

Crayons or marking pens: blue, brown, and black

Your Bible.

Introducing the lesson:

(Hold up the objects of review, get the children to name the main character of each story, or say a sentence to describe each story for the past eight Sundays.)

(Hold up the glass of water.) Children, I have a glass of water with me today. (Dip your fingers into the water.) See, the water is wet. The water is liquid. Sometimes I have seen water when it looks different from this. I have seen water when it has turned to steam. Steam comes out of the tea kettle after the tea kettle has been on the fire for a while. The steam is still water. I have also seen water that has turned to ice. After the water has been in the freezer for a while, it turns to ice. The ice is still water. So water can be either liquid, as it is in the glass; or it can be steam; or it can be ice. Liquid, steam, and ice are all water.

There is one God. There is only one true living God. God is three Persons, however. God is God the Heavenly Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit. People have seen God the Son. God the Son is Jesus. Jesus is God. Jesus is God in the form of a man. Everybody who asks Jesus to be his Saviour gets a gift. He gets the gift of eternal life. Eternal life is living forever with Jesus. Everybody who asks Jesus to be his Saviour receives another gift, also. He gets the gift of the Holy Spirit living with him. It is the Holy Spirit Who warns us about sin. The Holy Spirit lives in our bodies if we have asked Jesus to be our Saviour.

We want other people to know about Jesus so that they will go to Heaven, too, don't we? Whenever we tell other people about Jesus, it is the Holy Spirit Who convinces them that they need to be saved, too. In our Bible story for today, the Holy Spirit convinces another person that he needs to be saved.

Telling the story:

Let's pretend that we are living in Bible days, right after Jesus has gone to Heaven. (While telling the following, illustrate by coloring the large sheet of paper blue with the side of your crayon or with your marking pen. Then, using the brown crayon, draw the Isle of Cyprus in the shape of a fist that has the index finger extended toward the northeast.) Here is a lot of water. This is The Mediterranean Sea. See all this water. Nothing but water all around. Oh, but in this water is a little body of land. This land has water all around it. Because this land has water all around it, it is called an island. This island is called Cyprus. On this island are some cities. There are people who live in the cities. Let us go to this city. (Put a dot on the island of Cyprus at the southwest, on the seacoast.) There is a very important man who lives in this city.

The man is the leader of this part of the island. This leader's name is Sergius Paulus. (Say the name very slowly.) See, here is Sergius Paulus. (Draw a stick figure of a man, sitting on a chair.) Perhaps Sergius Paulus lives in a great big house. Perhaps when people come to talk with him, he sits on a chair like a throne.

There is also in this city another man. (Draw a standing stick figure beside or in front of the man who is sitting on the chair.) This man's name is Elymas. Elymas not only does not love Jesus, but he has turned his life over to the devil. Satan rules this man's life. He is a wicked man.

(Draw a simple building on the island near the figures for Sergius Paulus and Elymas.) In this city is a big building called a temple. This temple is not for worshipping the true, living God. This temple has a huge statue in it—the statue of a woman. Most of the people in this city come and bow down to the statue of this woman. The people of this city have never heard of Jesus. There are many of the city, however, who would really like to know about a true, living God. They are not really satisfied with the worship of this statue.

Now, across the water in this direction on some other land (point to the southeast) are some men who know and love Jesus. Paul is one of these men. The Holy Spirit is talking to Paul: “Paul, go away from home. Get in a boat. Go across the sea. In the sea is some land. Get out of your boat onto that land.” (Point to the eastern shore of the island of Cyprus.) “Walk across that island and as you meet people, tell them about Jesus. Do not stop until you have gone all the way across to this city.” (Point to the city where Sergius Paulus and Elymas are pictured.)

Paul is obedient. Whatever God tells Paul to do, he does it. Paul is leaving his home. Some other men are going with him. He keeps going until he gets to the sea. There he gets into a boat. He sails in the boat across the water. He gets out of the boat on this side of the island. (Point to the eastern side of the island.) He travels across the island. As he travels, he stops many times to tell people about Jesus. He keeps traveling until he gets to this city. The man Sergius Paulus lives here. Elymas lives here, also. Sergius Paulus is the important man of the city; Elymas is the man who is completely ruled by Satan. There is a temple in this city. People worship a statue of a woman in this temple.

Paul is in this city. Paul is walking up to people who live here. He is talking with them about different things. Then he says to them, “If you were to die today, do you know that you would go to Heaven?” Then he tells them about Jesus. I think that the people of the city are beginning to listen to Paul and then going to tell others what Paul is saying about Jesus. One day Sergius Paulus hears others talk about Paul. He hears them telling what Paul told them. Sergius Paulus thinks, “I would like to hear about this. I'd like to hear it from Paul himself.” Sergius Paulus calls one of his servants to him, “Go find that man Paul for me. Bring him here. I want to hear from him what he is telling the people.” The servant hurries to where Paul is.

The servant runs up to Paul. “Sir, my boss would like to have you come to see him. He wants to hear what you are telling the people.” Oh, how good! To get to see the leader of the people is a great privilege! Wouldn't it be wonderful if the leader would ask Jesus to be his Saviour? If the leader of the people would get saved, then surely more people in the city would be saved, too. Paul hurries to where the leader is. (Add a stick figure representing Paul to the place before the throne.) Paul sees the leader Sergius Paulus. Paul also sees another man. Paul sees Elymas.

Sergius Paulus says to Paul, “Thank you for coming, Paul. Would you please tell me the Word of God? Would you explain to me the same things that you have been telling other people?”

Paul is delighted. “Sir, you must know that one day Jesus came to earth. Jesus is the Son of God. Jesus came to do one thing. He came to make a way for people to be saved. Everybody has sin in his heart. Sin cannot be in Heaven. Jesus came to make a way for people to get to Heaven.” Sergius Paulus is listening very carefully to Paul. Sergius Paulus wants to know how to be saved so that he can go to Heaven, too, when he dies. Paul says, “Jesus died on the cross. Then our sins were put on Him there. Jesus' blood came out of Him on the cross. Through the blood of Jesus anybody who trusts Him can have sins washed away! Jesus did not stay dead. He rose from the dead. He can be your Saviour today.” This is such good news to Sergius Paulus! He is ready to ask Jesus to be his Saviour.

This man who always does what the devil wants him to do interrupts Paul. Elymas says, “Sergius Paulus, we worship a god here. You do not need to listen to Paul. Don’t do what he just said you should do. Do not ask Jesus to be your Saviour.”

Paul turns to Elymas. The Holy Spirit is telling Paul what to say and what to do. “Elymas, you are a wicked man. You are trying to get other people to be wicked, too. You have been trying long enough to turn people away from the right way. You are doing wrong by telling Sergius Paulus not to accept Jesus as his personal Saviour. Because you are so wicked, and you are trying to keep other people from doing right, you are going to be blind for a while.” Immediately while Elymas looks at Paul, he starts to get blind. It’s as if he is seeing Paul through a fog, and then suddenly he sees only blackness. God is causing Elymas to go blind. He cannot see anything.

Elymas turns this way and that way. “Will someone please take me by the hand and lead me?” Elymas is looking for someone to guide him around. He is blind now. He cannot see. He has been trying to turn many people away from Jesus Who is the Light of the world. And now God has made Elymas blind because of his wickedness.

Sergius Paulus watches all that is happening. When he sees Elymas become blind, and when he thinks about what Paul has been telling him, Sergius Paulus says, “I want to be saved, Paul. I know that I am a sinner. I want Jesus to be my Saviour.” Sergius Paulus bows his head, and he asks Jesus to be his Saviour. Sergius Paulus is saved! Elymas is blind because he won’t accept Jesus as his Saviour. When Elymas dies, what will happen to him? Yes, he will have to suffer for his own sins; Jesus can’t wash them away.

Now let’s come back to where we are. We are in the First Baptist Church, and Paul and Sergius Paulus have been in Heaven for many, many years. We’ve heard another good Bible story, now let’s read a wonderful Bible verse. (Open your Bible to John 5:24 and read that verse to the children.) What does this verse John 5:24 teach us? Yes, it teaches us that whoever will listen to God’s Word and believe what God has to say about Jesus will have everlasting life. (Say John 5:24 with the children.)