

JESUS AND A THIRSTY WOMAN



BIBLE STUDY GUIDE SERIES



Christ to the World Ministries

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CHRIST TO THE WORLD MINISTRIES



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Christ to the World Ministries is a non profit ministry dedicated to sharing the gospel of Christ with the world through radio dramas and printed and oral studies based on Scripture. The printed lessons can be studied by one person or by a group.

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Dear Friend,

I am glad that you are interested in studying the Bible. It is God's Word to us and in it, we find the way of salvation and guidance for daily living. The main theme of the Bible is God's love for us and how he expressed that love by Jesus Christ dying on the cross for our sins. Jesus arose from the grave and today He will save every person who puts his or her faith and trust in Him.

This study guide will help you gain a better understanding of the Bible. Open your heart to what God has for you through the study. I have prayed that your study will be life changing.

May God bless you richly,

*Larry Alston
Christ to the World Ministries*



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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to a study about Jesus and a thirsty woman beside a well. The woman came to get water from the well, but instead received living water from the Savior.

This Bible study will help you gain a better understanding of how Jesus loves every person. You will see the love and compassion of Jesus in action. He reached out in tender love and concern and forgave a sinner and gave her eternal life. No person is beyond hope for Jesus to save.

This study guide asks you to write in it. Don't keep it clean and unmarked! When the guide asks you to make a response, don't simply think of your response. Take time to write it down. Doing so helps internalize and reinforce your learning. Write from your heart. Only you will see what you write. As writer, I will work along with you as you complete your study. I will share with you my own responses to most of the questions and activities. This does not mean that my responses are any more correct than yours; it simply means that you will have the benefit of a fellow traveler walking beside you as you move through the study.

Keep your Bible before you as you complete the study. When you are asked to read a Scripture reference, take time to read it.

Ready? Then let's get started.

Begin your study with prayer. Make the following prayer your very own.

Dear God, please open your Word to me as I study. Speak to my heart. Help me obey your will for my life. Help me do what you want me to do. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

THE SCRIPTURE

John4:1-42

1 The Pharisees heard that Jesus was gaining and baptizing more disciples than John, 2 although in fact it was not Jesus who baptized, but his disciples. 3 When the Lord learned of this, he left Judea and went back once more to Galilee.

4 Now he had to go through Samaria. 5 So he came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph. 6 Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about the sixth hour.

7 When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, "Will you give me a drink?" 8 (His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.)

9 The Samaritan woman said to him, "You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?" (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.)

10 Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water."

11 "Sir," the woman said, "you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water? 12 Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his flocks and herds?"

13 Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, 14 but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."

15 The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water so that I won't get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water."

16 He told her, "Go, call your husband and come back."

17 "I have no husband," she replied.

Jesus said to her, "You are right when you say you have no husband. 18 The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true."

19 "Sir," the woman said, "I can see that you are a prophet. Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem."

21 Jesus declared, "Believe me, woman, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. 22 You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. 23 Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. 24 God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth."

25 The woman said, "I know that Messiah" (called Christ) "is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us."

26 Then Jesus declared, "I who speak to you am he."

27 Just then his disciples returned and were surprised to find him talking with a woman. But no one asked, "What do you want?" or "Why are you talking with her?"

28 Then, leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people, 29 "Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Christ?" 30 They came out of the town and made their way toward him.

31 Meanwhile his disciples urged him, "Rabbi, eat something."

32 But he said to them, "I have food to eat that you know nothing about."

33 Then his disciples said to each other, "Could someone have brought him food?"

34 "My food," said Jesus, "is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work. 35 Do you not say, 'Four months more and then the harvest'? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for the harvest. 36 Even now the reaper draws his wages, even now he harvests the crop for eternal life, so that the sower and the reaper may be glad together. 37 Thus the saying 'One sows and another reaps' is true. 38 I sent you to reap what you have not worked for. Others have done the hard work, and you have reaped the benefits of their labor."

39 Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony, "He told me everything I ever did." 40 So when the Samaritans came to him, they urged him to stay with them, and he stayed two days. 41 And because of his words many more became believers.

42 They said to the woman, "We no longer believe just because of what you said; now we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man really is the Savior of the world."

BACKGROUND AND SETTING

The event recorded in John 4:1-42 takes place early in the public ministry of Jesus. John the Baptist baptizes Jesus, and immediately Jesus spends forty days in the wilderness tempted by Satan. He calls his first disciples. He performs his first miracle at a wedding the village of Cana in Galilee.

Jesus and his disciples journey to Jerusalem to observe the Passover feast, a special occasion that celebrated the deliverance of the Jews from Egyptian bondage. While in Jerusalem, Jesus drives the merchants out of the temple courts. He performs miracles while there, most likely healing sick persons. He meets with Nicodemus, a distinguished teacher and leader, and teaches him about the new birth.

Jesus and his disciples conduct a very successful ministry while in Judea, a ministry lasting perhaps several months. A large number of people turn from their sins and commit their lives to Jesus and are baptized by the disciples. John the Baptist also preaches and baptizes in the same general area. The Pharisees learn that Jesus' disciples are baptizing more disciples than John the Baptist. They see this as rivalry and will try to create a controversy.

Jesus leaves Judea to avoid any possibility of conflict. The Greek word the apostle John uses in describing Jesus' departure is not the usual word for "left." He uses a strong word that could mean "to leave alone" or "to abandon or forsake." Sometimes in John's gospel, the writer uses a word that carries with it a deeper meaning. Such could be the case here. Jesus leaves Judea to return north to Galilee. He will return on occasion to Judea and Jerusalem, but from now on most of his ministry will be in Galilee and other parts away from Judea.

JESUS GOES THROUGH SAMARIA

Palestine stretches 120 miles from north to south and about 35 to 50 miles wide. Three regional divisions make up the land in the time of Jesus. Judea lies in the south and Galilee lies in the north. In the middle is an area called Samaria. Jews lived in Judea and Galilee, and Samaritans lived in Samaria.

The normal route from Jerusalem in the south to Galilee in the north passed through Samaria. But a centuries' old bitter hatred between the Jews and Samaritans prompted most Jews to detour around Samaria when traveling from Judea to Galilee. They would travel east and cross the Jordan River, then travel north through a region called Perea, and cross the river into Galilee, thus bypassing Samaria.

The roots of the animosity and bitterness between the Jews and Samaritans went far back to Old Testament times. When Assyria conquered the northern kingdom of Israel in 722 B.C., they carried many of the Jews away into captivity. The conquerors brought in idol worshipping people from other countries to settle in Israel. (See 2 Kings 17:5-6, 24.) Over time, the remnant of Jews left in the land intermarried with these people from other countries and became a mixed race. They were called Samaritans. The Jews despised the Samaritans and had no dealings with them.

When the southern kingdom of Judah was conquered by the Babylonians in 605-587 B.C., many of the Jews from there were carried into captivity, just like their neighbors to the north over a century earlier. These Jews were allowed to return to their land after 70 years in exile, and began to rebuild their temple destroyed by the Babylonians. This endeavor lasted many years. The Samaritans offered to help the Jews rebuild the temple, but the Jews adamantly refused their aid. (See Ezra 4:1-3.) This encounter fanned the smoldering rivalry and brought the dislike and hatred into the open.

The Samaritans built their own temple on Mt. Gerizim in Samaria. Their religion became a mixture of truth and error. (See 2 Kings 17:24-39.) Accepting only the five books of Moses, they rejected the prophets and writings. The Jews under a leader named John Hyrcanus destroyed the Samaritan temple in 128 B.C. The hatred continued unabated in the years that followed. If a Jew did travel through Samaria, the Samaritans would often harass him.

Jesus ignores all the barriers between Jew and Samaritan and heads north through Samaria. A note of divine compulsion sounds in the statement, “*He had to go through Samaria*” (John 4:4). Jesus and his disciples reached the Samaritan village of Sychar one day at the sixth hour. According to the Jewish system of time, the day ran from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. The first hour would be 7:00 a.m., and so on.

Calculate the time of day involved and complete this sentence:

Jesus and his disciples reached Sychar at _____.

Some scholars think John used Roman time which would put the sixth hour at 6:00 p.m. in the evening. But most likely John used the Jewish system of time, so Jesus sat down by Jacob’s well at 12:00 noon.



In the space below, write a sentence or caption that describes the event.

Read John 4:6-7. Check the answer that completes this sentence:

The fact that Jesus grew tired and thirsty indicates that . . .

_____ Jesus experienced life just as everyone else.

_____ Jesus only pretended to be tired and thirsty.

Read Hebrews 4:15. This verse about Jesus says that he experienced life just as everyone else did, with one exception. Complete this sentence:

Jesus did not _____.

Jesus came from heaven to earth and lived a perfect life. He faced problems and temptations like every person. Yet he never sinned.

The disciples leave Jesus alone by Jacob’s well and go into the village, about a half mile away, to buy food. Hebrew history and Jewish memories come alive in this place. Jesus sits

JESUS AND THE WOMAN AT THE WELL

by a well that Jacob dug and where the patriarch and his family drew water.

Jacob, when on his deathbed, gave this land to his son Joseph. (See Gen. 48:21-22.) A few minutes walk from the well would bring a person to Joseph’s tomb. (See Joshua 24:32.) Mt. Gerizim and Mt. Ebal rise nearby, calling to remembrance sacred occasions. Soon after the Israelites entered the promised land, Joshua built an altar on Mt. Ebal, and he gathered the people in front of the two mountains and read the law of Moses to them. (See Joshua 8:30-35.) Here Joshua gave his final address to the people before he died. (See Joshua 24.)

We do not know what fills Jesus' mind as he sits by the well. But soon a woman appears walking down the road to the well, her clay water pot clutched in her arms. Neither do we know what the woman thinks as she approaches and sees a Jew sitting by the well. From what we learn later, she may have been carrying a burden far greater than her water jar. Her life resembled her water pot: both were empty.



In the space below, write a sentence or caption that describes the event.

Women came to get water early in the morning or late in the day. They avoided the middle of the day and the hot sun. The well served as a gathering place, a social place. Here the women exchanged gossip and caught up on the news of the day.

Check the answers you think could complete the following sentence:

The fact that the Samaritan woman comes to get water at noon indicates that perhaps . . .
____ other women shunned her.
____ other women looked down upon her.
____ she lived a lonely life.

All the responses above may have characterized the woman.

Read John 4:7. Complete this sentence:

Jesus asks the woman for _____.

Not only did Jesus break the racial and cultural barrier between Jew and Samaritan, he also broke a gender barrier. He spoke to the woman and asked for a drink. Jewish men did not normally speak to women in public. Rabbis would not even speak to their own wife in public.

William Barclay, a Scottish expositor, writes that “there were even Pharisees who were called ‘The bruised and bleeding Pharisees’ because they shut their eyes when they saw a woman on the street and so walked into walls and houses!” (William Barclay, *The Gospel of John*, Vol. 1, Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1955, pp. 142-143.)

Read John 4:9. Then check the answer that completes this sentence:

When Jesus asks for a drink of water, the woman expresses . . .
____ surprise.
____ anger.

The woman immediately refers to the long-standing bitterness between Jews and Samaritans. She expresses surprise that Jesus would even speak with her, much less ask for a drink. A Jew certainly would not use a drinking vessel belonging to a Samaritan



In the space below, write a sentence or caption that describes the event.

Read John 4:10. Then complete this sentence:

Jesus uses figurative language in referring to the gift of God as living _____.

Rather than speaking of forgiveness and cleansing and salvation, Jesus speaks of living water. This raises the woman's curiosity. She misses the figurative language and understands in a literal way.

Read John 4:11-12. Check the answer that completes this sentence:

These verses indicate that the woman is . . .

- amused.
- indifferent.
- puzzled.
- annoyed.

Jesus makes clear to the puzzled woman that he is not talking about water in the well.

Read John 4:13-14. Then complete this sentence:

Jesus says that the water he gives a person leads to eternal _____.

The woman, her understanding still incomplete, but curious at the mention of eternal life, asks for the water Jesus offers (John 4:15). Then Jesus changes the subject.

Read John 4:16. Then check the answer that completes this sentence:

Jesus asked the woman to go get her husband in order to . . .

- drive her away from the well.
- embarrass her because of her sinful lifestyle.
- help her face her sinful lifestyle.
- condemn her for her sinful lifestyle.

Jesus wanted the woman to come face to face with the central problem in her life: a sinful lifestyle.

Much history lies in the woman's response, "*I have no husband*" (John 4:17)! We do not know the details of her five marriages. Most likely she fell in love and married. Things didn't work out.

A divorce took place.
She married again. Same result.
She married again. Again, same result.
She married again. Same story.
She married the fifth time. Again, there were brokenness and divorce.

The woman gave up. No longer going through the commitment of marriage, she now lives in sin with a man.

The woman no longer tries to hide her sinful lifestyle from Jesus. She knows that he knows. She faces herself, perhaps for the first time. She sees her immorality and emptiness and total inadequacy.

Read John 4:19-20. Then complete this sentence:

The woman asks if the proper place to worship was there in Samaria or in _____
_____.

The woman raises a question about whether to worship God on Mt. Gerizim or in Jerusalem. Most scholars think the woman raises this question as an evasion. Maybe so. Or perhaps the woman makes an honest plea for help. She wants to know where to go and what to do in order to receive the living water of which Jesus speaks. She needs cleansing from her burden of sin and guilt



In the space below, write a sentence or caption that describes the event.

Bible schools, theological seminaries and churches teach many truths about God. But the greatest lesson of all time takes place as Jesus sits on the curb of an old well and teaches a lonely woman whose life reflected disappointment and failure.

LESSONS ABOUT GOD

Jesus does not treat her question as an evasion. He helps her understand some things about God. He makes several important points about worship.

Read John 4:21-24.

He says that the place of worship is irrelevant. Worship is not a matter of geography; it concerns the heart. He asserts that the Samaritans' worship mixes truth with error. He acknowledges that salvation is from the Jews. This means that he came into the world as a Jew. He then tells the woman that true worship comes from the heart in spirit and truth.

Check the answer that completes this sentence:

God seeks persons to worship him who . . .
____ hold a high level of perfection.
____ are sincerely and honestly themselves before him.

Because God is spirit, he seeks persons to worship him in spirit and truth. He wants us to be sincerely and honestly ourselves before him.

The following Scripture illustrates what it means to worship God in spirit and truth, as well as worship that is empty.

Read Luke 18:9-14. Then match the persons on the left with the descriptions in the right-hand column. Write the correct letter in each blank.

- | | |
|----------------------|--|
| a. The Pharisee | _____ 1. was sincerely and honestly himself before God |
| b. The tax collector | _____ 2. thought he held a high level of perfection |
| | _____ 3. thought he was good |
| | _____ 4. knew he was a sinner |
| | _____ 5. God declared this man justified |
| | _____ 6. exalted himself |
| | _____ 7. humbled himself |
| | _____ 8. asked God for mercy |
| | _____ 9. told God how good he was |

Read John 4:25-26. Then complete the following sentences:

The woman believes that the _____ is coming.

Jesus revealed himself to the woman as the _____.

Whereas the Samaritans held many erroneous beliefs, they did believe in the coming of the Messiah. As Jesus looks into the woman's eyes and reveals his identity, she believes. And in that instant the load of sin and gift is lifted. She becomes a believer!

**THE WITNESS
OF THE WOMAN**



In the space below, write a sentence or caption that describes the event.

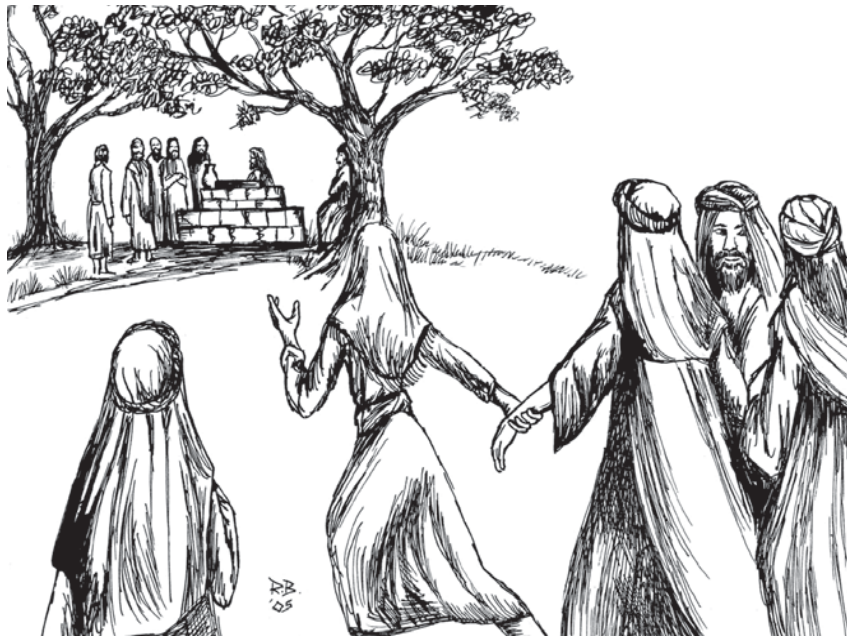
Read John 4:27-30.

The woman leaves her water jar and hurries back to town to invite the villagers to come meet Jesus. Did she leave her water jar because of the arrival of the disciples? Did she leave it so Jesus could get a drink? I think she left it because she was in a hurry to tell the people about Jesus. She fully intended to return to the well. No longer a walking scandal, she tells everyone she meets about Jesus. Set free, she wants everyone to know.

Read John 4:31-38.

A LESSON ABOUT SOWING AND REAPING

Jesus tells the disciples that deep fulfillment lies in obedience to the will of God. He describes the awaiting spiritual harvest. Perhaps just as he said, “*Open your eyes and look at the fields,*” the woman and the crowd of villagers came into view as they made their way toward him. He explains that in God’s plan, some sow, others reap. But all are workers together.



In the space below, write a sentence or caption that describes the event.

Read John 39-42. Check the answer that completes this sentence:

Many of the Samaritans believed in Jesus because of . . .

- a. the witness of the disciples.
- b. the miracles they saw Jesus perform.
- c. the testimony of the woman.

A VILLAGE RESPONDS

The woman’s testimony was important. She stands out as one of the most effective witnesses in the New Testament. God used her to change a town.

Jesus and his disciples remain in the village two days. Many more trust him as Savior.

Some years later, in the days of the early church, the evangelist Philip went to a city in Samaria to tell the people about Jesus. (See Acts 8:4-8.) The people were ready to receive what he said. Many of them trusted Christ as Savior. We have no way of knowing, but it may be that the gospel was received joyfully in Samaria because of the witness of the woman who forgot her water jar.

APPLICATION

Study again the six drawings in this lesson.

Write a summary of this Bible story in your own words.

The woman came to the well to get water because she was thirsty.

Write in your own words what else she was thirsty for without even knowing it.

People are thirsty today. They are thirsty for God, but many don't know it.

Name some ways people try to quench their thirst. Number 1 shows an example.

- | | |
|----------------------|----------|
| 1. _____ money _____ | 4. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 5. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 6. _____ |

The Jews and Samaritans hated each other. Is there a group of people, or a family, or a person, whom you dislike?

- Yes
 No

If you answered "Yes," what do you think God wants you to do to overcome that dislike?

People everywhere acknowledge Jesus as Savior of the world. He is proclaimed as Savior in Asia, Africa, the Middle East, Europe, North and South America, Australia and the islands of the seas. But the very first place he was proclaimed Savior of the world was in Samaria and by the Samaritan people!

Do people in your community or city know that Jesus is the Savior? Write the name of one person you can witness to about Christ.

Our Bible study emphasizes the following truths. Read the statements and reflect on them. Circle one statement that means the most to you.

1. Jesus loves the whole world.
2. Every person is precious in his sight.
3. He loves each of us.
4. He did not come to condemn, but to save.
5. Jesus wants everyone to trust him.
6. No person is beyond hope for Jesus to save.

Read the following questions and reflect on them. (No written response necessary.)

1. Why do you think that, as the disciples went to the village to buy food, it never occurred to them to tell the Samaritans that the Savior of the world was just outside the town by Jacob's well?
2. What does it mean to worship in spirit and in truth?
3. Why do you think the disciples were surprised to find Jesus talking with the woman?
4. What do you think gave the woman boldness to go back and tell the villagers about the Messiah?

Commit the following Bible verses to memory.

"If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him."
(John 7:37-38)

Read the verses aloud over and over until you can say them from memory. Write them on a little card or slip of paper and carry it with you. Repeat the verses every day.

Summarize in a sentence or two the main thing God has taught you in your study.

You can lead your family or a group of neighbors or perhaps a church group in this study on Jesus and a thirsty woman. Doing so will strengthen your own life and God will use you to bless others. The following suggestions will help you lead a small group study.

GUIDE FOR GROUP STUDY

Each person in the group has contributions to make. Each person should take active part in the discussion. No one should dominate the time together.

Begin the study with prayer. Read aloud John 4:1-42.

Using the six drawings as visual aids, tell the story of Jesus and the thirsty woman in your own words. Take your time and show the drawings to the group as you tell the story. Answer any questions group members may ask.

Use the activities under the “Application” section (pp. 16-18) as discussion items with the group.

Lead the group to memorize John 7:37-38. Take turns saying the verses aloud.

Read to the group the following section: “Responding to God.” Pray for yourself the prayer shown at the end of the section. Lead each person to pray it for himself or herself.

RESPONDING TO GOD

Now that you have studied God’s Word, he wants you to respond.

The Bible teaches that you are a sinner. *“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God”* (Rom. 3:23). *“There is no one righteous, not even one”* (Rom. 3:10).

But God loves you and sent his Son, Jesus Christ, to die on the cross for your sin. *“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life”* (John 3:16). *“But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us”* (Rom. 5:8).

You receive Christ as your Savior by turning from your sin and placing your faith and trust in him. *“Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out”* (Acts 3:19). *“Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved”* (Rom. 10:13).

Pray this prayer to God:

“Dear God, I know that I’m a sinner. I believe Jesus died for my sins and rose from the dead and is alive today. I now turn from my sins. I am placing my faith and trust in Jesus alone to be my Savior and to forgive me. I receive Jesus into my life as my Savior and Lord. From this day forward, I will follow Jesus. Thank you, Lord Jesus, for loving me and for coming into my life. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.”

Welcome into God’s family!

Share with others that you have received Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord. Ask for baptism by immersion in a local church as a public expression of your faith. If there is no church near you, start a church by gathering a group of persons in your home and worship together on a regular basis. Read your Bible and pray each day. Tell others what Christ has done for you and what he can do for them.