



## BIBLE RADIO PRODUCTIONS

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BIBLE ADVENTURES SCRIPT:

**A2091 ~ Peter Reports to the Church.**

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*Welcome to Bible Adventures. Help for today. Hope for tomorrow. Jesus is Lord of all.*

Criticism is something we all struggle with from time to time. In fact, if you want to avoid all criticism, it's said you should do nothing, say nothing and be nothing. A writer once wrote: "Against criticism a man can neither protest nor defend himself; he must act in spite of it and then it'll gradually yield to him."

This was the case for the famous preacher Charles Spurgeon. At the beginning of his ministry, he suffered a firestorm of criticism. A steady stream of articles trashed his sermons and leaflets appeared attacking his methods, motives, mannerisms and messages. He was ridiculed in cartoons and even a few questioned his conversion.

At first Spurgeon was deeply hurt by these things. To counter this, his wife put a wall plaque where he would see it first thing every day. From the book of Matthew, Chapter 5, it said: "Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven." The verse did its work and in time, Spurgeon learnt to take criticism in his stride.

When you are criticised, try to remember an important truth from author John Bunyan: "If my life is fruitless, it doesn't matter who praises me, but if my life is fruitful, it doesn't matter who criticises me."

In today's *Bible Adventure*, the Gentile Cornelius and his household are baptised first by the Holy Spirit and then afterwards with water, with converting to the new Christian faith. The news of these events quickly spread back to Jerusalem fast and there was great disapproval among the Jews over what Peter had done.

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DRAMA - [The Bible In Living Sound](#).

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God had just done a great work among the Gentiles. From then on, the Gospel of Christ was available to the whole world, including both the Jews and the Gentiles. The Jewish Christians should have rejoiced at this new development and praised God for it. But in Acts, Chapter 11, the Bible says instead they showed how much they wanted to cling to their man-made rules by criticising Peter in his absence. They thought that any Gentile person should convert to Judaism and first become a Jew before converting to Jesus Christ.

Whenever God does a great work in the church, there are always some Christians who are unhappy or complain. Sometimes they're jealous because they didn't get to take part in the new work. Or they are unhappy because their ideas were maybe not accepted or their plans carried out. They may also be unhappy because they haven't received as much honour and recognition as they think they should have received.

Whatever the reason for their complaint, such people are basically complaining against God, because He is the one behind the work that is happening. And to complain against God is a serious sin. God punished the Israelites for complaining against Him just before they were due to travel to the Promised Land. Be careful not to commit this sin. When God does a work, let us with one mind and heart rejoice and give Him our thanks and praise.

Up until this time of dispute over accepting the Gentiles into the new Christian church, Peter and the other apostles had been respected by both Jewish Christians and the non-Christian Jews. The apostles' mighty works were acknowledged by all. But with this dispute raging, the Jews began to persecute the apostles and Acts, Chapter 12, indicates how they managed to kill James, the son of Zebedee and brother of John.

When Peter arrived back in Jerusalem, he addressed the Jewish Christians and humbly gave them the facts. He didn't try to tell them that God had chosen him to do this so he was more important than they were. Peter went into considerable detail about what happened and the complaining stopped. The Jewish Christians then started praising God for what He'd done.

When we complain against a believing brother, we usually don't know all the facts. Those Jewish Christians only knew that Peter had gone to the house of a Gentile. Why he went they didn't know. Before we criticise our Christian brother for doing something, let us first find out why he did what he did. If we do this, more often than not we'll find there is nothing to criticise.

When we are criticising someone, we are judging things that often we cannot know all the facts. In Matthew, Chapter 7, it says: "Judge not, that you be not judged. For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you."

To understand these verses, we must distinguish between two kinds of judgment: one is the judgment of a man's work and behaviour, while the other is a judgment of the man himself. We must not judge any person's character, motives, thoughts, inner life or soul. Only God can judge this way.

In Luke, Chapter 18, Jesus gave the example of a Pharisee who judged in the wrong way. The Pharisee said: "God, I thank you that I am not like all other men – robbers, evildoers, adulterers – or even like this tax collector." In saying this, the Pharisee was judging the tax collector standing near him. He was saying in effect, "I am good, but he is no good."

This condemning, despising attitude towards others is wrong. This kind of judgment we must never do. People like that Pharisee are always looking for others' faults to put them down. They are happy when someone else stumbles and falls into sin. They like to hear bad things about others. Such a judging attitude is the opposite of love and encouragement.

However, there's a second kind of judgment which is correct and necessary. This is the judgment of other people's outward actions. We must not judge the sinner but we must judge his sin. We must judge other people's work and words. Jesus said: "Watch out for false prophets." So we must be able to recognise false prophets and false teachers by comparing their teaching to the teaching of the Bible.

Jesus said in Matthew, Chapter 7: "Do not give dogs what is sacred." 'Dogs' used here means those who oppose and disobey God. We must be able to recognise God's enemies and we do that by judging their fruit or results of their character and lives. If we judge others in the wrong way, God will judge us. If we condemn others, God will also condemn us but if we forgive others, God will surely forgive us.

If we don't forgive others, it means we haven't received or understood God's forgiveness. From this we see that God treats us as we treat others. In the same way we judge others, God will judge us. God shows us as much mercy as we show to others, and as much as we give to others, God gives to us. In this same chapter, Jesus gives us another reason why we must not judge: We are not worthy to judge and we cannot see clearly enough to judge.

When we see another person making a mistake or sinning, how quick we can be to accuse and condemn them! We suppose that it's our duty to point out the faults of others. But when we do this, Jesus says we are hypocrites. Our own sin makes us spiritually blind and we are unable to be any help to them.

Hypocrites are those who appear righteous outwardly but are inwardly evil. They are people who say one thing but in their hearts they believe another. They show concern for their brother's sin but they're secretly happy that he has sinned.

Instead of judging others, let us judge ourselves. In 1 Corinthians, Chapter 11, we are to examine ourselves so we do not need to be disciplined by God. When we examine ourselves, we can discover our sin and repent of it. As soon as we ask for forgiveness, God immediately forgives us. But when we sin and don't immediately repent of it, God disciplines us to keep us on the right path. Otherwise we might one day be condemned along with unbelievers.

In Matthew, Chapter 7, Verse 12, Jesus spoke about personal relationships with our neighbours. He said: "In everything, do to others what you would have them do to you." Without the love and grace of God poured in our hearts through the Holy Spirit, we cannot follow this golden rule.

*The drama is from The Bible In Living Sound.*

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