

Cindy Cottone

The Bible Corner



Letter to a friend

Theophilus took the letter out and clasped it tightly as if somehow to tell the writer how much Theophilus missed him. The letter had been written to him by his beloved friend Luke. It had been years since Theophilus had last seen him. Luke had given up his practice as a doctor the same day he had met Paul and Barnabas in Antioch. But that was just like Luke: he had always done what was right to matter what the cost to him.

Theophilus remembered how excited Luke had been when he had heard Paul preaching to the people about a new way of life. This way meant following Jesus Christ, the one true God. There were many that day in Antioch who believed in Jesus and chose to become Christians as Luke had done.

A short time later, Luke left Antioch with Paul and Barnabas. Together they traveled to Cyprus and Turkey and to towns all over the region, and taught others about this new life in Jesus.

Luke had not forgotten his friend Theophilus and he wrote to him on a regular basis. Theophilus was an old man — too old to have made such a journey. So instead, he had given Luke money for his trip, and through Luke's vivid accounts

in his letters, Theophilus felt he shared in the journey somehow. This latest letter from Luke moved him deeply. He opened it and began reading it again.

Dear Theo,

The days are long and we are all very tired, but the work that we do makes it all worthwhile. As Paul has said, it is a happy journey that we make by taking each step with faith in Jesus, who truly leads us.

All of my other letters to you have been an account of what Jesus began both to do and teach in His time until the day He was taken up into heaven. As you know, this was all foretold by the prophets many years ago. Just as Jesus promised. He sent the Holy Spirit upon His followers to give them the strength and courage to be His witnesses. All of us who choose to believe in Jesus receive this same gift of the Spirit. And so we must all become His witnesses.

Paul is an inspiration to us all. He always remains strong in his faith no matter what our circumstances. The Jews in all of the cities we have visited remain determined to silence us. They have tried to stone us and imprison us, but through it all Paul encourages us to keep fighting the good fight and trusting in Jesus.

Paul is a patient man, and at times we have needed a great deal of patience. When we visited Lystra, a great miracle occurred for all to see. Paul healed a man who had been crippled from birth. When the people saw this happen, they thought that Paul and Barnabas were the gods Hermes and Zeus come down to earth. The crowd tried to make a sacrifice to them until Paul made them stop, telling them that it was through the power of Jesus that this man had been cured.

We have been encouraged by our visits back to the cities where we first preached about Jesus. Paul appointed elders to continue the work of the Church. These churches have remained strong and continue to grow.

There have been many converts among the Greeks, and these new Christians have been a great help to us in our work. When we reached the city of Athens, Paul was shocked at the sight of so many idols. On every street corner, a statue had been erected to honor one of these false gods. One day Paul saw an altar that had been built with the inscription, "To the Unknown God." Paul told the people of Athens that the "Unknown God" that they worship is actually the one true God who made the world and everything in it. We have but to seek to know Jesus, and He will find us. Some of those who heard Paul speak that day chose to join us.

These new Christians in every city have opened their hearts to us. In the true spirit of love, they have shared

their food and anything else that we have needed.

I must close for now, dear Theo. I'll write again soon. Please pray for our continued success in spreading the message of Jesus.

I am keeping a journal of all of our teachings and travels. Someday, I will gather them all into a book of sorts so that all may know that we were faithful witnesses for Jesus. I promise to dedicate this work to you, Theo, for all of your help to me. My book will allow others to know, as you do, of the absolute truth of those things in which you have been instructed.

Your friend in Christ,
Luke

Theophilus carefully put the letter away with all of the others from Luke. Someday he would see Luke again and he would tell him how through this writing, he, too had come to believe in Jesus.

For Discussion:

1. What gift did Jesus promise to send to all of His followers?
2. Have you ever written to a friend to share important things about your life? Luke's writing to his friend, Theophilus, about Jesus' life and the early Church is the gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles in the New Testament.
3. Who did Paul tell the Greeks the "Known God" was?

For Further Reading:

Luke did dedicate his Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles to Theophilus. This dedication is contained at the beginning of both of these works.

Nazareth to host workshops for adults considering college

Free workshops for adults considering a return to college will be offered Thursday, June 12, from 7 to 9:30 p.m. in the Otto A. Skults Community Center at Nazareth College.

A presentation, "The Decision Making Process in Career Change," will begin the program. Following that program will be workshops — "Financing Your Degree,"

"Study and Time Management," "Impact on Self and Family: Relationships and Support" and "How Adults Learn (And How They Can Do It Better)."

A panel of adult students from Rochester area colleges will take part. Representatives from area colleges will be available to answer questions.

The workshop is sponsored by the Conti-

nuing Education Committee of Rochester Area Colleges and the participating colleges: SUNY College at Brockport, Empire State College-SUNY, Community College of the Finger Lakes, Monroe Community College, Nazareth College, the University of Rochester, Rochester Institute of Technology and St. John Fisher.

There is no charge for the workshop, but reservations are suggested. Call (716)586-2525, ext. 400 for reservations.

'Beyond the Pew' program

All working persons are invited to the On the Way Home program offered at the Cenacle Center for Spiritual Renewal, 693 East Ave., Rochester, on Monday, June 16.

Reservations are necessary. The offering is \$5. For information or reservations, contact the Cenacle at (716)271-8755. Latecomers are welcome.

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