

HOPE OF RESTORATION: Restored Anew in Jesus (Ruth 1:22; Jeremiah 30:17)

Object Lesson:

Fill a small bowl with 1 cup of vinegar and add 1 teaspoon of salt. Stir until the salt dissolves in the liquid. Pass around some old, dirty pennies or coins for the children to inspect. Ask the children:

- Do the pennies always look that way?
- How did they look when they were new?

Say: “So children, let’s see if we can restore these pennies to look like they did before.”

Invite the children to drop the pennies into the bowl of vinegar and salt solution. Let them soak for 1-2 minutes. Then dry them with a towel. Let them examine the pennies to see if they were “restored.”

What does it mean to be restored? -- The action of returning something to its former condition.

Children Need Restoration

Johnny’s old bicycle can be restored to its original usefulness when he puts on new tires, new chains, & new brakes. He fixed all the parts and painted it. It is new again! It is useful again!

Kitiwaroon’s world was shattered when both his parents were killed in the earthquake. Oh, how his heart hurt! He was left alone with no one to care for him. He had to live in an orphanage. War in Sudan separated Aisha and her brothers from their parents. Poor Arun was forced to work to earn for his family.

Do you remember Ruth in the Bible who had such similar heartbreak too? Ruth was a Moabite who did not believe in God, but she married Chilion from Bethlehem. They were happy together, but soon her husband died. In those days, being a widow was a difficult life. There was no one to support her financially, care for her, and protect her.

Then Ruth made one big decision for her life! She decided to go back to Bethlehem with her mother-in-law, Naomi. Ruth 1:22 tells us, “So Naomi returned from Moab accompanied by Ruth the Moabite, her daughter-in-law, arriving in Bethlehem as the barley harvest was beginning.”

Ruth decided to accept Naomi’s God, worship Him, and trust her life in God’s hand. Wow! Trusting in Israel’s God was not something she had done before. However, Ruth believed that God could heal her broken heart and restore her to a better life. Indeed, God did restore her! He provided Ruth with a good husband, Boaz and from her lineage would be born the Messiah of the world!

Yes, if we trust God, he not only heals our hurt and pain. He not only comforts us and leads us. He gives us even more than what we had before. He will restore, strengthen, and confirm us physically, financially, and spiritually. Look at Job! He lost all his children, property, and animals, but God restored him double the amount he had before the trials and sufferings.

So, boys and girls, remember these three things:

1. God is for You. Psalms 56:8-9 (NJKV) says, “You number my wanderings; Put my tears into Your bottle; Are they not in Your book? When I cry out to You, then my enemies will turn back; This I know, because God is for me.”

Can you believe that God cares for you so much that He keeps track of your tears, sees your pain and He soothes it. I find comfort in the song that says, “There is no storm that’s too dark, God cannot calm it; There is no pain that’s too deep God cannot soothe it.” Yes, God cares for you! No matter what your life looks like today or tomorrow, His love does not change!

2. Your Life Matters. 1 Peter 2:9 (NIV) says, “But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s special possession, that you may declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light.”

Boys and girls, you are chosen! Your life matters to God! He is calling you out of darkness into the wonderful light. He invites you to accept His Son, Jesus as your Forever Friend.

3. God brings Restoration. 1 Peter 5:10 (NIV) reminds us, “And the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast.” Jeremiah 30:17 promises, “But I will restore you to health and heal your wounds, declares the Lord.”

God wants to help us with what we need. Sometimes that means He helps us feel calm and happy inside, makes us feel better if we're sick, helps us make new friends, or brings us love from new families who adopt us. God can also fix things we don't even know we need right now, but we'll understand later. Even if things feel really tough and we can't see how anything good can come from it, we can always trust that God cares about us. We can believe in His incredible ability to make things better and rely on His help to fix what's broken.

That is a promise! All you have to do to receive this restoration is to *choose* Jesus. Make Him your special Friend and He will give you strength, to forgive, to love and care again.

For those of you who are fortunate to have a warm bed at night, parents who love you, and a happy life, remember to reach out to those who need those comforting arms. You can be God's **Agent** of restoration to care, be kind, and share what you have with those less fortunate.