

JESUS IS ALWAYS WITH US

LESSON 196 → John 15:1-9; Ephesians 3:14-21

The canned food drive had given Ariana a chance to tell Vicki about answered prayers.



“Whew, what a day!” Ariana flopped down on the family room floor and closed her eyes.

“Did you get many cans for the canned food drive?” Mrs. Torres asked as she looked at her daughter with concern. “You look pretty tired.” Ariana opened her eyes. “Yeah, I’m tired—but it was a great day!” We did collect a lot of cans,

and people gave us other foods, too, like boxes of cereal and bags of rice.” Ariana got up slowly and walked to the kitchen sink to wash her hands. As she was drying them she turned to her mother who was busily making a potato salad. “Mom, you know that new girl, Vicki, who just moved in on the next block? Well, she was my partner this afternoon. We had a chance to talk while we were walking from house to house.



JESUS IS ALWAYS WITH ME!

Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. — Matthew 28:20

“She doesn’t think there is a God. She thinks that our lives are run by chance, and even if there is a God, He’s not interested in us as individuals. So there’s really no use to pray! At least, that’s what she said when we started talking.” Ariana stopped and grinned at her mother. “I think she may have changed her mind though. I’m glad you’ve told us kids about prayers that you know God has answered. It’s helped me understand how He has taken care of our family since Dad died. I had a lot to tell her.

“While we were collecting cans, Vicki started telling me what she thought of God. She said Jesus was just a good teacher and that He was human like the rest of us. I guess her father doesn’t believe there is a God. She says he’s an atheist, and she goes along with what he says. At first I just let her talk. When the truck was full enough, the driver had to take the cans to school. The other kids went along to unload while Vicki and I stayed to sort and stack the rest. We had some time to talk before the truck came back.

“Pretty soon I guess she realized I wasn’t saying much, so she asked, ‘What’s the matter? Don’t you have any opinion about things like this?’ I said, ‘Sure, but I didn’t want to interrupt you. I’d like to tell you what Jesus has done for our family.’ She kind of sputtered and I thought she was going to get mad. But she just said, ‘Okay, I guess I’ve been talking a lot. It’s your turn. What has Jesus done for your family?’

“So I started by telling her about the time our family moved from California to Oregon when we were still little kids. Dad went on to his new job and we had to stay behind for a while until the house was sold. I told her how you cried after Dad left, and said you didn’t know how we’d ever make it, because Dad’s salary was only going to be half what he had been making. Then I told her how God gave you those Scriptures.”

Mrs. Torres repeated the words God had given her. “My God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus, and He ‘is able to do exceeding abundantly above

all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us.”

“Vicki started to laugh when I said that, Mom. Then I told her how Dad’s new company promoted him twice in three months, and how our house was sold by that time. When I told her that his beginning salary had been almost doubled, she didn’t know what to say. Finally she said, ‘Well, that’s just coincidence. I thought you said your father was dead. How do you fit that into God’s taking care of your family?’

“I didn’t really know how to answer her, so I said, ‘I don’t understand why my father died, but I do understand how God has taken care of our family since he’s been gone.’ I told her about the time the taxes were due and the car needed a new transmission, and we didn’t have the money. Then, after we’d prayed, someone put exactly that much money into the tithe box with our name on it, and a little note that said, ‘Jesus loves you and we do too.’ Vicki couldn’t believe anybody would give away all that money and not tell anyone they did it.

“Just then, the truck returned, and we had to work really hard to get the rest of the cans back to school on time. But we talked again while we walked home. That’s when I told her about your praying for a plant to hang on the front porch. She started to giggle, and said, ‘You really think God would hear that kind of prayer?’ So I told her how the kids in our choir at church, not knowing about your prayer, had put their money together and bought a big plant and left it on our front porch when we weren’t home. We were coming up to the house right then, so I pointed to the hanging basket on the front porch, and said, ‘That’s the plant.’

“You should have seen her eyes! At first she just stood there and looked. But before she started for home she said, ‘Ariana, you’re the first person I’ve met who could show me an answer to prayer. I’d like to talk to you again sometime.’ Mom, I’m so glad I could tell her that God is really alive and that He takes care of us all the time.”

IS HE WITH YOU?

Knowing that Jesus is with you all the time is a real comfort. Your key verse is a promise that He is with those who love Him. Write the key verse on the lines provided below. Then try to find it in the maze. The letters of the first three words have been circled for you. Just follow the verse through and mark it the same way, circling the letters of each word.

