



## 1. Robert comes to stay



Very early on Sunday morning the telephone rang. Paul and Sarah MacDonald, who were twins, heard their father go down the stairs to answer it. They guessed by the way he was talking that there was some bad news.

‘Yes,’ they heard him say, ‘we’ll be glad for Robert to stay here. Why don’t you let him come after church today? Then you can go off early tomorrow morning because you have a





## Sarah and Paul



long journey ahead of you. ... Yes. That will be fine.'

Paul and Sarah weren't sure who their father was speaking to. They only knew one Robert and he was the four-year-old son of their parents'

friends at church. As their father came up the stairs they couldn't hide their curiosity.

'Dad, we heard you talking about Robert. Was it Robert Tyson?'

'Yes,' answered Dad. 'Mr and Mrs Tyson have just received bad news. Mr Tyson's elderly mother died suddenly during the night. Mr Tyson feels that he and his wife must go south to where she lived as soon as possible. He needs to help his father do all the things that have to be done. The Tysons were wondering whether Robert could stay with us for a few days - it might be as long as a week. Of course, I said yes. Robert's coming to us after church. I hope he won't be too home-sick.'

8





## Have a Visitor

'We'll do our best to help him feel at home,' promised Sarah. 'It will be fun having someone younger to play with. He can play with our toys when we're at school, can't he, Paul?'

'Yes,' nodded Paul. 'I'll get out some of my old toys that I played with when I was younger.'

'Have you remembered that it's Harvest Thanksgiving at church this morning?' Mum asked Dad. 'I took our gifts down to church yesterday afternoon. The children will take theirs with them this morning.'

'I'd forgotten that,' Dad said. 'I always find it interesting to see all the different gifts of food and flowers people bring. Have you children got your gifts ready to give to your teacher at church?'

'I've decided to take apples, oranges and grapes and I've tied a blue ribbon on the basket, Dad,' explained Sarah.





## Sarah and Paul

'Paul's taking tins - baked beans, of course, his favourites. He doesn't want a ribbon on his.'

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They could tell it was harvest-time as soon as they went through the church doors.

'What a lovely smell,' exclaimed Sarah.





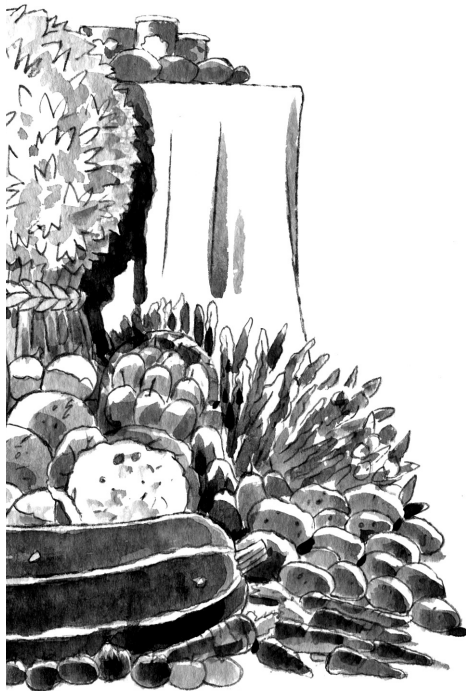
## Have a Visitor

*'Doesn't it look good?' added Paul.*

*There were flowers and vegetables, fruit and tins of all sorts of things. It looked like the inside of a supermarket!*

*'Look at that large loaf of bread in the middle, Paul. Isn't it huge?'*

*'Look at that pile of potatoes, too, Sarah.'*





## Sarah and Paul

Mr and Mrs Tyson and Robert came and sat next to the MacDonalds and together they nearly filled the whole row. The children enjoyed singing the harvest hymns, especially their favourite one, "We plough the fields and scatter the good seed on the land." Robert couldn't read yet, but he knew the chorus, "All good gifts around us," and he joined in very loudly when the time came to sing it.

\* \* \*

During the afternoon Robert didn't seem unhappy about leaving his parents. He liked being with Paul and Sarah, as they played with him and read him stories.

After supper Mum explained to Robert about his bedtime. 'I think you must go up to bed now, Robert, as it's eight o'clock, and your mummy said that was your usual time.'



'Will the twins come to bed, too?' Robert asked, a hint of tears coming to his eyes.

'No, not just yet. They'll go a little later because they're older.'





## Have a Visitor

'I don't want to go to bed on my own,' complained Robert, sounding very tearful.



'I'll tell you what,' said Sarah. 'Mum will read you a Bible story before you go to bed and Paul and I will come up with you and listen to it. How would that be?'

Robert nodded his head in approval.

'Get undressed first then, Robert, and as soon as you're washed and in your pyjamas, we'll have the story in your bedroom.'

The story Robert chose was the feeding of the five thousand with the little boy's lunch of loaves and fishes. When Mum had finished reading it she said, 'That was a good story to choose, Robert, on Harvest Sunday! Making the loaves and fishes go such a long way is what we call a miracle. It was easy for the Lord Jesus to do because He's God, and He made everything.'

'Yes,' added Sarah, 'in class this morning we were told that the Lord Jesus made all the food and flowers we could see in church.'



## Sarah and Paul

'Did Jesus make everything?' asked Robert.

'Yes, everything. All the wonderful gifts we see at harvest were made by the Lord Jesus Christ.'

Mum remembered Robert's singing in the morning service. 'Let's sing "All Good Gifts," shall we?'







## Have a Visitor

A big smile came on Robert's face as they sang together -

'All good gifts around us

Are sent from heaven above;

Then thank the Lord, O thank the Lord,

For all His love.'

'I like singing,' Robert said. 'Can we sing again?'





## Sarah and Paul



‘Yes, of course. We’ll sing again in a minute.’

Robert thought for a moment, and then said, ‘What does Jesus look like?’

‘I don’t really know,’ answered Mum.

‘I do,’ explained Robert. ‘I’ve seen a picture of Him at church.’

‘That’s only a drawing, silly,’ interrupted Paul.

‘No, he isn’t silly, Paul,’ Mum corrected. ‘Robert is quite right. Many artists have drawn pictures of the Lord Jesus and you can see them in storybooks. But you must remember that the artists are only guessing what Jesus looks like.’

‘I’m sure He looks very kind,’ added Sarah. ‘The sort of person I’d like to have as a friend.’

‘You’re right, Sarah,’ agreed her mother.



## Have a Visitor

'The Bible doesn't give us a photograph of Jesus. Instead it does something much better - it tells us the kind of person the Lord Jesus is. It tells us He is perfect, loving and kind - the best Friend a boy or girl can have. Who's your best friend at school, Paul?'

Paul thought for a moment. 'I suppose Philip or Chris. Yes, I'd put Chris first.'

'Why is he your very best friend?'

'He's such a good friend. He shares things; he never lets you down; and he likes doing the same things I do.'

'It isn't because of what he looks like then that he's your best friend?'

'Of course not!' exclaimed Paul. 'That doesn't matter.'

'Then you can see why the Bible doesn't tell us what the Lord Jesus looks like,' continued Mum, 'but instead tells us the kind of person He is. He's the most wonderful Person who has ever lived on this





## Sarah and Paul

earth. He was always kind. He never let anyone down. He willingly died to save His friends.'

'We'll see Jesus one day though, won't we? When He comes again? The Bible says so.'

'Yes, Sarah,' agreed her mother, 'and that will be a wonderful day.'

Mum looked at Robert and noticed how tired he was looking. 'Into bed, sleepy-head!'

When Robert had climbed into bed, he looked a little unhappy. Sarah and Paul guessed that he was missing his own home and parents. Mrs MacDonald helped Robert to say his prayers. They asked the Lord Jesus to keep Robert safe until the morning and to bless his parents as they helped his grandad.

Mum was just about to switch off the light when Robert asked, 'If we close the curtains, Jesus can't see me, can He?'

She smiled. 'Yes, He can, Robert. The Lord Jesus is God and He sees and knows everything. Nothing happens anywhere without His knowing all about it. Because of this He's able to keep us safe. He sees me and He sees Paul and Sarah, and He sees your mummy and daddy too. And He watches over us all. He

18





## Have a Visitor

never wants us to be lonely. He always stays with us.'

'Even when we've been naughty and disobedient,' added Sarah.



'Yes and no, Sarah. The Lord Jesus doesn't leave us, but we don't please Him when we sin. If we're truly sorry He will forgive us, and help us to do better. The Lord Jesus is the best Friend you can have. He will always stay close to you.'

'I know a chorus about that,' Robert said.

'So do we,' Paul and Sarah chimed in together.

'All right,' suggested Mum, 'let's sing it before we say good night.'

'Jesus is with me all through the night,  
Stays close beside me all through the night.

So I sleep safely till morning light.

Jesus is with me all through the night.'

'Good night, Robert. I'll buy you a Bible



## Sarah and Paul

colouring book tomorrow morning. You can colour it while the twins are at school, and we'll talk about the pictures with the twins at bedtime.'

'Good night,' said the twins.

'Good night,' said a little voice under the covers and in no time Robert was asleep.

