



William Booth
(1829 – 1912)

A Man of OBEDIENCE

William's Story

London's Great Exhibition of 1851 drew people from all over the world. Visitors were amazed by new inventions, many of which had brought better jobs and living conditions to everyone in England — except the very poorest people. Their lives seemed to get steadily worse. Some gave up trying to live righteously and began abusing alcohol. As a result, many fell into immoral living.

William Booth, a preacher in England, had given his life to Christ as a teenager. He wanted to obey God, no matter where God called him. As it turned out, God called William and his wife, Catherine, to the East End of London where people lived in great poverty with little hope.

William and Catherine began preaching to the poor people in the East End, setting up soup kitchens to serve daily meals and provide other services to help the people live more hopeful lives. But their obedience was not always easy. Not everyone was happy about the help. Bar owners lost money when people stopped getting drunk and started following the Lord.

But sometimes help came from unexpected places. Peter Monk, an Irish prizefighter, attended a meeting where William was preaching. Even though Peter enjoyed fighting and was not a Christian, he didn't like it when a rowdy crowd began to mock William and shout at him. He firmly calmed the crowd and soon became a follower of Jesus. People who didn't like William's ministry continued to threaten and oppose him and his helpers.

After one year, the Booths had 60 new Christians helping them reach people for Christ. They called their ministry "The Christian Mission." William believed they were fighting a war against sin. They began to use military terms, referring to William as "General." After a time, they changed their name to the Salvation Army, wore uniforms, and created their own flag, symbols, and music. Their "sword" was the Bible, and their magazine was called *The War Cry*.

Today, the ministry the Booths started helps people in more than 120 countries, sharing Jesus' love while providing health care, education, and disaster relief.

Key Bible Verse:

"Observe the commands of the Lord your God, walking in obedience to him and revering him."
(Deuteronomy 8:6, NIV)

Key Word: OBEDIENCE

Obedience: The willingness to serve or please another, or to carry out their commands or instructions; dutiful



William and Catherine's Childhood

William had learned something about poverty while he was growing up. He had to quit school and go to work at age 13 to help support his family. Catherine did not have an easy childhood either. A spinal condition kept her in bed for months at a time. But she was able to read the entire Bible eight times before she was 12!



Red Kettles

In 1891, a Salvation Army officer in San Francisco noticed that many poor people were hungry, and he decided to provide a Christmas dinner for as many needy people as he could. He placed a kettle in a public place to collect money for his project. Every year at Christmastime, the Salvation Army still collects donations in red kettles to help them meet the needs of the poor.



Salvation Army Bands

Salvation Army bands helped calm disruptive crowds. The musicians borrowed tunes from popular songs of the day and added Christian words. At first, William was not sure that it was a good idea to allow the bands at Salvation Army events. But he grew to appreciate them. Today Salvation Army music programs teach children to sing and play instruments to glorify God and bless those who hear them.



Last Respects

The Booths became very well known for their work. Catherine, the "Mother of the Salvation Army," died in 1890, and more than 30,000 people attended her funeral. When William died in 1912, the Salvation Army announced, "The general has laid down his sword." Tens of thousands also attended his funeral, and he was mourned by monarchs, heads of state, wealthy and poor alike.



What William Said



As a teenager, William Booth surrendered his life and future in obedience to God. Unscramble the words in the sentence below to see what he said.

ODG HSLLA EVHA LLA HTREE SI FO IWLLIAM OTBOH.

After William became a preacher, God led him to minister among the poorest of the poor of London. Unscramble the words in the following sentence to find out what William said about preaching to the poor.

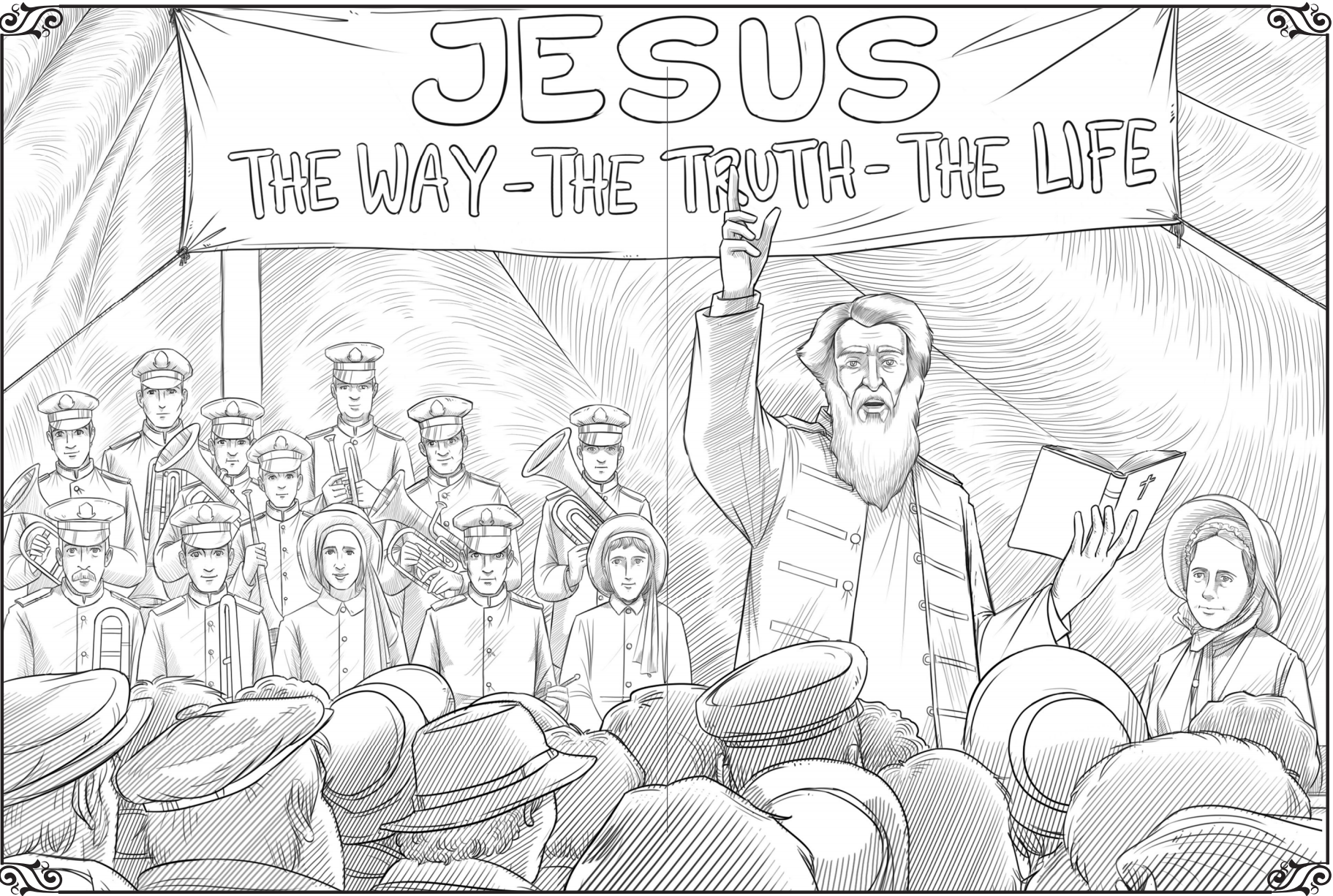
**UOY ONACNT WMRA ETH RASTHE FO OPPEEL IHWT GDO'S
ELVO FI YHTE HEAV NA PMEYT STOMAHC NAD DOLC TFEE.**

Read James 2:15–16. How do the verses agree with what William said?

William encouraged others to follow God's will for their lives. Unscramble the words in the following sentence to find out what he told Christians about how to discover the will of God.

**LEEVI BE WHTI LAL RYOU MIHGT LAL EH AHS IASD NI HSI
YHOL DROW.**

Answers are in the Answer Key.



William Booth preaching



National Donut Day is celebrated on the first Friday in June every year. Some donut shops offer free donuts in honor of the day.

But donut companies didn't start the event. The Salvation Army created the celebration in 1938. The first Donut Day raised funds for poor people. Since then, the Salvation Army has observed the day in honor of Salvation Army women who made donuts for American soldiers in France during World War I. Salvation Army workers again served donuts to soldiers during World War II and the Vietnam War.

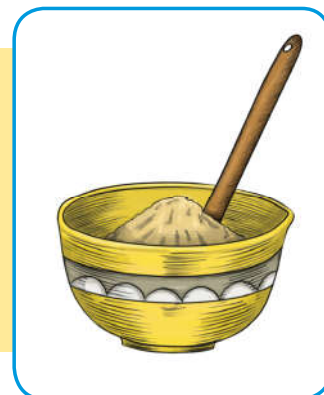
Today, following the example of William Booth, the Salvation Army serves millions of free meals — including donuts — every year to people in need.

Do you know someone you could encourage with a plate of donuts? You don't have to wait for National Donut Day! Try the recipe below if you want to share homemade donuts with someone who needs encouragement.

Donut Recipe

Ingredients:

1. Package of large canned biscuits
2. Peanut or vegetable oil
3. Icing or cinnamon sugar (optional)



- Use a 1-inch round cookie cutter or bottle lid to cut a hole in the center of each biscuit. Keep the dough you removed from the biscuit.
- In a large pot or deep fryer, heat about 2 inches of oil over medium to medium-high heat (about 350 degrees). (Make sure a grownup helps.)
- Fry the donuts and holes until they are golden brown on one side, then turn them over and cook the other side.
- Drain on paper towels. If desired, spread icing on them, or coat them in cinnamon sugar.
- Deliver to someone with a note or word of encouragement!



What Do You Think?



William Booth wanted to help Christian parents of his day raise children to serve the Lord obediently. Below are some of his instructions for parents.

God's Love

"The goodness and love of God should be explained to children very early in life ... that God is not only willing but anxious, for Christ's sake, to pardon their sins, and become at once, as a natural consequence, their Father and Friend." Do you agree that it is a good idea to teach these truths to very young children? Why or why not?

Keeping Silent

"Compel children to keep silence in the presence of grown-up people. Nevertheless, it will be good to give them every opportunity in their own play-time, or somewhere in the absence of strangers, to express their impressions about what they see and hear and learn. At such times converse with them freely; answer their questions." What do you think of William's rule?

Friends

"Prevent [children] from having association with their schoolmates. Let them mix as little as possible with them after school hours, going to and coming from the school alone, and keeping as much as possible by themselves in the playground." Do you agree with William's rules about classmates from school?

Putting Others First

"Teach your children to deny themselves in order to promote the happiness of others. Train them to give the preference to brothers and sisters in things that are most desirable. If there is a better seat at the table ... or in [church]; if there is nicer food, or a more desirable toy — teach them to let their brothers and sisters or friends have it." What do you think of William's suggestion about sharing the best things with others? Can you find any verses from the Bible to support William's suggestion?



William Booth saw horrifying sights when he visited London's East End. Homeless people slept outside, many families were sick and had no way to go to a doctor, and most were hungry and cold. William noted that horses in England got better care than the people of the East End.

Temptations to sin were everywhere. One visitor said that bars had little stair steps at the counter so even small children could reach the alcohol.

It seemed to William that no one outside the East End was paying attention to the people and problems there. He and Catherine championed (to support the cause of, or defend) those who could not speak up for themselves. They spent the rest of their lives telling the needy people about Jesus and speaking and writing to others on their behalf.

- Are there situations in which you could speak up for others?
- Are there times when it is right to be silent and not speak up?
- If you are with a group of kids making fun of someone who is not present, is that a good time to speak up for the person who is not there?
- Has someone ever spoken up for you?
- Have you ever heard someone speak out against Christians who speak up for Christian beliefs? What is the best way to speak up for the truth and for other Christians?

"God loves with a great love the man whose heart is bursting with a passion for the impossible."

— William Booth

Sometimes it's not easy to speak up. Others may reject your efforts in the same way people opposed the Booths. You can receive courage and strength to obey from God, the Bible, your parents, and other Christians who are willing to join you in speaking up.

"Open your mouth [speak up] for the mute [those who cannot speak for themselves]; for the rights of all those who are destitute."

(Proverbs 31:8)