



Appearing to Disciples

Luke 24:36-49

Algie tightened the last bolt on his plane's engine and stood up. He stretched out his arms and yawned. He had been working all day to fix his plane and was finally finished. He picked up his wrench and carefully placed it next to the hammer in his toolbox.

Through the large, open hangar doors, he could see the sun, still bright and very warm, just sinking beneath to the tops of the trees. The sky was glowing a golden red as a sign that the day was ending and the night was soon to come.

Algie stepped through the doors to get a better view of the sunset and breathed in the fresh air. Out of the corner of his eye, he saw Pepper flying towards him down the length of the runway.

"Tally ho, Pepper!" Algie called out and waved as the pelican came near.

Pepper turned in mid-flight and landed next to Algie. "Hi Algie! I was practicing my plane chasing skills for our first Bonzai Family Rescue Patrol mission next week. I want to make sure I can keep up with your family's planes since I will be following you. That was my landing practice. What do you think?"

"Great job, ol' Pepper! You will do just fine!" Algie paused. "Wait! What did you say? We are leaving on our first rescue mission trip next week?"

Pepper flapped his wings with excitement. "Yup! We're going to Uganda, a wonderful country in central Africa. We're going to rescue some sick children by flying in some doctors and medicine. And while I'm there I think I'll practice my Kung Fu skills on a rhinoceros!" He demonstrated a few of his favorite karate kicks for Algie to see.

Algie shook his head. "I don't know if that's such a good idea," he said hesitantly.

Pepper flew up into the air and demonstrated his best aerial kick. "Why not?! You don't think I can handle it? I'm not afraid of any old rhino! I am the Kung Fu master! I'm so tough, I make Chuck Norris look like Winnie the Pooh!"

"I meant I don't think it's a good idea for me to go to Uganda," Algie said, leaning over to pick a blade grass. He nervously rolled and unrolled the grass blade between his fingers.

Pepper stopped kicking and punching imaginary targets in mid-air and settled on a nearby tree stump. "What? Why not? Are you having doubts?"

"Well..." Algie began. "It's just that I would miss the island and the beach and I'm not sure God really wants me to go...so, I'm just going to stay here until God shows me a miracle!"

"Are you kidding me?" Pepper squealed. He took a deep breath and said quickly, "Haven't you noticed all of the miracles we've been reading in the last 5 months?? Jesus changed water to wine, He filled the nets, He calmed the storm, He healed Jairus' daughter, He fed 5,000 people. He healed the centurion's servant, the paralyzed friend, the sick woman, the deaf and mute man, and the ten lepers. He banished the demon, saved the officer's son, walked on water, gave sight to a blind man, raised Lazarus from the dead, died on the cross, was raised from the dead, appeared to His disciples, helped Thomas to believe, went up to His throne in Heaven, and He'd better catch me now, 'cause I'm about to pass out from saying all of that in one breath! Huh!" He bent over, panting hard as he tried to catch his breath.

Algie ignored the actions of the silly bird. And, he wasn't convinced by Pepper's speech. "Well, those were all important miracles but, unless the Lord talks to me personally, I am telling you I'm not going!"

Pepper, now wheezing breathlessly, squeaked out, "You just stay right here and do your thing, and I'm going to go tell your brother you've lost your mind! Oh Chauncey!" he called weakly as he waddled toward the hangar where Algie's brother was sitting in his office.

"Well, go ahead, call Chauncey!" Algie yelled after him. "Once a Bonzai makes up his mind, there's nothing to it!"

Chauncey, having heard all of the commotion, walked out of the hangar doors and looked at his angry brother and the wheezing bird. "You can say that again. What is going on out here?" he asked.

Pepper pointed to Algie and tattled, "He says he's not going on the mission."

"Once a Bonzai makes up his mind, there's nothing to it!" Algie stated matter-of-factly, crossing his arms to show he was serious.

"Well, in that case, I am here to help you change your mind!" Chauncey said with a big smile.

"Well, you can talk all you want but I am not going to budge!" Algie assured him.

"Oh, dear brother, I can make you budge. 800 Pound Gorilla will pick you up and put you in my plane if he as to. You're going on this mission."

"You wouldn't!" Algie dared with a glare at his brother.

"Watch me!" Chauncey answered playfully. Then he paused for a moment and said calmly, "I will do that if I have to, but first I wish you'd open your mind a bit, Algie. I believe God wants us to go on this mission."

"How do you know?" Algie challenged as he continued to glare at his brother.

"Because, I read it in the Bible," his brother replied.

"Well, I read the Bible, too!" Algie replied.

Chauncey put a hand on Algie's shoulder. "Well, let's read it together and ask God to help us understand."

Algie relaxed and agreed. He was always interested in reading God's Word. But he couldn't believe that God would tell him to go on the trip just by him reading the Bible. "Here's my Bible," he said as he pulled it from his pocket and handed it to Chauncey.

Chauncey took the Bible and flipped through the pages. Finding the right one, he announced, "Ah, here we are. This is another time when Jesus appeared to His disciples after His death."

Algie thought about what that must have like for the disciples to see Jesus alive after seeing Him die. "Were they frightened?" he asked.

Chauncey nodded. "They were. They thought He was a ghost. Then Jesus showed them His hands and feet to prove He had risen."

"Ah, then they believed Him?!" Algie wondered.

"No," Chauncey replied. "They still didn't believe. Then Jesus asked for something to eat. They gave Him a piece of fish and He ate it!"

"Well that's proof! Only a man with a body could eat food. So, then did they believe Him?"

"Yes. They believed it was Jesus, and in Luke 24:45-47 the Bible says: 'Then He opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. He told them, 'this is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.'"

Algie suddenly realized what Chauncey was trying to help him understand. "God's forgiveness has to be shared with all nations!"

"That's right, Algie! You get it!" Chauncey congratulated him.

"But how is the world going to hear about the miraculous love of Jesus unless we tell them?" Algie asked.

Chauncey slapped his brother on the back. "That's correct, good brother!"

"Chauncey! I have been waiting for a sign from God, but He already told us to spread His word to all nations!"

"You got it, Algie! God has opened your mind to understand the Scriptures!"

Algie smiled, "Well, we know that 'It's incredible but true, what the God of Wonders can do!' He can even help me understand what He wants me to do!"

"So right! Now let's get packing. Mumsy has put together this supply list to get ready for the trip." Chauncey reached into his pocket and pulled out the sheet of notebook paper filled with Mumsy's writing. "Ok, let's see, we need 50 pounds of beef jerky for Gorilla, 20 cans of sardines for Pepper, 100 Bibles to hand out..." Algie and Pepper looked over Chauncey's shoulder as he continued to read out the list. Algie felt relieved that God had helped him understand the reason for their mission. So many people in the world did not know Jesus loves them. He was ready to go and show them Jesus' love.