

Message for Kizuna
from Pastor Sarah

Last time I shared the plans for the English congregation's Audio Outreach Project. This time I am bringing you exciting news about our progress!

We have five stories of Bible characters so far. They are:

- 1) Mary Magdalene. She tells of how she suffered from the darkness within in her until she met Jesus, and he brought the light back into her life. She lost hope again when he died, but then she became the first person to see him after he rose from the dead. He called her by name: "Mary." Then she was filled with hope and faith.
- 2) Thomas. He explains that he wasn't with the other disciples when Jesus appeared after his resurrection. He just didn't believe what they said. He wanted to see and touch the risen Jesus with his own fingers. Thomas is the reason we know for sure about the salvation of our bodies and not only our souls. He is the proof that Jesus really rose from the dead.
- 3) Barabbas. He was a murderer who plotted a rebellion against the Roman empire that was occupying his homeland of Judea. He was in prison for his crimes. But then he was released from prison. He discovered that his life had been traded for a man named Jesus. And now he hears that the Romans crucified Jesus, but Jesus lives again. He wonders what it could mean!
- 4) Martha. She is an elegant and important lady with her own home. She and her sister Mary welcome Jesus to have dinner with them. But she gets so obsessed with making everything perfect for her guest that she forgets to enjoy his company. Jesus gently corrects her and reminds her that her value is not in being perfect or putting on a performance. It's enough for her to be loved by Jesus.
- 5) Cornelius. He is an important official of the Roman army. He wishes to know God, and one day he has a vision, telling him to seek out Peter, Jesus's number-one disciple. Peter doesn't usually talk to non-Jews, but he tells Cornelius everything he knows about Jesus. Cornelius becomes the very first non-Jew to become a Christian. He overcomes his prejudice against "foreign" religion because the love of Jesus is so great.

Over the past few months, a group of translators has worked very hard to take these five stories from English and put them into lively, modern, easy-to-understand Japanese. Each story has a principal translator, who then reads the story to the whole group and gets their feedback. They discuss together how to choose the best language and express the emotions. They have worked extremely hard, with a lot of interest and passion. These will be powerful testimonies to the Christian faith.

In December and January we will begin the audio recording of these stories. Hopefully we'll have them out on YouTube by the end of the winter. You will love them, and you'll want to share them with your friends!