

The Special Message Delivery

Fruit of the Spirit: faithfulness

Faithfulness is ...

- *sticking up for your friend*
- *staying with someone and not leaving them*
- *being loyal*
- *being a true friend*

Charlie and Charity were enjoying a picnic on the bank of Bunyip Creek, when along came Wally Wombat and his friend Billy Bilby.

"I thought it was about time we made a visit to the King's Garden again," said Charlie. How would you two like to come with us?"

The two animals thought it was a wonderful idea, seeing they had never been to the King's Garden before, and were very curious. Charity explained the special instructions for getting to the garden..."You just take the key of life, and put on love!"

Soon the four of them were standing outside the gates. They noticed a piece of paper stuck between two rocks just near the entrance.



"Hey look, Billy! It's a letter for you," exclaimed Charity.

"Let me see. What does it say?" asked Billy excitedly.

"It's a message from the King. It says that it's nearly

Easter and the King has a job for you. He wants you to deliver messages to all the girls and boys," read Charity.

Suddenly Charlie noticed something else.

"Oh no! Look at this sign. It says that we have to go the long way round because of road works."

Now our four friends didn't know it, but the sign had been put there by an enemy of the King. Yes, you guessed it...the snake, who was up to his wicked tricks again. The snake had put road work signs just at the entrance to the King's Garden. Of course, there really were no road works. It was just another trick.

"Hello there," said the snake, in a sweet, slippery voice. "I don't think you really want to go through the gate to the King's Garden."

"Why?" asked Charity. "Do you know a better way?"

"Yessss," said the snake. "I do know a better way. Come with me and I will make things easy for you. Don't you know that the King wants to give you lots of hard work to do? He's asked you to deliver all those messages hasn't he? I can give you a much easier way of delivering messages...*my* messages.

And as well, I'll give you a special reward. The reward is a ticket to my fun park."

"That sounds great!" said Billy, who started thinking that delivering all those messages might be hard work after all.

"I don't think we should listen to him," said Wally. "You know what the King said. He wants us to deliver **His** messages."

"But we can deliver the King's messages next year," protested Billy. "Why don't we try the easy way for this year?"

"It's a hard decision Billy," said Charlie. "The easy way does sound good...especially with the reward at the end. I'd love to go to a fun park myself, but I have a bad feeling about all this. Why don't we go to the garden and see if the special tree can help us decide what we should do."

Billy decided that Charlie was right.

"Good-bye Snake," they said. "Before we agree to deliver messages, we're first going to the King's Garden."

"You'll be sssso sssorry....all that hard work... and no reward!" hissed the snake.

"Ah...here's the gate," said Charlie. "Get your keys ready everyone!"

At last they were inside the gate. And what a beautiful place it was.

"I think I'd rather be here with the King than go with that snake...even if there is no reward. Let's find that special tree," said Charity. "Over there! Look at all those beautiful fruits...love, joy, peace, patience, goodness, kindness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. I wonder which fruit can help us."

"I'll try this one," said Billy. "It's called faithfulness. Mmmm delicious. Here...have some everyone." Mmm, how good it tasted.



"You know," said Billy, "I've suddenly realised something. If we had followed the snake, and delivered *his* messages, then we would not be showing faithfulness to the Good King. The King is really depending on me to deliver those messages to the girls and boys. I mustn't let him down. Even if serving the King is more difficult, and even if He doesn't give me a ticket to a fun park, it doesn't matter. Being faithful to Him is the thing that counts."

"That's right Billy," said Charlie. "But you know, there really *is* a reward for serving the King. Already I'm starting to feel His love, joy and peace inside me. It just makes me so happy to be His servant. And I've thought of something else. The Good King has a special reward for all those who serve Him. It's called eternal life."

"What's eternal life, Charlie," asked Wally.

"It means living forever with the King...even after we get really old and die, part of us will live forever here in this garden with the King... and we will have His love, joy and peace forever!" replied Charlie.

"Come on everyone!" said Billy. "Let's go to the King right away and get those messages. The King is depending on me!"

And that's just what they did. Billy collected the King's messages and the four of them returned to Bunyip Creek, each carrying a sack of messages. That Easter, all the girls and boys of Bunyip Creek received a special message from the King, delivered while they were sleeping, by Billy Bilby. Maybe you know the special message already. It's found in John 3:16...
For God loved the world so much that He sent His only Son, so that whoever believed in Him should not die, but have eternal life."



The Fabulous Sweets

Fruit of the Spirit: goodness

Goodness is...

- *obeying God's word*
- *doing the right thing*

Kanga Joe was just practicing his balancing. Sometimes Emily Emu gave him some of her eggs for juggling. Kanga liked to entertain the other animals with a little show now and again, and his assistant was Wally Wallaby.

"You're such a faithful friend, Wally." said Kanga Joe. "I can always depend on you. Come on. Let's practise our routine. Let's try the egg-balancing act again..."



"O no, Wally! "You've dropped the eggs and smashed them!" exclaimed Kanga Joe.

"Sorry Kanga," said Wally. "I didn't mean to."

"It's alright, Wally," said Kanga Joe, "I'm not going to lose my temper because I've just been to the King's Garden and picked some special fruit. Have a look at this!

G-O-O-D-N-E-S-S. And do you know what I learnt from the King's garden? Goodness is just doing the right thing. That's what the Good King wants. He wants us to be good just as He is. He also wants us to have self-control. That means not losing my temper, and not being greedy. Why don't we go and find Charlie and Charity and we'll all go to the King's Garden together!"

Wally and Kanga Joe soon found the children.

"Do you remember what to do to get there?" asked Charlie.

"Yes," said Kanga Joe. "Take the key of life, and 1, 2 ,3, Put on love!"

Soon they were at the gates. But look! There was someone new.

"I haven't seen him before," said Charlie. "It looks like a snake. Excuse me sir. Are you a snake?"

"Y..e..ssssss. I sssupposse I am," said the snake. "I'm here to tell you that you don't need to go to this garden. There's a much better garden. You can do whatever you like there. Look in my fabulouss ssurprisse ssac. I'll show you some of the goodies that are there. Put your hand in and sssee what you can find. Take whatever you want."



"OK. I love surprises," said Kanga Joe, who was very keen to put his paw into the sack. "Let's see...I'll feel around a bit. Ah...here's something interesting...It's a bag of lollies, with a sign on it..."

"Eat these sweets, so nice and yummy, All you can do to fill your tummy. No need to be good and follow the rule Eating sweets is really cool."

"Don't listen to him, Kanga Joe," said Charity. "Don't you remember what the King taught us about self-control?"

"But I love lollies," said Kanga Joe.

"Well," said the snake, "Come with me, and I will give you lollies for FREE!"

"You three go to the King's Garden," said Kanga Joe. "I'm going to get the lollies."

"But Kanga! You can't go with the snake!" exclaimed Charity.

But in a moment he was gone.

"We'll have to rescue him," said Charlie. "Have you two got any ideas?"

"We could go to the Garden and ask the wise old owl what to do," thought Charity."

And that's just what they did. The two children and Wally explained their problem to the owl.

"Who..who-oo," said the owl. "Take this guide book with you and it will show you what to do."



The three thanked the owl, and sat down to take a good look at the book. It said, "The King's Guide Book, the Bible." They searched through the pages, looking for something to help Kanga Joe.

"Ah, here we are," said Charity... "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, goodness, kindness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Galatians 5:22"

"Goodness," thought Charlie aloud... "Following the snake is not good at all. And eating all those lollies is not having self-control. That's what kanga Joe needs. He needs the fruits of goodness and self-control. Let's go and pick these fruits and take them to Kanga Joe!"

They knew where to find the special fruit tree, and they soon had the fruits.

"Now we've got the fruits," said Charlie, "we've got to find Kanga Joe. Look! Here's a trail of lollies. Let's follow it."

Along here, past the trees, and over there I can see a cave. Look. There's a sign that says "Snake's Hollow. Free lollies."

"I'm not going in there," said Charity.

"May be we can call Kanga and he might hear us," suggested Charlie.

"Kanga, Kanga," they called. "We've got something for you....fruits from the King's Garden."



Kanga's voice came from inside the hollow: "Is that you Charlie and Charity and Wally? OOOOh....help me! I've got a tummy ache... and a toothache. I should have gone with you in the first place. Thank you for coming to save me from the wicked snake. You're such good friends."

Now fortunately the snake was having a sleep, so Kanga crept past the old fellow very quietly. The children gave Kanga the fruit from the King's Garden. He ate it at once, and noticed how delicious it tasted...even better than the lollies. And do you know, that almost immediately his toothache started to get better, and so did his tummy ache!

"Come on," said Charlie. "Let's get out of here before the snake finds us."

"I sure have learned a lot about goodness and self-control today," said Kanga Joe.

"Yes, but you did learn the hard way," said Charity. "It's much better to obey the King in the first place and follow the advice in His book."

Kanga Joe agreed.

"If I had gone straight through the gate to the King's

Garden, and not followed the snake, I wouldn't have been in so much trouble."

"That's right, Kanga," said Charity. "When we follow the King's son, Jesus, we belong to Him, just like sheep belong to the shepherd. He helps us to have goodness in our lives, as we become more like Him."



The Most Delicious Red Apples

Fruit of the Spirit: self-control

Self-control is ...

- *not losing your temper*
- *knowing when to stop*
- *not being greedy*
- *not giving in to temptation*

Down by Bunyip Creek, growing on the bank was an apple tree. Now this apple tree hadn't been planted by anyone. In fact it may have been planted by Caroline cockatoo, who had the habit of eating apples all the way down to the seeds, and then taking out the seeds, which to her, were the most delicious part. It could have been that Caroline was flying over Bunyip Creek one year with a mouthful of seeds, when one dropped out of her mouth and fell into some soft soil on the creek bank. Caroline doesn't remember this time exactly, but that is how the animals think the tree got there. Anyway, the tree grew the most delicious small, red apples, which were

shared by all the members of Bunyip Creek, including Charlie and Charity.

It was a beautiful day at Bunyip Creek. The sun was warm, and all the animals were happy. Emily Emu was out for a morning walk, when she came across a whole tree of ripe red apples! Now Emily just loved apples. She reached out her beak and picked one. Mmm...delicious! Soon she was joined by William Wallaby, who also loved apples.



"I could eat at least 20." said Emily. "How about you,

William?"

"Too many, too many!" said William.

Just then Charlie and Charity came along. Seeing all those apples made them think of fruit...and thinking of fruit, they both had the same idea.

"Why don't we go to the King's Garden!" said Charity. "We've got our key of life. All we have to do is to put on love. Come on, let's go!"

Just inside the gate, the children saw an apple tree. They had not seen it before. It looked just like the one back at Bunyip Creek, and it was laden with ripe red apples. The children were starting to feel hungry now. They reached out and picked one each. The apples were delicious...even better than the ones at Bunyip Creek. They wanted to stay and eat apples forever, but then remembered why they had come.

The children knew their way very well now to the special tree. They read the names of all the different fruits...love, joy peace, patience, goodness, kindness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

"I wonder what self-control is?" said Charlie.

"I think I know," said Charity. "Now that I'm here, I seem to understand things so much better.

Self-control is something the King wants us to have. It means not being greedy or selfish. You see, eating lots and lots apples at once would be very greedy of me, and if we were back at Bunyip Creek, it would also be selfish to eat so many apples because there wouldn't be many left for the other animals."

"I've just had another thought," said Charlie. Having self-control can also be controlling your anger. You know, when you feel so angry that you want to hit someone, or even bash the door down. That's not what the King wants. He wants us to think of Him, and think kind thoughts."

Why don't we go back to Bunyip Creek and show this fruit to Emily and William. I think it will help them."

So off they went, with their special fruit. Back at Bunyip Creek they found Emily Emu and William Wallaby still at the apple tree.

"I hope Emily hasn't eaten all the apples," thought Charity. "We've been away for ages."

But there hadn't been time for Emily to eat too many apples, because the children had really only been gone a few seconds in Bunyip Creek time.

The children showed Emily and William the fruit of self-control, and hung it up on the old gum tree. Charity explained what self-control actually meant. Do you think you could help her explain it to Emily? Emily got the idea immediately.

"I like shiny brass buttons," she said, "but I know I must have self-control, and try not to pick them off people's jackets...And I have to remember not to pick sandwiches out of people's hands when they're having a picnic."

"And I have to remember not to eat too much sugary food that rots my teeth. I also have to have self-control with my temper. That means, when I feel angry at someone, I must still speak kindly to them," said Charlie.

"That's right," said Charity. "It's because of self-control that all the animals in Bunyip Creek are kind to each other. Everyone thinks about putting others first, and shares special things like apples."

