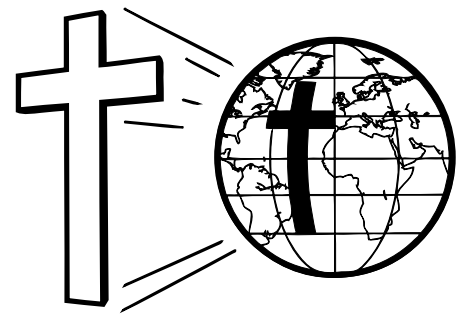


# Foundation of Faith



## RICHES THROUGH GRACE



By Grace  
**You Have Been Saved**

How to  
**Profit from Bible Reading**

**Nevertheless!**

Can Someone  
**Fall from God's Grace?**

**Experiences With God**

**Paid Debt**

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## *Editorial*

*Dear Reader,*

*As we were called to a new location in Christ's service some years ago, one of the brothers in the congregation told me within the first few days, "Go to the store and buy yourselves some groceries; we want to pay for everything."*

*It made me think of the word, "Ho! Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat. Yes, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price" (Isaiah 55:1). So, take ahold of it. It won't cost you a penny! Why? Because someone else is covering the cost.*

*Yes, that is grace. The apostle Paul writes similarly: "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich" (2 Corinthians 8:9).*

*What amazing grace is offered to us! The Lord called us to become His children, and through our Redeemer "we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace" (Ephesians 1:7). The Scriptures speak of the lavish and unsearchable riches of His grace.*

*Let's take a moment to consider this question: what is grace? Grace is a force, because it says, "But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more" (Romans 5:20). Grace is undeserved favor and mercy. It is a helpful action flowing from divine faithfulness, and is perfect evidence of God's love. Jesus descended from the heights of heaven to save sinners. Oh, that many might still recognize, seek, and accept God's grace, and that no one would neglect the grace of God and be lost for all eternity.*

*Take from the fullness that Jesus is giving;  
His hands are open with blessings anew.  
Grace upon grace He gives for daily living,  
Not by your merit, but since He loves you.*

*H.D. Nimz*

# Righteousness and Grace

*The Bible tells us that God is both just and merciful. How is this possible - in one Person?  
The following story illustrates this.*

In Scotland there lived two men who had grown up together. One of them was a follower of Christ and lived a life that was pleasing to God. He became a judge, while the other was a reckless man. One day the second man was caught in a criminal act and was arrested by the police. He soon found himself sitting in the dock of the court room before his childhood friend. There was much suspense over how the judge would react to this awkward situation. Some expected him to be very gentle while others claimed that devout people are twice as strict with those who are ungodly. Both sides were convinced they were right and the other was wrong.

The court case took place. The charges were read and witnesses shared their testimonies. At the conclusion of the case the judge calmly read the verdict. It was the highest sentence permitted by the law: a hefty fine or six months in jail. Those who were present felt the punishment was extremely harsh. But, then the judge stood and walked towards the accused man who had been found guilty. He handed him the money needed to pay his penalty so that he could go free. Then he said, "As long as I sit on the judgment seat, I must judge as the law requires. Now however, I stand before you as your old friend. I will gladly pay your penalty. In addition to this, take my

hand and let me lead you. I will do my utmost to help you become a different man, so that your life might also be saved."

Now the people began to understand how one can be just, yet full of compassion; how one can punish wrong and yet forgive the guilty one at the same time.

That is the wonderful news of the cross on Calvary. There we see God's righteousness and also His love. Yes, there "Christ was offered once to bear our sins" (Hebrews 9:28). Yes, there on the hill of Calvary we see "the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). He, the Son of God alone paid the debt for the debtors. He made peace through His death on the cross. No one can improve or add anything to it. He alone, the dying Savior, called out from the cross before He died: "It is finished!" (John 19:30). He completed the great work of salvation for you and for me.

Have you thanked Him by consecrating yourself to Him?

G. T.

# Now is The Time of Grace

Karl Renk was a master butcher. He and his wife were enthusiastic partygoers during the annual Fasching carnival celebrations. The raucous activities had been a habit of theirs for many years and they often celebrated for many nights on end.

One Monday Renk met an old school friend and in answer to his question of how he was doing, Renk cheerfully replied: “Fantastic, fantastic, thank you! The day before yesterday we participated in a splendid costume party and today we are going to a Mardi Gras Ball. Are you coming along?”

“No,” answered the friend, “I have nothing to do with that kind of thing anymore. I am a Christian and find no joy in those kinds of pleasures. Praise the Lord, I have been given something better. And to you, Karl, I would only like to say: Now is the time of grace. Take it from me. And one more thing: Soon the Lord Jesus will return to take His own home to be with Him.”

Well, Karl Renk had no love for Bible verses. He turned away abruptly, muttering: “Gotta go.” But, strangely, the words of his friend wouldn’t leave him: “Now is the time of grace” and “Soon the Lord Jesus will return to take His own home to be with Him.”

Arriving at home, he did not go into the shop; rather, he sat in his living room and pondered what he had heard. After a time his wife came, observed him with a shake of her head, and then asked if he had experienced something that annoyed him.

“Not exactly,” said Karl, “I just met a school friend and he said some words to me that do not want to let me go.”

“What did he say?”

“He said: ‘Now is the time of grace, and soon the Lord Jesus will return to take His own home to be with Him.’”

“You don’t need to take everything quite so seriously,” said his wife.

But the next afternoon, Mrs. Renk came to her husband and said: “I also can’t forget those words!”

\* \* \*

William Renner received his caller kindly. After Karl Renk told him the reason for his coming, the elderly man explained in his thoughtful way: “The matter is quite simple. Since Adam’s days, man is by nature sinful and therefore lost. But God prepared a way to His salvation through Jesus Christ. The Savior died on the cross for us mortal men. According to His Word in 1 Thessalonians 4 and 1 Corinthians 15, He is coming soon to take those to Himself who have believed in Him. Whoever accepts the sacrifice of Christ and recognizes Him as the forgiver of sins will not face judgment, for he has gone from death to life. But all people must face judgment, regardless of whether they are still alive when the Lord returns or if they have already passed on.

In Karl Renk, a light clicked on. He gratefully took the New Testament that William Renner offered him, along with the challenge to read it diligently.

After only a few days he became convinced through the gospels that God had spoken to him. He found peace in the blood of the Lamb, and his wife soon did the same.

The butcher couple remained faithful to their new-found Lord until the end of their lives. Former friends tried to entice them back to their old amusements, but they remained firm and steadfast. They passed away at peace with the Lord. When Jesus comes to receive His own, the call of the last trumpet will penetrate their graves, and along with all others who have died in Christ, they will be “raised incorruptible” and ushered into their eternal home to be with the Lord Himself forever.

# Wonderful Grace

*The grace of God is so multi-faceted. As we contemplate and study this grace we are overwhelmed by its glory. The wonderful thing about grace is that it is as wide and deep as the ocean, that can never be exhausted. All are invited to come and receive grace upon grace from His riches!*

A story is told of an old man of God who read his Bible for hours, yes, even for days. He would study a particular topic and become thoroughly engrossed in it. It was glorious, wonderful grace that he was pursuing and wanted to explore. So he flipped through the Bible page by page. His joy and gratitude grew more and more, often with every newly turned page, sometimes with every verse that he contemplated. The grace of God became so important to him that, overwhelmed, he left everything, jumped up, and ran out. He asked the first person he met on the street this question: “Do you know the grace of God?”

The grace of God is as glorious, as wonderful, and as great as God Himself. The magnitude, meaning, and splendor of God’s grace is inconceivable, incomprehensible, and cannot be described in words. And yet we can experience it!

Many people search for grace in dead form, in tradition, or in churches. But grace is only found in God. “The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in mercy” (Psalm 103:8). We cannot receive grace through baptism, confirmation, church sacraments, communion, by praying to saints, through offerings, people, or so-called saints. “Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need” (Hebrews 4:16). Grace has been made available to everyone through Jesus Christ, for the Word of God teaches: “And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace” (John 1:16).

## **The grace of God is mighty**

“But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more” (Romans 5:20). In the fifth chapter of Romans, Paul shows the power of sin and the great corruption that occurs because of sin. There are crimes and atrocities, murders and wars, troubles and hardships. All evil exists because of the reign of sin, because sin is mighty. But, thank God, through Christ we can receive the fullness of grace! And the grace of God is much mightier than sin. Yes, sin reigns and has always reigned, “but where sin abounded, grace abounded much more!”

All who have experienced God’s grace, in them “grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Romans 5:21). Because of grace, people can walk as redeemed in this life. “Much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ” (Romans 5:17). Yes, grace is mighty!

## **Grace is rich**

There are people who have enormous riches. Many countries have millionaires who own tremendous treasures: pearls, jewels, gold, and money. But the grace of God is more valuable and is richer than all of these treasures combined. Why? Try to buy redemption and eternal salvation with these earthly and perishable riches. Try to pay the guilt of a person with them. Try to mediate reconciliation between



God and people. Nothing helps, it is too little. But grace is sufficient!

What does the Bible say? “In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace” (Ephesians 1:7). Through the love of Jesus, not only are riches revealed but exceeding riches of His grace (see Ephesians 2:7). “By grace you have been saved” (Ephesians 2:5). Dear reader, we may be recipients of this wonderful, rich grace of God!

#### **The grace of God is manifold**

Each one of us is different. We have different backgrounds, different dispositions and skills, different weaknesses and deficiencies. But the grace of God is exactly what every person needs. Every one of us needs grace, and God has grace for all of our needs. Peter writes: “As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God” (1 Peter 4:10).

#### **The grace of God is all-sufficient**

In the natural world, some people need more food than others. Some are always worried: “There won’t be enough food!” They already fear beforehand that they will not be full.

Similarly, this can happen in the spiritual realm. Are you perhaps someone who needs a lot of grace? Maybe you have not yet risked coming to God because you are worried His grace will not be sufficient for you? Cast away your unbelief! Listen to what the Lord Himself said to the apostle Paul: “My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness” (2 Corinthians 12:9). Do not be afraid, God’s grace is sufficient for everyone. The stream of grace comes out of the ocean of love. And its abundance has never decreased. Come close, take plenty, and draw out of the abundance of grace. A song writer says:

Take from the fullness that Jesus is giving;  
His hands are open with blessings anew.  
Grace upon grace He gives for daily living,  
Not by your merit, but since He loves you.

But consider that this great, eternal, wonderful grace cannot be bought, neither can it be earned. Grace is only obtainable under one condition: You must let it be gifted to you! You must humble yourself before God and ask Him, “for God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble” (1 Peter 5:5).

H.D. Nimz

# By grace you have been saved

*Many religions teach that man must earn salvation through hard work and self-chastisement. People want to do the impossible and earn entry to heaven. Christ already paid the price for our salvation and is offering us grace free of charge.*

“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast” (Ephesians 2:8-9).

Grace is not something that people deserve; it is given at the pleasure of God. It is one of the most beautiful words in the Bible. Through His grace, God humbles Himself and comes down to humanity, lost in its sin. Grace is God’s love in action; it shows His love for fallen humanity.

Grace implies guilt because one can only extend grace to the guilty. Since it assumes guilt, grace excludes all merit. What is earned is not grace, but a reward. God’s grace is the unlimited source of all the blessings that we enjoy. Grace always comes from the inexplicable love of God. Through grace, He offers us the greatest gift of all—salvation, eternal life, and deliverance from sin. Through faith, we can make this great gift our own.

People hate to admit that they are utterly helpless and dependent on God. The human heart is proud and therefore unwilling to confess its depravity and its need for cleansing. People would much rather earn God’s favor through their own works. To humble themselves before God and ask for grace is contrary to people’s proud hearts. However, there is no other way

to obtain salvation in Christ and to be freed from sin than to humbly bow before God in sincere repentance and ask for grace, which comes from the shedding of blood.

All have sinned against God, forfeited His good will, and can offer nothing to pay their debt or to make amends. Although people have progressed in many different fields, they have been unable to free themselves of the burden of sin and earn God’s favor through their own knowledge and understanding. All must humble themselves before God. Since the earliest of days, people have tried to appease God through sacrifice, penance, and good works, but none of these methods can bring the peace of God to the human heart.

The idea that people can earn their own salvation continued in the Gospel age, and thousands of sincere people gave up all their possessions and walked through life poor and homeless, or otherwise spent a miserable existence.

There is only one way to achieve true peace and stand blameless in the presence of God—through the blood of Jesus Christ. Good works have their place in the lives of the redeemed. However, they are the fruit and the result of conversion in those who have



found salvation in Christ. They are not the purchase price of salvation. That price has already been paid. People must realize and admit that only the blood of Christ can wash their sins away.

Moreover, attending religious ceremonies cannot save people from their sin. People can do nothing to erase their guilt and secure God's favor. Not even penance, be it long and bitter, can purchase peace with God. No, not even fasting and weeping. None of these things have any power. They can only prepare the soul to meet Christ, and they cleanse the heart from what hinders people from seeking peace with God. Indeed, neither prayer nor faith can purchase salvation because it is not an abundance of prayer and the size of one's faith that brings salvation. Faith and prayer can only bring the searching soul to the place where people can reach out and receive salvation. Regardless from which angle we look at the situation, we can only come to the conclusion that salvation is not found in people, but only in God's grace.

When a baby rests in his mother's arms, it is not the baby's love for his mother, nor his faith or trust, that sustains him. On the contrary, it is his mother's arms that sustain him. His love and trust make him rest easy and prevent him from worrying. So it is with those who have been saved by grace. They have repented of their sin and prayed, trusted, and believed, and now they can enjoy salvation through God's grace.

Whoever longs for peace, and desires God's pleasure to rest on him, must humble himself before God and draw close to Him through the biblical way of repentance and faith. Whoever does not place his trust in his own worth, but in Jesus' sacrifice on Golgatha, will not be disappointed. We cannot earn God's saving grace through our good works. Rather, God in His mercy offers grace to all who seek it.

M. H.



# Must We Sin Every day?



The majority of today's Christians are of the opinion that we must sin daily "in our thoughts, words and deeds." Many do not know God's Word. Therefore many believe it is presumptuous to consider it possible to live a life that is victorious over sin. If, as they claim, all children of God must sin every day all their lives, then what is the difference between those who are saved and those who aren't? That is a serious question.

## What is sin?

It is very important to correctly define what sin is, and what it is not. Some say that the flesh is sinful, and that as long as you live in the flesh, you are subject to the sins of the flesh. Yet we want to remember that Jesus also lived in the flesh, and had the same body we do. Was His flesh sinful? The flesh sins because the spirit allows it to. In my unsaved condition, I allowed my bodily members to be used as "tools of unrighteousness." The perception that the flesh sins, and not the spirit, fully contradicts the Scripture in Romans 6:12: "Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts." This is a sufficient explanation demonstrating that the flesh is subservient to the will of the spirit.

Some are convinced that being saved subjugates the free will; that our inborn sense of righteousness is desensitized and cannot become outraged. They say, "If you rebuke someone, you have already committed a sin." The Master Himself, in holy outrage, made a scourge and drove out the money changers and merchants from the

temple. Salvation does not make us callous or unfeeling about unrighteousness and injustice; yet it protects us, so that anger cannot rule over us. In Ephesians 4:26, Paul said, "Be angry, and do not sin: do not let the sun go down on your wrath."

What does God's Word tell us about sin? "Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness" (1 John 3:4). To which law is this referring? It is in reference to the command of Christ and to the teachings of the apostles in the New Testament. This should be the standard of a true Christian. Jesus said, "He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him—the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day" (John 12:48). He who violates this command commits sin.

We must know the law, because the law brings understanding. "The law brings about wrath; for where there is no law there is no transgression" (Romans 4:15). After healing the blind man, Jesus said to the Pharisees, "If you were blind, you would have no sin; but now you say, 'We see.' Therefore your sin remains" (John 9:41). Here Jesus acknowledges the same principle found in James 4:17: "Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin." Only when we have the correct understanding of sin will we be able to acknowledge the truth of God's Word.

## Deliberate Violation of the Law

Sin is the transgression of a law that is familiar to us. When someone is newly saved, he may still do things that someone else can no longer do, who has been walking longer with the Lord. As long as the recently saved person is still ignorant, he is not committing a

sin. Only when he knows that what he did is wrong will he be, and must forsake it. That is why we will be judged according to our understanding.

A conscious, deliberate disobedience to God is sin. Jesus said to the lame man at the pool of Bethesda, “See, you have been made well. Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon you” (John 5:14). To the adulterous woman he said, “Has no one condemned you? . . . Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more” (John 8:10b–11). Was Jesus expecting the impossible? Did He command something no one was capable of fulfilling? When He said, “Go and sin no more,” then it was possible to follow the command. If we have faith in God, He will give us strength to keep His commandments.

### **Salvation from Sins**

If Jesus can save us from some sins, then He can just as well free us from all sins. The message of His coming proclaimed, “He will save His people from their sins” (Matthew 1:21). If someone saves a drowning victim, then he is pulled from the water. When Jesus saves His people from their sins, He is tearing them from the floods of sin and placing them on the solid ground of righteousness. “The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin” (1 John 1:7).

Paul calls out to the Corinthians, “Awake to righteousness, and do not sin; for some do not have the knowledge of God. I speak this to your shame” (1 Corinthians 15:34). This is a simple, yet clear message. When a person has awakened from his sinful slumber, and has become alert and sober, then he ceases to sin. Only when you have become a child of God and have experienced the mystery of your soul’s rebirth, will you praise God, “I am free from my sins!”

Taking a stand against sin often results in a raging battle within the heart. Challenges and temptations storm the soul; but God is faithful. He looks upon His child and will give him enough courage and strength to resist the devil and maintain victory. The experience of all true children of God attests to this fact.

John wrote, “My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin” (1 John 2:1). He did not write, “My old Christian friends” or “My mature, experienced Christian friends”—no, he wrote, “My little children.” Even for them it was possible to not sin.

“Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God” (1 John 3:9). Just as it is impossible for a good mother, with her heart full of a mother’s love, to purposely allow her child to fall out of the window onto the street below, so too will a child of God find it impossible to sin, as long as the love of God is in his heart.

Does God’s Word give an account of those who could live without sin? Let us read 2 Peter 2:14: “. . . having eyes full of adultery and that cannot cease from sin, enticing unstable souls. They have a heart trained in covetous practices, and are accursed children.” These are the only people of whom God’s Word says that they cannot refrain from sinning.

### **The Blessing of a Victorious Life**

Many believe that they cannot lead a sin-free life, and yet they are walking purely and sincerely before God. Such Christians could enjoy greater blessings if they could recognize the truths of God’s Word. Their testimony of God’s protective and sustaining grace would bring much more honor and glory to God than their sad confession that we cannot be free of sin.

In Revelation 21:27, it is said of the heavenly city, “But there shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb’s Book of Life.” Whoever wishes to be worthy of entering this city must already lead a life of purity here on earth. For when the soul leaves its earthly dwelling, there will be no opportunity to rectify what has been forever lost.

Heaven is a holy place,  
Filled with glory and with grace—  
Sin can never enter there;  
All within its gates are pure,  
From defilement kept secure—  
Sin can never enter there.

The blood of Jesus Christ, poured out on Golgotha, cleanses us from all sin. A person whose heart is tainted by sin can be cleansed through the blood and remain protected lifelong through its power.

Paul Wyler

# Can Someone Fall from God's Grace?

The question of whether someone can fall from God's grace after being saved is one that is of great importance for every Christian. I would like to draw our attention to several passages of Scripture that can help us come to the correct conclusion.

In Ezekiel 18:25–27 we read: “Yet you say, ‘The way of the Lord is not fair.’ Hear now, O house of Israel, is it not My way which is fair, and your ways which are not fair? When a righteous man turns away from his righteousness, commits iniquity, and dies in it, it is because of the iniquity which he has done that he dies. Again, when a wicked man turns away from the wickedness which he committed, and does what is lawful and right, he preserves himself alive.”—This statement is explicit and clear, and even though it is taken from the Old Testament, it is still in agreement with the New Testament.

It is possible for a righteous man to turn away from righteousness and commit iniquity. If he does, his soul dies. As is stated in verse 24, all the righteousness he has done shall not be remembered. However, when a wicked man repents of his wickedness to God and does what is good and righteous, he will live. The wickedness he has done shall not be remembered (see Ezekiel 33:15–16). How righteous and just is God's course of action!

“The soul [no matter who it is] who sins shall die” (Ezekiel 18:4). If it were impossible for those who are saved to sin, why does God, in such a serious way, show His children the danger of temptation? Jesus Himself shows us how we can successfully overcome these temptations. He says: “Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation” (Mark 14:38). A saved person can be strongly tempted, but does not need to commit sin. If however, we give in to temptation, the sad result is as James tells us: “Then, when

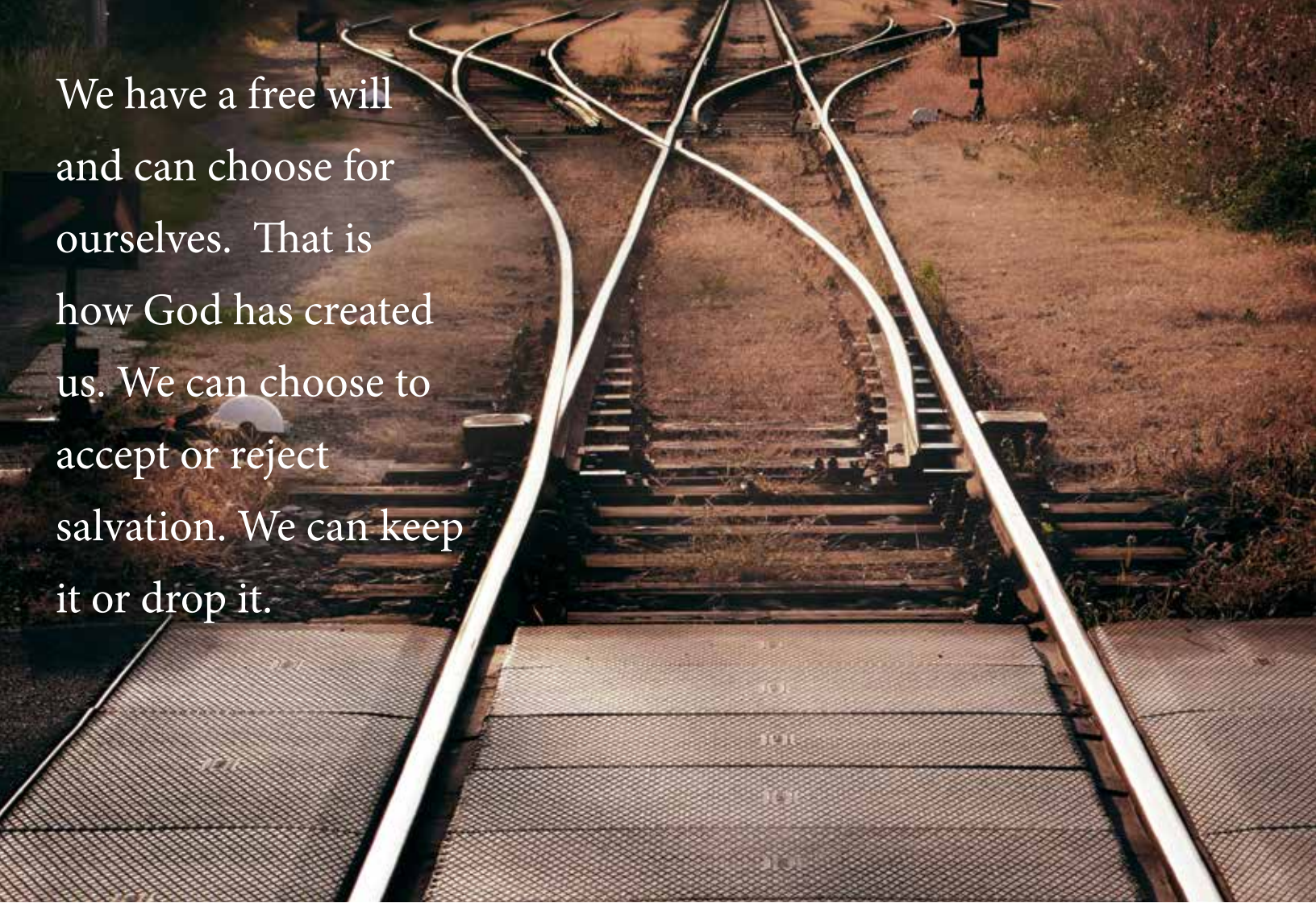
desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death” (James 1:15). The words of James precisely agree with those of Ezekiel!

You may now say that Jesus says of those who believe in Him: “And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand” (John 10:28). You will find the key in verse 27: “My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.” As long as we listen to Jesus' voice and follow Him, He will give us eternal life and we will not perish. No person, and not even Satan, will be able to snatch us out of His hand. We can stay there as long as we want. However, as soon as we stop listening to His voice or following the Lord and make the choice to sin, we will most definitely fall from His hand. We no longer have the promise of eternal life. Through our sin, we have caused our own death.

We people have our own free will and can make our own choice. This is how God has created us. We can either accept or reject God's salvation. We can keep it or we can fall.

In 2 Peter, in the first chapter, we are shown what we need to do after being saved in order to grow in the knowledge of Christ. In verse 10, Peter exhorts us to be diligent to make our call and election sure and says: “for if you do these things you will never stumble.” While these words express great assurance, we can also conclude that if we do not do these things, we will fall. In verse 9 Peter says: “For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins.”

We find an even more convincing and stirring passage in 2 Peter 2:20–22: “For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the



We have a free will  
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it or drop it.

Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning. For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them. But it has happened to them according to the true proverb: 'A dog returns to his own vomit,' and, 'a sow, having washed, to her wallowing in the mire.'"

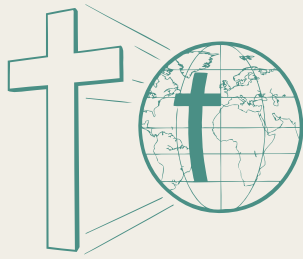
This statement is self-explanatory. It is possible for souls, after they have discovered the path of righteousness and escaped the pollutions of the world, to turn away from righteousness and again become entangled in the things of this world and return to their former sins. "The latter" is worse than the beginning. Paul says: "For if I build again those things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor" (Galatians 2:18). "The soul who sins shall die," no matter who that soul is or what their previous state may have been!

A lady once stood up in a church service and testified that she had once believed that when someone was

saved, they could never fall from grace. She continued: "I taught a class of girls in Sunday School and taught them that because they had now joined the church, the doors of hell were forever closed to them. Some of these girls have fallen as deep as girls can fall." Now the thought grieved her that these girls were influenced through her lessons to believe that nothing—not any sin they committed—would separate their soul from God and cause them to be thrown into eternal damnation. This belief had likely produced such an apathy and carelessness in their actions that it had brought terrible grief and sorrow into their lives.

Dear reader, it is not he who simply enters the Christian path "but he who endures to the end will be saved" (Matthew 10:22). It is no wonder that Jesus says: "And what I say to you, I say to all: Watch!" (Mark 13:37)

B.M.



# Radio Broadcast

## The Message of Salvation

Friedrich Krebs  
Kitchener, Ontario

# Do You Know the Grace Of God?

The Apostle Paul gave us a very personal testimony in 1 Corinthians 15:10. He reveals the secret of his blessed and fruitful life when he said: “By the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me has not been in vain.”

This grace and its vital activity can be manifest in all of our lives. The Scripture speaks of this abundance of grace. Paul testifies in Titus 2:11: “For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men.” Do we know the grace of God?

Some may now raise a legitimate question: “What is grace?” We would like to give a few short answers:

In light of the Bible, grace is an attribute of God. Scripture testifies that our God is a “merciful” God. Just as He is holy, so He is merciful. God’s patience, goodness, mercy and favor are summarized in this one word, “grace.” Grace is favor that is shown to all mankind. People have sought and found grace by their faith and belief in a merciful God. We read of Noah who found grace in the eyes of the Lord even when the rest of mankind was destroyed by the flood. This shows us that God not only offers grace but also practices justice.

The holy Scripture declares the grace of God as a power. In Romans 5:20, Paul speaks of the powerful effect of sin and the more powerful effect of grace: “But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more.” Grace is shown as a superior power. John testifies of the fullness of grace in John 1:16: “And of His fullness we have all received,

and grace for grace.” He also tells us in John 1:14 where we can find this grace: “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” Jesus put His life on the line in order to obtain saving and redemptive grace for all mankind. Through His sacrificial death and victory on the cross, God’s grace became a power that could overcome any sin. Without a doubt, sin has wrought horrific destruction, but grace works the amazing power of healing. God’s great love for us is shown through this gift of salvation and grace. God’s mercy comes to the forefront. What is bestowed upon us through God’s great compassion and mercy, we call grace.

This power of grace does what no other power can. Grace subdues the power of the law. What bound us by the law, grace can release. What was condemned by the law, grace can acquit. In the book of Romans, Paul explicitly explains the difference between the law and grace. In this discourse, Paul clearly explains that the law gave us the knowledge of sin but grace allows us to find pardon and salvation. Thank God for His saving grace!

Further, no person can demand this extraordinary gift of grace. God offers His grace to us freely. It can not be earned but is a gift which everyone can receive. Grace is the undeserved, saving intervention in the life of a person. Where all resources fail, where all hope is extin-

guished, and all prospects are over, there grace can begin to abound.

We think about a person who through his own guilt has been judged and condemned by the law. For him there are no more rights, there is no defense, no intercession, and no escape. But now, the highest authority, the king steps in, waives his punishment and sets him free. That is grace!

Christ took our deserved punishment on Himself so that we might have grace and peace. God's grace lifts us into the blessed state of salvation. Through grace we have forgive-

ness, acquittal, fellowship, and peace with God. Paul experienced this grace, and based on his blessed and fruitful life he could say: "His grace toward me has not been in vain" (1 Corinthians 15:10).

Do you know this grace? Turn to it and experience its saving, uplifting, and carrying power. Let the grace of God perform the miracle of salvation in your life and you will be able to say with Paul: "By the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me has not been in vain" (1 Corinthians 15:10).



# How to Profit From Reading the Bible

Reading the Bible plays a central role in our spiritual life. Peter writes: “As newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby” (1 Peter 2:2).

Every believer knows that he “must be eager for the Word of God” and that the Bible is indispensable to him, but why does the practical reality of Bible reading often look quite different?

Be honest: Have you ever read through the Bible completely? Do you find reading the Bible boring or do you read your Bible with pleasure and passion? Why do I have no problem checking 50 posts on Facebook—but already despair at the tenth verse of God’s Word?

Could our problem with reading the Bible be that we read it for the wrong reasons or simply read it wrong? We are often told THAT we should read the Bible, but have you ever asked yourself WHY or HOW to read your Bible?

## I. WHY DO YOU READ THE BIBLE?

There are a variety of motivations to read the Bible. Here are a few that are less than optimal:

- **Sense of guilt/duty:** “Ok, today I read my chapter. God will probably be satisfied with me.”
- **Teaching material:** You are reading the Bible to prepare for a Bible study or devotional. There is nothing wrong with reading the Bible in preparation for a biblical lecture—it is even compulsory. The problem arises when we only see the Bible as a source of information for teaching material.
- **Status:** Do I read the Bible to impress others? Do I want to be praised by others about my knowledge of the Bible?

Have you become guilty of one of those reasons?

To find the right motivation to read the Bible, it is helpful to ask yourself a simple question: Why did God decide to give us the Bible?

Here are a few answers to this question, which are also very good reasons for reading the Bible:

- God wants to reveal Himself to us. God in heaven wants us to get to know Him here on earth. For this He gave us the Bible. There we discover who God really is. We learn about His power, righteousness, compassion, wrath, love, goodness, faithfulness, and holiness.
- God wants us to know ourselves. When we read the Bible, we are like “a man observing his natural face in a mirror” (James 1:23). We learn to see ourselves through the eyes of God.
- Jesus is to be exalted. Reading the Bible is not primarily about increasing knowledge, rather to develop a close relationship with Jesus Christ, the Author of the Bible. Jesus once said: “You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me” (John 5:39).
- God gave us the Bible that we might live a holy life in this world and fulfill our purpose. The Bible shows us how we can live a God-pleasing life and equips us for our God-given mission in this world.

Take a moment to think about your motivation to read the Bible. Why do I actually read it? Is it necessary to reorient my motives?

## II. HOW DO YOU READ YOUR BIBLE?

Jesus once asked a scribe an interesting and important question: “What is written in the law? What is your reading of it?” (Luke 10:26). So it comes down to the manner of reading. Let me give you some suggestions that could be helpful for you to “correctly” and effectively read the Bible:

### 1. With great anticipation.

If you begin reading the Bible without anticipation and with doubt, you will not receive anything. “For let





not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord” (James 1:7). The disciples on the road to Emmaus did not recognize Jesus because they did not believe that He was alive and had not expected to meet Him.

Before you read, be aware that the Bible is highly effective. In 2 Timothy 3:16 we read: “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.”

“For the word of God is living and powerful” (Hebrews 4:12).

Expect God to give you a personal message, specific to your situation, in your daily Bible reading.

## 2. Daily and persistently.

In 1 Timothy 4:13 Paul writes: “Give attention to reading.” It is absolutely essential to read the Bible daily and persistently. Routine is the keyword here. Whether in book format or today in digital format—it is important that you read the Bible!

A good Bible reading plan may be a good help. Find one that guides you through the entire Bible and keep at it until you have completed it. As soon as you have completed one reading plan you can look for a new one.

Reading the Bible in a different translation every year may also be a helpful incentive. You are guaranteed to discover new beauties and details in God’s Word. If you read the Bible digitally, you may not even need to buy the various translations. Most of them can be downloaded free of charge onto your device or read online.

## 3. Depending on God.

To accurately understand the Word of God, we are dependent on the Holy Spirit. Although Bible commen-

taries or interpretations can sometimes be useful, they should never replace the Holy Spirit speaking through the Word.

Since Scripture is given by “inspiration of God” (2 Timothy 3:16), it is simultaneously the highest and surest authority when Bible questions arise.

We cannot truly understand the Bible solely with our human mind. “For the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life” (2 Corinthians 3:6). Unless the Holy Spirit opens the Scriptures to us it will be like a fountain without water or clouds without rain. Therefore, it is advisable to pray before, during, and even after reading the Bible, that God may enlighten us through His Spirit and unlock the Scriptures for us.

## 4. Read and live it out.

If you do not put what you read into practical action, then you read the Bible to your own condemnation.

“But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves” (James 1:22).

It does not suffice, after reading, to say, “Yes, this is true.” Before you close your Bible again, imagine the following question: From what I just read, what can I put into action? How can I improve myself? To which areas do I need to pay more attention? How does this Bible passage help me make the right decision in my situation?

I will admit that reading the Bible is not always an easy matter. Effective Bible reading takes effort, determination and endurance, but the consequences are inevitable. The Word of God will change your life, others will notice that you’re a reader of the Bible, and the more you read, the more difficult it will be for you to stop!

Roland Stieben  
Bolivia

# Paid Debt

There was once a wealthy estate owner in Ireland who was a Christian. He held an original and remarkable sermon for the people who were in charge of his estate. One day, the lord appointed his highest ranking officials to send out the following announcement:

“Next Monday I am available in my office between ten and twelve o’clock. During these hours I am prepared to pay out the debts of any of my farm laborers. You must bring along the invoices of outstanding bills.”

For days this announcement was the number one topic of conversation among the farm laborers. Anywhere anyone went, people were talking about this exceptional offer. Some held it for a cruel joke. Others said, “there must be some sort of catch to this.” Still others were convinced that the lord had gone mad; for who ever heard of a sensible person making this kind of an offer?

As the appointed day dawned, you could see a large number of people making their way towards the lord’s office. And when the clock finally struck ten, a large crowd had gathered at the door of his office. At exactly ten o’clock the wealthy estate owner arrived with his secretary. He left the vehicle without saying a word, entered his office and shut the door. An intense discussion broke out outside. “Is there a catch to this or not? Is he really serious about his announcement or does he think we’re fools? Perhaps he just wants to string us along so that he can humiliate us and expose our debts.” Others, however, pointed out that it was undoubtedly his own signature that was written at the bottom of the announcement. Surely he would not misuse his own name and therefore make it untrustworthy for all future.

But a whole hour passed and not one had entered in to have his unpaid debts pardoned. And if someone advised someone else to give it a try, he received this angry response: “I’m not as deeply indebted as you are; I don’t need it. You try it first!” With that, precious time was lost.

Finally, when it was already eleven thirty, an elderly couple approached the group walking arm in arm. They came from the furthest borders of his property. The old

man held a bundle of invoices in his left hand. With a shaky voice he asked the first person in line: “Is it true that the lord is willing to pay out every debt to those that now come?” And he received this harsh answer: “Until now he has not yet paid out anything.” And another quickly added “We believe that it is just a cruel joke.”

As the elderly pair heard this, their eyes filled with tears and the lady quietly murmured: “And we believed that it was true, we were looking forward to dying without debt.”

With disappointment they turned to leave when someone called out: “Until now no one has tried. Why don’t you go in? If he pays your bills, then come out quickly so that we can also enter!” And the two took the lord at his word. Rather timidly, they opened the door and entered the office. There they were warmly welcomed. In answer to their concerned question as to whether the announcement is true, the secretary answered, “Do you really believe the lord would deceive you? Now hand over the bills!” They handed all of them over. The sums were calculated and they received a signed cheque for the full amount.

Overcome with gratitude they prepared to leave the office when they received the following request: “No, please stay seated for a while! At least until twelve o’clock when the office will be closed.” They responded by saying that there were still many waiting outside who wanted to hear if the offer was true. But the lord held to his strict request and said: “You took me at my word, and those outside must do the same if they want to have their debts paid.” With that, the precious minutes passed. The crowd outside anxiously watched the door. But no one dared to push down the door handle and enter. Finally, around twelve o’clock the elderly couple came out beaming. “Did he keep his word?” they heard from the crowd. “Yes, look neighbors, here is the check, it is as good as gold!”—“Why didn’t you come out right away and tell us?” many asked angrily. “He told us that we had to stay inside. You had to come in like we did and take him at his word.”

Won’t it be likewise on the Day of Judgment?

# When it Snaps

On both shores of the Thames river stand crowds of spectators. Many of them are looking through binoculars. Others cheer excitedly when one boat passes another. Suddenly, all eyes are on one particular boat. What are they seeing? One of its rudders is snapped. This means that it is facing the wrong direction and is being pushed around by the current. For seconds the boat is slowed down.

It's too bad when something snaps! For example, perhaps your father forbids you to use the water gun in the backyard. To this you respond with a miserable scowl and go away grumbling! The boys that are playing in the backyard with you see it. Mother observes it too, and who

knows, maybe other people are also there who draw their own conclusions. You have spectators! They notice who you listen to and whom you belong to. You either bring glory or shame to the Pilot of your life. When this kind of "snap" occurs, you can only do one thing: as quickly as possible, ask the Lord Jesus for forgiveness! The sooner you admit that you have done something wrong, the quicker everything will be put in order again.

Pray each morning: Lord Jesus, please help me to stay on the right course today. Please take control of the helm of my boat of life.

Yvonne Frischknecht



# Nevertheless!

*Faith, courage, gratitude, loyalty, confidence, perseverance—these characteristics are precious in good and sunny days. But they develop special strength and effectiveness when life gets difficult and the storm tosses our life-boat back and forth. When many others have already given up, they develop in us a stronghold that is anchored in the steadfastness of God’s Word.*

Even though I have lived in Canada for over 40 years, I try to keep my German as up-to-date as possible. When I was last in Germany, I had the opportunity to expand my vocabulary. I learned the expression “nichtsdestotrotz” (nevertheless); it seems to be a stronger form of “trotzdem” (however).

Nevertheless! Without question, this word has a place in our lives, and is essential to our spiritual lives as well. Is it not this word that carries us through difficult situations, temptations, and doubts? Hebrews 11, which lists the heroes of our faith, names a series of men and women who secured a place in this chapter after experiencing this “nevertheless.” If, at the end, we belong to the overcomers, it is only because we, through the grace of God, said, “nevertheless” and carried on.

Job was such a “nevertheless-man.” Scripture presents Job as a righteous, but also wealthy man, who unknowingly becomes Satan’s target. He sustains heavy losses without knowing that Satan is testing him and planning still more attacks. He only knows the pain of his losses, including the deaths of his children. From a human perspective, Job’s situation is unbearable, and yet he says: “The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord” (Job 1:21b). These words are his “nevertheless”! He continues to serve his God. When he comes down with a serious illness, and Satan inflicts him with painful boils, even his wife can no longer watch his suffering, and she advises him, “Do you still hold fast to your integrity? Curse God and die!” (Job 2:9). In response, Job speaks an even greater “nevertheless”: “You speak as one of

the foolish women speaks. Shall we indeed accept good from God, and shall we not accept adversity?” (Job 2:10). Following these words, Scripture gives Job this testimony: “In all this Job did not sin with his lips” (Job 2:10). Job served his God. He did not give up. He did not reject God. He carried on.

We may not suffer the same hardships that Job suffered, but we are not unfamiliar with suffering. “The fiery darts of the wicked one” (Ephesians 6:16) also fly in our direction. Each one of us can surely tell of some trouble. Based on the story of Job, there is a German word (“Hiobsbotschaft”) that literally means “Job’s news.” The most difficult trials often hit us unexpectedly. “Job’s news” threatens the way we live and the things that we hold most dear; it complicates our lives, and makes us question everything. No one is prepared for such difficulties, and so we stand completely helpless before our fate.

Aging can also be seen as “Job’s news.” One thing after another is taken from us: we become poorer and poorer and, therefore also more helpless and dependent. We generally have no choice, and we must come to terms with the difficulties of getting older. What can people do, or more to the point, what should people do in such situations? Following the guidance of Job’s wife, should they deny God? Certainly not! Never! Not under any circumstances!

People can accept their situation. That is, they can say “yes” to their situation: “yes” to their troubles, to the infirmities that happen to people when they reach the other side of fifty. Why don’t we apply the “never-



theless” to aging? It is exactly the right place to say, “Nevertheless, we will continue, we will carry our sorrows, and we will not give up!”

Regardless of hardship, it is worth serving God with all the strength we have. Getting older is simply a part of what we call “life.” It is something we have to go through. If we make it through and come out on the other side, we will experience undreamed-of beauty and glory. On my bookshelf, there is a book titled “The Best is Yet to Come.” The writer reminds the reader that unimaginable beauty awaits us, and his words really spoke to me. Similarly, 1 Corinthians 2:9 tells us: “Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him.” There is just no way that I want to miss these things. On the contrary, I want to be there. I want to reach the goal. I do not want to lie down defeated halfway through; I want to finish the race.

Dear brothers and sisters, follow my example and add “nevertheless” to your vocabulary. Do not forget, however, to use it. Try it. Why don’t you start right now? When the next difficulty comes your way, simply say, “Nevertheless!” God bless you!

Harry Semenjuk

## I Will Carry You

Ecclesiastes 12:1 & Isaiah 46:4

*The day is coming closer of which the Bible speaks,  
There will be years and times, the ones we like the least.  
Where ailments, aches, and stiffness add to the load of care,  
But even in the dark hours we know the Lord is there.*

*Look back into your life and reflect upon your way,  
How God has always been there and helped you ev’ry day.  
God gave you strength in weakness, trust Him as you grow old.  
He gives food to the hungry, protects you from the cold.*

*In illness, strife, or suff’ring, beside you He will stand,  
And even to your old age, He’ll guide you by His hand.  
He is the faithful shepherd, who always will be there;  
He leads us home to heaven, for we are in His care.*

*And even to your gray hairs, He said he’ll carry you;  
In trials and temptations, the Lord will see you through.  
He lovingly does call you, to trust and follow him;  
You’ll praise him up in glory, when you have entered in.*

*Be true and brave in battle, one day you’ll wear the crown  
When after all life’s struggle, you lay your burdens down.  
We’ll praise our loving Savior, God’s Son who set us free;  
O yes, it will be worth it, when Jesus we will see.*

Angelika Vogt

# If You Would Believe

## Part 7

*Compiled by Hartmut Sonnenberg*

### *Escape*

Shortly after fleeing from Graudenz to Hagenow, in January, 1945, we leased a small apartment on the outskirts of the city. At that point, father was still in the military. In the last few months and weeks of the war, Hagenow was subjected to almost daily air raids, day and night. One night, air raid sirens again wailed over the darkened Hagenow. Mother snatched the youngest from a deep sleep, and stormed into the basement shelter with the two older children in the lead. Mrs. Hawelka, our landlady and her family also had sought refuge there. Being fully convinced that God would surely protect a God-fearing woman like our mother, Mrs. Hawelka pressed close to her as we huddled together.

Soon the walls of the darkened shelter began to vibrate from the drone of a distant, massive bomber squadron. The droning continued to escalate, when suddenly a hail of bombs surrounded us. The ground reverberated, and the walls of our shelter seemed to shake, as we sat fearfully pressed together in the darkened compound. Startled by the explosion of a bomb in our immediate vicinity, a quick prayer burst upward, "Lord, protect us!" The fury of the attack moved swiftly over us. Like a violent thunderstorm, the explosions faded into the distance. The sirens stopped wailing, and blissful silence engulfed us. "Thank God for His mercy! We have survived another attack."

Having barely scrambled out of our hole, sirens again began to wail. Once more we raced down to the shelter to seek refuge, but this time, unexpectedly, the droning was not accompanied by the explosion of bombs. Relieved,

we realized that the squadron, disgorged of its arsenal, was merely passing over us on its return journey.

Finally the long-awaited day arrived when the skies above Hagenow were quiet. The long barrels of the anti-aircraft installations silently stared at the empty sky, proclaiming the end of the war. Although we had evaded the Russian Front in our flight from Graudenz, after the Potsdam Conference following the end of the war, we found ourselves in the Russian Sector of a divided Germany. Almost immediately, the occupying forces built fortifications in the guarded forest as if to prepare for a continuing war.

Soon, the problem of accommodating the thousands of refugees who had fled the advancing Russian front needed to be addressed. The authorities decided to return them to their places of origin. We also found our name on the mandatory deportation list. Daily, refugees were deported back to the East; for many it was the death sentence. Shortly before our departure date Harald, the second oldest, became critically ill. The doctor determined that he was not fit for travel and so our departure was postponed. In the meantime, the deportation order was relaxed. Families who could provide proof of accommodation in the West were permitted to depart for West Germany. Our father, who had been re-united with his family shortly before the end of the war, was able to secure the necessary papers, enabling us to depart for Stedebergen in the spring of 1946.

Slowly, the freight train we had boarded began to

move. Mother sat on a suitcase at the back of the car, clutching her warmly-wrapped youngest to her bosom. The train stopped at the border checkpoint, and Russian soldiers leaped inside. They seemed less interested in our documents than in plundering the meager belongings of the band of refugees in our car. In the ensuing commotion, the youngest began to cry loudly. When the Russian soldier had made his way through the car to where mother was sitting he barked, "Suitcase!" attempting to dislodge her. With that, the boy in her arms began to scream, so that the Russian soldier covered his ears. Mother had just vacated her seat on the suitcase, when the train signaled

its departure. With a curse the soldier leaped out of the freight car without having plundered our belongings.

"Praise God, we are saved!" father enthused as the train slowly left the checkpoint. "We are now in the West!"

"But do not fear, O my servant ...

And do not be dismayed,...

For behold, I will save you from afar,

And your offspring from the land of their captivity"

(Jeremiah 46:27).

## *Answered Prayer*

In Hagenow, and even in Stedebergen, our meals were often quite meager. Mushrooms from the forest, as well as birds eggs and edible plants of the fields became seasonal additions. Yet even following a meal we mostly lived with a measure of hunger. For mother, there was no meal better than boiled potatoes, and potatoes had become available in West Germany.

Mother had found employment near Stedebergen, hewing wood in the forest. Father, with only one arm, stayed behind to prepare a meal of hot potatoes for supper. One day, following a stint of hard physical labor in the forest, mother eagerly lifted the lid of the pot of boiling potatoes. "Gustav," she protested. "Why didn't you cook more potatoes? All day I have slaved in the forest and I was so looking forward to this meal, and now we don't even have enough potatoes for supper."

With four sets of eyes following her every move, mother placed the small pot of steaming potatoes in the middle of the table. As always we bowed our heads and father began to pray: "Our Father in heaven, we honor and praise you for the good food before us. Bless this food to our bodies that with renewed strength we may serve you. I pray that the meal before us may keep and strengthen us. And Father, I pray especially for the children who are still growing up. Grant that, despite the meager sustenance, there would be no lasting health consequences for them. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen."

During these meager times, mother always dished out the food portions so that everyone would receive an

amount in accordance with their need. Invariably that meant that she retained less for herself than what might have been called her "fair share." But even then, there was often not enough on the plates to satiate everyone, and so it seemed at this meal. After distributing the potatoes, she returned the empty pot to the stove and sat down with us at the table. She studied her plate and began to protest. "Who forked potatoes from his portion onto my plate? I know how much each of you needs!" She studied each plate but nothing seemed to be missing from anyone's portion.

"Mom, just eat," calmed father. "It's ok."

"No! It's not ok! I know how much each of you needs, and someone has added potatoes to my plate from his portion." Again she surveyed the plates but nothing seemed amiss. "What you did was not fair," and with that we began to eat.

"Have you all had your fill?" father asked, as was his custom following the meal. Everyone was satisfied, but mother, still miffed, began to protest anew.

Father interrupted her, "Mother! None of us here at the table added potatoes to your plate. Did we not pray that God would bless this meal? And now if there were more potatoes on your plate, shall we not take this as an answer to prayer and thankfully receive it from God's caring hand?"

"And He (Jesus) took the seven loaves and the fish and gave thanks, broke them and gave them to His disciples; and the disciples gave to the multitude. So they all ate and were filled" (Matthew 15:36-37).

# Easter Conference 2016 in Hamm

God especially blessed us during our Easter meetings this year. There were 10 church services starting Good Friday and ending Easter Monday. God used the guest speakers, Brother Sieghard Schulz from Canada, Brother Artur Günter from Argentina, and a few brothers from Germany to speak through His word.

The theme was “The chastisement for our peace was upon Him” (Isaiah 53:5). The first topic explored the precious blood of Jesus. It is so unique because only through His blood can forgiveness of sin occur and spiritual life begin. In the evening we were asked the question: “What will you do with Jesus?” Pilate gave the people a choice between Jesus and Barabbas, who can be equated with sin. If you choose Jesus, He will give you peace.

“What does the Church of God mean to us?” On Saturday morning we heard that Jesus loved His bride (the church) so much that He gave His life for her. He wants a bride that is worthy of Him, pure and holy (Ephesians 5:27). What picture does the world see of Christianity today? In the afternoon the encouraging topic was “Do not give up!” Do you have a goal? Each one of us has the goal of making it to heaven. There is only one who does not want this and does whatever he can to hinder us—Satan. However, Jesus is stronger! He has taken the power from the enemy (Hebrews 2:14). He prayed for you that your faith would not fail. Therefore, do not give up, but live in God’s strength and strengthen your brothers (Luke 22:32). In the evening,







our attention was turned to the question: “Where am I standing, on the outside or on the inside?” It may be that you have heard much about Jesus, you may attend church services, be close to the kingdom of God, and yet not be on the inside. Come to Jesus, for there is still room!

“Jesus lives!” was and is the powerful message of Easter that proves to us that death does not have the final word! The second topic on Easter Sunday was, “The filling of the Holy Spirit.” Sanctification is part of the plan of salvation. Jesus came so that God’s children would have life abundantly (John 10:10), and He wants us as living sacrifices. Sunday evening we heard “Jesus is still calling.” Since the days of Noah, God has been calling

people to repentance (Matthew 24:35–44). If Jesus is calling you, then follow Him.

The topics on Monday were “Your Purpose” and “Go Forth.” We were encouraged to go out into our everyday lives and live out what we had heard.

During these days the Holy Spirit spoke to souls who found help and were later able to testify about it. It was a blessed time with approximately 500 visitors from various places. God provided grace in everything, and all glory be to Him.



## *Experiences With God*

### “My heart shall rejoice in Your salvation.” – David (Psalm 13:5)

For years, we have been working with brothers and sisters in the Philippines. The work is mainly supported by private donors, but also by the Canadian Mission Board of the Church of God. This support is primarily comprised of two aspects: One, it ensures the livelihood of approximately twenty pastors and congregations, and on the other hand consists of the construction and maintenance of three schools. Both projects have the ultimate goal of spreading the gospel. I have had the opportunity of visiting the Philippines several times. Poverty is generally great, but fortunately the gospel is received with open doors everywhere. We are sincerely grateful to the Lord for these opportunities.

In addition to the general support of the work, we help individuals in need here and there by paying the cost of surgeries, doctor visits, medicine, eyeglasses, and also daily sustenance. For a number of years, someone regularly gave me a check in the amount of \$5,000 for such hardship cases. This individual is no longer able to help in this way. When the sum was recently totally exhausted, I told my wife about it. How would we be able to help in the future?

The next day I received a call from a woman who wished to make an appointment to discuss an issue. We agreed on a time to meet. An elegantly dressed lady appeared and reported that her father had attended our church services years ago. When she looked through his papers, she noticed that in recent years he had no longer regularly supported God's work as he had become old and care-dependent. She inquired whether there was a need somewhere where she could be of assistance. As I could not think of anyone on the spot, I told her about the poverty in the Philippines. This need resonated with her. She took out her checkbook, picked up a pen, wrote out a check and handed it to me. When I held the check in my hand, I could hardly believe it; it was issued in the amount of \$5,000. Five thousand dollars!—We have a great God who does not lack resources. He directs the hearts and minds of people so that they open their checkbook to fill the needs of people on the other side of the globe. I am overwhelmed! To the Lord be all glory. He helps “exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask!” (Ephesians 3:20)

Harry Semenjuk

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There was a time when I did not know the Bible. In 1979 I became very sick, and suffered for three months. I was so sore from being bedridden, and the pain was so great that I came to the point of preferring death to life. My wife went to church, but I was unsaved and never went. Yet, I had overheard several devotions, and knew about heaven, but also of hell. I did not want to go there. I knew I was a sinner, and was therefore afraid to die.

Because I no longer wanted to live, however, I asked, “What must I do to be saved?” My wife's pastor visited me and left me a Bible. After I had prayed, “What must I do to be saved?” I opened the Bible for the first time and my eyes fell on Mark 16:16, “He who

believes and is baptized will be saved.” I confessed my sins and repented. I also confessed my shortcomings to my wife. I wanted the pastor to come and baptize me, but he had already returned to his home, so I had to wait. I wanted to be baptized before God called me into eternity, so I asked again, “When is the pastor coming so I can be baptized?” When he came, I was so weak that they had to carry me to the river to baptize me. The pastor baptized me in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Then it happened. When I came up from the water, it was as if something hit me on my head and then flowed through me from top to bottom. I got quite hot and I broke out into a sweat. I received new strength, and I was able to walk home.

My pain was gone, and I was healed. Because the Lord had lengthened my life, I told Him that the rest of my life belonged to Him. That was the first week of March 1980. The pastor had come to our place on Sunday and then baptized me on Monday. I began to go to church with my wife, but the first time I went, I hid the hymnal in my bag so that my former friends would not see it when I passed them. During the meeting, the pastor read the words, “For who-

ever is ashamed of Me and My words . . . of him the Son of Man will also be ashamed when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels” (Mark 8:38). I felt so guilty. I never again hid my hymnal on the way to church. My friends teased me and called me “Preacher.” That is my testimony and I have been healthy ever since.

Rodrego Taan  
Toronto, ON

## CAMP MEETING BLAUBEUREN 2016

We invite you to the second German camp meeting of the Church of God in Blaubeuren

*from the 20<sup>th</sup> to the 27<sup>th</sup> of August, 2016.*

For more information and to register please visit:

*[www.lagerversammlung.de](http://www.lagerversammlung.de)*

## Special Services 2016 in Canada, Germany, and U.S.A.

*Fest Services in Aylmer, Ontario*

JULY 2-3, 2016

*Bible Course in Aylmer, Ontario*

AUGUST 15-26, 2016

*Camp Meeting in Blaubeuren, Germany*

AUGUST 20-27, 2016

*Dedication Services in Chilliwack, British Columbia*

SEPTEMBER 2-4, 2016

*Fest Services in Swartz Creek, Michigan*

SEPTEMBER 3-4, 2016

## *It is Grace*

*What fills my heart with joy and song  
Here on my pilgrimage?  
What makes me happy all day long  
And fills my soul with bliss?*

*When battles rage, what comforts me  
When hope is almost gone?  
What finally gains the victory  
And leads me on to home?*

*Why are all sins that I have done  
Forgiven and atoned?  
What, seeking help and finding none,  
Can cleanse my spots alone?*

*What gives me peace within my soul  
Deep, precious, and serene?  
What gave me joy and made me whole  
And eased the pain I'd seen?*

*When life is done, what leads me on  
Through death to heaven's door?  
Why will I see my Lord and God  
And praise Him evermore?*

*O it is grace, amazing grace,  
Abounding, full, and free!  
This precious grace is mine by faith  
Since Jesus died for me.*