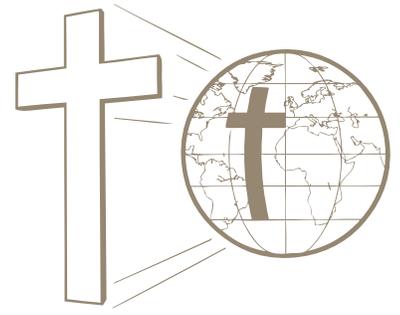


Foundation of Faith



Jesus, the Light

"I WILL ALSO GIVE YOU AS A LIGHT TO THE GENTILES,
THAT YOU SHOULD BE MY SALVATION TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH." ISAIAH

49:6

January 2014

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The future of the new year lies veiled and undiscovered before us. Yet, with confidence and faith we can say, “The Lord is my light and my salvation; Whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?” (Psalm 27:1) With this Bible verse we would like to wish every reader a blessed new year!

All of Scripture speaks about God’s light, about His grace, goodness, love, and power. We read in the very first passage of the Word of God: “Then God said, ‘Let there be light’; and there was light” (Genesis 1:3).

Our world has been darkened by the wickedness and misery of sin. Yet breaking through it all is the light and hope of the message of salvation that God lovingly offers everyone through His Son, Jesus Christ.

We read: “I will also give You as a light to the Gentiles, that You should be My salvation to the ends of the earth” (Isaiah 49:6). This wonderful prophecy remains in effect for all time, from the moment Jesus came to earth until He returns at the end of the age. Jesus is and always will be the Light of the World!

As we contemplate the year ahead of us, let us be reminded of the reassuring words of our Savior: “Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, ‘I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life’” (John 8:12). The promises of God are “yes” and “amen” (2 Corinthians 1:20), and He is “faithful in all he does” (Psalm 33:4 NIV).

Yes, Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today, and forever, will be our eternal Light in heaven, for we read: “The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb is its light” (Revelation 21:23).

H. D. Nimz

Pleasure in Pain?

When we were children we had a tradition of writing our parents a friendly New Year's letter at the beginning of each year. This was considered a very important task. We would take a large sheet of stationery and, using careful penmanship, we would write our parents a letter expressing our wishes for a happy New Year.

Of course, this is not the kind of letter I want to write to you. However, I do have a special wish for you. My wish and prayer is that you would always take pleasure in whatever the year 2014 may bring you.

I can already hear the various protests: "How can I take pleasure in my situation? You don't understand my struggles, my trouble, my illness, my concerns about making ends meet, or my concerns for my husband, wife, and children." Perhaps some of you by nature have greater difficulty in finding the positive in situations.

Let me first explain how I came to this phrase "take pleasure in." I like to think that I received it as a special gift. In the fall I became ill, and had painful, terrible nights where I lost all courage. One morning I read the words of the apostle Paul, "Therefore I take pleasure in..." (2 Corinthians 12:10). He continues, "...infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses." We could add to this list financial needs,

business and occupational stresses, parenting challenges, family struggles, difficult relationships, loneliness, and more.

This verse fit my discouraging situation. I asked myself: why was the apostle so optimistic? I quickly read the previous verse: "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness" (2 Corinthians 12:9). The apostle mentions no prerequisites for this optimism, no extraordinary measures to undertake, no securities to bank on, no application of great personal effort. All this I was lacking, after all! Only one thing was sufficient: His grace and His strength—both of which are available to the weak and powerless!

Dear reader, do you agree that my New Year's letter contains an unbeatable, precious offer for you? I would be delighted if each one of you would joyfully accept the Lord's offer! His grace and strength are infinite and available for every day of the new year.

One thing is necessary: we need to ask for this strength every morning! How do we do this? Tell the Lord Jesus Christ your troubles in reverence, trust, and simplicity, and ask Him to help you. He will give you strength for every new day! With this assurance, we have every reason to take pleasure in the new year.



Resolutions with God

The year 2014 promises to form the next leg in our life's journey. Where will this year take us? Have we set certain goals for ourselves, or do we let the circumstances of everyday life determine our destiny?

Many people will enter the new year without a goal. Unfortunately, a life without purpose is also a wasted one. If we set the right goal for our life, we will be rewarded in the end.

Paul said, "I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:14). We should all set a goal for ourselves in this new year, and make every effort, with God's help, to attain it. It is often helpful to write down our goal so that we can refer back to it later and see what has been accomplished and what is still lacking.

I once heard of a church that encouraged this habit. Every New Year's Eve the parishioners would give the pastor a sealed letter containing a prayer or a promise to God. These letters were kept secure until the end of the year. Only then could each person retrieve their letter and reflect how successfully they kept their promise.

Before we throw away our 2013 calendars, let's take a moment for reflection and ask ourselves, "What has God done for me in the last months? What have I done for Him? Have I met the goal that I set for myself?" If not – why not?

Try to learn from your mistakes and ask the Lord to help you in 2014. Do not be discouraged if you failed to complete all of the things you set out to do last year. Thank the Lord for that which you were able to accomplish by His grace.

Perhaps you relied too much on your own abilities last year, and not enough on the Lord. If you were unsuccessful in meeting your goal in 2013, it was because your strength failed, not the Lord's. Make it your goal to be a faithful disciple this year, so that you can agree with Paul when he says, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:13).

God wants us to rely on His Word. Many forget that the world does not read the Bible. We, as God's children, are their Bible. The world wants to see by our lifestyle that Christ is real. If our life is not a testimony to Him in this world, we will never win our friends and neighbors for Christ.

Last year is over and all our deeds have been done. We cannot undo anything. Ask God to give you a worthy goal for the new year, and then seek to accomplish it by His grace and with His help!



Christ, the Light!

“Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, ‘I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.’” (John 8:12)

I awoke this morning with sunshine streaming through my window, inviting me to behold the beauty of a new day. When I stood at the window, in awe looking at our Heavenly Father’s wonderful creation, I thanked Him for the great blessing of eyesight that makes it possible for me to see all the beauty and magnificence He has created.

There are two kinds of darkness, natural and spiritual. Spiritual darkness is the more serious of the two. How great, after all, is the darkness of unbelief! Unbelief is also one of the greatest enemies of the church, and not just the unbelief of atheists and non-believers, but also the scepticism that is often found in the lives of those who say they are followers of Christ. Many who claim to be Christians have become lost in the fog and darkness of confusion and division in the spiritual realm, and cannot find their way back.

Every sinner finds himself in great darkness. We can see the blinding force of sin all around us. Isaiah speaks of the people who lived in sin at the time of Jesus’ coming to earth as a people who walked in darkness (Isaiah 9:2).

At the beginning of time God said, “Let there be light!” (Genesis 1:3) and placed lights in the firmament of the heavens to drive away the darkness. Throughout the ages, these lights have illuminated the darkness of the natural world. About two thousand years ago, God again said “Let there be light,” and light burst forth anew. Jesus, the Sun of Righteousness, rose on the spiritual horizon and drove away the great spiritual darkness that had descended upon the entire world. He opened eyes blinded by sin and called on those who now had sight to look to Him,

the bright Morning Star. All those who see Him give heartfelt thanks that they can now see spiritually.

Christ said confidently of Himself: “I am the light of the world!” He knew how great the spiritual darkness was. He saw the dark clouds of oppression that had come over the people because of the legalistic yoke laid upon them by their leaders. God’s Word tells us that these people loved the darkness rather than the light because their deeds were evil (John 3:19). Ultimately, they crucified Jesus, seeking to extinguish the only light that could bring light to all people.

It is of great importance that our eyes remained focused on Christ. If we follow Him we will not walk in darkness. The apostle Paul expresses this thought by saying: “He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins” (Colossians 1:13–14). We cannot accept Christ without believing in Him and also accepting His cross, His blood, and His divinity. When we accept Christ, the darkness will have to yield.

Through our acceptance of the Lord Jesus we become children of God. We become partakers of His divine nature. Jesus tells His disciples: “You are the light of the world!” (Matthew 5:14) He calls on them to let their light shine before the people. Because they were connected to the heavenly source, they received illuminating power. They no longer lived in darkness, but in the light. They were so saturated with the bright light of the Lord Jesus that others could see it as well. Even today, Jesus shines



through people who have surrendered their lives to Him.

What happens though if our light is not clear, if we do not stay intimately connected to the true Light? We've heard the saying: "Christians are the only Bible that is read by an indifferent world." This should prompt us to live closely connected with God.

Today many people follow spiritual leaders who are themselves still blind and stuck in the mire of sin, headed for eternal ruin. Many are stumbling about, desperately looking for a light that can show them the right way. Yet many lights are so weak that they can barely be seen in the darkness. Other lights flicker on and off. Such lights can show no one the way.

But what a joy it is when a person, exhausted by his life of sin, discovers the light of a genuine Christian, and through him is directed to Christ, the true Light! He is the only hope for a dark world. Christ says: "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life" (John 8:12).

Yes, Christ is the Light of the world and the world needs Him. Everyone can come to Him, no matter what class, culture, or color they may be, no matter what level of education they may have attained. We all need Christ, who is the Light of the world!

Let There be Light!

I knew a man who always lamented his hardened, sinful heart. One day I asked him, "Have you ever known a sinner who did not have a hardened heart?"

"No," he replied, "but, my heart is not softening."

I stood up and closed the blinds so that the room was darkened. "Why did you do that?" he asked.

"I want to show you how you can get rid of the darkness," I replied as I handed him a broom and a dust-cloth. "Now sweep away the darkness."

"It won't work," he answered.

"Even if you try very hard?"

"Definitely not."

I opened the blinds again and the sun's rays immediately brightened the room. "It's the same with our hearts," I explained. "If we want to banish the darkness and fear that is inside, we will not be successful by our own efforts. Only if we allow Jesus, the Sun of Righteousness, to shine in our hearts, will this darkness be removed. If you do not accept this Light into your life, your heart will remain dark. He truly wants to fill you with His light.—But I see that the room is bright now. Let us close the blinds again. I think we have enough light."

"What do you mean?" he asked, rather bewildered.

"I am showing you that we cannot collect grace to store it up. If we want to walk in the light, we must continually be in the sun's presence and receive its rays in our soul. You do understand me what I am saying? We need to remain in constant connection with our Savior, the Sun of Righteousness, otherwise our soul will immediately be darkened."

The Inextinguishable Light

*All of us are forever dependent on this Light. It has no substitute.
This Light provides more than just energy — it gives life!
Therefore, in the absence of this Light there is only death.*

There is a light that always burns brightly and can never be extinguished. This light was kindled two thousand years ago when Jesus was born in Bethlehem. With the passing of time, this light has illuminated the world. Today, the name of Jesus is known across the globe.

From the beginning, the forces of darkness have hated the light. This darkness has tried everything to put it out, but neither the world nor the darkness can extinguish the light. It is unlike any other light. It not only illuminates the depravity of human nature and the injustices of the world, but it also illuminates the heart, revealing its secrets. Made uncomfortable by these revelations, people often rebel against the light. The Bible says that many people like the darkness more than the light because their hearts and deeds are evil (John 3:19).

The work of this darkness was already evident to Isaiah when he wrote these words: “Darkness shall cover the earth, and deep darkness the people” (Isaiah 60:2). The forces of darkness are still working to obscure the light and, where possible, to extinguish it completely. But all such attempts will fail.

From the beginning, Christianity has been under attack. Thousands of Christians have been burned alive, and many others have been thrown to wild animals. Using the cruelest methods that the devil can devise, Christians have been tortured and killed. Persecution continues to this day because mankind wants to destroy Christianity, but the light is like a fire burning in

the wind. The stronger the wind blows, the higher the flame leaps and the brighter the fire burns. The more Christians are persecuted and the more the name of Jesus is despised, the more the gospel is spread, and the light of the gospel will continue to burn until Jesus returns.

Let us praise God that there is there is an inextinguishable light in this sin-darkened world. Jesus, the Light of the world, has brought all people the hope of true happiness, and it is a hope that never deceives. The Bible says: “In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it” (John 1:4-5). If this light does not shine in the hearts of the people, then they are hopelessly lost. If all people would only open their hearts to the light, how different might the world look!

It is therefore the mission of the church to take the light to the people so that they may accept the gospel and live their lives in the freedom of Jesus Christ.

Dear reader, if this light is not yet shining in your heart, you can find it today! Jesus is knocking at the door of your heart, waiting to enter in. Let the Savior in, and give Him the first place in your heart and your life. Then you too will have the light that cannot be extinguished.

R.H. Minkler



The Light of the World

*What relationship do we have to the Light of God?
What effect does this Light have on our lives, on us personally
and on our relationships with others?*

In John 8:12 Jesus says, “I am the light of the world.” We read in the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5:14, “You are the light of the world.” Jesus’ disciples are to be like He is. This is both a privilege and an important responsibility. We all know that light is essential. Its absence can place us in danger. On a dark night our steps will be uncertain. However, darkness is banished by a shining light, and a dangerous way is illuminated and made secure.

Light is an essential element of life. Imagine the world without light, or without the sun! Everything would freeze and die; without the sun, the earth cannot produce its fruits. In a spiritual sense, darkness has engulfed the world. If Jesus, the spiritual sun, does not shine into a heart, that soul remains dark, bleak, and cold.

Our purpose as God’s children is to shine in a dark world. We are to point the way to God and heaven to those who are wandering in the darkness. However, in order to radiate His light, we must first have it in us.

Before a lamp can shine, it must be lit or connected to electricity. We notice that our streets are illuminated by streetlights at night. We know that these lights are connected to a power source. If this connection is broken, the lights immediately go out. Likewise, if we want to shine for Jesus, we must keep our connection to Him unbroken. We do not inherently possess this light. Jesus said, “I am the light of the world”. He is the light source, we are the lamps. We must get our light from Him. Only then can we truly shine.

Jesus wants to light up the world through the lives of His children. The purpose of a glowing lamp is not to be admired, but rather to illuminate the darkness and reveal what is around it. The world should be able to see God through us. We need to show the world that we are serious about our walk with God. We can only do this if we put our words into action. If all of God’s children would truly let their light shine, the spiritual darkness around us would be greatly diminished.

All followers of Christ are to be lights. It is very precious when children can follow the examples of their parents in shining for Jesus. The home where Jesus, the Sun of Righteousness, shines, is truly blessed!

Are you a light in the world, or does your life cast a shadow of sin? Let Jesus enter your heart and make you a light!

He Cares for You

Our limited knowledge and resources can quickly bring us to an impasse—or perhaps even into an emergency situation! The more wisdom a person gains, the more he recognizes the restricted bounds of his perception and how utterly dependent he is on the divine power the entire universe is subject to. What a difference there is in a life in which the omniscient and omnipotent God becomes active!

“Casting all your care upon Him; for He cares for you” (1 Peter 5:7). God cares for us in the sense of having a personal interest in us. We are the work of His hands, and as such He is interested in our prosperity. He watches over the development of our lives; He notes every step of progress. The one who plants a flower, waters it, cares for it, and watches the development of each tiny shoot and bud, cares more for that flower and has a deeper interest in it than has the one who merely stops for a few minutes to admire its full blown beauty and to enjoy its fragrance. To the one it is only one plant out of many, but to the other it has a special meaning, attraction, and worth because its bloom and fragrance are the result of his labor, care, and patience. It is his plant. So it is with God. He gave us our being; He has nourished and protected us and watched us develop day by day; He is interested in us and desires our lives to bloom and send forth a fragrance of integrity and purity all around. Let us so live that He will not be disappointed in us.

He cares for us because He created us for His glory and to fill a place in His eternal kingdom. He created us, not merely that we might have an existence, but for a purpose for Himself. He wants us to make a success of our lives, not for our own advantage, but to fill the place for which He created us for His purpose and glory. And because of this He will use every endeavor to help us succeed in our lives.

God cares for us in the sense that He loves us: “The Father Himself loves you” (John 16:27); “I have loved you with an everlasting love” (Jeremiah 31:3); “For God so loved the world” (John 3:16). He has a deep and abiding affection for every soul, and even when we stray away from Him into the depth of sin, His heart yearns over us

as a mother over her erring boy, only His love is stronger than a mother's. He sends His servants out to seek the lost, and His Spirit to plead with them. Sinner, He loves you! Though you have grieved Him and have repelled His Spirit over and over again, yet His eye beams with pity, His heart is tender with love, and His arms are outstretched toward you to welcome you to His embrace.

If He thus cares for the rebellious and neglectful sinner, how much does He care for His own obedient, loving children! How tender His love! Sometimes in a dark and troublesome hour when His face seems hidden, we may feel as the disciples did when they cried out in their distress, “Do you not care that we are perishing?” (Mark 4:38) Ah, He did care. At once He arose and rebuked the elements and brought the disciples safely to the land. Yes, He does care. “He cares for you” (1 Peter 5:7). His help may sometimes seem delayed, but it will come, and just at the most effective time. In your joys and victories and seasons of refreshing He cares for you, and also in the time of trial, of persecution, of heaviness and longing, and of bitterness of soul. In it all He cares, and He will bring you through when He sees the soul refined and fitted for His purpose. “He cares for you.” Believe it. Let your soul exult in it and shout it aloud. Or if you can in your sorrow only whisper it, let your Heart still say: “He loves and He cares. I will trust Him and be content.”

Again, He cares for us in the sense of taking care of us. His care is proved in His making so beautiful a world to be our home. The flowers, the fruits, the grains, the grasses, the animals, the sunshine, the winds, the rains, and all were made to minister to our need, comfort and happiness. For us these exist. That we may be fed:



He causes the earth to bring forth bountifully. That we may be clothed: He makes the cotton and the flax to grow out of the soil, the wool upon the sheep, and causes the silkworm to spin its glossy house. That we might be warmed: He made the coal, the gas, and the forests. That we might be protected: He made the stone, the wood, the iron, and the clay that we might have houses.

He cares also for our bodies, that we may have health. He gives us pure crystal water to quench our thirst and cool us in fever, balmy oxygen-laden air to build us

up, and countless other blessings. Above all this, He is Himself to us a Great Physician whose Word heals our suffering bodies and takes us out of the grasp of death.

He cares for us spiritually, giving us His grace to help in every time of need—to shield in temptation, to strengthen in trial, to make strong in adversity, courageous in danger, and valiant in conflict. Truly, God cares for us. Let us doubt and fear no more, but commit ourselves to Him, knowing that He will “never leave us nor forsake us” (Hebrews 13:5).

JESUS: LIGHT OF THE WORLD

Jesus, Our All in All

Who can bring true light into this dark world?
Only Jesus, because He is the Light of the World.

Who can get us acquainted with God?
Only Jesus, because He came from the Father.

Who can free the soul from sin?
Only Jesus, because He is the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.

Who can provide peace and rest for the soul?
Only Jesus, because He is the Prince of Peace, and gives rest to the weary.

Who can satisfy the hungry soul and fill the longing of the heart?
Only Jesus, because He is the Bread of Life, and gives living water. Whoever believes in Him and drinks of His water shall thirst no more, and who eats of His bread shall hunger no more.

Who can lead us to the Eternal Father?
Only Jesus, because He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life; our only way to the Father.

Who can give us an inheritance in heaven?
Only Jesus, because through Him we become joint-heirs with Christ. Whoever genuinely believes in Him has eternal life.

Who is the Joy of Heaven?
*Only Jesus.
In Him our joy is full.*

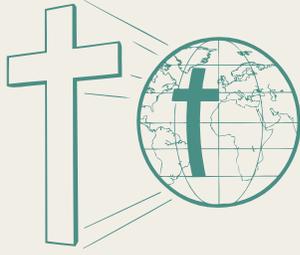
Who is the door to heaven?
*Only Jesus.
He says: “I am the door.”*

Who is the Song of Victory in heaven?
Jesus, for He is the Lion of Judah, who has overcome, and He has the key to Hades and to Death.

Who is the Light of Heaven?
Jesus, for He is the eternal light.

Who is the Love of Heaven?
Jesus, because He is the source of true love.

Yes, Jesus is our all in all.



Radio Broadcast

The Message of Salvation

Friedrich Krebs
Kitchener, Ontario

Under God's Direction

*“But know that the Lord has set you apart for Himself him who is godly;
The Lord will hear when I call to Him.” (Psalm 4:3)*

“Thus says the LORD, your Redeemer,
The Holy One of Israel:
“I am the LORD your God,
Who teaches you to profit,
Who leads you by the way you should go.” (Isaiah 48:17)

We are told that the patriarch Abraham went out of his country, not knowing where he was going (Hebrews 11:8). As we journey into a new year, we also know little about what we will encounter. Whoever considers our situation in this present age will recognize how much insecurity and uncertainty there is in our world. Each of us should therefore realize how much we need God's protection and guidance. The Bible says that Abraham had faith in God. What about us? Without a strong faith in God we cannot be anchored in Him.

Julia Hausmann (1826-1901) was the daughter of a teacher. She was chronically ill from early childhood, but she wrote over a hundred deeply meaningful songs. One of her most well-known hymns is, “Oh Take My Hand, Dear Father.” This song is written in the form of a prayer, and in the first stanza, Julia prays:

*O take my hand, dear Father, and lead Thou me,
Till at my journey's ending I dwell with Thee.
Alone I cannot walk e'en a single day,
So guide Thou, please, my footsteps on life's rough way.*

Should this not also be our prayer for the beginning of a new year? These simple words speak volumes! They allude to life's uncertainty, to our dependence on God, to our need for His help, and to faith and refuge in God.

Have you noticed that the precious name of Jesus is introduced to us in the very beginning of the New Testament (Matthew 1:1)? His name is Jesus because He is our Deliverer, Savior, and Lord, leading those who are His own to glory. Let us receive this message as if we were hearing it for the first time today. We are so blessed that this Jesus lives today, that He is there for us in a world in which there is so much sorrow, sin, and temptation. We know that this Jesus is our constant advocate before God. At the beginning of the new year, let us resolve again to hold His precious Name in remembrance and embrace it in our hearts.

Jesus met His faithful disciple John—who was called a “brother and companion in the tribulation”—on the island of Patmos with these comforting words: “Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last. I am He who lives” (Revelation 1:17). He was telling him, “Before you were here, I was here, and therefore I also want to be the first and the last in your suffering.” Jesus promised, “I am with you always” (Matthew 28:20). We can be assured that His daily guidance is also available for us.

Psalm 107:7 states: “He led them forth by the right way.”

Many of us have experienced this personally and can testify of it. Whoever walks in the way of the Lord walks in the best and most dependable direction. Confident in this faith, Thomas A. Dorsey prayed:

*Precious Lord, take my hand,
Lead me on, let me stand,
I am tired, I am weak, I am worn;
Through the storm, through the night,
Lead me on to the light;
Take my hand precious Lord, lead me home!*

Have we ever prayed like this? Have we recognized our need for His hand?

In October 1946, four of us undertook a dangerous journey. We were attempting to flee from Poland to Germany. With great difficulty we were able to board a freight train at a small station under the cover of darkness. We hoped that the train would eventually take us to our destination. However, already at the next station the train was delayed until the following evening. We were discovered by the station agent. However, he must not have reported us, due perhaps to our desperate pleas to him. When the train finally started moving again, we soon noticed that it was headed in the wrong direction. We decided to jump from the moving train to avoid having to backtrack too much. We managed it without injury and then faced a long trek on foot. Around midnight we approached a village. Since we sensed that we might have already been spotted by someone, we decided to risk walking openly through the village. Suddenly we came upon two men standing in a driveway. My father asked for directions to the train station. Although we were in what had recently become enemy territory, these men gave us directions and let us go. This was a miracle that continues to amaze me to this day! In that moment we were able to recognize and experience how wonderful the Lord saves and leads.

The year 2014 has begun. Some of us may be discouraged by anxiety and grief. But have we considered the wonderful truth that we, as insignificant beings, can rely on the leading of our mighty God? What a privilege and what a blessing!

Psalm 107 was written as a reminder to the people of Israel of their pilgrimage through the desert: “He led them forth by the right way” and they saw “His goodness” and “His wonderful works” (Psalm 107:7-8). We wish our readers a richly blessed new year, under the best and most reliable direction of our Almighty God!



Christian Discipleship

Jesus has saved me! What do I do now?

They are on the road to Damascus, determined to stand up for the truth, determined to fight the false prophets who deny the faith of their fathers with every available means. They have neared the city when suddenly a bright light from heaven surrounds them. And this is where Saul is converted to the faith he had tried to stamp out. You can read about it in Acts 9. While he is lying on the ground, he utters with fear and trembling the question that will dictate his life from that point forward: “Lord, what do You want me to do?” This is the central question of Christian discipleship.

Dear reader, God does not immediately take you to heaven once you become His child. He leaves you on earth because He wants to have people here who follow Christ, people who are becoming more like Him, people who are fulfilling God’s commission as light and salt of the earth, and people who bring forth much fruit to the glory of their Master.

But what does it mean to follow Christ? Jesus Himself tells us: “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me” (Matthew 16:24). Discipleship means three things: denying oneself, taking up the cross, and following Jesus.

Denying oneself means to stop asking what we want, and start asking what God wants. It means to do what God wants even if we would rather be doing something else. It involves admitting that life in this world is no longer solely about us; rather it is about Him. In our prayers, it is no longer just a matter of what the Lord can do for us, but more and more about what we can do for Him. Self-denial culminates in complete consecration (Please read Romans 12:1.)

Taking up the cross has the following meaning: Life with God will bring us hardship. First, we become the prime target of Satan. He will apply every effort to bring us back into sin’s bondage. At the very least, He will want to shift our focus away from Jesus. We will also experience hardship from those around us. (Please read John

15:18-20.) Taking up one’s cross means to go through these attacks and persecutions just as Jesus did, and not be diverted from the heavenly goal.

Following Jesus is best understood by looking at what the disciples did when they travelled with Him in Galilee and Judea. They were together with Him; they listened to His words. They lived in communion with Him. They accepted His advice and admonition. They were obedient to Him when He gave them an assignment to fulfill. They learned a lot by following Him. In order to follow Jesus we must do the same. We need to read the Gospels—read the words He spoke. We need to accept His instructions and admonitions. We must be obedient to Him when He calls us to action. Because He is risen and lives, we can live in communion with Him through prayer. Then like the disciples, we too will learn much by following Jesus.

In another place, Paul describes life in Christian discipleship as follows: “It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me” (Galatians 2:20). Paul repeatedly encouraged his readers to take Jesus as an example. You can read about it in Ephesians 5:1-2, Philippians 2:5, Romans 15:1-3, and in many other places. Following Christ’s example means that He is on our mind and that we think about Him often. He must be as precious to us as Paul describes Him in Philippians 3:7-8 and in Colossians 2:3. He must become the goal of our prayers, as Paul prays in Ephesians 3:14-19: “For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height—to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.”

Robert Witt
Gifhorn, Germany



JESUS: LIGHT OF THE WORLD

Let Your Light Shine!

This is a serious command from our Savior. Every one of His followers should strive to fulfill it.

We all know the relief we experience when after a long period of clouds and rain the sun suddenly pierces the grey mist and gradually dispels the overcast skies with its glorious beauty. All of nature again basks in its golden rays, and the pleasure of living is wonderfully increased.

Yet there is an even more powerful, life-altering kind of sun, our dear Lord Jesus Christ. Those to whom He graciously reveals Himself, and this He does only for those who express a true desire for His presence, are bathed in His glorious light. Only then can people shine as Jesus wants them to. What a great responsibility we have as children of God to provide this evidence of God's light!

The world is looking for more than artful and copiously dispensed words from Christ followers: it is looking for a real power. That will be hard to do if we are depending on our own strength. In fact, we soon realize our complete inability to display God's power in our own strength. Why then do we so often start by using our own wits and our own strength?

When the moon is in line with the sun's rays, it simply reflects the light it receives without expending any energy of its own. This is exactly what happens when we receive the rays of God's Son. It is completely natural then to re-radiate the power of the light we have received. The reason so many people do not reflect God's light is because they are not in line with His Son. Indeed, how could the moon reflect the light of its celestial counterpart if it were to hide from its view?

When we are not in constant connection with the Sun

of Life there will be a noticeable effect upon our lives. Not even our best efforts and most strident will can make up for a deficient prayer life or laxity in meditating upon God's Word. It is, after all, the faithful reading of the Scriptures that influences our thinking, speaking, and doing. If we hide from the light of God's Word, its reflection will soon fade in us and the people around us will notice. When Christians no longer shine and become dark they are more of a hindrance to God's work on earth than a help. May God help us!

May He give us the wisdom to speak only as the apostle Paul describes it: "Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one" (Colossians 4:6), and "whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things" (Philippians 4:8).

People generally think so little about the effect of their speech. In the heat of the moment, words are spoken quickly, carelessly, often producing harmful results. May we learn to think carefully before we speak so that what we say may truly glorify God. Our words and our deeds contribute to the light that we reflect.

Finally, let us look to Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, asking Him to make something beautiful out of us to His delight and for the blessed benefit of the people around us. It is my true desire to love the Lord with my whole heart, letting His light shine through me for His honor and sovereign purposes.

H. Schulz

BEING STEADFAST

BY VALENTIN STIEBEN

At the end of the year we usually spend some time reflecting on what has happened during the last twelve months. We become silent and the events of the year run through our thoughts. What did we experience, what were the special experiences we made with God? We remember answered prayers. We look back at wonderful moments spent in the presence of God, at times of fellowship with other Christians where God especially blessed us.

But we may also remember times when we did not sense God's presence at all. We may have been completely discouraged and it seemed as if God would not hear our prayers. Then Satan came along to take full advantage of our situation. Because we were not vigilant, he was able to bring about our downfall. What a deep pain filled your soul and the thought came to you: "Serving God seemed so simple and easy a few weeks ago, but now I have failed. Maybe serving God is not for me. I cannot resist temptation." Dear young reader, have you known such moments in your life?

Now you stand at the beginning of a new year and your heart's greatest desire is to make a new start; to open to a new, clean page in the book of your life and do better in the new year. In order to be able to succeed with God's help, consider the following points.

Undivided Service

The Lord Jesus tells us in Luke 9:62: "No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." That means that if you profess to serve God but continually look back wistfully on your life in sin, you are unfit for God's kingdom. If while plowing, the farmer drives the animals forward, but continues to look back, the furrow will be all over the place. This illustration shows a possible reason for your defeat: your firm will and determination to serve God in all circumstances is lacking. No one can serve two masters: God wants your entire heart.

God's Strength, Not Yours

Have you until now attempted to serve God in your own strength? Your parents may have brought you to church since you were a small child. You keep in contact with young people who follow Jesus and you have the outer appearance of serving God, but you lack the strength to

lead a sin-free life. Ask God to show you how He sees you! It is only when you are born again that joy and peace will enter your heart, and by grace you'll have victory.

Guard Your First Love

If God has forgiven your sins and made you His child, then take care to fulfill your spiritual duties and obligations. Keep God as the first love in your heart and guard your zeal for and gratefulness to Him. Should you carelessly commit a sin or make a mistake, then ask God for forgiveness. The apostle John writes these encouraging words: "And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (1 John 2:1).

Purpose of Trials

If you have lost the joy in serving God through the tests and struggles of life, then remind yourself of the apostle Peter's words: "These trials will show that your faith is genuine. It is being tested as fire tests and purifies gold—though your faith is far more precious than mere gold. So when your faith remains strong through many trials, it will bring you much praise and glory and honor on the day when Jesus Christ is revealed to the whole world" (1 Peter 1:7 NLT).

A Life of Faith

In Romans 4:20, we read about Abraham: "He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith." Amidst life's struggles, we may feel that God has forgotten us. Meanwhile He is near to us and holds His protecting hand over us. During a test in school, the teacher may be in the room but he is silent and does not help us answer any questions. This is necessary to test whether what was learned was also understood. It is the same with God. He allows us to be tested, "but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it" (1 Corinthians 10:13).

God desires to make us more like Himself. He works on us and allows certain things to happen in our lives. Look up to Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, in all of life's situations. He will give us the strength we need for our journey into the new year.

QUESTION

As a Christian, what should I do so that my siblings get saved?
How should I behave towards them?

ANSWER

This is an excellent question! Your heartfelt desire for the salvation of your siblings or parents is in itself evidence that you have spiritual life. Remember, true life produces life! Now, how should you and I behave towards the unsaved people who are close to us and who know us well?

Our relationship with God has everything to do with how our Christian testimony will be perceived by our family members. Jesus says, “Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me” (John 15, 4). As soul winners, we must never forget that it is God who most desires and actively seeks the salvation of our loved ones. He wants “all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth” (1 Timothy 2:4). God wants to show our family members His love, mercy, and justice—things every human heart longs for. But how does He do this?

God is able and willing to do it through you and me. God wants our loved ones to recognize His “fruit” in us. And, according to Jesus, the only way you and I can produce this fruit is if we have a live connection with Him. It is through this live connection that God’s life-producing “sap” flows. But here’s the thing: That connection needs to be maintained, according to Jesus. If it’s broken, the sap can’t flow into us and bring the godly fruit our loved ones need to see. So, we must “abide in the vine,” which means staying connected to Jesus.

Realizing this “connection obligation” will greatly influence our behavior. In fact, we will be less concerned with our behavior, our testi-

mony, and their success, and more concerned with maintaining this intimate, life-conveying connection with the Lord. It is across this connection that the power and grace of God will energize our behavior, our conversation, and our overall Christian testimony.

Now the question is, how do we remain connected to Jesus? Instead of just praying to Him, we need to live a life of prayer. Instead of just reading the Bible, we need to meditate on Scripture and absorb its truth. The result can be nothing less than a growing love for Him who loved us first. It will cause a daily, self-shattering awe over the unmerited favor God showed us in the gift of Jesus Christ, and we will humbly glorify Him for it. Exhilarated each day by God’s indescribable grace in liberating us from the power of sin, we will avoid every sinful thing in our lives. We will show God our undivided loyalty, rejecting every compromise the wicked world seeks us to make. And this love, this humility, and this freedom in Christ will not go unnoticed by those around us. God will reveal His saving attributes to them through us, and those who are seeking He will surely save!

One last word on longsuffering, or patience: Let’s remember how much pain and patience it cost God to save you and me. We would like to see our loved ones get saved right now! But you and I didn’t immediately take that step of faith either. Let’s remember that God loves our family members in the same manner, measure, and with the same longsuffering that He loved you and me. And His love will finally triumph!

Franz Friesen
Aylmer, ON

Experiences with God

Encouragement for Suffering Christians

“Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits.” (Psalm 103:2)

With the Lord’s help I want to write a testimony to encourage all children of God who may suffer from a physical ailment. God is still present and ready to help us today.

On January 4th, 1988, I had a work-related accident in north Caucasus in Russia. I was 32, had a wife and two children, was full of strength, and was brimming with plans and dreams. I was in the prime of my life. But on that fateful morning, God showed me that all we can ever say is: Only if God wills it and I live, I will do this or that.

My colleague and I were driving a motorcycle with a sidecar that morning, when a drunken tractor driver met us on the road. He came at us head on, and although we swerved, one wheel of the tractor rolled over my legs. I was unconscious for a moment. When I regained consciousness and tried to stand, my legs would not respond. I was taken by car to the hospital.

If someone had told me ahead of time what would happen next, I would have said that I could never endure it: three-and-a-half hours of surgery, three broken vertebrae stabilized by two metal plates and three screws, almost a year of paraplegia without a wheelchair (none were available), five months without sleep, only four prone positions available, pain day and night, and cramps in my legs that still bother me.

However I can now walk, drive, and ride bike. I learned to put my trust in God more than in people during these years. I thank God and also my wife. She was faithfully by my bedside in the hospital, never missing a day. She has been a great help to me over the years. God is my Father and increases my strength daily. I have learned to make peace with the pain and cramps in my legs. I see this experience as amazing love from my Father to me because He, out of love, found a way to save me.

God is faithful and keeps His Word. He is always there for those who suffer; He gives strength to endure. He lengthened my life that I might see my five grandchildren. Dear brothers and sisters: trust in God! He is still the same today!

Frank Rösch
Pforzheim, Germany

I WILL, I CAN'T, I WON'T!

BY BENITA TOVSTIGA

Benji and Sammy were standing in front of the candy counter looking longingly at the wonderful display of treats that neither one of them could afford. If only they had some money! Even just ten cents would have given them enough to buy two Sour Patch candies to share! Benji nudged Sammy. "Nobody would notice if we took just one and shared it. We could pay next time we come."

Sammy shook his head at Benji, horrified at the suggestion. "I won't do that. Not ever. Let's go." He turned and walked out, without looking to see if Benji would follow.

Benji stood at the candy counter for a while, and then reluctantly followed his friend out. "Spoil sport," he muttered under his breath, as he sat down on the bench outside next to Sammy. "But you're right. I can't do it, either. We'd probably get caught and we'd be in big trouble."

Sammy shrugged. "Maybe we would and maybe we wouldn't. I didn't say I can't steal. I think I probably could, and I probably could get away with it. I said I won't steal. "Won't" is better. I'm choosing to do the right thing, even if nobody knows but me and God." He shrugged again. "Let's go to my house. Maybe my Mom will give us some ice cream."

There are three answers you can give when temptation comes knocking at your door: I will, I can't, or I won't. When you say "I will," then Satan wins. When you say "I can't," you are leaving Satan room to tempt you just a little bit further and a little bit harder. But when you say "I won't," then you are choosing God's way, and God's way is always best.



Experiences with God

Healing after a Workplace Mishap

“Offer to God thanksgiving, and pay your vows to the Most High. Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify Me.” (Psalm 50:14–15)

With this testimony we wish to give honor, praise, and thanks to God for the wonderful help He has given us.

When our son Herbert was hospitalized because of a deadly injury and then lay in a coma for weeks, we wrestled in prayer with Almighty God. Herbert was injured while using a table saw: as he finished cutting through a piece of wood, the blade caught the piece of wood and shot it back at his abdomen. The force of the impact caused extensive internal injuries and our son was immediately hospitalized.

At first, the doctors believed Herbert was only severely bruised externally. They could find no evidence of internal injuries. But as three days passed, our son continued to complain about severe pain and asked to be operated on. The doctors did so, discovering to their dismay that his intestine had burst and that a deadly infection was already spreading.

Our son lay in a coma for over two weeks. Everything in his abdominal region had to be cleaned. His blood was infected, his kidneys overloaded. He had to be put on dialysis. His health was in such critical condition that from a human standpoint survival seemed impossible. As the family, we were deeply concerned.

On Sunday, the doctors predicted Herbert would live for only a few hours because the dialysis machine had broken down. It seemed there was no more hope for our son. The color of his skin got noticeably bluer, and he was swelling severely. There was nothing the doctors could do for him any more. We asked the brothers and sisters in the churches of Eppingen and Pforzheim for prayer support. Sunday morning they prayed earnestly for our son during the worship service. And praise God He heard those prayers! He deserves all the glory!

When Herbert's children came to the hospital Sunday afternoon to visit him, the doctors shared with them something that they themselves could not explain. That morning, the color of his skin had suddenly normalized and the infection began to subside. From that point forward, our son got progressively better. We can attribute his dramatic recovery only to the prayers that were sent to God on his behalf.

After 50 days in the hospital, Herbert was finally released. His wounds are not yet completely healed, but he is doing much better.

We are very thankful to God that He heard our prayers. Nothing is impossible for our dear Savior, and He is still the same today as He always has been. We are also thankful to all our brothers and sisters for their many prayers.

Frieda und Reinhold Rösler
Eppingen, Germany

Divine Clarity in a Time of Confusion

I was born to believing parents and was raised according to Christian principles. My parents came from the Ukrainian village of Marianówka. I can still remember how they drove my siblings and me to church, and how we would sing along the way: “No place is so dear to my childhood as the little brown church in the vale.”

In 1935, our family was forced to relocate to the Russian Republic of Karelovinska. It was a heavy blow for my parents. They had to leave their entire estate and move to a completely strange place. But God has always helped – as He helped then He helps us today. Even in this unfamiliar place, believers marvelously found one another and worshiped together in house churches. Many of the songs we sang at that time we still sing today from the German hymnal *Zions Wahrheitslieder*.

In 1941, because of World War II, our family and many others were displaced again. We were sent far north to Komi ASSR and placed under strict military control. Another very difficult chapter began here for the German people. They were subjected to hard labor in the forest and received almost nothing to eat. Many starved to death, including my father.

After the war, more house meetings were formed and God granted a great revival. Many people found the Lord and experienced His deep and abiding peace, myself included. Soon I was baptized by immersion by Brother Robert Rohde. As I came out of the water, I was filled with a deep desire to do all that God had commanded. I was so happy and deeply convinced that no one could take me from the right path. I did not foresee then how soon the temptations would start.

The military strictures were lifted in 1955. We all received our identification papers and were allowed to leave. I had married in the meantime and my husband and I now had three small children. Our family made the necessary preparations and we moved from the cold of the north to the more temperate area of southern Kazakhstan, where my husband's parents lived. The journey took 21 days and with God's help and protection we arrived safely.

In the village where my husband found work there was only one other German family. They were Adventists and observed the Sabbath. When they heard that we were believers, the man paid us a visit. He read Exodus 20:11 from his Bible and said, “God rested on the seventh day of the week, but you rest on the first day of the week.” I was unfazed, for at the time I was still very convinced about what I believed. But the man came again and again, and every time he asked, “Have you decided to live according to God's commands?” I began to experience great inner turmoil and confusion. My happiness was gone. I began to wonder if what my parents had taught me to believe was false. As time went on, my confusion became too much to endure. I could no longer sleep at night.

I yearned for a place where I could be entirely alone with God, where I could spread my need before Him and then receive His clear guidance. Not far from our house was a deep canal whose banks were overgrown with grasses and thorny hedges. One evening I went there. There were many snakes in this area, but I threw myself on my knees without fear and cried loudly and prayed: “Dear God, I am not standing up until you tell me what is right. I cannot continue to live in this way.” I suddenly heard a voice: “Follow Jesus' footsteps.” I was so shocked that my whole body started to shake. I opened my eyes and saw a human form dressed in white. I cannot grasp all that I experienced, but in my heart I felt a deep peace. The doubt was gone and I was confident that I was indeed on the right way. While going through these battles and doubts, I often wished that I lived in a different village, but God's ways are always right.

It is wonderful to be born to a believing family and to be raised in a Christian home. But there is something far more important. Each one of us must make our own personal experience with God. Praise, glory, and honor to my Savior Jesus Christ for His great grace. He heard my soul's need. To have the peace of God in your soul is the most precious jewel. May His holy Name be praised!

Sidonie Grauberger
Augsberg, Germany

Time with the Family

“My times are in Your hand.” (Psalm 31:15)

Trudy came to her mother with a picture book. She wanted her to explain what the pictures meant. The little girl looked up to her mother with a trusting glance. Her mother, however, was busy with her sewing and exhausted after a night of little sleep. Annoyed, she responded, “I don’t have time right now. Come back later.”

Trudy left disheartened. “Mother never has any time for me,” she thought, suddenly overwhelmed by sadness.

A busy father promised his children, “Tonight I will stay home and we will spend the evening together.” The children were excited, looking forward to the evening as only children can. But that night someone came to invite their father to an important meeting. The children expected their father to say “no”. Not wanting to appear weak in front of his friend, he agreed to go. Once again he did not have time for his family. Deeply disappointed, the children found other ways to occupy their evening.

A mother asked her daughter to help her with the laundry. She was not feeling well and was tired from a long work week. But the daughter had plans with her boyfriend. She was of the opinion that her free time on a Saturday belonged to her. “I don’t have any time,” she told her snippishly, and left her disappointed mother alone.

Dozens of similar stories could be told. Many people often have little time for the closest and most important people in their lives. Yet they find time for pursuing money and assets, amusements and pleasures, fame and influence. Often these people do not have the right perspective on time because they do not have a relationship with God. When God is not the priority in life, everything else is out of proper order.

When we take time to look at the future, we are reminded of the principle of sowing and reaping. The way we sow our time today will be the way we reap it in the future. God Himself promised that this principle would govern our lives (Galatians 6:7). To neglect to take time for our children means that one day our children may neglect to take time for us. We will need their help, their sympathy, their company, but they, having witnessed our example, may have better things to do.

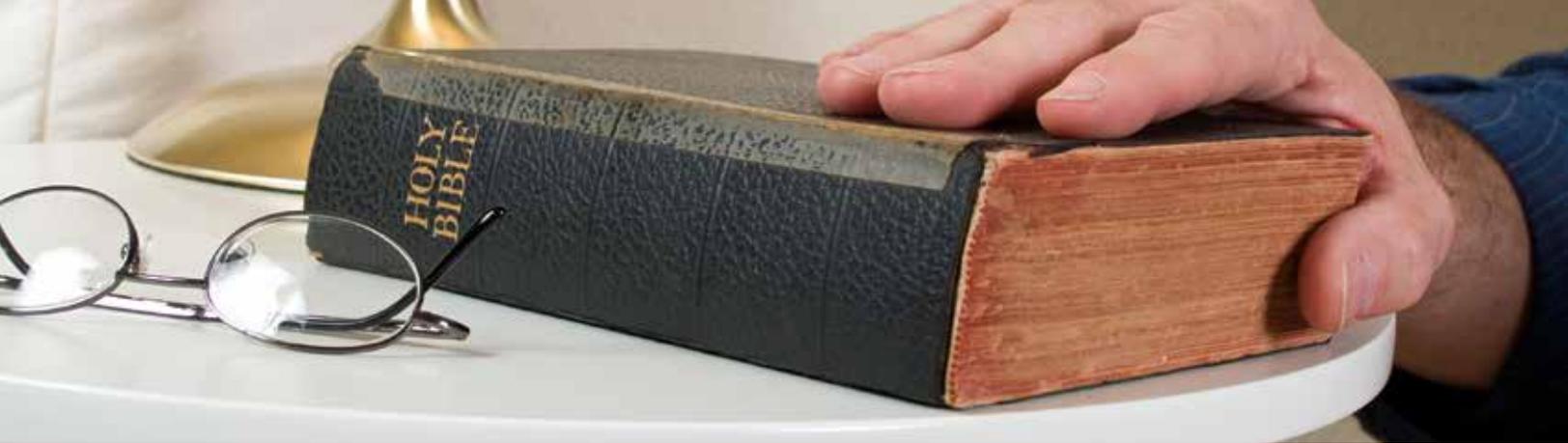
Many children are sent to daycare. Many elderly are in nursing homes. There may be justifiable reasons for leaving both the young and the aged in the care of others, but when it is done for materialistic and personal comfort reasons alone, our loved ones notice. As a result, it is possible that we will not be able to count on their patience and love when we become helpless and in need of it.

Listen to what the psalmist says: “My times are in Your hand” (Psalm 31:15). The confidence he has about his time is remarkable. Do we own our time? Can someone truly speak of “his time”? What does the psalmist mean by this? “My time” includes all the years from the day of birth to the day of death. This time is a gift to you and me. We cannot prolong this time, even if we desire to. “The days of our lives are seventy years; and if by reason of strength they are eighty years...” (Psalm 90:10). This is as true today as it was centuries ago. This is the time man has. Not everyone is given this much time. Often they have only short days, weeks, or months.

“My time” is measured time, a finite unit. One day it will come to an end. Even the greatest health and wellness promotor must die. Only someone who knows that his time is in God’s hand can hear this message with confidence and joy. Those who cling to this knowledge take every day from God’s hand and give it back to Him again. Whoever entrusts his life and time to God does not need to worry about the coming day.

When we see our time as coming from God’s hand we will not complain, “I don’t have time!” We will then know better how to separate the urgent from the non-urgent, the important from the non-important. A mother will have time for the questions of her child. A father will value his children more than his friends. A daughter will recognize her responsibility to her mother and help her without complaining. More importantly, we will have time for prayer and time to listen to God’s Word.

How comforting it is to know that in all situations our times are in the Lord’s hand (Psalm 31:15)! Let us cling to this promise in all our haste, turmoil, and uncertainties; even in the year ahead of us.



Preferred Translation

A teacher spoke to a Bible class about the different translations of the Bible. He began with the ancient Latin, called the *Vulgate of Hyronymus*. He then spoke of newly revised versions and which of them he preferred.

Afterwards, an acquaintance of mine remarked: "I prefer my mother's translation above all others." These words provoked considerable astonishment.

"Your mother's translation? What do you mean?" was the reply.

"I mean," the man explained, "that my mother, for as long as I can remember, translated the Bible for me into daily life. She translated accurately, giving full expression to all that she had read. She left nothing unclear. In her translation, things became clear and real to me. Her whole life is a translation of the Word of God. Every child can understand it. None of the best translations you listed can exceed hers."

Paul had a similar translation in mind when he said, "You are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read by all men; clearly you are an epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink but by the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of flesh, that is, of the heart" (2 Corinthians 3:2-3).

It is in this sense that we are all called to be Bible translators, and we are to offer that translation to our families and to the world in which we live. May we accomplish this important task in such a way that no one goes astray because of our version of the Word of God.

A Mother Frail and Aged

*When your mother is frail and aged,
And you have become older too,
When things that once seemed easy for her,
Are now a burden, hard to do;
And when her eyes, once bright and lovely,
No longer see with clarity;
When her feet have grown tired and weary,
And rapid steps are rare to see —
Then be her support, do it with gladness,
Give her your hand, do not decline.*

*The time will come, it is a given,
When you go with her one last time.
So when she asks, give her an answer;
When she repeats, answer again.
When she persists, do not grow weary,
With gentle patience, do the same.
And when she cannot understand you,
Explain it slower than before.
The hour approaches, it will be bitter,
When her soft lips will say no more.*

THE STORY BEHIND THE HYMN

He Lifted Me Out



LAWRENCE E. BROOKS

Lawrence E. Brooks was born in January of 1894. In 1915, at the age of 21, he found the Lord as his Savior. He entered the ministry in the Church of God in the same year. He would pastor churches in nine different locations over the next 20 years. In 1920, Lawrence Brooks married Vena Miller and they had two children.

Brother Brooks also wrote poetry. Some of his poems were set to music and appeared in the 1936 hymnal *His Praise Anew*. One of those songs is featured below.

Over the years, Brother Brooks served the church in various capacities. On August 2, 1979 he passed away at the age of 85. Shortly before his passing, Brother Brooks wrote the following about the movement of the Church of God: "It is great to know that God has brought us through these first 100 years. We have not grown rapidly in numbers, but in many other respects we have made great strides. I honestly believe that God now can depend upon this movement to do His work in a way that He has not been able to do before. I have faith for the future."¹

Lawrence Brooks told how "He Lifted Me Out" came into being in his memoirs (1974): "One of my best years in Cleveland was 1934. In May 1934, K. Y. Plank conducted a two-week revival in our congregation. I was greatly concerned for the revival effort, and made it a habit during the meeting to get up an hour before the family and spend this time in meditation and prayer.

One morning while I was in a mood of thanksgiving, a poem began to take shape in my mind. I secured paper and pencil and within twenty minutes I had written the song "He Lifted Me Out." As I wrote the song, the melody came very clear. An hour later when Brother Plank came down to breakfast, he went to the piano. I hummed the melody over and he picked it up on the piano. In a short time we were singing the song.

I managed to make a couple of hand copies of the music and in August at our state camp meeting at Springfield, Ohio, ...Marie Gorusch and I sang the song as a soprano and alto duet in morning service. Before we were finished, some of the people were shouting and coming to the altar. The preacher had no chance to bring the message, for the service and altar service lasted for an hour and a half."²

Kurt Pudel
Edmonton, Alberta

Sources:

¹ Callen, Barry L., *The First Century Vol II*, Warner Press, 1979, p. 107.

² Buehler, Kathleen D., *Heavenly Song*, Warner Press 1993, pp. 87-90

He Lifted Me Out

Lawrence E. Brooks
Harm. by K. Y. Plank

Lawrence E. Brooks



1 I was out on the broad way of sin and de - spair, Crushed 'neath my
2 I was wan - d'ring a - far from my Sav - ior and home, Faint - ing and
3 I was build - ing my home on the dry, shift - ing sand, Cast - ing my
4 I have start - ed for heav - en, my heart filled with song, Wan - d'ring is



bur - den of sor - row and care, My con - stant com - pan - ions were
wea - ry in sin did I roam; I need - ed a hand to
lot in a cold bar - ren land; "You're doomed now for aye," I
o - ver, my sins all are gone; Thru Je - sus own blood cleansed with -



trou - ble and doubt, Till Je - sus reached down and lift - ed me out.
turn me a - bout, Then Je - sus reached down and lift - ed me out.
heard Sa - tan shout. But Je - sus reached down and lift - ed me out.
in and with - out, O praise His dear name! He lift - ed me out.



He lift - ed me out of the deep mir - y clay; He set - tled my feet



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SALVATION



Experiences with God

Healed from a 13-year Ailment

I would like to thank my Savior for all that He has done for me and that He always chose the best ways for me to be drawn closer to Him.

I especially thank Him for freeing me from an ailment that has afflicted me for almost 13 years. In the summer of 2000 I was committed to a rehabilitation clinic because of my back problems. During one therapy session, my muscles started convulsing. At first these spasms seemed relatively harmless, but with time they increased in frequency and intensity. Neither tests nor doctors were able to provide any answers. Unable to work, I was eventually pronounced disabled. Yet, I knew that our Heavenly Physician could help me. I was anointed in accordance with James 5:14-15. I felt much better afterwards, but the convulsions did not completely disappear.

Then something unexpected happened. In October of last year, my husband and I drove to the 60th anniversary of the church in Hamm. I had been looking forward to the services and fellowship with the brothers and sisters, but on the second day I suffered a severe herniated disc and was brought to Bielefeld for an emergency operation. At first, I did not understand why this had to happen to me now and so far away from home. But then a passage from Isaiah 55:8 came to my mind: “For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways,” says the Lord.” I knew that the brothers and sisters in Hamm were praying for me and this gave me the strength to lay myself in God’s hands.

The operation went well and after being discharged I recuperated with my children in Bünde. My family cared for me around the clock. I was also encouraged by the calls and visits from various brothers and sisters. I am very thankful for them. After three weeks I was well enough to attempt the trip home, which I endured with God’s help.

The greatest surprise waited for me at home. I realized that the muscle convulsions had disappeared. The enemy tried to whisper to me that it was only temporary and that they would certainly return, but thank God, almost a year has passed and they have not once appeared. As well, the paralysis that came with the herniated disc is almost gone, and I can affirm the words of the psalmist: “In the day when I cried out, You answered me, and made me bold with strength in my soul” (Psalm 138:3).

Amen.

Anna Schöffmann
Germany



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FROM THE EDITORIAL TEAM

This January 2014 issue marks the 120th year of the *Evangelium Posaune*, the German co-publication of the *Foundation of Faith*. Its title is translated “Gospel Trumpet,” and this periodical began its important task in 1895, sounding out the clear and pristine sounds of our Savior’s gospel message.

Many challenges and difficulties confronted the publishing work, not the least of which were the tragedies of two World Wars. And yet, the publication continued uninterrupted through all the years, with copies of it sent to German readers all over the world.

The work was accomplished at the expense of much labor and effort, concerns over financial support, and prayers for willing workers. Yet the Lord faithfully stood by these efforts, helping, sustaining, and blessing them.

Isaiah writes: “Then I said, ‘I have labored in vain, I have spent my strength for nothing and in vain; yet surely my just reward is with the Lord, and my work with my God’” (Isaiah 49:4). We too look with confidence and faith to our Lord and say, “The work is not in vain.” It is, after all, God’s work, and it bears fruit for eternity.

Dear readers, the beginning of a new year offers us the renewed opportunity to express our gratitude to the Lord as we look back, and to ask Him for the grace we will need as we look ahead. It is wonderful that we can devote our energy, affection, and resources to the Lord. We also have the opportunity to share the saving gospel message, and to seek new subscribers to these important publications. Let us all be willing to give our best for God, for His church, and for His mission.

We offer heartfelt thanks to all those who have financially supported the *Evangelium Posaune* and the *Foundation of Faith*, and we wish all our readers God’s blessings and grace for the new year.

The Lord is My Light

*The Lord is my light! That is my glad confession,
He is my comfort, joy, and my delight.
Still shining bright in dark days and oppression,
The Lord is my light!*

*The Lord is my light! Though pillars fail and crumble,
And things in life may seem to not go right.
What sweet relief! Great comfort for the humble,
The Lord is my light!*

*The Lord is my light! Upon the path to glory,
It shines upon the way, and leads me right.
I'll greet Him joyfully with this glad story:
The Lord is my light!*