

# Foundation of Faith

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*Yearning*

NOVEMBER 2019

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## Editorial

Dear Reader,

*We are all on a pilgrimage and our body hungers and thirsts for, and needs food, our daily bread for life.*

*But everyone also has a longing and desire for love, respect, companionship, happiness, acknowledgment, possessions, and fortune. Yes, we all need earthly, material things for life, but therein lies the danger: "The more one has, the more one desires; but never will his wishes tire."*

*So when riches and possessions abound, a person may well say, "Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, and be merry" (Luke 12:19). Yet our Lord names this rich man as a fool because he only cared for earthly things and gathered treasures. Sadly, he was not rich in God; rather, he was poor, blind, and naked. Unprepared for eternity, he was damned.*

*Dear Reader, our inner person requires more than food and drink. Our soul thirsts for God. All of us have an inner longing, as the Psalmist describes: "As the deer pants for the water brooks, so pants my soul for You, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God?" (Psalm 42:1-2).*

*There is only One who can still our longing, our desire, and that is Jesus Christ, the Son of God. In the Lord alone we find salvation, peace, and eternal blessedness. Therefore, "blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled" (Matthew 5:6).*

*Dear Reader, do not try to still your longing with the things the world offers you. You will remain thirsty and empty on the inside. Find it at the spring of living water; find it with the Lord.*

H. D. Nimz





## Life in Light of Eternity

**W**e don't need proof that life is short and uncertain. We experience this daily. We get so attuned to this fact, and instead of allowing it to make an impression on us, we simply grow accustomed to it and barely ever think about it.

Someone compared life to a bridge that stretches over a roaring, raging river. The bridge floor is covered with trap doors, which open when a traveler crosses over, and he disappears from the bridge and is taken away into the depths of the raging river. Of the great number of people who attempt to cross this bridge, no one ever reaches the other side. They have all disappeared through the trap door into eternity. Again and again, huge numbers of people approach this journey.

This illustration portrays how short human life is and how certain the end is. But life entails a lot more. It has eternal possibilities and responsibilities. The Word of

God tells us many things regarding the end of our life. In Hebrews 9:27 we read, "And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment." "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad" (2 Corinthians 5:10). Viewed in this light, life on earth is a short probation period in which we must prepare for our future and eternal destination.

The human being is born in sin and, therefore, has the natural inclination towards evil. The Holy Spirit, however, wants to empower us to avoid the evil and follow the good. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. . . . He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him" (John 3:16, 36).

Dear Reader, what is the purpose of your life? For what and for whom are you living? Jesus illustrates a serious picture for us: "When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world' . . . . Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels' . . . . And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life" (Matthew 25:31-46). May God help us to be standing on His right hand on that day. ■

*H. W. Nelson*

# What Will Heaven Be Like?

There are people who don't believe in an after-life, be it heaven or hell. However, God's Word clearly describes both of these places of eternal destiny.

Eternity in heaven is time without end; it just continues on forever. This is something our finite minds cannot grasp. Try to imagine the future as far ahead as you can—think of ten thousand years in comparison to the span of your life. Then imagine ten thousand times ten thousand, and you have 100 million years. Even that exceeds our ability to understand, but it is just an infinitesimally small fragment of eternity. When this long period of time has passed, even though years will not be counted in heaven, eternity will not have diminished by even the smallest portion! The future home of the redeemed is an eternal one. Many who have accepted Christ and served Him faithfully have already entered their never-ending home in glory.

Let's consider heaven in its purity. God has His throne in this place. John speaks of a "great white throne" (Revelation 20:11). The revelator saw "a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb." This symbolism helps us picture the purity of heaven. God, Who sits on His throne there, is holy.

Jesus, Who sits at the right hand of the living God, is also holy. The angels are holy; yes, all the inhabitants of heaven are holy. Heaven is so holy that nothing unclean can enter it, for it is written, "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" (Revelation 21:27). This holy place can only be a habitation for holy people. "Blessed are the pure in heart, For they shall see God" (Matthew 5:8). All those who die in their sins will never enter heaven. Jesus left His throne in heaven and came down to earth to save mankind from their sins.

God, Who is love personified, lives in heaven, a place of love. All others who live there love one another. How different it is in this world! Hate, malice,

enmity, strife, and slander rule here, but not in heaven. There we will find only love. Imagine endless masses of angels and redeemed souls of all nations and languages that no one can count. They all deeply love each other. Wouldn't you want to spend eternity in such a place?

Heaven is also a place of joy, where no tears are ever shed. Here on earth, so many tears are constantly flowing, but there they are all wiped away. This is not some hopeful fantasy, but is biblical truth. "He will swallow up death forever, and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from all faces . . ." (Isaiah 25:8). "For the Lamb Who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to living fountains of waters. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes" (Revelation 7:17).

Here on earth we often sow with tears, but there we will reap with joy. Although we can already reap good things and be blessed with godly joy here on earth, the joy of heaven will greatly eclipse all of these, because heaven is exclusively a place of special joy! Heavenly joy will never fade or grow old. God's Word tells us that heaven is a place where "there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying" (Revelation 21:4). No troubles or trials can enter heaven's glory.

Heaven is a place of endless light. There are no nights, no darkness. Glorious rays of brightness stream from the presence of the Eternal. Never-ending glory and the eternal light of God rule there. The terrible darkness of hell cannot dim the light of heaven by an iota. All who were redeemed by the blood of Jesus will walk forever in His glorious light!

Dear Reader, have you been redeemed? Don't you too long to rejoice on the banks of those streams of living water, clothed in white robes of righteousness, and crowned with the Crown of Life? There's a joy-filled, pure, holy, never-ending inheritance prepared by Jesus and waiting for you in heaven! Won't you accept the requirements of God's Word and become a follower of Jesus today, in order to reach those heavenly shores? ■

C. O.

# Yearning

Within the heart of every person there is a yearning, a longing for something or someone. Often it is hard to discern the underlying reason for this longing, because we are so busy with the distractions around us and because we don't want to see how empty we are. So many people try to fulfill this yearning by looking toward the material world. They chase their dreams: if only that job promotion would come or that new car could be bought . . . . But sadly, they are left empty. They turn to drugs, pornography, alcohol, anything to numb the longing inside of them. Others try fulfilling this longing by seeking after love and are left always wanting more. The American dream is built upon this inner longing, with the pursuit of happiness being a core value of this dream. People pursue happiness, yet so many are left wondering where this true happiness can be found.

This is what the preacher in Ecclesiastes was searching for: some meaning to life, something that would offer fulfillment. He states, "All things are full of labor; man cannot express it. The eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing" (1:8). This preacher, King Solomon, had all that one could desire at that time. He had untold wealth, great wisdom, a kingdom at peace; he could afford every luxury and whim of the heart. Yet he felt this great emptiness inside of him, and on his journey to find satisfaction he sadly allowed his many wives to turn his heart to idols (1 Kings 11:4).

It was Augustine of Hippo who stated this yearning so well when he wrote, "You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it rests in you." So often, we try to still our restless hearts by turning to the creation instead of the Creator. Though this creation is good and wonderfully amazing, it can never still the inner longing of the soul. Blaise Pascal wrote that inside of us there is an infinite abyss that can only be filled with an infinite and immutable object; in other words, by God Himself. These men realized that inside the human heart there is a thirst for something more, and only God is big enough to quell this thirst.

## What are you looking forward to?

Ask this question of a child and they will give you an answer that looks just a few days or weeks into the future. Perhaps they are looking forward to spending a day with their friends or having a birthday party. Ask this question of an adult and they tend to have a little further-reaching outlook on life. Maybe they are looking forward to paying off a mortgage or even retirement. But what would happen if you would pose this question to a Christian? Often in our modern, affluent age, the things that the Christian looks forward to are no different than others around them. We have the same goals and aspirations. In many ways, we have acquired heaven here on earth. Our basic needs are taken care of and often we have money left over to enjoy life. What is there to look forward to?





This stands in sharp contrast to how the early Christians viewed life and what they looked forward to. Peter writes that since this world will one day dissolve, we are to live a life that is defined by the word “godliness,” our conduct is to be holy, and we are to be looking forward to that day when a new heaven and earth will be created in which righteousness dwells (2 Peter 3:11-14). In other words, we are to be yearning for heaven. It was this yearning for a better world, a city that God was building, that caused Abraham to leave his country and his family and set out on a path of obedience and trust. He was willing to sacrifice everything, because he had a yearning for a better place.

How often do you think about eternity? Do you yearn for heaven? Heaven is a wonderful place that will be beyond our wildest imaginings. When the apostles wrote about heaven, you can sense how they struggled to describe it. Paul writes, “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” (1 Corinthians 2:9). John writes about the City of God in Revelation and describes its radiance like a most rare jewel. Its foundations were adorned with every kind of jewel, its streets were made of pure gold, and God’s glory was fully revealed. The material things often treasured in this present age will be walked upon in heaven.

This will be a place of no more evil, no more violence, no more hate; instead, love will reign. There will

be no more death, no more pain, no more sorrow; instead God will wipe away every tear we have cried in this life and we will experience eternal joy. Everything will be made new. Our bodies will no longer ache, we will no longer need surgeries or even dental work. There will no longer be any painful goodbyes, just perfect delight in God’s presence.

This is what our future holds as Christians. This is what we are to be looking forward to and it is this yearning for heaven that ought to transform the way we live our lives today. Because heaven is a reality, we are to be storing up treasures in heaven and not on earth (Matthew 6:19-20). Because the glory of the coming age is going to be so great, we can bear the sufferings of our present age as we wait in great expectation for the world to come (Romans 8:18). And as already noted, because we are yearning for the new heaven and earth, we live a life that is pleasing to God.

What we are looking forward to will shape the way we live today. If we are looking forward to retirement, then we will be saving money in a retirement fund; if we are looking forward to paying off our mortgage, then we will put aside extra money each month; but if we are looking forward to heaven, then we will be investing our energies, our talents, and our material goods in such a way that it will bring dividends for eternity. What are you looking forward to? ■

*Ruben Reisdorf,  
Aylmer (CA)*

# Is Your Heart Unsatisfied?

*I've traveled through many countries,  
And there's beauty far and wide;  
But still there's a longing in me  
This world cannot satisfy.*

*Oh, I've seen the people working  
And searching night and day;  
They're coming and going and yearning  
And toiling upon their way.*

*They won't find for what they're searching  
In pleasure and fortune and fame;  
And burdened with sin, and hurting,  
The masses return again.*

*This rest is what we've been seeking,  
Its essence is so profound;  
Proclaim it, declare its meaning,  
The answer has now been found.*

*Oh yes, there is rest for the weary,  
For everyone far and near;  
I know there is rest for the dreary  
At the old cross of Calvary.*

**M**any centuries before the poet Eleonore, Empress of Reuss, composed these lines, a wise king observed humanity in its quest and said, "I have seen all the works that are done under the sun; and indeed, all is vanity and grasping for the wind. . . . For what has man for all his labor, and for the striving of his heart with which he has toiled under the sun? For all his days are sorrowful, and his work burdensome; even in the night his heart takes no rest. This also is vanity" (Ecclesiastes 1:14; 2:22-23).

To those with an observant eye, they see on a daily basis how people consciously or unconsciously are searching and continuously seeking. Somewhere deep

inside each heart there is a void, a deep longing for peace, happiness, and satisfaction. Among these seekers, you will find every age group: the high and low, the rich and poor, the educated and the uneducated. Everyone desires to find happiness. But only a few ever find true satisfaction.

Perhaps you belong to those who would like to find contentment. Perhaps you have searched for happiness in a variety of places and have not succeeded in finding it. It is possible that in your searching you may have had some gloomy experiences.

It is God's will that all people should be helped and that they should find true happiness here on earth and ultimately in eternity. It hurts Him to see you go through life without peace.

Why is it that so few people know true peace? Seeking is not wrong, since God commands us to search in His Word. He even gives a promise that he who seeks shall find (Matthew 7:7). However, even though most people seek, they seek the wrong path. Some seek blessedness in the wrong places. God says, "They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, and hewn themselves cisterns—broken cisterns that can hold no water" (Jeremiah 2:13). The secret to finding true happiness is to seek out the proper fountain.

Man, whom God created to rule over all creatures on earth, lost his right to rule when he sinned and became himself a slave. Since that time, man still seeks to quench his deep desire for peace and happiness in the wrong place. And despite all his efforts, that void remains in his heart. Only God can fill that void. Through the blindness of their hearts, they do not know the way of peace (Isaiah 59:8).

The world, with all its distractions, pleasures, delights, and various temptations is capable of deceiving the human heart and to cause misery. The world cannot offer true contentment. And yet, so many people seek to quell their thirst at the fountain poisoned by sin. The more they drink, the thirstier they become, and their heart becomes more anxious and unsatisfied the longer they seek.



In vain, some seek contentment in artistry, science, and education. As valuable and worthy as some of these may be, they are not capable of satisfying the heart that sincerely longs for peace and truth.

Many believe they will find their happiness in riches. They mistakenly believe that indulging in overabundance may satisfy their desires, and so they seek to store up treasures on earth. In everything they do, they ask, "What's in it for me?" These poor, deceived souls know nothing of the great profit of godliness and contentment. What a huge disappointment it is when they realize they cannot take a single one of their highly prized possessions with them into eternity (1 Timothy 6:6-8).

An earnest pronouncement was proclaimed to the rich man who relied on his wealth and prosperity: "Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?" So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God" (Luke 12:20-21).

Comparable to that are those individuals who seem to not have time for God and godly things. They concern themselves only with fleeting, earthly things. People try to gratify their unsatisfied soul but will not find true peace and contentment if they don't turn to God. God's Word remains truth: "There is no peace,

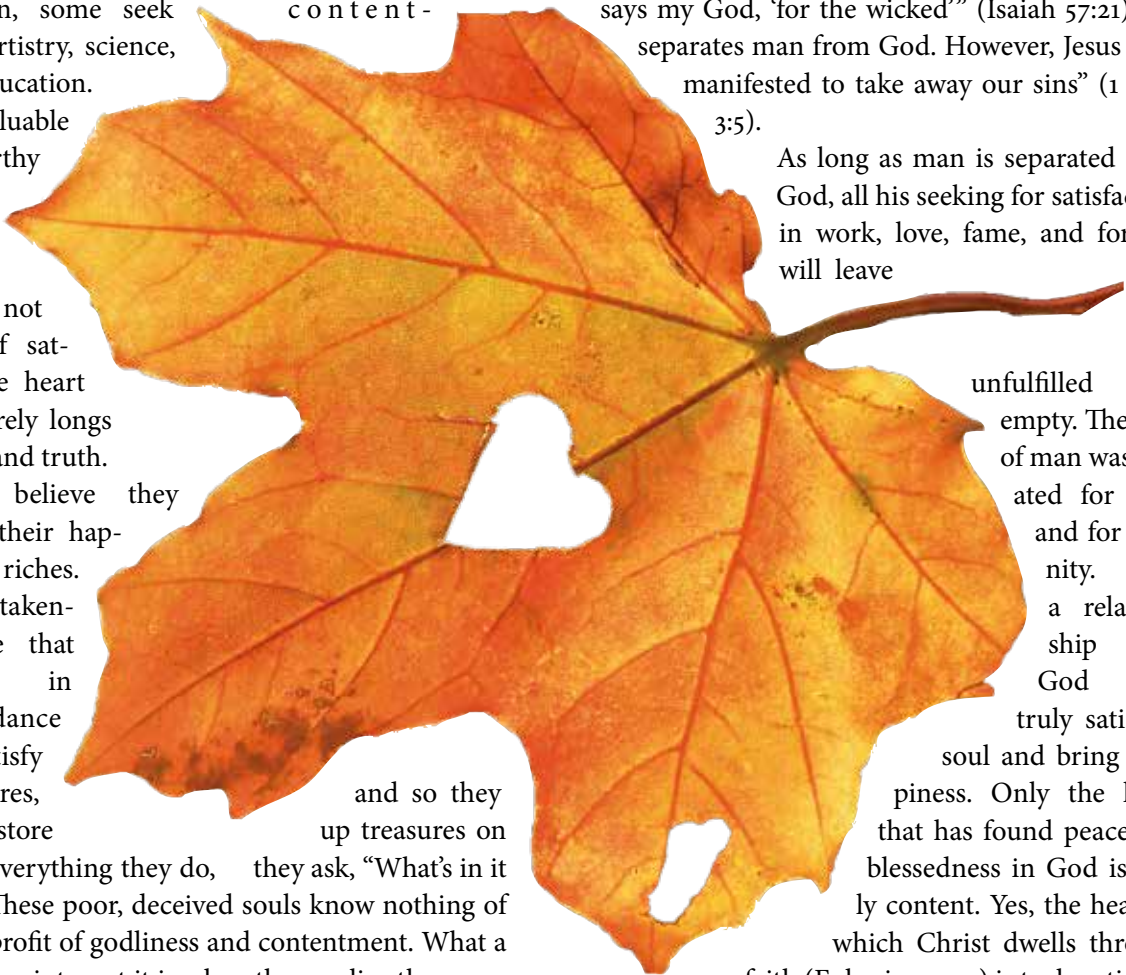
says my God, 'for the wicked'" (Isaiah 57:21). Sin separates man from God. However, Jesus "was manifested to take away our sins" (1 John 3:5).

As long as man is separated from God, all his seeking for satisfaction in work, love, fame, and fortune will leave

his soul unfulfilled and empty. The soul of man was created for God and for eternity. Only a relationship with God can truly satisfy a soul and bring happiness. Only the heart that has found peace and blessedness in God is truly content. Yes, the heart in which Christ dwells through faith (Ephesians 3:17) is truly satisfied.

Are you seeking true contentment? Come to Jesus. You will find peace in Him. The person who belongs to Jesus has everything that will provide true satisfaction for time and eternity. The person who doesn't belong to Him has nothing that has value and lasting worth.

In conclusion, the testimony of an educated, prestigious person who came to know the great gift of God in Christ Jesus reveals that "what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ" (Philippians 3:7-8). ■



# Need We Fear Death?

**A**lthough you may fear death and not wish to think about it, death is not the scary monster some people imagine it to be. As certain as the Jordan River flows towards the Dead Sea, so certain it is that we too will pass away. All life approaches death. We cannot change that. You were born not only to live but also to die.

When told that his infant son had died, a father exclaimed, “Poor little child, it died before it had a chance to live.” Death has no rivals. You may not wish to think about it, yet death will come for each one of us.

“So what shall we do? How can we face the inevitable?” you may ask. Jonathan Edwards was a preacher of the gospel. Shortly before death, to everyone’s surprise, he said, “Trust in God, and ye need not fear.” He seemed already to have had a glimpse into the unknown world, and he spoke these last words as a farewell to those he loved.

Charles Hodge once said, “You plant a seed: it does not come up a seed, but a flower.” Should the future of our bodily state not be what the flower is to the seed? Compare the beauty of the flower with the humble appearance of the seed. The scent and the loveliness of the flower surpass the efforts of the gardener who planted the seed. In

like manner, life after death will far exceed all our expectations. When we look at the laws of nature, we find that life always emerges after death.

If God, the Almighty Father, allows a seemingly cold, lifeless acorn to burst out of its shell and grow into a magnificent oak tree, would He then neglect the human soul which was created in His image? If God allows a bare, dead-looking rosebush to sprout new life in the spring sunshine following a cold winter, would He not also have words of hope for the human soul when the winter of life arrives?

The inspired words of the apostle Paul are a comfort to those who are dying: “Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory? . . . But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Corinthians 15:55, 57). The Bible tells us that death does not have the final say. Life continues after death, and it continues on a higher plane. The abundant life Jesus came to give us never ends. “He who believes in the Son has everlasting life” (John 3:36a). Someone once said, “My loved ones who have departed this life are only in the upper room, waiting until I come.”

The testimony of the early Christians confirms that God’s power and grace can keep His

own in perfect peace even in the hour of death. Many of the martyrs faced death joyfully and even with singing. When the Roman emperor, Justinian, watched the hungry, wild animals pounce upon the helpless Christians in the Colosseum in Rome, he reportedly said, “These Christians know how to die!” Death itself was not frightening for those who had experienced Jesus Christ as their personal Savior.

No child of God needs to regard death as a frightening, scary monster. We, who have the assurance that our sins are forgiven, should not forget that Jesus said, “Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also” (John 14:1-3).

A place is prepared in heaven for God’s people. When we go to bed at night, we are confident that the next morning will come. In the same way, when we face death, we can know that God has prepared a new morning for us, and we will be awakened to a glorious new life. ■

*Mary Raab*

## The Doctor at the Deathbed of a Child of God

When Billy Bray lay terminal-ly ill, “he sent for a medical man, and when he arrived he said:—‘Now, doctor, I have sent for you because they tell me you are an honest man, and will tell the people the truth about their state.’ After the doctor had exam-



Billy Bray

ined him, Billy said: ‘Well, doctor, how ist it?’ ‘You are going to die.’ Billy instantly shouted ‘Glor y! glory be to God! I shall soon be in heaven.’ He then added in a low tone, and in his own peculiar way, ‘When I get up there, shall I give them your compliments, doctor, and tell them you will be coming too?’ This, the doctor says, ‘made a wonderful impression upon me.’”

What will your death be like, dear reader? ■

## Let Me Go Home

*Let me go home. I have an inner longing  
to be with God. It would be blessed  
to leave this world, its tumult and its thronging,  
and reach that place of perfect rest.  
I went through life with many expectations;  
I’m coming home with just one aspiration.  
My hopeful heart, it waits for this alone:  
Let me go home!*

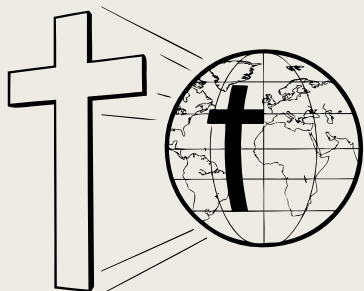
*Let me go home. Enough of all the sorrow  
of this deceitful, wicked world!  
Let me go home. I hope not for tomorrow;  
Good luck to all who seek life’s pearls.  
If God decrees that here on earth I tarry,  
Then willingly in hope my cross I’ll carry;  
But deep inside, from time to time, I groan:  
Let me go home!*

*Let me go home; the vision is compelling.  
I dream of that bright fatherland.  
When we inherit those eternal dwellings,  
Free from the earth, with joy I’ll stand.  
When winter’s gone, the swallow has a yearning;  
It must fly home, warm weather is returning.  
The swallow flies, in groups or all alone:  
Let me go home!*

*Let me go home; a ship will find its harbor.  
The river runs into the sea.  
Who dares to wake, within a shady arbor,  
A child who’s resting silently?  
I, too, seek rest. How quickly comes the morrow!  
I sang many songs in joy and sorrow;  
Now I sing one more song while still I roam:  
Let me go home!*

Karl Gerok





# Radio Program Message of Salvation

Friedrich Krebs  
Kitchener, ON

## A Pivotal “At Last”

*Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright; for there is a happy end to the man of peace. Psalm 37:37 (ASV)*

**W**e continually encounter a “last” in our lives. The usual course of life spurs us on, and living conditions change and get altered. The present quickly becomes the past, and only certain memories remain.

I remember my last day of school and how hard it was to leave my teachers and good friends. Likewise, we may remember our last meeting with close friends. We may also think back to the last time we saw our parents and heard their last words. A retiree may remember his last day of work. In this life, we will all experience that final “move” or that last journey.

Very often, we are completely unaware of something being the “last” time. Without expecting it, we may have attended our last worship service on that Sunday. Or someone may have left his home, quite unsuspecting, for the last time. I once saw a quote at the back door of a house: “Do not depart your home in anger; many have left never to return.” How often this has come to pass! Many fathers and sons came home on leave from the war and didn’t realize that it would be their last time. It was the last reunion and the last goodbye. All these cases teach us how serious the “last” in our lives can be.

The above-cited Bible verse speaks of a very important “last” which will be crucial at the end of our lives. Who of us does not wish our life to end well? It is possible. A certain requirement is needed: “be

blameless and live upright.” Being blameless or devout does not just mean to be selfless, good-natured, tolerant, helpful, and good. It also doesn’t describe a person who goes to church every Sunday. Being blameless or devout is really a matter of the heart. He who walks before God with a pure heart and in reverence is devout. Being blameless or devout means to have the right relationship with God and honor Him through faith, righteousness, and obedience.

The truly blameless man will please his God and other people. He will abstain from every sin and have a distinct fear of God. Such a man will never forget his God and will also not be forgotten by Him. With this glimpse into its true meaning, we will realize that “the future of that man is peace.” And this is what is meant by the “last” which occurs at the end of our lives.

We find this special “last” in other passages of the Bible. In Deuteronomy 32:18 and 20, we read, “Of the Rock who begot you, you are unmindful, and have forgotten the God who fathered you. . . . I will hide My face from them, I will see what their end will be.” In Proverbs 16:25, we read, “There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death.” These verses are thought-provoking since, in many cases, this has actually happened.

Many years ago, a young man visited us on a Sunday. We took him along to church. The sermon affected him so deeply that tears ran down his cheeks. He real-



ized his guilt before God, but did not seize the opportunity to repent. After the service, he said goodbye and we never saw him again. Many years later, we heard that he was living in a squalid basement suite with other desolate and bitter men. He had fallen into bad company and died under unexplained circumstances. How tragic! They turned their backs on God and did not know what would happen to them in the end.

Should we not pause and think about the question in Jeremiah 5:31: “But what will you do in the end?” The people in his time had embraced the false message and allowed themselves to be drawn into error. What could the result be? What is wrong can’t lead to correct results. But “mark the blameless man, and observe the upright; for the future of that man is peace.” Jesus will say to those, “Come, you blessed of My Father!” (Matthew 25:34). That will be the joyful meeting with

Him in the eternal city of God. Before being stoned, Stephen, a man of faith and filled with the Holy Spirit, saw heaven open and Jesus standing at the right hand of God (see Acts 7:55). His death was painful, but his welcome into heaven was wonderful. Yes, the future of that man is peace! Are we just as certain?

A poet wrote:

*Though I sigh and shed tears on my journey,  
I will keep my eyes fixed on the goal.  
God will dry all our tears when we enter  
That fair land, the sweet home of the soul.  
When at last I'm at home! When at last I'm at home!  
Every storm will be over, when at last I'm at home!*

This is the pivotal “at last” I wish from the heart for myself and for everyone else! ■

## Testimonies of the 2019 Bible Course In Mexico

**W**e thank God with all our hearts that we were finally able to hold another Bible course in Mexico this year, 14 years after the last one. We were thrilled to welcome participants from abroad, including from Bolivia, Canada, Germany, and the USA. The lessons were taught by three brothers from Canada: Bro. Martin Kehler, Bro. Gerry Mielke, and Bro. Ron Taron. Topics addressed included the church of God in the context of the Bible, growing in faith, Israel in prophecy, eschatology, and other practical areas of doctrine. Below are several testimonies from participants, sharing what they took away from the course.

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It was such a blessed time, and I learned a lot. This experience will stay with me for the rest of my life. These two weeks were bathed in the love of the church, and I was struck by the realization that we need to base our self-esteem not on people but on Christ, loving ourselves with a healthy, divine love before we can love our neighbor as ourselves. It is by losing ourselves in Christ that we find ourselves.

*Erich Schall  
Weil am Rhein, (DE)*

I thank my Lord with all my heart that I was able to take part in the Bible course. The Lord richly blessed me. The topic of the church of God became important to me as we discussed, for example, how the New and Old Testaments fit together and how the church is represented in metaphors that ultimately point to the church of God. The lesson on growing in faith and prayer was also a great blessing to me. If we want to grow spiritually, we need to make a deliberate decision

and effort to do so. If we want to grow in our prayer lives, we also need to overcome obstacles. Spiritual growth means doing God's will. I was also blessed by all the other topics. I learned a lot. May the Lord help me apply it to my life.

*Judy Neufeld  
Neustädt, (MX)*

I feel very blessed that God allowed me to be part of the Bible course in Mexico. I felt acceptance, warmth, and love from the other participants, but most of all, I learned to love the Word of God, the Bible. This Bible course changed my outlook on God's Holy Word. Before, I recognized that the Bible was important and that I needed to read it every day, but I did not love the Word. I learned that the Bible is our foundation, our comfort, our support, our knowledge and wisdom, and our spiritual food. The Bible is inspired and written by God, and it should be our greatest treasure.

*Heidi Wieler  
Steinbach, (CA)*

The Bible course was a great blessing to me. I was not quite sure what to expect, but with every lesson, more of my questions were answered, and I found something I had long been searching for: joy. I was already saved and baptized but always felt a dark cloud looming over me. Now, I feel free again. My prayers were answered through the Bible course. Thank you!

*Sonia Neufeld,  
(MX)*

I owe God a debt of thanks for giving me the opportunity to take part in the Bible course. The topic of growing in faith and prayer became important to me,





reinforcing the lesson that we need to place our full faith in God and pray every day for the strength we need to be an example in our daily lives. God tested me during the Bible course. I would never have expected to experience such a tragedy in these two weeks, but I lost some friends in a fatal aviation accident. God tested me to see if I would trust Him and let Him sand some of the rough edges off of my life. God proved Himself to me, and I was able to let Him work on my life. We need to have faith when we pray. There is no point in praying if you do not have faith and do not believe that God can answer your prayers. However, if you adjust your attitude and believe that God can answer your prayer, great things can happen. As it says in the Bible, “Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify Me” (Psalm 50:15). This lets us shape our faith and prayer life fully in God’s image.

*Aristeo Krahn,  
(MX)*

I would like to glorify God by sharing a little about the valuable Bible course I attended in Mexico. I am deeply grateful to our Lord for enabling my family and me to travel to Mexico and participate in the Bible course. God protected us on the journey and blessed us through the topics addressed during the course. I was

especially touched by the lesson on love. God’s love is unconditional and so great that He sent His only Son into the world to save all who believe in Him. I am so thankful that I, too, have been able to acknowledge Jesus and accept Him into my heart. I have the privilege of being His child and trusting in His promises. His blood flowed at the cross for me personally—for my sins. We also discussed Jesus’ return. We must be ready at all times for when the Lord comes back. When we pack for a trip, we take along only what we need. The same applies to our spiritual lives. In order to grow, we need to leave aside all that is irrelevant and focus our attention on Jesus. Personally, I was richly blessed by the Bible course and I’m so grateful to God for this opportunity.

*Liza Krahn,  
(BO)*

When I heard that I would be able to attend the Bible course in Mexico, I was super excited. I didn’t know what to expect at first, but in the end, it was a very great blessing.

The greatest blessing for me came on the second Wednesday of the course through a message brought by Pastor Kehler on the topic “Love Your Neighbor as Yourself.” This is a very well-known and important commandment that God gave us. Since I basically

# YOUTH PAGE

grew up with this, I thought I knew everything about it. What I knew since I was young was to love everyone, even our worst enemies. Pastor Kehler, on the other hand, focused on the “as yourself” part, which I had never even thought about.

He started with “healthy self-love.” I’ve been struggling with this since I started middle school. I was always insecure about my height, what people thought of me, and my appearance. I always thought I wasn’t beautiful, and I just recently got insecure about my weight. I started eating less because I thought I was overweight.

Pastor Kehler quoted Dr. Johnson, who said that a lot of people take this commandment the wrong way, as I did. We always think that we should love others more than ourselves, so we concentrate on them and keep giving until we fall into a depressive state where we’re unable to help others or even ourselves.

I’m still struggling to get rid of all the insecurities and gain a healthy self-love. However, I can’t do it in my own strength. I need God’s help.

I know there are other people, even Christians, who struggle with this. So whenever you see yourself

in a mirror, stop all the bad thoughts and say to yourself, “God! Loves! Me!” This is the advice Pastor Kehler gave us in the end, and it does help.

*Melissa Wieler,  
Steinbach (CA)*

I was incredibly blessed to have the opportunity to attend this year’s Bible course. Every topic covered was so encouraging and edifying. One that impacted me most was with Brother Kehler, where he covered growing in our faith and prayer life. It was packed full of practical tips, all backed up by Scripture. It was also very encouraging to learn through Brother Taron what we believe and why we believe it, using the Bible as a foundation for everything.

I am very thankful I had the opportunity to attend. I grew stronger in my faith and was encouraged anew to follow Christ on this narrow path. It truly was a great blessing to be there.

*Priscilla Wiens,  
(MX)*





## *Something That Will Not Die*

**E**va was given a cute little kitten. She loved it more than her doll and all her other toys. But one day, the neighbors' big dog attacked the poor animal and killed it. Oh, how it hurt little Eva! Sobbing, she ran into the garden and hid. For a long time, she would not be comforted.

A few days later, she found a birdcage by the living room window that housed a beautiful canary from her parents. How happy Eva was! Eventually, she was able to forget about her sweet kitten, as she joyfully listened to the sweet song of the little bird. She fed it carefully and felt very blessed.

But one morning, when she was about to feed the bird again, she saw him lying cold and motionless on the floor of the cage. He was dead. This time, Eva did not cry loudly but instead went about sad and quiet.

When her father saw her sitting huddled in the corner of the big armchair one evening, he felt very sorry for her. "Evie," he said, "should I give you a puppy that will jump around with you everywhere?"—"No, thank you, Daddy," she replied, looking at her father. "How about a bunny? Or a hamster?" her father continued.

Eva suddenly threw her arms around her father's neck and with tears in her eyes, she cried, "Oh Daddy, dear Daddy, can you not give me something that will not die?"

The father held his child close to his chest as she sobbed out the pain she had held back for so long. Finally, he said in a quiet, solemn voice, "My Eva, I can only offer you one thing that never dies and never ends, and that is Jesus. He is life! If you give Him your heart, you can have Him forever and ever!" ■



# God's Promises— Also Relevant for Seniors?

God Himself is timeless—as well as His promises.  
So they apply to every age group and at any time.  
But especially when we urgently need them.

**M**uch could be said and written about God's promises. How many sermons have been preached on this theme? We also think of hymns, for example: "Though heaven and earth will pass away, God's promises stand." Another composer goes one step further and writes, "For I've trusted, and tested, and tried it, and I know God's promise is true."

The Bible is the book of promises. Someone found 5467 promises within it. The number of promises is not as important as the fact that these promises, according to 2 Corinthians 1:19-20, are "Yes and Amen" in Jesus Christ. That means that God stands on all His promises.

When we look at these many promises, we realize that not all of them apply to each of us personally. God made promises to specific individuals: Abraham, when He promised him a son, or King Hezekiah, to whom He added 15 years of life when he was deathly ill. The promises were specifically meant for one person at a specific time. Other promises were meant for Israel in a specific situation, like conquering Canaan under Joshua's guidance.

God always kept His word, even if Abraham had to wait a long time for the fulfillment of this promise. God was not dependent on Abraham and Sarah's help. What He has promised, He is able to do and fulfill. It is so revealing when we read at the end of Abraham's life, "Now Abraham was old, well advanced in age; and the Lord had blessed Abraham in all things" (Genesis 24:1), just as He had promised him, "I will bless you" (Genesis 12:2).

In addition to the specific promises, there are also those that apply to all humans. Take the promise of God that Peter mentions in his Pentecost sermon:

"And it shall come to pass that whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Acts 2:21). This promise is meant for all.

We are on the seniors' page and are therefore justified in asking: "Are there promises for those who are now on the other side of 50? Are those of us who have already lived out the largest part of our lives still able to lean on God's promises like a secure staff, during our remaining time?" Of course! God, Who said, "Let the children come to me," has not forgotten us seniors. God knows that concerns about aging, can often be accompanied by uncertainty, fears, and questions about the future. Through His promises, God wants to assure us and strengthen our trust in Him, to encourage us, and to help us end our journey with joy.

Each enduring promise depends on its giver, the Almighty God, "Who made heaven and earth" (Psalm 121:2). Let's look at a few of God's promises:

- "Even to your old age, I am He, and even to gray hairs I will carry you! I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you" (Isaiah 46:4).

If we look in the mirror, it becomes clear He is not speaking to children, but to us, which allows each of us to claim this promise. What a tremendous statement! God said "I will." What God wills, He can fulfill. What does He want? "I will carry you into your old age." Because we may sometimes have doubts, He states one more time, "I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you." Have you noticed that in just one verse, God emphasizes three times "I will?" I don't know if you interpret this verse as I do, but to me it means that there is nothing I need to fear. My God bears and carries me.

•“Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, ‘I will never leave you nor forsake you.’ So we may boldly say: ‘The Lord is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?’” (Hebrews 13:5-6).

These verses indirectly address problems of existence. Perhaps the question arises when someone looks at their savings account and asks, will this be enough? With a modest pension, we can't take big chances. The writer commands us not to worry but to make do with a joyful heart with whatever we have. We can accomplish this because God has promised not to desert us. This could also be stated: “I will not forsake you.”

•“And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to myself; that where I am, there you may be also” (John 14:3).

Shortly before His ascension, Jesus spoke these words. They are not just encouraging words but also contain a promise. Here on earth, the question of our future may cause fear and worry. How long will we be able to live in our own house? If we can't manage on our own, what then? “Assisted living” are two words we don't want to hear or utter. Where we will live out our last days is not guaranteed. However, Jesus' promise goes beyond this time and illumines our future. Our definite place of residence is in a better world and is specifically where Jesus resides. When things become complicated in our decreasing ability to care for ourselves, it may become necessary to depend on the help of others. I am able to console myself with the thought that soon I will take up residence with Jesus!

•“Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a

bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, ‘Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away’” (Revelation 21:2-4).

It's all about heaven. “Where do I go after I die?” is what people often ask. The answer naturally depends on our standing with Jesus. As followers of Him, we can expect an unimaginable eternity. When we close our eyes as suffering and frail humans, we will be with Jesus in a place where “tears, death, sorrow, noise, and pain” are foreign to us. The sorrows of this time have boundaries—sooner or later they do have an end—and then this applies: “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” (1 Corinthians 2:9).

We have touched on only a small number of God's many promises. One brother read his Bible with pencil in hand so that every time he encountered a promise, he would write “For me” in the margin. This gave him strength and courage to carry on; he was totally “convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform” (Romans 4:21).

Chiming in with the composer's song, I would like to encourage you to “trust in the promises, Brothers and Sisters”! ■

*Harry Semenjuk*





# On the Road of Salvation

Part 10

A Covenant with God

Ron Taron

## *God's Plan of Salvation in the History of Israel*

*“Therefore keep the words of this covenant, and do them, that you may prosper in all that you do. All of you stand today before the LORD your God: your leaders and your tribes and your elders and your officers, all the men of Israel, your little ones and your wives—also the stranger who is in your camp, from the one who cuts your wood to the one who draws your water—that you may enter into covenant with the LORD your God, and into His oath, which the LORD your God makes with you today, that He may establish you today as a people for Himself, and that He may be God to you, just as He has spoken to you, and just as He has sworn to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.” (Deuteronomy 29:9-13)*

Moses was nearing the end of his life and God had a job for him yet: He wanted to renew His covenant with Israel. Back when God had given His Ten Commandments to Israel at Mount Sinai, He had entered into a covenant with them, and now the Lord wanted to renew that covenant with the next generation. Of Israel's leaders, only Moses, Joshua, and Caleb had been present at the enacting of the first covenant.

What a privilege it is for man to enter into a covenant with God! When humans make a pact, they always seek a mutual benefit of that alliance, but God doesn't need anything man has to offer. If He makes a covenant with man, then He does it to offer mankind His love and compassion. Such a pact is always to man's advantage. Have you accepted God's offer of a covenant with Him?

### **How do we enter into a covenant with God?**

God must be willing to make a covenant. The inferior party can never force the superior one to make a cov-

enant. At the end of World War II, the Axis powers, as losers, were forced to accept the Allies' conditions of unconditional surrender. They had no choice but to accept whatever the victors demanded. In like manner, man has nothing with which to force God to enter a covenant with him.

But God greatly desires to enter into a covenant with man, a pact in which He wants to gift us with every manner of blessing in Christ. Tirelessly, in His great love and grace, Jesus entreats, “Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls” (Matthew 11:28-29). “And the Spirit and the bride say, ‘Come!’ And let him who hears say, ‘Come!’ And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely” (Revelation 22:17).

In a covenant with God, His will must always be paramount. Man, guilt-laden and seeking grace, does not determine the conditions of the pact, but rather the thrice-holy God. Man must plead for grace, for forgiveness and renewal, in order to be worthy to enter into a covenant with God. This is only possible by the precious blood of Jesus that was shed for sin. In Psalm 50:5 the Lord says, “Gather My saints together to Me, Those who have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice.” This sacrifice refers to Jesus' dying on the cross. Beneath that cross, by accepting atonement by faith, man enters into a covenant with God. Dear Reader, do you know of a time when you forged into this covenant by repentance and confession of your sins? Have you remained true to this covenant, or have you long since broken it?





### **The Conditions of the Covenant**

What defines a covenant with God? God promises to save man from sin and bondage and to give him a new and pure heart. He promises to never remember or resurrect the sins He's forgiven. As a party to His covenant, God adds man to His church, His family. He desires man for Himself, and endeavors to lead him to a further covenant, in which man consecrates his all to God for time and eternity.

In a covenant with God we become children of God receiving a birthright, an inheritance, and entry into the family of God. Because God is holy, He purifies man and makes him holy in order to exist in His covenant with Him. Yet God has so much more for man if he will enter into a covenant with Him. He promises His love and faithfulness, and to care for him. He will fill man with His power, offer His protection, and much more. The crowning glory: eternal life! Man, in a covenant with God, will rejoice in indescribable glory in the presence of almighty God for all eternity!

What does man bring to this covenant? He promises to renounce the world and sin, and to serve God. He promises to obey God, to cherish Him, and to love Him above all else. As part of the covenant, man promises to remain faithful to God, to serve Him with all his heart and soul, to obey His voice, and to follow Him. Dear Reader, have you kept your part of the covenant with God? Indubitably, God has kept all His promises and conditions. Have you too?

### **Why enter into a covenant with God?**

Israel became and we too will become God's own treasure, and the apple of His eye. People who are not in a covenant with God are His enemies. And who wants

to be an enemy of God? There are many great blessings that result from a covenant with God: God's presence in our life, His protection, His help and guidance, peace in our hearts, knowing true joy, having the best of all friends, knowing His love intimately . . . and many others.

Man, in a covenant with God, is always on the victor's side. The omnipotence of God fights for him and in the end, God will remain victorious! A covenant with God reaches into eternity. Imagine arriving at the gates of heaven with the joyful assurance: I am secure in a covenant of love with God!

### **What impact does a covenant with God have on my daily life?**

I live every day in the presence of God. He is always with me, cares for me, strengthens me, leads me, protects me. Only within the bounds of this covenant can I reach the heavenly goal. My covenant with God requires that I keep my promise to remain faithful to Him, which will compel me to get onto my knees to pray for His strength for every day and every battle.

Being in a covenant with God means determining His will, doing His will, and living a holy life. This bond compels me to relive and renew in my heart that holy encounter at the altar, where Jesus' blood was applied to my sin-stained soul. The glory of God will accompany me on the way, my love for my Savior will blossom ever stronger in my heart, and I will be blessed by God. He will be my God, and I His loving child.

Have you experienced this amazing covenant with God? Are you in it today? Dear Soul, don't let Satan rob you of this incredible privilege with his cheap substitutes. At all costs, protect your covenant with God! ■



## 2019 Blaubeuren Camp Meeting

In past years, we had heard numerous times that the camp meetings were wonderful and indescribably blessed times, so we went to Blaubeuren this year with great anticipation. Yet we were blessed beyond our expectations!

When we arrived, we hardly knew any brothers and sisters personally. But everyone was very friendly and took us in with love and open arms. At the end, we felt as though we had always known each other.

We were richly blessed through preaching of God's Word. The meeting's theme was "Be holy, for I am holy" from 1 Peter 1:16.

It touched us to hear the Word spoken in unity and through the Holy Spirit. God's presence was perceptible in every worship service. The point from Genesis 18:22-33, where "Abraham intercedes for Sodom," particularly blessed us and caused us to reflect. Abraham pleaded for each soul. What about us? Do we battle for every soul?

During these days, great importance was laid on prayer and dependence on the Spirit's leading in the camp meeting's organization. Before and after each sermon, much time was given for corporate prayer, and many believers participated. We also noticed how after every worship service, everyone remained where they were and took time to pray a silent prayer before they left.

Especially encouraging was for us to see how God is also building His church in Germany. We feel connected to the brothers and sisters through God's Spirit and are happy that we had the opportunity to take part in the camp meeting ourselves. We will never forget the blessings and the memories of this time.

*Maria und Marvin Günter,  
Steinbach (CA)*

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Further reports, pictures and all messages from the Camp Meeting 2019 can be found at:  
[www.lagerversammlung.de](http://www.lagerversammlung.de)





Again this year, the blessed days of camp meeting already lie in the past. But the deep impressions of these days, the encouragement, and the experiences with God will continue to work in the hearts of His children.

The best thing about camp meeting is fellowship with children of God apart from the world. It is vacation for the soul and allows one to clearly focus through godly nourishment provided in abundance for an entire week. There is something for everyone. I personally am very thankful that I have been able to be there each year and every day in order to reap the full blessings. In the turmoil of our time and hectic everyday life, our focus heavenward can quickly diminish and God's voice seem to get quieter. The camp meetings till now have continually provided me with clarity for my situation so that I could find peace in my soul. I drove to Blaubeuren with joyful anticipation and a hunger for clear preaching, and God blessed these

days. He gifted me with meaningful conversations, new acquaintances, and deeper friendships. No matter where we live and how different we may be from one another, it is the same Spirit who works in us, and we are joined together by Jesus Christ.

The thought that trusting is the most important thing, brought me particular joy in regard to the topic of divine healing. It is not due to a lack of faith if healing doesn't occur. Jesus said, "If you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you" (Matthew 17:20). It is paramount for the soul to fully trust from the heart that God can truly heal and to trust that His will and way is the best, no matter how it may look. I experienced this myself years ago. ■

*Stephanie Wiefel,  
Eppingen (DE)*





# The Golden Rule

**A**s we look forward to a new year in the Lord, will we be living by the Golden Rule of God's Word: "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you" (Matthew 7:12)? Such a high standard is only attainable by God's grace and by being born into the Kingdom of God. What a difference this would make in homes and communities, where hate, envy, and strife would be replaced by peace, love and care! How can we live out this command of the Lord Jesus in practical terms? In the previous verses (7-10), Jesus encourages us to pray, by asking, seeking, and knocking in faith until our heavenly Father answers us.

Harry Klinger, Winnipeg, (CA)

## Topic 1 - The Golden Rule of Contentment

"Godliness with contentment is great gain." (1 Timothy 6:6)

Who does not wish to have great gain? Yet most are primarily seeking financial gain. But Jesus said that if a man should gain the whole world but lose his own soul, he has surely lost everything of true value (Luke 9:25). Paul explains that godliness is great gain. God will be with those who live a holy life focused on His will.

The other great gain is contentment. Since we are living in prosperous lands with some of the highest standards of living the world has ever seen, shouldn't we be content? The lie of the devil is that we need to compare ourselves to others who appear to have more than we do. This leads to a continual state of discon-

tent and the desire to become rich. Paul warns that some have lost their faith by such greed, and that the love of money is at the root of all kinds of evil (v.7-10). Let us be content with the basics of life, knowing that the only thing we can carry out of this world is our salvation in Christ. Let's look forward to our treasures in heaven.

### **We pray:**

- a. For a heart of contentment and peace for each day of trial we face, knowing that God will strengthen and comfort us in all of life's difficulties (Philippians 4:11-13).
- b. Lord, help us to live daily by your grace.

## Topic 2 - The Golden Rule of Persistent Prayer

"He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart." (Luke 18:1)

When have we prayed enough for God to answer our prayers? Think of the man whom Jesus healed at the pool of Bethesda. He lay ill for 38 years until Jesus came (John 5:1-9).

In Luke 18:1-8 we are encouraged to pray persistently until God answers in His time and in His way. Even the unjust judge gave in to the widow's continual requests, so how much more will God honor the needs of His children!

From my mother I learned this truth: Never give up praying for the lost son, daughter, or relative. She and others prayed for me and other prodigals. Some eight years would pass until I turned back to the Lord and

was born again by the Spirit. In the case of my father, she prayed for some 40 years until in his last weeks he too found the Lord. She simply would not give up and insisted we all keep praying for my dad despite his hardened heart.

### **Let us pray persistently:**

- a. As long as someone lives, never give up hope for their lost soul. God can speak to any soul at any time by His Word and Spirit. Perhaps someone will share the Good News with them, and their eyes of faith will be opened.
- b. Your prayers for healing may suddenly be answered and you will praise God for His healing power of both body and soul.



### Topic 3 - The Golden Rule of Praying for Others

*“I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions and giving of thanks be made for all men.” (1 Timothy 2:1)*

It is natural for us to focus our prayers on those close to our hearts, but God wishes us to expand our horizons and consider that Jesus died for everyone who comes into this world. He so loved the world that He “desires all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth” (v. 4). This includes all your family members, co-workers, and friends. As you pray for their souls, ask God to open doors for you to witness to them. Perhaps giving them a gospel of John as a gift will cause them to consider the saving faith of Jesus. At the same time, pray He opens their spiritual eyes to their lost condition.

In a broader perspective, we are to give thanks for all men and all who are in authority (v.1f). When we

consider some of our leaders today, we may find this very difficult to do. Yet Jesus requires us to love and pray for even our enemies (Matthew 5:43-45). God promises this will help to bring about a special blessing, “that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence.”

***We pray:***

a. Lord, help me to witness to someone today. Prepare their heart and give me wisdom to speak your truth into their life.

b. Lord, help me to love and pray for all people, even those who persecute us. Help me to recognize that “this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior” (v.3).

### Topic 4 - The Golden Rule of a Life of Thanksgiving

*“Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.” (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18)*

All of us are familiar with difficult days filled with suffering, heartache, and grief. We know bad things will happen to good people, because we live in a fallen world. We think of the sufferings of Job, the seemingly endless enemies and battles King David faced, John the Baptist imprisoned and the apostle James, who were both executed for their faith. The list goes on. How can there be joy amidst such suffering?

Today there are many cases that bring tears to our eyes: children suffering from incurable diseases,

the homeless and the abused, along with accidents and sickness that leave some barely able to function. And yet, we are always to keep our joy in the Lord by praying without ceasing. Therein lies our secret: we will keep praying, thanking, and worshipping the Lord, regardless what comes our way.

***We pray:***

a. That even in our difficulties, we will give thanks for our great salvation through the blood of Jesus. We will realize that He has borne our griefs and will strengthen us to face every trial.

b. That the joy of our Lord will always be our strength.

## Topic 5 - The Golden Rule of Praying for the Church

*“We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers.” (1 Thessalonians 1:2)*

Paul is writing to the local church in Thessalonica and wishing them grace and peace from God (v.1). He gives thanks for each of the church members and lets them know they are not forgotten in his prayers. Why is this so important even today?

On the one hand, the devil wishes to divide Christians, promote false doctrines, tempt, and mislead us. Paul warns the church elders of Ephesus to take heed of this in Acts 20:28-30. By watching prayerfully and asking God, through His Holy Spirit, to guide and strengthen us, we can overcome the evil one and stand together for the truth.

On the other hand, Paul’s prayers are directed at encouraging Christians to grow in their work of

faith, labor of love, and patience in hope (v.3-5). This is only possible by living true to the Word and in the power of the Holy Spirit. It is the same Spirit Who will answer our prayers. There are times when it is difficult to pray: times of persecution, loss, sickness, and all kinds of affliction. How wonderful to know then, that other Christians are praying for you!

### ***We pray:***

a. Lord, help us to pray for all of our fellow Christians, locally and in other places.

b. Help our brothers and sisters around the world, that their faith might grow and persevere in the love of Christ, despite persecution, poverty, temptation, and any other affliction. ■

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*“Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless His holy name!” (Psalm 103:1)*

I would like to write a testimony to God’s glory. The Lord has done great things for me again. I had internal bleeding, and in order to determine the cause, I was supposed to have a colonoscopy. As I am already 87 years old and my health is not good, the doctor advised against having this procedure. But he left the decision up to me. So I decided to leave it up to my Lord and Savior. If God wills, He can make me well, and if it’s not His will, then I’m prepared to go home to be with Him.

In the next prayer meeting, I asked the brothers and sisters to pray for me. On Sunday, a brother told me, “Sister Semenjuk, we didn’t know you were so ill. We pray for you every day and will continue to do so.”

That encouraged me a lot and strengthened my faith. God has helped me so often.

My husband and I prayed earnestly. During our devotions on March 27, 2019, I received assurance that Jesus healed me.

The bleeding lessened. When I saw my physician for a follow up visit after blood work, she told me: “I have good news for you. Your lab values have risen from 104 to 112, and your blood sugar has dropped from 9.6 to 8.1.”

We thanked the dear Lord with all our hearts. He has done a great miracle for me again. He is still the same, great God. On Wednesday in prayer meeting, I testified that God healed me. I thank all the brothers and sisters who prayed for me. May God reward them. ■

Your sister in the LORD,  
*Else Semenjuk, Edmonton (CA)*





## *It is Later Than You Think!*

The expression, “being late,” is used in conjunction with an event. Unfortunately, many “push” the occasion of their life’s end into a distant future. They do not know that the time is already near.

“It is later than you think!”—This phrase is written on a garden wall in the Chinese capital Beijing. Of course, this does not mean your wrist watch: you would quickly get it adjusted if it started losing time. But your life’s clock is later than you think!

Do you need evidence for this? Just read the news. The articles about accidents and crimes and the pages of obituaries tell you everything. Add to this endless litany of individual cases all sorts of catastrophes, in which hundreds of people must leave this world from one moment to the next.

It happened on October 8, 1952. The station clock in the London suburb of Harrow indicated it was 8:19. On the platform was a commuter train, fully occupied with mostly laborers and school children. At that moment, the Perth–Euston express, running late, hurtled down the track at full speed and smashed into the commuter train, bringing down part of a footbridge and throwing debris over the other tracks. In the next moment, the morning Euston–Manchester express came racing in and crashed into the wreckage, ploughing into the footbridge. The cars piled up in a jumble of steel, wood, glass, and people, to a depth of 10 meters. Hundreds of passengers lay under the rubble of the tangled debris. The screaming of the wounded and the moaning of the dying was horrifying.

Everything happened within a span of 40 seconds. But what about the station clock? It still showed 8:19. It

had to be later. Yes, it certainly was later. The vibrations from the impact or a flying piece of wood had stopped it. But there was something else hanging on the wall next to the clock: a poster from the station mission. People stopped, and, deeply shocked, read, “Prepare to meet your Lord.”

The morning mist still hung in the air as wreckers with cranes rolled up to rescue the victims. The disaster claimed 112 lives and injured 340. It was later than they all thought!

The Psalmist is so right when he says in Psalm 103:15-16, “As for man, his days are like grass; as a flower of the field, so he flourishes. For the wind passes over it, and it is gone, and its place remembers it no more.”

In the face of the catastrophe in Harrow, I am unequivocally aware of the fact that my life is not in my hands but in God’s hands alone. Because I have no insight into His hidden workings, I want to remind myself, it may be later than I think. Whether spring, summer, autumn, or winter, whether day or night, death is constantly passing through our ranks, and nobody knows where it will find its prey. A poet says: “In the midst of life, we are in death.”

We are actually candidates for death from the moment of our birth. None of us knows at what moment our thread of life will tear. When you get up in the morning and start the new day abounding with health, remember, it may be later than you think. ■

## *Things That Pass Away*

You're born to die, and time is passing  
And even if you like it not.  
Your loved ones may ere long be asking  
Which inheritance will be their lot.

When you were young, the days passed slowly;  
You seemed to have a lot of time.  
The years have flown and you see only  
That life is short, both yours and mine.

Where did the time go, you are wondering;  
How come my hair is shaded gray?  
You were just a child, you're pondering:  
How could I be this old today?

The Bible says your days are numbered;  
The Lord allots your time on earth.  
Not many live to be a hundred;  
Redeem the time for what it's worth.

The opportunities you're given,  
Make use of them with deeds of love.  
Let acts of kindness be your mission  
With blessings from the Lord above.

O seek ye first the things of heaven,  
The things that will not pass away.  
The things of earth won't last, not even  
The best ones that you have today.

Look up to God; cherish the hours  
That He still gives you here below,  
And daily tap into His power;  
Do not dismay, He loves you so.

*Herbert Klinner*