



# Foundation of Faith

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THE UNIQUENESS OF CHRIST

JESUS DIED FOR ME

CHRIST, THE MINISTERING SHEPHERD

YOUNG—AND PLEASING TO GOD

## The *incomparable* Christ

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## Editorial

*Dear Reader,*

*How great is the mystery of Christ, in Whom riches of wisdom are found and the knowledge of God is hidden! We were once blind and lost, ensnared in sin, without true faith and without Christ. But when the Lord called us and we experienced His grace, God gave us enlightened eyes and showed us the unfathomable riches in Christ. We were able to step out of darkness, out of night and sin, into the light of the everlasting gospel which the Lord has prepared for everyone.*

*Yes, how great is the mystery of Christ; how great is His power and His love, His godliness, His majesty and grandeur! We read in the letter to the Hebrews that Jesus is better than the angels, and that His name is more excellent than all cherubim and seraphim. Jesus, the Son of God, has a throne and godly scepter and is exalted above all.*

*Although we read in the Old Testament how Moses had received the Ten Commandments at Mount Sinai along with many instructions and regulations about offerings, these things were just a shadow, a foreshadowing, a testimony of that which was to come. Yes, Moses and Aaron were servants, chosen from among the people to be mediators and priests.*

*However, Jesus Christ as the Son of the God of eternity is much higher and more exalted. He is appointed as a godly mediator and the everlasting High Priest, not exclusively for natural Israel, but for the whole world, for all people. Why? Our Lord and eternal Shepherd gave Himself as the eternal Lamb of God and died on Golgotha for our reconciliation. However, He was awakened from death, He rose again, and sits at the right hand of God. All things have been put under His feet, and God has placed Him to be the head of His Church. Oh, how great is Jesus Christ! Yes, He is highly praised for all eternity!*

*H. D. Nimz*

## Jesus Died for Me

The “Marieliese,” a fine new sailboat, was on her first journey from Bremen, Germany, to Valparaiso, Chile. Everything was going smoothly, and they were almost at the halfway mark. But a dark cloud hung over the “Marieliese.” Peter Jensen, the captain, had been lying seriously ill in his cabin for several days. It seemed he would not reach the harbor alive.

One day, he spoke to the lead helmsman standing beside him, who was now in charge: “I’m not going to make it. I know I won’t reach the harbor. But how will I get to that other harbor—the one up there? Oh, please help me! Tell me what I have to do so I don’t perish.”

“Captain,” the helmsman replied, “I have no idea; I have never thought about that. I have always lived an upright life, done my duty, and didn’t concern myself with God or things of God.”

“Then send me the second mate,” the captain ordered. He came but was also unable to alleviate the captain’s agony. One crew member after the other was called, but no one could show the dying man the plan of salvation. Finally the only one left was the cabin boy, who was called to the bedside of the sick man.

“Karl Müller, do you have a mother at home? Is she a godly woman? Did she teach you to pray?”

“Yes, she did, Captain, and she gave me a Bible when I left home, and—”

“Do you have the Bible here, boy?” the captain interrupted.

“Yes, sir, and I had to promise my mother I would read it every day.”

“Get it and read something that will help me with dying.”

Karl brought the Bible, opened Isaiah chapter 53, and read, “Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God and afflicted.”

When he came to the fifth verse, he hesitated. “Captain,” he asked, “should I read the verse the way my mother taught me?”

“Yes, go ahead.”

Then he continued. “But He was wounded for Karl Müller’s transgressions, He was bruised for Karl Müller’s iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes Karl Müller is healed.”

The dying man suddenly sat up. “Stop!” he called. “That’s just what I need! Read the verse again, son. But use my name instead of yours!”

Karl proceeded, and with the comforting words. “by His stripes Peter Jensen is healed,” the captain entered the heavenly haven of peace.

Salvation through the blood of Jesus is a very personal thing. There is no benefit to knowing what “others” have experienced without having experienced it yourself. Praise God that everyone of us can have the complete assurance of forgiveness of sins and peace with God. ■

# Salvation Through Christ

*Christ “gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.”*

*Titus 2:14*

These words relay one of the most amazing facts ever to be made known. This redemption through Jesus is greater than the freedom given to a slave through the generosity of his master. It is greater than the cancellation of the enormous debt the servant owed, of whom we read in Matthew 18. Even the saving of Lot's life because of Abraham's intercession is not to be compared with the redemption Jesus has given us. The ransom for our freedom, so we are no longer slaves of Satan, has been paid. Yet, the cost was overwhelmingly high.

Years ago, some children had a little white lamb as a pet. They loved the little animal. However, it was stolen and sold to a butcher. When the children discovered this, they went and tried to get their lamb back and save it from being killed. They were unable to convince the butcher to be compassionate. Someone interceded, paid the butcher for the lamb, and returned it to the children. The lamb had been helpless, and the children couldn't save it by themselves. Somebody had to intercede for them. In the same way, we could do nothing to redeem ourselves from spiritual death, nor could anyone else help us, except Jesus. Christ alone was able to redeem us.

The Bible tells us we were all sold as slaves of sin. But Jesus came to ransom us. He paid the price with His own blood. Peter writes, “knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold . . . but with the precious blood of Christ” (1 Peter 1:18-19a). What a price! But there was no other way possible because “without shedding of blood there is no remission” (Hebrews 9:22). The blood sacrifices in the Old Testament were symbolic of what was to be done through the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus. All the blood sacrificed in the Old Testament could not remit and obliterate sin. Only the blood of Christ can do that. The Old Testament sacrifices were only “a reminder of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins” (Hebrews 10:3-4). That is why Christ needed to shed His blood.

Everyone needs a Savior because all have sinned. The consequence of the fall of Adam and Eve into sin is suffering. Nobody can save themselves. Here we see the tremendous difference between Christianity and other religions. A young Brahman told a missionary that he finds much of Christianity in his own religion, except one thing. “What is that one thing?” asked the missionary. The Brahman answered, “A Savior.” This man had great insight in recognizing the significance of this missing piece.

There are many other things that differentiate Christianity from other religions, yet without Christ, there is no Christianity. A Christianity that does not value the redemption of Christ through His blood denies the Savior. How can such a Christianity be better than other religions?

According to the Bible, redemption is not just a ransom and a paying of our debt. Otherwise, all people would be redeemed, even without their own consent. Christ does offer redemption to all, but since humans are moral beings with a free will, they must willingly give themselves to God. Whoever comes to God in repentance will be redeemed.

Romans 8:23 speaks of “eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body.” The redemption of the body itself will take place when Christ returns, and “this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality” (1 Corinthians 15:53). Although the redemption of the body will not be total until the resurrection, we are already now redeemed. Those who are redeemed have corresponding privileges. In God's plan, healing for the body (Isaiah 53:5), freedom from sin, (Matthew 1:21) and peace with God (Romans 5:1) are included. We have the privilege of having the image of God restored in us. The hope of eternal life and anticipation of the glory of heaven are also ours. What an amazing plan of redemption! It is all ours through Jesus Christ, our Lord. ■

# The Uniqueness Of Christ

## **In the midst of humanity, Christ appears, unique in form and existence.**

There has never been a man who could be equal to Christ; no, never. In His birth, His life, His nature, His death, and His influence, He stands above all human beings. Adam was an innocent man, without blame or blemish, until he fell into sin. Since then, no man has lived on this earth without carrying that burden of sin. Only Christ, the second Adam, is the sinless Son of Man, the holy Son of God.

## **He is unique in His birth**

Never was a man born like Him. He came into the world as a baby but born of a virgin. The prophets foretold His birth, and the gospel writers confirmed it. “The Word became flesh and dwelt among us” (John 1:14).

Christ became the mediator to restore the original connection between God and man. Through Him, God meets man, and man encounters God. To be such a mediator, He had to be fully human and fully God. This could only occur through the virgin birth.

## **He was unique in His life**

Never did a man live as He lived. His was an absolute sinless life. He maintained what Adam lost. The serpent, Satan, tempted Jesus just as he had Adam, and tried to entice Him to eat of the “forbidden fruit.” But He did not “eat.”

Not only did He avoid evil, but He went around preaching and performing good deeds. Many people have expressed great thoughts and truths, but have not lived according to them. However, Jesus’ life was completely in tune with His teachings. Every step He took, every word He said, every deed He enacted improved and enlightened the world.

“Which of you convicts Me of sin?” (John 8:46). Who in the history of this world could ask this ques-

tion, especially while facing his worst accusers? At the end of His life, when the people demanded His death, the judge who condemned Him to die had to say, “I find no fault in Him at all” (John 18:38).

“Most assuredly, I say to you,” displayed the authority with which He spoke. The greatest of the prophets could say no more than, “Thus says the Lord.” Jesus did not have to invoke any other authority because He was more than a prophet. He was God and could speak on His own authority.

## **He was unique in His nature**

His birth proves His human nature. He was perfectly human and completely divine. He was human, as Adam and Eve, brought forth from the hand of God. The words “God’s only begotten Son” can only mean that He was divine in nature, that He was and is God. His disciples called Him the “Son of God,” but He called Himself the “Son of Man.” The name “Son of God” is mentioned numerous times in the New Testament. But He seldom called Himself by this name.

He was God revealed in the flesh. He and the Father were one, one in the eternal deity. He Himself said, “I and My Father are one” (John 10:30). How could He have only been a “good person”? Had He really not been more than that, then His enemies would have been right in accusing Him of blasphemy and deserving of death.

## **He was unique in His death**

No one ever died like He did. Christ died for our sins. He died on our behalf. Through His death, He paid the debt of our sins. Because He died, God can be just and also judge the ungodly. “But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8). His death demonstrated the great love of God.

Jesus died willingly and victoriously conquered death. He robbed death of its sting and the grave of its victory (1 Corinthians 15:55). No wonder that Rousseau, the great French infidel, exclaimed that, "Jesus died like a God!" Yes, most certainly, since He *was* the Son of God, eternal and unchanging.

**He was unique in His influence**

Let us observe His triumphal procession, since He

has prevailed through all the centuries. Many millions have followed Him since His time on earth. He is the One who was crucified, and He will return to judge the living and the dead.

Dear Reader, have you acknowledged the wonderful Savior, the Lord and King, Who deserves all honor? Oh, worship Him and follow Him faithfully until your faith is rewarded in eternity. ■

E. Martin



## What *Salvation in Christ* Can Accomplish

A poor drunkard came into a small church gathering. His sins weighed so heavily on him that life held no more appeal. Even the pleasures that he had reveled in now repulsed him. As he listened to the message of the cross, however, his hard heart softened. He fell on his knees and began pleading for mercy and forgiveness. The Lord, full of mercy and grace, accepted him and granted him forgiveness for his sins. The man began his way home as a new person, his heart filled with God's peace. The misery that once filled his home was now replaced with joy and peace.

The Lord Jesus stretches out His hand of redemption to anyone who is willing to hold onto it and allow themselves to be saved, and who is also willing to fulfill the expectations of His Word. There is no partiality with Him. Anyone may come and receive the Water of Life freely. We must all come before Him in the same manner, whether young or old, rich or poor, educated or uneducated, and we must fulfill the same requirements if we wish to receive salvation in Christ. Sadly, so many have no knowledge of the blessings of salvation. They yearn for happiness, peace, and satisfaction, but they are searching in the wrong places.

Dear Reader, if you have not yet found the joy of salvation and

haven't experienced the blessing of God's favor on your life, do not allow yourself to be robbed of this wonderful experience any longer. Jesus is also extending His life-saving hand toward you and wants to save you.

"Come now, and let us reason together," says the LORD, "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (Isaiah 1:18). Yes, Jesus wants to cleanse us from all sin. He will not overlook a single spot. Even the most vile outcast and despised person may be cleansed and set on the Way of Life if he is willing to repent of and forsake his sins.

If you are still far from God, how long do you want to wait? He wants the best for you. He desires to save you from the devil, to whom you are still in bondage, and who is trying to pull you deeper into destruction. He is offering you the wonderful freedom that children of God enjoy. Would you rather remain in the tyranny of sin? What will you do? Many a home has been completely transformed. The dark clouds of despair and distress had to disappear as heaven's light shone into the former discord, hate, and strife. God's salvation alone can transform all that evil into peace, joy, love, and har-

mony. Every person receiving this wonderful gift of God is converted and becomes a new creation. There is nothing more important, priceless, and valuable than the healing balm of God's redemption.

The love of God is able to heal sad, heartbroken, and lonely hearts. Jesus came into the world for this purpose. "He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted" (Luke 4:18). Jesus demonstrated this during His time on earth, and His love is still the same today. It is immeasurable and vast; it knows no boundaries. Jesus loves you and wishes to save you from your sins; He wants to make you happy and fill you with joy. He wants to remove the heavy burden weighing on your heart and wants to pour His oil of pleasure into your heart. Salvation wrought upon the cross by Christ is meant for every person. Do you want this for yourself?

"Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28). The weary will find rest in Jesus. He is waiting for that poor, tired soul. Do not delay any longer to come to Him and find that peace in Him.

"As a father pities his children, so the Lord pities those who fear Him" (Psalm 103:13). He is merciful to those who humbly come and call upon Him for help. ■

J. T.



# Salvation: Incomparable–Unique

“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.”

John 3:16

Throughout the Bible, we do not find another verse so familiar, packed with so much content and so many promises. It contains the plan of salvation revealed in all simplicity and clarity. We see God’s overwhelming love, His wonderful salvation is unique and incomparable for all people, all generations, all eras, and will last forever.

Let us look at this verse in more detail.

## **For God—the greatest Lord of all, the Most High!**

Who here on earth is capable of describing the immutable, eternal, unchangeable, Almighty God, the Creator of heaven and earth? God’s Word gives us a small glimpse, showing us the Lord sitting on a high and exalted throne surrounded by great heavenly hosts, by seraphim who call out to another and say, “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory” (Isaiah 6:3).

## **So Loved—the Greatest one-of-a-kind Love**

We often speak of love and being kind to one another. There is also motherly love, parental love, brotherly love, neighborly love, and love that binds husband and wife. But at the same time, we are also acquainted with misguided love, unfaithful people, even the love of evil which brings God’s judgment.

But God’s love is the greatest, unchanging, eternal love. “I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore with lovingkindness I have drawn you” (Jeremiah 31:3). “Since you were precious in My sight, you have been honored, and I have loved you” (Isaiah 43:4). Yes, “in this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him” (1 John 4:9).

## **The World—the Greatest Number**

We are able to count fingers on our hand, and days, people, and years. We are told the population of villages, cities, countries, and nations. But these words are directing us to God’s plan of salvation, and God’s desire for “all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth” (1 Timothy 2:4).

All people, all nations, all generations are to be saved from their guilt and sins and find the Lord’s redemption through the blood of the Lamb. This is the world—the greatest number. Oh, dear Reader, may God find you and me included in this great number!

## **That He gave—the Greatest Promise**

In the Garden of Eden, Satan in the form of a serpent, made a great promise to Eve; but it was only a half-truth, a deception. This deception caused great distress and the fall of mankind, and separation between God and man. But when God makes a promise and the Lord Jesus says, “Most assuredly, I say to you,” we know we have the complete truth.

At the time when Jesus was born, the greatest promise was fulfilled: “But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son” (Galatians 4:4). With Jesus Christ, all promises of God are fulfilled. God gave, God gives, and God forgives!

Dear Reader,

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





***His only begotten Son—the Greatest of all Gifts***

Oh, how happy and excited we were as children when we received gifts at Christmas or for our birthday. God is the Giver of all gifts, but His greatest gift is His Son.

God tested Abraham’s faith and obedience when He asked him to sacrifice his son Isaac. When he completed the test, being willing to do what God asked him to do, Abraham was able to sacrifice a ram as a substitute. However, God “did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all” (Romans 8:32). Yes indeed, “thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!” (2 Corinthians 9:15). Have you already received this greatest of all gifts, and do you value it?

***That whoever—the Greatest Invitation***

“Ho! Everyone who thirsts, come” (Isaiah 55:1). When Jesus began His ministry, He repeatedly called out, “Come, follow Me” and “Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28).

At the wedding of the king’s son, he sent out his servants, calling, “Come to the wedding.” But when so many rejected the invitation, a command was issued, “Go into the highways, and as many as you find, invite to the wedding” (Matthew 22:9). “Invite the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind” (Luke 14:13). “That whoever” is the greatest invitation that should be sent out today!

***Believes—the Greatest Simplicity***

What do so many people in the world do? They try journeys and trips to holy waters and places, penance, and even self-mutilation in order to reach a merciful God.

Thousands, even millions of people have tried throughout all times to find personal righteousness in their own power and works. But no, your own works do not count. Only faith is needed. “For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation” (Romans 10:10). Having faith and believing with your whole heart, yes, that is simple, child-like faith!

*We're living by faith in the Savior alone,  
Who suffered on Calv'ry for sin to atone;  
He fully redeemed us from Satan's domain  
By raising us up to this glorious plane.*

### **In Him—the greatest and most supreme Person**

There are so many names, celebrities, so many gods, who are honored, highly extolled, and often even worshiped. But there is only One Who can proclaim to the entire human race, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth” (Matthew 28:18). Only One is worthy, of Whom the angels say, “Worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom, and strength and honor and glory and blessing” (Revelation 5:12).

The apostles testified, “Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12).

### **Should not Perish—the Greatest Rescue Mission**

Almost every day, we hear about shipwreck rescues, survivors rescued from earthquakes, helicopters and ambulances attempting rescue after casualties. But these human rescue missions are actually quite limited.

God, however, sent His Son, Jesus Christ, so that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. Our Heavenly Father started the greatest rescue mission through His Son. Peter writes, “Knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot” (1 Peter 1:18-19).

### **But—the Greatest Difference**

Every person must decide whether to accept, believe, and follow God's voice. Alternatively, those who choose to ignore and reject God's invitation and Jesus' offering, actually choose their eternal ruin.

The prophet Malachi writes, “Then you shall again discern between the righteous and the wicked, between one who serves God and one who does not serve Him” (Malachi 3:18).

That is the greatest difference! “He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not be-

lieve the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him” (John 3:36).

My dear Reader, do you see the huge difference? On Judgment Day, the Lord will speak to those standing on His right, “Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” And to those standing on His left, He will say, “Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels” (Matthew 25:34, 41). Where will you spend eternity?

### **Have—the Greatest Assurance**

Many here on earth practice religion, but they do not have the assurance. “I hope I will be saved; I think I'm better than others, so I think I'll make it somehow.”

We have the privilege of saying, like the apostle John, “We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren” (1 John 3:14). “We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one” (1 John 5:19).

All of God's children have the privilege of testifying with Paul, “In Him [Christ] we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace” (Ephesian 1:7). Oh blessed assurance, Jesus is mine!

### **Everlasting Life—the Greatest Wealth**

“For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?” (Matthew 16:26).

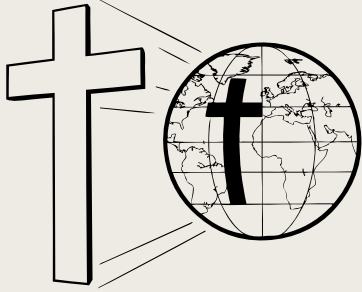
Everything on earth is fleeting and will pass away. We are fully aware of the fact that we were born naked, and that when we die, we will leave empty-handed. However, who will have a part in all the heavenly riches and the greatest wealth in eternity?

Here is the answer: “If children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together” (Romans 8:17).

Dear Reader, it is true. “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 2:9-10).

Dear Reader, the wonderful Word of God in John 3:16 was written for each and every one of us. Believe it, live it out, and you will have everlasting life! ■

H. D. Nimz



# Radio Program Message of Salvation

Friedrich Krebs  
Kitchener, ON

## Christ, the Ministering Shepherd

*A shepherd has a special job. He has a very close relationship with his sheep. He knows them and cares for them self-sacrificingly. The psalmist David, who was a shepherd himself, knew what he was speaking of when he said, “The Lord is my shepherd . . . .”*

In John 10:11, Jesus calls Himself “the good shepherd.” Many artists have portrayed Him as a shepherd. Many of us are familiar with the picture of Jesus standing in the middle of a flock of sheep, carrying a lamb in His arms. This picture reminds us of the actual pastoral work of Jesus. It also chronicles the Christian’s life in four important points: lost, sought, found, and carried home.

It was precisely for this reason that Jesus came into this world. With compassion, He observed wandering, lost humanity. Matthew writes, “But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd” (Matthew 9:36). He wants to be this shepherd since He calls Himself the good shepherd. In Luke 19:10, we read, “for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.”

The image of Jesus as the shepherd was already seen by the Old Testament poets and prophets. Through the prophet Ezekiel, the Lord said, “I will establish one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them” (Ezekiel 34:23). And David sang in Psalm 23, “The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.” Jesus was seen as a full-

time shepherd, doing helpful and blessed pastoral work.

### **He seeks the lost and those who have gone astray**

From our own experience, we know how far we can become estranged from God. Isaiah wrote, “All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, everyone, to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all” (Isaiah 53:6). Becoming lost can quickly turn into panic and hopelessness. Imagine a lost hiker in the desert. The moment must be terrible when he realizes he is really lost. His heart is filled with fear. Such a situation can become a death sentence.

Such is also a spiritually lost person. In this seemingly hopeless circumstance, there isn’t a greater comfort than knowing that the Shepherd is looking for the lost. This awareness brings hope and the possibility of salvation.

### **The Good Shepherd seeks the lost until He has found them**

Jesus emphasized this fact when He spoke to His disciples about the good Shepherd (John 10). He showed



them how He values every single soul. Regardless of the effort or cost, He searches for each individual until He has found them. He is prepared to leave the 99 in the pasture and find that one lost sheep. He finds them immersed in lusts and addictions, in foolishness and uncertainty, in the crevices of stubbornness and hardheartedness, in impurity and fornication, and in the thorns of despair and weariness of life. No case is hopeless, because the Shepherd searches for everyone with His love and grace until He has found them.

### **He carries the sheep home on His shoulders**

What a beautiful picture! Sheep are some of the most helpless, defenseless, and awkward animals. If lost, they rarely find their way home again. For this reason, the shepherd must search, find, and bring his sheep home. As mothers, fathers, pastors, and prayer warriors, we often plead, “Lord, please bring our lost ones home!”

Although Jesus compares people to sheep, in reality, we are not sheep but moral human beings with

a free will. Often, we deliberately choose the wrong path. We need to be willing to be found, saved, and brought home. Even in Jesus’ inner circle of disciples, there was a “lost child.” We hear His heartfelt prayer: “While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name. Those whom You gave Me I have kept; and none of them is lost except the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled” (John 17:12). Without question, Jesus interceded for Judas, but in spite of that prayer, he was lost.

Pastoral work is difficult. A pastor met a poor man on the side of the road, breaking up rocks while on his knees. “My friend, you have a difficult job,” he said, “but it is like mine. You have rocks to break, and so do I.” “Yes,” the man replied, “If you want to break hard hearts, you have to do it like me—on your knees.”

Should such pastoral work be of no avail? Even for you? Who should save you from your lost, helpless, and despondent situation? Jesus wants to be your shepherd! Grasp His saving hand and allow yourself to be lifted up and carried home. ■

# The Testimony of the Blind Hindu

In the large Indian city of Allahabad, where the holy rivers of Ganges and Yamuna join into one, and where thousands of pilgrims pay their respect each year, there once lived a young Hindu. He was a poor blind man with a pitiable appearance and a pock-marked face. A serious illness in early childhood had stolen his sight, forcing him to live the many years since in darkness.

One day, a missionary stopped him on the street, asking, “Do you know who the Lord Jesus is?”

“I heard His name once, a long time ago,” answered the blind man, “but please tell me more.”

Happy to oblige, the missionary began telling his rapt, young listener the old and yet ever-new story of the Son of God Who came to earth to save sinners. He continued, describing with passion and warmth the good shepherd who seeks the lost until he finds them.

While the missionary was speaking, a visible change came over the blind man’s face, his disfigured features became beautiful as he joyfully smiled. As this glorious news reached his ears, the love of God began to dawn in his heart, driving out the darkness of superstition as the morning sun beats back the black night. The poor, blind man was surprisingly quick to grasp the message.

“Oh,” he cried when the missionary had finished, “I need to belong to Him. Yes, I belong to Him! I want to be baptized. No longer do I want to bear my old name. I want to be called David. Just like David, I want to sing of His love and grace.”

He said this because the missionary had also talked about David, the psalmist king of ancient times, who had said and sung so many glorious things about the

coming heavenly King. That was the kind of person our young Indian friend wanted to be.

From this day on, the blind man could often be found with his teacher. In the eyes of the people, he was still the poor, pitiable man of the past, but in reality, he had become a new and different person. Naturally he was still blind, but his spiritual eyes had been opened wide. He had glimpsed God’s holiness, and what he had seen caused his heart to overflow with joy.

Every day, he visited the missionary to get his “daily bread”—not for his body but for his soul—a passage from the Word of God that his teacher read out loud to him and that he could think about all day.

One morning, he met the missionary as usual but looked very troubled. This was so out of the ordinary that his friend noticed immediately and asked what was wrong. “Oh, sir,” said David, as he had chosen to be known since the day of his salvation, “I wish I could read!”

“But David,” replied the missionary with surprise, “why would you wish for something impossible? After all, you’re blind.”

“Yes, that is true,” replied David, “but I have heard about an alphabet that blind people can read, and there is even supposed to be a Bible written in this alphabet. Do you know more about it?”

The missionary did, but he saw no way to get such an expensive Braille Bible for his impoverished student. He therefore thought it best to talk him out of the idea rather than to raise his hopes for something that was, at best, highly unlikely to happen. But David was not deterred. “Sir,” he asked touchingly, “won’t you pray with me that my Heavenly Father will send me His book and teach me how to read it?”



The missionary was unable to refuse. They knelt down together and prayed, although, as the missionary later confessed, with little faith on his part.

Three months passed. David still came day after day to get his “daily bread,” but he never mentioned his wish again.

One morning, the missionary was sitting on his porch when he suddenly heard rapid footsteps beating their way up his stairs. His door started shaking as someone knocked loud and fast, and a voice called out, trembling with excitement, “Are you there, Sir?”

“Yes, what is the matter?”

David entered, his excitement palpable. “Sir,” he cried, “someone on the street just pressed this package into my hand and said, ‘You poor, blind boy, I have long felt drawn to you. Here is something for you. I hope it will be a blessing.’ What could it be, Sir? Open it, quickly, please!”

The missionary cut through the twine, expecting to find a gift of clothing or the like, but to his surprise, the wrapping fell away to reveal a book entitled “The Gospel of John in Braille.” He could hardly believe his eyes, and there are no words to describe the joy of the blind man when he realized what he had received. “I knew it,” he rejoiced, “I knew that my Heavenly Father would answer my prayer if I waited patiently! It is my Father’s book, His own gift!” With that, he hugged the Gospel against himself and kissed it, long and fervently.

The two men first fell on their knees to thank the Lord for this new proof of His love, and then David got straight to work, learning how to read. The joy and love he brought to the task helped him progress quickly, and in a relatively short time, he had passed

the greatest hurdles and was able to read his precious book, albeit slowly.

One day, after he had learned to read fluently, he came to his teacher and said, “I can read now. But I don’t want to keep all the wonderful things I learn every day to myself. There are hundreds of people here who need this book as much as I do.”

And do you know what he did next? The following morning, he tied his book around his neck, went out into the street, and began to run his index finger over the lines, reading aloud with a raised voice. One of the first verses he read was, “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep.”

We can imagine the stir this caused. A blind man reading aloud in the street was a rare sight. The novelty drew a large audience, but most people were just listening out of curiosity, and many made fun of him. But that did not deter him. He was content to know that he was helping people hear the Word of God.

His love for the Lord and his desire to witness for Him did not wane. After some time, David dedicated himself to the service of the Lord full-time. He went from one place to the next, reading God’s Word wherever he was. Eventually, he became a reader in an institute for the blind and helped many of his fellow sufferers find their way to believing in the Lord Jesus and to becoming happy children of God.

Is there anyone not touched by this story? I think it has something special to say to every one of us. To one, it says, “Jesus, the Good Shepherd, left His life for you too,” and to another, “If this poor, blind Hindu found a way to serve his Lord, should you not be able to find one, too?” ■

From: Samenkörner

## Young— and Pleasing to the Lord

**I** don't know if your life already belongs to the Lord or if you are still far from Him. I also don't know how old you are, perhaps 15, 17, or 20? That is not an easy age. Sometimes at that age, you aren't taken seriously, or you haven't really found your place and don't really seem to fit in anywhere. Others don't often understand how you think or feel. Sometimes, you just feel isolated and lonely. There are many questions, and you contemplate things concerning serving the Lord. Am I too young? What can I really accomplish? I'm not really needed. Possibly, you notice the missteps of others. Just look at their behavior; the Bible calls for something else; someone should say something or do something. It seems you are the only one who sees clearly.

You may be skeptical about some biblical accounts and may have your doubts about some of those gospel truths. You question other things, not in a bad way, but you would just like to grasp and understand them. On top of that, you have the energy and the will as a youth to actually achieve something. Or is it a bit of everything? It might be beneficial to look at the life of another young person in your age group, one who really experienced Easter up close and personal. You know him well—John.

### **Who was he?**

According to contemporary witnesses, John still lived at the time Trajan was the Roman Emperor (98-117 A.D.). It is thought that he died approximately 101 A.D. at the age of 85 to 90 years. If we calculate backwards, it turns out that John was, at most, 21 years old during the first Easter. Do not forget that John had traveled with Jesus for about 3 years at this point. That tells us John must have been very young when Jesus called him into His service—about your age.

John was from Galilee and was a fisherman with his brother. According to Mark 3:17, their father was

Zebedee, and their mother was named Salome. We first read this in Matthew 27:56 and later on in Mark 15:40. In John 19:25, four women are mentioned who stood at the cross: Mary, the mother of Jesus; her sister; as well as Mary, wife of Clopas; and Mary Magdalene. Going back to Matthew 27:56, we understand that Salome likely was the sister of Mary, which would mean that John was related to Jesus. As John later writes in his letter, it appears he was also related to the High Priest, or at least they would have been family friends.

### **What was he like?**

Throughout the gospels, John seems to be the quiet, calm disciple in the background. You could say he was caring and gentle. This is clearly revealed in his letters as well. Additionally, he also seemed to be the younger one, which would explain why he kept himself in the background. However, he had other characteristics as well. The name, "Sons of Thunder" given to him and his brother would imply that. In Luke 9:52-54, we read the explanation. When the disciples, along with Jesus, were not welcomed in Samaria, John and James vehemently recommended having fire from heaven come down and devour the people. Their youthful zeal was revealed, and Jesus had to correct their impulsive thoughts.

John and his brother James, along with Peter, belonged to the inner circle of the Lord Jesus. These three accompanied Jesus several times and experienced Him in an extraordinary manner (e.g. on the Mount of Transfiguration). John especially had a strong relationship with the relatively older Peter. Was Peter an example for him, being the leader of the group? Perhaps John marveled at his boldness and fervor. We see these two together again in the opening chapters of the book of Acts. Together, they were entering the temple, after having healed a sick man in the name of Jesus in front of the entrance (Acts 3). They proclaimed the ris-



en Jesus and, as a result, were thrown into prison (Acts 4). Subsequently, they went to Samaria to encourage and strengthen the brethren in their faith (Acts 8:14-15). I find this illustration very important. How beautiful when young and old serve the Lord together and complement each other.

Indirectly, it becomes evident that young John endured some hardships as he followed Jesus. Not only did he leave his family home—after all, they would have been expected to help sustain the family—but there were other challenges as well. The Bible states that even the brothers of Jesus did not believe in Him (Mark 3:20, 21, 32). Additionally, he was acquainted with the High Priest and possibly even related. Would

that have been easy for him? He may have been challenged with some of these statements: “How can you follow Jesus and cling to Him? He’s out of his mind! It’s embarrassing! You should steer clear of Him; who knows where this will end? You are being pulled into something. Don’t bring shame on your family . . .” But John continued following Jesus. He loved Him and was drawn to Him, especially His love, helpfulness, seriousness, and manner of speaking with authority.

John was also the first disciple to believe in the risen Savior (John 20:6-8), and later it was also John who first recognized Jesus on the shore after their unusual, remarkable fishing incident (John 21:7). ■

*To be continued*

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## A question

One of the most useful functions of my smartphone is actually the small LED flashlight. It has saved me so many times when I needed light somewhere and didn’t have a “real” flashlight at hand. In the meantime I don’t need a real flashlight anymore, because I have my smartphone with me a lot more :)

The Bible tells us that God’s Word is a light on our path. How many times has that Word saved me.

Do you feel the same? Can you remember situations where God illuminated your way with a Bible verse?

Just write us which Bible verse has particularly touched you recently. Why was that? What do you associate with this verse? Or just tell us which verse you are currently thinking about, what it has to say to you or which questions it brings up for you. We would be very happy to hear from you. Niko Ernst



**Send us an email: [foundationoffaithteam@gmail.com](mailto:foundationoffaithteam@gmail.com)**



## The Savior, a Helper for Everything

In a distant country, a poor girl in the mission school was sitting and crying over her assignment. It just was not working out for her today. She seemed to have forgotten everything. A missionary who was visiting the class came to her aid. He pointed her to the Savior, to Whom she could pray and ask for anything in her distress. With childlike faith, she asked the Savior to help her. When she had prayed, the assignment suddenly became clear to her. And now she was able to write everything down flawlessly. The poor girl certainly had not known that we can tell the Lord everything in prayer.

If we want to go through the day with complete certainty, we should pray first thing in the morning. In our Bible, we read about the Lord rising and praying very early in the morning while it was still dark. Nobody bothered Him at that time. Through prayer, He always had great strength to do all the hard work.

No sooner had the day started, than people came and sought Him out. They flocked to Him in large numbers. Everyone wanted to see and hear Him. Many confessed their sins to Him. Once, there was

even a leper in the crowd. People ignored him because they were afraid of the bad illness. Nobody gave him a friendly word or said “hello.” But the poor man made his way to the Savior. He had heard that Jesus could help him. He knelt before Jesus and asked, “If You are willing, You can make me clean.” The dear Savior, Who always has a compassionate heart and helps everyone who comes to Him, was not afraid of the terrible illness. He touched him and said, “I am willing.” The Lord answered the short, sincere prayer of the sick man. The poor man got up and went home well.

Yes, we all wish to have such a Savior, to Whom we can bring everything and Who answers our prayers. We have certainly received a lot of good things from Him. Wouldn't it be nice if we gave Him our hearts in thanks?

*Take our hearts as a sacrifice to You;  
we give them freely and with joy anew.  
Make them as Yours, holy and blessed,  
With Yours as one forever to rest!*

# What God Has Done for Me

*Many songs express the wonders of  
The Savior's love and saving grace;  
Though they try to share God's precious love,  
I know the half has not been said.  
I know my song is also feeble  
And can't express the things above;  
There are no words on earth to equal  
The glory of this wondrous love.  
But still I want to praise my Savior  
And tell of His great loving favor.*

*I once was lost, living in darkness,  
Was plagued with guilt, a slave of sin;  
The devil's chains were like a harness,  
I had no rest, no peace within.  
My guilt increased, I kept on sinning  
A mountain of iniquity;  
There seemed to be no way of winning,  
For all the good just seemed to flee.  
Tell me, is there really no way out,  
Sin and shame, is that what life's about?*

*As cold as stone, my heart was hardened,  
My mind was numb, focused within;  
My plight was sad, my guilt unpardoned,  
Where could I go with all my sin?  
I sought to find my joy and fortune  
In worldly pleasures here below;  
Soon hope was gone. What was my portion?  
Just disappointment, pain and woe!  
Can one not live without resentment?  
Is there no life of real contentment?*

*The hour, it came, the Lord had pity,  
I heard the Word of God proclaimed;  
For it was preached in town and city,  
I saw my sin, my guilt, my shame.  
Depraved and wretched, lost and hopeless  
Was my condition on this earth;  
Sad and forlorn, deprived of wholeness,  
I lived corrupted from my birth.  
I saw my state, wretched and forlorn;  
I even regretted that I was born.*

*Then I heard that Jesus died for me,  
To grant salvation from all sin;  
I knelt at the cross, wept bitterly,  
And sought forgiveness, peace within.  
My heart of stone was broken by grace,  
My pride was shattered verily;  
I gave Him my life and now can face  
A future that is heavenly.  
My life is changed, o wond'rous story,  
Freed from the past to share His glory!*

W. Ebel

## 60,000 Thoughts a Day— a Challenge

**I**t is estimated that we humans think an average of 60,000 thoughts a day. Can this be? I can hardly believe it! I tried to count my thoughts one day, but somehow it just didn't work.

Likewise, it was found that only 3% of our thoughts are positive or helpful for us or others. Twenty-five percent of thoughts are supposedly detrimental. The remaining 72% are just fleeting or insignificant thoughts. I do not know if the numbers are estimates, but the fact is that we all think. From early morning to late night, we think. Sometimes, our thoughts trail into the midnight hour.

The Bible also speaks of thinking people. In Job 1:5, we read, "For Job thought" (CEB), and in 1 Chronicles 22:5 we find, "David thought" (CEB). In Isaiah 55:8-9, God speaks in regard to men, "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways." Luke reports in his gospel account (5:22, NIV), "But when Jesus perceived their thoughts, He answered and said to them, 'Why are you thinking these things in your hearts?'"

By nature, the thoughts of humans run in the direction of "evil." "For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts," declared Jesus (Matthew 15:19). A person needs an all-encompassing renewal that also reforms his way of thinking. Therefore, the prophet Isaiah addresses this point openly (55:7): "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the Lord, and He will have mercy

on him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon."

To the brothers and sisters in Rome, Paul writes and exhorts them not to conform to the world, adding, "be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God" (Romans 12:2). That means that our thoughts (mind) should be regulated by the Word of God.

Perhaps you are asking yourself why this article is found on the seniors' page. It is a valid question. When we find ourselves in retirement and our desires and abilities are restricted, we spend more time within our four walls and can no longer participate in common events like before. It is precisely in such situations that various thoughts occur. We sit in our favorite chair, rocking back and forth, thinking about this and that. Thoughts run rampant. So, when considering thoughts in general and the number "60,000 thoughts a day," this does not seem so far-fetched after all.

In the previously-mentioned study, thoughts were classified into three main categories: helpful, detrimental, and insignificant. If you think about your own thoughts, thoughts that come to a person of senior age, you are led to contemplation. Of course, we only want to give room to helpful (useful and positive) thoughts. Who wants to think detrimental and harmful thoughts? The fact is that the Bible even speaks of sinful thoughts. May God keep us from that!

Why is all of this so important? If our thoughts go in a wrong direction, they will affect our entire lives. Other people (spouse, family, children) are also affected. What and how we are today is the result of our thoughts. Thoughts form us and our perspective on life. The person who thinks negative thoughts slowly but surely develops into a negative person. In contrast, a person who thinks positively remains thankful and pleasant and is a blessing for others, despite aging. In plain language, we are architects of our own destinies. We can either be our own greatest enemy or best friend because of our thoughts.

Where do our thoughts come from? We “create” some of them ourselves. Others come from people around us. The Holy Spirit also gives us thoughts, and Satan whispers his destructive evil dogma into the “ears” of our mind. We have “thought ourselves” into a lot of things in our lives. For example, consider fear and worry. When these find entrance to our world of thoughts and are accepted and developed, then our surroundings darken and our lives become unbearable. If we have friends who think alike, who add to those fears and worries, then sadness will ensue. Thoughts can terrorize us, rob us of our appetite and sleep, and, in terms of health, even shorten our lives. If you think about it, it becomes apparent how important it is to employ “guards” for our thoughts.

Let’s be reminded once again of Jesus’ question: “Why are you thinking these things in your hearts?” (Luke 5:22, NIV). This has become very personal. Jesus is speaking to you and me just as He did to those listeners. Each person will obviously judge their own thoughts favorably. But wouldn’t we broaden our outlook if we had the courage to let dear people within our sphere answer this question?

Not all thoughts are worth thinking. We need to be able to discern in situations like these. Some thoughts must be ruthlessly eliminated before they do us harm:

1. Thoughts of self-pity: “No one likes me. I am forgotten by everyone. What awful things people have done to me! No one understands me.”
2. Thoughts that have to do with our past. The past cannot be changed. If God has forgiven us and we have tried to make things right, it is not worthwhile to continue thinking about it. It is best to leave the past where it belongs: in the past. Let go of the past.

3. Thoughts that begin with the words: “If only I had . . .” You accuse yourself and condemn your own decisions.

4. Thoughts that question God’s Word, resulting in the growth of doubts.

5. Thoughts where we question our “fate” (God’s way with us).

6. Thoughts that focus on things that cannot be changed. What can be changed should be changed. What cannot be changed should be surrendered to God.

7. Thoughts that pertain to others, and putting their mistakes under a magnifying glass, amplifying them. We are not responsible for others.

8. Thoughts in which we compare ourselves to others; thoughts that eventually even awaken jealousy in us.

If you were to expand this list, you would notice that almost always, we personally stand at the center of our own thoughts. Everything revolves around them. Such thoughts are essentially useless. Not only that, they drag us down, make us tired and frail, darken our path and future, and lead us to become unthankful and grumpy. No, this should not happen to us! We have to think differently and let our attitude be transformed. Do you want to know how to do that? The apostle Paul gives us a brilliant tip, which we find in his letter to the church in Philippi. He writes, “Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things” (Philippians 4:8, NIV).

Everything begins with our thoughts. The impact of them has a far-reaching effect.

- Watch your thoughts, for they become your words.
- Watch your words, for they become your actions.
- Watch your actions, for they become your habits.
- Watch your habits, for they become your character.
- Watch your character, for it becomes your destiny.

Why don’t you fold your hands right now and let your thoughts turn into prayer? “Lord, free me of all wrong thoughts and give me victory to think in line with your Word. Help me to glorify You even in my world of thoughts. Amen.” ■

Harry Semenjuk



# On the Road of Salvation

Part 14

Conquer New Territory in Canaan

Ron Taron

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

*“The LORD our God spoke to us in Horeb, saying: ‘You have dwelt long enough at this mountain. . . . See, I have set the land before you; go in and possess the land which the LORD swore to your fathers—to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—to give to them and their descendants after them’” (Deuteronomy 1:6,8).*

The Israelites had crossed the Jordan and arrived in the Promised Land. Yet their work was not done. They needed to conquer their inheritance, city by city and region by region. In each case, they enriched their experiences with God and learned new lessons of faith. We, as saved and sanctified children of God, have those same privileges, without which we could not progress in our spiritual walk.

### **Conquering Jericho—A Lesson in Faith**

The first city that barred Israel's progress was Jericho. Here, right at the beginning, they were to learn several lessons which can also be of great help to us on our spiritual journey.

1. The Lord leads and His people follow Him. Wherever He directs, they follow Him, even into battle, as it was at Jericho.

2. Every spiritual battle is won only by God's power. It would have been impossible for the inexperienced Israelites to conquer Jericho in their own strength. Likewise, in our battles with the enemy of our soul, we cannot be victorious in our own strength, but if we trust in God His mighty arm will always ensure victory.

3. Israel was commanded to abstain from “accursed things.” It is no different today. The world tempts greatly, but God's people must be separated from, and

dead to, the world. As a song writer says, “Dead to every worldly pleasure, Dead indeed to sin am I.” See 1 John 2:15-17.

4. The great lessons of Jericho were faith and obedience. Who in his right mind conquers a city by walking around it? But if God has commanded exactly that while promising victory, Israel needed to believe and obey.

Certainly, the Israelites would have had many questions and doubts, especially on the seventh day, circling the city for the seventh time, tired and exhausted. Don't you think Satan would have tried to convince them of the ridiculousness and hopelessness of this exercise? But they continued on in faith . . . and when they had passed the test, those massive walls fell. Dear Reader, let your similar experiences with God encourage and strengthen you. Go forward and conquer new territory in Canaan.

### **The Defeat at Ai—A Lesson in Holiness**

“And the men of Ai struck down about thirty-six men, for they chased them from before the gate as far as Shebarim, and struck them down on the descent; therefore the hearts of the people melted and became like water” (Joshua 7:5).

Why did God desert a whole nation for the sin of one man? Why did thirty-six innocent men have to die? To demonstrate God's holiness and the requirement of holy living to His people. Only if we personally walk before God in holiness can we have victory and stand before God. God can only work where sin does not separate His people from Him. Victory over Satan, sin, and temptations is only possible in a holy heart. Spiritual progress can only occur from a foundation of



holiness, and only with a sanctified heart is it possible to continue dwelling in Canaan.

God takes this very seriously. We read in Joshua 7:15, “Then it shall be that he who is taken with the accursed thing shall be burned with fire, he and all that he has, because he has transgressed the covenant of the LORD, and because he has done a disgraceful thing in Israel.” Ambivalence or carelessness in regard to holiness cost Achan his life and all that he had. Dear Friend, take a very serious stand on sin and holiness before God.

Notice not only did Achan die, but also his family and all that he had. When we play with sin, it will not only harm us personally, but often those around us: our family, our friends, and our church. How bitter and harsh was this lesson about God’s righteousness! Take great care with holiness in your life.

### **The Bread of the Gibeonites—Self-confidence**

“Then the men of Israel took some of their provisions; but they did not ask counsel of the LORD. So Joshua made peace with them, and made a covenant with them to let them live; and the rulers of the congregation swore to them” (Joshua 9:14-15).

When the people of Gibeon heard what Joshua had done to Jericho and Ai, they conceived a crafty deceit. They took old clothing and moldy bread and rode towards the Israelites, pretending that they had been on the road for months. When challenged, they flattered the Israeli leadership with the words that they had heard of the great deeds of God far away in their own country, and had now come to enter into a covenant with this glorious nation. Instead of asking God for guidance, Joshua and Israel’s leaders accepted the

Gibeonites’ “proof” and made a covenant with them. We must ask ourselves honestly, what would we have done in that situation? It sounded so pleasing: “We can see God is with you and we’d just like to serve Him with you wonderful people!” Wouldn’t we have rejoiced? But it was all deceit, and because Joshua and the leaders had sworn and couldn’t renege on their promises, this compromise resulted in much trouble for many generations, even to the time of King Saul.

How are we doing? Do we “ask the mouth of the Lord” in every decision, or have we gotten used to relying on logic, intellect, and education? Dear Reader, be warned that spiritual self-confidence can often cause us the greatest difficulties. Go into God’s sanctuary and ask the mouth of the Lord. Let Him lead you.

### **The Danger of Becoming Complacent**

“Then Joshua said to the children of Israel, ‘How long will you neglect to go and possess the land which the LORD God of your fathers has given you?’” (Joshua 18:3). Years had passed and seven tribes had not yet conquered their prescribed territory. They seemed to be in no hurry; were quite comfortable living as guests of their brothers.

We too, who live in such superficially good times, are in great danger of spiritual complacency. We have grown used to a comfortable life and have in many cases let our affluence lull us to sleep. Brother, Sister, take hold of your inheritance in Canaan. Conquer new territory, seek deeper experiences with God, lest you fall asleep spiritually and come short of the goal at the end. Spiritual stagnation results in backsliding. Hurry onward to the eternal prize. The Lord has a glorious inheritance for you. Claim it. Conquer new territory in Canaan! ■

## Experiences with God

*“But I will sing of Your power; yes, I will sing aloud of Your mercy in the morning; for you have been my defense and refuge in the day of my trouble. To You, O my Strength, I will sing praises; for God is my defense, my God of mercy.” Psalm 59:16-17*

When I look back on my life, I am able to joyfully testify, the Lord was and is gracious to me. Until it pleases the Lord to call me home, I will praise His mercy every morning.

It is true that I have experienced many difficult hours in my long life, including war, hunger, and distress. And yet, I see the hand of God and His plan in my life. His grace has kept me and carried me to this day.

I was born in what is now the Ukraine. As the Second World War was raging, we were displaced to Kazakhstan in 1941. A Russian family in the town of As-trachanka was forced to billet us. It was God’s grace that this family was very considerate and looked after us well. Although I was just a young child during this journey of many weeks, I already experienced God’s protection. Once, the train almost left without me after a stop in the midst of a dense forest. What would have become of me, and how would my parents have felt if someone had not lifted me into the train at the last moment? My whole body shook with terror.

In 1944, when I was 11 years old, my mother died. Now my two brothers, two sisters, and I only had a father. My youngest sister was just two and a half years old. For a year and a half, we struggled together, and then my father remarried. Our new mother had lost her own child and husband. Surely it was not easy to marry into a family with five children and have to care for them right away. This demonstrates great trust in God. We had only three months to adjust to this new situation, when my father was taken away and sentenced to seven years in prison because of his faith. How difficult this was for all of us. I often saw the tears of my mother and heard her cries to God. But she loved us as her own children and cared for us sacrificially. She was a great example for me. She often went to bed hungry after dividing between her children the last bit of food we had received. What would have happened

to us if Father had not remarried shortly before his imprisonment? God was so good and cared so well for us.

Both of my brothers were eventually enlisted in the FSO/work army and had to work in the coal mines. Now there were four of us left. We had barely anything to eat, hardly any clothes to wear, and lived in unfamiliar surroundings among strangers. This prompted my mother to take us girls and move about 70 km (43 mi) to Kamenka, where she had lived before she came to us. There, we attended a house church. At the age of 14, I became a Christian and experienced the peace of God filling my heart. Shortly after, I was baptized according to the biblical teaching. I experienced how God pays attention to the prayers of His children, and He hears and answers them.

I worked quite a distance away from home, herding cows and sheep and looking after them. It wasn’t an easy job. On top of that, I was only allowed to go home for one day each month. As a result, I could not attend the services regularly. But even during this time, the Lord was with me, protecting me, and helping me to remain true and grounded in the faith. The Holy Spirit led me to fully consecrate myself to Him. Glory, praise, and thanks to God for this experience that allowed me to move forward in His power and strength. It was always very important for me to attend the worship services. After work, I rushed to join other young Christian girls as we quickly walked a considerable distance just to be in a worship service. Although I cannot go into details, I can assure you, the Lord was good to me.

In later years, many fellow believers and I experienced the joy of worshipping openly in a church building rather than having to gather in homes.

We moved to Germany in 1990 and found our new spiritual home in the Church of God in Pforzheim. In 2011 my husband passed away, but I am not alone. I am thankful that the Lord is always with me. Every day,



I experience His presence. Every day, I can tell Him everything, and He gives me the strength and courage I need.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ, my deepest wish is to remain faithful until my journey is over. During my life, the Lord has taught me that His Word is true. He is a stronghold, a refuge in times of distress, and He is mighty. We won't allow anything to separate us from

Him. Let's keep the faith so we can all be together in heaven, extolling His grace for all eternity. "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen" (2 Corinthians 13:14).

Gertrud Gerlach  
Pforzheim, Germany



# The Man *with the Message*

New life sprouted from the trees and bushes, fresh strength streamed through all the branches, and the air breathed the invigorating balm of the coming spring. But none of this was enough to brighten the sad features of the aged man walking through the park, supported by his cane.

Mr. Mueller had seen seventy years come and go. They had taken everything from him that was dear to his heart. They had robbed him of his health and wealth. Hope and desire had escaped his sad life. His was a lonely, desolate existence with a cold, aching heart. He wandered on, lost in his thoughts, which could not bring him peace.

He lowered himself onto a bench, thrust his stick into the ground in front of him, put both hands on the handle and rested his chin on his hands. Lost in his dull brooding, a picture of despair, he sat there, all alone.

A young man approached him from behind, holding a letter in his hands, the contents of which had him so deeply engrossed that he did not see the bench and bumped violently into it. The old man sighed deeply and looked up to see a tall man with dark hair standing beside him. “I apologize,” said the stranger, “I disturbed your dream. But I was reading a message.”

“I just hope your message is better than my dream,” muttered the old man.

“You would be the best judge of that,” replied the stranger, “because you are older. May I read it to you to get your verdict?” Without waiting for an answer, the stranger read from the letter. “If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?” (Romans 8:31-32).

“I don’t know anything about that,” said the old man. “I only know one thing; life is a huge disappointment. You seek and strive for something, believe you can grasp it, and it escapes from your hands. The end comes before the desired object has been fulfilled. Hopes betray us. Everything leaves us; only one thing remains and settles more and more firmly—despair.” Again, his tired head leaned on his trembling hands, which desperately held the handle of the cane.

With deep sympathy, the stranger said, “God grant that you, old friend, awoken from this terrible dream. May He give you the good that He allowed me to find in this truth. I too groped around in fear and doubt until this letter arrived with such kind counsel. But the most beautiful part of it is this scripture passage. I find everything in these few words: God, Jesus, reconciliation, justification, assurance. There, see and read it for yourself with these thoughts.”

Mr. Mueller took the letter, his hand trembling, and his eyes still sharp despite their age, and looked at the words. “Oh yes, it may be so,” he sighed. “It is all very good, there’s no doubt about that. But not for me. Farewell. It is too chilly to be sitting here any longer.” The old man shivered in the cool evening wind, turned his back on the playing and laughing children, and left the park.—

A squalid little room was dimly lit by the feeble light of a lamp that cast its shadow on the white walls and on the almost-as-white face of the man lying on his miserable bed.

He had been very still. Now he moved and eagerly groped for a book on the table next to his bed. His thoughts had been on completely new paths for days, looking for solid ground. The book was very old. He had put a strip of paper in the place where he now began to read in the dim light.

“If God is for us—God!” he repeated, leaning back into his pillow, contemplating. He straightened up again and continued reading. “He who did not spare His own Son—reconciliation,” he murmured softly, “but delivered Him up for us all—justification and assurance.” The rigid, cold features were gradually disappearing, and awakening hope pushed the despair away. His weak body trembled at the anticipation of bliss that began to flow through his inmost being. This was what his miserable life had been missing, but he had not known it. Now he was old and decrepit, at the edge of the grave. But the end would be a bright, reconciling one. He could pray and accept God’s unspeakably glorious gift, Jesus Christ, who died to save.

“Hannah, come closer,” he said to his granddaughter who lived with him. “Where is he?”

“Who do you mean, Grandfather?” she asked.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

The old face lit up once more as he said, “I mean the man with the message.”

“You dream, Grandfather,” she replied, “there was nobody here.”

“No, my child, he awakened me from my dream. He brought me the good news. Hannah, I wish he had come much earlier and had saved me years of unnecessary gloom. But you have to go out like me. Maybe he’ll cross your path too. I am tired. I can’t tell you now.” She saw him close his eyes. He looked so strangely still, so completely happy. She couldn’t grasp what had happened.—

Sunshine lay on the old man’s face when he spoke again. “Bring it quickly, Hannah, as long as I have enough strength to show you. That old book there, give it to me.” She handed him the Bible and he pointed to where the strip of paper lay. Hannah took the book from his trembling hand. “Everything is there. Why did I never find it? Everything there, the balm to heal the pain of life, the hope to cheer the saddened heart. I thank God for that man with the message!”—

Hannah was amazed to witness this change. He had always been so irritable and severe. And now she read aloud that scripture passage from Romans 8:31-32. “Take it to heart, my girl, and your whole life will change. And make sure others hear it too, when you’ve grasped the truth.”

“Grandfather, you are very sick. What can I give you?” the girl whispered, moved.

A long, silent look upward, and the old, wrinkled face transformed to the most peaceful calm when he said, “He really gives us everything, even peace in death.” The weary man lay quietly in his last slumber. His soul was now secure in the Savior, and he entered eternal rest.

Multitudes walk this earth, deluded by the mysteries of life, aged by the pressures of care, longing for rescue and redemption. In Christ’s name, we ask, “Where is the man with the message?” Where are those who know about the great message of joy? Are they so wrapped up in their own interests that they have no time to bring sinners the message of the Savior they found? Have they forgotten how short and fleeting the time is? Let us run to be men and women with the message. ■

*Youth Bible Days in Kirchberg, Germany*

March 6–8, 2020

*Easter Conference in Hamm, Germany*

April 10–13, 2020

*Fest in Winnipeg, Manitoba*

May 16–17, 2020

*Pentecost in Herford, Germany*

May 30 to June 1, 2020

*Youth Retreat in Tuningen, Germany*

July 31 to August 4, 2020

*Bible Course in Winnipeg/Steinbach,  
Manitoba*

August 10–21, 2020

*Camp Meeting in Blaubeuren, Germany*

August 15–20, 2020

*Convention in Swartz Creek, Michigan*

September 5–6, 2020

*Fest in Seminole, Texas*

September 26–27, 2020

## *Precious Savior– Never Changing*

I should not complain to others  
Of my sorrows, grief, and woe;  
One can help my heart recover,  
So to Jesus I must go.

Everything on earth is changing,  
Friends will come, and friends will go;  
And despite much rearranging,  
All will pass away below.

There's but One who never changes,  
He will guide and help me through;  
Should friends treat me like a stranger,  
Jesus Christ is always true.

When my days were filled with sorrow,  
Tearfully, I sought His face;  
Giving new hope for tomorrow,  
Jesus helped His child with grace.

In His love I rest completely,  
I am His without a doubt;  
I'm, despite what may surround me,  
Safe within my Father's house.

O the wond'rous love of Jesus,  
Sweeter than all else in life;  
Through His blood that saves and frees us,  
He has opened Paradise.

Lord, I praise You and adore You  
Now, and when from here I go;  
For Your blood, of matchless value,  
Washed a sinner white as snow.

Frieda Dornblaser