

# Foundation of Faith

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## *God's Promises and His Faithfulness*

There Is a Living God

Take God at His Word

In Times of Fear

The Unwelcome Visitor

The Rainbow of Grace

# Content

## GOD'S PROMISES AND HIS FAITHFULNESS

### 4 There Is a Living God

### 5 He Does Not Lack Means

### 6 Exceedingly Great Promises

*These are God's promises to His children. Have you come to appreciate their worth?*

### 8 Take God at His Word

### 10 The Faithfulness of God

### 11 Hidden Treasures in God's Word

*God is always able to give us the right word for our situation.*

### 12 In Times of Fear

### 13 A Shepherd's Psalm

#### RADIO BROADCAST

### 14 We Have a God Who Helps

*What support, what confidence, what strength and wonderful help we have in God! Do you have Him in your life too?*

### 3 Editorial

#### YOUTH PAGE

### 16 . . . Study Notes (12)

### 17 Building Character

#### SAMUEL HEBICH

### 18 But Victory

**Comes through Prayer**

#### CHILDREN'S CORNER

### 19 Home

#### SENIOR'S PAGE

### 20 The Unwelcome Visitor

### 24 Where is Zebedee?

*A father who has not done his most important duty . . .*

### 24 The Rainbow of Grace

### 26 The Attitude of Jesus

#### POEMS

### 13 A Shepherd's Psalm

### 23 Fathers

### 28 See the Great Promises

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## Editorial

Dear Reader,

*What a wonderful privilege it is to have a Savior Who is with us and for us! Yes, He understands our situation and knows, “In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world” (John 16:33).*

*In the world, we are afraid. Surrounded by danger, we suffer from trials and temptation. We can be injured and hurt, even by accident through no fault of our own. We can fall victim to crime. Every day, every hour, a murder suddenly and unexpectedly ends a life here on Earth, sending a soul into eternity. Yes, dear Reader, we are in danger—of catching the coronavirus, getting cancer, having a stroke, or suffering from any number of other misfortunes.*

*But what does our Savior say? “In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer!” This is where Jesus comes into the picture, saying, “I have overcome the world.” I—the Son of God, crucified for you and raised from the dead for you—I have all power in Heaven and on Earth. “I . . . was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore” (Revelation 1:18). “I am with you always, even to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:20).*

*Dear Reader, despite all the pain and danger we may face, we have so many wonderful promises from God, and we can claim them for ourselves in faith. They are for you and me. They are offered to us out of mercy. Take, for example, Psalm 91. Set aside some time and read it for yourself. It reminds us that we can dwell in the secret place of the Most High and rest in the shadow of the Almighty; we can find cover under His feathers and refuge under His wings.*

*God is our refuge and strength, but not only He alone. He often commands His angels to protect us, wherever we may be or may go.*

*Dear Soul, hold fast to your Savior. You can call on Him at any time, and He will hear you. He will be with us through all pain and danger as we go from believing to seeing.*

H. D. Nimz





# There Is a Living God

A tense atmosphere permeated a Chinese city. One could literally feel the enmity against the sole remaining missionary and the small group of Christians.

Three times on this particular day, the people had been summoned to public meetings at which the same high government official always spoke. It was clear to everyone that he wanted to incite his audience against the Christians by using all means available to him.

The following night, the missionary awoke to someone calling her name. She saw a faint glimmer of light coming from a small lamp. Who was standing there? It was the man who had so spitefully raged against her three times the previous day. Had he come to arrest her and take her to prison? Was her life in danger? Such thoughts assailed her as she strode out into the garden toward him. But then, to her greatest surprise, she heard the man say, “Miss Missionary, come and help me. My little son is dying!”

She quickly took her bag of medicines and rushed to follow the father to the boy’s bedside. It immediately became clear to her that the child was suffering

from severe pneumonia and that his heart could give out at any moment. She knew there was nothing more she could do for this young life except to pray for him. For that, she wanted to be alone. So she turned to the father and asked to be left alone. She would call him back in if it became urgent.

The next morning, the young boy was still alive. With tears in his eyes, the father said, “Miss Missionary, my son is in your hands.”

“My hands are only powerless human hands. They can do nothing here,” the missionary replied. “Unless God’s hands perform a miracle, we cannot save this young life. His heart is too weak. But may we pray for your child?”

“My son is in your hands. Do as you think best.”

The missionary hurried to the chapel and found some brothers and sisters of the congregation gathered there and told them what had happened. Immediately, the whole congregation went on their knees and asked the Lord to heal the little boy and prove to the official that there is a living God. While the missionary continued to do everything in her power to help the

child through appropriate medication, some fasted and prayed.

After four days, the little boy had recovered enough that his father could be told the danger was over. This turned the former enemy into a friend of the congregation.

A few days later, another official appeared at the mission station and told the missionary that he also had a three-year-old boy who was seriously ill. He himself had worked in a hospital a few years ago, but neither he nor others were able to help the little boy. The official whose son had recently been so miraculously healed was an old friend of his and had told him how the healing had happened. Would the missionary be willing to help his child as well?

The missionary assured him that she herself could not help but would do everything that was in her power. The official and his son were accompanied by the grandmother, whom the missionary immediately recognized as a child of God.

After a thorough examination, the missionary found that the little one's heart was badly affected. She did not say a word about it but gave the stethoscope to the father and asked him to listen for himself. He listened to the heartbeats and exclaimed in despair, "O, his heart is beating so restlessly! There is no more hope!"

When the grandmother heard this, she cried out, "The boy said over and over again on the way here that he was going to the foreign lady and that she would pray to the Lord Jesus for him. Now we must pray!"

With that, she fell on her knees where the sick child lay. The missionary knelt beside her and laid her trembling hands on the boy, calling on the Lord and asking Him to glorify His name. What would it mean to this official if God would stretch out His hand and send the help he so desperately longed for? Afterward, the father took his son in his arms and went away.

The next day, they all came back. Again, the missionary took the stethoscope and listened to the boy's heart. Then, without a remark, she handed the device back to the father, just as she had done the day before. He listened, listened again, and then dropped the instrument and exclaimed, "Yes, there is a living God!"

The child's heart was completely healed, and the missionary thanked the Lord who had so wonderfully delivered her from all fear and had so unmistakably shown those who would not believe in Him that He lives.

"Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up" (James 5:14-15). ■

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## He Does Not Lack Means

When Samuel Gobat (1799-1879) went on his first missionary journey through Abyssinia (now Ethiopia), he and his companions experienced the Lord's miraculous help several times in the middle of the wasteland. One time, they had run out of food and had to cover a long distance between thorny bushes. Since there was no human habitation to be seen far and wide, most of the small traveling party was convinced with certainty that they would have to fast that day.

But Gobat himself, with greater confidence than

ever, asked God for daily bread. And behold, in the afternoon at about 1 p.m., they saw a black man sitting by the road with a basket of bread and a jug of native drink, who asked them to accept both.

Gobat asked him how he knew him. The man replied, "I don't know you. I am a slave. My master could not sleep last night and found no rest until he got up and ordered me to bring this bread and this jar to the travelers who would come this way. Since you are the first, it is for you."

Gobat accepted the gift with heartfelt thanks and asked for God's blessing on the benefactor. ■

# Exceedingly Great Promises of God

**H**ow do we perceive and view God's promises? What relationship do we have to them? Of what value are they to us? Are they part of our everyday life or do we have them on display in a china cabinet?

I marvel at how Peter speaks of Christ's promises and how he relates to them. We read in 2 Peter 1:2-4, "Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, as His divine power has given to us [those who believe] all things that pertain to life and godliness, [how?] through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these [promises] you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped [through these promises] the corruption that is in the world through lust."

Christ's promises are exceedingly great, precious and magnificent, and of inexpressible value. As Christ is, so are His promises.

What are some of His promises and their characteristics that make them so exceedingly great, that words cannot describe their greatness?

First let us look at the characteristics of divine promises, or God's pledges or assurances.

## **His Promises are Unfailing**

His promises, like His Word, cannot fail. In fact it is impossible for His promises to fail, for we read that "it is impossible for God to lie" (Hebrews 6:18).

"For all the promises of God in Him are Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us" (2 Corinthians 1:20).

The people of Israel experienced this reality. Solomon expressed it clearly and said "Blessed be the Lord,

who has given rest to His people Israel, according to all that He promised. There has not failed one word of all His good promise, which He promised through His servant Moses" (1 Kings 8:56).

How precious is something that cannot fail? How do we relate to His unfailing promises in our day to day life, in our Christian walk?

Do we fully rest and confidently build and walk upon them? Or do we have them on display on the mantle or shelf, where we lovingly gaze at them and speak highly of them and perhaps even polish them from time to time? Do we dare to take them and rest upon them in our everyday life?

Here is a story to help illustrate:

In the early days of immigration to the West, a traveler came to the banks of the Mississippi River for the first time. It was wintertime and the surface of the river was sheeted with gleaming ice. He needed to cross, yet not knowing the thickness of the ice, he hesitated for a long time, not trusting himself. It was getting late and he needed to cross. At length, with many fears and great caution, he crept on hands and knees, thinking to distribute his weight as much as possible. He trembled at every sound. After painfully creeping along for sometime, he heard singing behind him. There in the dusk was a man driving a four-horse load of coal across the ice and singing as he went.

Many Christians creep along trembling upon the promises of God, while others go singing over these same promises. May the Lord grant us mercy to recognize the power of God and know that His promises are always true and unfailing.

## **His Promises are Assured by Divine Ability**

As humans, we often make promises we cannot keep.

Yet is there anything too hard or complex that God cannot do? The ability to carry out the promise is what makes it valid. The same power that raised Jesus from the dead stands behind His promises.

Abraham was “fully convinced that what [God] had promised He was also able to perform” (Romans 4:21).

### **Promises—Grounded in Christ**

Christ is the cornerstone, the living stone, that cannot be shaken, removed, or broken. The cornerstone is eternal. No earthquake of any magnitude can shake this cornerstone.

“For all the promises of God in Him are Yes, and in Him Amen” (2 Corinthians 1:20). The promises of God are grounded in Christ.

### **The Precious and Exceedingly Great Promises to Believers**

Do we have a count on how many promises He has given? Multitudes exist for those who believe.

We can only touch on a few . . . .

#### *1) Salvation*

Romans 1:16: “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes . . . .”

Is this not an exceedingly great and precious promise?

#### *2) Power for Service*

John 14:12: “Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father.”

Christ told His disciples prior to His ascension that all power had been given to Him. Therefore He told His disciples to “go.” He gives power for service.

#### *3) He Will Not Forsake Us*

One of our greatest fears, even from young on, is the fear of being left alone. Yet God’s unfailing promise according to Hebrews 13:5b is “for He Himself said, I will never leave you nor forsake you.”

#### *4) Answers to Prayer*

In various ways He shows us that it is for us to pray and for Him to answer. “Therefore I say to you,

whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them” (Mark 11:24).

Or read Luke 11:5–8, the parable of the friend who comes knocking at midnight, and Luke 11:9–13, where we see the promise to those who ask, seek, and knock. The parable of the persistent widow in Luke 18:1–8 is also a fitting example.

#### *5) Removal of Obstacles*

“So the Lord said, ‘If you have faith as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, Be pulled up by the roots and be planted in the sea, and it would obey you’” (Luke 17:6). On another occasion He adds to this promise and says, “Assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt, you will not only do what was done to the fig tree, but also if you say to this mountain, ‘Be removed and be cast into the sea,’ it will be done” (Matthew 21:21).

#### *6) Unlimited Blessings*

They are promised to those who believe: “Jesus said to him, ‘If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes’” (Mark 9:23). Is there any limit to anything? Do we really believe this promise?

#### *7) Provisions—Food/Shelter/Clothing*

Christ Himself speaks and promises in the Sermon On the Mount that He will provide for those who seek Him first. He knows what we have need of, and He mentions that if He cares for the flowers in the field and the birds in the air, how much more so will He not take care of those who believe in Him! See Matthew 6:25–34.

### **His Ultimate Promise is Everlasting Life**

To those who believe, this promise is assured. Let us simply read the words of 1 John 2:25: “And this is the promise that He has promised us—eternal life.” A glorious future promised to us, is already on the horizon.

Blessed are they who, with singing confidence, put their trust fully in His promises in the course of life. God will surely strengthen those who do, for He stands by His Word. ■

*Jake Wiebe  
Waterloo, ON*

## *Take God at His Word*

**M**any people hesitate to trust in the promises given by God. Jesus called the people of His time “slow of heart to believe” (Luke 24:25). Today, as in times past, the world demands visible proof. When Jesus hung on the cross, they said, “If He is the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe Him” (Matthew 27:42).

During the time that Jesus walked on this earth, there were repeated requests for Him to do signs and wonders. Although He did works that had never been seen before, most of the people still did not believe. We read in John 12:37, “but although He had done so many signs before them, they did not believe in Him.” Today, the same is true, as people still demand signs and remain non-believers.

The people said, “Show us, so we may believe.” But Jesus said, “Believe, and you will see.” To Martha, He said, “Did I not say to you that if you would believe you would see the glory of God?” (John 11:40). Believing was needed before seeing, just like today. In Old-Testament times, God did many wonders among the people of Israel, and yet the people of Israel were slow to believe. “The LORD said to Moses: ‘How long will these people reject Me? And how long will they not believe Me, with all the signs which I have performed among them?’” (Numbers 14:11).

Even the disciples were slow to believe. We all know that Thomas said in disbelief, “Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe” (John 20:25). Jesus was gracious enough to supply him with the evidence, and yet Jesus said to him, “Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed” (John 20:29).

John 4:47–50 gives us a beautiful example of what true faith looks like. A royal official came to Jesus and asked him to come and heal his son who was at the point of death. Jesus tested his faith, saying, “Unless you people see signs and wonders, you will by no means believe” (v.48). The man was not deterred. He did not try to convince the Lord he had faith. He just earnestly begged him, “Sir, come down before my child dies.” He was so sure Jesus was able to help, that there remained no doubt. He begged Him to come quickly. Jesus, seeing his faith, put him to another test. He did not go with the man but simply told him, “Go your way; your son lives.” Again, the official did not object, but believed the word of the Lord Jesus and departed with confidence. He had no proof that anything had actually happened. He only heard the words Jesus spoke, but that was enough. He believed those words and did not doubt. His whole hope for the health of his son was grounded on Jesus’ few words. Part of his prayer was not answered, because Jesus did not go with him as he had requested. But what Jesus said was sufficient for him. He believed and went home with a happy heart. He did not wait until he could see the results. No, he believed, and the results were realized.

On the way home, his servants came to meet him and brought him the good news: “Your son lives!” He was not surprised because he did not expect anything else. He only asked at what time he got better. And he found that it was the exact hour that Jesus said, “Your son lives.” The man had never doubted the words Jesus spoke and was well-prepared for the good news concerning his son.

This story shows us what real faith is like. Many people want to see before they believe. Many would want to believe if God would allow a great light to fall from heaven onto their path, as He did in the apostle



Paul's case. If God filled them with an overwhelming feeling of joy, then they would perhaps believe. But to simply take God at His word and trust Him the way this royal official did, to be content to go their way in faith, that seems to be too much.

However, if we believe God and His Word, as the Scriptures require of us, then the results will follow. The Word of God remains true, and to trust God to the utmost is best; yet how often people find simple trust in God so difficult. They expend effort, tremble, quake, and pull back because they want to be absolutely sure. That is why they are so often defeated. Those who trust God, however, and proceed confidently because they do not question His Word, will be victorious in all the storms and challenges of life. They remain steadfast. We can all have this kind of faith if we take God at His Word.

It is true that some people cannot believe because there are hindrances in the way that first need to be eliminated. If we do not meet certain biblical prerequisites, we cannot practice faith. But if we have met the prerequisites and still do not dare to believe, the results will remain unsatisfactory, since obedience comes at the climax of trust.

If we trust and obey, God has promised and has therefore obligated Himself to fulfill His promises. Faith will bring results. God will not let us down if we trust Him and obey.

Believe the promises of God and take Him at His word, and the results will follow. Do not wait to see before you believe. Believe, and you will see. Believe God and His Word like a child who trusts his father. If you trust Him with childlike faith and stand on His Word and His promises, then all difficulties that may seem to tower like mountains before you will disappear, and you will gain the victory. ■

C. W. N.



## The Faithfulness of God

If any doubts concerning God's faithfulness trouble us, we can do nothing better than to open our Bible and thoughtfully and prayerfully read some of the accounts that testify of God's faithfulness.

When God made the promise to Abraham that his seed would be like the sand on the shore of the sea, it seemed quite impossible, humanly speaking. But Abraham believed God, and although he needed to wait a long time, he was eventually able to rejoice when the blessing arrived: his son Isaac, the promised heir.

When God gave Jacob the promise to be with him, He kept His word and gave Jacob the deliverance he fought for at Jabbok.

Much earlier, God gave the promise that "Israel's seed" should take possession of the land flowing with milk and honey. For a long time, the fulfillment of this promise seemed impossible. The Israelites became oppressed slaves in Egypt, and Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, refused to give them their freedom. But the time came when God Himself led them out of bondage with a mighty and strong arm. He parted the waters of the Red Sea so they could pass through and escape from their enemies. He

led them through the desert. Finally, He drove out the Canaanites before them and gave the land of Canaan to the people of Israel for their inheritance, as He had promised them.

In the battle of Gibeon, God had promised Joshua to deliver the enemies into his hands. Joshua

*"Behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth. And you know in all your hearts and in all your souls that not one thing has failed of all the good things which the LORD your God spoke concerning you. All have come to pass for you; not one word of them has failed"*  
(Joshua 23:14).

believed the promise of God. Although defeat seemed imminent at first, Joshua did not doubt that God would give him victory, and God kept His Word. He sent great hailstones on the enemies and even made the sun to stand still in the sky so Israel could win the battle.

At the end of his life, Joshua made special reference to God's faithfulness: "Behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth. And you know in all your hearts and in all your souls that not one thing

has failed of all the good things which the LORD your God spoke concerning you. All have come to pass for you; not one word of them has failed" (Joshua 23:14).

In 2 Kings 20, we read that in answer to the earnest prayer of King Hezekiah while he was deathly ill, God promised to add fifteen more years to his life—and He kept His Word.

These are just a few examples of God's faithfulness noted in the Bible. Many of God's children can also testify today that God is faithful. They have experienced it. Yes, we too can daily experience that God is faithful and keeps His word.

When we are plagued by doubts, and when it seems impossible for God to make His promises come true, let us remember how He has proven Himself faithful again and again in the past, right up to the present time. Let us also remember: with God nothing is impossible. He is not only the Ever-Faithful but also the Almighty God.

Even our best friends may leave and fail to keep their promises, but our God will always do what He promises. We can count on Him. Yes, God is faithful; but are we faithful to Him? ■

W. Wright

# Hidden Treasures in God's Word

**Y**ou've probably heard of invisible ink that leaves no perceptible writing on paper and fades after it flows from the pen. An uninformed person would certainly think the paper was blank. However, if the paper is moderately heated, the writing gradually appears until word after word stands out clearly and sharply against the white paper.

In a similar sense, we may also call God's promises in the Bible hidden, not because God wants to withhold them from us, but because our hearts need to become ready to see and accept these truths.

"Was I blind, that I did not notice until now all these treasures found in the Psalms?" exclaimed a sick woman with whom I had been contemplating a Psalm. She blamed herself because, until then, she had carelessly read over these verses. "Countless times I have already read the Psalms and had no idea that they hide such wonderful depths. But now the scales have fallen from my eyes. Why didn't I notice them before? Surely God didn't want to keep these riches from me?"

God wants to give us His revelations, His blessings. But sometimes we cannot see them, just as we cannot see the stars in the firmament during the day; but in the darkness they are brightly visible.

A mere half year ago, the rich treasures of that Psalm were not understood by this suffering woman. Healthy and strong, lively and eager for action, a rich future lay

before her, according to human calculation. At that time, too, the Bible offered her many delightful truths and serious teachings, many encouraging assurances, indeed everything she longed for. But what the Word revealed to her now had remained closed to her then. God's Word will always give us comfort in our weaknesses, strength to bear our sufferings patiently, trust in loving and divine care, and much more.

Some Bible verses are already known and understandable to children and young people. How many a word awakens the heart of a young person who reads the Word of God thoughtfully! When we take time to meditate on God's Word, a passage we may have read many times before becomes completely new to us.

Every Bible passage should be experienced and grasped inwardly. The Holy Scriptures are rich in glorious promises for the afflicted. But as long as temptation does not yet seize you with a strong fist, you will often not receive the flood of rich blessings God has prepared to refresh and strengthen His afflicted children. Many meaningful words of comfort are intended especially for widows. But as long as you are allowed to walk by your husband's side, these words resemble locked treasures for you. The same is true for children who have lost their parents. Only then can the words of Psalm 27:10 comfort them: "When my father and my mother forsake me, then the LORD will take care of me." Scripture also gives the

elderly and the suffering many a comforting word which means little to the young and healthy who are in the prime of life.

In the Beatitudes in Matthew 5, the Lord Jesus remembers the various situations of life. "Blessed are those who mourn." He who never ate his bread with tears, who never lay in his bed weeping during sorrowful nights cannot grasp these heavenly blessings. "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled." Only those who hunger and thirst for godly righteousness may taste it, and they will be filled with God's peace.

The Word of God contains rich treasures of grace for different situations of life. As soon as we get into some of these situations, God will reveal His words for us. The Bible can therefore never become obsolete; it is, and remains forever, a vast treasure trove. You may read it as often as you like. Each time, you can discover new treasures, new promises, new revelations of divine love. The experiences we have will open our understanding to new treasures previously hidden, and we will be like the "householder who brings out of his treasure things new and old" (Matthew 13:52b).

Never be afraid to be placed where you might lack strength to live a pure, noble life. The Lord has enough strength and grace for you in all circumstances. God's promise stands firm: "As your days, so shall your strength be" (Deuteronomy 33:25). ■

## In Times of Fear

**W**e live in a time of fear and fear-mongering, bombarded from all sides. We face fear of loss, sickness, old age, accidents, loneliness, and difficulties; fear of sinning and being sentenced to damnation; fear of death and eternal judgment.

But let us ask ourselves: Do our lives need to be filled with fear? Should it not be possible to become free from this fear? Or must its dark clouds hang heavily over every life? Must children of God live in constant fear?

How many diseases and difficulties do we suffer in our minds without them ever actually happening? This can rob us of so many happy hours in our lives! Would it not be better to read and draw comfort from the Word of God? Faith and trust are two effective weapons in the fight against fear.

A Christian woman from Korea who had lived to a very advanced age once brought a testimony about what Christ had done for her. “The greatest blessing He gave me was in an area that might not seem nearly as important to you as it has been to me. Before I knew Jesus, I spent several hours lying awake almost every night, tortured by terrible thoughts and worries about what kinds of illness and suffering evil spirits could cause in our family. However, when I met Jesus, I began entrusting my family and our

possessions into God’s hands every night. Then, I was able to lay down, and sleep peacefully through the night.”

When the fear of difficulties troubles us, we have this promise in His Word: “I will be with him in trouble” (Psalm 91:15). In times of trouble, we find comfort in the words “I will fear no evil; for You are with me” (Psalm 23:4). When we suffer a loss, Paul reminds us, “We know that all things work together for good to those who love God” (Romans 8:28). When illness confines us to our beds, let us remember the words of the Lord, Who commanded, “Do not be afraid; only believe” (Mark 5:36). Even when old age arrives, when the years draw near when we say, “I have no pleasure in them,” the Lord promises, “I will never leave you nor forsake you” (Hebrews 13:5). Even in financial difficulties, when our hearts are overcome with fear because the bills are piling up and we do not know how we can possibly pay them all, we can draw new strength from the Scriptures, which tell us, “My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:19).

God’s Word also contains many promises for sinners. We only need to sit down one day and search the Scriptures for them. Jesus died on the cross for our sins: “He was

wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed” (Isaiah 53:5).

When our sins have been forgiven, we no longer need to fear judgment. We no longer need to be afraid to one day face God and reap what we have sown. Yes, the thought of the end of our lives no longer needs to be a terrifying one, regardless of whether death comes quickly or slowly. We can commend ourselves into our Heavenly Father’s hands and know that everything will be all right.

Years ago, I suffered a sudden, terrifying shock. I had just gotten ready for the first morning service of a revival service when I was bitten by a highly venomous spider. I was immediately aware of the danger because I knew that this spider’s bite could be fatal. For a moment, I stood very still. Then, I remembered an occurrence from Acts, when Paul was bitten by a venomous snake. The poison could not harm him, doubtlessly because of his faith in God’s limitless power. I was reminded of the verse, “You shall not be afraid . . . of the arrow that flies by day” (Psalm 91:5).

Other comforting verses and promises also came to mind. I was filled with a deep peace. I knew God would take care of me. I got into my car and drove home,



around one hundred kilometers away. During the drive, I sang reassuring hymns and recited one promise after another. When I arrived home, I was at death's door, but I was not afraid. I was just able to call a doctor. He asked how the swelling looked, but nothing was swollen. After a few days, the pain subsided, and the effects of the poison ebbed. How wonderful are God's promises in the face of the fear that lies in wait to ambush us as we live our lives!

The best way for us to conquer our fears is to love Christ with all our heart and strength. "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love" (1 John 4:18). This does not preclude the existence of difficulties and dangers, but God's love for us and our love for Him let us be absolutely certain that He will be there for us and take care of us. "I am your God. I will strengthen you, Yes, I will help you" (Isaiah 41:10).

In the midst of all fear, our lives can have a purpose—but only if God's love fills our hearts. God's love should go hand in hand with our prayers. As the psalmist writes, "I sought the Lord, and He heard me, and delivered me from all my fears" (Psalm 34:4). ■

H. N.

# A Shepherd's Psalm

A Psalm of David.

The Lord is my shepherd;  
I shall not want.

He makes me to lie down in green pastures;  
He leads me beside the still waters.

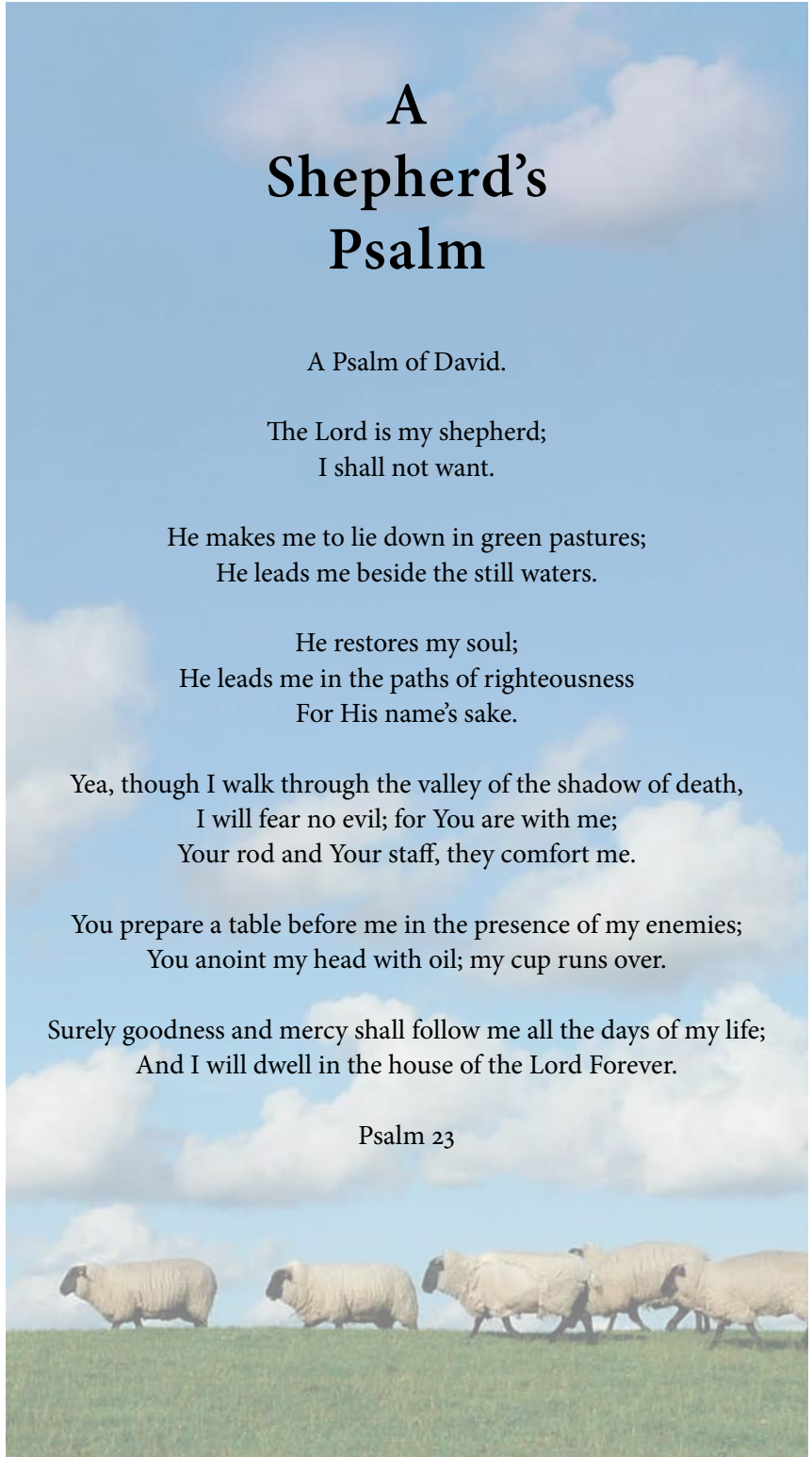
He restores my soul;  
He leads me in the paths of righteousness  
For His name's sake.

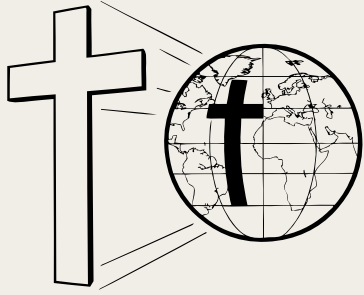
Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,  
I will fear no evil; for You are with me;  
Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.

You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;  
You anoint my head with oil; my cup runs over.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life;  
And I will dwell in the house of the Lord Forever.

Psalm 23





# Radio Program Message of Salvation

Friedrich Krebs  
Kitchener, ON

## We Have a God Who Helps!

*How blessed are the children of God who have the Almighty God as their Father! We do not need to be strong in ourselves and do everything on our own, but have the privilege of trusting Him and His omnipotence.*

This is a word of joy and great blessing. It is in complete contrast to the condition the Ephesians had been in before they heard about Jesus and had received Him. Paul describes them as having been “without God in the world” (Ephesians 2:12).

How decidedly different a life looks when God is part of it. With God, wonderful experiences are possible, and whoever has experienced this will triumphantly exclaim with David, “Our God is the God of salvation; and to God the Lord belong escapes from death” (Psalm 68:20). I am convinced many of our readers will attest to this statement: “Yes, I have personally experienced this.”

Now, if it is true that we have a God Who helps and even saves from death, why do we trust Him so little? Why do we put so little trust in Him? Why do we no longer count on His power and help? Why do we try to do everything in our own power? Why are we so often fearful, worried, and discouraged? Do we really live and act as if we have a God we can experience and Whose help is there in a practical way on an ongoing basis?

You may have heard this story from the life of Luther, the reformer. Mindful of the grave dangers that threatened, and tormented by anxious questions concerning the cultural conditions of his time, he had fallen into a deep depression. One morning, he saw his wife wearing black. Astonished, he asked, “Who has died?”

She replied, “Don’t you know? God is dead!”

“Don’t talk such nonsense,” he returned. “God is spirit and lives on for all eternity. How can you doubt that? As certain as God is in heaven, it is also certain that He cannot die.”

“And yet,” she said, “though you do not doubt that God lives, how have you become so hopeless and despondent?”

With that, his depression was lifted.

We have all probably experienced this kind of depression at some point and have given the impression that we have no God.

Sometimes we have burdens and trials that are difficult to bear. David often experienced trials and tried to find an easy way out. David once took refuge with Achish, the king of the Philistines. He learned he was in great danger and was plagued with uncertainty for his future.

The help we hope to find ourselves or through other people often brings us even greater hardship. We would not get out of these hardships at all if we did not have a God Who helps.

We see the great darkness in the world, the dangers of our time, the fears of people; we sense the approach of disaster and judgment. We know about the unrest on all continents and the anxiety of mankind. Is this not a cause for concern and fear? What is more important and valuable than the certainty which allows



us to say, “We have a God Who helps.” And should we lose everything and have nothing in our hands, we are still well-equipped if we can say, “We have a God Who helps.” His ear hears the cry of His child; His hand has not grown too small that it cannot help. Nothing passes His eyes unheeded, and His power is great enough for our safety and security. He, Who governs the whole universe and keeps all invisible worlds in their courses, is also mindful of the sparrow. Jesus says, “Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows” (Luke 12:7).

In Psalm 46:1–3, the psalmist says with confidence, “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, even though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea.” He does not speak of armies and fortifications, nor consider human power

and force to be his security and strength, but finds his strength in God.

Loved Ones, we need more than human power and security; we need a God Who helps and a Lord Who can save not only from physical, but also from eternal death.

A child in hours of distress wants nothing more than to be in his father’s arms or on his mother’s lap, and “the LORD pities those who fear Him” (Psalm 103:13).

Through Jesus Christ, God wants to be a merciful Father to everyone, including you. Accept Jesus into your heart and life, place yourself in His will, and then you too can say, “I have a God Who helps me, a Lord Who has saved me from death, and a God Who is my confidence and strength for time and eternity.” May the Lord allow you to claim this right by His grace. ■

## ... Study Notes (12)

### THE END IS IN SIGHT

The second state exam was now before me. It is the last written exam and requires extensive preparation. There are study plans that divide up the material, but it still takes about one hundred days to go through everything. If you want a free weekend, the time increases to one hundred forty days. Then one spends approximately eight hours daily with the test material, and as it turns out, there is not much time to do the actual studying. Somehow, the planners seem to assume that you read the texts and then just know them (which immediately seems improbable to me with the amount we have to look through). There was no time for intensive studying as I still had too much ahead of me to do. For lack of alternatives, I decided to stick to this concept and “read through” everything once, while practicing with the exam questions from previous years. Some days it worked out quite well; others, I struggled through topics I disliked. However, I must say that even on the darkest days, I never thought for a moment of giving up. I was spared such doubts by the goodness of God. I had colleagues who had a different experience, which was hard for them. How good it is for us to be able to entrust ourselves to God’s guidance without hesitation, knowing that He will provide the right outcome. The exam itself seemed strangely unspectacular after the rather exhausting time of study. On the first day, I was very nervous when I drove to Gelsenkirchen by car, but the next two days weren’t so bad anymore. There is an organization that publishes the answers the same evening so you can see how you did on that particular exam day. After three days, although I didn’t have an official result, I was pretty sure I had passed. Some time later, I received a letter which confirmed this. Thank God, the last written exam was done! Next, I will do an internship for one year in a clinical setting, and then take an oral and practical exam. Lord-willing, I will be finished with my studies next year in November. ■

*Corinna Kowalski  
Hamm, Germany*

## Verse of the Month

*[B]ut grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and forever. Amen.”  
(2 Peter 3:18)*

Like a newborn child or a plant that first grows and develops, so our spiritual life manifests change. With our conversion or spiritual rebirth, we break through to a new life with Jesus Christ, but we have not yet reached our goal. Now the development of our spiritual life begins. After becoming a Christian, do not sit back and be satisfied with what you have.

In his letter to the Hebrews (5:12-14), Paul expressed his regret about their spiritual immaturity. While they should have been teachers long ago and could have had solid spiritual food, they were still immature and needed “milk” as “baby food.”

Do not stand still in your spiritual growth, but go forward and become ever stronger in the faith. Carefully nurture your young, tender “plant of life” through daily Bible reading and prayer.

Let us pray that God helps us grow into steadfast and fruitful plants in His kingdom.





## Building Character

**C**haracter doesn't develop within a day, nor a week, nor even a year. It is actually formed through our actions and deeds every hour and minute of our lives. Without interruption, we are weaving the threads of our character—our true self—from the many fine threads of our daily life, which will have a great impact on who we will be.

We often hear people say, "I want to get all I can out of life first, but just for now. When I'm older, I'll change my lifestyle and use my time and abilities for something useful. I only live once. That's why I want to enjoy my life while I'm young. Why should I take it so seriously? I'll have time later to fulfill my purpose in life; I'll develop my character later."

But this is where people are mistaken. It doesn't occur to them that they are constantly laying the foundation of their future life. They forget that certain habits cannot be given up as fast as they might think. The truth is that the habits you foster in your youth will usually stay with you for the rest of your life.

Do not think you can just shake off a habit anytime you want. You will realize it's much more difficult than you had thought. It is very easy to get used to something, and the moment you want to break a certain habit, you'll notice you've become a slave to your habit. Lifestyle habits and inclinations are hard to give up when the foundation is already laid. A person can't be careful enough when laying a foundation for a building that will be built later. The youth years are the time when a solid and safe foundation for further building can be laid.

An honorable and genuine character has immeasurable value. It is what lasts when everything else fails. Whoever has such a character has something that cannot be bought with money or taken away. Disappointments may come, friends may leave, storms may rage around us, but true character remains. The deciding question is, what kind of a character have you built for yourself? Will your character stand firm when the storms of life come? Remember, the character you own

will either be a blessing or a curse. Which one it will be depends on you.

When building your character, be careful about your habits. Only pick up good ones, and weed out the bad ones. Your efforts will be worth it, because if you have acquired an honorable character, it will guide you through every trial and tribulation in life and will crown your life with happiness and true success. ■

C. M.

We sow a thought  
and reap an act.

We sow an act  
and reap a habit.

We sow a habit  
and reap a character.

We sow a character  
and reap a destiny.

Charles Reade  
(1814-1884)

## But Victory Comes Through Prayer

Samuel Hebich, a missionary whom God blessed and used, continually maintained a life of prayer and worked in a prayerful atmosphere. Only when his soul received the the Holy Spirit's witness that God would give him victory, would he go out to preach.

A co-worker related the following story.

One day, the ox cart was ready to take the missionary to Kannur, where he was going to preach to the Moplah people. Hebich rushed out of the house as if in a great hurry but did not get on the cart. He stood there as if he had forgotten something. Suddenly, he turned on his heel and went back into the house. He was gone for a while, came out again, but still did not get on the wagon. Once more, he returned to his room and remained there for a while. Some time later, he came out again, got into the wagon, and told the guide to drive on. When they came to the gate, he suddenly shouted, "Stop!" The driver stopped the wagon, and for the third time, Hebich hurried back into the house. After some time, he came out of his room for the third time. I asked him, "What is going on, Brother Hebich? Three times you've prepared to travel, but again and again you go back to your room. What seems to be the problem?"

With a carefree and smiling face, the old man replied, "Well,

Brother Diez, you see, I am about to go to old Kannur and preach to the Moplachs there. But how can I go before I am certain of victory? I thought God had heard my prayer when I first prepared to go, but I was not sure, so I kept going back. In my impatience, I did not take time to wait before the Lord, and so I had to go three times. Now I am certain of victory, for I now have the assurance from the Holy Spirit!"

As a victorious soldier in battle, he cheerfully went to meet the enemies of Christ.

This incident demonstrates one of Hebich's outstanding character traits. Like the apostle Paul, every soul he won for Jesus was birthed through the gospel message, and labored for in anguish, until Christ was manifested in it. With holy zeal, he wrestled in prayer for each person until he received the assurance that God would save them. But then, like an army general confident of victory, he attacked the fortress of the soul, often in unexpected ways.

Of course, this wise soul-winner also had invaluable troops behind him, supporting him in fervent prayer as he went to battle. He had implored and inspired his people at home to assist in the salvation of souls by fervent intercession for the workers in God's kingdom. He fully believed in the effectiveness of earnest prayer and

encouraged his fellow believers to make it their sacred duty to support his uplifted arms. That is why he had success.

Another old co-worker recounted his experience with the faithful soul-winner:

One day, he wandered to the house of a captain. However, the officer did not grant him entrance, but said, "Go away; I have nothing to do with you!"

"But I have something to do with you, Captain," he replied, pointing his finger at him. "I have come to pray with you; if you will not let me in, I will pray for you out here!" When the captain left him standing there, Hebich knelt down in the sand, outside in the blazing sun, and prayed earnestly for the captain's salvation. Then he left.

The next day, he went again. Once again, he was not received. Hebich knelt down again in front of the house and prayed. Seeing this, the captain called his servant and told him, "Why don't you hold this umbrella over the missionary's head while he prays."

Finally, when Hebich returned the third time, his prayers had defeated the captain, and he bid him to come into the house. That was when the old messenger of God shared the gospel about Jesus and the cross. It didn't take long before the captain also prayed and gave his heart to the Lord Jesus. ■



## Home

**D**ear Children, surely you know the story in the Bible about the prodigal son who did not like his life at home anymore. He ran away from home. But how did he fare in the strange, wide world?

Hannah's fate was similar to that of the prodigal son:

"You are the meanest of all parents! I don't want to have anything to do with you! I wish I could run away from this house and have a different father and mother!"

Hannah's face turned red with fury, and she stomped her foot violently. She looked angrily at her parents.

Her father calmly replied, "It's fine, Hannah. If that's how you feel about your father and mother, go ahead and leave. Find other parents who will take better care of you and whom you can love."

Hannah became quiet then. She looked up at her father. His voice suddenly sounded so different. Did he really want her to go away? Did he want to get rid of his Hannah?

Hannah had been very naughty and had been punished, and now she didn't want to accept the pun-

ishment that she deserved. That was when she had become furious.

"Well, Hannah! Go! Get your coat and then go!" Again, her father spoke in a calm tone. But it sounded so determined. Hannah was still angry. "I'll go!" she replied and fetched her coat. But when she was in her bedroom, tears suddenly came to her eyes. With trembling fingers, she buttoned her coat. Where was she going to go? She had no money and knew no one who would take her in. Sadly, she descended the stairs and stepped out into the street. Slowly, she wandered down the long avenue. When she reached the country road, she stopped. She looked around in all directions. Where to?

Then, sobbing, she dropped down into the grass at the edge of the road. She thought she was all alone, completely abandoned, loved by no one, forgotten by everyone.

But her father had gone after her. He had not let his child out of his sight for a moment. And while Hannah now felt abandoned by all the world and wept silently to herself, she suddenly felt herself

embraced by two strong arms. Her wonderful Daddy! Hannah's head was already resting on his strong shoulder.

Her father did not look angry. Now she could tell him that she was very sorry for having been so naughty. She whispered in his ear, "Will you forgive me? May I come home again?"

A tender kiss on her forehead and a firm squeeze from Daddy's strong arms was the answer.

On the way home, they both held each other firmly by the hand. The father thought to himself, "Many people are like my Hannah when it comes to God. They don't see His goodness. They don't want Him to tell them anything. They think He is tough and merciless, and so they turn their backs on Him and run further and further away from Him. But God loves them. He waits for them to see their wrong and return to Him. He wants to forgive them and receive them. He wants to be their Father, and they shall be His children. They are to be with Him forever."

How about you, dear Child? Have you already turned back? ■

## The Unwelcome Visitor

Company. For as long as I can remember, I have never met an elderly person who was not happy to have company. Fellowship and being together with other people is one of the basic human needs. This becomes even more important as we age and lose contact with the outside world. Sitting within our four walls and struggling with loneliness, we literally long for visitors to interrupt the monotony of our existence. So, we wait for a visit from our children, relatives, siblings, or even the pastor. Some begin their day by asking, "I wonder if anyone will stop by today?"

While visiting an older sister once, I learned she had already had company that day. I didn't want to pry and ask about the visit but would have loved to know who had been there before me. Perhaps she noticed my curiosity. I had to listen carefully, because very softly she said, "The demon of worry has already visited me today." I had not expected that. She obviously was not pleased about her visitor. It was an "unwelcome visit."

Who of us doesn't know the demon of worry! He comes at an unwanted time, makes himself comfortable, talks without end, and just doesn't want to leave. You keep looking at the clock and still can't sleep; the visitor is still "sitting" there. You literally have to "kick him out" to get rid of him. Even that is not an easy thing to do.

The Word of God speaks bluntly about the "plague of worry." Peter, in his letter to a scattered Christendom, assuming that the unwanted visitor would come to them as well, writes, "[cast] all your care upon Him" (1 Peter 5:7). So, I suppose, everyone has his worries. Some talk about their cares; others stay silent and carry them alone.

Surely you have also noticed, at least at times, it seems that worries multiply with increasing age. The

bundle of worries seems to get bigger and becomes heavier to carry. If you look at it matter-of-factly, it becomes clear. Increasing age brings changes with it, and not just a few. Changes come unsolicited, unexpected, and mostly undesired. Probably the worst of it all is having to let go. You have to part with things that belonged to you for years, such as your driver's license (and therefore your car), your home, your mobility, your independence, and often your health. Slowly but surely you lose control and feel more and more helpless. It would not be normal at all to have no worries. In the end, we are and remain human. Peter knew this, and therefore addressed this problematic issue and also its solution in his letter.

Worries are connected to questions. The body slowly breaks down and everything is more difficult to do. That is just the way it is. A brother once told me, "By the time I button up my shirt, I'm tired already!" Even putting on socks becomes more challenging and takes longer. "How much longer will I be able to look after myself?" Of course, the more you dwell on it, the more despondent you can become. The unwanted visitor is of no help to us. He whispers all manner of thoughts to us, and the tower of worries grows higher and higher. Our situation seems more hopeless.

It is true, as someone once said, "Worry is like a rocking chair. It gives us something to do, but it doesn't move us forward."

He's right. Worries do indeed keep us occupied. They give us plenty to talk about (What else is there to say?) and keep doctors and pharmacists busy, and yet they don't change the situation at all. Jesus expressed this clearly: "Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?" (Matthew 6:27 NIV).



### **Worrying also Comes with Side Effects:**

- *Worry robs us of time and energy.*
- *It attacks our health.*
- *It questions God, as if He were unable to bring us through.*
- *It arouses discontent and doubt.*
- *It does not portray God in a good light and is negative advertising for Christianity.*
- *It steals our joy because it is difficult to rejoice and worry at the same time.*
- *We put ourselves in the spotlight. It becomes about us (the very thing that always bothered us about others).*
- *And finally, we run the risk of meddling in the affairs of others, because God has taken it upon Himself to care for us.*

In addition, the claim is that 90% of our worries never come true. In plain language, worrying is totally in vain.

I'm sure you feel the same way I do. I would like to refrain from this evil. But is that even possible? Can it be done? If so, what is the best way to deal with the demon of worry?

James writes, "Resist the devil and he will flee from you" (4:7). He is alerting us to take action. Instead of giving worry free rein, we are told to do something about it. Don't offer the demon of worry a seat. Don't let him move in with you, but resist him. This can be done in a variety of ways.

### **Some Helpful Tips:**

- *Change your focus. Do not look at what you lack but at what you have. Think about how you have made it through life and how the Lord has never let you down.*
- *Seek help and direction in the Word of God. Let His Word carry you. Be encouraged by the stories of Joseph and also Job. Though invisible, God was their constant companion.*
- *Associate with grateful people.*
- *Sing. Songs are an antidote to worry. Just think of the beginning of the song, "What a Friend we have in Jesus . . ."*
- *Do good. Encourage others. Let God show you an assignment. There is so much to do, You will find you will forget your worries.*



In a worship service, a sister began her testimony by quoting Psalm 103:1–3. She said, "Bless the LORD, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless His holy name! Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits; Who forgives all your *worries*, Who heals all your diseases . . . ."—She had only mixed up one word, "Who forgives all your *worries*" (it should really say "iniquities"). Yes, He also forgives our worries, but He also wants to free us from them.

What are actually your greatest worries? Is it the children? Fear of the future? Is it health, or lack thereof? Whatever it may be, worries have one thing in common: they make life difficult, sometimes almost unbearable.

Peter wrote, "Casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you" (1 Peter 5:7). Perhaps he remembered Jesus' words, "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28). Worriers belong to the burden-bearers, but they are urged here to cast their cares on the Lord.

Sister and Brother, why don't you cast your cares on Him? Let go of everything that weighs you down and makes you afraid. Cling to the second part of the verse, "for He cares for you." Don't get involved with the unwelcome visitor. If he tries to make you fret, remind him there's no reason to worry because you have a God Who cares for you.

*Harry Semenuk*

## Where is Zebedee?

**M**atthew 20:20 tells us that the mother of the children of Zebedee, together with her sons, fell down before Jesus and asked something from Him. Zebedee may have been the first father who stayed at home while his wife and children went to see Jesus. It is something we often see nowadays: a mother and her children at church, but the father is busy with something else.

For some women and mothers, it is embarrassing when they hear comments of people wondering whether they are widows because they have not been seen with their husbands at church. The question we want to ask Salome, the wife of Zebedee, is still the same one that is often asked today: “Where is Zebedee?”

Zebedee must have been a great provider for his family. Mark 1:20 tells us that he had hired workers. Also, the family of Zebedee must have had high standing in the town because at the time of Jesus’ trial in

front of the high priests, John, one of Zebedee’s sons, had the privilege of walking in and out of the high priest’s courtyard whenever he wanted to.

The writers of the gospels often mention Zebedee as if it were obvious everyone knew him. Yet Matthew 4:21 is the only passage that mentions anything about his occupation.

We can assume Zebedee was busy mending his nets when his wife and children were going to see Jesus. He didn’t think of anything else besides preparing his nets for the next catch.

Many fathers in our homes are similar to Zebedee. They put everything into their professions and business opportunities. So many things take a father’s time and attention that he doesn’t have time for his children.

Several years ago, when I was still single, my five-year-old niece would sometimes come into my room after dinner to be entertained. One time when I was very busy, I told her not to disturb me that evening be-



cause I had too much to do. It didn't take more than fifteen minutes before my door slowly opened again. My niece stuck her little head in and asked, "Uncle Ralph, can I come in now?"

When our kids come to us, do we see it as a disturbance or an opportunity? If they were old enough to express their thoughts and feelings in words, do you know what they would say? Something like this: "Daddy, you are the best man in the whole world. No other kids are as happy to have a dad like you as we are. But couldn't you spend more time with us? There are so many things we would like to talk to you about and some questions we would like to ask you. We would like to hear your opinion about how we're doing in school, Sunday School, and church." Yes, this is what is deep inside the hearts of our children. Often, their questions are cut short by the impatient remark, "Don't interrupt me right now!"

Some parents of youth-aged children often wonder why they do not approach them with their questions and problems. But why would they come to them when they have often been put off by the hurtful words, "Don't bother me!"

When children hear this too often, it is normal for them to turn to other people so their dad can "mend his nets" without interruption.

We might feel sorry for such fathers, because they usually have good intentions. Often they say to themselves, "Once I have finished the next catch, completed the next business deal, accomplished this goal, then I can spend more time giving attention to my family." But the years go by. Then, when the children are grown up, they can only remember that their father was usually busy and did not have much time for them.

While at the beach a short time ago, I was running by the shore with my six-year-old son. As we were running back, I noticed shards of glass in one spot near the shore. I warned my son to be careful so that he wouldn't injure himself on the glass. Looking up at me, he said, "I don't need to be scared, Dad, because you're running in front of me, and I step only where you are stepping."

This is what children want to do. They trust us. They feel safe when they put their feet where ours have been. If they trust us in this way, where are we going to lead them? ■

Ralph D. Morton

## Fathers

*We need fathers in our world today  
Of whom their children can truly say,  
They showed us the way that leads to heaven;  
Their integrity is far beyond question.*

*We need fathers as true as Moses  
Who care for their own when danger poses,  
Who intercede with pleading and prayer  
That none would be lost under their care.*

*We need fathers, men like Abraham,  
Who believe the Lord and will follow Him;  
Men who will do the will of the Lord  
So that we, too, will trust in God's Word.*

*We need fathers who take time for us  
When we have questions we want to discuss;  
Men, young at heart, to hear what we've planned,  
And teach us when we cannot understand.*

*When in our young hearts we want to enjoy  
As many pleasures as we can employ,  
Because we want to get the most out of life,  
We need fathers who will guide us right.*

*No doubt we still wish to do what is good  
And serve our Savior the way that we should;  
Because of the dangers this world is made of,  
Fathers, we desperately need your love.*

Rita Henschel

# The Rainbow of Grace

*“I set My rainbow in the cloud, and it shall be for the sign of the covenant between Me and the earth. It shall be, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the rainbow shall be seen in the cloud” (Genesis 9:13-14).*

We are all familiar with the rainbow. If you live in the countryside, you can see this divine natural phenomenon in all its splendor and glory. Once, I was traveling with a young sister to her city, when a black cloud appeared in front of us. Turning to her, I said, “Now the beautiful rainbow is missing!”

She replied, “I have rarely seen a rainbow.” However, shortly after, the sun broke through, and in the sky in front of us was the rainbow in glorious splendor. The sister was deeply moved. “This is an unforgettable experience for me; the rainbow of God in the clouds!” This thought then occupied me more and more: the rainbow of God.

When Noah and his family stepped out of the ark, we can imagine how they could have suddenly looked with great concern at the black clouds approaching. After all, they had witnessed storm clouds earlier when God’s judgment had fallen upon the corrupt earth and all its sinners, and they were all lost.

However, now the clouds were supposed to be bearers of blessings upon sowing and harvesting, bringing growth and prosperity. Now God showed His grace and mercy. He made a covenant, a divine promise, and set His rainbow in the clouds.

Clouds are often used as a symbol of something we are afraid of. Sometimes you hear people say, “Oh, there’s a dark cloud coming!” Something we are afraid of is approaching like a dark cloud. Many times, we have experienced dark clouds descending over our lives, and we have been afraid.

In this sense, the world is full of clouds, and all people get to know them as well. We will learn from our text that God put the rainbow, His rainbow of grace, in the clouds.

## **The Cloud of Sin and the Promise of Grace**

Sin is probably the most terrible cloud. It is possible to find a remedy in many hardships that befall us, with the help of other people or from some other source. But when the cloud of sin falls upon us, there is no human help.

Someone once came to me crying. I thought an accident had happened. But he cried, “O, my sins!” What a terrible thing when the cloud of sin covers a person! But the Lord provided His promise: it is the grace that has come to us through Jesus Christ.

Let us consider the case of the first people on earth. How beautiful was their home and their fellowship with the Lord! I can imagine there was nothing more beautiful for them than the evening hours when the Lord came into the garden and had fellowship with them. But then one day, disobedience came. The cloud of sin settled over them, and they were afraid. But the Lord wanted to point them to the promise of grace, to His mercy.

He came to them again. They had been hiding. But His mercy called out, “Adam, where are you?”

Adam should have come and fallen before the Lord and said, “I have sinned; have mercy!” But Adam did not. He did not seek the promise of God’s mercy. He sought excuses and apologies, and that was his undoing.



What a pity! We see how the cloud of sin came over man right at the beginning.

Another example is Cain. When the Lord met him after he had slain his brother, He said to him, "Where is your brother? What have you done?" Cain should have sought the promise of mercy. God, in His merciful love, wanted to show him, "The promise of mercy is there; you may find mercy!"

But Cain rebelled. "Am I my brother's keeper?" he cried.

He did not seek the promise of mercy. How terribly was sin upon him now! When he was convicted of his sin, Cain said, "My punishment is greater than I can bear!" He now felt his burden of sin, but instead of seeking God's mercy, it says, "Then Cain went out from the presence of the LORD" (Genesis 4:16).

In all this we see how foolish people were from the very beginning. God keeps offering His grace in full measure, but people despise it.

It was different with Peter. His heart burned for his Savior; he was even ready to die for Him. But when he was not watchful and perhaps lost sight of the Savior, fear came over him like a dark cloud, and he denied his Lord. But then the Savior's gaze met him, and the promise of grace shone upon him. Then the tears of repentance flowed abundantly! And God's promise of grace saved him.

In numerous cases, the rainbow of grace has been reflected in the lives of many people. People accepted this blessing, this grace, and were saved.

### **The Clouds of Chastisement and Judgment**

God placed His promise of grace in these clouds as well. The Lord destroyed the people, but Noah stood under the promise of grace and was saved.

Take the example of Nineveh, the sinful city that was threatened with the judgment of God. However, God wanted to show His promise of grace to these people once again. He sent them the prophet Jonah, who preached repentance to them. As a result, the people bowed down and took this promise of grace and were saved. The judgment did not come!

Even if God has already imposed His judgment on people, they can still be saved if they seek God's promise of grace. This is especially proven by the story of Nineveh. God was merciful. He made His covenant for as long as the earth stands, as long as people seek and accept this grace. The psalmist says, "Blessed is the

man whom You instruct, O LORD, and teach out of Your law" (Psalm 94:12). The chastening is exceptionally good for us, and yet the grace of God is in every chastening.

I was also given many blessings through my illness. When I was hospitalized the day after our beautiful church convention, some brothers and sisters said, "How are we to understand this now?" I replied, "I am not trying to understand; I am trying to be grateful to God." The blessing of the intercession of God's children became so meaningful to me that I had to keep saying, "I give You thanks, dear God, for the prayers of God's children!" How one can be so secure! And the greatest happiness for me was, "Lord, You love me, and You want the best for me!"

### **The Cloud of Tribulation and the Promise of Grace**

I once read about an old shepherd. He was an extremely poor man but a child of God, a fearless hero of faith. Suddenly, his dying hour was approaching, and everything was dark around him. A man of God visited him.

"Well, Hero of Faith, you are going home!"

"Yes, but everything is so terribly dark."

The preacher said, "You know the twenty-third Psalm. Were you afraid when a dark cloud came up?"

"Oh no, I wasn't afraid of anything like that."

"Okay, so why not?"

"Well, the cloud goes away again, and then there is sunshine, and then the stars appear again in the sky."

Gently, the preacher then said, "And where the shadows of death approach like a dark cloud, are you afraid?"

With sinking hands, the shepherd said, "How foolish, how foolish!" and the shadows faded and he went home to eternity, rejoicing. Look, the dark clouds bring us blessings!

What does this promise in the clouds tell us? The Lord is thinking of us; He will be gracious to us. May God help us to look for this promise of grace in our lives, whether in good times or bad. We cannot live without the grace of God.

"But those who wait on the LORD shall renew their strength" (Isaiah 40:31). There is such divine power in this grace that we can soar even above the clouds like an eagle. Do not stay under the dark cloud. Seek the promise of grace, and you will be a joyful child of God!

*Emmi Abram*

# The Attitude of Jesus

“Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 2:5).

“Have this same attitude in yourselves which was in Christ Jesus” (AMP).

**W**e know that the Son of God was the image of the Father from eternity in divine majesty and glory in heaven, but He left behind this wonderful glory. Yes, He debased Himself, relinquished everything, and took the form of a bondservant. Even more, Jesus humbled Himself and was obedient to the point of death on the cross (see Philippians 2:5–8). The Son of God came to earth as a servant of the Most High in order to save us, make us righteous, and promise us the crown of life.

However, the mindset of Jesus is foreign to millions of people who have carnal and worldly minds.

## The Carnal/Earthly Mind

God’s Word shows us:

- “The imagination of man’s heart is evil from his youth” (Genesis 8:21).
- Many religious people are “vainly puffed up by [their] fleshly mind” (see Colossians 2:18).
- The apostle Paul said of the children of Israel who rejected Jesus, “But their minds were blinded” (2 Corinthians 3:14). And further, such people do not believe, “whose minds the god of this age [Satan] has blinded . . . lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them” (2 Corinthians 4:4).
- The apostle John also warns of such an earthly mind: “Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever” (1 John 2:15-17).

## How Can We Receive the Mind of Jesus?

- Without rebirth, one will continue to have a worldly mind.

“That which is born of the flesh is flesh [or earthly-minded], and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born again’” (John 3:6-7).

- However, through rebirth, when we come to Jesus and confess our guilt and sins to Him, He forgives us and transfers us from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of the Son of His love (see Colossians 1:13).

- This new birth fulfills what was prophesied of in the Old Testament: “I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them” (Ezekiel 36:26-27).

Only by God’s grace, mercy, and love do we become children of God. The old life with its earthly mind then ceases. “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new” (2 Corinthians 5:17).

## Learning from Jesus

Christ worked the miracle of God by pulling us out of the pit of sin. He has set our feet on solid ground. Now we can safely follow the Savior and learn from our heavenly Master. He Himself invites everyone to do so: “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).

The Son of God came from glory and renounced His own power and honor. His life was entirely self-denying, and He was completely submissive to the will of His heavenly Father. He demonstrated in Himself what He so often taught:

“He who humbles himself will be exalted” (Matthew 23:12).

“He humbled Himself . . . therefore God also has highly exalted Him” (Philippians 2:8-9).

May God help us to live with this mindset.

In the gospel of John, we are shown the inner life of our Lord. Jesus spoke frequently of His relationship with His Father, of the motives that led Him, and of the power and mindset with which He worked. On the basis of scriptural testimonies, we therefore want to examine what Jesus’ mindset consisted of.

Humility is the simple agreement of a created being to surrender to God, to allow Him alone to work and to give everything over to Him. As the incarnate Son of God, Jesus chose to wholly submit Himself and gave the Father the glory that was due Him.

When we pay attention to the words Jesus spoke concerning His relationship with His Father, we observe that He continually used the words “not” or “nothing” in regard to Himself. This “not I” with which Paul characterizes his relationship with Christ (in Galatians 2:20) aptly reflects what Christ, in turn, says of His relationship with the Father:

*“The Son can do nothing of Himself” (John 5:19).*

*“I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me” (John 5:30).*

*“I do not receive honor from men” (John 5:41).*

*“For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will” (John 6:38).*

*“My doctrine is not Mine” (John 7:16).*

*“I have not come of Myself, but He who sent Me is true, whom you do not know” (John 7:28).*

*“I do not seek My own glory” (John 8:50).*

*“The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own authority” (John 14:10).*

*“The word which you hear is not Mine” (John 14:24).*

These scriptures show us the deepest roots of the life of Christ. They reveal the way the Father could accomplish the work of His mighty redemption through Jesus. They show us the heart attitude Jesus had as the Son of the Father. They illuminate for us the very essence of redemption and the true life Jesus made available to us.

Dear Reader, we want to learn from Jesus and serve God with all our hearts, with the mindset of our Savior!

Is the wish of this songwriter also your desire?

*Have Thine own way Lord,*

*Have Thine own way.*

*Thou art the potter, I am the clay.*

*Mold me and make me after Thy will*

*While I am waiting yielded and still.* ■

# *See the Great Promises*

See the great promises, Brother,  
Are they so hard to believe?  
How can you doubt the dear Savior?  
Why don't you ask and receive?

Ask, my brother and sister,  
For all you need believe;  
Ask the bountiful Giver;  
Ask and you shall receive.

Jesus has suffered so meekly,  
Sorrowing hearts to relieve;  
Trust Him with all of your burdens,  
Comfort and strength receive.

If there's a want in your bosom,  
Father will fill it, believe;  
Do you need knowledge and wisdom?  
Ask and you shall receive.

Open the kingdom of heaven,  
Jesus all bounty will give;  
Here is the pledge of His promise,  
Ask and you shall receive.

*B. E. Warren*