



Foundation of Faith

HE IS
RISEN!



THE RISEN CHRIST IS VICTORIOUS

FROM SADNESS TO JOY

THE CROSS—OUR GLORY

THE SUCCESSFUL CHILD

HOW TO REMAIN SPIRITUALLY HEALTHY



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Editorial

Dear Reader,

We all want to live. There is nothing wrong with that, but many take it one step further, trying to ignore entirely the reality of death. However, the truth is that life and death are in God's hand. Knowing this, let us take a sober look ahead, to the end of our pilgrimage, when we will pass from here into eternity. While the dead can no longer hear, see, and speak, death is not the end.

The dead do not speak, but are they silent? Consider Cain, who heard God say, "What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood cries out to Me from the ground" (Genesis 4:10). Yes, the blood of Abel, who had been killed by his brother, cried out for vengeance.

Dear Reader, why am I writing about Cain and Abel? I want to draw a parallel between Abel and Jesus, the Son of God. The high priests and Pharisees wanted to get rid of Jesus, intending to kill Him to silence His voice, but the Scriptures reveal the powerful message sent through His death, stating, "You have come to . . . God the Judge of all . . . to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel" (Hebrews 12:22-24).

Abel's blood cried out for vengeance, but the blood of Christ cries out to us of forgiveness, salvation, peace, and eternal bliss. The death of our Savior on the cross at Calvary is a message of God's indescribable love and mercy. "The grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men"—salvation for everyone who believes in Jesus, and serves, and follows Him (Titus 2:11).

The blood of the Lamb leads to eternal salvation, but when people willfully sin, reject His offered love, scorn the Son of God, or disregard the precious blood of the Son of God, they face God's wrath and are doomed for all eternity.

H. D. Nimz



He Died for Us

The legend of John Maynard is based on an actual event, and illustrates sacrificial love.

In a cemetery in Buffalo, U.S.A., stands a magnificent marble cross. On the bench across from it sits an old man with white hair. With his hands folded in his lap, his eyes remain fixed on the cross, while tears stream down his cheeks. He often sits there, as do many others, with hearts that are deeply moved. When you ask them what this cross means, they point to the inscription of golden letters written on the base of the cross: “To the Helmsman John Maynard. The grateful passengers of the ‘Swallow.’ He died for us.” If you question them, they will tell you with trembling lips and wet eyes:

“John Maynard was the helmsman on a steamer going from Detroit to Buffalo on a beautiful summer day. The whole ship was full of people, and we too were passengers. As some smoke was seen coming up from below, the captain called out, ‘Simpson, go down and see what it is.’ Simpson returned quickly with a pale face, he shouted, ‘Captain, the ship is on fire!’

Soon the cry of terror rang out everywhere: ‘Fire on board! Fire on board!’ All hands were called on deck, and streams of water were poured on the fire, but all in vain, as there were great quantities of resin and tar on the ship.

“The passengers rushed to the helmsman and asked, ‘How far are we from Buffalo?’ ‘A mile and a half.’ ‘How long will it take us to get ashore?’ ‘Three quarters of an hour, if we sail as we are now.’ ‘Are we in any danger?’ ‘Danger? Look at the smoke bursting out! Everybody should go to the front if you want to save your lives!’

“Everyone rushed forward, passengers and crew, men, women, and children. John Maynard was at the helm. The fire was already breaking through, as clouds of smoke were rising. The captain called through his mouthpiece, ‘John Maynard?’ ‘Yes, yes, sir!’ ‘Are you at the wheel?’ ‘Yes, yes, sir!’ ‘Turn southeast and keep to shore!’ The shore came closer and closer, and again the captain called out, ‘John Maynard!’ ‘Yes, yes, sir!’ came the reply. ‘Can you hold out another five minutes?’ ‘I will, with God’s help!’

“The old man’s hair was singed down to the skin, his whole body

burned, his right hand charred. But with his left hand on the wheel, he stood like a rock in the smoke and flames and guided the ship ashore. All were saved, every man, woman, and child. Only he, John Maynard, sank down on the shore, and his soul departed the burnt shell. He died for us!

“We stood around the corpse with deep sorrow in our hearts, and all eyes full of tears. Here we buried him. The entire crew, all the passengers, and almost the entire town followed the coffin. When it was lowered into the grave, there was loud weeping. We have since erected a memorial stone for him, which will fade and decay. But his memory lives in our hearts. We’ll never forget him, because he died for us!”

The passengers of the “Swallow” have done right by setting up a monument in honor of the good helmsman and by praising his deed. But I know One, and you know Him too, Who died for you and for me. How often do you stand before His cross, pondering with a deeply moved heart? How often do you talk about Him with wet eyes and trembling lips that proclaim, “He died for me!” ■

You and the Resurrection Power

| *“That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection” (Philippians 3:10).*

Spring has arrived. Frozen by frost, nature has awakened to new life. Fresh greenery is resplendent amid the flowers. This is an image of rebirth, a symbol of spiritual awakening. We do not believe spring has arrived until we actually see the changes in nature.

Can I believe that someone is a Christian if there is no noticeable change or if something doesn't stand out as a witness of new life? Proof is not quoting Bible verses in conversation. I have heard a hot-tempered person spout biblical words. Being filled with anger represents spiritual death and coldness to those around him and in his own heart.

Revelation 21:5 states, “Behold, I make all things new.” If new life cannot be seen, then no number of Bible verses can hide the sins of envy, resentment, unforgiveness, worldliness, and lack of prayer. “And by this we know that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us” (1 John 3:24). The one who is born again no longer “walks in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful” (see Psalm 1). “Old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new” (2 Corinthians 5:17).

The resurrection of Jesus was noticed. The soldiers were frightened, the disciples were shocked, and the scribes were dismayed.

In one European city, four high school students had become followers of Jesus Christ. It was noticeable. They had agreed among themselves that from now on, they would resolutely stand for Christ at school. They would no longer cheat on exams or copy other students' work. This was no small thing, since they had done it before.

The professor was not satisfied with the work they handed in and asked one of the students, “What's wrong with you? You have always been a good student, and now this miserable work?”

The student replied, “Professor, this is my first honest work!”

“Have you gone mad?” The same thing happened with the other three.

The whole class was abuzz. In response to further questions, it was necessary to declare freely and openly, “We have become Christians.” The matter came before the teaching staff. Some students have gone mad! At first, there was some ridicule from their classmates. But the four stood firm and promised to make up for their lack through hard work. Their steadfastness and brave testimony caused deep reflection in teachers and students. Conversations were held, questions were asked, and many opportunities for witnessing were given.

It got to the point where, out of sincere interest, they were asked at a student event to explain their position in more detail. Modestly but fearlessly, one after the other testified about their experience with Christ.

While they were talking, an unknown gentleman came into the room. He listened with interest and, when the opportunity arose, asked what kind of meeting it was. He was an American who was looking at the hall to rent it for an event.

He was so gripped by the testimony of these young people that he said to himself, “The students in America need to hear these testimonies.” He offered them a free trip to America, all expenses paid. These four students traveled through the various states of the United States giving their testimonies for Christ. “A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden” (Matthew 5:14).

Symbolically, resurrection is perceived each spring in nature, but needs to apply so much more in our spiritual lives. Are you still living in spiritual death? Put an end to all previous habits of sin, by living in faith. This gives room to the resurrection power of Jesus Christ in our hearts and lives, for all time and eternity.

W. Waurich

Gethsemane

“Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done” (Luke 22:42).

Once again, it is time to celebrate the Passion of Christ! Many may hear this, but few take it to heart. Most of humanity lives according to their self-centered mind; their love of the world is too strong to let the image of the crucified Christ disturb their desires. They do not pause to consider how tremendously difficult it was for the Savior to bear the sins of the entire world to purchase our salvation with the sacrifice of His life. But if we call ourselves by His name, then especially during this time we should want to show Him our deepest gratitude and immerse ourselves in His suffering and death.

Let us go to Gethsemane in spirit. Our Savior was willing to suffer the most awful event in order to fulfill the Father’s will, to take the punishment of sin in our place. The path that David once walked when he fled from his son was walked here by the One who was both David’s son and David’s Lord. From the crowd of His disciples, He chose the three who had been witnesses of the revelation of His power. Now they were to be witnesses of His humiliation.

The Lord had once addressed His disciples with the question, “Can you drink the cup that I will drink?” (Matthew 20:22). They had confidently answered, “Yes.” But now, when they were to support their Master in His struggle, they failed. The Master left them and went into the Holy of Holies to agonize with His Father and to summon strength for the terrible battle ahead of Him.

Now fear and the horror of death overtook Him. He began to tremble and tremble—the tremendous weight of mankind’s entire burden of sin pressed upon Him. See how the Lamb of God bore the sin of the entire world. No man is able to comprehend the nameless agony He endured. It

was so horrible that His sweat was like drops of blood falling to the earth.

We might ask ourselves why there was this fear of death in Christ when so many martyrs went to their deaths with triumph. He had to drink the bitter cup so the bitterness of death could be taken away. He won the battle for us. “The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed” (Isaiah 53:5). He has overcome our enemies, and we may enjoy the fruit of His victory. But how immeasurably much it cost Him until this victory was won!

Three times we hear Him ask, “Father, if you are willing.” The Son clung to the Father’s heart. His faith is the anchor He cast out into the eternal ground of the Father’s love. “If it is Your will, take this cup away from Me.” Are you surprised that your Savior prayed like this? Surely it was only natural that He should shrink from the gruesomely bitter cup. He abhorred the agony of sin and death, and yet He wanted nothing other than what the Father wanted. Therefore, He added the words to His petition, “Yet not My will, but Yours, be done.”

The fact that He offered His will to the heavenly Father established a sacrifice that was godly, pure, and holy. The entirety of sinners could not be redeemed in any other way than through the complete surrender of the Son into the will of the Father.

Was the Son’s prayer answered by His Father? To this, we can first answer “no,” for indeed our Savior and Redeemer had to empty the bitter cup to the last drop. And yet we can also say that Jesus’ prayer was heard. An angel was with Him in His agony and strengthened Him. As a hero and triumphant victor, the Lord Jesus emerged from this difficult battle. His faith-filled victory is also our victory.

R. D. M.

The Cross— Our Glory

The apostle Paul writes to the Galatians, “But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world” (Galatians 6:14).

In the passion week, we are especially reminded of Christ’s sacrificial death on the cross. In regard to the Lord’s supper, he admonishes the Corinthians, “For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death till he comes” (1 Corinthians 11:26).

Is the cross our glory, something to boast about? Most people have something they are proud of and sometimes even boast about. Young men like to boast about their physical strength or their fast cars. Older men boast about their academic or their financial achievements. Some parents boast about their talented children and the list goes on and on. Didn’t Paul have anything else to boast about than the cross of Christ?

The apostle Paul had things to boast about. He could have boasted about his legalistic righteousness. To the Philippians he writes in Philippians 3:4–11, “If anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I more so: circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith; that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His

death, if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.”

Paul could have boasted about his suffering for Christ’s sake, which he describes in 2 Corinthians 11: three times shipwrecked and spent days and nights adrift at sea; he was stoned once and left for dead; five times received forty lashes minus one. He could have written volumes about these experiences and all he suffered for Christ’s sake, but he chose to boast about the cross of Christ!

Why exactly the cross? Wasn’t that the deepest and darkest hour in the life of Christ? Shouldn’t he have rather chosen to boast about Christ’s incarnation? “God with us” came as a helpless infant, born in abject poverty. Shouldn’t he have boasted about the remarkable life of Christ, His compassion for the lost and rejected, how He healed the sick, raised the dead, and how even the forces of nature obeyed Him? He calmed the raging sea and even walked on water. No, Paul chose to boast about the cross of Christ.

The cross is more than a religious symbol. Jesus Christ, the son of God, suffered and died on a literal cross. “For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God” (1 Corinthians 1:18). Paul chose to boast about the cross of Christ because it is the greatest revelation of God’s love for a fallen world. “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes on Him should not perish but have ever lasting life” (John 3:16). The blood of Jesus Christ, the unblemished, spotless Lamb of God, cleanses us from all unrighteousness.

“Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord” (1 Corinthians 1:31 ESV).

Art E. Lange
Vernon, British Columbia

The Power of the Blood of Jesus

On Good Friday, many people go to church (possibly the only day of the year) to hear the Gospel of Christ. May the “Man of Sorrows” be so clearly presented to them that they realize how exceedingly precious the blood of Jesus Christ is. The whole world, including all of its most precious treasures, can never replace the value of the blood of Jesus.

When God made tunics out of skin for Adam and Eve, blood flowed for the first time as a sign of reconciliation with God. When Noah went out of the ark, he first built an altar and sacrificed animals and birds as a sign of thanksgiving for salvation, both for himself and his whole family. Before God brought the nation of Israel, His people, out of Egypt, He commanded them to slaughter a lamb and to put the blood on the posts and lintel of their doors in order to be protected when the angel of death struck all the firstborn of the Egyptians.

Then God commanded Moses to institute the sacrificial offerings with very precise regulations. These offerings reflected that all sin of the people could only be forgiven by an offering of blood, a lamb or other sacrificial animal that was to be without blemish. Without the shedding of blood, there would be no remission of sin (see Hebrews 9:22).

Then God sent His Son. John the Baptist exclaimed, “Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!” (John 1:29). Jesus became our sacrificial Lamb, and He is the only Mediator by which the matter of sin can be settled between God and man.

Standing before the throne of God, the entire multitude of the redeemed cries out to the Lamb of God standing there before them: “For You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and have made us kings and priests to our God; and we shall reign on the earth” (Revelation 5:9–10).

Thus, the blood of Jesus Christ has eternal value. Dear Reader, what does His blood mean to you? The apostle Paul says, “For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified” (1 Corinthians 2:2). There on the cross of Calvary,

the holy blood of the Son of God flowed. Everyone who believes in Jesus and His shed blood is cleansed from all sin. With the blood of Jesus alone, all guilt can be washed away.

This was the enormous price Jesus paid to redeem the sinner from the power of sin and eternal death. His blood transforms one into a child of God, an heir of God and co-heir of Jesus Christ. The sinner who believes in the blood of the Son of God is washed pure and is whiter than snow.

What a powerful message for sinful and guilt-ridden mankind: to become free and pure from sin! But the blood not only takes away all guilt; it also frees us from the power of sin. In Ephesians 1:7, we read, “In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace.” If we have come to God in faith, with true repentance and remorse, then we may trust in the sacrifice and blood of Jesus, and can believe that we are cleansed from sin and can walk with God in full redemption. Paul says, “For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under the law, but under grace” (Romans 6:14). It now depends entirely on whether or not we want to believe God’s truth.

For the believer, this now begins a completely new life. A child of God does not do what his flesh desires but what God wants. In this manner, rebirth is surrendering our own will to God, relinquishing our direction in life to the Holy Spirit, and embracing God’s Word. Therefore, the Word and the Holy Spirit become the first, last, and supreme authority in our life.

The blood of Jesus has incredible power. As the redeemed by the blood of Jesus, millions have even become martyrs for Christ. They have sacrificed their lives to the point of death. However, not only martyrs but everyone who becomes a child of God must experience rebirth if they want the certainty of eternal life. Then, every day becomes a Good Friday, thanking our Lord daily for His blood and sacrifice on Calvary. That makes our life rich and infinitely complete. ■

A Monument— To Sin and Divine Mercy

“He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him” (John 3:36).

A few years ago, I stood in front of a monument near Soissons that France had erected to commemorate the terrible battles that took place there. I stood there longer than in front of many other monuments. Not far from it was a cemetery for the fallen with over eight thousand graves, where, if God’s protecting hand had not been upon me, I too could have lain. Why did this particular monument become so important to me? Because it concerned me, because I had actively experienced those days of battle.

But today, dear Reader, I would like to introduce you to a historical monument that concerns you, because you contributed to its creation. It is the indelible monument to human sin, erected on the solid foundation of divine mercy—the cross of Golgotha. Especially this monument bears a powerful, shattering witness of the death and life of our soul.

This monument is the center of world history and must be the center of your life. Those who still doubt the depravity of the human heart can see confirmation of it on the cross, and those who have never yet felt the love of God can have their hard hearts broken by looking at the cross.

The Cross of Golgotha— A Monument of My Sin and Yours

We are all participants in the fall of Adam: “Just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned” (Romans 5:12). Because sin was committed, death also came upon the soul of man. This means much more than a physical death. Spiritual death separates us from the living God. Union with God is the home of our soul. But the person who has sinned can agree with the poet:

I was asked, What torments you so?
I can’t go home—I have no home!

“I have no home!”—How terrible is the condition of the spiritually homeless, excluded from fellowship with God, cast out from heaven. Sin has such terrible consequences. This is what the devil tries to hide from people, but it is the truth: “The soul who sins shall die” (Ezekiel 18:4).

When Adam and Eve sinned, they broke their fellowship with God and were cast out from the Garden of Eden. But God wanted to reconnect with mankind, so He sent Jesus Christ, His only Son. He was the only One Who could re-establish the connection, paying with His life for the sins of mankind.

Jesus Atoned for Us Through Divine Mercy

He, the holy Son of God, came down from heaven and died for us, “that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life” (John 3:16). He suffered death for you and me on the cross; not only bodily death but, as understood in the biblical sense, also spiritual death: “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” (Matthew 27:46). Because He took the guilt upon Himself, the Father had to forsake Him. He suffered separation from God for you and me, out of love, to save us from eternal separation. On the cross of Golgotha, He proved to be the stronger One and defeated Satan.

Jesus’ death on the cross of Golgotha gives us the divine promise, “He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him” (John 3:36). Do you believe in Him with all your heart? In the midst of all mankind, and right before your heart stands the cross of Golgotha—a home for the homeless!

W. Waurich

The Risen Christ is Victorious

Referring to Jesus's work on Earth, Peter explained, "For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty" (2 Peter 1:16). Peter was asking his readers to believe in Jesus Christ as Lord on the basis of a provable fact.

Peter directed his readers' attention to his experience together with James and John on the mountain where they had seen Christ transfigured, and heard a voice from the clouds saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (2 Peter 1:17). This unforgettable experience solidified the faith of Peter, James, and John, giving them steady footing on the rock of truth.

Peter himself, however, had seen even greater things. He was a witness to the resurrection of Christ from the dead. He saw the empty tomb, and better yet, he saw the risen Christ. He praises God, saying, "[He] has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" (1 Peter 1:3).

The message of Christ is based on the fact of Christ. Jesus Christ lived on this Earth, and was crucified and buried. He arose from the dead, left the grave, and ascended to Heaven. He said of himself, "I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore" (Revelation 1:18).

The risen Christ was victorious over the grave. The angel said to the women going to the Lord's tomb, "He is not here; for He is risen" (Matthew 28:6). The words could not be simpler, yet the truth could not be more significant. This simple phrase reveals a revolutionary reality.

Christ had already defeated death for Lazarus, the daughter of Jairus, and the son of the widow of Nain. After Jesus' resurrection, the angel at the empty tomb explained to the women that Christ had defeated death and the grave on His own behalf as well.

Christ's resurrection is a guarantee that there is something beyond death and the grave. Death may seem dark and unfamiliar to us from a human perspective, but it is not dark or unfamiliar to the Savior of Humanity. Christ promises, "Because I live, you will live also" (John 14:19). Through the miracle of resurrection, He defeated death and the grave. Paul writes, "Christ . . . has abolished death and brought life and

immortality to light through the gospel" (2 Timothy 1:10). This is hope!

Because Christ was victorious over death and the grave, our future is not dark, uncertain, or hopeless. Behind the shadow of the tomb stands the One Who has fully overcome the forces of death. We can trust Him to lead us to glory.

The Risen Christ Defeats Doubts and Fear

Peter writes, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" (1 Peter 1:3).

All the hopes cherished by the disciples had been shattered, and Jesus' crucifixion had plunged them into deep despair. This kind of despair is not uncommon in our world either, with people today remaining hopeless because they know nothing of the message of Christ. Death holds them shackled in dread. They know nothing about eternity and have no assurance of eternal life after death. God's Word shows us the sad reality that these people "through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Hebrews 2:15).

What a comfort for a child of God to know that "if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens" (2 Corinthians 5:1). This promise of a resting place for the soul was fulfilled when Christ arose from the dead, and ascended to heaven, where we can trust that a place has been prepared for us too.

Christ Arose to Defeat Satan and Sin

On the day of the crucifixion, if somebody had asked, "Who won? Christ or Satan?" nobody would have dared to name Christ as the victor.

If the gospels had ended at Calvary and the tomb, God's plan to save humanity would have been defeated. Christ's life and death would have been in vain.

On the cross, Satan and sin did the worst possible thing to the Son of God. Satan's deep hatred of God caused him to use people to torture and kill the object of God's love and grace, His only Son. Although Satan was allowed to put Christ on the cross, he did not have

the power to separate Him from His godliness. In fact, by putting Jesus on the cross, Satan played a role in God's grace-filled plan of salvation, and when Christ arose from the grave, Satan and sin were defeated.

"I . . . was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore" (Revelation 1:18). The strength, authority, and life contained in these words are an inspiration for every believer tempted by Satan. They encourage us to call on the One who defeated Satan and sin, once and for all.

It is a wonderful fact that the risen Christ takes up residence in every heart that acknowledges Him as Lord and Savior. Christ's victory over the grave becomes our victory, too, and His triumph over Satan is our triumph as well.

It is up to us to lay our personal weaknesses at Christ's feet and place our souls and lives in His loving care. If we do so, we will lack for nothing.

Glen E. Marshall

From Sadness to Joy

In Luke 24, we read of two followers of Christ who were traveling from Jerusalem to Emmaus on the day of Christ's resurrection. As they traveled, "they talked together of all these things which had happened" (Luke 24:14). They were discussing Jesus, how their Master, Whom they had witnessed doing incredible miracles and teaching amazing things, was captured by the chief priests and rulers, condemned and crucified. They were also discussing Christ's missing body. They had heard the testimony of the women, and of Peter and John who went to Christ's tomb and found it empty. They had heard how some were visited by angels who proclaimed Christ's resurrection to them. Mary even claimed to have seen the risen Lord with her own eyes.

While they conversed about these incredible things, they had a very somber and sad disposition. Luke writes in verses 15–17, "So it was, while they conversed and reasoned, that Jesus Himself drew near and went with them. But their eyes were restrained, so that they did not know Him. And He said to them, 'What kind of conversation is this that you have with one another as you walk and are sad?'" Later, after recognizing it was Jesus Who was with them, they were filled with great joy and immediately traveled back to Jerusalem to tell the others what they had experienced.

As believers today, we can relate well to these two Emmaus disciples. We know who Christ is. We know of the many wonders that Christ performed during His earthly ministry, and we know His teachings be-

cause we have His gospel. We know of the eyewitness accounts, the people who saw the empty grave the morning of the third day, and of those who were personally visited by angelic messengers, and by Christ. One would think that knowing all these things would produce great joy in the hearts of all those who follow Christ. So why is it then that many who claim to be disciples of Christ carry a sad and somber disposition? From the account of the Emmaus believers, we find three potential reasons.

The first possible reason they were sad had to do with their misconceptions of Jesus. After explaining to Jesus what had happened during the last days, they state in verse 21, "But we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel." They were hoping Jesus would save Israel from the Romans and establish an earthly kingdom. There are many self-professing believers today who lack joy in their lives because they have misconceptions about Jesus and His teachings. Perhaps they believe it is impossible to live a sin-free life, and so they live each day in sin, and then confess their sins each night. This false understanding of Christ's teachings will rob believers of their joy in the Lord because of the shame and guilt brought on by their daily sins. Jesus and His disciples taught that we are to ask the Holy Spirit to fill our lives with His presence and empower us to live victorious lives for Him. Likewise, there are other misconceptions about Christ and His teachings that rob believers of their joy.

A second reason why these disciples were sad had to do with their unbelief. They had heard of the great news of Christ's resurrection but did not believe the accounts, because they hadn't seen Jesus for themselves. In verse 25, Jesus even says to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe." As Bible readers, we know what happened to Jesus regarding His death and resurrection. But do we believe it? There is a difference between knowing and believing, between fact and faith. When Jesus told His disciples about His coming death and approaching ascent to heaven, He assured them in John 14:1, "Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me." Do we believe Christ and His gospel?

The Emmaus disciples could not believe in the resurrection without first experiencing their risen Lord. This is the third reason. After they recognized Christ, they had great joy in their hearts, and they needed to

immediately tell others what they had experienced. Perhaps the greatest reason why self-professing believers lack joy today, is because they haven't personally encountered their living Savior yet. They haven't truly accepted Christ to be their Savior. Or perhaps they had at one point, but backslid in their Christian walk. Could your lack of joy be attributed to these things?

Dear Reader, does the story of Easter fill your heart with sorrow or joy? Can others see your joy in the Lord on a daily basis? If not, perhaps your lack of joy can be attributed to certain misconceptions you have about Christ or His teachings. Do you believe in the resurrection? Have you experienced Christ's resurrection in your heart? God wants to fill your heart with His joy, as He did the Emmaus disciples on the day of His resurrection.

David Knelsen
Seminole, Texas



The Cross and the Empty Grave

"[God] has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began, but has now been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel" (2 Timothy 1:9-10).

The cross of Calvary and the Resurrection of Jesus have become a sure foundation and solid anchor for my faith. Years ago, when I bowed my knees before the Lord and confessed all my sins to Him, the power of His Resurrection worked complete forgiveness and release of my guilt caused by all my trespasses. I am very thankful to God for eternal life in Christ. If Jesus had not died and risen from the grave, our faith would indeed be senseless and in vain.

Good Friday

When Jesus held the Passover with His disciples, He knew that He would suffer and die shortly. This was no ordinary type of suffering and death. He would die the death of a criminal, although He had never done anything wrong.

When He wrestled in prayer in Gethsemane and the fear of death overwhelmed Him, He yielded fully to the will of His Father, even when He had the power

to ask for legions of angels to come to His defense. The enemies of Jesus—particularly the Scribes and Pharisees—demanded that Jesus step down from the cross, if He indeed was the Son of God. Many bystanders mocked Him, saying, “He saved others; let Him save Himself if He is the Christ, the chosen of God” (Luke 23:35). The criminal to the right of Jesus understood: “I am guilty, I need forgiveness,” and humbly asked Him to remember him when He would depart. Jesus responded generously, “Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise” (Luke 23:43).

Good Friday is a sad day in which we remember and reflect on the passion, suffering and painful death of our Lord Jesus Christ. He took our sins upon Himself and suffered the punishment we deserved. For our sake, He allowed Himself to be betrayed, mocked, spit upon, offended, beaten, whipped, and a crown of thorns pressed on His head. He went the difficult way to Calvary for us, carrying the heavy cross. He had His hands and feet pierced by nails, drinking the bitter wine before He died an agonizing death. However, despite all the pain and suffering, Jesus asked the Father to forgive His enemies. What happened on Good Friday was to fulfill all the Scriptures. Only after the sacrificial death of Jesus could there be a resurrection, and that is our reason to celebrate Easter.

What Is It All About?

My sins and yours nailed Jesus to the cross; it was our debts that made His death so gruesome and bitter. Because He took our punishment upon Himself, we can now live, provided we have received His gift of grace. Through His blood He has paid the price and redeemed us.

Moses raised the brass serpent in the desert so that the people could look upon it and be saved from the poisonous snake bites. Similarly, we can turn our eyes to the crucified Christ, who suffered and died for our debt of sin. We now look up to the finished work on the cross that Jesus has completed for us. At the same time, however, we also look up to Jesus, who rose from the dead and defeated death and the power of evil.

The Empty Tomb

Augustin once wrote: “What a death that gave a mortal blow to death!”

The resurrection of Christ declares that death does not have the last word and we need not perish but can live eternally. Jesus rose from the dead and overcame death once and for all. With that He proclaimed a triumphant victory over Satan and death. Therefore, we no longer need to fear that Satan can overcome and bind us again. Jesus sets those free who come to Him with sincere and repentant hearts.

The Resurrection of Jesus Is A Fact

All doubts and arguments that the disciples stole the body of the Lord while the soldiers were asleep must be exposed and rejected as falsehood and evil gossip. The frightened disciples could never have overpowered the Roman soldiers watching the tomb. The Scriptures testify, “And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat on it. His countenance was like lightning, and His clothing as white as snow. And the guards shook for fear of Him, and became like dead men” (Matthew 28:2-4).

The women at the tomb became the first witnesses of the Resurrection when they heard the message by the angel: Jesus is risen! Come and see the place where He lay. The stone is rolled away, the tomb is empty! Jesus has risen triumphantly!

Hope for Everyone

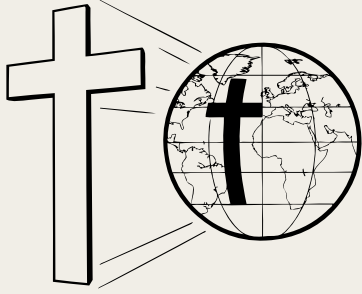
The Resurrection Day means eternal hope for all believers. Now we can all turn our gaze to the Crucified, who suffered for our guilt and sins, died and completed the work of redemption for us. We can all look upon the Author and Finisher of our faith, knowing that He will not disappoint or leave us.

Christ is risen indeed! Through His death and Resurrection we are now able to live in the blissful hope to be with God for all eternity.

Dear Friend, if you hear the voice of the Savior, I urge you to accept Him into your heart. Then the Resurrection Day will not only be an important historical event, but also the most beautiful celebration experience for you.

Let us be Christ’s witnesses and call out to the world: “Quit your searching! Take hold of the eternal life that is readily available in Jesus Christ!”

Martin Kehler
Winnipeg, MB



Radio Program Message of Salvation

Friedrich Krebs
Kitchener, ON

Jesus at the Beginning and End of His Week of Suffering

“Then, as He was now drawing near the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works they had seen, saying: ‘Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the LORD! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!’ . . . Now as He drew near, He saw the city and wept over it” (Luke 19: 37–38, 41).

The week began with Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem. All four gospels give an account of it. These writers only wrote of the most essential part of the events that took place during Jesus’ final week. They were eyewitnesses, and their reports are therefore absolutely credible. We are grateful for their communications, for otherwise a very considerable and valuable part would presumably be missing from our Bibles.

The events in Jesus’ week of suffering give us an especially deep insight into His selflessness, His absolute obedience, His willingness to suffer, and His complete devotion and love for mankind. These days of suffering show us Jesus in poignant imagery that we would otherwise not have seen or known in its fulfilled form. Isaiah 53 shows us an impressive prophecy about the sufferings of Jesus, but the Passion Week shows us the reality of the fulfillment.

This moving and eventful week began with the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem. How ironic that this entry

began with people in joy and hope, but ended with Jesus in sorrow and tears! The people’s enthusiasm and joy came from a hope that soon crumbled. We read, “When the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son” (Galatians 4:4). Luke writes: “Now it came to pass, when the time had come for Him to be received up, that He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem” (Luke 9:51).

Therefore everything went according to an appointed time. We continually read about this in correlation with the Old Testament, “that the scripture might be fulfilled.” Jesus knew about this time and was ready to fulfill the scripture. The scribes and Pharisees should also have recognized it, but they distracted the people from Jesus, and He wept over the confusion of the city, exclaiming, “If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things that make for your peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes” (Luke 19:42).

Before His death, Jesus still appeared in all His messianic authority. Even during His last days of suf-



fering, He still took the opportunity to send out clear, straightforward messages to plead with the people to repent. But the broad masses could not be moved and did not suspect how late it was for them on God's timeline. This was the reason for Jesus' tears, for the Savior knew that with His entry into Jerusalem, He was also taking the road to Golgotha.

People did not orchestrate the suffering of Jesus according to their will and desire. Everything happened just as God had determined and intended. One must not forget that Christ, the sacrificial Lamb of God, was not only given for us by God, but also surrendered by Him. Referring to this, Jesus could conclude His time of wrestling in prayer in Gethsemane with the words, "Father, . . . not My will, but Yours be done" (Luke 22:42). Precisely this was His only consolation on His path of suffering, which became ever darker and more difficult: that He stood persistently and unceasingly in the will of God.

Jesus had entered this city with last attempts to help and save the people; yet He was to leave it again as an outcast, burdened with His own cross. The rejoicing of the people at His entry had turned into the ugliest cries of contempt and rejection. Jesus had to contend with this, because He did not want to respond to the will of men but to remain firmly in the will of God. With this clear decision, His path of suffering and the cross were decided.

How often has this happened in the life of the steadfast, faithful child of God! But the way of the cross is also the way of victory, and this was Jesus' only ray of light, which accompanied Him in the shadow of suffering and death.

The attitude Jesus had from the beginning of His week of suffering is one that He maintained firmly and clearly to the end. Let us remember this image of Jesus' suffering and follow His example, remembering Zinzendorf's words: "Sorrows pave the way home to You."



From the Working World (5)

“Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify Me” (Psalm 50:15).

One and a half weeks remained until the end of the course.

When I reached into my pocket as usual for my apartment key on that Wednesday evening, it wasn't there. I had left a spare key with my dining companion, whom I trusted. But the loss of the other key was very upsetting to me. Since I was on my way by subway clear across the city—on a day when some of the rails were being replaced and I needed to transfer multiple times—the key chain was like a needle in a haystack in the big city. From a human point of view, getting it back was pretty hopeless.

The key chain had a small pendant hanging from it, a hand with a quote from Psalm 139:5: “You have . . . laid Your hand upon me.” Once I got home, I brought my problem before God in prayer, trusting that He would hold His almighty hand over the key chain. But my trust was still to be put to the test. All conceivable searches and inquiries were initially unsuccessful.

Three and a half weeks after my key had gone missing, I had to hand over my apartment. I made some calls, but my key was neither in the central lost and found office of the city, nor in the other places that had been recommended to me. In my distress, I cried out earnestly in prayer again for help and asked God

to show me where the key might be. Suddenly, the thought came to me to call the lost and found office of the transport authority again. I had already inquired here at least twice, so I hadn't thought of inquiring at this office yet again. But now I felt a new glimmer of hope. Immediately, I picked up the phone and called. When I described my key chain, the person said, “Yes, it's here. You can pick it up.” The joy was indescribable! Just in time before the apartment handover, I held the keys in my hand.

Deep gratitude filled my heart that God is so faithful to His Word. Our circumstances and problems of everyday life are not too small for Him to help us. For that, I give Him the thanks and the glory. This incident reminded me not to give up trust and hope too quickly, but to hope until the end. Even when it seems the last glimmer of hope is gone, God can create a new way out and help in the darkest situations. It is worthy to trust Him. God is never too late!

“Therefore do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward” (Hebrews 10:35).

Dina Grötzinger
Eppingen, Germany



What Does Easter Mean to Me?

When thinking of how to describe what Easter means, we had to realize it is beyond our ability to comprehend. The amazing, wonderful, and glorious love of Jesus is hard to grasp. But in order to show what Easter means to us, we would like to provide a brief list of things that come to mind when we think about Easter.

There are so many things associated with Easter, beginning with love, grace, mercy, salvation, forgiveness, goodness, compassion, hope, holiness, suffering, and sacrifice for our sins, freedom, eternal life, and more.

Here are a few of our personal thoughts about Easter:

Love

Yes, love. God's great love for humanity. God's love for us. God loved us so much that He sent His only Son to suffer for us and take the punishment we deserved!

"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).

"But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8).

Salvation

Jesus saved us through His death on the cross. He brought salvation to all.

"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).

Redemption

Jesus, our Savior, has set us free from the bondage and snares of Satan.

"In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace" (Ephesians 1:7).

Suffering

Jesus loved us so much that He allowed Himself to be taken captive for us, to suffer the penalty for the sin of the world, indeed for our sins.

"For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit" (1 Peter 3:18).

He "was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification" (Romans 4:25).

Eternal Life

Through Jesus' death and resurrection, we can have eternal life, the hope of being in heaven for all eternity.

"And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent" (John 17:3).

"And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand" (John 10:28).

We cannot imagine what life would be like without Easter. If Jesus had not risen, we would not have access to unconditional love, grace, mercy, salvation, forgiveness, goodness, compassion, hope, redemption, and completeness. If Jesus had not risen, there would be no One who suffered for our sins or who was a sacrifice for our freedom and eternal life. Let us surrender our lives to the Lord Jesus for His service so He can work in us the fruit of the Spirit to show those around us the meaning of Easter!

Does the resurrection have a personal meaning in your life?

Maria & Marvin Günter
Bolivia

This Have I Suffered for You; Now What Will You Do for Me?

The following story is based on a real painting by the Italian artist Domenico Fetti, which can be found in a Munich museum.

This Have I Suffered for You;
Now What Will You Do for Me?

The artist stood lost in contemplation, while holding a piece of charcoal in his hand. Thoughtlessly, half in a dream, he drew a thorn-crowned head with a few strokes. His eyes became moist. Suddenly, a thought flashed through his mind: “I can paint! My brush must proclaim it, like in that altarpiece I painted! His face expressed only agony, but that was not the truth. Inexpressible love, endless compassion, willful sacrifice must be read in it.”

The artist fell on his knees and prayed, “Help me to paint You as You are, that I may thus testify of You.” And then he painted. His genius awakened, every fiber in him came alive, and the artist surpassed himself. The new painting of the crucifixion was like a divine inspiration.

He was reluctant to sell it and therefore donated it. The painting was hung in the public gallery, and citizens flocked there to see it. Everyone who stood in front of it fell silent, and their hearts were moved. They left with the consciousness of God’s love, and in their souls resounded the words that were written under the picture:

This Have I Suffered for You;
Now What Will You Do for Me?

Often, Fetti would go there too. He stood far back in a corner of the gallery, watching the people crowding around his painting, asking God to bless his painted sermon.

One day, when the many visitors had gone on their way, he noticed a girl, forlorn and sad, standing in front of the painting, crying bitterly. The artist approached her. “What makes you so sad?”

The girl turned around. It was Pepita. “O sir, if only He had loved me like that!” she said, pointing to the Savior’s face, leaning over her with demanding love. “I am just a poor girl. His love is there for you, but not for

me.” Tears fell from her eyes without her making any effort to hold them back.

“Pepita, it’s all for you too!” And then the artist told her the entire story of God’s love. Until late in the evening, after the gallery closed, the two of them sat and talked. The artist did not tire of answering her questions, because she was asking about the One Whom he loved. He told the girl about the wonderful life of the Savior and His victorious death, and then how He triumphantly arose. He also explained to her how this redeeming love unites us with God. She listened, received the words in her heart, and believed them for herself too!

Years had passed since then, and the artist and the girl were already in glory. Then, while on the journey to Paris, a merry young nobleman arrived in his splendid carriage at the city which held the painting. While the hostler cared for his horses, he visited the famous gallery. He was rich, young, and clever; the world shone beautifully before him, and all its treasures were open to him. Now, he stood before Fetti’s picture and was deeply touched.

This Have I Suffered for You;
Now What Will You Do for Me?

He read the inscription on the frame again and again and could not tear himself away. It penetrated his heart. The love of Christ took hold of him and captured him forever. As the light faded, the doorkeeper had to take the weeping nobleman by the arm and tell him that it was time to leave the gallery. Night had fallen, but not for that young man; rather for him the dawn of eternal life had opened. It was the Earl of Zinzendorf. He returned to the inn and got back into his carriage to turn his back on Paris and travel home.

From that moment on, he laid life, fortune, and fame at the feet of the One who had spoken to his heart through the image. He answered the question by the devotion of his life.

Fetti’s painting testified of God. The Lord had used it to speak of the Savior on Golgotha.

Dear Reader, can you also say, “He suffered for me”? ■

Those Beneath the Cross

The Curious

Whenever there is something special to see on the streets, like a traffic accident or a parade with music, many crowd in to see everything as closely as possible.

Many also came to Golgotha, not wanting to miss the gruesome spectacle. When they saw Jesus in pain, they shook their heads. Each one told what they knew about Jesus' deeds. According to them, He should be able to come down from the cross without any problem, and if He did, He would be able to convince foe and friend that He was really the Son of God.

But when none of this happened, which the curious had been eagerly awaiting, they turned away from Him, bored, and went back to the city of Jerusalem. At home, they ate and went back to work.

Jesus certainly could have come down from the cross, but His love toward us and all of humanity caused Him to walk the path His Father had shown Him to the very end. Jesus took our punishment upon Himself and died because of our sins. With this, He completed the work of salvation.

Is it possible that you only want to be an observer at the cross? Jesus has shown you through His death how much God loves you. Accept this love. Thank Him that you can live as a child of God.

An Admirer

Different groups of people stood at the cross of Jesus. Some came just out of curiosity. Others were happy to finally be rid of Jesus. Still others stood crying at the cross.

A man, perhaps standing a little off to the side, observed these many people, but especially Jesus. He was the centurion in charge of the execution. Was he a Roman, or did he belong to another nation within the large Roman Empire? In any case, he had hardly heard anything about Jesus before. Maybe he had heard about Him for the first time from Pilate at His trial. During the sixth hour, when Jesus hung on the cross, he finally got to know Him. He heard how He prayed for God to forgive His enemies, how He worried about His mother, how He called God His "Father." He had never executed such a person as this before. After all he experienced in this short time with Jesus, he told himself it was impossible for this person to be a criminal. When Jesus bowed His head and died, the officer called out, "Truly this Man was the Son of God!"

Did he come to this conclusion out of astonishment, out of admiration? Then his judgment would not have been worth much. But if his words were a confession, then the centurion also belongs to the church of the cross. Then his confession is a question to you: Is the Crucified One your Savior and Lord? ■

The Successful Child

Children can dream so wonderfully. They paint the future in bright colors. Sometimes their dreams reflect their fears, but most of the time they reflect hope, which arises from their life's circumstances. But as parents, what dreams do we have for our children?

Before you continue reading this article, why don't you put it aside for a while, close your eyes, and think about your child's life in 2050, twenty-eight years from now. What will your child's life be like then? How is his soul? What family situation could your child be in? Before you read any further, please take the time to imagine each of your children in April 2050.

Two examples: Sophia is six years old today and delights those around her as a little ray of sunshine. In 2050, we see her as a young, successful woman. After completing her studies, she has found a promising job in her desired profession and is in the process of climbing the career ladder. She enjoys a substantial income, has an interesting circle of friends, likes to travel, and lives life fully. Understandably, there is little time for family and old friends. Unfortunately, she has long lost her childlike faith and the purity of her soul. She manages on her own and does not need God.

Little Sophia currently attends the same Sunday School class as Julian. He is a bright, outgoing little boy who brings his parents a lot of joy. In 2050, at the age of 37, we see him also working in the profession he chose after his studies. But his greatest love is his life for God and for serving others. In his local church, his place is never vacant. He is a valuable asset and a blessing to many: to the younger ones he is an encouraging example; to the older brothers and sisters a comfort in a time marked by godlessness. His family is a little slice of paradise. He always has time for people who ask him for help and advice. The blessings of God abound in his life.

From Child to Adult

People have very different ways of life. Whereas behavior in childhood and adolescence is dominated by a certain predisposition, and is affected by the influence of parents, of their home and environment, adults find that their own will increasingly determines the course of their life. In many cases, events develop or unfold

that parents would have liked to see happen very differently.

Unfortunately, the great influence of fathers and mothers on the lives of their children is often underestimated. The value system they live by shapes their children to a great extent. What they live for, what is important to them, will also have considerable significance in the lives of their children. Here, everyday practice speaks much louder than spoken words.

What does success mean to you? Do you define success by the general norms of the Zeitgeist: power, prestige, wealth, prosperity, or self-realization? Or is your life completely focused on the fulfillment of God's will, godly goals and heavenly treasures? Do you care what people say and think, or do you care to please God? Your children sense what really motivates you, what you love, and what you're attached to. Often, these things will also become important in their lives.

Parents generally want the best for their children. Sometimes, their own unachieved wishes are projected into the children's lives. Unfortunately, it is often the unachieved materialistic and temporal goals that are then set as the criteria for success in the children's lives. What is best for our children?

What Do Our Children Need?

Our children are educated and shaped in the school system. This involves dangers, and not only for their faith. Jesus prays in Matthew 11:25, "I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and have revealed them to babes." In 1 Corinthians 1:26-29, Paul, an intelligent and educated man, paints a negative picture of people who have much knowledge and education on display. Let us have a sober and healthy attitude in these matters and set the right priorities.

What do our children need? They need parents and grandparents whose spiritual life is full of clarity and joy, and is an example worth imitating. They need this much more urgently than wealth, houses, and money. Some foolish parents think that by amassing wealth, they will help their children to have a better life. But most often, ingratitude, tears, and sorrow are the harvest of such superficial sowing.



SOMETHING FOR THE FAMILY

Our children need a healthy development into strong spiritual personalities. First in the home and then also in the congregation, they should learn and experience the clear biblical truths of salvation. Much more important than talking about other people's problems is the question, "Child, did you understand the sermon today? What was said, what did you understand?" The child should clearly perceive the high esteem we have for the worship services, the congregation, and the brothers and sisters. He should learn from our example how preaching translates into practical action, especially when the sermon has affected us personally and changes need to take place in our own life. Our child might also understand and with great interest watch our obedience to the Word.

We receive divine power and grace especially in our quiet time with the Lord. Therefore, children should learn at home the naturalness and beauty of family devotions and personal prayer life, not as a compulsory exercise but as a spiritual necessity.

Spiritually strong personalities are people who are clear in their values and firm in their decisions for good and for truth. Therefore, it is extremely import-

ant to clearly support every right decision our children make. They should know with certainty that living a good life is pleasing to God, and that their parents will always stand by them, even when they make some poor decisions, or sometimes overshoot the mark in their zeal. Spiritually strong personalities are people who are positive about their mistakes and consciously learn from them. How sad when children are afraid of making mistakes, and then, in the worst-case scenario, become puppets who only do what is right for other people.

In Retrospect

What a blessing when Paul could retrospectively observe, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith" (2 Timothy 4:7). We should always define success from the perspective of eternity. Otherwise, it will be fleeting like morning mist in the warm sunshine. May our children be Christ-centered people whose lives are rich in grace and faith, and who love freely by showing many the way to heaven with patience and kindness.

Hermann Vogt



The observance of the Lord's Supper is an ordinance clearly taught in the New Testament. Since there are many false concepts and doctrines about this ordinance, it is appropriate to clarify what the Bible really teaches about it.

No Ordinary Meal

Apparently there were misunderstandings in the church at Corinth about the Lord's Supper and its significance. Something else that did not belong had been introduced or added to this ordinance during the absence of the apostle Paul. Paul therefore wrote to the church to clarify, and to set the matter straight: "Therefore when you come together in one place, it is not to eat the Lord's Supper. For in eating, each one takes his own supper ahead of others; and one is hungry and another is drunk. What! Do you not have houses to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and shame those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you in this? I do not praise you" (1 Corinthians 11:20–22).

A Memorial Meal

After rebuking the church at Corinth for its conduct and showing that taking such a communal meal is not the Lord's Supper, the apostle went on to clarify what the Lord's Supper really is. "For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord

Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, 'Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me.' In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.' For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes" (vv. 23–26).

Paul specifically points out that the Lord Jesus Himself instituted the Lord's Supper. In Matthew 26:26–28 we read, "And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, 'Take, eat; this is My body.' Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, 'Drink from it, all of you. For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.'"

The Purpose of the Lord's Supper

In instituting the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, Christ had a definite purpose. Much of its original and proper meaning has been lost or obscured by spiritual dimness and by theological views and false human opinions. Thus, some teach that the bread and wine are changed by consecration into the actual body and blood of Christ. Others teach that by taking the Lord's Supper one receives forgiveness of sins. But these theo-

THE LORD'S SUPPER

ries, which make the Lord's Supper a substitute for the Savior Himself or a substitute for the particular experience of salvation, are not based on God's Word.

The true purpose of the Lord's Supper is clear from the words of the Lord Jesus spoken at its institution, "do this in remembrance of Me" (Luke 22:19).

Now if this ordinance is instituted in memory of Christ, it is evident that He is not actually physically part of the Communion wine or bread (though Christ is symbolically represented in them in His atoning sacrifice), but rather we are reminded by it of His death, and are made aware of Christ's vicarious suffering for our sins in a way that would hardly be possible otherwise.

By participating in this ordinance, we are brought into a more intimate communion of His sufferings and death. In observing this ordinance, we do not gain spiritual life, but in it we proclaim the death of Christ.

"Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body" (1 Corinthians 11:27-29).

People who do not discern the body of Christ (His sacrificed body in its true embodiment as a sin offer-

ing), and who are not actually redeemed from sins, are unworthy to partake of the Lord's Supper, which after all proclaims the Lord's death. If they partake of the Lord's Supper in an unredeemed state, they become guilty of the Lord's body and blood, eating and drinking to their own damnation. "Let a man examine himself." Only those who are truly redeemed have the right to partake of this holy memorial ordinance.

Continuation of the Ordinance

That the ordinance of the Lord's Supper was given and is to be kept for the whole Christian age is clear from the Scriptures. In the apostolic age it was kept by the church. Jesus commanded the apostles to go forth and teach all nations. What were they to teach? "Teach them to keep all that I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:20). Did He command keeping the ordinance of the Lord's Supper? "Do this in remembrance of me" (Luke 22:19). Until when should this be continued? As long as the gospel is preached, all that the Lord has commanded should be kept, until the end of the world. In 1 Corinthians 11:26 we read, "For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes." Thus, the true followers of Jesus of the entire Gospel Age are obligated to keep the Lord's Supper until the Lord comes again.

F. G. Smith

A Reader's Question

From our Web Mail:

Question: “By chance, I came across your homepage, and I have a question. In your Statement of Faith, one sacrament listed is foot washing (John 13:14–15).

“How am I to understand this? First, I relate it to serving, and second, to the inner cleansing (from our sins) by Jesus’ blood. See verse 8: ‘If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me.’”

Answer: With respect to your question, I would like to say the following:

We believe in three New Testament ordinances: baptism, the Lord’s Supper, and foot washing.

Ordinance or Sacrament?

I’d like to briefly clarify the term “sacrament.” I assume you agree with me that none of the three ordinances are “sacraments” in the sense of “a means of grace or healing.” Salvation through faith in Jesus Christ is and remains the only “means of grace” by which we are washed clean of sin and become children of God.

A biblical ordinance is not something we must do to be saved but something we should do *because* we are saved.

I would describe the term “ordinance” as “an act or ritual given by God and designed to represent a particular truth of the gospel. It demonstrates the personal relationship of those involved in the act to that truth. It is a godly requirement whose obligation is universal and ongoing.”

We believe that the ordinances (baptism, the Lord’s Supper, and foot washing) were given and instituted by God. Because these are clear, godly requirements, they must also be obeyed.

Symbolism of the Individual Ordinances:

Each of the three ordinances illustrates an important aspect of the participant’s connection to the truth it teaches:

- Baptism symbolizes death to the world and sin.
- The Lord’s Supper symbolizes our relationship to Christ as our Savior.
- Foot washing symbolizes our relationship to our neighbor as his or her submissive servant.

Why Foot Washing at All?

A few brief points as to why we consider foot washing an ordinance of Jesus, just like baptism and the Lord’s Supper:

- Christ instituted each of the New Testament ordinances by two crucial elements:
 1. A clear command to keep this ordinance
 2. By His own example in personally practicing the ordinance

The commandment of the Lord’s foot washing and example is explicitly detailed for us in John 13:2–17.

- Jesus Himself said, “If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet. For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done unto you” (verses 13–15). In verse 17, He adds a special emphasis to the commandment: “If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them,” and in Matthew 28:20, Jesus says, “. . . teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you.”

Biblical Kinship

Do you know my brothers'
Or my sisters' names?
They love one another;
They are born again.

Born of God's own Spirit,
Trusting in the Lord,
They not only hear it
But obey His Word.

Sheep of the green pasture,
The small flock of Christ,
Heirs forever after
Of eternal life.

Children of salvation
Whom the world knows not,
Withstanding temptation
By the grace of God.

Yes, these are my brothers,
These the sisters mine,
Jesus has no others,
Family divine!

From the Worship Hymnal #170

- If Christ our Lord humbled Himself in this way and washed the feet of His disciples, it is rather incumbent upon us as servants to humble ourselves in the same manner.

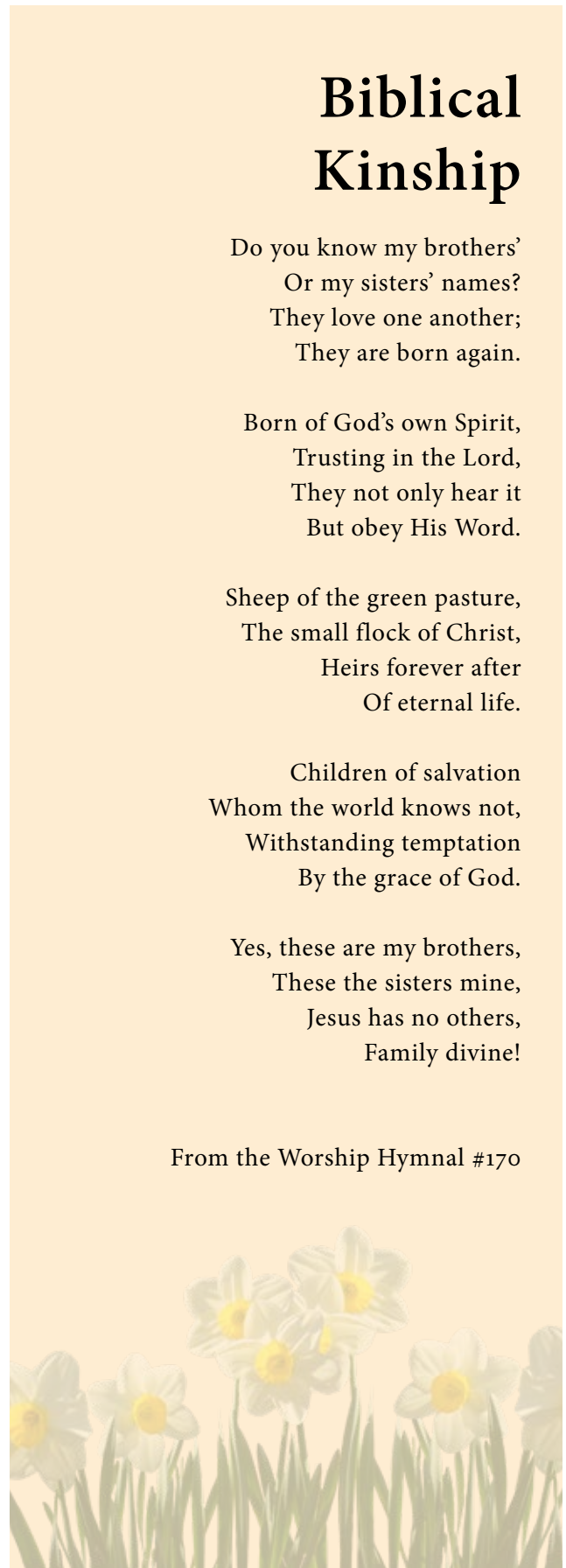
- If it were really as unimportant as many believe it to be, why would Jesus attach such importance to all of this (John 13:2–16) so close to His crucifixion and waste His time on “unimportant” things?

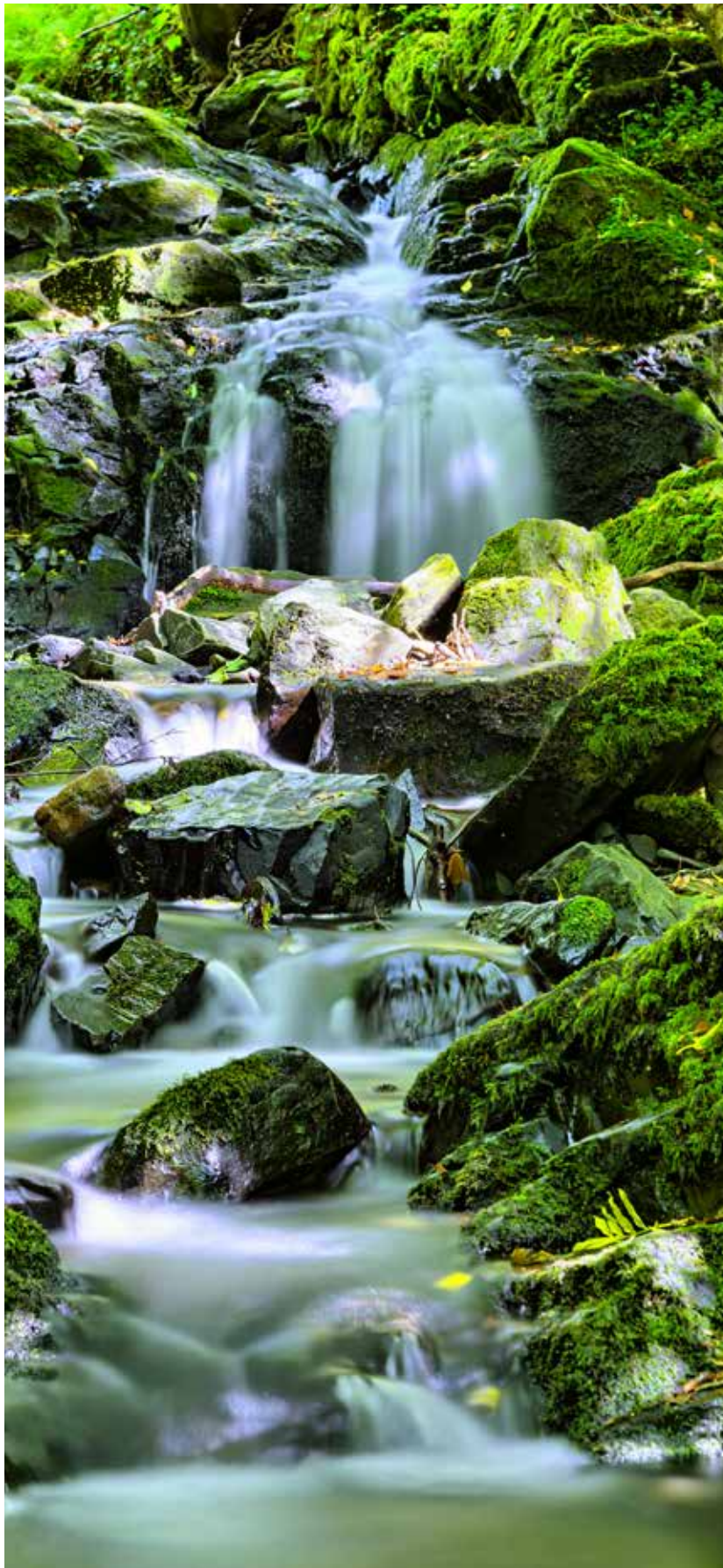
- Referring to the celebration of the Lord's Supper, He said in Luke 22:19, “Do this in remembrance of Me.” And referring to the washing of the feet, He said in John 13:15, “For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done unto you.”

- The failure of many churches to practice foot washing is not proof that foot washing is not biblical. We all know that many truths and also ordinances of the Bible were distorted as early as the first centuries of the Christian era, and some were omitted completely. The “believer's baptism” became infant baptism; the Lord's Supper, which is in a sense a time of remembrance, became a sacrament, and almost nothing of foot washing remains. “Blessed are you if you do them.”

On a personal note, I would like to add that I would not want to miss the blessing we receive during communion and foot washing. It is always a meaningful day (for example, as a congregation, we practice the Lord's Supper and foot washing twice a year). Foot washing is a special reminder of our relationship with fellow believers, and we can personally examine ourselves in this regard.

Roland Stieben
Bolivia





How to Remain Spiritually Healthy

It seems that many people have trouble staying spiritually healthy. They lead a life of repeatedly falling into sin. At the next revival, they go to the altar again, seeking salvation. But all they succeed in doing is to renew their confession, since not long thereafter they again fall into sin. Such a life does not glorify God, nor does it bring honor to the cause of Christ. It is not the will of God for Christians to lead such a miserable lifestyle, nor is it necessary.

There are different reasons for such a condition. And if you would like to be spiritually healthy, it is up to you to examine yourself and see what the reason for your lack of victory is. When you have found out the reason for your failure, then, by all means, avoid the cause.

When a river is polluted, we try to discover the reason why. When the causes of pollution are discovered and removed, then the river will once more become clear and unpolluted. Spiritually speaking, it is the same. If you have trouble staying spiritually fit and you repeatedly keep on falling, then there is a reason for this. If we wish to have victory over sin, then we need to get rid of the problem that is the cause of our failure. Let us look at some of these causes, and perhaps this may help you determine what is happening in your personal situation.

1. A lack of true repentance in seeking the Lord at the beginning is the reason some people do not have a satisfactory experience of salvation. Perhaps they are not sincere in seeking the Lord and only repent superficially. Perhaps someone has done wrong to another person and is unwilling to clear up the matter. Someone else may have gained some advantage in a deceitful way and is not willing to give back what they took dishonestly. Others may not wish to give of their wealth to the poor or support the needy, nor support the kingdom of God either financially or in some other way. And still others may not wish to give up a sinful habit or may harbor hatred, envy, anger, or pride in their hearts.

Instead of turning their backs on these things and experiencing true salvation, they may make a confession that they are Christians but soon fall back into open or secret sin again. If you wish to be spiritually healthy, it is imperative that you seek God with sincere repentance right at the start. That is vitally necessary. Turn your back on all sin, and do not cling to even a single wrong.

2. A lack of determination is another reason some people do not stay spiritually healthy. They are not determined enough to withstand temptation at all cost and be faithful no matter what. When a temptation gets difficult, they think it is too hard to withstand it. They forget that God has promised to give them sufficient grace to withstand the temptation and

will not allow them to be tempted above what they can handle. When persecution or daily battles in life come, people who are not determined to be true at all cost will be shipwrecked by these storms and will no longer be able to stand on solid ground.

In order to be successful in your Christian walk, you must be determined and remain so. Without determination, you cannot be successful in life, and it is the same in spiritual matters and in the Christian life.

If you wish to keep your salvation, then do not sway. Be determined to remain faithful no matter what. Do not let the mighty tempest and the storms of life alter you, and you will be able to overcome every foe and have victory in every temptation.

3. One of the main reasons certain people cannot remain spiritually healthy is simply because of carelessness. They seek the Lord, have a good experience for a while, and then they let other things in life take the place of the Spirit in their hearts. They start being so busy in dealing with the things of the world that they do not find time to pray anymore. At first, their personal prayer life starts to wane, and then family prayer is also neglected. They work so hard during the day that when evening comes, they are too tired to pray. And in the morning, they have so much work planned for the day that they do not have time to pray, or if they pray, they only go through the motions. They find no joy in pray-

ing. Some may still pray because they feel they have to, otherwise people may think they have fallen from grace. No wonder such people are not spiritually healthy and do not maintain a solid salvation experience.

It is not only prayer they neglect, but also Bible reading. With time, they find no more interest in reading the Bible and the content also seems to have become dry. So the Bible is relegated to a place on the bookshelf. Sadly, such conditions exist among those who claim to be children of God. Is it any wonder that such people cannot maintain a healthy spiritual relationship with God?

Dear Friend, if you want to take money out of a bank account, then you must first have money in your account. If you have not put money in the account, you cannot expect to draw any from that account. This also applies to serving the Lord. Do not expect to get anything out of it if you have put no effort into it. The more you put into it, the more you get out of it. If you wish to remain spiritually healthy, do not neglect to go to worship services, and do not neglect to pray and read your Bible.

Do not just do these things because you feel you must do them, but do them with joy. Read your Bible in order to receive true spiritual food for your soul; then you will find it to be a blessed privilege and not a burden. If you do all these things, you will remain spiritually healthy and find joy and contentment in serving the Lord.

N. C. M.

Resurrection

The whole world was in darkness and in sin;
The lion roared, and hell thought it would win,
Rejoicing that the Son had been crucified,
And in the grave there His body would abide.
But, behold, the chains of death were put aside:
Resurrection!

The grave could not hold back the risen Christ;
He conquered death, and darkness changed to light!
The Son of God has arisen from the dead;
Freed from the shackles of death, He lives instead.
In all lands and times, let this message be spread:
Resurrection!

Hallelujah, let anthems ring with joy;
Spread the news with glad shouts and songs employ!
Tell it in prisons, in dungeons and alleys,
Over the seas and on mountains, in valleys.
Let the joy flow, and proclaim it in rallies:
Resurrection!

Sorrowful heart, do you weep at the tomb?
O, troubled soul, is there darkness at noon?
Have you not heard the glad tidings of Easter?
The rays of its sun heals wounds and diseases.
God grants you freedom in all that He pleases:
Resurrection!

Eva von Tiele-Winckler

