



Foundation of Faith

*What is
Salvation?*



**WHAT IS SALVATION?
SALVATION OR RELIGION?**

**CAN ONE SAVE HIMSELF?
FREED FROM ANXIETY**

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FOUNDATION OF FAITH

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Editorial

Dear Reader,

“Salvation” is such a meaningful word—and it has many shades of meaning.

When prisoners of war finally return home, having endured torture, hunger, pain, and fear of death, we can certainly say, “They’ve been rescued!”

In recent weeks and months, many of us heard about the numerous civilians, including women, children, and the elderly, who were trapped in the steel works in Mariupol in the Ukraine, helpless, weathering bombardment day after day and waiting for salvation from the constant threat of death. When some of these unfortunate people were freed from the ruins in which they had slowly been starving, their joy and gratitude must have been immense. The sick and injured received help; they were saved!

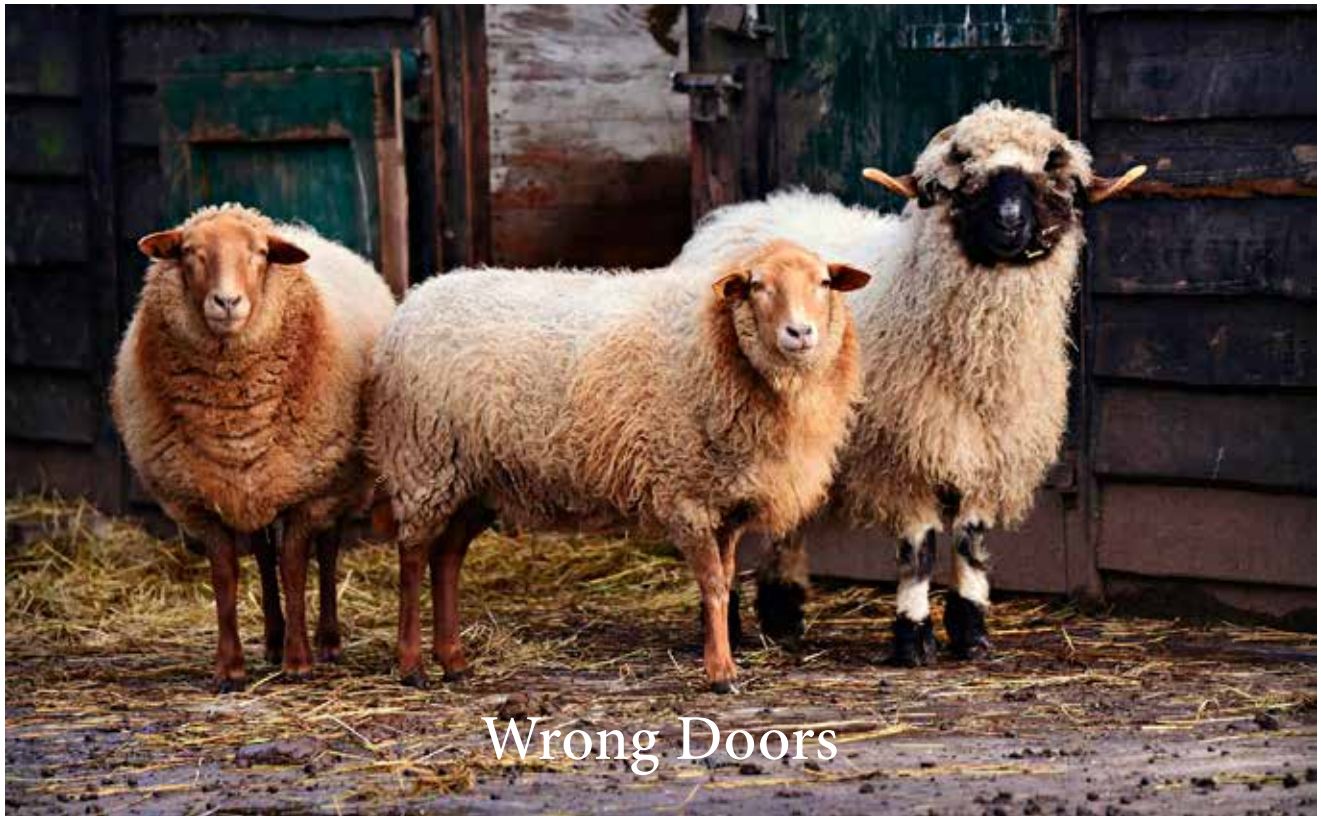
In other cases, men and women have been falsely accused and imprisoned as well, before being freed.

And in God’s Word? The Bible tell us how 17-year-old Joseph was thrown into a well by his brothers and sold as a slave before being freed at age thirty.

The Bible also tells us about the salvation and liberation of the children of Israel from servitude in Egypt and from forty years of wandering in the desert.

However, the greatest, most meaningful salvation of all is the one the Son of God earned through His suffering and death at Calvary. Our Savior’s victory came through His resurrection. “Christ . . . has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel” (2 Timothy 1: 10). How wonderful! We have been saved from God’s wrath and the curse of the law and now have hope because of our eternal salvation through Christ’s blood. Praise be to God!

H. D. Nimz



The other day, I received a visit from an acquaintance who had been invited to church services. Now he had come to my apartment for a personal visit.

After some small talk, I asked him, “Do you believe the Bible is God’s Word?”

“Yes.”

“Are you a child of God?”

“Yes.”

“Are your sins forgiven?”

“Yes.”

Now I silently prayed to the Lord for His guidance and blessings for this soul. Then I opened the Bible, and we read together from John 10:1. “Most assuredly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door, but climbs up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber.”

Now I asked him what was meant by the sheepfold. After various answers, we came to the conclusion that the community of God’s children was meant.

Now the Lord Jesus says, “He who does not enter the sheepfold by the door, but climbs up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber.” By this He is saying that one can enter the sheepfold elsewhere than through the door. Now what does the Lord Jesus mean

by “some other way?” Or which one is the door of the sheepfold?

In order not to hurt him, I tried to make this clear through a story from my life. Therefore, I said to him, “I was raised in a Christian home and was a believer since childhood. Referring to this passage, I would have said I am one of Jesus’ sheep and am a child of God. But then, according to the following verse, the Lord Jesus says, ‘If you have nothing more to show than your godly and faith-filled upbringing, you have not yet entered the door and are a thief and a robber.’”

If I would have further said, “I am baptized and confirmed and attend the Lord’s Supper,” even to this the good Shepherd says, “This is not the door into the sheepfold, and if you have nothing further, you are a thief and a robber.”

If I would have continued by saying, “I often go to Christian services; then surely I must also belong to His sheep,” then the Lord and Master would say, “All this is good and useful, but this is not the door. And if you have nothing else, you are a thief and a robber.”

“But I have been trained to do inner-city missions work. Surely I must have gone through the door into the sheepfold!” To this, the great Teacher come from God says, “If you can’t prove anything else, then you

haven't yet gone through the door into the sheepfold. And your education has deceived you, and you are a thief and a robber."

"But yet I read the Bible daily, hold my devotions regularly, and try to do many a good thing." To this, He who can never lie nor exaggerate says, "All good and useful. But even that is not the door. And if you have nothing else, you are a thief and a robber."

All these examples and more can be good and useful. But they are not the door into the sheepfold. They would be considered means of "climbing up some other way."

The question still remains, what, then, is the door? The great Teacher Himself gives us the important and memorable answer in verses 7 and 9. Because this matter is of such great importance, He again affirms this truth with "Most assuredly, I say to you" and follows with the fundamental truth: "I am the door!"

The Lord Jesus says, "I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture."

Now I asked my dear visitor, "Have you entered this door?" To this, he hesitantly said, "No." Then I said to him further, "Do you wish to enter through this door?" He said, "Yes."

After I showed him the biblical conditions—sincere willingness, turning away from all evil, and child-like trust in God, along with his willingness to abide by these—we both knelt down. Already on his knees, he recognized his self-deception. He had said in the beginning that his sins had been forgiven. But now, of his own accord, he prayed for forgiveness and confessed his sins and entered through the narrow gate, making a covenant with his Savior for time and eternity.

Dear Reader, have you already entered through the door into the sheepfold? If not, do not wait to enter through Jesus, the door, to experience this salvation promised by Him.

Jesus says of His followers, "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand" (John 10: 27–28). ■

Only Jesus

A man related how he was walking through the streets of Stockholm one day bearing a heavy burden of sin upon his heart. He passed a pub he had often frequented. It was as though someone said to him, "This is where you should go to find some relief for your troubled mind." But then he heard another voice saying, "This is where they drink each other into hell," and he could not go in.

Later, he passed a theater and thought of going in. But there he felt again as though someone said to him, "Here they act and lie each other into hell." He could not go in there either.

So, he proceeded along the street. Then he heard singing resounding from a house where a worship service was being held. Without thinking further about the matter, he went inside and sat down on an empty chair near the door. Just as he sat down, the preacher said, "You think you can redeem yourself because you no longer go to the taverns and drink, and because you no longer go to the theater. But you deceive yourself.

All your own works cannot redeem you. The only work that can redeem you was already done more than two thousand years ago when Jesus died for you on Calvary."

As the man sitting in the last row of chairs heard these words, he saw the solution to his burden of sin. He sat there and spoke with his Savior, Jesus Christ, confessing his sins to Him and asking for forgiveness. A deep peace entered his soul. That same evening, he wrote to a Christian relative who had prayed much for his salvation, telling him that the old things had passed away and that all things had become new (2 Corinthians 5:17).

Dear Reader, the only thing that can redeem you is what Jesus has done for you. In order for you to accept this, you should understand that all your own attempts are worthless. You will be saved the moment you recognize and confess your sins and put your trust in Jesus' deed at Calvary. It is not through your own efforts and attempts that you can be helped, but through faith in the accomplished work of redemption at Calvary. ■

The Plan of Salvation

How can man escape eternal damnation?

Corrupt and sinful people stand before a holy and just God. They have not “simply sinned”. They have sinned against Him, the holy and perfect One. What will the righteous Judge do with them? The Bible is very clear on this. He already punishes the wicked here on earth: “Surely You set them in slippery places; You cast them down to destruction. Oh, how they are brought to desolation, as in a moment! They are utterly consumed with terrors” (Psalm 73:18–19). At the judgment, God will say to them, “Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels” (Matthew 25:41). This doesn’t merely apply to murderers and cheats; even one who boasts cannot stand before God. David writes, “For You are not a God who takes pleasure in wickedness, nor shall evil dwell with You. The boastful shall not stand in Your sight; You hate all workers of iniquity. You shall destroy those who speak falsehood; the LORD abhors the bloodthirsty and deceitful man” (Psalm 5:4–6).

The question we are faced with today is how man can escape certain damnation. What can he do to be redeemed? The prophet Micah calls out, “With what shall I come before the LORD, and bow myself before the High God? Shall I come before Him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, ten thousand rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?” (Micah 6:6–7). The Bible teaches us that man can do nothing to appease God, as described in a scene in the book of Revelation: “And I saw in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne a scroll written inside and on the back, sealed with seven seals. Then I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, ‘Who is worthy to open the scroll and to loose its seals?’ And no one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth was able

to open the scroll, or to look at it. So I wept much, because no one was found worthy to open and read the scroll, or to look at it” (5:1–4). No one was worthy; no one was able to deliver mankind from the power of sin. Therefore, God established the plan of salvation for mankind, even before the foundation of the world. We read about it in 1 Peter 1:18–20: “Knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you.” The plan was hidden for millennia. The angels wanted to know how God would redeem His creation, but God only showed it to His prophets in commandments and faint illustrations, like a shadow play on a wall (Colossians 2:16–17). But then we see how the plan is fulfilled! All that the prophets saw and foretold suddenly becomes real. The eternal Son of God is born as an infant to a virgin. Jesus exemplifies love and submission to His Father for us. He takes the sins of the world and carries them up to the cross. As the innocent and spotless Lamb, He spills His blood and becomes the sacrifice that propitiates the wrath of God. He calls out, “It is finished.” Then comes Easter morning, the triumphant resurrection! The sting of death is broken. As mighty Conqueror, Jesus ascends to heaven to sit at the right hand of the Father. Dear Reader, are you not deeply moved when you study this plan of salvation and its consummation in Jesus Christ? Please take a moment and think about it. Then take your Bible and read the remainder of Revelation 5.

What a plan, and a way of escape! The Lion of Judah, the wonderful Savior! Let us bow down and worship Him, Who lives from everlasting to everlasting! ■

The Value of Our Salvation

Sometimes we hear about kidnappings in the news, where a large ransom is demanded by the kidnappers. Imagine what the ransom would be for hundreds or even thousands of people! Jesus Christ paid the ransom for the salvation of all mankind!

If we want to purchase something very precious, we need to be willing to pay a high price for it. This is true in the natural, but also in the spiritual realm. As humans, we were captives and bound by Satan's power. One soul is worth more than the whole world.

Therefore, to purchase freedom for our souls and to free souls from captivity, a very high price had to be paid. In Matthew 16:26, Jesus says, "For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?" Imagine the value of all the souls in the world. The world has many precious treasures, trillions of dollars' worth of gold, silver, and jewels. But even if one person owned all these riches combined, they would still not be worth as much as his soul. How precious is a soul in the eyes of God! The value of all souls combined is beyond comprehension. Nobody is able to calculate such a high price, and yet it was paid. To the Corinthians, Paul says, "For you were bought at a price, therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's" (1 Corinthians 6:20). The apostle Peter reminds us that "you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Peter 1:18-19).

Although the price for human souls was too high to be calculated, it still needed to be paid. This price was paid by the precious blood of Jesus Christ. It is the blood of the Creator, the blood of God Himself. The blood of Jesus is worth more than billions of worlds. This blood, the precious blood of Christ, cancels our debt. The blood of Jesus is sufficient; it covers the cost. It paid the price.

If we would only realize the value of the blood of Jesus! If we would take the time to let it sink into our consciousness, then we would cherish beyond measure what God has done for us. Paul realized it. In Ephesians 3:8, he speaks of the "unsearchable riches of Christ." He cherished his salvation so greatly that nothing could separate him from it (see Romans 8:35-39). He proved this by the way he lived. Not only Paul, but we as well can know God and the high value of salvation. In Hebrews 8:11, we read, "for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them."

May many yet come to realize that salvation brings joy in life, contentment in death, and rejoicing in heaven. May they realize that true peace for the soul can only be found through the blood of Jesus Christ. It is only the blood of Jesus that can cancel the debt of sin, free the shackled conscience, rejuvenate the depressed heart, and save the lost soul.

Dear Friend, look to Jesus in humility and faith, and you will come to realize how precious salvation actually is. If you are still chasing after happiness, which you cannot find, if you are plagued by your conscience, if you have done everything in your power to find contentment and are still unsatisfied, then tear yourself away from these vain pursuits. Instead, cast yourself at the feet of Jesus, for "the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin" (1 John 1:7). On Judgment Day, we must be ready to give an account of our lives. Only those who have "washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" (Revelation 7:14) will be ready to enter glory.

F. S.

Salvation—A Precious Thing

The subject of salvation, the purchase of our redemption by the blood of Jesus, is a subject that makes all other themes less significant. God’s messengers have proclaimed redemption, poets have sung about it, and an untold number of people have experienced it personally. This subject of redemption is so simple, yet inexhaustible, that we cannot really fathom it in all its details. All those who have received salvation through Christ will one day have the privilege of joining the innumerable hosts of heaven singing the praises of the Lamb, to the glory of God the Father.

What comparison could we possibly make with this glorious heavenly gift? The treasures of this world are completely insufficient for any comparison since they are only temporal, while the salvation of our soul remains for all eternity. God’s Word asks us the question, “For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?” (Matthew 16:26). It would not help him at all!

Redemption through Christ is so immeasurably priceless because it cost the Son of God His own blood. “All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all” (Isaiah 53:6). All men have gone astray in the wilderness of sin. Every one of us has wandered far away from the Shepherd of our souls. We were in danger of being torn to shreds by the bloodthirsty wolves of sin. We may have cried out for help at times, but no one seemed to be able to save us.

But there was One, and He alone was Jesus, the faithful Shepherd. But we did not know Him. However, he knew that we were lost, and, therefore, He came down to this earth and left behind the glory He had with the Father and came to seek His lost sheep.

He exchanged the crown of glory for the crown of thorns, and His heavenly robe for the simple shepherd’s garment. On the mountains, in the clefts, in the valleys, in the woods, He sought His erring sheep; He sought you and me. He did not succumb to the tempter’s lure of seduction, nor did He allow the rage of the mob to influence Him to abandon the work He had

been given to do. Yes, He “humbled Himself and became obedient to *the point of death*, even the death of the cross” (Philippians 2:8). From this cross, however, a light shines through the dark night of sin, showing the lost the sure way to salvation.

Our salvation in Christ Jesus is a free gift of God to all people. God has not reserved this precious gift only for the wise and prudent, the educated, the wealthy and the respected, but it is for everyone who desires it.

Some want to earn God’s pleasure through good works, but that is useless. God’s pleasure cannot be purchased with anything, neither good deeds nor money. The only one with a right to Christ’s gift of peace and blessedness is one who seeks Him in sincere repentance with a broken heart and turns his back on all evil ways of sin. Such a person can acquire that priceless pearl, as we are told in Matthew 13. There we read of the merchant who sold all he had in order to possess that priceless pearl.

Redemption offers what humanity actually seeks. Every person desires peace, joy, blessings, and a hope for eternity. Everyone, rich or poor, needs the help of the Savior. But without a genuine desire for it, it cannot be acquired. One must dig for it as for a hidden treasure. Thankfully, we have the promise in God’s Word to “ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and it will be opened to you” (Matthew 7:7).

Sadly, countless people neglect the salvation of their souls. It is the only means that frees man from the bondage of sin and from the fear of death and hell. It is the only thing that can make a soul happy and content. It is the only thing that offers the certainty of present as well as future blessings.

Dear Reader, if you have not yet experienced salvation, please seek Jesus with all earnestness. Then, when you are called to appear before the throne of the righteous Judge, you will not have to hear those awful words, “I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness” (Matthew 7:23). Wouldn’t you rather hear the glorious words, “Well done, good and faithful servant . . . Enter into the joy of your Lord”? (Matthew 25:21). God wants to extend His grace to you and me. ■

What Jesus Can Do

One evening, a small group of miners stood in front of the entrance to a coal mine waiting to be paid their wages. They were joined by a tall, slim man with a pickax and a burning pit light.

“Alfred,” one of the men called out to him, “we were just talking about you. They say you have become a saint!”

“Or even an angel,” scoffed another.

“Nonsense!” cried a third. “Alfred is a pastor and will preach to us all!”

“Right,” said the eldest among them, “he should just start right away. Here, Alfred, your congregation is already assembled. There’s also a block of coal to serve as your pulpit. So now let’s hear your sermon!”

Alfred had listened calmly and smiled at this strange request. But finally giving in to the impetuous urging, he climbed onto the block amid ever louder shouts from the men. For a moment, he bowed his head, silently praying to the Lord for help. Then he raised his voice in a firm tone: “Well, friends, I . . .”

“Not like that, not like that!” they shouted. “First a scripture and then a real sermon!”

The miner paused, then in all seriousness replied, “The scripture is called, ‘I am Jesus’ from Acts 9.” He continued, “Friends, during the last few days, this word has really spoken to me. You want to know why I have changed so much. Well, I will tell you what God has done for me.

“Just a fortnight ago, I was still cursing and believed there was no God. Today I say I know there is a God and that by grace He is my Father. I know there is a Savior Who has redeemed me. I know there is a Holy Spirit Who wants to guide and lead me. How did all this come about? I can hardly believe it myself. But you know how Saul suddenly became Paul. You know how he suddenly heard a voice from heaven saying to him, ‘I am Jesus!’

“Well, it happened to me the same way. I was running headlong down a wrong path until God spoke to

me. On Wednesday, eight days ago, I missed the last evening train, so I had to walk for three hours. It was pitch dark, and I had trouble making progress on a bad pathway.

“All of a sudden, the words of my late mother came to mind about the two paths that exist and that God, by His presence, illuminates the path that leads to Him. I had to tell myself that I was not on that path and my life couldn’t stand in God’s light. And then, my friends, I will never forget how suddenly my whole life with all its sins was spread out before me. I sat down on a pile of stones and wept. From the depths of my soul, I cried out to God, ‘Lord, it is all true, quite true! Please save my soul!’ Then it was as if I heard the words of Jesus,

which my mother taught me: ‘Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest’ (Matthew 11:28). Right then, it became light in my soul. I cannot explain it; I only know that Jesus died for me and washed me in His blood.

“You know very well that I am not a preacher. I wish I could speak to your hearts and guide you to this wonderful Savior. He is here and says, ‘I am Jesus,’ which means Savior. Oh friends, you know who I was, and yet He saved me as He saved Saul. And He wants to do the same for you. Do you not want to follow Him?”

There was deep silence when the miner finished speaking, and after a fervent silent prayer, he left his strange pulpit. Then one of the men approached him and said, “You ask whether we want to be saved by this Jesus? Well, I want to, if He is willing to accept one such as I.”

“Jesus said, ‘The one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out’ (John 6:37). You can rely on His word,” Alfred assured him, warmly squeezing his friend’s hand.

Six months later, Alfred knew that God had blessed his simple testimony, since three more of his friends were following Jesus. Their influence and example also bore fruit, and many had cause to thank God for that short sermon. ■

*“The one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out.”
(John 6:37)*



Salvation or Religion?

Do You Have Salvation or Just Religion?

That is a crucial question for everyone, and how we answer makes a big difference. You can be very religious without having salvation. Many people base their hope of salvation on religious rites, believing that observing the right practices and ceremonies will ensure the salvation of their souls. That is entirely wrong.

You may belong to a church, hold a religious office, or regularly attend services, and you may be a Sunday school teacher, a youth group leader, or even a pastor without actually having salvation. You may have been baptized, completed classes in Christianity, read the Bible, received communion and faithfully practiced all spiritual disciplines, but if you have not repented and turned to God with all your heart, you remain trapped in your sins and cannot claim Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior.

If you are not yet reborn through the Spirit, you are still of the flesh, and “those who are in the flesh cannot please God” (Romans 8:8). You may lead a good and moral life, but if you have not been born again, you are still not saved, regardless of how hard you may try to please God. Before God, “all our righteousnesses *are* like filthy rags” (Isaiah 64:6). “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit”

(Titus 3:5). Only through spiritual rebirth can we receive spiritual life.

There is only one way to be saved, and there is only one Savior: Jesus Christ. God’s Word tells us, “But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God” (John 1:12).

Perhaps you believe Jesus died on the cross for you but have not accepted Him as your personal Lord and Savior. Have you repented and accepted in faith the salvation that He purchased on the cross through His blood? If not, you have no part in that salvation. Only those who acknowledge and accept Jesus become children of God. Maybe you have been unable to find the peace of God in your heart despite your best efforts. This sweet peace of God will become yours as soon as you let Jesus Christ save you from your sins.

Jesus says, “Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me” (Revelation 3:20). Jesus is knocking on the door of your heart. Let Him in. Bow down contritely before Him, confess your sins, and ask Him for forgiveness and for a new heart. He will not reject anyone who comes to Him with a sincere heart and the desire to be saved from sin. He paid the price of salvation for you, so remember to ask yourself, “How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?” (Hebrews 2:3). ■

What is Salvation?

Salvation means freedom. The Bible speaks of both physical and spiritual freedom. God freed the children of Israel from the bondage of slavery in Egypt.

This is a symbol of the spiritual freedom God has for His people. He set them free from the bondage of sin. Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist, prayed, reminding God of “the oath which He swore to our father Abraham: to grant us that we, being delivered from the hand of our enemies, might serve Him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him all the days of our life” (Luke 1:73-75). This deliverance and this freedom is spiritual. Our souls are freed from the shackles of sin so that we may live in holiness and righteousness all the days of our lives. If we have not been freed from sin, then we do not have salvation in Christ.

Salvation Is For Us, Here and Now

“For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Thessalonians 5:9). “But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth, to which He called you by our gospel, for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Thessalonians 2:13-14). These Bible verses show us that we are chosen to freedom. Yet this freedom does not simply “fall in our laps.” We must reach for this precious jewel.

First of all, we must repent of our sins. Only by admitting our guilt and realizing we have sinned against God can we attain salvation. “For godly sorrow produces repentance *leading* to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death” (2 Corinthians 7:10). Secondly, we must believe. We must believe that by coming to God, confessing our

sins, and accepting Him as our personal Savior, we are saved, because “without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him” (Hebrews 11:6).

Today Is the Day of Salvation!

“For [God] says: ‘In an acceptable time I have heard you, and in the day of salvation I have helped you.’ Behold, now *is* the accepted time; behold, now *is* the day of salvation” (2 Corinthians 6:2). It is only through the grace of God that we are saved, delivered from sin. Therefore, the day of salvation is a day of grace. We can experience the full blessings of the love and grace of God because Christ paid for the salvation of mankind with His life. Only through Him alone is salvation offered to everyone. Today is the day of salvation, the day in which all can come and be saved. Today is the “accepted time.” The time is now. Those who procrastinate, thinking there will be a better time to draw near to God, will one day find the door of grace forever closed.

“Once the Master of the house has risen up and shut the door, and you begin to stand outside and knock at the door, saying, ‘Lord, Lord, open for us,’ and answering he will say to you, ‘I do not know you, where you are from’” (Luke 13:25), it will be too late. These words are said in conjunction with the second coming of Christ. Then the door will be closed, and the time of grace will be over. The door to salvation will never open again. The words of our Lord will condemn us on the last day if we do not heed them now. Yet, today is the day of salvation. Fortunately, there is still time. Make use of it. “Today if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts” (Hebrews 3:15).

W. S.



Can One Save Himself?

Man is a slave to sin, and all his efforts to free himself from it are useless and futile. Human nature has become so weakened by its service to sin that it has no power nor strength to resist the ever-repeated onslaughts of temptation. Sin is like a stain on the soul, from which no man can cleanse himself, though

he wash himself with lye and take much soap to it (Jeremiah 2:22). From the earthly, human point of view, sin is an incurable disease of the soul. Sin brings man into a raging torrent, whose wild-foaming floods will soon drag him down into the endless depths. All his own efforts to extricate himself are in vain. In the despair of his

soul, man then cries out for freedom from the chains and bonds of sin, for a power that will break the fetters. The tormented soul asks if there is no more balm in Gilead, if there is no more physician (Jeremiah 8:22), no way to drain the flood surrounding it.

Must man be subjected to sin as something inevitable? Must he



always remain in the cruel clutches of this monster? When he peers into himself in this way, everything is dark and hopeless. Turning over a new leaf will not erase the sins that filled the pages of his past.

But we contrast the great power and reality of sin and the hopelessness and weakness of man with the power and strength of

God and the riches of His divine grace. Paul tells us clearly, “Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more” (Romans 5:20). The angel told Joseph that the infant should be called “JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins” (Matthew 1:21).

Until the time when the cross was raised on Golgotha, sin reigned. But since that significant day, grace reigns, “so that as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Romans 5:21). “What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?” (Romans 6:1). Free grace is now available for every sinner. He can choose for himself whether he wants to remain in sin or enter the realm of divine grace.

Through Golgotha, God has brought salvation, as He once did through the brazen serpent in the desert. It depends on man whether he wants to look upon it and obtain perfect salvation. The truth will make him free. Yes, the Son of God, Who is Himself Truth come into the flesh, will completely redeem him. All I have to do is to rely completely on Him and His grace and mercy. I cannot save myself, but He is powerful to save me. I cannot wash myself, but He is able to cleanse me from my ugly stains. “‘Come now, and let us reason together,’ says the LORD, ‘Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool’” (Isaiah 1:18).

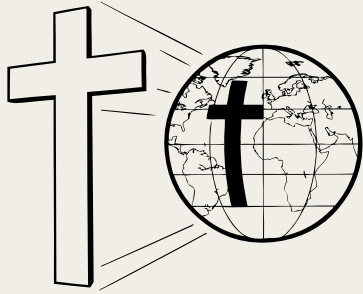
We cannot attain forgiveness of sins ourselves, because it is offered to us “without money and without price.” There is nothing we can do to earn it; nothing we can do will redeem us. Yet, the sinner has a roll to play. The well of salvation is ready and open, but the sinner must come to Jesus, repent of his sins, confess them, and ask for forgiveness.

There is no way by which man can be saved except through the Lord Jesus Christ. We may well call ourselves religious, give tithes and sacrifices, do good works, and make an open confession by saying, “Lord, Lord,” but all this will not save anyone. Christ said, “I am the way and the truth and the life; no one comes to the Father except through Me” (John 14:6). You cannot go around Christ and come to God. In Christ alone the question is answered, “What must I do to be saved?”

Salvation is more than reformation, confirmation, imagination, imitation, or education. We become new creations in Christ, because salvation does not happen through what we do for ourselves but through what God does for us and in us. A new birth is required to be able to give us a new heart.

A man can no more make a Christian out of himself than a sculptor can make a real man out of a block of marble. He can no more change his heart and live a life pleasing to God than a leopard can change his spots. But do not despair, there is One Who can help and save—His name is Jesus.

M. M.



Radio Program Message of Salvation

Friedrich Krebs
Kitchener, ON

On the Run—Where to?

Many people are fleeing, perhaps without even being aware of it. Yet such a flight will never end well, if they do not cease and turn back to God.

Thousands and millions of people are on the run. Many of us have had that experience and therefore know what it means to flee: from persecutors, from catastrophes of war, from threatening floods, from earthquakes, and from other dangers.

Having to flee always involves danger. Fear, distress, uncertainty, and confusion tend to accompany this kind of flight. Temptation and death lurk on all sides. One never willingly embarks on such a flight. What a relief it is when a flight has been successful and one reaches safety!

Proverbs 28:1 speaks of a flight that is equally dangerous, yet seemingly never ends: “The wicked flee when no one pursues.” How strange! This is a flight from God, a flight many have been on and still are today. This flight goes back to the Fall, which Adam and Eve were guilty of. Right after they had transgressed God’s commandment, they came under the spell of sin. Communion with God was broken, their conscience condemned them, inner fear rose up, and we read, “Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden” (Genesis 3:8). Man became “God-less,” detached from God. Sin separates us from God and makes us guilty. In his letter to the Romans, Paul writes, “There-

fore, 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).

Since then, man has dealt with the most diverse ways to flee from God. To soothe their guilt-ridden consciences, some say, “God is dead.” Others refer to a “loving God.” Still others console themselves with the theory that the astronauts searched outer space and found no God. But why are there still so many arguments against God? Why is there still a continued fight against God and His Word? Why are new escape routes still being invented? Why do people seek to get rid of and become free from a God Who, in their own opinion, does not exist at all? Yes, why do so many flee when no one is chasing them? Just the incessant battle, the constant escape, the arguments against God prove that He exists. Indisputably, nobody has yet found rest and safety in their flight from God.

The flight from God continues to be a futile undertaking. Fleeing from God, man does not know where he’s going. Just as one cannot escape the rays of the sun, neither can one escape the omnipresent God. David confirms this in Psalm 139:7–12: “Where can I go from your Spirit, or where can I flee from Your presence? If I ascend into heaven, You *are* there; if I make my



bed in hell, behold, You *are* there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there Your hand shall lead me, and Your right hand shall hold me. If I say, ‘Surely the darkness shall fall on me,’ even the night shall be light about me; indeed, the darkness shall not hide from You, but the night shines as the day; the darkness and the light *are* both alike to *You*.”

Fleeing from God is an exercise in futility. Detachment from God has driven many adrift and into error, heartache, distress, fear, guilt and vice, into sin and unrest. In any case, this path does not lead to inner peace and security. It is therefore foolish to flee from a God Who has thoughts of peace for us and Who loves us.

God has made a way for peace through Jesus Christ. In Isaiah 28:16, we read, “Whoever believes will not act hastily.” And the Lord Jesus says, “Come to Me, all

you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. . . . and you will find rest for your souls” (Matthew 11: 28–29). He can lead the whole world out of its error and misery, including you.

As Savior and Redeemer of the world, He has made it possible for all to experience salvation, redemption, and inner healing. Therefore, your flight can come to an end. You should be able to breathe and be free. Recognize your destructive path, and give up your futile escape.

Confess your sins, experience forgiveness, and be placed on the path of light, redemption, freedom, and life.

Dear Soul, there is only one “flight” God’s Word urges everyone to take, and that is to take refuge in God. This is also your only way out, and on this path, Christ wants to meet you as the King of Peace.

Do We Need God?

When I looked about after my conversion, I realized there were many who did not live according to the Bible, yet seemed to be rewarded for it. Lying, arrogance even when they're wrong, hypocrisy, boasting—these are just a few examples of things that were normal. Yet, these people succeeded in life, and were even envied by others. At no time did they ever consider God, the Bible, or whether what they did and said was pleasing to Him.

This behavior is clearly contrary to the Bible. We read about the most important commandment in the gospels, about the fruit of the Spirit, and many other examples of how a child of God should live.

Asaph similarly observed in the psalms. In Psalm 73:3–12, he describes accurately the people of that time as well as of today: arrogant, without daily worries, bursting with health and strength, proud, boastful, seemingly omniscient, and, at the same time, contemptuous towards fellow human beings; above all, contemptuous of God. Asaph knew God's will and acted accordingly. At times, however, this seemed to be associated with effort, quite the opposite of the godless. They led a simple, enjoyable life. Additionally, their wealth and power grew steadily, causing Asaph to stumble. What did he get out of sacrificing himself every day to live out God's will? Apparently, the godless were doing better, although he served the almighty God, Who is above everything after all.

When I think back to my younger years, I felt similar to Asaph and asked myself the question, why shouldn't I live like my classmates or fellow students, without asking about God and His will. After all, it makes no difference how I live. If I want to live according to the Bible, I will do without things that give people around me fun and joy in life. As a young person, you do strive to have fun in life.

Psalm 73 provides the answer in verse 17 that helped me at that time. It says, "Until I went into the sanctuary of God; *then* I understood their end." In my younger years, I almost believed (or wanted to believe) the lie that sinful pleasures of this world, or pleasures that lead us to sin, have no consequences for my life, because God also overlooks the unbiblical action or does not care.

But as verse 17 says, it is the end that matters after all. We can sometimes see what the consequences of sin are, and further, the Bible tells us that sin gives birth to death in the end.

At the end of life, every person will have to stand before the Holy God and answer to Him for his life. We can no longer lie, point the finger at others, or expect God to overlook sin. He will decide whether we will spend eternity with Him in glory or need to taste death because Jesus must cast us out.

I Asked Myself the Following Questions:

Should I reject what I have known so far and begin an unbiblical, sinful life in order to secure fleeting pleasures or recognition from people? What do the pleasures of my fellow humans bring me? What can these people give me? Can the pleasures or people give me peace and tranquility in my heart?

I had to say no! Only God can. He loved me so much that Jesus also died for me and my sins on the cross and rose again. He offers me rest and peace. He wants to accompany and guide me until the end of my life so in the end I can join Him in eternal glory.

He wants to guide and accompany every person to the end, including you.

What do you think? Do you need God?

Eduard Zelmer
Eppingen, Germany

Freed From Anxiety

“The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy, but I came that you may have life, and have it abundantly” (John 10:10).

Struggles with mental health, particularly anxiety, are very prevalent in today’s society. Growing up, I had never imagined that I would ever struggle with mental health issues; however, over the years anxiety crept up on me. I didn’t recognize the warning signs until I started suffering from frequent anxiety and panic attacks. My anxiety became very severe in early 2020, and last year it took on a new level when I developed insomnia. I hit what I refer to as my own personal “rock bottom.”

In September 2021, I was anointed and prayed over for healing according to James 5, and God has put me on a healing journey ever since. Shortly after I was prayed over, I began a 28-week Bible-based program, which equipped me with certain tools to help me gain freedom and healing God’s way. This program can help people find freedom and healing from a variety of different challenges, including addiction, trauma, depression, anger, and fear. One particular session was a breakthrough session for me in my healing journey. The session focused on trusting God by turning our life, our pain, and our will over to the leadership of Jesus Christ. I thought I was already trusting God, but I realized I had still been trying to control things in my life. I often worried about the what-ifs and the worst-case scenarios. If I could prepare my mind for the worst-case scenario, I felt as though I could better prepare for it; however, this mental rehearsal just increased my anxiety. The Bible says worrying only causes harm (Psalm 37:8). This program has taught me to ask myself certain questions when I’m being tempted to worry: What am I hoping to gain by worrying? What do I really want

more than this worry? What actions have I and will I take to help defeat this temptation in the future? Answering these questions helps me to refocus my attention from worrying to trusting Christ. There are also other tools that have helped me to monitor and overcome my anxieties.

Bible memory is very important to slay Satan when he attacks our minds. The Word of God is sharper than any two-edged sword (Hebrews 4:12). We are in a spiritual battle. Satan wants to destroy our lives. If we have the Word of God memorized, we can use Scripture to defeat Satan and his lies. We also know that Jesus employed the power of God’s Word when He was tempted in the desert. Speaking the Word of God and claiming a promise from the Bible is effective in helping our minds overcome anxiety.

Praying in Jesus’ name has also been life-changing for me. The name of Jesus is the name above all other names. We can pray in Jesus’ name that Satan would flee our minds and bodies. We cannot create peace within ourselves; it must come from the Lord. Asking Jesus to fill me with His peace has truly transformed my life. He has repeatedly shown Himself faithful by providing me with His peace.

I have grown so much closer to God through this valley, and I give God all the glory for the healing He has done, and is doing, in my life. Anxiety can be a daily battle, but we can overcome with Jesus on our side. If you are struggling with anxiety, there is hope and freedom available through God’s power.

Natasha Seida
Chilliwack, British Columbia



On Our Street

Ronny paid close attention when the missionary spoke about his work in South America and presented a slide show about it. The tall, strong man told many stories of his experiences with his Heavenly Employer, of His assistance, and above all, of the rich blessings God placed on his work.

“I’ve decided to become a missionary, too, when I’m forty,” Ronny explained when he got home.

“Why do you want to wait until you’re forty?” asked his mother with interest.

“Well, I’m sure I have a lot to learn first. Nobody can use me the way I am now. I don’t know anything yet. What do you think is required of a real missionary? Not only does he have to

know the Bible very well and speak foreign languages, he also has to be able to help himself in all kinds of manual trades.

And he has to know about medicine. When I’m about forty, I think I’ll start.”

“That’s a good resolution,” his mother replied, “if you can carry it out. But as you know, when Mrs.

Stephan's paralysis first showed itself, she was just about forty. Don't you think you should start your plan a little earlier?"

"Well, then thirty," said Ronny as he went to the window and looked out.

"Thirty, that's better. But that's how old Annegret Kern was when she was killed in a car accident."

Ronny drummed his fingers restlessly on the window pane. It seemed to him there had never been so few old people passing by on the street.

"Maybe when I'm twenty-five I could," Ronny finally said with a little sigh.

"That's certainly young enough to go to South America. But you know that Mr. Walter, who was buried just before Easter, was planning to go to Chile on various business matters."

"Hmm." Nothing further was heard from Ronny at first; after a while, another "hmm."

After some thought, he then said, "I think I have no choice but to leave soon, preferably right now." He laughed, and at the same time two big tears rolled down his cheeks.

"You can start missionary work today, Ronny," his mother told him. She was happy about his desire to do something for the Lord Jesus, his personal Savior. Ronny had been a lamb of the Good Shepherd for some time and now wanted to lead other people to the Savior in South America.

"You can also work for the Lord here, Ronny, and now already. If you wanted to start this work many years later, it would surely be difficult for you. It's not easy to have lived only for yourself for years and then want to start working for the Lord. Don't dream of great things, my boy, of tasks you intend to accomplish in the distant future. That usually leads nowhere. Start this work you would like to do today. Begin with prayer. Just imagine how happy the Lord Jesus would be about it! He obviously needs workers in South America but certainly also here in our city, right here on our street."

Ronny started with his "work" by beginning with prayer. "Everything for the Lord Jesus!" was his resolution. His mother encouraged him again and again, because it was often quite difficult for him to do what he had resolved to do. How extensive his field of activity suddenly was! He had to be tolerant with his younger brother, considerate of the other children on the playground, friendly to the other residents of the building, helpful in school, fair in gym class, patient in inviting some of the neighbor children to Sunday School, and above all, conscientious, punctual, and faithful in the fulfillment of his small duties within his own family, which he had voluntarily taken on.

"Jobs aplenty!" he still often thought, and he did them for his Savior. For this, Ronny will receive his reward. It is not the size of a Christian's task that is decisive, but whether it is carried out faithfully for the Lord Jesus. ■

“You Must Consider Your Age”

I was at a doctor’s appointment. At the end of our conversation, the significantly younger doctor said in reference to circulation, “You must consider your age.” I was floored. No one had ever said that to me. But, I was well aware of what he meant. It’s one of those things about getting older. For some of us, it can definitely be a challenge.

In Paul’s second letter to the Corinthians, he must have been thinking along these lines as well when he writes that “our outward man is perishing” (2 Corinthians 4:16). We understand the decline has begun. We are heading downhill. Let us venture to address this fact.

A bit earlier in the same chapter, Paul draws a comparison and, referring to human beings, calls us “earthen vessels” (verse 7). The Greek word used in this passage speaks of fired clay, or earthenware vessels, which were inexpensive, fragile, and easily replaceable at that time. Clay jars were used in the household or for storing valuable objects such as precious scrolls. If you looked at the outside of such a jar, all you saw was the worthless clay jar, slightly scraped, perhaps already cracked. The treasure, however, was found inside.

Paul then refers to his ministry in the kingdom of God, the treasure of the glorious gospel, the preaching ministry which God has entrusted to earthly vessels, and indeed to men. In this picture of the clay jar, Paul envisions his own life. On the surface, it is pitiful, without great importance, powerless, insignificant, and unimposing. There is no evidence of “glory.” He describes himself as suffering, weak, constantly harassed, and dealing with hardships. But it is not about the vessel; it is about the contents, the harvest of the Gospel, and the glory of God. And because he had these goals in

mind, he was able to add, “Therefore we do not lose heart,” we do not give up (verse 16).

Have you ever marveled at Paul, perhaps not only at what he encountered but also at the extent to which God was able to use him, how he was a guide to eternal life for many people? An extremely far-reaching influence emanated from him. He also had an explanation for this. On the one hand, he was dealing with a declining physical body that had been subjected to various circumstances. On the other hand, he was connected to the divine source of power, which continually renewed his inner man. He always received new strength to serve, not just occasionally, but day after day. “Therefore we do not lose heart; but, though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day” (verse 16).

Reflecting on Paul’s words, we begin to understand him better. He was not working in his own strength, was not focused on himself, but consistently depended on the Lord. His daily supply of strength kept him going. What profound words these are: “new strength every day,” an experience we too can have. We need this strength that lets us say, “Therefore we do not lose heart.”

Without a doubt, the “outer man,” our body, slowly degenerates with aging. My doctor said, “You must consider your age.” One could sing a dirge here and list all the things that make life difficult. We could come up with several stanzas that would certainly please the adversary if he heard us constantly singing laments. But we will not participate! It does not help us, and it does not help others. Above all, it does not change the facts. Wouldn’t it be far better to deal with the reality that inwardly we are being renewed day by day?

What does this actually mean, and what does God's Word tell us? While the body is gradually degenerating, the inner person is being renewed every day, strengthened, encouraged, is finding security in God, and receiving grace to not give up. And this is ongoing, new every day, until we enter the final port and reach our destination. A song so aptly states, "There's not an hour that He is not near us, no not one. . . . No night so dark, but His love can cheer us, no, not one!" (Worship Hymnal of the Church of God, #341.)

I'm sure you feel the same way I do. The thought of this daily renewal becomes increasingly important to us. We realize we cannot do it alone. The challenge of growing older is simply too great for us. What Paul describes here from his experience, this renewal of the inner person, is what I wish to experience too. Daily. How does this renewal happen? It happens when we pray, when we cast our cares upon Him. It also happens when we read His Word. The Psalmist knew this and prayed, "Revive me according to Your word" (Psalm 119:154). Reflecting on the many promises of God also has a strengthening effect on the inner person. What could we add? Attending church services is also part of it. Spiritually uplifting songs bring cheer. Encouragement from dear brothers and sisters also lifts us up. These points are best summed up by the prophet Isaiah, "Even youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall, but those who wait on the LORD shall renew *their* strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint" (Isaiah 40: 30-31).

Then, one day, we will hear God's call to come Home, when "our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed"

(2 Corinthians 5:1), when we die, and our body is laid to rest. Paul then adds, we will have "a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." That will be glorious indeed! There we will rejoice forever, with Jesus. In heaven, we are free from all the frailties of old age. The resurrection body is an eternal one. Hallelujah!

Harry Semenjuk





Am I a Stumbling Block?

Everyone who crosses my path in this life is on the way to another land. Many just go with the flow, choosing the path of least resistance. There are others with a goal in mind, the city of God, and they strive to reach it. They face many difficulties because the great majority of people are heading in the opposite direction. Many become discouraged. Many abandon the narrow path of life because some of their fellow pilgrims who are closest to them engage in petty and often questionable things unworthy of a Christian.

For once, let's ask ourselves this question: Am I this stumbling block? I do not wish to be. But in light of the importance of this matter, namely salvation or the potential loss of souls, let us examine ourselves:

Are Souls Being Drawn to Christ through Me?

Is the Christian life seen in a favorable light through my actions, causing others to be drawn to it? Does a desire arise in them to live such a life? Or am I so indifferent that it is difficult for those watching to determine if I belong to Christ or to the world? Am I perhaps engaged in things that are indeed inappropriate for a Christian? If I am apathetic, my influence will cause others to be indifferent, and, therefore, I am certainly a stumbling block.

Am I Worldly-minded?

Do I go to places where I could not take Jesus along?

If the answer to this question is "yes," that makes me a stumbling block.

Do I Engage in Things I Know Do Not Please Christ?

Are they things I try to hide from others? If so, I am a hindrance.

Are My Words Appropriate?

Do I engage in useless chatter? How many people are a stumbling block because of their words!

Do I Spread Harmful Rumors?

Do I put obstacles in the way of one of my fellow human beings by sharing gossip I hear about them? Or perhaps even by failing to have trust in them? That, too, makes me a hindrance. Perhaps I withhold encouragement that I could share. Then I am not as helpful to my neighbor as I should be.

Does My Lifestyle Show I Am a Follower of Christ?

Does my way of living demonstrate that the path to heaven is the most glorious and satisfying one imaginable? Does my life encourage my fellow pilgrims to persevere and continue this pilgrimage to the end? If so, my faithfulness will allow me to rejoice because some souls will enjoy eternal blessings. How devastating the remorse if I should be the stumbling block to have caused others to fail and to face eternal disaster. Let us instead resolve to encourage others and help them on their way to heaven. ■

Are You a Christian?

How do you become a Christian? Many today do not have an answer to this question. Anyone who goes through life with open eyes has long since realized it is not enough to be born to Christian parents or be raised in a Christian family. A Christian upbringing is certainly an investment that bears interest, but it cannot make anyone into a real and true Christian on its own.

Are You a Christian?

A general once stood before a battalion of his soldiers and ordered, “Taylor! To the front!” Two men stepped up. Turning to the first one, the general said, “My jacket is torn. Please mend it.”

But the soldier answered, “General, my name may be Taylor, but I am not a tailor.”

Is it possible you are called a Christian without actually being one? Or are you perhaps in a similar situation as King Agrippa who said to Paul, “You almost persuade me to become a Christian” (Acts 26:28). Almost being a Christian, or being a half-Christian, is the same as not being a Christian at all. Are you a Christian with all your heart?

We need to accept Jesus as Lord. That means we need to believe in Him and acknowledge Him as the only begotten Son of God Who died on the cross to save us through His blood. The apostle Paul tells us how to become true Christians, writing, “As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him” (Colossians 2:6). We must ask, as Paul once did, “Lord, what do You want me to do?” (Acts 9:6).

Invisible hands from the invisible realm reached out for Saul from Tarsus. He was unable to evade them, and the immediate aftermath was unpleasant for him. The invisible hands guided him towards a different path, and he had to choose how to continue his journey. Paul had to turn to God to be saved. If we are pushed towards salvation the way Paul was, we feel our world collapse just as he did. However, we also can

experience the hands of the resurrected Son of God reaching out to hold and carry us. We can experience the Spirit of God working in our hearts, and we can become children of God. That is how you become a Christian.

Having become Christians, we are driven by a previously inconceivable desire to do God’s will. We seek out quiet time to read God’s Word, to pray, and to hear the glorious gospel being preached. These things are as necessary to our souls as food and water are to our bodies.

This insight was shared by the author of Psalm 1. Describing a man who desires to fulfil God’s law and who thinks about His law day and night, he wrote, “He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water” (Psalm 1:3a). The subject of this psalm did not plant himself in the rich soil; instead, a higher hand picked him up and planted him in the ground, and he allowed it to happen. This tree is planted by the rivers of water, where it never lacks nourishment. While other trees stand in dry and arid soil, losing their leaves in the heat and gradually withering away, this tree stands fresh and strong, full of sap. Its leaves do not wilt and its fruit does not ripen prematurely; it matures over time and grows to lush proportions. This is how greatly the Word of God blesses us when we plumb its depths. We will never suffer a shortage of blessings because He, Christ, is our source.

We become Christians by confessing our sins and being reborn, and we grow as Christians by letting Christ guide us and by remaining in Him.

Then say with all your heart:

Without You, O Lord, I can do nothing;
My own strength is weak, but You are everything.
With You, O Lord, nothing is too hard for me,
For You, my strong Helper, go before me!

Are you a Christian, a child of God? ■

Know the Difference

When we shop at the store or market, we may not simply purchase what is displayed, because there are quality and low-quality goods, especially among fruits and vegetables. Naturally, we prefer the good produce; however, this requires discernment. We do not purchase everything offered, nor do we believe everything we are told. We live in an age where attempts are made to blur the distinctions, and temporally we develop a certain wisdom through experience. The Lord says that the children of this world are shrewder than the children of light (Luke 16:8).

However, in the spiritual realm, people are often very gullible and have little discernment. Sometimes there is counterfeit money in circulation. What a pity if you receive money and later discover that it is such! But oh how serious in spiritual matters, where it is not a question of perishable, earthly things but of your salvation. How important it is to recognize the difference!

In creation, God separated the light from the darkness. Every child knows the difference between day and night. But in the spiritual realm, people are often unable to distinguish light from darkness. “The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it” (John 1:5). Yes, God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all (see 1 John 1:5).

These words “in Him” represent the kingdom of God, fellowship with the Lord. “If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not practice the truth” (1 John 1:6). There are many

who profess to be children of God who say, “We cannot live free from sin.” Sin is darkness. The sinner has no fellowship with God, whether he pretends to be a child of God or not. It is said that sin is not charged to the “convert” because he is under grace. But this is darkness and confusion. “There is no darkness in Him.” One is no longer a child of God, no longer a child of light, if he gives place to sin, to darkness. The truth is that God has separated light from darkness. If this is reversed, it is a deception and does not correspond to the truth. There is no such thing as being a child of God and also a sinner. “That is a lie,” says John. We must distinguish the truths of God from those that are imitations if we do not want to face a great loss on the last day.

An especially important truth is that sin and disobedience separates one from God. In the beginning, God said to man, “The day that you eat of it [the fruit of the tree], you shall surely die” (Genesis 2:17). Similarly in the new covenant, the soul that sins dies. The devil has tried to twist the truth from the beginning. He said, “You will not surely die” if you eat from the tree.

Authenticity versus imitation are an important part of the doctrine of forgiveness of sins. Some people try to forgive sins through rites, money, and certain customs. But they are cheated, since only Christ can give true forgiveness of sins. Those who have true forgiveness are free from their sins. God has forgotten them; He remembers the sins no more and gives power to rule over sin.

Much is also preached about repentance. “By daily repentance and penance drown the old man” is not the right philosophy to embrace. The one who undergoes true repentance is redeemed from his sins according to the Word of God. The best proof of a sincere repentance is when we turn away from what we have repented of. But if we repeatedly fall into the same sin, then we have not truly repented either.

Being born again is also taught. Some say man is born again in baptism. However, we must hold to God’s true teaching. When we turn to God and ask for and receive forgiveness, we are born again. The right rebirth gives man a new life and the power to rule over sin. “Whoever has been born of God does not sin” (1 John 3:9). Where is this taught anymore? In our everyday life, we seek to distinguish qualities. Why not in our spiritual life? We want the true rebirth, not an imitation. The devil is an imitator. But in the sight of God, imitation is worthless.

Miracles, signs, and healings are also imitated. When Moses did his miracles, the magicians did the same. Yet God retained the victory.

So it is with virtues and good works. Non-Christians also have virtues and do good, not by grace, by faith, or by the Spirit of God, but by their own efforts. In eternity, only what is done through God endures. Everything else does not stand up to the divine test of authenticity. “And though I bestow all my goods to feed *the poor*, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not love, it profits me nothing” (1 Corinthians 13:3).

From representatives of certain denominations, we sometimes hear it said, “We also teach sanctification.” However, we must also examine whether it is biblical sanctification. We are not indifferent to what kind of food we eat. A little poison in the milk can cost the child its life or prevent healthy development. A little false doctrine mixed into God’s Word poisons it. The healthy maturing of a Christian life is then very doubtful.

There are many congregations and fellowships. God has only one church. Through human undertaking, diversity has arisen in the place of the kingdom of God. Christ is the head of His church, and no one else.

The biblical teaching is that the Lord called His disciples and sent them out to preach the gospel. Only sanctified men who had been taught by Jesus were considered. What a preacher should be like is described to us in 1 Timothy 3 and in Titus 1. But what are the conditions in the modern world?

There is a difference between a gold-gilded vessel and a genuine golden vessel. Eternal life or eternal damnation for you depends largely on having the right discernment. “Many will say, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ What will He answer them? “I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!” (Matthew 7:22–23).

May God help us all to stand on the ground of truth and test everything with the Word of God.

Salomon Weissburger

God Will Deal With His Enemies

“I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a native green tree. Yet he passed away, and behold, he was no more; indeed I sought him, but he could not be found” (Psalm 37: 35–36).

Emperor Julian became the sole ruler of the Roman Empire in 361 AD. His life’s mission was to suppress Christianity and restore the supposed resplendence of paganism. He managed to deprive Christians of all the liberties granted by previous emperors and redirected the favor of the administration and government to pagan worship. The state funded the construction of pagan temples. However, despite all of this, Christianity remained victorious.

In the year 363, the well-prepared Emperor Julian went to war against the most powerful enemy of his empire; the Persian king, Shapur II, whom he was eventually able to defeat after several battles. However, after then being forced to retreat due to lack of food and an unfortunate injury, he died on June 26, 363 AD, of a severe wound received in combat. His life ended in the painful awareness that all his struggling and fighting against the Cross of Golgotha had been in vain. On his deathbed, Julian came to the realization that he had not fought against a human doctrine or an earthly religion, but against the Almighty, the Creator of the universe.

It is said that lying on his deathbed he exclaimed, “Thou hast conquered, O Galilean!” Which was, in any case, true. Gone was the splendor and power of his imperial reign; however, the sins and accusations of his conscience remained. He had despised the love of God and declared himself the mortal enemy of the One who had loved and sought him, even unto death. Therefore, even this powerful person, this highly gifted man, collapsed. God dealt with this enemy, as with all the enemies who came after him.

Should God not be able to contend with His enemies in our day? Then we need not be concerned. Whether scholars fight against Jesus with the weapons of man’s knowledge, whether the wicked challenge Him, or scoffers, cursers, or brawlers, God will deal with all of His enemies.

To every enemy of faith, to every scoffer, to every proud one who rejects God’s love, let it be said, “You

can deny the presence of God, you can challenge Him and blaspheme with your tongue. You can fight Jesus all your life and loudly proclaim that you don’t want to hear about Him, nor hear from Him. You can boldly declare you don’t need the help and blessings of Almighty God and that you feel sufficient in your own strength. You can write books, give lectures and lead great debates, maintaining there is no God Who punishes sin, nor answers prayers.

Many have done so before you, but they have all come to shame. Since they would not accept God’s grace, they chose His judgment; many already here on earth, fully evident to all mankind. Others, as they lay dying in despair and hopelessness, confessed the existence of the One Whose grace they had resisted all their lives.

Therefore remember, God will deal with those who oppose Him. The Bible gives an account of the words and attitude of His enemies. They say, “Let us break Their bonds in pieces and cast away Their cords from us.” (Psalm 2:3). We also read, “We will not have this *man* to reign over us” (Luke 19:14). Just ask the scoffers and skeptics if these words represent their mind. Are these your thoughts about God?

It doesn’t matter what a worldly sinner thinks of God, for he lives by God’s grace and breathes by His mercy. His earthly hours are gifts he receives from God’s hand, whether he likes it or not. But it is important what God thinks of such people. God says of them, “He who sits in the heavens shall laugh; the Lord shall hold them in derision” (Psalm 2:4).

Perhaps the Lord has allowed you, His child, to live, serve, or work with such enemies of Jesus. When your heart might sigh or tremble, remember this scripture: “I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a native green tree. Yet he passed away, and behold, he was no more; indeed I sought him, but he could not be found” (Psalm 37: 35–36). ■

The Good Is So Close

Many years ago, I visited friends in the Moscow area. Since a vicious fever raged in the surrounding villages, we wanted to bring some relief to the sick. We visited these poor families in July at harvest time when all the healthy people were busy in the fields and the sick had to stay alone in their homes.

I saw a poor, old man tired of lying down for so long, sit down at the open window of his little hut. His face and eyes were very red from fever. As I entered, I felt deep pity for him. Involuntarily, I wondered if I would see this old man again, for he seemed very ill and near his end.

I was seized with the desire to briefly tell him the “good news”, as clearly and as simply as possible, the holy news of salvation that God gives freely to every sinner who wants to accept it.

I knew well that only the Holy Spirit can bring spiritual things so close to us that we can understand them and let them affect us. I begged Him for His assistance. After a few moments, the thought came to me to ask the old man a simple question.

“Grandfather, tell me: Do you know the prayer, ‘Our Father in Heaven?’”

“Yes,” he answered, “I know it well. I always hear it in church and repeat it to myself in the morning and evening.”

“Now then, when you say to God, ‘Our Father, my Father,’ who are you in relation to Him? If God is your Father, what are you to Him?”

“Oh,” the old man replied with a fearful look, “I think I’m saying I’m His child.”

“Yes, Grandfather, that’s right. So if God is your Father and you are His child, then where is your home, your Father’s home?”

“Ah,” he said thoughtfully, “it must be where the Father is, in Heaven.”

“Most certainly. Now if your Father said to you, ‘My child, you have been on earth long enough. I want you here in Heaven now; come to Me.’ Would you then be afraid to go?”

I watched the poor, old man, whose face brightened more and more as he tried to answer my questions. And I could see what was going on inside of him.

“But, but, the sins?” he said at last in a sad tone, from which all joy seemed to have gone.

“And Jesus, the Son of God,” I asked, “what do you call Him?”

“Savior and Redeemer,” he answered.

“Yes! If you call Him Savior, then He can save you from something.”

“From sins!” he said.

“Now then, if the Lord Jesus has saved you from sins, they are no longer upon you, Grandfather. You see, God says in His

Word that nothing unclean can enter where He is in heaven. And yet He wanted us with Him. His Father’s heart was longing for us, so He sent His one and only Son to us, the Lord Jesus Christ Who was without sin, so He could take our sins upon Himself and could forgive them. Then God tells those who accept His good news, that all our sins which we bring to Him have been washed away by the blood of Jesus and that He has not only forgiven them but will remember them no more.”

As I spoke, the old man’s eyes filled with tears, and he said at last, “Oh what beautiful words you are saying to me! You have told me nothing new at all only a prayer I have known for a long time. But I had never thought of what it meant. Thank you. I shall never forget your words, and I believe them.”

I did not see my old friend again. A few days later when I went to visit the sick in the village again, he had already gone, I believe, to his “Father in Heaven.” ■

*“Do you know
the prayer, ‘Our
Father who is in
Heaven?’”*

I've Been Redeemed by Christ's Own Blood

I've been redeemed by Christ's own blood
That flowed for me, a crimson flood,
That cleansed from sin and made me whole.
By faith, I know Christ saved my soul.

I've been redeemed by Christ's own blood
That Jesus shed through His great love
For sinners all, to set them free
From sin and pain and misery.

I've been redeemed by Christ's own blood;
He sent His Spirit from above
To guide and lead me day by day
And keep me on the narrow way.

I've been redeemed by Christ's own blood;
I cannot fathom such great love.
Though Satan's rage has not declined,
The blood will triumph; peace is mine.

I've been redeemed by Christ's own blood;
He gives me comfort from above.
I'll praise the Lord, who set me free,
And sing throughout eternity.

I've been redeemed by Christ's own blood;
All that I have upon this sod,
My body, soul, and everything,
I freely give to Christ, my King.