



Foundation of Faith

Return to Heaven

Heaven

I Go to Prepare a Place for You

The House in the Golden City

Eternal Things

Dear Mother

Contents

RETURN TO HEAVEN

- 4** **Twice in the Shadow of Death**
- 6** **I Go to Prepare a Place for You**
What Jesus is preparing for us will far exceed our greatest dreams.
- 8** **Eternal Things**
- 9** **Mission to Mars or “Ascension”?**
- 10** **Either–Or**
The choice is yours: Where would you like to spend eternity?
- 11** **The House in the Golden City**
- 12** **Heaven**
A glimpse of heaven—and the deep yearning to be there

3 **Editorial**

CHILDREN’S PAGES

- 14** **Wishes**
- 15** **Your Decision**

YOUTH PAGES

- 16** **Unreliable**
What reputation do you have as a Christian—unreliable or faithful?

FAMILY PAGES

- 18** **Individual Roots, Growing Together**

20 **Dear Mother**

- 22** **If You Still Have a Mother**
... don’t let her wait in vain for you.

22 **Mother**

SERIES: “I WILL BE WITH YOU”

- 24** **Practical Preparation for Pastoral Service—Part 17**

- 25** **The Lost Child**
A riveting account of an experience in post-war Germany

12 **Announcements**

POEMS

- 5** **Ascension**
- 28** **Mothers Day**

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Editorial

Dear Reader,

The Lord Jesus left His Father in glory to serve humanity here on earth, to suffer and die. But then, He rose again. He, the Son of God, was with the disciples for another 40 days and spoke to them of the kingdom of God.

And then came His ascension. Back to the Father. Back to glory. Back after His faithful service! Back to fulfill what King David had already written 1000 years before Jesus' birth: "The LORD said to my Lord: 'Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool'" (Psalm 110: 1).

Yes, the Son left the divine Father's house, and it is said:

"He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Philippians 2: 8-11).

Dear Reader, Jesus has returned to the Father at the right hand of power, and He will come again to judge the living and the dead so that everyone may receive according to what they have done, whether good or evil.

Are you ready for His return? Jesus will then divide all of humanity into two groups and place them on the right and on the left. Then He will pronounce His judgment: either "Depart from Me" or "Enter into the joy of your lord" (Matthew 25: 21).

Let us watch and pray and be ready for Jesus' coming!

H. D. Nimz

Twice in the Shadow of Death

An adventurous young man lived together with his parents in a harbor town. One day, he made the acquaintance of the captain of a large ship. A friendship soon developed between them. After some time, the captain prepared his ship for a long journey and invited his young friend to join him. The young man gladly accepted the invitation and dreamed of the wonders of foreign lands and adventurous voyages.

His father, a man who had also traveled the world, had no objections and readily gave his consent. However, his mother was not in favor of her son's plan. She desperately wanted to prevent him from going. It seemed, however, that all her pleas were in vain. Other people offered their thoughts, saying that the opportunity to see the world did not happen every day. And so, despite the mother's heavy heart, preparations for the journey were made.

Finally, the eagerly awaited day of departure arrived. After a heartfelt farewell at home, our young friend happily set off for the harbor where the ship was all ready to sail. He could clearly see the ship as he passed by a construction site where workers were erecting large scaffolding on a house. Suddenly, he heard a crashing noise above him. A strong hand pulled him aside, and in the next instant, the entire heavy scaffolding collapsed. Had someone not pulled him into the doorway at the right moment, he would have been buried under the rubble. Thankfully, his life was spared. Only his left foot throbbed terribly, not allowing him to put weight on it. A rock or some other heavy object had evidently injured him as the structure fell. Whether he liked it or not, he had to return home.

What would become of his journey now? The ship had to sail without him as he was confined to bed for several weeks. His loving mother gladly cared for him, knowing that the accident could have easily cost her beloved son's life. Now, however, he was safe at home

and not exposed to the dangers of the long journey that she had feared so much. Mothers often worry about many things; are their worries always justified?

The proud, great ship, however, never returned. It was lost forever with its entire crew. No one ever saw it again, and all searches proved fruitless.

Was it not a favorable coincidence that this young man injured his foot at the last moment and as a result was prevented from traveling? He was truly fortunate in the middle of misfortune! Perhaps you think so too, and you line up one coincidence after another. In the end, all of life seems to be made up of coincidences. But with God, there are no coincidences, and nothing happens without His permission.

Perhaps the worried mother was a woman of prayer who brought her concerns to the Lord, even

in this case, for God saved her son in such a remarkable way—twice—from certain death. One thing is certain: God, the Lord over life and death, has the final say in our lives.

*The Lord wants to lead you
to repentance and cleanse
you from all impurity.*

Dear Friend, examine your own life. Do you find incidents which resemble this story? In how many troubles has God in His graciousness spread His wings upon you? When you first entered this world, utterly helpless, who was it who took care of you, who watched over your life and kept you from countless, often unnoticed dangers? Was it not God's goodness? Have you ever thanked Him for it, or do you take it all for granted?

But the goodness and faithfulness of God is not limited to watching over your life. He wants to give you so much more: peace and joy, "green pastures" and "still waters" to refresh your weary soul, "paths of righteousness," and eternal life. He offers you this wonderful salvation completely free of charge. He gave His only Son to die so that you might live.

How patient has the Lord been with you till now! How much longer will He wait for you to turn to Him? Will you not fall to your knees today and thank the Al-

mighty Creator for His longsuffering toward you? Will you ask Him, for Jesus' sake, to forgive you? How will you escape the eternal wrath of a righteous and just God if you neglect such a great salvation (see Hebrews 2:3)?

The Lord wants to lead you to repentance and cleanse you from all impurity so that your life may

praise His wonderful grace. Then you too will be saved from spiritual death. But if you do not seek salvation in Jesus during your life, sooner or later, physical death will result in eternal death, yes, eternal damnation. Oh, take this warning to heart! Seek salvation in Christ, and you will live forever.

W. Berle



Ascension

*For me the way to heaven is open
Through Your ascension, precious Lord!
Therefore with joy my soul is hoping
Soon to be going heavenward.
I am a guest and pilgrim here;
Lord, draw me near, yes, draw me near!*

*I will follow You with eyes of faith
With joy upon the heavenly path.
Ev'ry day I want to live with grace
Until I reach the goal at last.
And when my earthly life is through,
Draw me to You, draw me to You!*

*One day You'll come again with glory;
As You ascended, You will come.
In majesty, oh wond'rous story,
You'll come with saints to take me home.
Meanwhile, I pray, Lord, keep me true:
Draw me to You, draw me to You!*

I Go to Prepare a Place for You

“Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.” (John 14: 1–3)

Jesus is informing His disciples that He is going to leave them and return to the Father. In Luke’s account of Jesus’ ascension, He focusses on the disciples returning to Jerusalem and waiting to be filled with the Holy Spirit, something they direly needed in order to fulfill their roles in evangelizing the world. But here in John 14, the Ascension takes on a much more comforting timbre. Jesus is actually making His ascension be about them, the disciples!

Now, we know that it was because Jesus had finished His mission on earth and was returning to His rightful place at the right hand of the Father in heaven, that Jesus was leaving. But, once they could understand what was happening, how comforting were the Savior’s words to the disciples!

Jesus begins by referencing the “troubled” hearts His disciples would have when He physically left them. Many of us might have experienced something similar when our parents had to leave us alone when we were still fairly young children. Up until that point we had always relied on their presence and that they would assume responsibility for every situation, but now we were suddenly placed into a position of having to decide and do things on our own, filling us with trepidation. For the disciples, the thought that Jesus would actually die on the cross must have been terrifying! It was so terrifying that their minds just couldn’t conceive of it; they just didn’t understand. And then, after His resurrection from the dead, when it finally seemed that everything would be back to normal or even better, Jesus left them and ascended to heaven. Once again, they were left alone, albeit with the promise of the Comforter, or Holy Spirit.

But here in John 14, Jesus offers them comfort before those things happened. Years later, when John wrote down his gospel, the Holy Spirit brought these amazing words of Jesus back to his mind. “Let not your

heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me.” Then the Lord refers to the eternal home that is awaiting every one of His followers, and says the words that make this all so personal and wonderful: “I go to prepare a place for you.”

What can we learn from these words?

1. Jesus is going

In other words, no one is forcing Him to do something. The nations might rage against Him and sinners might crucify Him but in the end, they are not doing anything to Him that He doesn’t want to do. And now He is going with a very specific task in mind: to prepare a place. The Lord knows that this is what we need. He knows that the place that He prepares will be the answer to all our hopes and dreams, exceeding them by far! And He is going . . .

2. To prepare a place

Let’s focus on the place first. Heaven is a real place. Many have questioned where it is to be found on a map of the universe. Astronauts and cosmonauts have seen no physical signs of it, or of God for that matter. And yet, He exists, and He resides in a “place.” That place exists in some completely different dimension or functions according to some completely different laws of physics that cannot be directly detected by inhabitants of the universe in which we live. Nevertheless, it is a specific place. A place that may be as vast as the current universe (which seems unending to human understanding), or even greater. All we know is that it is a perfect place, a wonderful place! And Jesus is going to prepare that place. He calls it His “Father’s house.”

Does the fact that Jesus is going to prepare it mean that it doesn’t exist yet? Or that its “construction” is not finished? Surely not! Jesus is indicating that He is



going on before, and that once our work here on earth is done, He will be waiting for us and that there will be room for us, for every one of His redeemed. The “many mansions” that Jesus refers to can be better described as “settled abodes.” In other words, something permanent. We will never again need to fear change! And the fact that Jesus is preparing “many” mansions does not mean that we may live millions of kilometers away from the throne of God; we will all be in “God’s house,” in His inimitable presence . . . forever!

3. A place for you!

Yes, we could take these words in the collective sense: “I will prepare a place for all of you; there will be room for everyone,” but my personal feeling, formed by the way I’ve experienced my Lord, is that Jesus will delight in having a special place for each one of His redeemed, according to the special way He created them and how He relates to them. God created each one of us individually, as His own special child that is to glorify Him in a unique way. He bestowed unique gifts and talents upon us, along with gifts of time and opportunities with which to serve Him. And He is preparing a very special place in the Father’s house that is just perfect for each one of us. It will be marvelous, wonderful, and astounding, a never-ending source of joy and pleasure in our God!

The *Expositor’s Bible Commentary* writes of this place: “And this is what we have to look forward to . . . we shall live in the constant enjoyment of a Father’s love, feeling ourselves more truly at home with Him than with anyone else, delighting in the perfectness of His sympathy and the abundance of His provision. Into this intimacy with God, this freedom of the universe, this sense that ‘all things are ours’ because we are His, this entirely attractive heaven, we are to be introduced by Christ. ‘I go to prepare a place for you.’” How great is our Savior’s love to us!

4. I will come again and receive you to Myself

Jesus left His disciples and went to heaven. There is no doubt about that. He also fulfilled His promise of never leaving or forsaking His children by sending the Comforter, the Holy Spirit. But the Lord also promised to come back. When He returns, He will judge the world, and all eyes will see Him and every knee will bow before Him. But He will also receive His redeemed unto Himself and take them into His presence to be with Him, where He is, forever. What a wonderful promise and what a beautiful hope for all His children: To be with Jesus in the place that He has prepared for us, for me, in the Father’s house, forever. All by His grace and His great love. All praise and honor to Him!

Ron Taron

Eternal Things

*“Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.”
(Colossians 3:2)*

The things of this world are fleeting. Its pleasures are temporary; its glories quickly fade, and everything we love and cherish withers like a flower. We look back on the joys of days gone by with a sad heart. How much sorrow and disappointment there is in our lives! No sooner have we gained the beautiful things in this world than we have to give them up again.

So we see that everything visible and everything the world offers is fleeting. We must therefore look for something else that satisfies our soul. God, in His infinite love, wants us to look higher, to where there is eternal joy, lasting peace, and never-ending fellowship.

The Bible only gives us a glimpse of eternity because an exact description is impossible, and we cannot express that great glory in words. We must stand still in awe when we read that heaven awaits us with its golden streets, its eternal light, its countless angels, its harps and golden crowns, with our Savior who has redeemed us from our sins with His precious blood and now sits at the right hand of the heavenly Father. “[L]et him who hears say, ‘Come!’ And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely” (Revelation 22:17).

When we dwell upon this, we will gladly turn from earthly things, and our hungry and thirsty soul will long for the eternal. And if we entrust ourselves

completely to our heavenly Father, then rivers of joy and peace will flow into our hearts from His glory, for soon our soul will be lifted above the corruption of this world, and it will “seek those things which are above” (Colossians 3:2).

If we remember that we are to be heirs of this heavenly glory and must prepare ourselves for it in this life, then we can be joyful here on earth. How wonderful it is to sit at Jesus’ feet and, through His loving and comforting words, forget all our sorrows and worries and look forward to the eternal. What peace and blessings we can attain when everything we are and have belongs to the Lord. Therefore, there can be nothing more glorious here on earth than to be a true follower of Jesus.

Dear Soul, do you have this peace? Can you be master over the things of this world? Is the word of God sweeter than honey to your mouth?

How many people go through life with great worries and cares. How bleak and desolate such a life is without God and without the certainty of eternal bliss.

Dear Soul, it is God’s will that you walk through this life contentedly by His hand. He is ready to nourish your soul with heavenly manna at all times. He alone can give eternal joy. Look up to Him, the Giver of all good and perfect gifts, and you will receive from His abundance everything that makes you joyful and happy. ■



Mission to Mars or “Ascension”?

“But let those who love Him be like the sun when it comes out in full strength.” (Judges 5: 31)

On February 18, 2021, NASA’s Perseverance rover landed on Mars. After 203 days in space and 471 million kilometers (293 million miles), it penetrated the thin Martian atmosphere and set down undamaged—completely on its own but with a program “in its belly.” Direct control is not possible because signals from Earth take 11 minutes. The NASA employees rejoiced. The experiment had been a success. Now the rover was to search for tiny traces of life, i.e. life from long ago.

Is this the first step towards human habitation of the Red Planet? Many may dream of it. And yet it should be more of a nightmare, because what awaits someone “up there”? All deserts on this earth are paradises compared to the hostile environment that is found there. And yet people seem to be drawn to it. Unbelievable!

What have people lost here that draws them to such a place? Perhaps the belief that God has prepared this beautiful earth for us humans? And even it is only a picture of a far greater and more beautiful heavenly home that is promised to those who love God and believe in His Son Jesus Christ and who entrust their lives to Him. How quickly one becomes uprooted and homeless if he forgets, overlooks, or even rejects this. But God has promised the believer an eternal home. Jesus Christ says: “In My Father’s house are many mansions” (John 14:2). That is where we should be drawn to, because it is a place that surpasses everything we have ever experienced. We should strive to reach this eternal goal.

Which would you rather have: a bunker on Mars or a home in heaven? We should trust God more than those who promise us the impossible.

*Rudolf Koch
Life is more!*



Either–Or

People are faced with choices in life. We don't necessarily have to limit ourselves to choosing just one thing but can often choose several things at the same time. The situation is different when choosing things that will affect our eternal well-being. Here there is just an "either-or." We either decide to stand for God or against Him. If we fail to decisively take His side, then the choice has already been made—we are against Him. We are either children of God or sinners. Each of us belongs to one of these two groups. Either we gather with the Lord or we scatter. We cannot go in two opposite directions at the same time. We cannot serve two masters. There are only two paths, the narrow and the broad way. Every person walks on one of these two paths. No one can be on both at the same time. There are only two destinations before us: heaven or hell.

Whether one day we will stand on the right or the left of God, our Judge, depends entirely on the choice we make in this life. "It is appointed for men to die once," a fact we are all familiar with. But is death really the end of everything? What comes after death? "But after this the judgment" (Hebrews 9:27).

If everything ended with death, there would be no need for judgment. Judgment would also be unnecessary if there was no reward or punishment after this life.

God has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness. The day of judgment awaits every person just as surely as death. No one can escape either one or the other. But it is in our power to choose now whether heaven or hell, eternal bliss or eternal damnation, will be our future fate. There are only these two places where we will be for eternity.

In Matthew 25: 31–46, the Lord gives us a picture of the great Day of Judgment. He will then come in all His glory and the holy angels with Him. All the nations of the earth will be gathered before Him. He will separate the righteous from the wicked as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. It will not be difficult for

Him to determine which side each individual belongs to. Those on the left will hear the terrible words: "Depart from Me." Those on the right will hear the same voice, but it will have a different sound: "Come, you blessed of My Father." They have heard this invitation before: "Come to Me, all *you* who labor and are heavy laden" (Matthew 11:28). And they came.

Those on the left also heard the call of the Lord, the Spirit, and the bride to come, but they didn't pay attention. Instead of coming, they turned their back on the Lord and His Spirit. Now in the decisive hour, they must depart from the Lord. The righteous will then inherit the kingdom of their heavenly Father. The wicked, however, will go into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.

What will the righteous inherit? A heavenly home! Jesus said: "In My Father's house are many mansions" (John 14:2). What no human eye has ever seen and no human ear has ever heard, indeed what man cannot even imagine, God has prepared for those who love Him and obey His voice.

There, in our heavenly home, we will see the King in His glory. And even more importantly, we will be like Him. Everything there is pure, the streets are of purest gold. There the pure and holy Son of God dwells among a great multitude who have washed their robes and "made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

Everything the Bible tells us about heaven is true. But the statements about hell are just as true. While heaven is a place of bliss prepared by God for those who love Him, hell is a place of torment prepared for the devil and his angels. It was not created for man. But if man chooses to serve the devil, he must also share his fate in eternity. The rich man in Luke 16 experienced that it was a place of torment. "The smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever" (Revelation 14:11).

It is terrible to think of the fire that will never go out. Even worse is being separated from God. What a thought: to be separated for all eternity from all that is

good, pure, and holy—a place with all that is unclean, where no ray of hope penetrates! Once the door has closed behind the damned, it will never open again. This state will last forever, just as the joys of heaven will last forever.

All those who persist in sin and refuse to accept Jesus as their Savior will spend eternity in that terrible place. If only this terrible thought would open the eyes of all those who are still living in sin! But

unfortunately, so many do not heed the warnings in God's Word.

Have you already made your choice? Are you on the way to heaven? If not, then you are still on the road to perdition. There is no middle way: heaven or hell—eternal bliss or eternal damnation! It is up to you to decide for yourself in which of these two places you want to spend eternity.

E. Martin

The House in the Golden City

An aging Harry Rimmer wrote the following letter to his friend Dr. Charles Fuller:

“Dear Brother Fuller, Next Sunday, you are going to talk about Heaven. I am interested in that land because I have held a clear title to a bit of property up there for about 50 years. I didn't buy it, for it was given to me without price. The donor purchased it for me at a tremendous sacrifice. It is not being held for speculation and it is not just a vacant lot. For more than half a century I have been sending materials up to the greatest Architect of the universe. He has been building a home for me which will never need to be remodeled or repaired. Termites can never undermine its foundations, for it rests upon 'The Rock of Ages.' No lock or bolts will ever be placed on the doors. It is almost completed, ready for me to enter and abide in peace eternally, without fear of being ejected.

“There is a valley of deep shadow between this place where I now live and that to which I shall journey in a very short time. I am not afraid however, because the best friend I ever had went through this same valley long, long ago. He drove away all its gloom. I own His promise in printed form never to forsake or to leave me alone. I hope to hear your sermon on Heaven next Sunday; however, I have no assurance that I'll still be here. My passage to leave has no date marked for the journey, no return ticket, and no permit for baggage. I am ready to go, and will meet you there someday. Your brother in Christ, Harry Rimmer.”*

Harry Rimmer died before the following Sunday. ■

**Heaven's Title Deed
Biola Broadcaster
November, 1966*



Heaven

We would like to invite you to leave this world behind for a moment and think about heaven. We assume that you believe that heaven is a reality. Regardless of what a person believes or not, most people agree that there is a place, which we call heaven, where a person can stay for eternity.

Let us first consider the eternity of heaven. Heaven is a dwelling place for the righteous, a place without end. There is no passing of time there, but the bliss of the righteous lasts forever, without interruption. Although there are no years in heaven, let us imagine that there are.

Think of ten thousand years compared to this short life on earth. Then multiply this number by ten thousand to get one hundred million years. That's more than our minds can fathom. But even that is only a

tiny fraction of eternity. Even if such a period of time had elapsed, not even the smallest part of eternity would have passed as it has no end. Such a place, never ending, could be the future abode for us. Perhaps you think of loved ones who were believers and have gone to this place, to this home of never-ending bliss. Perhaps some of them are especially precious and dear to you. There they live forever, and you can see them again once you yourself are ready for heaven, once you leave this world behind.

Let us look at the reality of heaven. In heaven, there is the throne of God. In the book of Revelation, we read that John saw a stream of pure, clear water flowing from the throne of God. This informs us of the absolute purity of the throne of God. John also speaks of the great white throne—again, white is a symbol of

purity. He goes on to describe a rainbow that resembles an emerald and surrounds the throne. God, who sits on the throne, is holy. Jesus, who sits at the right hand of God, is holy. The angels are holy, and all who dwell in heaven are holy.

Heaven is so holy that nothing unclean can enter there. “There shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb’s Book of Life” (Revelation 21:27). This place of purity can only be the eternal home of those who are pure in heart: “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God” (Matthew 5:8). Those who die in their sins cannot enter heaven. That is why Jesus came into this world: to save people from their sins. He wants everyone to be saved.

Heaven is a place of love. Only people who love are there. Those who do not love cannot enter there. This thought alone should increase our longing to go there. Many people in our world lack love. Hatred, malice, envy, strife, gossip, slander, and suspicion are common everywhere. But in heaven, there will be none of these things. Think of a place where great numbers of holy angels are gathered and a redeemed multitude from all nations, peoples, and languages, greater than anyone can count—and yet they all love one another. Can you fathom that? I would like to spend eternity in such a place.

Heaven is indeed a place of bliss. There are no more tears there; they are all wiped away. This is not just my imagination. The Bible tells us that “the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces” (Isaiah 25:8).

Our time on earth is a time of sowing, whereas heaven is a place of harvest. On earth we often sow

with tears, but there we will reap with joy. This does not mean that we do not experience joy here on earth, but in a special sense, heaven is truly a place of harvest. The Bible tells us that there will be no suffering, pain, or crying in heaven.

Even death will not be there. O heaven, land of purity! The concept of angels playing sweet music on golden harps cannot be truly comprehended by mere mortals. No suffering can penetrate this realm of bliss. The sweet songs of angelic voices of those gathered around the throne of God, the songs of praise of the multitude of the redeemed by the blood—all this and much more will delight the inhabitants of the heavenly realm forever.

Heaven is a place without an end. There is no night there, no darkness that descends. There is eternal light. Neither sun nor moon are needed, for the light of God’s eternal presence floods the heavenly city with such splendor that even the deepest darkness of hell cannot cast the slightest shadow there. A sea of glory pours out from the great white throne and flows through the heavenly realms. The redeemed of all nations will walk in this light.

Are you redeemed from your sins, dear Reader? Are you saved by the blood of Christ? Are you sure of your salvation? Do you have a fervent desire to walk in these heavenly realms and spend eternity in heaven? Such a glorious, undefiled, and unfading inheritance is waiting for you. Make sure that you meet the conditions that the Word of God shows us in order to receive all of this.

C. E. Orr

ANNOUNCEMENTS

June 7 – 9, 2025
Pentecost Conference in Herford, Germany

June 22, 2025
100th Anniversary Celebration
Wetaskiwin, AB

July 18 – 20, 2025
50th Anniversary Celebration
Neustädt, Mexico

July 21 – 25, 2025
Bible Course
Neustädt, Mexico



Wishes

"Hello, Nicholas!" Leon called out to his friend. "Do you know what's happening tonight?" Nicholas shook his head.

"I heard on the radio tonight you'll be able to see shooting stars. If you see one, you can make a wish." Nicholas' eyes lit up. "But your wish must remain a secret, otherwise, it won't come true." Leon warned his friend.

Nicholas spent the whole day thinking about what he could wish for. He could hardly wait to go out into the garden in the evening. When it got dark, he set up a chair.

"Nicholas, what are you doing?" asked his mom.

"There are shooting stars tonight, and if you see one, you can make a wish!"

Smiling, Mrs. Werner pulled up a chair next to him and sat down. They sat together for a while, but Nicholas was getting impatient. His mother stroked his hair: "You know, shooting stars are beautiful, but they're just shining particles flying around in space and cannot grant wishes. Instead, you can come to God with all your wishes."

Nicholas nodded. "But God isn't going to give me the latest computer game . . ."

"Maybe not. But God hears us and knows what's good for us. Sometimes, we want something that might not be good for us. Imagine if there was nothing but sunshine for a week. We would be happy, but grandma doesn't feel good in the heat, and the flowers in the garden need rain. If you had a new computer game, you might spend too much time indoors instead of helping Dad or playing with your friends."

Nicholas thought for a while. "But there's nothing wrong with me sometimes playing on the computer."

"This computer game you want isn't bad. But if you don't get it, there are plenty of other ways to be happy. God wants you to enjoy life. When you help Dad or play with friends, that makes you happy, doesn't it?" Nicholas nodded. Suddenly, a shooting star flew across the sky. Nicholas reflected, "Thank you, God, for knowing what I need and taking care of me."

Katharina Raiser

Your Decision

What should I wear today? Should I obey when my mom asks me to do something, or should I pretend I don't hear her? Do I argue with my brother or let him have my Lego figure? Should I do my homework or risk getting an "X" next to my name on the class list when the teacher checks?

Notice how many decisions you make by yourself every day? Sometimes, it's just about whether to wear a yellow or a green shirt. But often, your decisions impact you and others.

God has given us free will. This means we can do anything we want. But should we? The Bible says: "All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any" (1 Corinthians 6: 12). Yes, everything is permitted—but not everything is good. Therefore, make wise decisions that are good for you and others.

Please find the following Bible passages with your parents or siblings and discuss your thoughts on these topics:

Choose obedience! Obey your parents and experience God's blessing. – Ephesians 6: 1–3

Choose to help others! – Galatians 6: 2

Choose the Bible! Read the Bible every day or have it read to you and memorize Bible verses. – Psalm 119: 9

Choose to pray! God is always available—24 hours a day, 7 days a week. – Hebrews 4: 16

Choose good friends! Stay away from children who misbehave and can negatively influence you. – Proverbs 13: 20

Choose what you (don't) say! Ensure everything you say is good, helpful, kind, and true. – Psalm 19: 15

Choose patience! – Ephesians 4: 2 and Proverbs 16: 32

Choose joy! – Philippians 4: 4

Choose to trust God! – Proverbs 3: 5–6

God wants to help you make decisions if you let Him. "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him" (James 1: 5). God often uses your parents, your grandparents, or your Sunday school teachers to show you the right way. Make your decisions with God!

Jessica Mueller



"Delight yourself also in the LORD, and He shall give you the desires of your heart."

(Psalm 37:4)



Unreliable



Unreliable. That is the best way I can describe the digital clock I have on the wall in my home office. I cannot trust this clock anymore as there have been too many times when for whatever reason it would be wrong. The clock might be three minutes slow or ten minutes slow. There is seemingly no reason for this clock to be unreliable. It just is. Now, for months it has worked well. But when I get up in the morning and go into my office, I check the time. Unfortunately, I still do not trust the clock. I always check my watch or my phone to see if the clock is accurate. I wonder how long the clock will remain accurate. I wonder if the clock does remain accurate, when will I totally trust it? Will this clock in my office always keep the reputation of being unreliable?

Do you know people who are unreliable? Perhaps they are usually on time and usually keep their

"The works of His hands are verity and justice; all His precepts are sure".

Psalm III: 7

commitments. Then, seemingly without a reason, they are late, or they do not keep their commitments. Perhaps they have said they would meet you somewhere, but they do not show up. Why is that? Why is a person usually reliable and then suddenly unreliable?

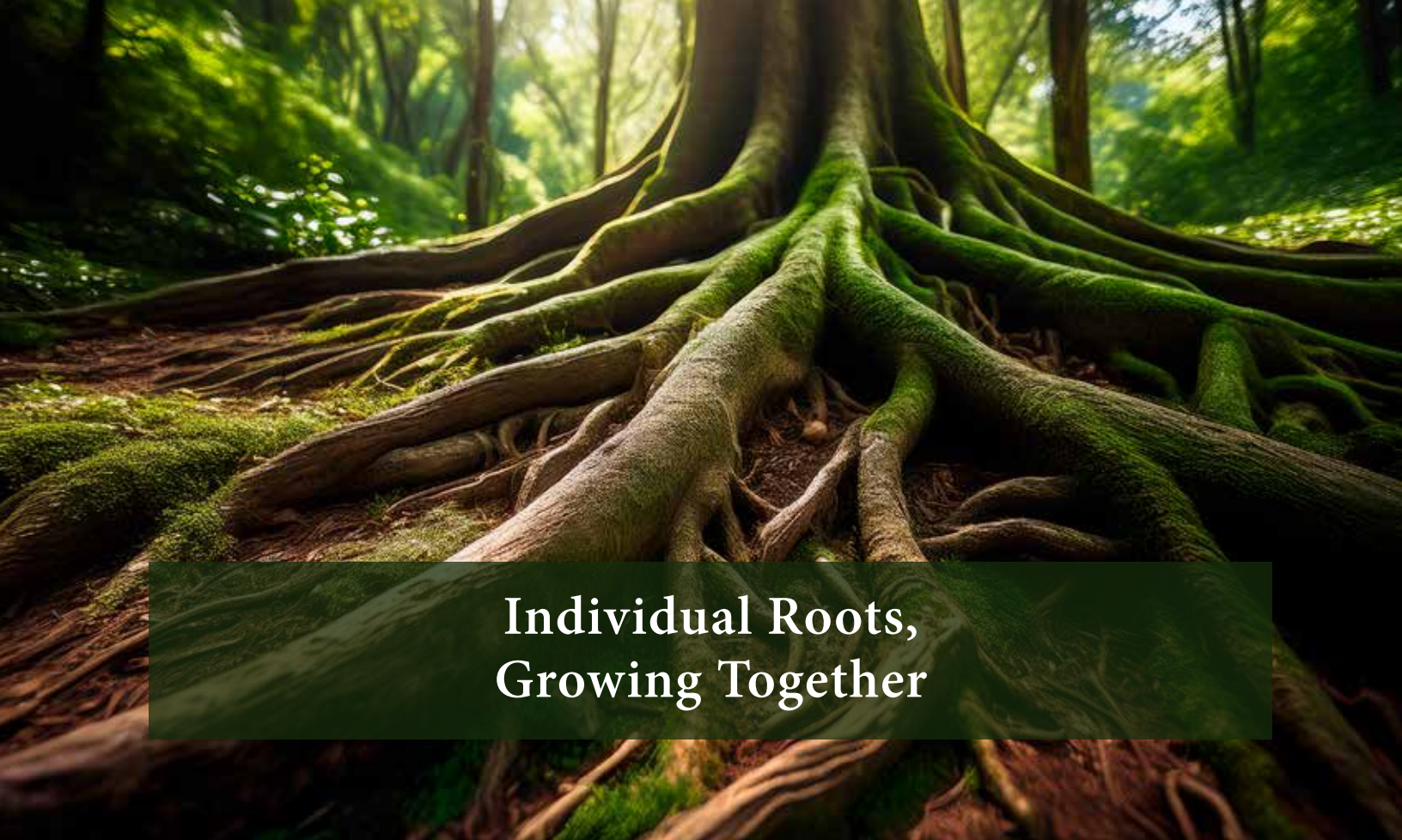
As Christians, we are taught to be reliable or faithful. In the book of Matthew in the Bible, Matthew shares the words of Jesus: "Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his master made ruler over his household, to give them food in due season?" (Matthew 24: 45). Jesus goes on to state the faithful servant will be rewarded. In the next chapter, Matthew 25, Matthew shares from the teachings of Jesus: "Well *done*, good and faithful servant" (Matthew 25: 21). Throughout the Bible, we are taught to be reliable. We are taught to be careful with our words and as much as possible to fulfill what we have said. Christians are to have the reputation of being reliable.

We learn to be reliable or faithful from the example our Lord Jesus set and from the example our heavenly Father has given us. As we know, Jesus is totally reliable. What He said He would do, He does. When Jesus tells us that He will be with us always, we can trust His words. Therefore, we know that He is always with us. When our Father in Heaven states how He will take care of us, we know that He will. Everything that the Bible tells us about Jesus and our Father in heaven is reliable. We can safely build our lives on the reliability of Jesus and His Father. The Psalmist states: "Whatever He does is reliable and just" (Psalm 111: 7, ISV).

The longer we follow Jesus, the more we are to be conformed into His likeness. Paul writes to the Roman church: "For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son" (Romans 8: 29). Over time, as we study the life of Jesus and as we allow God to mold us, we will become more reliable, more faithful. Being reliable will become part of our being as we are conformed into the likeness of Jesus. We will learn to be more careful with our words, and we will strive to fulfill what we have said. Young people should strive to be trustworthy and reliable. They should also strive to be obedient to their parents because that is what children are commanded to do in the Bible. If you promise something to someone, you should strive to fulfill that promise. In relationships, you should totally trust each other. Paul, writing to his young friend Timothy, encouraged him to find reliable people: "The things you heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people" (2 Timothy 2: 2, NIV). In other words, the workers in the Kingdom of God are to be reliable people.

How long does it take to regain trust? As I sit in my office this afternoon, I look at my clock and I wonder when I will totally trust it again. It will be a long time before I regain total trust. As followers of Jesus, we need to be aware of the value of being reliable in all situations. We need to remember that once trust is lost, it is hard to regain. Let's pray that God helps us to be reliable people. Let's pray that others will always trust us, whether we are younger or older. We do not want the reputation of being unreliable, right?

Sieg Schuler, Calgary (CA)



Individual Roots, Growing Together

One day, as I was walking along the river through the serene park of a small resort town, I spotted an interesting metal sculpture: the stems of two plants close to each other, while their strong roots were firmly anchored at the base. The title of the sculpture, “Individual Roots, Growing Together,” caught my attention. Although I don’t agree with all of the artist’s philosophy, which is both Christian and shaped by the current world view, the symbolic power of the artwork impresses me. After all, the Creator of heaven and earth designed every plant to draw nutrients from the soil individually and then grow together with others.

This principle can also be applied to us humans—as individuals and within the community. The key, however, is in what we are “rooted” and where we “grow.” Do we allow ourselves to be shaped by the spirit of the age or by the eternal truth of God’s Word, for the principles of this world and the will of God lead in opposite directions. The Apostle Paul says in Romans 12: 1–2: “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, *which is* your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be

transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”

When we prayerfully reflect on the thought “Individual Roots, Growing Together” considering God’s Word, this sculpture can serve as a powerful symbol of the community of God’s children. Each person is deeply rooted in Christ, growing together as His body, supporting, and complementing one another. Even a marriage blessed by God reflects this comparison: a man and a woman, each nurturing an intimate relationship with Jesus Christ, growing together toward Him.

Rooted in Christ

In the creation story, it is written: “So God created man in His *own* image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them” (Genesis 1: 27). Before the specific gender differences of the first humans are even mentioned, the relationship to God and thus the destiny of mankind is clarified twice. We were primarily and essentially created for fellowship and relationship with God, from which our collaboration and interaction with other people flow.

After the fall of mankind, there is no other way back to fellowship with God except through the reconciling sacrifice of His Son. How thankful we should be that the path to the sanctuary is open to anyone who accepts this sacrifice in faith! Peter writes: “But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus . . . perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle *you*” (1 Peter 5:10).

Every child of God is called to glory in Christ Jesus. Through grace, we receive the great privilege of living in God’s presence—strengthened by His Word, comforted by the Holy Spirit, carried, and guided. Even in everyday life, our souls can breathe the air of heaven.

The more we are filled with His beauty and glory, the calmer, more balanced, and joyful our lives will be. This assurance carries us even in difficult times: whether our children are ill, in financial worries, or in the monotonous routine of a busy day. Whatever life brings, in Christ we are loved and sheltered. His love satisfies our deepest longing for recognition and peace, and our hearts find rest in God.

Even the most insignificant, everyday tasks gain meaning when we do them for Jesus. Especially homemakers and mothers, who often feel that their faithful work goes unnoticed, can know: In God’s eyes, every small, lovingly-fulfilled task has eternal value. It helps create a home that is marked by His love, where He can be glorified, and where others can also find peace.

The Purpose of Storms

Even though we are deeply rooted in Christ, we are not spared the storms of life. Occasionally, God allows these so our “roots” may go even deeper and more firmly grasp the eternal, unshakable Rock, Jesus Christ. In such times, He stays faithfully by our side and does not allow us to be tested beyond what we can bear (1 Corinthians 10:13). These trials are meant to refine and strengthen us so that the things of this world may fade and Jesus alone remains.

The Black Forest provides an example. After Cyclone Lothar in December 1999, entire mountainsides, once covered by mighty, century-old trees, were devastated—like someone had scattered a box of matchsticks. Upon closer inspection, it was evident that most of the fallen trees had very shallow roots.

However, there were trees that withstood the force of the storm. While some of their branches broke, they remained standing, anchored by their deep roots.

Growing Together

In Christ, we find the wonderful unity of God’s children, regardless of age, gender, status, nationality, or other characteristics (Galatians 3:28). Within marriage, however, God has established a special order: the man bears the responsibility as head, while the woman supports him in love and respect, just as Christ cares for the church. The church entrusts itself to Him as His body (Ephesians 5:21–25; 1 Peter 3:1–7). This order does not delineate the superiority of one over the other but is based on mutual respect as co-heirs of God’s grace.

Often, God leads two people with very different personalities into marriage. These differences are not obstacles but opportunities to grow together. Just as individual puzzle pieces come together to form a picture, man and woman are meant to complement each other in their differences according to God’s plan. Let us thank God for His wisdom in entrusting us with just the person with whom, together, we may reflect more of the image of Jesus.

For productive relationships—especially in marriage and family—we can follow the example of Jesus: He came to serve, not to be served (Mark 10:45). If we work on ourselves and do not expect it from the other person, we spare our homes from unnecessary conflict. It truly helps when we approach our spouse as Jesus would. Ask God for a loving perspective for the people He has entrusted to you and for the grace to serve them selflessly.

Here, I am reminded of other images from the world of trees. There is the magnificent walnut tree under which only extremely resilient plants, such as ivy, thrive. The reason is that walnut trees exude a chemical substance called juglone through their leaves, roots, nut hulls, and even bark which is toxic to other plants. In contrast, fruit trees enrich the soil with their fruit and foliage, providing the necessary shelter and shade for delicate plants to grow.

That’s just like our relationships with others: Unjustified criticism and unrealistic expectations can choke delicate “shoots” of affection and trust. But patience, gentleness, love, humility, and appreciation create an atmosphere where growth according to biblical principles is possible. May God grant us the grace to be such “fruit trees”—a humble example of Christ’s love.


Helene Rotfuss, Pforzheim (DE)



Dear Mother

Dear Mother,

As I remember you today and reflect on the mother you were, I find myself thinking of the idiomatic expression “unique as a blue diamond.” Why do I say this? I say it because of something very special you shared with me. You shared with me that, despite your situation and circumstances growing up (which were beyond your control), you always had a strong desire to do what is right. God saw your longing heart and led you in wonderful ways. God’s amazing grace began to work powerfully in your life. You had the opportunity to hear the message of salvation and give your life to Jesus and walk in truth. Today, I am still so thankful for His providence in your life, for your obedience in following God’s call and how it set the trajectory for our family.



You were a beacon of light for me.

Your quiet walk with Jesus taught me so much. You valued your relationship with Him and kept it in check, always drawing closer to God. The way in which you led our family with your quiet and gentle nature left a credible legacy. You led by example. You lived gentleness. You lived kindness. You lived unassuming. You lived surrendered, committed, and loyal. You endured hardships quietly. You hid heartaches behind a smile. You suffered much pain without drawing attention to yourself. For you, life wasn't about you; you were always thinking about others. You gave generously of yourself, your time, and your finances. When you knew I was having a difficult day, you would deliver a hot meal to our door for me and my family. You lived with incredible gratefulness for the material blessings and never took these for granted.

But above all, you were grateful for the gift of salvation. I remember picking up your Bible and reading Philippians 2: 8 – “And being found in human form, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross,” next to which you inserted in your handwriting these two words, “for me.” How that impacted me! You were so amazed at God’s love for you. You returned that love to Him and passed it on to me, our family, and others around you. You supported me. You loved my husband. You loved my children. You weighed your words.

Thank you, Mom, for loving me unconditionally. I know that I often frustrated you, but you always had such a forgiving heart and had so much patience with me. You prayed for me. You trusted me. You guided me. You mentored me. You encouraged me. You laughed with me. You cried with me. You sang with me. You prayed with me. You cared so much for my spiritual well-being and the spiritual well-being of others and prayed faithfully for each member of our family. I still see your hands folded in prayer, and the sound of your whispered prayers still lingers in my ears.

You set the bar high, Mom, but I thank you so much for that. You helped shape who I am today, and I am so grateful for that. Thank you for leading me and showing me the way to the Savior you loved so much. You truly lived your faith, and it shone brightly to the very end.

Today I miss you; forever I'll love you. Longing to see you again.

*With all my love,
your daughter*

“We are told to let our light shine, and if it does, we won't need to tell anybody it does. Lighthouses don't fire cannons to call attention to their shining—they just shine.”

Dwight L. Moody

If You Still Have a Mother

Like every evening, Mother Binder went out with her pitcher to water her flowers. Yet what was the radiance on her otherwise sorrowful face today?

There was nothing beautiful about Mother Binder. No, the worries and cares of life had left their furrows in her face from early on. It had not been an easy life. She had worked hard together with her husband, all the time, from morning till night. Children had been given to her, but God had soon taken them away again. They only had one daughter left, a pretty girl with dark hair and sparkling brown eyes. Shortly after graduating from school, she had moved to the city to work. The village was too small for her, the conditions at home too cramped. Every now and then she came to visit her parents on Sundays. Then her father passed away. How her mother had aged in the weeks of her father's illness! Frieda's conscience began to bother her. From then on, she came more often, but she never stayed long. After sitting with her mother for a short hour on the bench in the flower garden, she would be seized by restlessness: "My friends are waiting for me. You won't be upset if I leave now, will you?"

After that, Frieda didn't come back at all. Her mother wrote her a letter, despite her hands not wanting to. However, her mother's love left her no peace. For weeks she waited for a reply, but nothing came. Then one day, she set off for the city. Unfortunately, her daughter had given up her job and moved away; no one knew where.

Had she not had faith in God's fatherly love, Mother Binder would have died of grief. Nevertheless, she continued to love and pray for her child and kept the tiny home as clean and beautiful as if she expected her daughter to come home every day. It was already the second summer that she had not heard from her daughter. Often, Mother Binder held long conversations with her flowers: "Bloom beautifully; Frieda will certainly come back one day. When she does, you should greet her, and she should realize that we have always been waiting for her."

The flowers did their best under the careful hand of Mother Binder. All the pots were lined up in rows. Each flower was lusher than the next. Bright red geraniums shone among petunias in all colors: white, deep

purple, and rose red. How her husband and Frieda had always enjoyed them when Frieda was younger!

People walking by on Sunday stopped and gazed in awe: "Surely a happy family lives here." They had no idea that a mother resided here with deep sorrow in her heart waiting for her child to return home—and so were all the colorful flowers.

So, the days of May passed, and June dragged on. Then one morning, the mail carrier arrived: "Mrs. Binder," he called from afar, "I have something for you today!" The mother's hands trembled as he handed her the letter. Her knees buckled as she entered the house. Frieda wrote! What might be in the letter? She opened it hastily. However, her eyes were so wet that she could hardly make out the writing. Using the tip of her apron, she wiped her eyes; then she read:

Dear Mother!

May I still call you Mother? I have treated you terribly. Oh Mother, can you forgive me for neglecting you for two years? I have caused you so much grief in other ways too! When I left our village, I went away with a sad and defiant heart. You had always told me that Karl was not a good fellow. Yet I didn't want to believe it. Then he left with someone else. I didn't want to admit that to you, so I never came home again, moved away from town, and looked for another job in the big city. There I found a promising occupation.

In March, I fell ill; the nurse said I was hovering between life and death. It was pneumonia. During the fever, I used to dream about you and all the beautiful flowers on our windowsill and in the garden. When the fever broke, the nurse asked me: "Do you still have a mother, Frieda?" That made tears flow down my face. Then I told her everything about you and how nice I could have had it at home. However, at the time it wasn't good enough for me. Then she told me there was still time to turn back. God had still given me a time of grace.

Oh Mother, do you still have love for me? I don't want anything more from the world; I just want to be with you in our dear little house. Will the flowers bloom as beautifully this year as they used to? I never wanted to see your hard-working hands. However, your hands love the flowers because you care for them, and you cared for

me too. Now I want to help you with all your work, and I want you to have an enjoyable life. May I come home? Forgive your daughter Frieda!

Mother Binder pressed the letter to her heart. Tears ran from her eyes down her wrinkled cheeks. "Lord, You answer prayers!" her lips whispered. She read the letter repeatedly. Then she hurried to the village, bought paper and a stamp, and wrote:

*My dear child!
We have been waiting for you every day, the flowers and I. Come home soon!*

Your Mother

As she stood waiting amongst her flowers with her face aglow, she told her flowers that soon, soon Frieda will come home to stay.

H. H.

Mother

The mother guides the child's first steps and nurtures his or her heart. A mother once asked a preacher when she should start to train up her four-year-old child. "Dear Woman," replied the preacher, "if you have not already begun, four years have been lost to you."

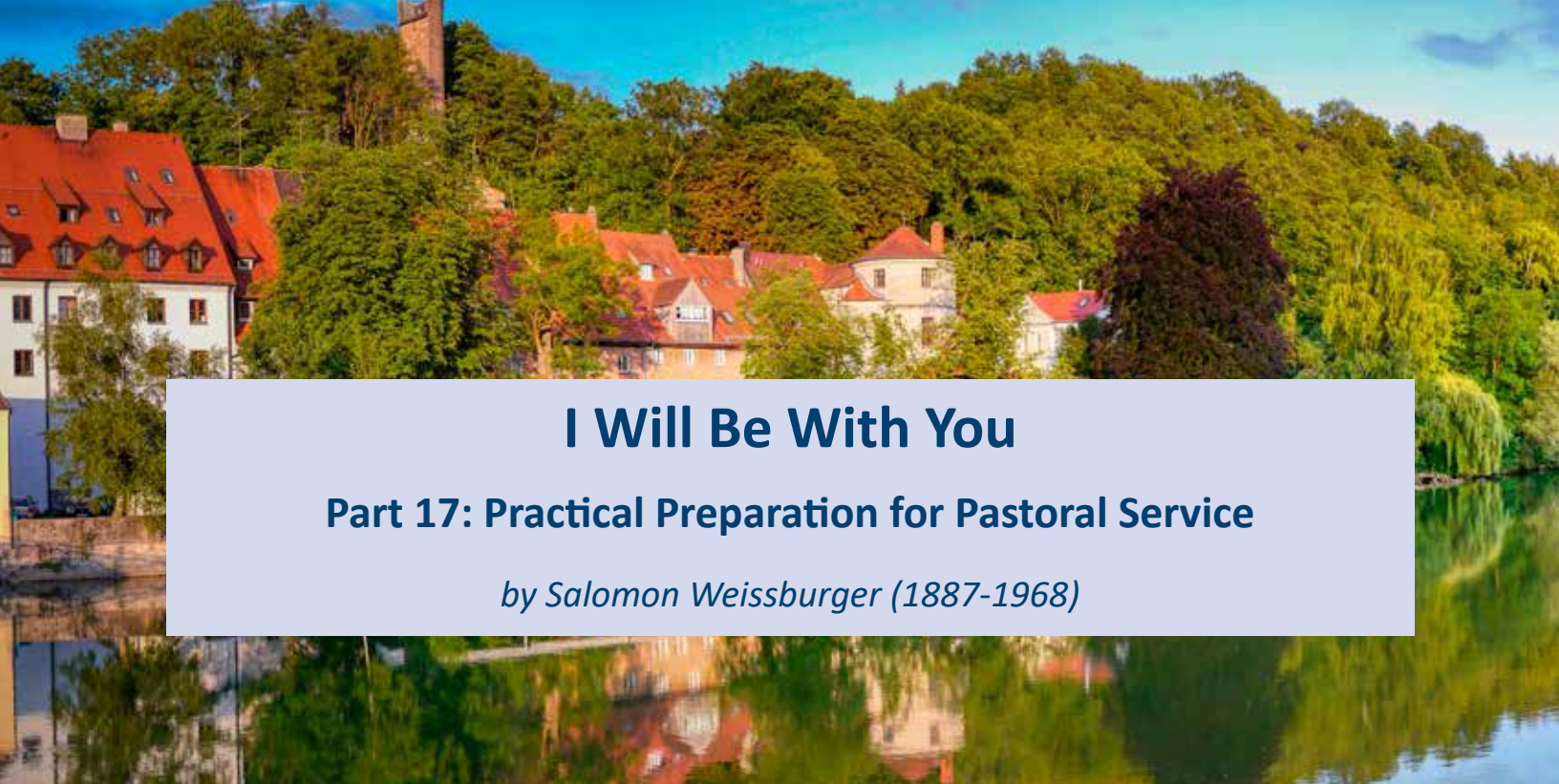
There is a saying: "Like gardener, like garden; like wife, like family."

I once read of an unbeliever who, under the power of divine truth, bowed his knees in a Christian assembly and cried out in his deep distress of soul: "Thou God of my mother, have mercy on me!" How meaningful is this exclamation! It clearly shows that this man had a mother whose faith and faithfulness had impressed him so deeply that this impression could not fade with time. What an example this is for our mothers to impart the divine truths in the family with diligence and faithfulness!

Yes, the influence of a believing mother on her children remains. She can accom-

plish great things through prayer. Children of prayer will grow up to be children of thanksgiving. Mothers who have wept in the closet before God over their children will one day sing a new song. God can make right those whom we cannot make right and whom we cannot make better. Therefore, mothers should never despair of their children as long as they live. Prodigal sons and daughters may wander in the world. But the great, good Father in heaven never loses sight of them, even if they are still far away, like the prodigal son in the parable.

The greatest blessing a mother can leave to her children is the example of the fear of God and true faith in the heart. Even if her children do not follow this example, they must at least confess: "My mother was devout and served the Lord!" The time will come when this influence of the mother on her child will claim the most glorious victory. ■



I Will Be With You

Part 17: Practical Preparation for Pastoral Service

by Salomon Weissburger (1887-1968)

The path down which God led my wife and me here in Brazil was not dissimilar from the road I had taken years earlier in Germany, when I gave up my career in business to work in factories and mines. As previously mentioned, the resulting first-hand experience of the workers' lifestyle enabled me to serve the congregation in Essen with a greater understanding of congregants' concerns than if I had only been a businessman.

God's path for us in Brazil served a similar purpose, as we would likely not have been very successful in understanding and supporting the settler-heavy communities without being settlers ourselves. In fact, people would probably have said, "He can't understand us," or "That's easy for him to say, but if he were the one working all day among tall corn or sugar cane—and in this heat—he would speak differently." We had to become the same as our colonist brothers and sisters, suffering alongside them, in order to understand them in their struggles and to empathize with them. We did this work for many years.

Could a woman from the city really understand, for instance, what a settler feels while milking when a cow hits her in the face with a dirty tail, or when it escapes, or when it gives a kick and knocks over the milk or injures her? Life in the jungle entails many such experiences. Looking back today, I thank God for His won-

derful guidance in allowing us to share them as well. Everything the Lord does is good.

I am strongly in favor of future preachers learning a secular profession before beginning to work in God's Kingdom. If nothing else, it is an opportunity to demonstrate diligence and expertise, thereby showing that they can become capable preachers.

As Jesus says in the parable of the talents (Matthew 25:15), "he gave . . . to each according to his own ability." The wider and deeper a riverbed is, the more water can flow through it. Similarly, servants of God are the channels through which God's blessings, the water of life, flow to other people. For God to best use His servants, their natural abilities need to be refined, for instance through a good education. Provided they are purified from the sinful self and are entirely dedicated to God, people who have developed their skills through education or training are often of greater use to God than people who have not done so.

That is one reason why God allowed Moses to be pulled out of the water by Pharaoh's daughter and to be brought to the royal court to be instructed there "in all the wisdom of the Egyptians" and thus to become a man who "was mighty in words and deeds" (Acts 7:22). This education enabled him to lead the people of Israel later on.



We see the same dynamics at work in the case of Joseph, who was unjustly sold to Egypt by his brothers. In Egypt, he came into the house of Potiphar, a royal minister, where he eventually became his secretary and deputy. In this position, he got to know Egypt and its people, language, and government—all things that would be necessary for him to become a ruler in Egypt when God decided the time was right. His time in prison was educational, too, in that it taught him to empathize with people in similar circumstances.

Just as Moses and Joseph needed practical preparation in order to be able to carry out their divine missions, those who want to enter the ministry today need to prepare as well. This can begin with how parents raise their children, but it also includes the education the children pursue themselves, following in the footsteps of men like Moses and Joseph or even Paul, who studied at Gamaliel's feet to earn that era's equivalent of a university degree.

Nonetheless, despite all the wisdom and education Moses had, it took him 40 years in the desert to grow beyond his sinful self and reliance on his own skills. Joseph needed 13 years to achieve the same; for Paul, it was around 17 years. Only after completing this lesson could God use them for the service to which they were called.

This is reflected in the answer Jesus gave when His disciples asked who was the greatest in the kingdom of heaven: "Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 18:1–4). On another occasion, the Lord said, "What is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God" (Luke 16:15).

During our years of service in South America—with the help of the Lord, with much prayer, and through the power of the Holy Spirit—we tried to spread the teachings of the Lord and the church of God through assemblies, congregations, camp meetings, pastors' meetings, Bible schools, and Bible courses. One of our priorities was to share biblical truths, to the extent allowed by God's grace, with the people working for God's Kingdom alongside us. We continue to follow this approach, which we had previously applied in Germany and other European countries.

Thanks to God's grace, our work was not in vain. Our path was certainly not easy, and the many blessings were joined by the many battles all messengers of God can expect to encounter, but our attitude and resolve never wavered from the time we left Germany in 1936. ■

The Lost Child

Where was Ingeborg Machel? Inge was only three years old when she went missing, and she could never fully remember the events of that terrible night in 1945. But one thing she knew: her name was Ingeborg Machel. She also remembered the loud, terrifying noises as the panicked horses stormed through the night while she was wrapped in feather blankets with her grandmother. Amidst the dense hail of bullets, her grandmother was fatally wounded. Inge, too, was hit just below the knee and apparently bled heavily. Fortunately, Russian soldiers managed to stop the frightened horses. They found the little girl and her deceased grandmother, wrapped a tight bandage around Inge's small leg, and brought her to an abandoned house, where she was left to fend for herself.

Inge apparently spent a few days alone, but soon other refugees began to occupy the same house. It is almost unimaginable how a three-year-old child coped with such terrible circumstances and how she must have cried day and night for her family. But they never came. Other refugees found the little girl, who, remarkably, had not bled to death—saved by the soldiers' quick actions. They shared their meager food with her, and eventually, she was taken to the hospital in Anklam, the nearest town. There, her wound was cleaned, and her leg began to heal. After some time, when she had regained her strength, she was placed in a nearby orphanage.

A young nurse quickly formed a close bond with the sweet little Ingeborg. Soon, Inge's eyes filled with tears whenever the nurse left after her shift. She begged her to stay or called out for her mother—but her mother never came. The obvious pain of the child deeply moved the nurse, and she considered how she could help the little foundling. Her aunt, Lotte Schmidt, who lived in Leopoldshagen near Anklam, had recently lost her only son. Perhaps she could be a solution for Ingeborg's situation? Mr. Schmidt was a prisoner of war in Russia, and the nurse knew that Mrs. Schmidt

felt terribly lonely. Maybe Ingeborg could fill this void in her heart? A meeting was arranged, and indeed, Mrs. Schmidt fell in love with Inge at first sight. She intended to keep the girl with her without involving the official authorities until her husband returned home. If he objected, Inge could always be returned to the orphanage. If not, they would begin the adoption process.

Shortly before Christmas 1948, Mrs. Schmidt's conscience began urging her to contact the Red Cross, which was searching for missing children. She was deeply troubled, but she refused to register Inge, as her feelings for the girl had grown very strong. At the same time, a search notice from the Machel family was published in the *Evangeliums Posaune* magazine (the German version of this publication).

Years passed, and Inge gradually forgot her biological family, giving her whole heart to her new "mother." But Mrs. Schmidt's conscience gave her no rest. At night, she felt as if a cold hand was shaking her awake, reminding her of her duty toward the lost child. She began to fear sleep, lost her appetite, and became increasingly depressed. Eventually, she was so desperate that she registered the child at the local registration office. She later recalled that the moment she informed the authorities of Ingeborg's whereabouts, her appetite returned, she could sleep peacefully again, and her life normalized.

Meanwhile, God's plan was working in the background. As with hundreds of thousands of lost children, Inge's registration with the Red Cross Children's Relief Program was sent to the headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland. There, Inge's mother, Paula Machel, was already known, as she had been tirelessly searching for her child. Within a few days, she received a message: A girl named Ingeborg Machel, eight years old, was living in Leopoldshagen with Mrs. Lotte Schmidt.

Paula could not believe it. She read the letter over and over, then broke into tears, screamed with joy, thanked God, and praised His holy name. She ran out



into the street, shouting to strangers: “My child Inge is alive! She is in Leopoldshagen in East Germany! This is a miracle, praise the Lord!”

Only a few days later, Paula was on her way to East Germany with a visa. In Anklam, she had to officially identify her daughter. The official listened attentively as she described her child: dark brown hair, gray eyes, and a reddish-blue birthmark on her forehead. Suddenly, he interrupted her: “This must be Paula Machel’s child! Bring this woman to Ingeborg immediately!”

But when Paula saw Inge, the girl pushed her away: “Go away! You’re not my mother! This is my mother!”—pointing to Mrs. Schmidt. Inge had been coached to reject any stranger. The pain was unbearable for Paula. Sobbing, she fell to her knees and began to pray loudly. Mrs. Schmidt watched and realized that this was indeed Inge’s biological mother. Eventually, mother and daughter reconnected.

Paula spent Christmas in Leopoldshagen to make the farewell easier for Inge and Mrs. Schmidt. Finally, she returned to West Germany with her daughter. There, Inge recognized her father and met her siblings. And then a miracle happened: her birthmark disappeared! God had removed it after it had fulfilled its purpose. Even her weaker leg began to heal.

Epilogue:

In December 1960, Inge married Horst Grams. She invited Mrs. Schmidt as an honorary guest, but East Germany did not allow her to travel to Canada. Years later, Inge visited her in Leopoldshagen. She fell into her arms, crying. They stayed connected through letters until the end of their days.

How wonderful and amazing are the ways of God with His children!

Josef Jakobsh, in “We Have Seen His Glory”

Mother's Day

Mother's love is deep and true,
Great and noble, selflessly,
Faithfully in all you do!
Mom, you love me tenderly.
Your love, powerful and bright,
Cares for me both day and night.

Mother's kindness is so great!
Mom, your counsel's mild and wise.
You rise early, stay up late,
Much is done unrecognized.
She has mastered many trades;
Mother's kindness never fades.

Mother's loyalty is strong,
Faithful every day anew.
The selfish world does us wrong,
Deceiving, proud, and untrue.
Yet great is Mom's faithfulness,
Greater than words can express.

Mother's prayers, on bended knee,
Powerful, direct, and plain
Rise up earnestly for me.
Mother's prayers are not in vain.
Others fail to do their part,
Yet mother's prayers reach the heart.

A mother's love, kindness, faith,
Loyalty, and earnest prayer—
Blessed are they who by God's grace
Have such a mother who cares.
Let us thank God when we pray
For such mothers, every day!