



# Foundation of Faith

---

## **Overcoming Crises of Faith**

**Why Do I Feel So Sad?**

**Can a Crisis Be a Blessing?**

**Toolbox of the Christian Faith**

JULY 2025

# Contents

## OVERCOMING CRISES OF FAITH

- 4 Heroes in Crises**  
*Heroes who do not give up in the spiritual storm and hold on to God's faithfulness*
- 6 When Spiritual Pillars of Faith Fall or Stumble—Crisis or Opportunity?**  
*Is our faith built on people? What gives us lasting stability?*
- 8 Toolbox of the Christian Faith**  
*Well equipped for the storms of life—thanks to God's powerful tools*
- 10 Why Do I Feel So Sad?**
- 12 Can a Crisis Be a Blessing?**
- 14 Joy in Suffering: Purpose in Pain**  
*How God uses suffering to shape us and glorify His name*

- 3 Editorial**
- CHILDREN'S CORNER
- 16 Who Cares?**
- 17 Learning from the Ants**
- YOUTH PAGES
- 18 Overcoming Fear with God's Help**
- SENIORS' PAGES
- 20 The Aging Christian**  
*Challenges and struggles in old age*  
*Encouragement to strengthen faith*
- SERIES: "I WILL BE WITH YOU"
- 22 More Arduous Journeys - Part 19**
- 24 Overcome Fear**
- 25 Are You Strong?**  
*What is true strength?*
- REPORT
- 26 Early Beginnings in Mexico**
- 21 Announcements**
- POEM
- 28 God Rewards**

## FOUNDATION OF FAITH

*Editor*

Ron Taron

*Editorial Team*

Niko Ernst, David Knelsen

Hans-Dietrich Nimz, Harry Semenjuk

Hermann Vogt

•  
The FOUNDATION OF FAITH is a journal of vital Christianity, published in the interest of the Church of God, that takes a clear and decisive stand for full salvation in Christ, the unity of all true believers, and the truths of the Bible.

The editors reserve the right to abridge and edit all materials and information submitted for publication. Research sources are listed for information only and should not necessarily be construed as an endorsement or recommendation.

•  
Questions and suggestions can be sent to:  
[contact@foundationoffaith.cc](mailto:contact@foundationoffaith.cc)

Please address all other correspondence and subscription requests to:  
Christian Unity Press  
5195 Exchange Drive  
Flint, MI 48507  
Tel.: (810) 732-1831  
or email us at  
[cupress@christianunitypress.com](mailto:cupress@christianunitypress.com)  
[www.christianunitypress.com](http://www.christianunitypress.com)

All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise indicated, are taken from the New King James Version. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission.

FOUNDATION OF FAITH (USPS 9008) is published monthly by Christian Unity Press, 5195 Exchange Dr., Flint, MI 48507, USA. Periodicals postage paid at Flint, MI, and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Christian Unity Press, 5195 Exchange Dr., Flint, MI 48507, USA Volume 23 Issue 7

FOUNDATION OF FAITH is a trademark owned by Christian Unity Press in the United States and foreign countries.  
Printed in USA.

FOUNDATION OF FAITH is published free of charge. All expenses are covered by freewill donations.

## Editorial

*Dear Reader!*

*Half a year is now behind us. For those of us who live in the northern hemisphere, it is high summer, and everything in nature is ripening for harvest.*

*In addition to our daily work, many of us are on vacation and traveling, and the children are off from school. And we older people should make the most of the time we have left. That is why we want to use every opportunity and do good to all.*

*We find this godly counsel in the Old Testament: "In the morning sow your seed, and in the evening do not withhold your hand; for you do not know which will prosper, either this or that, or whether both alike will be good." Further, "Give a serving to seven, and also to eight, for you do not know what evil will be on the earth" (Ecclesiastes 11: 6, 2).*

*In the kingdom of God, in our Lord's church, every one of us has a job to do. We read in Matthew 25: 14–30 how our Savior and Master distributes His goods to everyone according to their talents and abilities, and He expects us to use them in His service. Those who work faithfully and diligently will receive a reward. We will then hear from the Son of God: "Well done, good and faithful servant . . . Enter into the joy of your Lord" (verse 21).*

*Just as in the natural world harvest follows sowing, so we also have a wonderful harvest in the spiritual world. The Lord Jesus says of His faithful servants and workers: "Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father" (Matthew 13: 43).*

*Let us walk in the light, serve the Savior faithfully, and fulfill the tasks that God commands us to do. Then we too will receive the crown of life!*

H. D. Nimz



# Heroes in Crises

*“My flesh and my heart fail; but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.” (Psalm 73: 26)*

In Psalm 73, Asaph reveals for us one of the deepest and darkest hours of his life. He admits that he was on the brink of giving up his confidence and faith in God. The unresolved questions and the obvious injustice he perceived almost drove him to despair. Indeed, he had the impression that there were more blessings to be seen in the godless lives of the evildoers than in his own. He felt plagued (verse 14), perhaps tormented by poverty and illness, while the sinners were obviously doing well. They had success and he had pain.

Such despair not only shakes our feelings, it can also shake the foundation of our faith. These are the times when God seems far away, when our prayers seem futile and unanswered. Not only does that cause great distress, but it can endanger our personal faith in God.

The Bible does not gloss over such times of struggle. David knew them as well. He cries out: “Save me, O God! For the waters have come up to *my* neck” (Psalm 69: 1). Here we gain insight into the struggle David wrestled with and then the victory he experienced by the grace of God. At the end of Psalm 69 he concludes: “For God will save Zion” (verse 35). In addition to David, the Bible gives us other portraits—not of perfection, but of true heroes, who find themselves in crises!

## ***Gideon—When God’s promises do not seem to match our experience***

Gideon had gone into hiding to do his threshing work. Perhaps his soul was crying out to God when he heard an angel say: “The LORD *is* with you, you mighty man of valor!” (Judges 6: 12). In despair, he bursts out: “O my lord, if the LORD is with us, why then has all this happened to us? And where *are* all His miracles which our fathers told us about . . . [?] But now the LORD has forsaken us” (Judges 6: 13).

His question is not a protest. It is his soul groaning to God: “I don’t understand all this. Lord, where are you?” God does not condemn him, but responds

with trust, with a calling to special service. God trusted Gideon much more than Gideon trusted himself.

A calling in a crisis of faith—that was Gideon’s plight. He followed the call in faith, knowing that he could not do what was demanded of him in his own strength. He was completely reliant on the eternal, strong, and gracious God, whom he got to know more intimately during this crisis.

## ***Elijah—When all seems to be collapsing***

The heroes of God were not exceptional people. James says that “Elijah was a man with a nature like ours” (James 5: 17). Is it not encouraging to know that in his grace and mercy, God will carry us through our times of extreme weakness? He responds to our questions of doubt and fear with great patience. Elijah seemed to be at the height of his calling when God answered with fire at the altar on Mount Carmel. Elijah pronounced God’s judgment, and then according to his prophecy a heavy rain began to fall. But only a little while later he was lying under the juniper tree wanting to die. Elijah was spent. Instead of celebrating tremendous victory, he suffered persecution and loneliness, and could only perceive failure.

But God does not admonish him. He lets him sleep, and then provides him with food and water to replenish his strength. God speaks to him, not in storm and fire, but in a quiet, gentle, fatherly voice. Sometimes God helps us in our times of need with the realization that although He may not meet our expectations in a spectacularly intervening way—yet He is completely faithful. We can commit ourselves into His eternal arms.

## ***Asaph—When God is silent***

Let us look at this man of God, Asaph, once more. He cries out: “Do not keep silent, O God! Do not hold your peace, and do not be still, O God!” (Psalm 83: 1). It is the cry of his soul! He has been crying out to God for help for days, weeks, perhaps even months in his distress. He knows that God is listening. But where is the answer?



God hears our cry, sees our distress, hears our questions, sees our helplessness—but we may not perceive an answer. We see no change. We go through temptations and trials, through weakness and illness, we cry out to God for help—but nothing seems to change. It may be that we have taken on an assignment or a ministry according to God’s will. But suddenly we face a severe dilemma, we feel weak, we may have made a wrong decision that causes us distress, we cry out to God, yet everything remains unchanged. The storm rages, our insecurity grows – yet God does not seem to respond.

In circumstances when our faith is being severely challenged and Satan seeks to bring despair or doubt, we may be thinking: “Did God really want me to do this? Is this really His leading? If it were, wouldn’t God help and relieve this distress?” How did Job feel in the greatest crisis of his life? Who encouraged him? Who comforted his shattered soul? Yet, Job believed God. Job placed his full trust in the mighty hand of the omniscient Creator. But Job was misunderstood by his friends and was even despised. We may find ourselves in similar situations—times when we can only do one thing: trust unwaveringly in God’s faithfulness. Once we have resolved to do this, then we just need to remain faithful to the one who called us, and continue to occupy the role He placed us in, and do

our part there, even if we don’t know what tomorrow will bring.

Asaph says: “*But God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever*” (Psalm 73:26). He does not say this at the beginning of Psalm 73. The verse comes at the end of a long journey full of pain, temptation, perplexity and disappointment. Asaph had been distressed and endured much when he finally concluded: “*But it is good for me to draw near to God; I have put my trust in the Lord GOD, that I may declare all Your works*” (Psalm 73:28).

A crisis of faith is not the opposite of faith. It is not unbelief. It is a time when personal faith is put to the test. This is when heroes of faith counter their own weakness, inability, helplessness, and ignorance with a “nevertheless,” a firm resolve of “no matter what.” Faith may be weak, but the important thing is that it remain firm. Those who stand firm in such circumstances—often it is just a case of “not giving up”—experience God in a deeper and more powerful way. The true hero, our heavenly Father, becomes visible in the end. He is the one who carried us through by His grace. We are weak, but He is strong. He is the one who gave us the power to overcome and remain faithful. So, be faithful and have courage in every situation, because HE is faithful.

*Hermann Vogt  
Gifhorn, Germany*



## *When Spiritual Pillars of Faith Fall or Stumble—Crisis or Opportunity?*

**A**lmost all of us, regardless of our age group, look up to people who are role models for us. In particular, those who are still young in the faith, look for role models to imitate. This is quite natural and serves as a support for a “newborn” in the faith. In his letter to Timothy, Paul writes: “But be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity” (1 Timothy 4:12). Most certainly, many looked to Timothy as their role model.

It can be very helpful to have a good role model. But what happens if this support suddenly disappears from our lives? There are many reasons why this can happen. For instance, it can be distance that separates our lives and connections. Perhaps as a young person

you start studying further away, where you are no longer supported by your faithful family, church or circle of friends. Suddenly you are on your own and, figuratively speaking, no longer feel “the ground under your feet” in your faith. You are in danger of losing your spiritual bearings and getting lost. Even if you have been serving Jesus for a long time and are seemingly firm in your faith, you can get into situations like this. You then feel like a single coal that has been taken from the embers and must now continue to burn alone. Perhaps someone very close to you has suddenly been torn from your life and you ask yourself: How will things go on now? These situations can become a strong test of our faith and cause us to waver.



Quite early in my walk of faith, some practical experiences taught me that we must not depend on other people to further our spiritual life. People come and go in our lives. Stable long-term friendships and relationships are very valuable and important. Nevertheless, we must keep ourselves from becoming dependent on other people, especially in regard to our spiritual lives. As human beings, we are subject to changing circumstances and can never offer each other support that will last forever. In any case, such support must cease at death.

In addition, people are often fickle when it comes to their opinions or beliefs. We see a clear example of this in Jesus' last days. While a large crowd cheered on Palm Sunday as He entered Jerusalem, just a few days later there were loud cries for His death: "Crucify Him, crucify Him!" Out of fear or due to the influence of the Pharisees, there was no more cheering from the crowd. Only a very few people remained faithful to Jesus right up to the cross. People are impressionable and can turn their backs on convictions that they were apparently still firmly convinced of just yesterday. Remember: even the best role models can fall, those you would never have thought possible. Yes, people can disappoint. When strong, influential leaders suddenly take a different spiritual path or even turn their backs on God, it can shake those who have relied on that person and built their lives around them, leading to a crisis of faith. Why is it that even strong role models can fall? There are certainly many reasons for this. I think the main reason, which includes all other factors, is that as long as we live here on earth, we are exposed to the dangers of a fallen world and the powers of the devil. He fights to the end to take souls away from God. We know that the devil is a lying, dangerous creature who is very good at disguising himself. He spares no one. That is why we need to be vigilant to the end!

In all this human fickleness and impermanence, however, there is One who is eternally unchanging: Jesus Christ. We can build our lives securely on Him. Nothing else can offer us such a secure hold as we have in Jesus Christ. Already Moses, David, and Isaiah experienced that God is an eternal rock. "Trust in the LORD forever," for in Him, "is everlasting strength" (Isaiah 26:4). This characteristic of God has never changed. Hebrews 13:8 says: "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever." People may be unfaithful, yet He remains faithful.

He is also a reliable teacher who, through the Holy Spirit, will always show us the right way to the right goal. Particularly in this day and age, when we have online access to all kinds of beliefs, there is a danger of inner confusion and instability. While gifted teachers with leadership potential can distract our focus from Christ—either to themselves or to the world (a more comfortable path)—the Holy Spirit will always direct our focus to Jesus Christ and His Word. He will always show us the goal, eternity, and give us clear direction.

If we have found this secure footing in Jesus Christ, nothing can separate us from Him and His love. "For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:38). Even if everything around us is shaken, He remains! To revisit the illustration of the single piece of coal that threatens to go out: as long as the fire of His love burns in you, nothing and no one can extinguish it.

In conclusion: When those who have been a support for you leave your life, it does not necessarily need to lead to a crisis. Use such opportunities to become even more grounded in God and your faith. Build your faith on Jesus Christ and His Word alone. If you were brought up in a Christian home, do not rely too heavily on the faith of your parents or grandparents, however helpful and valuable it may be. Don't be a people-follower, but discover faith in Christ and the truths of God's Word for yourself. This will give you a rock-solid foundation that will last forever.

One song says:

*How deep can I fall when everything crumbles?  
When bridges and pillars disappear?  
How long do I have to walk in this world  
to find safe and solid ground?  
Never deeper than in God's hands,  
never longer than in His presence.  
I never build my life on sand,  
when I walk every step with Him.*

God grant that we may always know that we are safe in His hands!

*Dina Grötzinger  
Eppingen, Germany*

# The Toolbox of the Christian Faith

**T**ools are essential to any occupation. Whether a woodworker, gardener, automobile mechanic, bricklayer, or accountant, the ability to produce an end-product relies heavily upon the worker's tools. Tools also come in a variety of sizes and shapes, each designed for a specific purpose. Furthermore, through study and experience, the worker must train to use his various tools effectively and efficiently.

The practical Christian life is in some ways not unlike an occupation, in which the Christian has tools with which he must work. As an employer might provide the necessary tools for an employee, God has provided each Christian with the necessary tools for the Christian walk. 2 Peter 1:3 says, "His divine power has given to us all things that *pertain* to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue" Paul, in Philippians 2:12 says, "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." And in 2 Timothy 2:15, Paul says, "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." The Christian faith is not a passive, inactive faith, it is an engaging active faith—a faith wherein God works in the life of the individual, and one wherein the individual works as a worker in God's Kingdom. As Kingdom workers, we have all the necessary tooling provided to us by our King. What are these tools we find in the toolbox of our faith?

First, God has given to us the tool of *self-examination*. Much like a diagnostic tool, self-examination is the capacity to test the internal workings of our hearts to determine whether or not we are in a right relationship to God. In 2 Corinthians 13:5, Paul says to Christians, "Examine yourselves *as to* whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves."

We live in a world full of influences and philosophies that can sometimes weaken our faith or divert us from a focused faith in Jesus Christ. Thankfully God has given us a tool whereby we can diagnose the strength and the focus of our faith—a tool called

"self-examination"—an important tool in the Christian toolbox.

Second, God has given to us the tool of *belief*. Much is realized in the Christian life through believing in the power of God. Prayer, for example, when accompanied by belief, is very powerful and very effective in overcoming obstacles, doubts, fears and temptations in the Christian walk. Hebrews 11:6 says, "But 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." Belief is the tool that moves a person's heart from trusting in self to trusting in God, and with God, nothing is impossible.

Third, God has provided us with the tool of *prayer*. Similar to belief, prayer is a powerful tool in that it moves the sovereign hand of God to intervene into otherwise hopeless situations. Prayer plugs the struggling human heart into a divine source of power. James 5:16b–18 says, "The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much. Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain; and it did not rain on the land for three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth produced its fruit." When building bridges over and through difficult experiences of life, prayer is an essential tool.

Fourth, God has given to us the tool of *thankfulness*. This tool may seem insignificant at first, but when used often, it maintains a God-pleasing alignment of the heart and attitude in the Christian life. An unthankful heart, combined with an attitude of cynicism and negativity will render any Kingdom worker ineffective. Christians who allow themselves to slip into mindsets of ungratefulness and negativity often do much damage, both in their own lives and in the Church. In 1 Thessalonians 5:18, Paul says, "in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you." Thankfulness services our faith as an oil-can services a transmission. Without adequate oil, a transmission grows loud, squeaky, and eventually in-





efficient. Without thankfulness, Christians grow loud, squeaky and eventually inefficient in building effective testimonies that reflect Christlikeness and impact the world for Him. The oil-can of thankfulness is an essential tool in the Christian's toolbox.

Fifth, God has given to us the amazing tool of *serving*—that is, the capacity to serve God, and serve others. We can call this the tool of delivery. The tool of serving enables the Christian to convert that which is internal to that which is external. In other words, serving is the tool that delivers that which we believe into that which we do. We believe in loving God and loving others—serving is the tool that delivers that love into action. We believe in loyalty and faithfulness—serving is the tool that delivers that loyalty and faithfulness into our relationships with God and with people. 1 John 3:18 says, “My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth.” Without serving, the Christian faith would be a faith of

mere words and good intentions without any mechanism of delivering the faith to the lost and dying world. Thankfully, God has equipped His people of the faith with this necessary tool of serving—the tool which, in the end, delivers Christ to the world and builds God's Kingdom.

Dear Christian, you have no reason to ever feel ill-equipped as a worker in God's Kingdom. God has equipped your faith with all the necessary tools needed for a life pleasing to Him. You are adequately supplied to “Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling,” and to deliver the faith to those around you. As God continues His work in you, continue on in your journey of working for Him. Together, “We are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us” (2 Corinthians 5:20).

Rod Tribiger  
Kelowna, BC



## Why Do I Feel So Sad?

**I**n many ways, my life played out like a novel. As a teenager, I had the privilege of accepting Jesus as my Savior. As a young man, I married the woman of my dreams. After completing my studies, I quickly found a job in my field and shortly thereafter landed my dream position right in my hometown. Our first child was born healthy. Three years later, our second child arrived. The joy was overwhelming.

Our local church was planning renovation work, and I was happy to volunteer my free time to support the project for the next few years. The construction team had outstanding helpers, and many great ideas were successfully implemented. And during this time of apparent success, one evening my wife said something along the lines of: “With the way things are going right now, I can’t imagine continuing to live together.”

At that moment, my emotions were on a rollercoaster—surprise, fear, and anger surged one after another.

I ran through possible responses in my mind. “What is that supposed to mean? I’m working so hard, and then I hear something like this? She can’t say that to me. If she wants to leave, let her go! But do I want that? Do I want to give up my young family before I’ve even turned 30?”

My wife calmly and clearly explained what had led her to make that statement. Over time, we had drifted apart and were now merely functioning side by side. I was irritable, impatient with the children, and brief in my conversations with her. At first, she had subtly hinted at it, but I was too busy to understand. Instead of things improving, the problems worsened and became more obvious. I only had limited time for the family, but I was always available for my job or the church construction project. She wanted me to get help. But what would that look like?

Through friends, I had heard about a Christian counselor and career coach and decided to reach out.

Since coaching was significantly more expensive, I opted for counseling. I couldn't deny my wife's points, but in my mind I thought: "I just need to optimize myself more, structure my schedule better, and work more efficiently. Then things in my personal life will settle down again."

What started as a plan for three to four sessions turned into over two years of counseling (with some breaks). I was in the middle of a life crisis—a "burn-out"—and I didn't even realize it at first. My mental health rapidly deteriorated. Every task became an effort.

I reduced my volunteer commitments and was forced to take more time for recovery. Conversations at home and in the church became increasingly difficult. Social activities with friends turned into a challenge. I started breaking into a sweat reading children's books aloud or answering my kids' questions.

For years, I worked Monday to Friday and often spent the entire weekend in bed. I couldn't go to church on Sundays, and physical work was out of the question. But where was God in all this, and what about my faith?

I had always been active in church life—choir, orchestra, recording and sound for services, and of course my efforts in the church renovations. When I had a task, I thrived in it and felt closer to God. Now, worn out and with no motivation or energy to do anything "good," I felt distant from Him. I had made the quality of my relationship with Jesus Christ dependent on how much I was doing for Him. Now I was in a situation where I couldn't do anything anymore. I could barely earn our daily bread. Reading the Bible or praying for long stretches was nearly impossible.

Through counseling, I was gradually able to adjust my expectations—of myself, of others, and of God. Jesus died for me, regardless of the number of good or

bad things I did. He gave everything for me out of love. The message was clear and simple. But did it apply to me, when I was overwhelmed and sad nearly every day? Is it Christian to feel no joy or motivation?

These were questions I didn't have answers to.

By now I understood intellectually that my desire for approval—from both God and people—had exhausted my body and mind so severely that they simply burned out. It was understandable that my body was reacting this way, and yet the situation felt nearly hopeless.

In February 2021, a day after my birthday celebration with family, I drove to a store alone to return a gift. After I was done, I sat in the car and didn't want to

go home. I knew my wife and kids were there. They would want to talk or play with me. And I . . . I couldn't do it anymore.

I didn't want to go home, so I stayed in the large parking lot and tried to distract myself with my phone. Hours later, I stepped out of the car and looked up at the now dark sky. Internally, I cried out to God: "Why am I

so sad?" And into that darkness, I heard: "I love you!"

Jesus loves me? The one who can't get anything right anymore? Who's afraid to go home? Who has no strength left for his own family?

This is the very person to whom Jesus says: "I love you!"

Mental and physical weakness can have a powerful influence on us. But what the Bible proclaims remains true regardless of our condition.

Whether your life is picture perfect or sorrow feels like it's crushing you, Jesus shows through the Bible how much He loves you.

To you, too, He says: "I love YOU!"

*Richard Kimmerle  
Herford, Germany*

*Whether your life is  
picture perfect or sorrow  
feels like it's crushing  
you, Jesus shows  
through the Bible how  
much He loves you.*



## *Can a Crisis Be a Blessing? Biblical Wisdom Tells Us Yes!*



God loves us deeply, but he has a bigger view of our lives than we can imagine. Sometimes He sends His people a crisis in order to bless others. Job was severely tested and faced a tremendous crisis. In one day, he lost all of his children, much of his wealth, and he experienced great devastation. Then he lost his health and was in great agony. It was so severe, that most of us likely can't identify with such great grief. Job never found out why this all happened to him. Yet, God knew that he would pass the test. He would never have allowed this to happen to Job if he doubted his steadfastness and the trust he knew Job had in Him.

We read "Then the LORD said to Satan, 'Have you considered My servant Job, that *there is* none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil?' So Satan answered the LORD and said, 'Does Job fear God for nothing? . . . But now, stretch out Your hand and touch all that he has, and he

will surely curse You to Your face!'" (Job 1:8–11).

Well, that may have been the case for the great majority of people—it's easy to question God's master plan when we are grieving or in pain—"but not for My servant Job." God knew this and allowed this trial to come over Job. The outcome of this trial? God richly blessed Job and brought him incredible prosperity afterwards but, in addition, Job's crisis was a tremendous blessing for others. How many people over the thousands of years since have taken great courage and comfort from this story! Many who found themselves in a crisis, have found comfort and thought, "Maybe I have it bad, but Job had it worse, and Job persevered." They follow his example and persevere. People sometimes think bad things happen to them as punishment, but by Job's example, they may realize that the crisis they are in has nothing to do with punishment. Even the blameless face crises at times. Jesus knows our sorrow and was a "man of many sorrows" too; we are not alone

in our trials and dark times. God knows all things and He is with those who are his own. He is with them even in the dark valleys. And as with Job, every crisis will have an end.

We know that Jesus was tempted but remained without sin. He faced the greatest crisis of his life in the garden of Gethsemane and up to the time of the crucifixion. Again, His crisis was a gift for us. The blessing of His crisis is that we can obtain salvation. Jesus was exalted and is seated at the right hand of God. As in the case of Job, His crisis is a blessing, still thousands of years later. Indeed, the word blessing is too weak to describe the eternal life and benefit mankind has through the sacrifice of Christ.

“But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone. For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings” (Hebrews 2:9–10).

“Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things *pertaining* to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted” (Hebrews 2:17–18).

Let us consider another crisis. God tested Abraham and asked him to sacrifice his beloved son, Isaac (Genesis 22). That was perhaps the hardest thing that Abraham had ever done. All the crises in his life were easier to handle than this matter. Any of us who are parents know the deep love we have for our children. What an unspeakable trial! And yet Abraham passed the test. This was not a temptation because:

“God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone” (James 1:13).

What is the difference between a temptation and a test?

1. A temptation is an attempt to snare you or to make you fall. Example: A fisherman tempts a fish by the lure attached to his fishing rod. It is intended to fool the fish and catch it.

2. A test is there to teach or to foster growth, and can be a gift—even when it doesn’t look like one. As a teacher, I did not give tests to my students until I had taught them and was confident that they could pass the test.

God knew Abraham was able to pass the test He gave him and wouldn’t have given him the test if Abraham was not ready for it. Abraham knew that through Isaac he would become a great nation. Yet Isaac had no children yet. So how could God’s promise come to pass if he sacrificed Isaac? Abraham did not know, but he believed God would do what He promised. He trusted in God’s guidance and His plan.

The Hebrew writer tells us that “By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten *son*, of whom it was said, ‘In Isaac your seed shall be called,’ concluding that God *was* able to raise him up, even from the dead” (Hebrews 11:17–19).

The Jewish Rabbis call this story the Binding of Isaac. God did not condone the sacrificing of humans. We read of King Ahaz that “he walked in the way of the kings of Israel; indeed he made his son pass through the fire, according to the abominations of the nations whom the LORD had cast out from before the children of Israel” (2 Kings 16:3). The sacrificing of humans was an abomination to God. So, this story of Abraham makes no sense without understanding it as a metaphor and foreshadowing of Jesus Christ, who—as the Son of God, Son of Abraham, and Son of David—paid the ultimate price by being the sacrifice for our sins. Because of Abraham passing his test, a great blessing has come to all nations.

Even today, the way God’s people handle crises can be a great blessing to others. After the well-known Canadian hockey player, Paul Henderson, was diagnosed with chronic lymphocytic leukemia, a rare, often deadly form of cancer, he said that he is certain that the Lord would not have allowed him to get this cancer if God knew he couldn’t handle it. He also said his illness has allowed him to talk freely about his faith. His attitude in this health crisis is a blessing and encouragement to many people. How could your own struggles be understood or contextualized as a vessel for learning, healing, and blessing for those around you?

If you are in a crisis, commit it and yourself to the Lord. Know that He is with you in your pain, but that He also has a greater plan for you and there is a lesson in every valley you walk through. Ask Him to give you the strength to pass the test and be a blessing to others despite the dire circumstances.

Gerhard Mielke  
Hamilton, ON

# Joy in Suffering: Purpose in Pain

In the face of suffering, we often ask, “Why is this happening to me?” or “Is there any purpose in this pain?” The Apostle Paul, writing from prison in Philippians 1, offers a surprising perspective—joy in suffering. Despite being chained to Roman guards, with an uncertain future, Paul speaks of rejoicing, offering a profound example of how pain can be purposeful.

## **Suffering advances the gospel (Philippians 1: 12–14)**

When we face hardship, it’s difficult to see how it could be used for anything good. But Paul, even in prison, saw his suffering as an opportunity to advance the gospel. He witnessed to his guards, and through them, the message of Christ was spread throughout the Roman Empire. Additionally, Paul’s imprisonment encouraged other Christians to speak boldly the Word of God, despite the fears they may be facing.

An example of this “joy in suffering” is Corrie ten Boom, who, during her imprisonment in a Nazi concentration camp, led Bible studies and shared the gospel with fellow prisoners. Even the hardship of the fleas in their barracks, which protected them from guards, played a role in advancing God’s purposes.

In our own lives, suffering may not seem like an opportunity, but God can use it to share His love with others. Instead of asking, “Why is this happening to me?” we can ask, “How can God use this?”

## **Suffering refines our focus on Christ (Philippians 1: 15–21)**

Suffering has a way of stripping away distractions, forcing us to focus on what truly matters. Paul, despite his circumstances, remained focused on Christ. When others preached Christ out of envy or rivalry, Paul rejoiced because Christ was being preached. His per-

spective was radically different—his life wasn’t about comfort or reputation, but about Christ.

Paul famously declared, “For to me, to live *is* Christ, and to die *is* gain” (Philippians 1: 21). His suffering refined his focus, showing that Christ was the one unshakable foundation in his life. When we experience hardship, it can burn away distractions, leaving us with what truly matters—our relationship with Christ.

Real-life examples, such as those who face health struggles, loss, or rejection, show that suffering can force us to reassess our priorities. It can make us more reliant on God and more focused on eternal things. In times of crisis, we can ask, “What is truly important?”

## **Suffering strengthens faith—our own and others (Philippians 1: 27–30)**

Paul’s suffering not only shaped his own faith but also strengthened the faith of others. He encouraged the Philippians to stand firm in their faith and not be frightened by opposition. Suffering, as Paul explains, is a gift granted on Christ’s behalf—not only to believe but also to suffer for Him. This perspective on suffering changes how we view our trials.

### **1. Suffering teaches us to rely on God**

Through suffering, we are reminded that we are not in control. Paul experienced this when God told him, “My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness” (2 Corinthians 12:9). Suffering humbles us and draws us closer to God, showing us that our strength is found in His grace.

### **2. Suffering encourages others in their faith**

When others see us endure suffering with faith, it strengthens their own resolve. Paul’s imprisonment



emboldened other believers to preach the gospel without fear. Similarly, Corrie ten Boom's example of faith in the midst of unspeakable hardship inspired countless others.

### **3. Suffering is temporary—glory is eternal**

Suffering can feel overwhelming, but Paul reminds us that it is temporary, while God's glory is eternal. In Romans 8:18, he writes, "I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us." Suffering, though painful, is not the end. It is the pathway to eternal glory with Christ.

An illustration of this is childbirth, where the intense pain of labor is soon forgotten when the joy of holding the newborn takes over. Similarly, the temporary suffering we endure now will be overshadowed by the eternal joy that awaits.

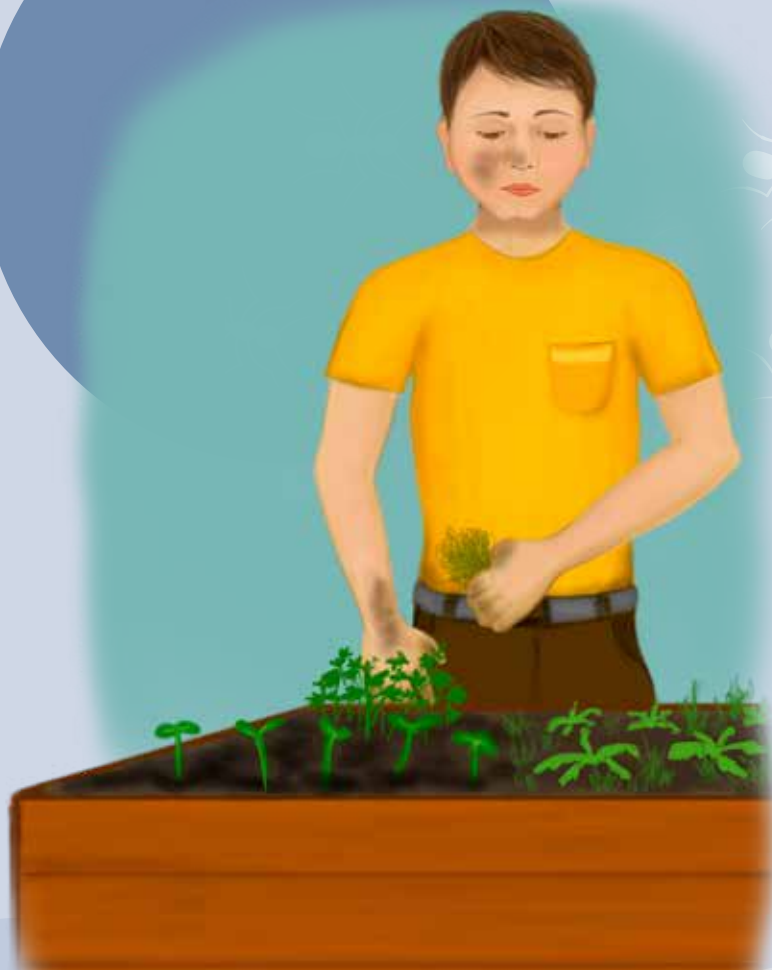
Suffering is an inevitable part of life, but it doesn't need to lead to despair. Paul teaches us that suffering can bring joy when we:

1. Trust that our pain has a purpose.
2. Shift our perspective to focus on Christ rather than our circumstances.
3. Recognize that our faith in hardship can inspire others.

Instead of asking, "Why is this happening to me?" we can ask, "God, how can You use this for Your glory?" By choosing to trust in God, we can find joy, not because life is perfect, but because He is. Through our trials, God refines us, strengthens others, and positions us for eternal glory. Let us choose joy today, trusting that God is working in every moment of our lives.

*Ruben Reisdorf  
Aylmer, ON*





## Who Cares?

**“M**om, mom, guess what . . .” Nicholas excitedly came running into the house. He had a streak of dirt on his forehead and black crescents under his fingernails. Mom interrupted her work and asked: “What’s wrong? Why are you so late, and why are you so dirty?”

“You know our class has a plot in the school garden,” Nicholas explained. “The teacher asked who could look after it today. Maik volunteered. And guess what! During the break today, he suddenly said he didn’t feel like it after all. He wanted to go to the playground with his friends instead.”

“Oh, that’s not nice at all,” said Mom. “Then why did he volunteer?”

“Because nobody else wanted to do it,” Nicholas muttered meekly. “I didn’t feel like it either. I’ve already helped in our garden.”

Mom asked: “And what about the garden now?”

Nicholas sighed deeply. “I had a bad feeling all day.

Someone must look after the poor plants, otherwise they’ll wither. That’s why I watered them and pulled the weeds. That’s why I came home late. I’m sorry, Mom.”

When Mom heard this, she was not angry with Nicholas at all. She hugged him and said, “You know, Jesus told a parable in the Bible about two brothers. A father asked his sons to go into the vineyard. The first son replied, ‘I don’t want to’, but later he was sorry and went after all. The second son said he would go, but then he didn’t. Jesus asked his listeners which son had done what the father wanted.”

Mom continued: “If you agree to a task, you should fulfill it faithfully. Your class is responsible for the plot and must take care of it, even if you don’t feel like it. I’m glad you listened to your conscience and were sorry you wanted to dodge the work. Now, please go and wash your hands and face.”

Nicholas was relieved. He was glad Mom was not angry and decided in the future he would always do his chores straight away.

Irene Wuchrer



## Learning from the Ants

**H**ave you ever observed an ant? Ants are very interesting animals! They are insects and live in large groups called “colonies.” Each ant has an important task: some ants protect the nest, others look after the larvae (the newly hatched baby insects), and still others collect food.

When an ant is looking for food, it leaves a scent trail. This is how it finds its way back and shows other ants where to go. If it discovers food, such as a piece of fruit, it tries to carry it into the nest. Ants are incredibly strong and can carry hundreds of times their own weight! However, if the food is too heavy, the ants running behind them come to the rescue.

Together, the group then manages to carry the large piece into the nest.

Ants are very industrious and are even mentioned as role models in the Bible. In Proverbs 6:6, we read: “Go to the ant, you sluggard! Consider her ways

and be wise.” In other words, we can learn a lot from ants!

Imagine you have a difficult task—perhaps at home, at school, or in church. You’re trying really hard, but somehow, it’s not working, or it’s just too difficult to do alone. You can ask other people for help, for example, your parents, siblings, friends, or someone from your Sunday school group. They will certainly be happy to help you, and it is often easier together than alone. The reverse also applies: if you see that someone needs support, offer them your help!

Most importantly, we have a heavenly Father whom we can ask for help at any time. Whether you need to complete a task, write a paper, or make a present for your mother, you can ask Him for help beforehand. And if things get difficult in between, just take the time to pray again. You will see: Often, a way will open up, or God will send someone to help you.

And don’t forget to say “thank you” when the task is complete! God’s Word says: “Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify Me” (Psalm 50: 15).

Irene Wuchrer

*“And let us not  
grow weary  
while doing good.”  
Galatians 6:9*







# Overcoming Fear with God's Help

**A**s a pastor, I have learned over the years that when people are afraid, they tend to do things they would not normally do. They are tempted to fight their perceived threats or to flee their circumstances. As Bible readers and followers of Christ, we are called to overcome the things that want to make us afraid. I recently saw a social media post that stated that the phrase “do not be afraid” appears 365 times in Scripture. What a good reminder that God wants us to overcome fear every day of our lives. This would be an impossible task on our own, but God promises to help us overcome the different kinds of fears that want to rob us of our joy in the Lord. Let’s look at a few examples together.

Fear often comes from uncertainty about the unknown in our future. It’s natural for young people to be concerned about their future, since most of their life has yet to be lived. I’m reminded of Joshua standing at the Jordan River, looking over to the other side. God wanted him to lead His people over the Jordan and into battle against the nations of Canaan. Can we imagine the thoughts and feelings Joshua would have had looking over that river, not sure what he was about to face, or how he was going to do everything God expected of him? God saw his uncertainty and said to him in Joshua 1: 5–7a: “No man shall *be able*

## YOUTH PAGES

*"I sought the LORD, and He heard me,  
and delivered me from all my fears."*

*Psalm 34: 4*

to stand before you all the days of your life; as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you nor forsake you. Be strong and of good courage, for to this people you shall divide as an inheritance the land which I swore to their fathers to give them. Only be strong and very courageous." God promised to be with Joshua and help him overcome the unknown battles he was about to face. If you're a child of God through Jesus' salvation, God promises to help you overcome any unknown challenge that might be coming your way.

Some people are concerned about finding and keeping a job. Many people these days are being laid off or being asked to work less hours. Young people are especially vulnerable because they are new to the job market and are often the first ones to be let go. Employment uncertainty can make us fearful. Satan plays with this fear and tries to burden us with a weight that we were never meant to carry. He wants us to forget that God is our Provider who promises to take care of us. Jesus says in Matthew 6: 30–34, "Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, *will He* not much more *clothe* you, O you of little faith? Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble." God is asking us to bring our worries to Him, to place Him and His work first in our lives, and to trust in His perfect provision for each day.

Fear is also a fruit of sin in one's heart. When Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden, they hid themselves from the presence of God (Genesis 3: 8). When asked by God why they were hiding, they blamed it on their nakedness. But in reality, they were afraid to be in God's presence with sin in their hearts. They knew they were unworthy and were fearful of punishment. God is the Great Judge. There is only one thing that can get rid of this kind of fear, and that God's love. John writes in 1 John 4: 17–19, "Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as He is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love. We love Him because He first loved us." Because God loves us, He gave His Son for us. Because Jesus loves us, He died for us. Because the Holy Spirit loves us, He wants to fill our lives and help us to live holy lives. Once we have accepted God's love in Jesus' forgiveness, and have experienced His cleansing, this fear of judgement is removed, and is replaced with peace. Jesus says in John 14: 27, "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

In this uncertain time that we live in, Satan wants to rob our hearts of the peace and love of God, by sowing fear. We cannot allow him to do this. The Lord is with His people, and He promises to remain with us, no matter what comes our way. Let's trust in His provision, and root ourselves deeply in His love and peace.

*David Knelsen  
Hamilton, ON*



## The Aging Christian

I have had some heart-breaking discussions with my elderly brothers and sisters in Christ. One brother stated that he did not understand God. He had followed God and obeyed Him for many years, and now, in old age, he could not understand why God was allowing him to suffer. A sister stated that she was being attacked so viciously by Satan that she could hardly remain faithful to Christ. Another elderly person asked the question: “Why is God punishing me?” Why is this happening to the elderly Christians? Why, so close to the finish line, are they facing such battles? In this article I would like to encourage the elderly to remain focused on Christ and to remain faithful to Him.

Due to the many discussions I have had with the elderly, I have concluded that Satan is doing what he can to destroy their faith. Satan wants them to loosen their hold on Christ. He is also doing what he can to get them to quit, just before the finish line. I think it is important that we realize, as we get older, that the attacks of Satan will only increase. Satan, the liar, will only intensify his lies, so the elderly will give up.

As we get older, it becomes increasingly vital for us to cling to Christ and the promises we have in the Bible. I would like to share some verses from God’s Word to encourage our older brothers and sisters to remain faithful in their walk with Christ. We read in Psalm 92:12–15: “The righteous shall flourish like a palm tree, he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon. Those who are planted in the house of the LORD shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall still bear fruit in old age; they shall be fresh and flourishing, to declare that the LORD is upright; He is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in Him.”

As the Christian gets older, it is important to stay fresh and green. This means staying connected to Jesus Christ through the reading of Scripture and through prayer. This also means remaining involved in the service of Christ. To be older does not mean to be doing less. To be older may mean to do different things, or to do things differently. Perhaps instead of inviting families for dinner, the older Christian could take the family out for dinner, or even give a gift card, and bless the family in this way.

In Psalm 92, the writer states: “they shall still bear fruit in old age.” Getting older does not mean just observing or standing on the sidelines. Getting older, for the Christ follower, means to bear fruit that honors God. I like the picture of the Christian being in school. All of us have to learn. We could say that the older Christian is in “high school.” Being in high school means that many lessons have been learned, but also that there are still many lessons to be learned. This life stage also gives opportunity to teach the younger Christians how to be a Christ follower. For example, the older Christian can model the fruit of patience. This is important, since we live in a world of “hurry.” We can show younger Christians how to take time when making important decisions. We can explain that God’s timing and God’s schedule may not be in sync with our time, and that we need to learn patience. The older Christian can also teach patience in the daily routines of life, like standing in a line-up or waiting patiently at the doctor’s office. There is much godly fruit that the older Christian can bring forth, and in this way, encourage younger Christians.

In Psalm 92:15, we read: “declare that the LORD is upright.” The older Christian, through years of experience, can proclaim the goodness of God. The older Christian knows the importance of words, and that words have great power. When words are used wisely and carefully, they will be a great blessing. Grandparents can encourage, can speak truth lovingly, and correct. For the older Christian, it is important to know that words can affect their children and grandchildren for life. I remember my grandmother talking about me as a young boy and saying that I was a good boy. I needed to hear that encouragement. Paul, writing to the Ephesian church states this: “Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is

helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen” (Ephesians 4:29, NIV). Children and grandchildren need to hear uplifting and upbuilding words from the older generation. Younger Christians need to hear how God has been faithful. They need to hear how to avoid some of the dangers in life, and how wonderful it is to follow Jesus through the highs and lows in life.

What the writer of Psalm 92 also wants to emphasize is this: there will be difficulties and dark valleys, but there is no quitting for a Christian. There is constant nourishment in the house of God. The older Christian has learned where to find that spiritual nourishment, and retreats there regularly. We can anticipate that there will be changes that come as we age. There may be a wheelchair in our future. There may be some physical changes that will happen, as this is often the way of life.

For the older Christian, our resolution is clear: we will cling to God! Leaving behind a legacy of a God-filled life is so valuable. I would like to encourage you, if you are noticing how the years are flying by and how life is changing, to commit your future to God. We do not know what life is going to bring us. We do know, however, that God will be there for us every step of the way. Let’s remember the words that Jesus spoke to Peter: “when you are old you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry *you* where you do not wish” (John 21:18b). When this happens to us, let’s remember that we are never alone, that God is always with us, because God has promised never to forsake us. My prayer for you, my older brother and sister in Christ, is that these thoughts in Psalm 92:12–15 would be a description of your life.

*Sieg Schuler  
Calgary, AB*

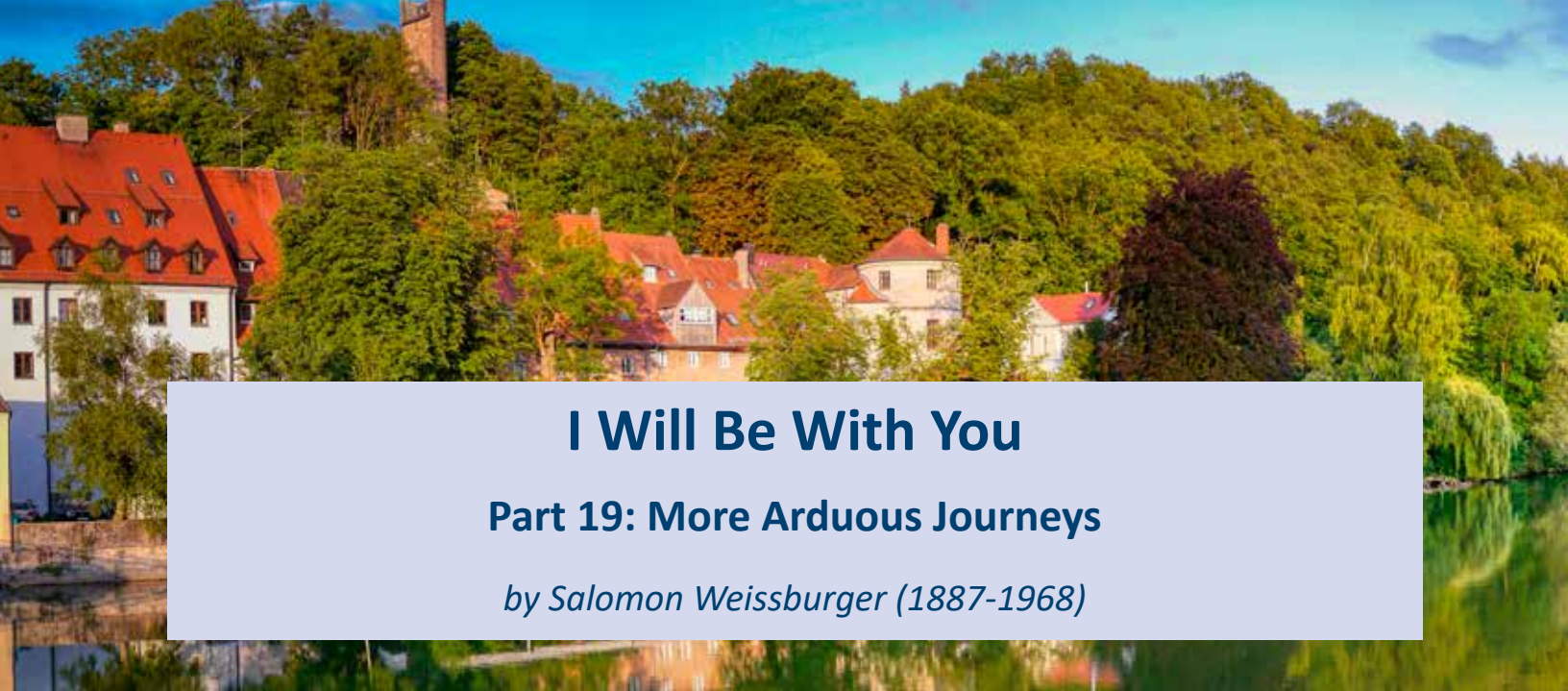
July 18-20, 2025  
50th Anniversary Celebration  
Neustädt, Mexico

July 21-25, 2025  
Bible Course  
Neustädt, Mexico

August 30-31, 2025  
Church Conference in Edmonton

August 15- 20, 2025  
Camp Meeting in Blaubeuren, Germany  
Registration and Information:  
[www.lagerversammlung.de](http://www.lagerversammlung.de)





# I Will Be With You

## Part 19: More Arduous Journeys

*by Salomon Weissburger (1887-1968)*

When the rainy season in Misiones came to an end, we returned to Leandro N. Alem, where the Church of God congregation was still in its infancy. Nonetheless, our work there was blessed by the Lord. During this time, other churches frequently asked me to bring sermons for them as well. In one instance, some 300 people had gathered for the closing service of a longer series of meetings. This service was taking place in a big tobacco warehouse owned by a businessman named Wieler. The heat was horrendous, but the Lord gave me so much inspiration that I spoke for three hours about the Kingdom of God to this diverse crowd of people from various religious communities.

These trips always involved great effort and cost. They were unfortunately not free of danger either, so we also experienced some accidents. However, the Lord was always with us and helped us wonderfully, protecting us and providing for us.

In the early years, not one trip in Brazil ended without something happening. Once, on a train ride from Jaraguá to Porto União, the locomotive derailed twice; another time, taking the train from Rio das Antas to Porto União, we encountered a few freight-train wagons blocking the tracks several stations past Caçador. On that trip, we were also carrying bags of flour, recently produced and generously given to us by our sisters and brothers in Rio das Antas, who knew that those of us in Neu-Hoffnung only had access to bread made from corn flour. Although we greatly appreciated the gift, it caused us some trouble, too, when we had

to unload all our luggage and carry it past the stalled freight train.

The plan was then to load it onto a relief train that was expected to approach from the other side to take us onward to Porto União. As we were dragging our freight over, someone started a fire next to a stretch of open track so that we travelers could stay warm despite the cold night air—a real concern at an altitude of 1200 meters. We had just settled in to wait when we were suddenly instructed to take our original train back to Caçador, where we had all eaten dinner!

Not being able to speak the local language, we allowed ourselves to be persuaded to go back. That meant dragging all our luggage and our gifted flour back, past the accident site, to the train we had just left. We did so, only to retrace our steps yet another time towards morning in order to meet the relief train. It was hard work and almost overwhelming, but the Lord gave me grace and strength, both in body and soul, to overcome this adversity and maintain a victorious soul.

However, all this back and forth meant that we reached Porto União too late, missing the connecting train, which only ran once a day. That added another day to our trip and, crucially, another night's accommodations, which represented a significant strain on our meager wallets. We finally reached Neu-Hoffnung after five days instead of four.

### **God's protection**

On another trip from Curitiba to Porto União, we were



taking a bus through rainy weather on a narrow road. The bus driver kept up a high speed and at one point, while trying to overtake a car, went off the side of the road. Two somersaults later, the bus came to a rest, five meters deep in a ravine. Before the accident, my wife had just enough time to shout, “Now we’re done for!” And I had just enough time to reply, “Hold on tight!” The next thing I knew, we were awakening from unconsciousness in the ravine. Some passengers had already climbed out when we came to, so we grabbed our luggage and glasses before following them, and a helpful person helped us climb up the steep slope, back to the road. A passing truck driver was kind enough to give us a ride from the scene of the accident to Porto União. We felt fine until we went to bed that evening. Then, we began feeling the pain. Both of us had severely aching sides, suggesting either broken or bruised ribs; I also had a foot injury. The delayed response was probably due to the excitement and adrenaline finally wearing off. In the end, we recovered, although it took a few weeks.

We can only thank God for His preservation and protection on the many journeys and dangers we encountered during our missionary service here in South America. That accident made clear yet again that we cannot count on getting a last-minute chance to find peace with God. We need to be ready to meet Him at any time!

We experienced another instance of God’s wonderful help during a trip to the interior of the state of Sao Paulo, early on in our time in Brazil.

Our destination was the congregation in Lettonia. At that time, the trip from Rio das Antas to Lettonia took two-and-a-half days, in this case from Tuesday evening to Friday morning. Being new to the area, we did not yet know our way around and ended up taking the long way there. On this route, we had to change trains at a larger train station outside of the city of Sao Paulo, but since we did not speak the local language, we could not figure out when the connecting train would be leaving. Fortunately, we made the connection thanks to the Lord bringing us together with a man who was fluent in both German and Brazil’s official language, Portuguese. He was, in fact, from Germany, having been born in Baden. We were glad to have found someone to talk to, and he accompanied us on a large part of our journey.

We stayed in Lettonia for about four weeks and had a very blessed time there. The return journey went much the same way as the journey there, but this time, we did not find a German speaker to show us the way. However, I lived a life of faithful prayer, and a wonderful thing happened: right where we had to change trains, we saw the same man from before walking towards us!

He had gone to the Paraná River for a hunting trip, and we had not arranged to meet again, but here he was nonetheless. This hunter accompanied us for quite some distance on the return trip as well. We were so grateful to the Lord for helping us in this way! ■



# Overcome Fear

*“Now when He got into a boat, His disciples followed Him. And suddenly a great tempest arose on the sea, so that the boat was covered with the waves. But He was asleep. Then His disciples came to Him and awoke Him, saying, ‘Lord, save us! we are perishing!’ But He said to them, ‘Why are you fearful, O you of little faith?’ Then He arose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm. So the men marveled, saying, ‘Who can this be, that even the winds and the sea obey Him?’” Matthew 8:23–27*

**W**e live in a world where fear is a constant companion. Fear can be a powerful motivator.

But fear can also paralyze the will, cloud the mind, and lead one in a completely different direction than he actually wanted to go. The Bible speaks of two kinds of fear. Not every fear is a sin.

The first kind of fear is useful and was created by God as part of human nature. It is perfectly normal to fear danger, for example, so as not to step into an abyss. Likewise, it is normal to fear acting selfishly against the will of the Creator. In the Garden of Eden, God warns man, “In the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.” This type of fear or anxiety is healthy and protects us.

The second type of fear is sinful. It arises from mistrust, unbelief, and rebellion against God. It also arises from selfishness and self-centeredness and focusing on one’s own will. Fear is also a consequence of sin. It gripped Adam after the Fall, Cain after murdering his brother, and King Belshazzar when the hand wrote his judgment on the wall.

This is the fear that exposes the heart: people are afraid of not being able to achieve their positions, their goals, their ideas.

## Where does the root of sinful fear lie?

- In mistrust and unbelief toward God. The disciples recognized Jesus’ power and followed Him, but they had not yet learned to trust Him when He seemed to be silent. Little faith is not a lack of

faith, but its inadequacy, the inability to trust God completely, to surrender all areas of life to Him.

- When our focus is on danger instead of on Christ.
- In the aim of achieving our own goals. When our lives are based on our own plans, we are afraid that they might fail.

## Fear has consequences:

It robs us of peace, paralyzes our will, drives us to lie, destroys relationships, and prevents us from acting in truth.

## Victory over fear:

Christ teaches us that trust in God is the most important way to overcome fear. This means not just believing in miracles, but believing in Christ as the Lord of all things. Trust means entrusting my life, my circumstances, and all the events of my life to God. This does not mean doing nothing—on the contrary. It means acting as Scripture says, knowing that the outcome is in God’s hands.

## Victory over fear comes through:

- Prayer: “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God” (Philippians 4:6).
- Peace in the heart: “and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:7).



- Obedience: Doing what God commands despite fear—regardless of the circumstances.

### **Victory over fear is the privilege of Christians**

It is not about no longer being afraid of anything but about knowing to whom our lives are entrusted. Fear is real. But Christ is the Master and Lord of fear. When He is steering the boat of our lives, it doesn't matter

how big the storm is. It is important to remember that Christ, who loves us, is stronger than all circumstances. We can trust Him.

Our faith is strong through Christ, who is greater than all fears.

*Alexander Gross  
Eppingen, Germany*

## ***Are You Strong?***

“Watch, stand fast in the faith, be brave, be strong” (1 Corinthians 16: 13).

On the battlefield of life, the child of God must have victory. Indeed, he can overcome much in the power of Jesus Christ who loved us. In His strength, we have power and can triumph over all that is of the world.

In Psalm 46: 1, we read: “God *is* our refuge and strength.” If we make God our strength, then we have power and can overcome much. In Psalm 27: 1, David says: “The LORD *is* the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?”

They are not always the strong ones who can “speak with the tongues of . . . angels.” Nor are they who are prepared to let their bodies be burned and give all their possessions to the poor. Nor are they who “have *the gift of* prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge.” Only he is strong who can stand against the attacks of Satan and who has victory over sin, the world, and the devil. The one who remains loving and kind in the midst of life's worries and trials and is always able to control himself is strong.

It is not always the young who are the strongest, though they may display great energy. Some of them cannot even obey their parents with a willing, joyful heart.

Many employers too, find it easier to participate in charity events than to be kind and respectful toward their workers.

There are people who appear in public like Samson did—full of strength and self-confidence—but who lose their self-control as soon as something doesn't go their way. It takes more strength to patiently overcome the little adversities in one's everyday life than to testify of victory and grace in a public assembly.

A strong person is one who can rule over passions and feelings. He is stronger than the one who conquers nations and cities. A man may be strong and able to overcome when all goes well, but when the storms of life blow and adversity approaches, he cannot prevail. Some may appear strong and powerful, but inwardly they have no power to keep themselves from envy and jealousy, and they cannot control their inclinations.

A proverb says: “Great is he who overcame the world, but greater still is he who conquered himself.” The Bible also says: “*He who is* slow to anger *is* better than the mighty, and he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city” (Proverbs 16: 32).

How sweet it is when we are strong in the Lord—strong enough to overcome all that is in the world and also our inner being. Yes, only in God do we find the source of true, lasting strength. Who would not want to possess it?

“He who overcomes shall inherit all things” (Revelation 21: 7).

## Early Beginnings in Mexico

Although the brothers J. Jakobsh and H. D. Nimz had already made their first contacts in Mexico during their 1974 trip and visited many people in various colonies, especially in the Swift Colony, I know little about it—except that Sister Peters and her daughter had been converted, which we only found out later.

When they visited us in “Hoffnungsfeld” on their second mission trip in February 1975, after a brief conversation, we invited them to dinner to get to know them better. They gladly accepted the invitation. Since many in the village had heard of their visit, some of our relatives, including some young people, came to our house that evening to meet the visitors. There was conversation, singing, prayer, and testimonies shared by the brothers. Some hearts were moved, and so the first seeds were sown.

Before they left that evening, I asked Brother Jakobsh if we could possibly have a service on Sunday. Since they had already promised to hold services in the Swift Colony on Sunday morning and evening, they promised to come in the afternoon—provided we could offer space and seating, which we assured them we could. At that time, there was no car in the village that could have taken us to the services in the Swift Colony, so we set up the large room at Brother J. Redekop’s house for Sunday afternoon.



The hour came, and the service began with singing and prayer. After two short messages, one or two testimonies, a closing song and prayer, the service ended. Some people stayed behind to talk with the brothers. I believe that most had already made up their minds during that time, whether they agreed or disagreed with the doctrine these brothers were preaching.

Five families from Hoffnungsfeld decided that something had to happen. How and what exactly, we hardly knew at the time. After that Sunday, the brothers visited the farm once more to say their farewells. At Brother Jakobsh’s invitation, I soon traveled to Aylmer, Ontario to visit my older brother and the church there. Besides Aylmer, my brother and I also visited Brother Nimz in Toronto. Since it was Wednesday and we also wanted to visit Kitchener, we stayed in Kitchener for the prayer meeting and later returned to Aylmer.

On Friday afternoon, March 14, 1975, Brother and Sister Jakobsh invited us to visit them in their home. After a short conversation and a few questions, we went over to the church. There we prayed together, and I asked God to forgive my sins. After the prayer, Brother Jakobsh asked if I believed that God had forgiven me. I replied, “The Bible tells me so.”

Not long after that, Brother Redekop also traveled to Aylmer, and he too was converted. From then on, we often met and prayed together. We also spoke with others about the faith and then also got in touch with people from the Swift Colony. Several families there too were willing to ask the preachers to come and establish a mission. The previously mentioned mother and daughter Peters especially were very enthusiastic. That gave us great encouragement to continue with the idea—believing that the word from Philippians 1:6 also applied to us:

“Being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ.” We then heard that the Canadian Mission Board had also given their consent and Brother Nimz felt the call from God to go to Mexico. We were overjoyed and thanked God for answering our prayers.

1975: Br. Jakobsh leading a worship service



On the first Sunday in August 1975, we had our first morning service in a room we had set up in our carpentry workshop. I don't remember how many people were there, but I do know that all five families from the village, as well as young people; some from the Swift Colony and others from different areas attended.

As I remember, Brother Nimz spoke about God's love for humanity. After the service, I heard many say, "We've never heard anything like that before." That afternoon there was a service in "Schöndorf," and in the evening one in "Schönberg," which all the 'Hoffnungsfelders' also attended. More and more people began coming to the Sunday morning services. Young and old were converted and thanked God that they had found the Lord Jesus and the truth of the Church of God.

However, where God builds, the enemy also works. Many people did not like this development at all. Some people united to oppose us and took us to court. Several times they blocked the roads, sent men to the prayer meetings to spread misinformation about us, or let the air out of our tires while we were in prayer. One Wednesday, when everything remained quiet and we were surprised by it, we soon learned that our opponents had sent soldiers to 'Hoffnungsfeld'—but they got lost and ended up taking a long detour. When they met the churchgoers already on their way home, they turned around and then left. Again and again, we thanked God and gave Him all the glory.

Despite everything, the government was favorable toward us. After the Fundación Cultural A.C. was established and we received the authorization to build schools, we began construction in 1976 on the land we had acquired in Neustaedt—with shovels and pickaxes on rock-hard ground. Once again, the opponents tried to stop it, but when they realized that we had government approval, they gave up.

Now that the beginning was made, we could repeatedly thank God, who made people willing—not only those nearby, but also many from Canada and the USA—to support us not only financially, but also through their actions. To God alone be the glory.

Despite being two weeks behind schedule, we were still able to start school in September. Church services were now held in a larger room within the school building. There, the first baptism service also took place in September. Among others, my wife and I were baptized along with several newly converted brothers and sisters. Again, more and more people came, and many expressed their gratitude to God that they had found a spiritual home.

Although the beginning was difficult, His grace was sufficient. I believe many can agree and say that it was not in vain. To God alone be the glory.

*Gerhard Thiessen  
Chilliwack, BC*



# God Rewards

*What you have done for the Lord  
Is not in vain, my friend.  
There is a great reward,  
If you remain faithful to the end.*

*Even a cup of cold water,  
Offered to someone in love,  
Even the things of small matter,  
Are seen by the Master above.*

*You too will have sorrow and strife,  
For even the best are not spared,  
Yet God notes your compassion in life,  
And the neighbor for whom you have cared.*

*Those who serve in the Church, let me stress  
Your labor, it is not in vain.  
Remember, Jeremiah saw little success  
But even in sorrow there's gain.*

*Remember the seed you have sown  
Will also bring fruit in its time.  
The kingdom, it is not your own,  
So let not your passion decline.*

*Some seed will fall on hard ground,  
And some will be choked by the weeds,  
But your labor of love will abound  
And the Lord will reward you, indeed.*

*The blessing you are can't be measured  
With the outcome your eyes may behold,  
But your faithfulness, it is treasured,  
And your reward is better than gold.*

*Are you suffering and woeful like Job?  
Is your burden too heavy to bear?  
Oh, what misery abounds on our globe!  
But remember the Lord is still there.*

*If alone, like Elijah you feel,  
Just remember the passion of Christ.  
It is the wounded Healer that heals.  
He is the master of life.*

*Just be steadfast in all that you do.  
Commit your ways to the Lord.  
Be faithful, continue, be true,  
For in heaven there is great reward.*

*G. Mielke*