



Foundation of Faith

By
Faith

Saving Faith

God's Promises

The Overcomer

Experiences of Faith

He Healed Their Sick

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Editorial

Dear Readers,

In last month's issue, we discussed crises of faith. In this issue, we want to focus on the great benefits of faith in the living God.

In chapter 11 of the Epistle to the Hebrews, we repeatedly read the words "by faith." This phrasing reflects the highly personal experiences that people have with God. It also speaks to the faith that shaped the lives of these people, leading them through dark depths and shining heights for God to glorify Himself through them again and again. Finally, "by faith" indicates a close relationship with God!

Some time ago, in a public shopping center in Munich, some young women came up to my wife and me and asked us for advice on ensuring a happy marriage; perhaps their interest had been sparked by watching us two older people walk hand in hand through the milling crowd. In the end, I told them that a truly happy marriage requires a third person: Jesus Christ.

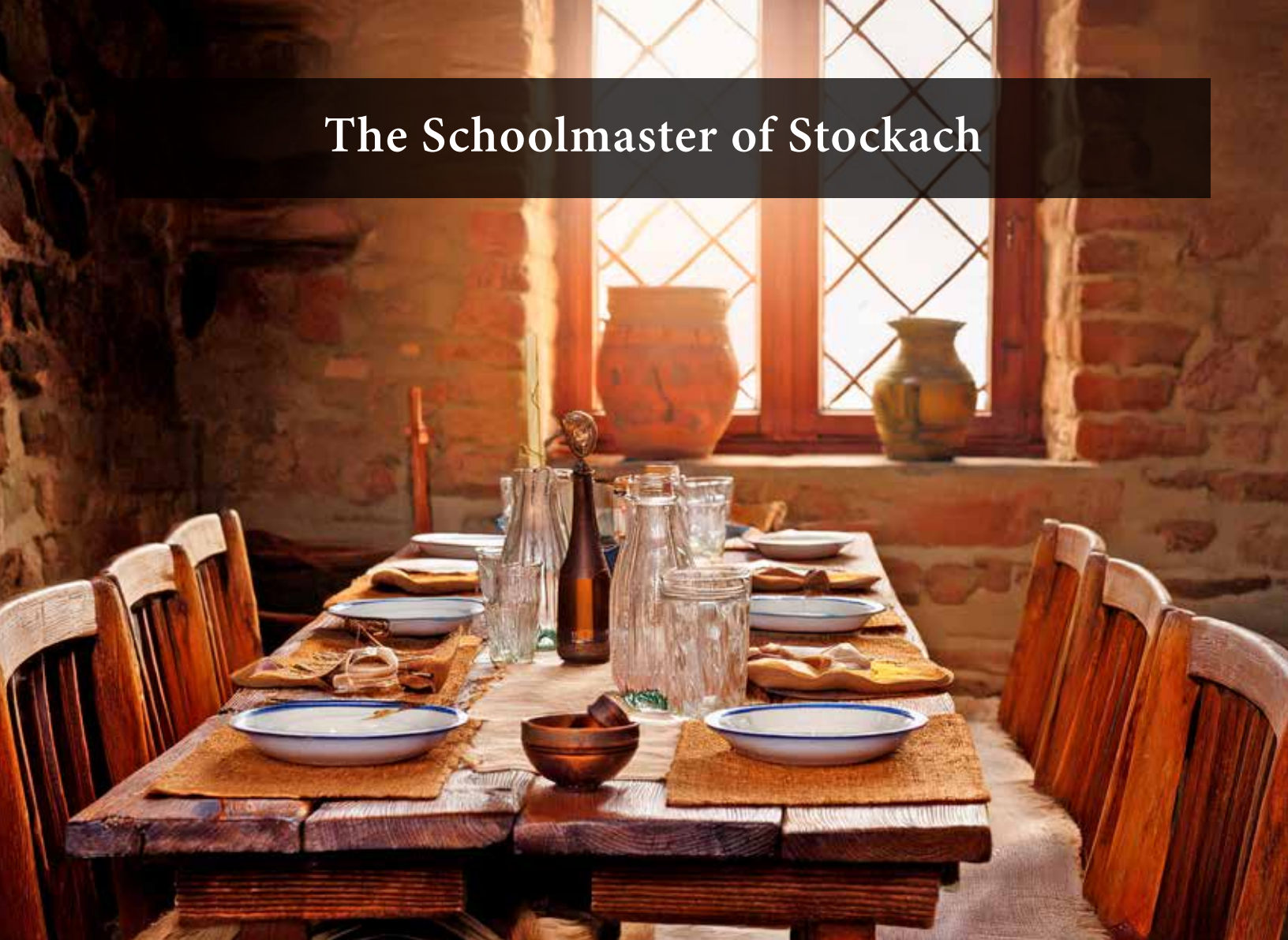
"Oh," one replied, "you mean faith."

"No," I corrected, explaining, "Not a vague, universal faith but rather a personal relationship with Jesus Christ that places Him at the center of both spouses' lives and of their relationship." That put an abrupt end to the conversation—and to the young ladies' interest . . .

How sad that so few people know such a faith in God! It immensely enriches our lives. We hope to describe some of its many benefits and glorious qualities to you, dear readers, through the following articles. We wish you much joy and God's presence as you read!

R. Taron

The Schoolmaster of Stockach



The year of 1816 was one of real hardship in Germany. In November, my husband and I traveled to Tübingen to sell our goods at the market. The proceeds were meager, and the weather was extremely poor.

Evening was approaching, and my husband didn't want to spend the night in the town of Oftringen, so we set off toward the village of Stockach.

After a row of three or four houses, the hamlet split into two alleys. My husband chose one, and I the other. Whoever found lodging first was to come and get the other. After inquiring at the third or fourth house, a woman told me that she might be able to offer us lodging, but we should first ask the schoolmaster. If he couldn't take us in, we could come back to her.

On the way, I ran into my husband. He asked, "Did you find a place to stay?"

"Not quite yet, but I was sent to ask the schoolmaster," I replied.

"I just came from there. He's willing to take us in," said my husband.

We were received warmly. In the heated living room, we took off our wet clothes, which were then hung up to dry. In the meantime, the schoolmaster and his wife gave us clothing to wear. After the exhausting days we'd had, the conversation with the teacher was so refreshing to us.

Eventually, the table was set, but there was only a thin soup. We received the first servings, followed by four or five children, who each got a smaller portion. In the end, only a little was left for the schoolmaster and his wife. When the children noticed this, they offered to share their food with their parents. But the parents said, "Eat what you have—we have enough." The schoolmaster then asked the children if they felt

full. One child said that it had enough, another said that it would be fine to wait until tomorrow. Then he turned to us: “See, dear folks, the good Lord can satisfy us even with a little. If we had more, we would gladly have given you more. But the One who fed five thousand with five loaves can also satisfy us with five spoonfuls of soup.”

I was truly shocked by their extreme poverty and felt regret that we had eaten their meager supper.

“Do you really have nothing else in the house?” I asked.

“Nothing,” said the wife, “absolutely nothing.”

We were even more alarmed. “But what will you do tomorrow, if you have nothing left?” I asked.

The schoolmaster replied, “I don’t worry about that. I’ve entrusted my needs, my wife, the children, and everything we require to the Lord—and I am in good spirits. If He sees that we need something, He will provide for us.”

We were amazed, and I was nearly moved to tears. My husband was also deeply touched, and he felt very drawn to this faithful man. The schoolmaster soon noticed what my husband was lacking inwardly. He spoke kindly but earnestly to him. He urged him to place his trust in God and the Savior. The man also testified that *He* had never let him down.

At the end of the evening, our sleeping arrangements were prepared. Straw was laid on the floor and blankets were spread over it. We couldn’t fall asleep for a long time. When the schoolmaster and his wife were already sound asleep, I heard my husband sigh, “Ah, this schoolmaster. I can’t stop thinking about him. I’ve never met such people!”

I thought to myself, “Oh, if only we could be more like them.” And then, suddenly I remembered the goods we had purchased and brought back from Tübingen. I said to my husband, “What if I make breakfast tomorrow? We have coffee, sugar, and two loaves of bread. I’m sure we can find some milk.” My husband agreed, and finally we fell asleep.

The next morning, the schoolmaster and his wife got up early. When he came into the room, I immediately offered to prepare breakfast—provided he could get some milk. It was quickly obtained, and soon everything was ready.

After the schoolmaster prayed and sincerely gave thanks he said, “Didn’t I tell you: If the Lord sees that we need something, it will be provided? And now it’s

here—it was already in the house; I just didn’t know it.”

As we prepared to leave after breakfast, I couldn’t help but ask the schoolmaster what they would eat for lunch, since there was nothing left in the house. He answered cheerfully, “The dear Lord has already taken care of that—you needn’t worry. I, at least, have no anxiety. By lunchtime, something will surely be here.”

He accompanied us a short way and showed us a path through the field which would shorten our journey. Before parting, he exhorted my husband to trust in God and to live in the fear of the Lord.

As we reached the top of a hill, my husband, who had spoken little until then said: “That is a godly man—if only all people were like him!”

As we descended the slope, we met a man pushing a handcart. A few steps ahead of us, he stopped, wiped the sweat from his brow, and greeted us as we passed. We saw that his load consisted of two full sacks. Curiously, I turned and asked, “Is it heavy?”

“Yes, indeed,” he replied.

“Pardon me for asking, but where are you headed?”

“To Stockach,” he replied.

“What are you transporting?”

“All sorts of things: bread, flour, potatoes, barley, beans, and so on.”

“Are you going to sell that at the market?”

“Oh no—a poor, but godly schoolmaster lives there in Stockach. In these hard times, he and his children probably don’t have much to eat.”

We were stunned by his words. The man looked at us questioningly, not understanding our reaction. We then told him what we had just experienced with the schoolmaster. The man listened with emotion. Finally, he said, “But now I must hurry, so the schoolmaster and his children have something warm on the table by lunchtime.” He slung the strap of his cart over his shoulders and pushed on.

What a touching example of deep faith in God’s love and provision this experience with the schoolmaster of Stockach was. Despite complete poverty, he trusted that God would not forsake him—and indeed, the Lord provided for him and his household in a wonderful way. It brings to mind the words of Jesus in Matthew 6: 31–33: “Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ . . . But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.” ■

Saving Faith

"Then He said to her, 'Your sins are forgiven.' And those who sat at the table with Him began to say to themselves, 'Who is this who even forgives sins?' Then He said to the woman, 'Your faith has saved you. Go in peace.'" Luke 7: 48–50

To those who clearly recognize the lost state of their heart and who feel the weight of their burden of sin, nothing could give so much freedom and peace as these words that Jesus speaks here to the repentant sinner. It is certain that anyone who is still held in the grip of sin can hear such words if they only come to the Savior with the same humility and faith as this woman did.

It was not her tears, although they flowed so abundantly that they wetted the Lord's feet, that brought her the forgiveness of her sins. Her humility and sincere repentance were clearly visible. But Jesus said to her: "Your faith has saved you." Humility and tears are certainly evidence of a sincere soul, but faith alone can help and save. "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is the gift of God*" (Ephesians 2: 8).

Faith in Christ

It is not enough for us to believe in God. We must also believe in Christ and acknowledge Him as our Savior. This is the only way that God has created for our salvation. "You believe in God, believe also in Me" (John 14: 1), says Jesus. (Please also read John 8: 24 and 1 John 5: 1.) In Jesus' name and through faith in His name alone can the soul be saved. Every individual and every class of people who reject and doubt Christ as the Son of God are also rejecting their only hope of salvation from sin. "Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4: 12).

Dead faith

Hebrews 10: 39 speaks of people "who believe to the saving of the soul." A faith that does not bring us into a close spiritual relationship with God has no value. Someone may have a dead or even a historical faith, but such is a faith that is based purely on knowledge, not one that brings them to be obedient to God. That is

a dead faith. "But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead?" (James 2: 20). James further says that even the demons believe in God and tremble (verse 19). In Mark 1: 24, we also read that the demons and unclean spirits acknowledge Jesus as the Holy One of God.

We can also believe that there is a true God, just as the Jews did. We can believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, just as the demons do, yet we can still be eternally lost.

However, historical faith is also necessary in a certain sense. "He who comes to God must believe that He is, and *that* He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him" (Hebrews 11: 6). No one would seek God or make efforts to be saved as long as they still doubted His existence or His power to save.

Faith comes from hearing

"How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? . . . So then faith *comes* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10: 14, 17). When sinners are shaken and recognize their lost state, when they can see that they cannot stand before God, they initially find no peace for their soul. Their heart does not become still. But they hear and believe that Christ has come to set them free. They have remorse over their sins, repent, and can then believe that God forgives their sins for Christ's sake. Only then is Christ brought to them through true, life-giving faith.

Through the gospel, people not only hear about Christ but are also reminded of their duty to forsake sin and fulfill the requirements of God's Word. When they recognize and do this, their faith grows and comes alive. Only through this faith, which has led them to obedience, do they receive forgiveness of sins and, in the end, eternal salvation as long as they abide with the Lord.

**We must accept Jesus**

“But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name” (John 1:12). These words show us that we need to do more than just acknowledge Christ as the Savior of the world. We must accept Him as our personal Savior. We must believe that through His sacrificial death, the guilt of our sin has also been atoned for. We must believe in His grace, which forgives our transgressions. If living faith dwells in someone’s heart, they not only know that Christ is the Son of God, but also that He has become their personal Savior.

What is faith?

“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” (Hebrews 11:1). The

Apostle describes here the living faith that brings us into intimate contact with our heavenly Father and allows us to enjoy His blessings. This faith is truly a firm assurance. The forgiveness of our sins depends on our faith. Faith is a firm conviction and expectation that God will fulfill all the promises He has made to us through Christ. Faith is the soul’s sure and full consent to the divine plan of salvation. Faith agrees with the promises of God and waits to receive them. Faith helps the seeking soul. And even though we cannot see what we are struggling for, God’s grace and blessings are granted to us. There will then be no doubt in our souls that God has heard our prayers and forgiven our sins. We only need to take God at His word!

W. S.

Faith and Assurance of Salvation

“He who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself; he who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed the testimony that God has given of His Son. And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God.”

1 John 5: 10–13

The theme of knowing that one has eternal life runs throughout the first letter of John. We are told: “So that you may know that you have eternal life.” John shows us that those who truly believe are certain of their salvation. There are still many who claim that we cannot know whether we are children of God or not, whether we are really saved or not, if one has received forgiveness of sins or not. But those who say this have never truly obeyed the Word of God, and therefore they cannot have this assurance. Without real faith, assurance of salvation is impossible. And you can’t have real faith if you are not fully obedient to the Word of God. For example, the Word of God says: “Repent, therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out” (Acts 3: 19). If we are not willing to repent, and not willing to obey this first requirement, then the effort to believe in the gospel will be futile. But whoever submits to the Word will also be able to believe. The same is also true for the other promises of God’s Word. Those who do not obey cannot believe, and without faith we cannot receive anything from God. Without true faith, there is no assurance of salvation. But living faith, which comes from obedience to God and His Word, will accept the Lord Jesus Christ and have everything in Him.

Faith and assurance of salvation belong together. It has been said that “Faith is the root, and assurance of salvation is the flower. You cannot have the flower without the root, and if you have the root, you will also have the flower.” Faith looks to the accomplished work of Christ. It submits to the Son of God and accepts the testimony that God has given of His Son. “He who

does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed the testimony that God has given of His Son” (1 John 5: 10). It is troublesome that there are many people who profess faith but do not have assurance of salvation. They say they are converted, yet they do not know whether they have forgiveness of sins or not. What a pity!

Sometimes false teaching is the reason for this, yet in many cases it is that people are not willing to obey the Word of God in all things. It may be a favorite sin that one does not want to give up. As long as a person clings to sin, they cannot have assurance of salvation. The Spirit of God will never testify to our spirit that we are God’s children if we live in sin. The Spirit of God, who gives assurance of salvation, is a holy Spirit and does not allow sin to remain in control. If we are obedient, “The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God” (Romans 8: 16).

There are people who have trouble attaining the assurance of salvation because they rely more on their own feelings than on the Word and promises of God. We live by faith and not by sight. True and living faith is based on God’s Word and trusting in Jesus. Those who submit to the Word of God in obedience are able to sing with confidence:

*Oh, I have found the firm foundation
The blessed anchor of my soul.
I have assurance of salvation
The wounds of Christ have made me whole.
Heaven and earth will pass away.
But this foundation, it will stay.*

Yes, the one who lives a life of faith, rather than a life of feelings, can sing this song with confidence, even when their feelings are not favorable. This is not just for a few of God's favored children, but for everyone who obeys and serves Him. All who are in a right relationship with God and have been born again by repenting of their sins can claim this for themselves.

Dear Reader, do you have full assurance of salvation? At the end of his life, George Müller said that for more than 53 years he had never doubted for a moment that he was a child of God and an heir to

heavenly glory. He was completely certain of this because he knew that he was obedient to God and he was certain that God keeps His promises. This wonderful assurance of salvation is also for you. God gives it to all who obey and believe. He is without partiality (James 2: 1). Be obedient to God's Word and trust completely in the Lord Jesus. Surrender yourself fully to Him to do His will. Then you too will have the glorious assurance that you are a child of God. One day you will be able to meet the Lord with great joy and without fear. ■

Impossible—And Yet Possible!

How quickly we tend to say, "It's impossible!" The builder of the great Berlin Cathedral dome was denied a building permit because he was told it would be impossible to build this dome. It would surely collapse. However, the dome still stands today! Nevertheless, the same man who built this dome later told Count Zeppelin that his airship was an impossible plan, because at that time such a thing seemed completely unthinkable. Today, hardly any child is surprised by this invention.

How quickly people say, "Impossible!" when it comes to eternal things. It is impossible that the Bible could really be the Word of God—and yet it is, and has proven its power countless times to thousands, in death and also in life. It is impossible that prayer can help; what good is it to talk "into thin air"? Yet God, the Lord, professes it again and again and Jesus in particular urged us to pray.

It is impossible that this Jesus of Nazareth could be the Son of God. That is an unimaginable thought for the human mind. Yet He proved Himself to be the Son of God. He

walked on this earth without sin. With authority, He forgave sins, and even today He continues to transform people completely.

Miracles cannot possibly exist; and yet we are surrounded by miracles. The miracles of the Bible are so well attested, indeed the miracle in Jesus is so irrefutable, that here too our reasoning will and must fail.

"Impossible," says our common sense: it is impossible to forgive an enemy; it is impossible for an alcoholic to be completely freed from his sin and addiction, impossible, impossible! And yet, completely different miracles have already happened: people who hated each other have shaken hands in reconciliation. Those who lived in sensual lust have become people living pure, self-controlled lives.—With God, nothing is impossible!

In an era when we consider almost nothing impossible in the technical realm, we should also forget the word "impossible" when it comes to inner and eternal things with God. "All things *are* possible to him who believes" (Mark 9: 23). ■

The Triumph of Faith

“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. By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household, by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.” Hebrews 11:6–7

Noah's faith stands in sharp contrast to the unbelief of the world before the Flood. Wickedness had multiplied on Earth to such an extent that God regretted having created man. It is astonishing that of all the many people who lived on Earth at that time, there was only one on whom God's good pleasure could rest and who found favor in God's eyes.

God revealed the impending flood to Noah. How surprising this announcement must have been for Noah. There was absolutely no outward sign of such an impending catastrophe. The course of nature and experience seemed to speak against the likelihood of such an event. Public opinion would ridicule it, which was indeed the case. But Noah knew that the message was from God, and he was also convinced and believed that what God said would come to pass. That is why he immediately set to work to follow God's instructions and create a way of escape from the impending catastrophe.

By faith, Noah accepted the revelation about the flood without doubting. By faith, he began to build the ark on dry land, as God had told him. By faith, he completed the ark without heeding the objections and taunts of the unbelievers. By faith, he preached repentance to the people. He told them that the flood was coming and endeavored to rouse them from their indifference and implored them to turn to God. And by faith he went into the ark when there was still no sign of the coming flood.

Noah believed God even though the flood had not yet come. He did not look at the clouds, the moon, or the sky for any sign of the coming flood. He simply

believed God, because he knew that everything God says is eternal and established truth. And it is a glorious thought that after Noah had done everything God asked of him, God Himself closed the door of the ark behind him. This meant that he was now completely safe.

If we believe and trust God completely, He will shelter us under the shadow of His wings, and we need not be afraid. A man of faith can see things that the unbeliever cannot see. No doubt the people of his day called Noah a fool when he set about building the great ark on dry land. Even today, worldly wisdom shakes its head when one takes God at His word and stands in faith on the divine promises.

Christ is the ark of salvation in which a world lost in sin and perishing can find refuge and salvation. Only through faith can we enter this ark of salvation.

Dear Reader, let yourself be led to repentance. Judgment is coming. Jesus has certainly promised that He will come again. The first time, He came into the world in lowliness to become the Savior of mankind. But when He comes again, He will come in judgment with power and great glory. But it is still the time of grace, so repent and forsake your sins. Through faith, see how Christ bore your guilt on the cross. Recognize Him as the only “ark” of safety. Believe in Him, obey and trust Him, and be saved.

And you, children of God, wake up! Have faith in God. Take hold of His promises in faith and go forward fearlessly. Whatever situation you may find yourself in, dear child of God, believe God. Don't be swayed by emotions or anything else. Through faith you will be victorious. ■

God's Promises

The Word of God encourages us to come to Him in times of need, worry, and illness, and to trust in Him. His Word is not merely a well-meaning comfort; His Word is His earnest will. Let us not think that the promises of the Word serve only to uplift us so that we are not so distressed. It would be wrong to claim that faith and trust in God are only meant to comfort us in suffering so that we can better endure it, or that we should have hope just so we do not become discouraged until death. If that were the case, then the promises would not only be a great deception, but also untrue. But we know that God is truthful. Therefore, let us not believe that God's direct promises are meant only to be a comfort to us in various situations.

When the Word tells us: "The prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up" (James 5:15), then that is truly what it means. It is not just meant to comfort the sick; it is meant to happen just as God promises.

God is not unfaithful, nor does He give hypocritical promises. For this reason, we do not want to stop taking the Word exactly as God has spoken it. Whoever cannot believe these words will also receive nothing from God.

Indeed, many things which are not understandable to the human mind, can be easily accepted by childlike faith. It is God's will to nullify the wisdom of the world and to reward simple faith. The wisdom of the mind often causes problems even for the children of God. How often does the question of Nicodemus arise: "How can these things be?" (John 3:9). And in many cases, Jesus' answer would also be appropriate: "Are you the teacher of Israel, and do not know these things?" (verse 10).

Yes, the mind cannot grasp many divine things. If we could understand and explain all divine things, we would be like God. We are only given the ability to understand human, natural things. But that should not cause us to doubt God or His Word. Whether we be-

lieve it or not, it remains true nonetheless. We believe many other things that concern this world without being able to fully grasp them.

So why do we want to doubt divine help just because we cannot comprehend it with our minds? Faith does not ask such questions. "All things *are* possible to him who believes," says Jesus in Mark 9:23. And with that, the power of faith is confirmed to us as valid and true.

When I tell my little child, "We're going to the city tomorrow," my child believes me. It doesn't ask whether we'll go by car or on foot. If I have promised it, then the child believes it and looks forward to it. Father will take care of the rest. And if the child hadn't believed, their unbelief would not have invalidated the truth of my words.

Our part is to believe God. The "how" and "whereby" is God's business. It is not necessary for us to dissect divine processes with our minds. But it is absolutely necessary to believe the Word.

God's Word alone should be the foundation of our faith. Often people base their faith on special feelings they once had, or on a dream. Such things are often uncertain. But God's Word is never to be doubted. Let us value God's Word more highly than anything else. The Word of God is more reliable than a feeling. Feelings fade and are subject to many influences.

Let us join in the words of the poet:

*Lord, Your Word, the noble gift,
keep this gold preserved for me;
for I value it above all wealth,
more than the greatest prosperity.*

*If Your Word no longer stands,
on what shall my faith then rest?
I do not care for a thousand worlds—
No, in Your Word I'm truly blessed!*

H. W.

He Is Just the Same Today

*Have you ever heard of Jesus,
How He came from heav'n to earth,
With a name of mighty virtue,
Though by very humble birth?
When the world was held in bondage,
Under Satan's dismal sway,
Jesus healed their dread diseases—
He is just the same today.*

*Do you see the people gather
Round that great and holy Man,
Bringing all the sick and suff'ring,
Coming to Him all who can?
See Him look with great compassion,
As they fainted by the way!
How He called them gently to Him,
He is just the same today.*

*Is it true that every sickness
May be laid at Jesus' feet?
All my trouble, care, and sorrow,
And I rest in joy complete?
Yes, my brother, every sadness,
If by faith to Him you pray,
He'll remove with tender mercy,
For He's just the same today.*

*Oh, that precious, loving Jesus!
His compassion still the same,
Toward poor sinful, suff'ring mortals
Who seek refuge in His name.
Heed the present invitation,
Oh, you need not stay away!
Just receive His healing favor,
For He's just the same today.*

Jacob W. Byers

He Healed Their Sick

What a powerful Word! In Matthew 14, we read how the Lord Jesus had withdrawn into the desert after the death of John the Baptist but the people continued to seek Him out. When Jesus saw the large crowd, we read that “he was moved with compassion for them and healed their sick” (verse 14). The fact that these people took their sick to Jesus in the desert shows that they were no strangers to divine healing.

The clear Word of God was already given to the Old Testament people of God through Moses: “I *am* the LORD who heals you” (Exodus 15:26). David testified to the God of Israel as the God “Who forgives all your iniquities, who heals all your diseases” (Psalm 103:3). Isaiah spoke of Jesus Christ in his revelation: “Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows . . . and by His stripes we are healed” (Isaiah 53:4–5).

The fact that God can heal was firmly rooted in the faith and experience of the patriarchs. Moses prayed for his sister Miriam, who was afflicted with leprosy (Numbers 12:13), and God healed her. Hezekiah pleaded and wept before the Lord in his sickness, and he was healed. Jeremiah spoke with firm confidence: “Heal me, O LORD, and I shall be healed” (Jeremiah 17:14).

Divine healing was extensively experienced in the New Testament era. Jesus frequently carried out this promise for we read: “Jesus went about all Galilee, . . . preaching the gospel . . . and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people” (Matthew 4:23). It is therefore not surprising that divine healing was clearly preached, believed, and experienced in the early church of the New Testament.

What about divine healing today? Do we still believe and experience it or has God stopped working in this way? Has God’s healing power been broken, or has our faith and our interest in this kind of healing been broken, so that we no longer bring our sick to Jesus in earnest intercession? We certainly don’t want

to give our fellow human beings the impression that the church has changed its position and view of divine healing. That would be irresponsible. Divine healing in the sense of the Bible is still part of our message.

The need for healing is great. We think of the hundreds of diseases and the thousands of sick people. But we must also remember the unchanging healing power of God through Jesus Christ, whose substitutionary sacrifice was used to heal our sins as well as our illnesses. The promising word: “I *am* the LORD, who heals you” applies to us today just as it did to Moses and the people of Israel.

God is the creator and sustainer of our body. He created our body with all its functions. That is why He can also heal us. Divine healing is therefore possible and can be experienced today. Each of us have the need

to be strong and healthy. The body of one born-again is described in God’s Word as a “temple of the Holy Spirit.” Shouldn’t God be concerned that this temple is healthy and strong?

The real obstacle to divine healing often lies in the fact that believers, as well as unbelievers, seek help from medicine instead of from

God. This means that more trust is placed in human and chemical power than in the omnipotence of God. Why don’t we first turn to God, who said: “I *am* the LORD, who heals you”?

During a camp meeting, a man came to the pastors and reported that his wife was seriously ill and lying in their camper. He wanted to call the doctor, but first wanted to inform the elders about his wife. Two of the brethren immediately sought out the sick woman, anointed her, and after praying the prayer of faith over her, they left. In the same hour, however, the illness left her. She was able to attend the evening service because she had been healed.

There are many such witnesses, so that we can say: “Jesus . . . healed their sick.” And, thank God, He heals them today as well!

Friedrich Krebs

*Divine healing in the
sense of the Bible
is still part of our
message.*

Elijah, the Tishbite

It was evident to all that Baal was unable to assist. For hours, the priests of Baal had danced around their altar, imploring their god to reveal himself with fire, cutting their bodies so that blood flowed from their wounds to persuade Baal to intervene. However, their bloodshed only served to reveal the deception of idolatry. Exhausted, discouraged, and filled with fear, they now stand around their altar and wait for the things that are to come.

Will God respond with fire? Any Israelites who were familiar with their history would know that this had already happened in the past. The first sacrifice Aaron offered was consumed by fire from heaven, a sign that it was pleasing to God (see Leviticus 9:24). When Solomon's temple was dedicated, the Lord also showed His approval by sending fire from heaven to consume the burnt offering (see 2 Chronicles 7:1). Would God do that again today?

So that no one could think that Elijah had secretly set fire to the sacrifice, he had the sacrificial animal and the altar doused with water three times. It should be truly evident that the almighty God would provide the fire.

God revealed Himself wonderfully on Mount Carmel. He is the living and almighty God! He is also the God of grace and faithfulness.

Allow us to pose the question: "Are there certain prerequisites today for God to reveal Himself?" There is no doubt that God desires to reveal Himself to His people and to each of His children time and again. However, do such revelations from God occur independently of human behavior?

The fact that God still cared for His people during the time of Elijah can only be attributed to His grace and faithfulness. He had every reason to reject these unrepentant people. But instead, over the years, sought

to win their souls through His prophets. With infinite patience, He bore with them and repeatedly forgave them. Whoever reads the Old Testament prayerfully cannot doubt that God's grace and faithfulness are infinitely greater than we can imagine. Paul did not exaggerate when he wrote in Romans 11:29: "For the gifts and the calling of God *are* irrevocable."

When we are unfaithful, He remains faithful! How He cares for each and every one of His children to this day. Just as He cared for Israel, just as He revealed Himself and testified to them again and again, so He continues to do so today in the lives of His children. It is His mercy and faithfulness that draw us to Him

again and again. We should rejoice in such unchanging goodness of our God.

However, there are prerequisites for God to reveal Himself. We can see three very specific things in Elijah:

Trust

James says, "Elijah was a man with a nature like

ours." This means that Elijah was not above human weaknesses but was subject to them just as we are. We know from his later life that he was not immune to fear. We see in 1 Kings 18:22 that he suffered from the thought that he was the only prophet of the Lord left. Yet how this man stands before this great crowd! He stands alone against the 450 priests of Baal. He also stands alone against the king who is hostile toward him.

One man dares to trust God. God uses this one man to reveal Himself. This trust is not a human characteristic but grows out of the Word of God. Therefore, we cannot excuse ourselves and say, "I just can't trust like so-and-so." If we read the Word of God with a childlike faith, then this living trust will be awakened and strengthened in us through the Word.

*How He cares for
each and every one
of His children to
this day.*



Mount Carmel

Surrender

Elijah built the altar in the name of the Lord. The altar was the place where Israel met its God. Through the offering presented on the altar, Israel consecrated itself to its God, and God in turn met his people at the altar by looking graciously upon the sacrifice. Since Israel was now serving Baal and other gods, the altar had been destroyed.

We, too, must surrender ourselves to the Lord as a whole sacrifice. The Lord expects complete consecration. Unfortunately, however, it often happens that we slowly and imperceptibly take back a piece at a time. We once surrendered ourselves with all that we are and have to the Lord, and after some time, we find that we are once again masters of ourselves and of all that we are and have. We have made ourselves independent again. Certainly, we believe in God, we read the Bible, we go to church, and we even give missions offerings. However, can the Lord truly rule over us and all areas of our lives? Who is Lord in our lives? Ourselves, the Lord, or even some other person?

If we want God to newly reveal Himself to us, it will be necessary for us to first “build the altar,” that is, to renew our surrender.

In some families, the “home altar,” praying and studying the Bible together, must also be rebuilt if God’s blessing is to flow.

Faith

“But without faith *it is* impossible to please *Him*” (Hebrews 11:6).

Elijah took 12 stones and built the altar. Why didn’t he take 10? The northern kingdom where he lived consisted of only 10 tribes. Elijah knew that, but in faith he ignored political reality. He believed in the God of faithfulness, and so he took 12 stones to tell all the people: I believe in the unity of God’s people, even when they are torn apart!

How often does our “faith” go no further than the point that our minds consider possible? Elijah does not look at the actual circumstances, but at God, for whom nothing is impossible. “Faith breaks through steel and stone and can grasp the power of the Almighty.” God wants to work faith in us if we are willing to follow Him.

In His mercy, God leans toward us. He wants to reveal Himself to us if we give the Spirit room to work these prerequisites in us: trust, surrender, and faith. ■

The Overcomer

In the 7th chapter of Revelation, beginning with verse 9, the disciple John sees the blessed multitude of the redeemed of all nations, “clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands”; a multitude who have been washed by the blood of the Lamb of God and made victors and overcomers through redemption.

But who is an overcomer?

“Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?” (1 John 5:5).

Faith in the only begotten Son of God, that Jesus Christ is truly God, sent by the Father, is the condition for being an overcomer. Belief in the Lamb of God, who suffered death for our sins, was lifted up on Calvary’s cross and truly died for us, is the foundation from which God grants grace and strength to anyone who desires it. Jesus Christ was not only a good teacher or a good man, but He is truly the Son of God.

Only those who have experienced the new birth can be overcomers. Through the living Word of God, Jesus Christ, we are saved and washed and born again by the Spirit of God from above. This is a very personal experience.

What must be overcome?

The world “For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. . . . Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that

Jesus is the Son of God?” (1 John 5:4–5).

The world with all its lusts: the lust of the flesh, pleasure, the lust of the eyes, desires, the prideful life, ungodly deeds—a child of God conquers all these things. He who resists temptation is an overcomer.

Evil “Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good” (Romans 12:21).

We live in a world full of wickedness, full of injustice, discord, war, hatred, and envy. Therefore, do not be deceived, but walk as children of light. The fruit of the Spirit is all goodness, righteousness, and truth. We overcome evil by keeping silent when we are scolded, by blessing, by seeking peace, and by pursuing it. Who could harm us if we pursue what is good?

The antichrist “You are of God, little children, and have overcome them (the Antichrist), because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world” (1 John 4:4).

Since time immemorial, and even today, many do not believe that Jesus became a true man. Jesus, the Son of God, “made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men” (Philippians 2:7).

The children of God to whom John wrote overcame false doctrines and false prophets. We, too, will only be overcomers if we remain firmly on the ground of truth and fight for the faith that was once delivered to the saints.

The devil “And they overcame him (the devil) by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death” (Revelation 12:11).

All those who seek to serve God here and be with the Lord in glory one day must resist the devil and stay close to God. Even the Son of God was tempted by Satan, but without sin. In the name of the Lord Jesus and through the power of His blood, we may also be victors over the devil. The conqueror is faithful unto death because he knows that the crown of eternal life awaits him.

How can we overcome?

By faith “And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith” (1 John 5:4).

By faith we receive salvation, but by faith we must also fight and stand firm and win. Without faith, it is impossible to please God. But faith honors God, and the Lord confesses faith. Christ’s victory is our victory if we are on the winning side with Him. Our faith is the victory!

By the blood of the Lamb “And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb” (Revelation 12:11).

The blood of Jesus is the blood of the New Testament, which has the power to forgive sins, to give a new life, and the strength to lead an overcoming life. Scripture speaks here of those who have overcome. How? Through the blood of the Lamb! The blood of the Lamb is

the source of strength and blessing for us all.

By the word of their testimony

“And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death” (Revelation 12: 11).

Through the word of their testimony, people of all ages, young and old, great and small, have stood before emperors and princes, testified of their faith, and overcome. We too must follow in their footsteps and bear witness to what the Lord has done for us.

When do we overcome?

Now, in this world! “So then faith *comes* by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God” (Romans 10: 17).

The Lord Jesus says: “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life” (John 3: 16). We may believe today and attain salvation today. Then we will already be victors in the time of grace and reign in this life with Christ.

How is your life? Oh, come to Jesus. You, too, can find forgiveness and grace. Consecrate yourself to God. Put everything in His hands. Surrender yourself completely to Him, and you will be joyful, content, and godly in this world.

Become an overcomer! Only those who overcome will inherit all things. ■





Out of Love for Jesus

The Werner family lives in a rental house with a large garden. The house belongs to the elderly Mrs. Graf, but the Werners are allowed to live there because they pay rent.

There is plenty of space to play on the lawn around the garden. The parents have planted a vegetable patch, and Mom is happy about her many flowers. Everyone especially loves the raspberries, strawberries, and blueberries that they have grown themselves.

But there is one small challenge: the fruit on the trees belongs to Mrs. Graf. In summer and fall, juicy apples, sweet pears, bright red cherries and ripe plums hang there. Mrs. Graf usually shares generously as soon as she has harvested enough.

It's plum season right now, but Mrs. Graf hasn't been there for several days. Many of the fruits have already fallen from the tree, which is close to the sidewalk. Today, Ben, Nicholas' friend, is visiting, and they are all playing in the yard. Without realizing it, they step on some fallen plums.

Just then, Mrs. Graf comes by and discovers the crushed fruit. She angrily reproaches Ben, Nicholas, and Laura.

Mom is in the kitchen with baby Tobi when the children rush in, excited and teary-eyed, and explain what happened. She takes them in her arms, comforts them, and then says, "I know you didn't do it on purpose. But Mrs. Graf doesn't know that. That's why it would be good if you would apologize to her and offer to help gather and pick the fruit."

Nicholas protests: "But Mom, Mrs. Graf was so unkind, and now we're even supposed to help her?"

Mom explains: "Yes, you should—out of love for Jesus. It says in Matthew 5: 44–45 that He wants us to forgive those who have offended us and do good to them. Pray for Mrs. Graf and also pray that God will give you the strength you need right now."

After the prayer, the children feel better. When they apologize to the landlady and ask if they can help gather, she gets teary-eyed. "You are good children. I'm sorry I was so harsh."

After the work is done, Mrs. Graf gives the children two large bowls of plums—enough to bake cakes and make jam for both families.

Helene Rotfuss

The Second Mile

Have you ever heard of the second mile? We find the story in the Gospel of Matthew. Jesus says here: “And whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two” (Matthew 5: 41).

The people of that time suffered under Roman rule. High taxes were imposed, and they had to live under foreign laws. They believed they had three options at the time:

1. To conform—they followed the laws and rules of the Romans.
2. To leave—they moved to areas that were not under Roman control.
3. To fight back—some joined the violent resistance movement against the Roman occupation.

But Jesus confronted them with a fourth option: “[B]less those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you” (vs. 44). Jesus gave them a new idea here: the second mile.

Members of the Roman troops could legally force Jewish citizens to carry their luggage for one mile (1.6 km). One command was enough to force them to drop everything and go.

Jesus is saying: “Do more than is required of you. When you have gone one mile, don’t stop, but go the second mile.”

What does that mean for you? What would the second mile look like in your everyday life? If, for example, your mother asks you to empty the dishwasher. You could do it as quickly as possible and run straight back to playing.

2nd Mile



However, you could also go the extra mile and do more than your mother asks. You could load the dishwasher with dirty dishes again. Or you could wipe down the dining table.

And you know what? Suddenly it becomes fun! Because you do it willingly and gladly. Going the extra mile now brings you joy, even before your mother can praise you.

Do you want to be one of those children who go the second mile? Start today, and you will see how God will bless you with joy.

*Jessica Müller
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“Do not be
overcome by evil,
but overcome evil
with good.”
(Romans 12:21)





GOD SEES INTO THE HIDDEN PLACES

We live in a time when making things public has almost become the norm. The internet and social media make it possible to publish everything quickly and easily. If you are so inclined, anyone can immediately see where you've been, what you're doing, what you like, what's important to you, and what you think. So much is now public. The possibility of publicity and openness itself isn't a bad thing. It can also be used to do good. But there is a problem: we are losing the value and meaning of things that are hidden. Yet the hidden things are so important to God.

He is a God who hides Himself (Isaiah 45: 15). Hidden things are of great importance to God. He has hidden the whole spiritual world for us, and for good reason. We cannot see into it; we cannot see heaven or hell, angels or demons, God or the devil. That is why faith is so important. Through faith in God's Word, we realize that there is so much more than just the visible.

God is in secret, which is why He hears everything that happens in secret, everything we say and do in secret and even our thoughts. God sees what is hidden and He will judge us one day according to what we have done in secret (Romans 2: 16).

Hebrews 4: 13 says “And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things *are* naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we *must give* account.”

Jesus talks about the hidden things in the Sermon on the Mount (read Matthew 6). First He talks about giving alms, then about prayer and finally about fasting. These are three important things, but they only have value before God if we do them in secret. Why is it so important to God? God is always concerned with our heart and our motives (1 Samuel 16: 7). Are we really doing all this just for Him or to be seen by people? Our human nature (the flesh) desires visible recognition. That is why we are all in danger of becoming hypocrites.

This is why God values what is hidden so much. It is in what is hidden that we reveal who we really are, because there is no reason to pretend to be something we are not. Are you prepared to work in secret? No one notices, but you give money to someone because they are in need. No one knows, but you pray for someone who is lost. No one notices, but you fast for a hopeless situation because you care about people. No one will know, only your Father, who sees what is hidden, is watching closely, and will reward you publicly. The Father longs for children who seek His approval and not that of people.

Matthew 6: 17–18: “But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, so that you do not appear to men to be fasting, but to your Father who *is* in the secret *place*; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.”

Does this mean that we should keep everything hidden? No, not at all. There is also another side to

this. Satan also wants some things to remain hidden. He wants us to sin secretly and hide it so that nobody notices (John 3: 20). Hidden sin has great power, it binds people. The power of such sin can be broken if we confess and expose it. Sometimes it can help if we confide in someone and pray about it together.

Proverbs 28: 13: “He who covers his sin will not prosper, but whoever confesses and forsakes *them* will have mercy.”

Another point is God’s honor. Satan wants to do everything in his power to prevent us from publicly honoring God and glorifying Him. Yet it is so important to God!

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

Psalms 40: 10: “I have not hidden Your righteousness within my heart; I have declared Your faithfulness and Your salvation: I have not concealed Your lovingkindness and Your truth from the great assembly.”

Scripture also tells us that we are to be His witnesses (Acts 1: 8). We are not to be ashamed of the gospel (Romans 1: 16). We are to confess Jesus before men (Matthew 10: 32). This is only possible if we do this publicly.

It is not God, but Satan, who wants to keep these things hidden! He wants us to be ashamed and keep everything to ourselves. He even hides it under false humility. So how should we differentiate? When should I do something openly and when should I hide it? Examine your own heart, what is your motivation for doing something publicly? Check whether God’s honor is your goal and then let the Lord use you.

Psalms 115: 1: “Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but to Your name give glory, because of Your mercy, because of Your truth.”

Willi Albrecht
Eppingen, Germany

Take Them With You

Years ago, someone noticed a young mother with her small children at church conferences. Back then, there were just two young ones. They held tightly to their mother's hands and followed her everywhere. Some older women took in the scene and with a wistful smile said, "While they are little, they let themselves be led to the church services. But one day, they will go their own way."

These words impacted the young woman deeply. Her heartfelt desire was to raise her children for God, not for the world. In her distress, she sought advice from a pastor. He listened to her and said calmly, "Don't be afraid. The most important thing is that you are on fire for Christ and live for Him. Then the Holy Spirit will work on your children's hearts and lead them to God."

Years passed by. Trials and tough times were inevitable. But the children grew up and came to faith in their youth.

Parents as God's co-workers

It is by God's grace that we know the Savior and are able follow Him. It is also His grace alone that draws and saves our children (read John 6:44; Ephesians 2:8–9). As parents, we cooperate in this vital process—we are to take our children "along" in following Jesus. Just as Moses declared to Pharaoh before the exodus from Egypt in Exodus 10:9: "We will go with our young and our old, with our sons and our daughters, with our flocks and herds we will go, for we must hold a feast to the LORD."

Pharaoh strongly opposed the people of Israel taking their children with them (Exodus 10:8–11). Even today, Christian parents often face intense spiritual battles. But thanks be to God—we fight on the winning side, not on the field of defeat! God's Word contains many promises to believers regarding their families, for example.

Psalms 103:17–18: "But the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear Him,

and His righteousness to children's children, to such as keep His covenant, and to those who remember His commandments to do them."

Deuteronomy 30:19–20: "Choose life, that both of you and your descendants may live, that you may love the LORD your God, that you may obey His voice, and that you may cling to Him."

Acts 11:14: "Who will tell you words by which you and all your household will be saved" (the angel to Cornelius).

Acts 16:31: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household" (Paul and Silas to the jailer in Philippi).

Other examples include Lydia, the seller of purple, and her household (Acts 16:15), Crispus, the synagogue ruler in Corinth, and his household (Acts 18:8), and more.

How can we guide our children into a relationship with God, into serving Him? Let us consider this question in view of Romans 12:2: "Do not be conformed to this world."

Be an example

Don't the words "come with me" sound very different from "go there"? Taking someone with you means doing something yourself while allowing others to participate. Be an example to your children "in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith in purity" (1 Timothy 4:12).

Children clearly sense what truly matters to their parents—whether it's material possessions, personal recognition and self-fulfillment, or eternal values, love for God and for others. They notice whether we resist God's ways and working, or humbly ask for His grace to walk the path of selflessness. They notice whether God's Word remains mere head knowledge or shapes our hearts and lives.

Draw your children into your prayer and faith life. Instead of speaking negatively about difficult people at the dinner table, forgive those who have hurt you

and pray for them (Luke 6:28). By God's grace, turn stressful situations into prayer requests and tell your children about the miracles He works in your life. This way, they'll learn to trust you with their concerns and ask you for advice and prayer.

Take your children to experience the blessings of spiritual fellowship, such as attending Bible study and prayer meetings during the week. They will only learn to value these times if they see it's a genuine priority for you.

Have them join you in faithful service. Whether it's in the household, visiting the sick, helping with repairs for fellow believers, or "hands on" service in church—this becomes a lesson. They can learn what it means to be faithful in small things for Jesus and to show compassion to others.

Take them along when you honor and care for your elderly parents. Although generational differences can be challenging, children must learn that God's command in Exodus 20:12 remains timeless: "Honor your father and your mother."

Encourage your children in every good way—but don't let them become passive spectators and consumers. Involve them in responsibilities by assigning specific tasks. As they grow, so should their responsibilities, allowing their character and skills to develop, making them capable and dependable people.

Be honest

Being a role model doesn't mean being perfect. It's not about us, but about Jesus Christ—He should be glorified. That includes admitting our wrongs and asking for forgiveness—even from our children.

The mother referred to in this article continues:

"I remember a time when I was working too much. Whatever the work—if it leaves us no time for fellowship with God and the people He entrusted to us, then something needs to change. At that time, we also noticed our teenage daughters were influenced by friends. I could feel our close relationship slipping

away, and harmony suffered. It felt like a wall of misunderstanding and resistance.

When I earnestly asked God for wisdom and guidance, He showed me that I needed to ask our children for forgiveness—for my impatience, stress, and the lack of time. The conversation lasted over two hours; we cried together and came to renewed understanding. The wall between us disappeared, and harmony was restored. To this day, I am infinitely grateful to God."

Whoever wants to be a role model and is honest about it will often experience inadequacy. Even the best we can offer our children is not perfect. In hindsight, we might wish we had done some things differently—despite our best intentions at the time. Let's not be discouraged, but humbly look to God. Let's trust Him with our imperfect efforts and ask Him to use them for His glory and to guide our children.

Let go

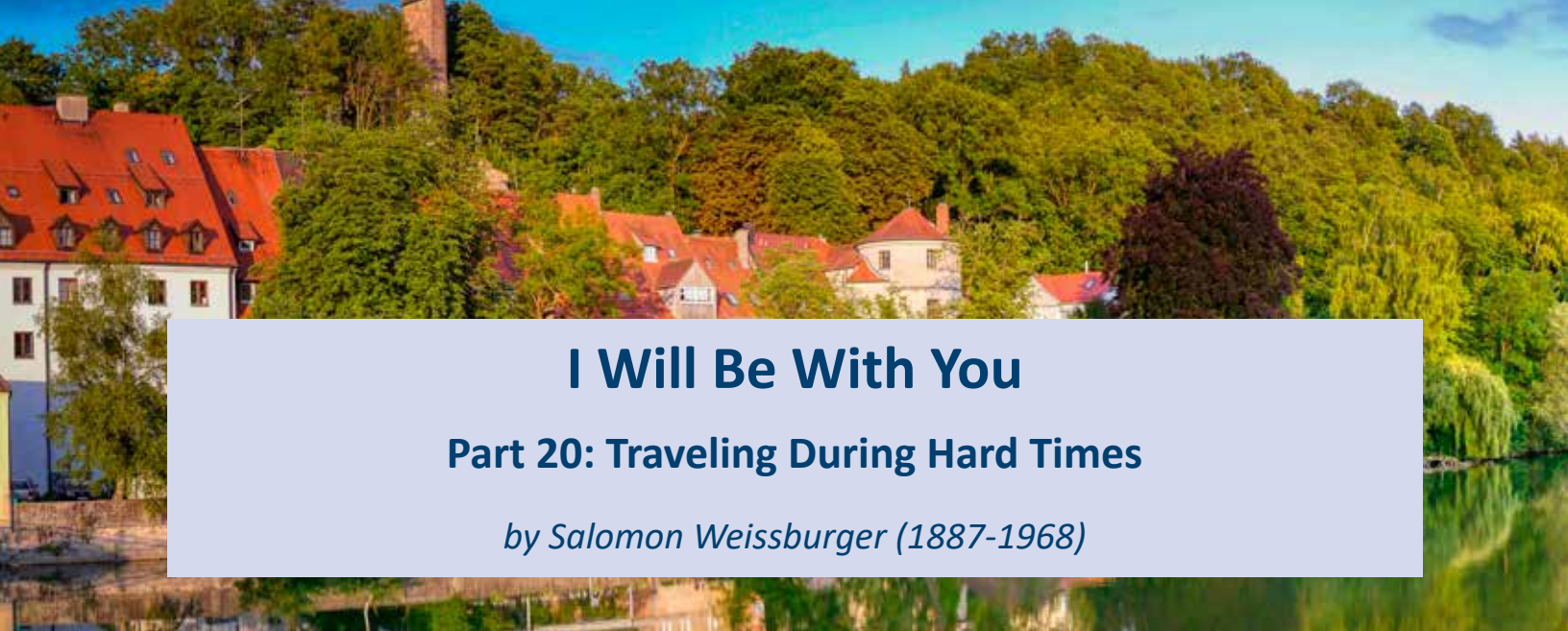
This is perhaps the most difficult thing for a loving parent's heart: How can you let go of a child who is, after all, a part of yourself? However, this is not about indifference. Our children are entrusted to us for only a short time—they belong to God, and we must intentionally place them back into His hands.

Think of Abraham in Genesis 22:1–19. He knew God had a plan, and trusted Him. Or of Zechariah and Elizabeth in Matthew 3:1–4. What must they have felt when their only son withdrew into the wilderness and lived on locusts and wild honey? They also knew that God had a plan and trusted Him.

When you let go, God can continue His work—in you and in your children. This assurance brings comfort and strength in every situation in life.

It helps you look upon the past, present, and future with gratitude and confidence.

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Pforzheim, Germany*



I Will Be With You

Part 20: Traveling During Hard Times

by Salomon Weissburger (1887-1968)

Covering the distance from Rio Grande do Sul back to Nova Esperança (New Hope) would have taken about six days of continuous driving, but we stopped over in Rio das Antas, holding church services there for several evenings.

From the pulpit I mentioned that, with God's help, we can be thankful even during hard times; God took me at my word and sent me severe, long, and painful suffering as I fell ill with rheumatoid arthritis. My wife suffered a lot, too, because she had to take care of me day and night. As a result of this illness, Brother and Sister Eduard Wegner had to host me for three months, presenting them with great burden and cost. They have both already passed on to eternity, but I remain grateful for what they did for us back then.

When I had recovered a little, we were able to join a group making the trip from Rio das Antas to Nova Esperança. I was so weak that they had to help me climb onto the old truck. The journey was dangerous enough, even without considering how worn out the vehicle was already. The roads were so bad that the 30 kilometers (19 mi) from Rio das Antas to Caçador took us a whole night of continuous travel: from 10 p.m. until after sunrise the next morning. The second night, I slept in the vehicle since we all were camping out. The third night, I had a bed. On the morning of the fourth day, we drove down the steep slopes of the Subida Serra, fortunately arriving at the bottom before one of the wheels came off. What would have happened if the wheel had come loose before, while we were navigating one of the many dangerous corners?

In Subida, we were able to switch to another car in order to finally reach our home in Nova Esperança in the evening. This journey of 380 kilometers (236 mi) took us four days. By the end of the trip, I was very weak; I drank some water and thought that was my end.

When World War II began, I was so weak that I could hardly speak, sing, or preach. I was no longer able to do any work, so my wife and daughter worked the land to give us something to live on. We had no other support. It took four years for this heart disease to relax its grip sufficiently for me to resume my pastoral work. I thank God for helping me through this difficult time and for restoring my health so that I was able to take spiritual work up again, more intensely than ever before.

As previously mentioned, travel in South America was often uncomfortable and dangerous. Our lives were frequently at risk. One time, I had to hang onto a moving train by just my hands. It is only thanks to the grace of God that I escaped with my life; in fact, it was such a close call that someone informed my wife, who was also on the train, that I had actually been run over. What a horrible moment for her! Thankfully, it was not true, as some fellow travelers had helped me out.

In Brazil and Argentina, the roads in the areas where we worked were very primitive. These were mud roads that became dangerous and partly impassable in rainy weather. Even today, dirt roads predominate in and around the small city of Leandro N. Alem, where our work in Argentina is based. This means that rain brings nearly everything to a standstill. One year,



after attending the big annual camp meeting, my wife and I had to stay there for another two weeks because traffic was tied up by the rain. The situation has now improved significantly, especially here in Brazil, with asphalt roads being built and traffic improving. Visitors or preachers coming from abroad today cannot imagine what things used to be like.

Our service required great self-denial, especially since we, as well as my son Heinrich and his family, rarely received support from abroad. In such a situation, it becomes apparent whether one serves out of love or out of a desire for profit. That is not to say that preachers should not be supported by their congregations as well as is possible; however, this support should only be a means to an end and not an end in itself.

Preachers should also live as examples in terms of donating and tithing. Although it is recommended, not commanded, to give a tenth to God, many children of God have given that much and more out of love for Him. John Wesley had famously said: “I do, blessed be God, gain, and save, and give all I can.” He put this principle into practice in his own life.

To the glory of God, I can truthfully say that He never abandoned me in my long and busy life, however dark things sometimes seemed. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the brothers of the Christian Unity Press in York, Nebraska, USA, who supported us with a monthly sum of \$2.50 for some time, later raising this to \$15, before ending the donations in 1956. May God bless them for helping us in our time of need.

The topic of travel is highly relevant because a large part of our work in the early years consisted of traveling to help the congregations, which were very few, small, and scattered at the time. For instance, if we wanted to go to Argentina, we had to travel six days from Nova Esperança to reach the border. Still on the Brazilian side, we would visit the small town of Porto Luzena, where we would have to stay in a hotel, sometimes for several days, before catching a river steamer down the Uruguay River to the customs outpost on the Argentine side. From there, it was not far to Leandro N. Alem.

From Leandro N. Alem, we once accompanied several sisters and brothers to a church service some 30 kilometers (19 mi) away. On the way back, we got caught in the rain, and the truck got stuck, forcing us to cover the remaining 15 to 20 kilometers (9–12 mi) on foot. During this long and wet trek, we were thrilled to come across a hut where we could seek shelter, light a fire, and dry our clothes. God had been watching over us again! ■

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

August 15-20, 2025
Camp meeting in Blaubeuren, Germany
Registration and Information
www.lagerversammlung.de

August 30-31, 2025
Church Conference in Edmonton, Alberta

Jesus' disciples once said to Him, "Increase our faith" (Luke 17:5). In response, the Lord challenged them to do something unthinkable—something seemingly impossible—accompanied by a promise: "So the Lord said, 'If you have faith as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, "Be pulled up by the roots and be planted in the sea," and it would obey you'" (Luke 17:6).

The fact is that our faith is only strengthened—or grows—when we use it, when we have experiences with God. What follows are a few such experiences.

It was on Mother's Day of this year. The theme of the morning message was "A Mother's Prayer for Her Child," and on the way home from the service, my wife sighed and said, "Maybe it will be today," referring to her prayers for our children.

That evening, she received a text message from our oldest daughter, from whom we had not heard a single word in nearly eight years. The message read (in part): "Hi Mom. I just wanted to say happy Mother's Day . . . I love you very much and am grateful for you."

What this message did to us is hard to describe. It was overwhelming! At first, we couldn't believe it was really true, especially since the message had arrived on her phone in an unusual way. But it was indeed true. A week later, we were able to meet with her in Winnipeg, embrace her, and—with many tears—get to know each other again.

What a strengthening of our faith and trust in God such an experience brings! Over the years, the enemy came to us again and again, trying to convince us that all our hope was in vain. "Who knows if she is even still alive? Many who knowingly turn their backs on God die in their sins." Whose voice was this? The one who led her into sin through his lies, and then continued to do everything he can to destroy her!

With many other temptations, the enemy of our souls tried to destroy our hope and faith. We had to repeatedly declare Satan a liar and stand upon the promises of God. Time and again, we brought her before the Lord in prayer: "Lord, Your Word says that it is not Your will that any soul should be lost. 'Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us' (1 John 5:14)."

"Jesus, You promised us: 'Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heav-

en' (Matthew 18:19). Lord, in many countries around the world, Your children are praying for the salvation of our daughter. We simply choose to stand in faith on Your Word and Your promises, and we do not listen to the enemy."

Time and again, over the years, we had to strengthen ourselves in the Lord, just as David once did. And God stands behind His Word. Every syllable is eternally true! This experience has strengthened our faith greatly—even though this is only the first step. We continue to pray for the spiritual salvation of our daughter (and our sons), and we are thankful for your continued prayers. To God be all the glory!

Ron Taron, Steinbach, Manitoba

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In 2017, I was diagnosed with bladder cancer. The year 2018 in particular was very difficult. Not only in our local church, but also in other places, many people prayed for me. In conversations, phone calls, or letters, my husband and I were repeatedly encouraged. In our local congregation, many brothers and sisters also supported us with practical help, often with great self-sacrifice. We are grateful to this day.

In the subsequent years, new tumors kept developing in the bladder, so I had to undergo repeated surgeries. In mid-February 2021, a Grade 3 hydronephrosis (swelling of the kidney) was suddenly discovered. I was rushed to a university hospital. There was a possibility of a ureteral carcinoma and a renal pelvis carcinoma. Biopsy of the renal pelvis proved to be difficult. Due to complications, I underwent four surgeries in about six weeks. For a short time, I had a urostomy (artificial opening).

We prayed, and once again we were supported in prayer by several congregations. During the fourth operation, they again wanted to take biopsies from the renal pelvis, but no tumor was found. God had intervened! I still have my kidney today.

During the last bladder surgery in October 2022, the consulting physician told me that the cancer would keep coming back. From a human perspective, his statement was not unfounded. Several bladder malignancies had already been found. Removal of the bladder was a future consideration. But first, chemotherapy was recommended.

After persistent prayer and consultation with my local urologist, I decided against chemotherapy. Now, for two and a half years, I have had no new tumors. Once again, God has helped, and we are deeply grateful to Him!

“O LORD, You *are* my God. I will exalt You, I will praise Your name, for You have done wonderful *things*; Your counsels of old *are* faithfulness and truth” (Isaiah 25: 1).

Gaby Hellmanzik, Hamm, Germany

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“Bless the LORD, o my soul and all that is within me, bless His holy name. Bless the LORD, o my soul and forget not all His benefits. Who forgives all your iniquities, who heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from destruction, who crowns you with lovingkindness and tender mercies.” (Psalm 103: 1–4)

God has been so good to my wife and me, and with this short testimony, I want to give Him thanks and all the glory.

It is now a year ago since my wife was diagnosed with cancer and my carefree life collapsed all around me. I knew God loved and cared for us, and yet all my thinking wanted to spiral into worry and helplessness. I always liked to control the situations I found myself in, and here I was, helpless and completely at God’s mercy. All my thoughts were prayers; begging God to have mercy and help my dear wife.

I clearly remember sitting in medical facilities, waiting for my wife to be tested and diagnosed. I thought: where do all these other people sitting here, who have no God, go for support? I thanked God that

although I did not know the outcome of our serious situation, He did know, and what He allowed would be best for us.

Well, God did more than we could have humanly expected, and my wife is now completely healed and free of cancer. I praise His holy name!

God cares about the health of our physical bodies, but He is even more concerned about the health of our souls, and I thank Him that in this difficult time He taught me to blindly trust Him even if there seemed no hope in sight. “God, You are so good and I thank You and love You!”

Sieghard Henkelmann, Edmonton, Alberta

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A few months ago, I got very sick for a number of weeks. During this time, sleep was hard to come by, and thoughts were continuously going through my mind about phone calls, messages, things I had done, and the things that needed to be done. While all these thoughts kept burdening my mind, a completely different message came that stood out—unmistakably. The message was this: “*You have nothing to complain about!*” I believe that this message was from God, and, upon reflection, I came to agree with it. I really have nothing to complain about.

This gave me comfort and peace. It also boosted my faith in God, and reminded me that the prayers and studying of God’s Word were not in vain. It encouraged me that in a time such as this God would so powerfully answer my prayers. I was so uplifted and blessed by these six words and also chastised a bit for having complained and not believed.

Isaiah 41: 10 says it beautifully: “Fear not, for I *am* with you; be not dismayed, for I *am* your God. I will strengthen you, yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.”

This experience challenges me to continue to have and grow in child-like faith. But this also encourages me to share what the Lord Jesus has done for me. Not just for me but for all of mankind, and that includes even you who read this.

May you be blessed and encouraged in this testimony.

Ron Friesen, Steinbach, Manitoba

Not Seeing, Yet Believing

*Not seeing, yet believing,
Lord, let me walk by faith.*

*I know I am receiving
Your promises by grace.
You said you will be with me,
I know your Word is true;
So, I will trust you fully
In everything I do.*

*Not seeing, yet believing,
In sunshine or in rain;
In darkness, not perceiving,
But trusting, once again.
You know the load I carry;
I know you'll help me through;
And even if you tarry
I am secure in you.*

*Not seeing, yet believing,
By faith and not by sight.
When daylight is receding
You'll lead me through the night.
If I can't see my pathway
And I don't understand,
You, Lord, are with me always;
I know you hold my hand.*

*Not seeing, yet believing,
That gives me strength each day.
O'er mountains and through valleys
You lead me on my way.
And when I get to heaven
All darkness will be light;
To God, all praise be given;
My faith will then be sight!*