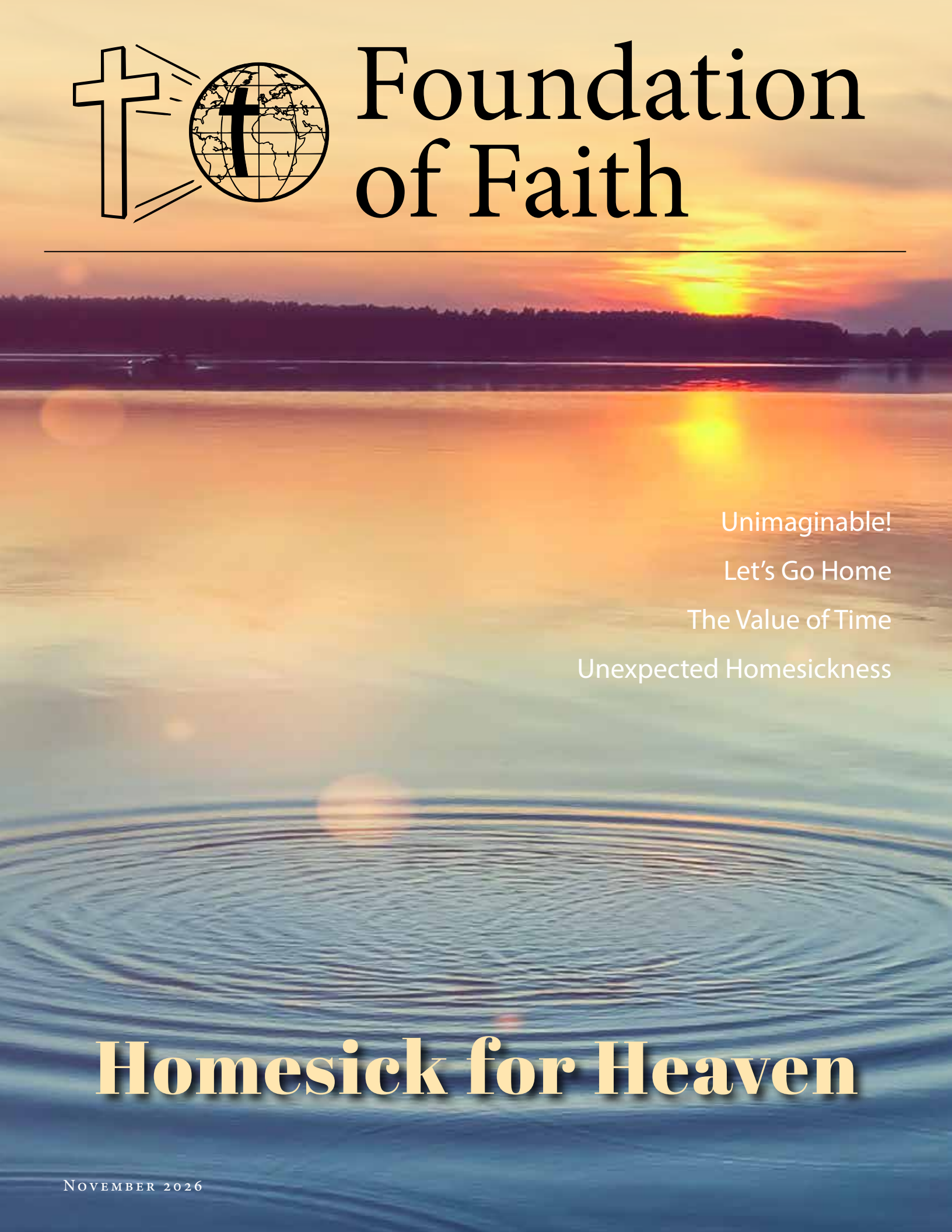


Foundation of Faith

Unimaginable!

Let's Go Home

The Value of Time

Unexpected Homesickness

Homesick for Heaven

November 2026

Contents

HOMESICK FOR HEAVEN

4 **To Heaven**

5 **Will It Be Goodnight or Goodbye?**

6 **Where Is My Citizenship?**
The decisive question concerning our eternal home.

7 **Heaven**

8 **Unexpected Homesickness**
When a longing for the Father's house awakens in a lost soul.

10 **The Value of Time**

12 **Knowledge of Eternity**
Do you possess the most important knowledge of your life?

14 **Unimaginable!**
What God has prepared for those that love Him.

16 **Let's Go Home**

3 **Editorial**

CHILDREN'S CORNER

18 **The Goal**

19 **Running From God?**

YOUTH PAGES

20 **Youth Bible Days 2026 in Tuningen**

THE SECRET OF THE SINGING HEART

22 **Part 11 – Destroying Negativity**
Are you letting fear and worry control you? Learn to trust God.

SENIOR'S PAGES

24 **Homesick for Heaven**
A growing longing for our eternal home.

26 **Prayer Week Topics 2027**

POEM

29 **Longing for Home**

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

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
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 24 Issue 11

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 Readers,

The word "homesickness" evokes a deep, painful feeling when we think about our home. Despite the pain, this is not necessarily a bad thing.

For instance, the pain brought by the memory of leaving home in rebellion and anger can lead us to repent and return. In other cases, if we live in another country, far away from our loved ones, homesickness can make it all the sweeter to see them again.

This reminds me of a time when my wife and I were newly married and I was in another country for four weeks on a business trip. The third and fourth weeks were so hard, and I couldn't wait to finally get home! I can hardly imagine what it is like for those who spend months and years away.

If being away from our earthly home is so difficult, shouldn't it be the same regarding our eternal home? As children of God, we are only pilgrims and strangers on this earth, waiting for a better world in the presence of Jesus. In Paul's words, "having a desire to depart and be with Christ, *which is* far better" (Philippians 1:23). Should our longing for our eternal home not shape everything we do and make our decisions easier?

May the following accounts and articles help you, dear readers, on your pilgrimage to our eternal home!

R. Taron

To Heaven

> *"We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord." (2 Corinthians 5: 8)*



How tightly people cling to life! Paul, however, takes an astonishing stance—he longs to die! Yet he does not have a suicidal attitude or a hostility toward life. "We are confident," he says, looking back on all the difficulties he mentioned earlier. This is the attitude of those who have received forgiveness of their sins and peace with God through Jesus' blood. They possess the sure hope of eternal life. In the meantime, they live with confidence.

The hope that is continually renewed through Jesus' resurrection shapes the entire earthly life of Christians.

Let's imagine a country road at night. It's raining, and a cold wind is blowing. A man is slowly making his way down the road. With his collar turned up against the wind, he trudges along. The poor man has no home. He has no destination!

Such is the one who has not experienced forgiveness for his sins and has not found peace with God. He wanders aimlessly along the paths of life. For such a person, the saying applies: "Woe to him who has no home!"

Now another traveler comes along the same road. The rain is lashing his face, too. He is also freezing in the biting wind. But he whistles a cheerful tune and walks on with confidence. Why is he so different? He can see the lights of his home ahead. It is warm there. Peace and quiet await him. That is where his father's house is.

This is how Christians walk through life. They face the same difficulties as the people around them. But they can see the lights of their eternal home ahead of them.

So, while on earth, though weary,
My life shall thus be spent;
Yet think I not to tarry
Fore'er in this strange tent.
Along the streets I travel
That lead me to my home!

Will It Be Goodnight or Goodbye?

Dr. Langdale of New York tells of a devoted Christian business man who was struck by an automobile. Hurried to the hospital he was informed that he had only about two hours in which to live. His faith was implicit in the goodness of God and in the future life. To him death was only the gate way leading to a higher world. He had his family called and thus addressed them:

"Wife you have been to me the greatest woman in the world. Through sunshine and shadow we have walked together. You have been my inspiration in everything I have undertaken. Especially has this been true in reference to my religious life. Many times I have seen the spirit of God shining in your face. I love you far more than I did the day you became my bride. Goodnight dear. I'll see you in the morning. Good night."

"Mary you are our first born. What a joy you have been to your father. How glad I am that you have looked so much like your mother. In face and spirit you have always reminded me of her. I see in you the sweet beautiful young woman who left her home to become the builder and keeper of mine. What a Christian you are! Mary you will never forget how your father has loved you. Goodnight, Mary. Goodnight."

He then turned to his oldest son. "Will, your coming to our home has been an unmixed blessing. You were a manly boy. You have become an exemplary man. You love the God and the church of your father. . . . You will continue to grow in every Christian grace and virtue. You have your father's love and blessing. Goodnight, Will. Goodnight."

Charlie was the next. Charlie had fallen under evil influences and had grievously disappointed his father and mother. The dying man skipped him and spoke to the youngest child a beautiful young girl. "Gracie your coming was like the breaking of a new day in our home. You have been a song of gladness, a ray of light. You have filled our hearts with music. When, not long ago, you . . . surrendered your life to Christ . . . your father's cup of happiness was full to overflowing. Good night, little girl. Goodnight!"

He then called Charlie to his side. "Charlie, what a fine, promising boy you were. Your father and mother believed you would develop into a great and noble man. We gave you all the opportunities that we gave to the other children. If there has been any difference, you yourself must admit that that difference has been in your favor. We have done the best we could for you, Charlie. But you have disappointed us. You have followed the broad and downward way. You have not been guided by our advice. You have not heeded the warnings of God's holy word. You have not hearkened to the call of the Saviour. But I have always loved you, Charlie, and I love you still. God only knows how much I love you. Goodby, Charlie! Goodby! Goodby!"

Charlie seized his father's hand and between his sobs cried out: "Father, why have you said 'Goodnight' to the others, but 'Goodbye' to me?"

"For the simple reason, Charlie, that I will meet the other members of the family 'in the morning,' but by all the promises that assure us of a reunion and give me hope of having them with me again, by those same statements of God's word I can have no hope of seeing you 'over there.' It's goodby, Charlie, goodby!" Charlie fell on his knees by his dying father's bed and cried out in the agony of his soul, praying God to forgive his sins and allow him the hope of meeting his father again. "Do you mean it, Charlie? Are you in earnest?" "God knows I am," said the heart-broken young man. "Then God will hear you and save you, Charlie, and it is not 'goodby,' but 'goodnight,' Charlie. Goodnight. I am so grateful to God that it is not 'goodby,' but only 'goodnight.' Goodnight, my boy." And he was gone.

Charlie is now a minister of the gospel of Jesus Christ and is looking forward to the time when he shall hear his sainted father exclaim, "Good morning, Charlie. Am so glad the night is done and the day has come. Isn't it a glad, great hour? Good morning, Charlie. Good morning."

O members of the same home circles; husbands, wives, fathers, mothers, sons, daughters, loved ones; you who are bound not only by ties of blood, but by the stronger chords of a love that is sweeter than life; the day is ending; the morning is coming. They are making for you a little bed yonder in God's acre. When the shadows fall and you go to sleep, to those who love you, will it be "goodby" or a short "goodnight"? ■

The Michigan Christian Advocate. August 18, 1920.

Where Is My Citizenship?

That's a good question, dear soul. Pause for a moment, for this is a vital question—not only for this life, but also for eternity. Perhaps you have never given it serious thought before. If so, please do so now!

Even in this earthly life, it's important to know where we belong, for being homeless is a sad thing. The Apostle Paul was once able to invoke his Roman citizenship in a time of need (see Acts 22:27–28). Yet as valuable as it was for him to have been born a Roman, he considered it insignificant compared to his citizenship in eternity. He writes to the Philippians: "For our citizenship is in heaven" (Philippians 3:20).

Yes, the important question is: "Where is my eternal citizenship?" Dear soul, ask yourself sincerely: "Am I registered as a citizen in heaven, or does eternal homelessness await me—cast into the outer darkness, where, according to the word of the Lord Jesus, 'there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth'?" Your soul will not die, despite your homelessness. It is not true, as some people claim, that the souls of the unredeemed will be destroyed. No, that is not true! You will live forever, but where—in heaven or in hell?

Through His suffering and death, Jesus Christ has secured for us citizenship in heaven. He has stripped death of its power and brought life and immortality to light. Do you want to secure this glorious citizenship for yourself? The Word of God shows us the way.

"From that time on, Jesus began to preach and to say, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand'" (Matthew 4:17). Let this call penetrate your heart! "Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent" (Acts 17:30).

Perhaps you are hesitating to take this path. You are looking for another one. But there is only one. Jesus says: "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me" (John 14:6). Only by being born again spiritually can you become a citizen of the Kingdom of God. Do not let these appeals die away in your heart! You will one day bitterly regret it. Perhaps this is not the first time God has called you; but it may be the last. God Almighty does not show partiality, for He is just—come to Him! Heavenly citizenship surpasses all earthly things!

How many let Jesus' call fall on deaf ears! But in doing so, they have an end like Esau, who sold his birthright for a bowl of lentil stew. Regarding Esau, the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews remarks: "For you know that afterward, when he wanted to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought it diligently with tears" (Hebrews 12:17).

According to the Lord's parable in Matthew 25, the five virgins were shut out of the wedding feast. They lacked oil—the grace of the Lord. Their hearts had grown dark, and thus came the response: "I do not know you." How terrible it will be for those who must one day hear these words from God Himself!

God takes this seriously. O dear soul, turn from the broad path that leads to destruction, lest you suffer the same fate as Esau. Choose your heavenly citizenship today, so that the words in Ephesians 2:19 may apply to you as well: "Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God."

H. B.



Heaven

There are many who deny that there is a heaven—a place of eternal bliss. Yet heaven is real. It is a place of everlasting joy. Yet we can hardly begin to comprehend what it is truly like.

Heaven Is a Place of Purity

It is a place where God has His throne. This is described for us in Revelation. John saw a "pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God" (Revelation 22:1). This gives us a glimpse of the purity of God's throne. Yes, heaven is so pure and holy that nothing impure can enter it (the Heavenly City), for it is written: "But there shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life" (Revelation 21:27). There will be those who have been made pure and holy through the blood of the Lamb. "Blessed *are* the pure in heart, for they shall see God" (Matthew 5:8).

Here on earth, we sow with tears, but in heaven we will reap with joy.

Heaven Is a Place of Love

In heaven, everyone loves one another. Anyone who does not have God's love in his or her heart cannot enter heaven. Here on earth, so many people lack true love. In heaven, there is no hatred, no enmity, and no strife. There are a great multitude of angels and a great multitude of people from every tribe and nation—so many that no one can count them—all of whom love one another with holy and pure hearts. Who wouldn't want to go to such a place and spend eternity there in bliss?

Heaven Is a Place of Complete Bliss

Here on earth, there are many tears. However, in heaven no more tears will be shed. This is a glorious biblical truth. Furthermore, there will be no more death. "For the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to springs of living fountains of waters. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes" (Revelation 7:17).

Here on earth, we sow with tears, but in heaven we will reap with joy. That does not mean, of course, that we will not have joyful harvests here on earth, but heaven is the place of never-ending joy. The Bible tells us that there will be "no more sorrow or crying or pain" (see Revelation 21:4).

Heaven Is a Place of Endless Day

There will be no night in heaven—darkness will never descend upon it again. God Himself is it's light, and that is why the redeemed in heaven need neither the sun nor the moon.

A sea of glory surrounds the white throne, and heavenly light floods the heavenly realms, while all the redeemed will walk in this glorious light.

Are you redeemed from your sins? Would you not like to walk along the glorious banks of the pure stream of living water, clothed in white garments and crowned with the crown of life? Such an undefiled and unfading inheritance is prepared for you in heaven. Will you not accept the salvation that God offers you and reach this glorious destination?



Unexpected Homesickness

> ***"But when he came to himself, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father . . . .'" (Luke 15: 17–18)***

Who doesn't know this parable of the prodigal son? When he was still at home, he felt anything but homesick. He simply couldn't stand being at home! Everything within him drew him out into the world, where he sought happiness and self-fulfillment. Sadly, however, his adventure ended with him a broken man in a distant land.

How often has this story been repeated throughout human history! It seems that young people who have had it too good at home often fail to recognize the value of a blessed home. When the "prodigal son" left home, he felt no homesickness whatsoever. On the contrary, he was delighted to be free from rules and responsibilities. Freedom at last! His heart seemed to have no room for parents, siblings, friends, or acquaintances. He was blinded by the glamour of the world and the money in his pocket.

But as Bible readers, we know how the story ends. It took only a short time—perhaps several months or years—and everything fell apart. One misfortune followed another. Apparently, this young man could not recognize the hand of God that was resting heavily upon him. He thought it was merely coincidence. *If only this had not happened; if only that had not come; if only that person had not acted that way; if only I myself had not made that mistake!* And on top of that, a famine struck the land. After all, everyone else was in a similar situation. Surely, none of this had anything to do with him personally!

But eventually, when his situation became unbearable, he began to think of home again. What memories must have come flooding back? Perhaps memories from his childhood and youth—a gift his father had given him for his birthday, which had brought him so much joy. Or perhaps he remembered the time he had fallen from a horse and been badly injured. His father and mother had been so concerned. They had stayed by his bedside and comforted him. Perhaps he remembered a family outing to the mountains with his cousins. How much fun they had had! And then there were the wonderful meals at special celebrations. How delicious everything had tasted! Now, as he was starving, he could almost taste those delicacies again.

Eventually, he came to realize that his home hadn't been so bad after all. In fact, it had been wonderful at home with his parents! There was everything he needed, and more than enough of it. Even the servants and field workers were always well cared for. His father treated them fairly. Over time, the workers were treated almost like family members. And he, that foolish, ungrateful son, had thrown it all away! He simply had not been able to see it. Why? Because he had always been focused only on himself.

It had taken a long time, but now the moment had come. What he had never imagined had happened: he was overcome by an unexpected, overwhelming wave of homesickness! Perhaps when he left home, he had burned his bridges and boldly declared, "I will never return to such an old-fashioned, narrow-minded, rule-bound home." Yes, it took humility to swallow his pride and admit that he had been terribly wrong. In response to the earnest prayers of his parents, relatives, and friends, the good Spirit of God brought him to recognize the greatness of his sin.

"I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him: 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants'" (Luke 15: 18–19).

Even after he came to this realization, the enemy of his soul would not have stopped working against him and trying to hold him back. "You can't go back. You have ruined everything forever. You squandered your father's money in sinful living. They won't want you anymore. No, it's impossible! After all, you yourself said you would never return."

We don't know exactly how the enemy spoke to him, but anyone who has ever struggled with the enemy of their soul in a similar situation knows how

it works. There are endless excuses and objections. Anything but going back to the Father! Anything but confessing the sin and admitting failure! Sadly, this is where many people remain. They allow themselves to be deceived by the enemy once again . . . and gradually the awakening in their souls dies away, and everything remains as it was.

But for this prodigal son, the homesickness became too strong! The horror of his sin overwhelmed him. Everything else became unimportant, and only one thing remained: "I must set out. I must go home—to my father!"

"And he arose and came to his father" (Luke 15:20). How many times must the enemy have attacked him again along the way: "Turn back! You can't do this! They'll throw you out!" Endless discouragement, doubts, and inner struggles! Imagine what it must have been like as he climbed the final hill before he could see his father's house. How his heart must have pounded! And there, who was standing on the hill? Yes, it was his father, obviously watching and waiting for his lost son. After all this time! How the tears must have streamed down his face! Perhaps he was so overcome with emotion that he fell to the ground and could go no farther. But within seconds, his father's arms were around him.

Finally home! Finally back where he belonged! His longing for home was finally satisfied.

Through the work of the Holy Spirit, homesickness brought a lost soul home. Perhaps you, too, are still wandering in the world, far from home. Perhaps you have also left your home or your local church—or even your Savior—with the determination never to return. But if, from time to time, you feel even a faint sense of homesickness, pay attention to it! Thank God for it, even if it bothers you at first. Homesickness is one of the ways God speaks to us, drawing us back to Him, our heavenly Father, and to our Savior, Jesus Christ. Follow that call back to the Father's house!

R. Taron



The Value of Time

Days, weeks, months, and years are what we use to measure the length of our natural lives. Time is indeed valuable, because our short span of existence on Earth determines our eternal destiny.

The other day, I noticed a moving truck standing in front of my neighbor's house. He told me that he was moving to another city, where he would be able to earn more money. However, that same evening, he died in a car accident.

The following words from James 4:13–15 came to my mind as a warning: "Come now, you who say, 'Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit'; whereas you do not know what *will happen* tomorrow. For what *is* your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away. Instead, you *ought* to say, 'If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that.'"

All the World's a Stage

When I was young, this world seemed like one big stage to me. Walking to school, I saw wildflowers growing by the wayside, and when strong winds swept across their delicate stems, the swaying fields of grain seemed almost like living creatures. The old tree in front of the school seemed like a mighty giant who had already withstood a thousand storms.

Then, one day, a dark shadow crept across my life. First, one of my childhood friends died. Then, a short while later, I lost my uncle and my grandfather in quick succession. At one of their gravesides, I remember a preacher saying that everything that lives must die someday.

The next day, on my way to school, I said to the flowers, "You will die someday." Looking past them, it suddenly occurred to me that the harvesters would soon mow down the swaying grain. Then I passed the big tree and cried, "You're going to die too!"

Time Is a Gift From God

Time cannot be bought or sold; it is a gift from God. Scripture does not tell us how long we will live, but it does tell us how to live. The length of our lives, measured in months and years, is not what matters most; what is important is how we live, and the motives behind our words and actions.

A Journey We Are Forced to Make

We had no choice in the parents we were given. We are beings created by God and are on a path that we cannot travel a second time. We are compelled to go forward, to a place where everyone must go and from which no one can return. It is sad to say that we have all been misled by the enemy of our souls and have wasted much time on the wrong path. If you, dear reader, are still unredeemed, hurry to God while the gates of grace are still open! If you have wandered away, return to your Father's house! And if you are a careless Christian, fulfill the task entrusted to you before night comes, when no one can work anymore!

Time Is Fleeting

As children, time seemed to move so slowly. But before long, we were suddenly in adolescence and then, the next time we looked, we were in middle age. Age creeps up on us quietly, like the snow that falls from the sky at night. We can only rub our eyes, look back, and wonder how the days and years have passed.

We remember the days of our youth, when we spent the golden spring of our lives with our fathers, mothers, brothers, and sisters. Time brings great changes, and as we look back, we see many whom we have loved—and, perhaps, could have loved better—but they are already gone.

A friend once invited me to visit him. I gladly accepted the invitation and spent a pleasant evening with his family. A few weeks later, he invited me again, but this time he seemed very depressed. When I arrived at his house, he broke down in tears, telling me that his wife, who had welcomed me so kindly a few weeks ago, had suddenly died.

What I remember most were his words of bitter remorse: "If only I had one more chance with her! I would treat her with more love!"

Life Is Short

The writers of antiquity often tried to describe the brevity of life. One compared it to a shadow, appearing for a moment and then disappearing in the blink of



an eye. Another likened life to an eagle soaring over a mountain peak, watching its unsuspecting prey before suddenly diving down, seizing its victim, and soaring back into the air with its catch.

Other images used to illustrate how short life is include the breadth of a hand, a messenger hurrying away, and, in Moses' words, "We finish our years like a sigh" (Psalm 90:9). In verses 10–12, he adds, "The days of our lives are seventy years; and if by reason of strength *they* are eighty years, yet their boast *is* only labor and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away. . . . So teach *us* to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom."

The End of Time

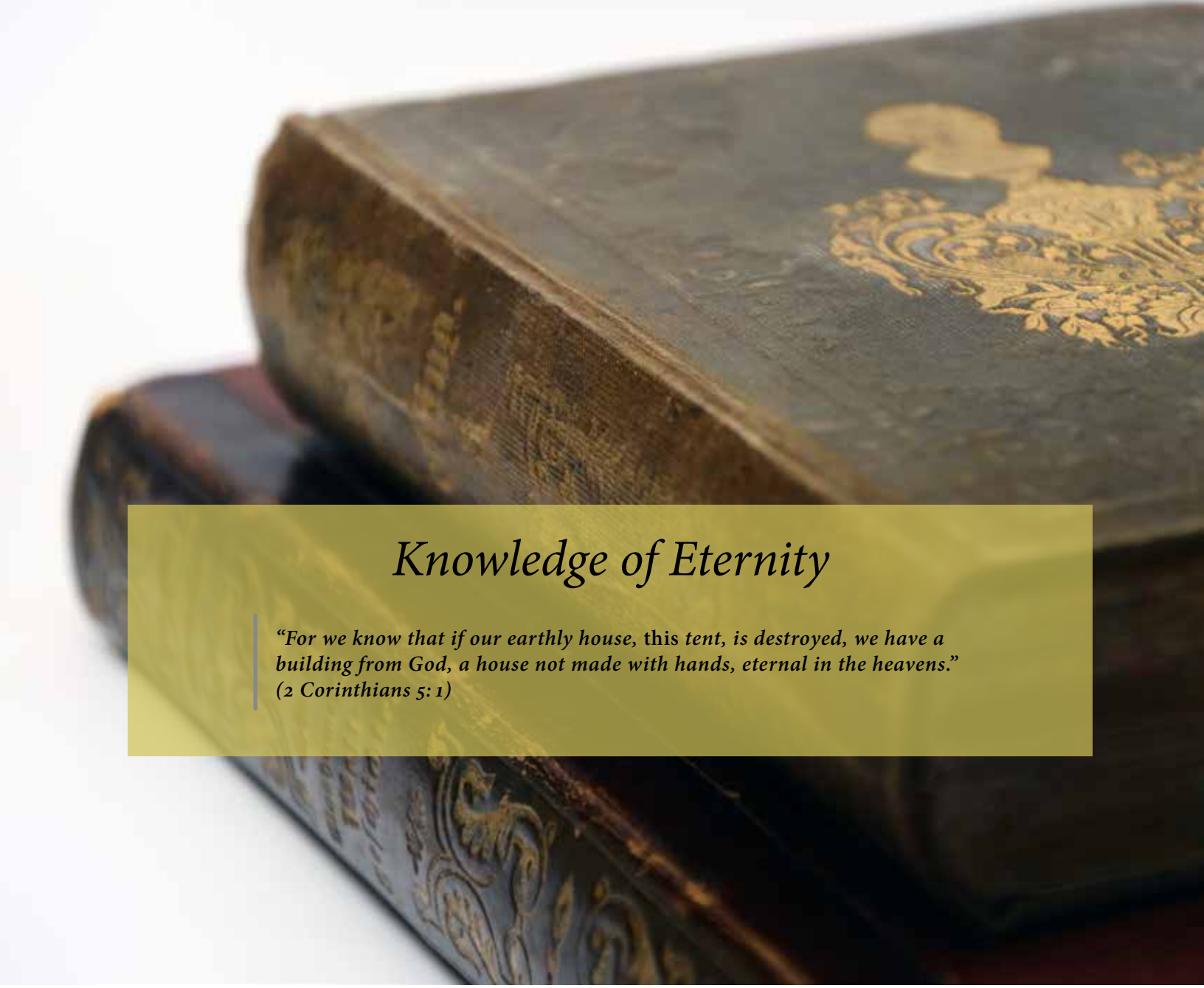
We are all destined to die someday. On that day, the period we call time comes to an end, and with the end of our earthly time, the door of opportunity closes forever.

Death is not an accident of nature; rather, it is a universal destiny brought about by sin. For our inner being, death is only a change of place, not of condition. At physical death, the body returns to the earth, and our natural body is dissolved. By contrast, our soul is immortal (see 2 Corinthians 4:16, 18) and will live on. The Bible clearly states that death and the grave have no power to free us from guilt. Time is therefore a period of testing and grace; if we let this opportunity pass, we will be lost in eternity.

Dear reader, your own eternal destiny depends on how you use your time. Use it well: turn to God in repentance, and live for Him during the time He has given you!

J. G. Anderson

Adapted from the book, Problems of Eternal Moment, 1921.



Knowledge of Eternity

> ***"For we know that if our earthly house,*** **this** ***tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."***
> ***(2 Corinthians 5:1)***

Knowledge is power, and many seek to expand their knowledge through study, lectures, or good books. Everywhere, people are striving to unravel the mysteries of nature, the universe, and technology—and just think of all they have already accomplished! It really takes a lot of effort to stay up-to-date.

But despite all our efforts, there is still so much we will never know—things that even science cannot explain. For example, many people would like to know how long they will live, how long the world will last, or if and when it will come to an end; what will happen to them after death, and much more. Indeed, there has been a lot of speculation about these matters, and many have followed in Saul's footsteps (see 1 Samuel 28) in an attempt to lift the veil that God has drawn over these things.

And yet, there is a kind of knowledge that every mortal should have—indeed, that everyone must possess. The Apostle Paul speaks of this knowledge in 2 Corinthians 5. This knowledge is very easy for everyone to obtain, and it comes at no cost. Nor is it necessary to attend prestigious schools or pass difficult exams. Yet there will come a moment for every person when the lack of this necessary and important knowledge will cause deep sorrow and unspeakable hardship. And this sorrow could last for all eternity.

Paul begins by stating a truth known to every person on earth, namely, that "our earthly house"—actually, our tent—is being torn down. Isn't that true? We all have this certainty; we have no permanent home here. Our lives pass quickly. Every setting sun, every funeral procession, every illness, and every pain reminds us that the "tent" is being torn down. How much longer will it stand?

The psalmist prays: "So teach *us* to number our days"—for what purpose?—"that we may gain a heart of wisdom." My friend, have you already explored this "science" of life and death? And what have you learned from it? What did the Spirit of God and your troubled conscience tell you? And what did you do?

It is unpleasant to realize that our "earthly tent" has fallen into disrepair.

It is unpleasant to realize that our "earthly tent" has fallen into disrepair. The vast majority are also plagued by fear and dread. What do they do, then, to get rid of this fear? Do they become still and seek knowledge of eternity? Maybe if they did, they could find help. Unfortunately, experience teaches us that the vast majority take the opposite path: "Just don't think about the end. There will be time for that later."

"Don't let them scare you," says your "friend"—oh no, he's not your friend, but the enemy who wants to make you miserable forever when your earthly tent is torn down. Time is flying by all too quickly, and with it, the opportunity to turn back.

But the knowledge that this earthly tent will be torn down is only one side of the reality of eternity. The other side is full of light and glory for all who know that the new building, the new home, is already prepared. That is why they do not fear when this fragile tent is torn down. They will not be without a home. But who has this knowledge?

Many may know that their earthly dwelling will one day come to an end but only those who have been born again, who know that they have received forgiveness of their sins through the blood of Christ and can call Him their Redeemer, have the assurance that comes from this knowledge. Whoever has received the testimony of divine sonship through the Holy Spirit also knows that the heavenly dwelling is already prepared, one that will never be torn down again. It is a house full of heavenly glory, where suffering has no place, where no more tears are shed, and where death no longer exists. We are not told exactly what this dwelling will look like. But we know that we have a loving Father Who has prepared the very best for His own.

This knowledge of eternal things enables us to properly evaluate earthly, transitory things. This is of great importance for our spiritual life and our walk with the Lord. How often is life in this world completely misjudged and misunderstood! It is not only the goods of this world, but also the desire for recognition and honor among people that must be properly evaluated.

Jesus' followers are indeed in this world, but they are not of this world. Their knowledge of eternity protects them from misusing the things of this earth. Many abuse this world because they do not know any better. But those who possess this knowledge value and embrace heavenly and eternal things, knowing that their true home—the place of their bliss—is above. This knowledge gives them rich comfort in the storms of life and in suffering, for they know that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to them.

Yes, it also gives us strength in the struggle, in all trials and temptations, to hold high the shield of faith and resist the enemy. It stirs our longing for the unseen, for what endures forever—the longing to see Jesus Christ in the glory of heaven, as well as the longing for those who are already at home with the Lord! It also spurs us on to live a life pleasing to the Lord. It takes away our fear of death and also protects us from the terror of judgment.

What a wonderful and desirable knowledge this is! It surpasses all the knowledge of our time and proves its worth in life and in death. Only those who possess it can truly be called wise. Let us ensure that it remains our most important source of knowledge at all times!

Wilhelm Berle

Unimaginable!

> ***"But as it is written: 'Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him.'" (1 Corinthians 2: 9)***

Have you ever stood before a view that was so beautiful, so majestic, so astonishing that a pain literally pierced your soul—a pain that can only be linked to the soul's longing for heaven? Perhaps you're asking, "Why a pain?" Yes, I can't quite describe it either. It's simply so beautiful that the heart longs for more!

This has happened to me several times in my life: In Grindelwald and Lauterbrunnen in Switzerland; at Lake Louise and the Grand Canyon in North America; even in the harbors of Hong Kong and Istanbul. However, with the latter examples, because they are man-made, they can be disappointing when you take a closer look. Behind the facades, you see the filth, the decay, the pain of desperate people, and the reality of godlessness. And suddenly, everything no longer looks so magnificent and dazzling! It's the same everywhere: people in the world without God, without true hope, and ultimately lost forever! And everything is falling apart!

How different it is with God's creation! It deeply satisfies the soul and stirs up a longing for more, for further discoveries. And yet, all the splendors of this world will one day burn up and melt away—even those that God has so wonderfully created. "Heaven and earth will pass away . . ." (Matthew 24: 35).

A New Heaven and a New Earth

If the splendors of this world can move us so deeply, how much more will the glories of heaven mean? People have tried to form a picture of heaven based on the hints found in Scripture. And although what we can know about heaven overwhelms us, it will be infinitely more beautiful and glorious! "Eye has not seen, . . . nor have entered into the heart of man." It is simply impossible to describe heaven using human terms or human understanding. Heaven simply does not fit within the confines of human experience.

I often imagine it this way: Here on earth, we know four dimensions. But how many are there in heaven? Are there dimensions beyond what flesh and blood can perceive? Are there ten, or a hundred, dimensions there? And if that is the case, how can a person bound to our four dimensions possibly perceive heaven? One thing is certain: heaven will far surpass even the most magnificent imaginings of humankind. Quite apart from the fact that we will be there in the immediate presence of God, where He radiates such bright light that there will be no need for the sun, moon, or stars, and that He will be all in all, so that everything else seems insignificant by comparison, we will discover endless new things and be continually overwhelmed by the new glories of our God. Who can comprehend this?

And then to see Jesus face to face! "Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is" (1 John 3: 2).

To see Jesus in all His glory! Far, far better than we can see Him here! This glory will cause us to bow our faces to the ground before Him. But not in any forced way. No, a deep joy—that we may belong to such a wonderful God and that we may be with Him forever—will fill us and permeate us again and again! There will be no ritual church services. No, only renewed wonder and amazement and eternal joy!

There is absolutely nothing negative there! No sin, no injustice, no conflicts, no misunderstandings, no war, no strife, no pain, no accidents, no sickness—not even the temptation to sin! There is no room for any of these things in heaven. God's presence simply drives them out. We can't quite understand it here on earth, but joy will always overflow there. Joy that comes from God, where He Himself is its source.

Much more could be written about heaven, but for us here on earth, some important questions remain. First, do you have citizenship in heaven? Have you



been cleansed by Jesus' blood and born again to new life in God? Are you a child of God and thus "at home" in heaven? Is your name written in the Book of Life, recorded there before God in heaven? "Blessed *are* the pure in heart, for they shall see God" (Matthew 5:8). And, second, do you long for God and for heaven? Or are you "earthbound"? So many who claim to be Christians actually live for this present age and for this world. Yes, they hope to be in heaven someday—after all, no one wants to be in hell—but they give little thought to heaven and to eternity. It plays no active part in their present life. After all, that's all still somewhere in the future!

May God give us such a longing for our true home with Him that we, too, may sing:

Oh, I am homesick, longing for home;
Homesick, my heart burns as I on earth roam.
Oh, still this homesickness, Jesus, in me,
My heart only longs to go home, Lord, to Thee.

R. Taron

Let's Go Home!

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

Language is very interesting; you can have words that represent similar things but can carry significantly different meanings. For example, the word "house" refers to a structure in which someone lives. My family and I live in a house. "House" is a neutral word that carries little emotional weight for most people. The word "home," on the other hand, is vastly different. Houses can become homes, but first an emotional connection must be made by those who dwell in them. Home is where people feel safe and free enough to let down their guard against the pressures of society. Home is where we can rest. Home is where family and friends enjoy fellowship and share life together.

Those who are familiar with my family know that I have a brother who has severe learning needs. He is limited in his abilities to communicate and to process his circumstances. Growing up, I would watch him deal with stressful situations. You could tell when he was anxious or uncomfortable by his mannerisms; he would fidget with his hands, refrain from eating, and then say to our parents, with his limited words, "no Hus," which is Low German for, "let's go home." This didn't necessarily mean that he wanted to go to a physical place, but rather, he wanted to remove himself from the circumstances or people that were making him anxious or uncomfortable. He wanted to be in a safe place with his family.

Scripture teaches us that we live in a fallen world filled with death, disease, and moral decay. Every day we as Christians are faced with spiritual battles and societal pressures that threaten our souls and deplete our energies. Though we have communities of believers and places of worship where our souls can be refreshed, it is not unusual for Christians to feel alone in their places of work or learning. Jesus instructed His followers to be "in the world," without becoming "of the world" (John 17: 14–16). We are to be "in the world" so that Christ can use us to reach other souls for His kingdom. We are to shine brightly for Him in a dark world without allowing the darkness to dampen His light in us. Such a life can be draining and lonely at times. When I feel this way, my soul at times resonates with my brother, and my thoughts wander to the place that our Lord has gone to prepare for us. I desire to "go home" and be with the Lord. Some of my favorite hymns are those found near the back of the hymnal, hymns that describe how wonderful it will be when either the Lord returns or calls us home to be with Him.

I believe that it is normal for Christians to feel as though they are pilgrims passing through to a better place. I also believe that it is normal for us to have a deep desire within us to leave this broken world, so that we can be with the Lord. This is part of our nature as people of God. I'm reminded of Elijah, who had "a nature like ours" (James 5: 17).

Shortly after Elijah's Mount Carmel victory, he found himself fleeing for his life from Queen Jezebel. The Bible says that he fled to the wilderness and prayed that the Lord would take his life. Elijah had a difficult life. The times in which he lived were godless. His people continued to forsake the one true God, though Eli-

jah repeatedly displayed God's power to them. While in this valley of discouragement, an angel of the Lord strengthened Elijah, so that he could continue his journey to Mount Horeb (1 Kings 19:4–8). There in a cave on the mountain, Elijah poured out his heart to God and revealed to Him his desire to go home and be with the Lord.

Though God was able to use Elijah in mighty ways, he could sense that God's main purpose for him had been completed. Nonetheless, God gave Elijah three tasks to carry out before his departure from this world: to anoint Hazael as king over Syria, to anoint Jehu as king over Israel, and to anoint Elisha as prophet in his place (1 Kings 19:15–16). What I find interesting is that Elijah started with the third task; he anointed Elisha as prophet to replace him. This is actually the only task of the three that he completed. In 1 Kings 19:19 we read, "So he departed from there, and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, who *was* plowing *with* twelve yoke *of oxen* before him, and he was with the twelfth. Then Elijah passed by him and threw his mantle on him." Bible scholars note that this act of placing a mantle on someone was a sign of prophetic transition; something that Elisha would have understood. Elisha had officially been called and appointed by Elijah as God's chief prophet among His people. Scholars differ in their estimates as to how long these two prophets worked together; yet one thing is clear: Elijah was taken home before the other two assignments were completed. Why? Likely because of Elijah's strong desire to go home.

I often find it difficult to relate to the great men and women of Scripture whom God used to do incredible things for His kingdom, but I can relate to Elijah. Yes, he was a tool in God's hands, and a prayer warrior, but he was "a man with a nature like ours" (James 5:17). He was a faithful servant who felt alone in a country filled with those who did not know nor serve his God. It's true, God reminded him that he was not alone, but this did not diminish his desire to go home to be with the Lord.

Though we can relate to Elijah, we cannot expect that God will take us home today in a chariot of fire. However, we can rest assured that the Lord has done exactly what He promised to do; He has prepared a place for us so we can one day be with Christ where He is. Let us faithfully serve the Lord until He says to us, "Let's go home."

David Knelsen
Hamilton, ON





The Goal

Nicholas practically jumped out of the car when they got home from the archery club's event. Today, his dad had gone with him to try archery. It was really special to spend time together under the blue sky amid the colorful fall scenery.

"Dad! That was the best day ever! Did you see? None of my arrows missed the target! And a lot of them even hit the bullseye!" His father smiled. "Yes, I saw that. You shot really well."

"I want to practice a lot now—like three times a week! Then I'll go to competitions and maybe win medals. I'm getting better and better . . . and someday I'll be the very best!" His father looked at him calmly. "The very best, you say?"

They went inside and sat down at the table. "You know, that reminds me of a Bible story. Do you know Nimrod?"

Nicholas shook his head.

"In the Bible, in Genesis 10: 8–12, he's described as a mighty hunter—strong and skilled. But he also became a ruler, the first great ruler on earth."

Nicholas furrowed his brow. "That sounds good, doesn't it?" His father shook his head. "Not necessarily. Those who want to rule often think that others are beneath them. Nimrod built fortified cities like Babel and Nineveh. But the people there turned away from God. They were concerned with power and greatness, not with pleasing God and helping others."

"Please don't get me wrong," his father said gently. "Archery is a wonderful activity. It's good for your body to practice outdoors a few times a week. It's fun and keeps you fit—but school and family shouldn't take a back seat."

"And . . . I don't have to be the best?" Nicholas asked quietly. "Exactly," his father replied. "Anyone who absolutely wants to be first is seeking their own glory. That's not what Jesus modeled for us. Our lives are meant to honor God."

Nicholas smiled. "Then I'll just do my best—so that God is pleased . . . and you are, too." His father put his hand on his shoulder. "That's a very good goal."

What do you think is the difference between "being the best" and "doing your best"?

Helene Rotfuss

Running from God?



The Bible tells us about Jonah, whom God sent to go to Nineveh and deliver the message to the people there that God would destroy their city because they had forsaken Him. But Jonah did not want to do what God had told him to do. Instead, he boarded a ship bound for Tarshish.

While the ship was underway, a violent storm began to rage. The ship's crew wondered who was responsible for bringing such a terrible storm upon them. Jonah confessed to them that he was the cause of the storm, because he was fleeing from God. What should the crew do with Jonah now? Should they all perish in the storm, or would it be better to throw one man overboard? Jonah himself told them to throw him overboard, which is exactly what they did. Immediately, the violent storm stopped.

But what happened to Jonah? A large fish swallowed him. Jonah did not die. Instead, he stayed alive inside the fish's belly. God took care of him. He spent three days and three nights there. What kind of fish do you think it was? A big whale, perhaps?

After that time, the fish spit Jonah onto the shore. Do you think Jonah then went to Nineveh to fulfill his mission? Yes, he did! The people of the city turned from their evil ways, and God relented and spared the city.

Jonah couldn't hide from God. Even on the ship, God could see him. We can't hide from God either—even if we had the very best hiding place, the farthest corner of the attic or a cave no one has ever entered—God sees us there, too.

This fact may scare some people who would rather run away from God. But if you love God, isn't this a wonderful thing to know? God is always with you, wherever you are—even when you're lost in a department store, even when no one at school wants to stand with you because you follow Jesus, even when you're separated from someone you love . . . God is with you. Hold on tightly to this wonderful truth!

Anja Mantek

"Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God."

1 Corinthians 10:31

Youth Bible Days 2026 in Tuningen

The Youth Bible Days in Tuningen have been held annually since 2007, with a special theme chosen for each year.

Once again, we were blessed to experience a wonderful time together.

Under the theme, "Be Strong in the Lord" (Ephesians 6: 10), young people and several youth leaders gathered to devote themselves to an in-depth study of God's Word.

The following report brings together the written responses and reflections of several of the young people who attended.

A Special Break from Everyday Life

For us, the Youth Bible Days are a valuable break from school, work, appointments, and all the things that fill our everyday lives. They give us an opportunity to slow down, listen carefully to God's Word, and reflect on our own walk with Him.

The many sermons and teaching sessions are especially meaningful to us. Because they are specifically geared toward young people and the challenges we face, they provide practical guidance and encouragement for everyday life. Time and again, we come away with new insights and renewed encouragement for our walk with God.

The fellowship we share is another great blessing. We enjoy spending time with friends and acquaintances from other congregations, some of whom we rarely get to see because of the distance. The honest and open conversations about spiritual matters are especially valuable—both among ourselves and with the youth leaders. These conversations strengthen and encourage us.

Singing and praying together also mean a great deal to us. We can praise God, give Him glory, and experience how our faith brings us together.

The testimony service was particularly moving. We were encouraged to hear how other young people experience God in their everyday lives, how He carries them through difficult times, and how they have personally experienced His work. Hearing how our brothers and sisters share their faith with others also inspired us. Such testimonies strengthen our own faith and encourage us to trust God more fully.

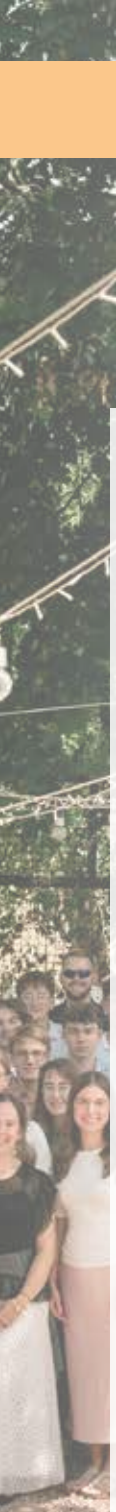
Overall, the Youth Bible Days are a time when we can be spiritually refreshed and renewed in our strength. We return to our everyday lives encouraged and strengthened to faithfully follow Jesus.

We are also deeply thankful for the wonderful hospitality and warmth of the brothers and sisters in Tuningen. Throughout the entire event, we experienced the love and care they showed us. The delicious meals, thoughtful hospitality, and warm welcome all helped us feel at home and truly valued.

"Be Strong in the Lord"—
The Theme of the Youth Bible Days

One thought especially stayed with us this year: true spiritual strength does not come from our own efforts or willpower, but from our relationship with Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ died and rose again for us. He bore our sins, forgave us, and lives in us through the Holy Spirit. He is the source of our strength



and joy. Through Him, we are strengthened day by day—to resist sin and to live for Him.

The session "Fallen, Wounded, but Not Defeated" especially spoke to us. We were reminded that Christians can fall into sin if they are not careful. What matters, however, is that we get back up if we fall and continue the fight. We have an Advocate with the Father—Jesus Christ Himself. The assurance that God does not abandon us, even in times of spiritual struggle or after we have experienced failure, gave us new courage.

Another important topic was "Be Strong in the Battle of Faith," based on Ephesians 6: 10–20. We learned how to put on and use the armor of God so that we can stand firm against the attacks of the enemy in our spiritual lives. We were also reminded of what it means to live in God's love and draw our strength from Him.

The session for the young men on the Holy Spirit was also very encouraging. It is precious to know that the Holy Spirit, as a divine Person, dwells in every born-again Christian. This truth gives us courage and reminds us afresh of God's presence in our personal walk of faith.

"You Are Stronger Than You Think"

Through the story of Gideon in Judges 6 and 7, we saw how God can use a person despite his weaknesses, fears, and doubts.

Gideon focused on his own limitations and the obstacles standing before him. God, however, met him in his weakness and gave him a task to fulfill. A man who was initially fearful and uncertain became someone who obeyed God and courageously carried out the task he had been given.

This showed us that it is not primarily about what we are able to do, but about our willingness to serve God. When we trust Him, obey Him, and make ourselves available to Him, He can use us despite our weaknesses. Gideon did not win the victory through his own strength, but through the strength of God.

In this context, the words of 2 Timothy 1: 7 have become especially precious to us: "For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind."

The words "You are stronger than you think" therefore took on a special meaning for us. They remind us that we do not have to be strong in ourselves for whatever tasks He gives us.

What We Want to Take Home with Us

We want to learn not to minimize our failures, but to face them honestly. What we experience and learn through difficult times can also help others who are going through similar situations. At the same time, we want to deal more seriously with unhealthy habits and, with God's help, overcome them.

We also want to use our time more intentionally. Bible reading, prayer, and fellowship with other believers should have an important place in our everyday lives. We do not want to deepen our relationship with God only during the Youth Bible Days, but also intentionally nurture that relationship at home.

The illustration of the "helmet of salvation" as part of the armor of God reminds us to guard our thoughts and allow Jesus to shape our minds more and more. Regular fellowship with Him and a life of prayer help us to do this.

We also want to make ourselves more fully available to God. We were reminded once again that God wants to use people in His kingdom. We do not need to be especially strong, gifted, or perfect. What matters is our willingness to serve Him. We need Him every day, and we can trust that in Him we will find the strength and help we need.

Thank God for this special time!

THE SECRET OF THE SINGING HEART

C. W. Naylor

The life and strength of a tree depend largely upon the soil in which it grows. For many years I lived in a region with flat, fertile soil. Many beech trees grew there. I had occasion to "girdle" some of these trees by cutting through the bark all around the trunk so that they would die. To my surprise, the trees died within a short time.

Earlier, however, I had lived in another region where the soil was clay-like and the land was hilly. There the beech trees were much more resilient and far more difficult to kill.

I remember a neighbor who wanted to cut down a large beech tree. He girdled the trunk and chopped off all the branches. The branches were even piled around the tree and burned. I wondered why so much effort was required to kill one tree.

The following spring I understood the reason. In spite of this drastic treatment, the tree put forth new shoots and leaves. The roots sent out fresh growth with renewed vigor, and all the labor seemed to have been in vain. The secret of this remarkable vitality was not in the tree itself, nor in the climate, but in the soil.

The same is true of the "harmful tree" of negativism. It grows in the soil of doubt and unbelief. If we want to destroy it, we must change the soil. We must take away the nourishment that keeps it alive.

A Decision

We can adopt an attitude that feeds fear and anxiety, or we can choose faith. We can strengthen our faith and learn to trust God and His promises. It is our privilege to turn our eyes away from our fears and difficulties and fix them firmly on God.

Yes, we can undermine the strength of this harmful tree and finally destroy it. God has promised us a life of victory. He desires that we enjoy the deep rest of heart that is found only in His presence.

As long as we devote all our attention to the cares and troubles of life, we will have little time to develop the abilities God has placed within us—abilities that can bring us joy and contentment.

How often we practice doubt instead of faith! Yet every person can grow in faith if he follows the right path. The Bible says, "And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith" (1 John 5:4). Faith is also the victory over fear, anxiety, and negativism.

The surest way to destroy this harmful tree is to cut it down with the axe of faith.

But How Can Our Faith Grow?

Take your Bible and write down the promises of God that meet your present need. Read them every day. Read them until they become alive and real to you.

When fear and worry attack you, read those promises again. After each one say, "This is true, and this promise is for me!"

Repeat This Again and Again

At first you may struggle inwardly. The promises may seem too good to be true. It may even seem as though your own words are speaking against you.

I know that feeling from personal experience.

But I also know that you can read, ponder, and believe the promises of God until they become deeply rooted in your mind and become a personal reality. They calm the heart, relieve anxiety, and bring comfort. Little by little, confidence grows, and as confidence grows, fear disappears. In this way we learn truly to trust God and His promises.

Worry or Trust

If I emphasize these thoughts again and again, it is because they need to sink deeply into our hearts. We need this truth. One thing is certain: if you worry, you are not fully trusting God. And if you trust God, you do not need to worry. You cannot do both at the same time.

Worry is a habit of the mind. Little children do not carry deep, lasting worries. Even when they become frightened, their fear usually passes quickly. Every habit can be broken—including the habit of worrying.

If you suffer from fear and negativism, begin today to break this habit. Worry is a harmful state of the mind, but it can be overcome and even completely uprooted. We owe it to ourselves to fight this battle. We cannot prevent certain thoughts from knocking at the door of our minds, but we can decide which thoughts we allow to enter and which we keep out. We can arrange and direct our thoughts. We can replace negative thoughts with better, healthier ones.

Destroying Negativity

Part 11

An Important Lesson

During years of suffering, when I was confined to my bed and almost unable to do anything, I came close to sinking into deep discouragement and despair. Then I learned an important lesson.

I realized that I had to turn my thoughts away from myself. I deliberately began to fill my mind with better and more hopeful thoughts. And behold—the dark thoughts lost their power. Whenever they tried to return, I replaced them with other thoughts. Eventually, I broke the habit of dwelling on gloom and despair.

Our will plays an important role in this process. Our thoughts possess remarkable power. They influence our feelings and often determine the direction of our lives. We can imagine discouraging things, or we can imagine hopeful things. Our lives will be shaped accordingly.

Therefore, deliberately direct your thoughts in a positive direction. Do not allow them to become a hindrance, but rather let them become a source of help.

Overcoming Life's Circumstances

Many people are constantly resisting their circumstances. They fight unceasingly against things they cannot change. Such an attitude produces continual tension.

One writer said that many nervous people live in a state of constant inner strain and that many of their fears would lose their power if they would simply stop resisting everything.

Often it is our resistance that gives small things the power to trouble and torment us.

This does not mean that we should simply surrender to every situation. But neither should we waste our strength.

If we can change something, then we should change it. If we cannot change it, we should learn to adapt to it and make the best of it.

We do this in other areas of life. When I am cold, I do not fight against the cold—I seek warmth. When I am hungry, I do not argue with my hunger—I seek food. When I am weary, I rest. And when I am filled with fear and anxiety, I should turn to faith and trust in God.

The psalmist said, "Whenever I am afraid, I will trust in You" (Psalm 56:3). He had learned the secret of overcoming difficulties and suffering.

Many of our fears exist only in our imagination. And when real troubles are present, we often make them much greater through our fears and imaginings. Many people are afraid when there is actually nothing to fear.

Consider this wonderful promise: "But whoever listens to me will dwell safely, and will be secure, without fear of evil" (Proverbs 1:33).

And consider also the promise fulfilled through Christ: "That we, being delivered from the hand of our enemies, might serve Him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him all the days of our life" (Luke 1:74–75).

The experience of the psalmist can also become our experience: "I sought the Lord, and He heard me, and delivered me from all my fears" (Psalm 34:4).

Then we too can say with David, "The Lord *is* my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord *is* the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?" (Psalm 27:1).

And again: "God *is* our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear" (Psalm 46:1–2).

The exhortation of Jesus is, "Do not worry," or in other words, "Do not be anxious." And He also said, "Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me" (John 14:1).

For Jesus, this was reason enough not to fear; it should also be reason enough for us.

Finally, let us impress this truth deeply upon our hearts: if we trust God and obey Him, then nothing can come into our lives apart from His knowledge and permission.

He knows all things.
He cares for His children.
He carries us through suffering and trials.

If we hold fast to Him and trust His Word, we need not fear the future, no matter how threatening it may seem.

Therefore, take up the axe of faith and cut down the harmful tree of negativism. Then you will rest securely in the sunshine of God's love and live in the brightness of His presence.

Homesick for Heaven

Some time ago I visited an elderly sister. She had given up her apartment because she required more care. This move was meant to make life easier for her. Nursing homes and caregivers play an important role, especially for the elderly. They can lighten the load. Hardly anyone is happy to move into a nursing home, but when independent living isn't feasible, such a step can be of great benefit and relief. Whether we want it or not, sometimes the move is simply necessary. The wise Solomon once wrote, "To everything *there is* a season" (Ecclesiastes 3:1). And that's life.

Back to my visit. It was in the afternoon. After her midday meal, the sister had laid down to rest a little. An afternoon nap seems to become more necessary with advancing age. But she must only have been dozing, because when I stepped quietly into the room, she opened her eyes. I could tell she was happy to see me.

We talked about various things. Eventually we came around to her health. She did not really want to speak about it at all. But because I had asked, she told me about her pain, the constant aching in her joints, the trouble with her knees, and other challenges. Then she grew quiet. After a while she said slowly and softly, "This had to happen. It's how the dear Lord wanted it."

Again she was silent. At first I did not quite know how to respond. Then she lifted her head from the pillow, looked at me, and said very earnestly, almost as if preaching, "The dear Lord wants to make me homesick for heaven."

Then I began to understand. She had reflected on her age, her ailments, and her circumstances, and had come to this conclusion: I'm homesick. That is what she called her longing. I drove home deep in thought. Her words accompanied me: make me homesick . . . homesick . . . homesick." Again and again I had to think of that sentence of hers: "The dear Lord wants to make me homesick for heaven."

How is the word "homesickness" best explained? Homesickness is the opposite of wanderlust. Wanderlust is the longing to set off, to see something new, to experience faraway places. Homesickness, by contrast, is the heart's longing for home. It is the yearning for a place where one feels at home, where one is safe and accepted, where one belongs.

If you look up the word "homesick" in a concordance, you notice something interesting: the word does not appear in the Bible at all. And yet the thought is very familiar to us. For us as Christians in particular it carries a deep meaning. Alongside the natural homesickness for one's house, family, and native land, there is another kind of homesickness—a longing that reaches beyond this earthly life: a homesickness for heaven, our eternal home.

We live on this earth. We rejoice in the life God has given us. Here we have our tasks, our families, and our responsibilities. But we also know that this earth is not our final home. We are passing through. Our destination is heaven—our eternal home with God.

- Jesus said: "In My Father's house are many mansions; if *it were* not *so*, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, *there* you may be also" (John 14:2–3).

- Paul writes: "we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens" (2 Corinthians 5:1).

- And in the letter to the Hebrews we read: "For here we have no continuing city, but we seek the one to come" (Hebrews 13:14).

For a Christian, heaven is not a foreign country—it is home. We are on our way home. That does not mean we are weary of life. We know our place on this earth. We know our tasks and our responsibilities, and we are thankful for every day God gives us. But we also know that this is not all there is. Deep in our hearts lies the longing to be with Jesus one day.

Paul knew this yearning. He writes: "having a desire to depart and be with Christ, *which is* far better" (Philippians 1:23). You can practically feel this homesickness in Paul. He wanted to be with the Lord who had met him on the road to Damascus and had completely changed his life.

Every believer has had a personal encounter with Christ. And from that moment on, something

changed. We still live here on this earth, but our eyes are directed toward heaven.

You might say that, as Christians, we have dual citizenship.

Most of us have a passport somewhere in a drawer. That passport tells us which country we belong to. It identifies our earthly citizenship. But the Bible reminds us that we have another citizenship—one that is eternal. Paul writes: "For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ" (Philippians 3:20). We live here. We serve here. We fulfill our responsibilities here. But our true and eternal home is in heaven.

Sometimes we wonder what heaven will be like. The Bible gives us glimpses, but much remains hidden from our human understanding. One thing, however, we do know: it will be wonderful. So wonderful that Paul could write, "For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy *to be compared* with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (Romans 8:18). The Bible speaks of "a better and an enduring possession" in heaven (Hebrews 10:34). The suffering of this world, sickness, parting, and death remind us that we are waiting for something better. Someone once put it beautifully: "The best is yet to come." The longer you think about it, the better you understand that elderly sister. You begin to feel homesick—homesick for Home.



This hope of our eternal home makes life easier. It does not remove every difficulty, but it helps us see our difficulties from the right perspective.

- It helps us overcome temptation. We know what we are living for and where we are headed. And so we want to remain faithful to the Lord.
- It helps us deal with difficulties. Our problems are real, but they are not permanent. The burdens of today will not last forever.
- It gives us endurance. Even when the road is at times rough and exhausting, we know there is a destination. We are on our way home.
- This hope gives us courage and strength for our daily tasks. We do not neglect our duties. On the contrary: because we know to whom we belong, we take our responsibilities seriously, and serve the Lord faithfully.
- And this hope comforts us in times of sorrow. Death does not have the final word. For the believer, hope reaches beyond the grave. This is why Paul writes that we do indeed grieve, but not as those who have no hope (1 Thessalonians 4:13).

I like the way Paul explains this thought. In 2 Corinthians he speaks about dying and transition to the other world. As long as we live on this earth, we live by faith and not yet by sight. But one day faith will become sight. And then Paul states a governing principle of his life: "Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him" (2 Corinthians 5:9).

That is crucial. As long as we are here, we want to live faithfully. We want to fulfill our tasks, to be a blessing to others, and to please our Lord. And when our road ends, we can know this: we are going home.

Homesickness—is the heart's longing for home. For a child of God it is the longing for our eternal home, for the place where we will be with our Lord forever. We are still on the journey—but we are on the way Home.

Harry Semenjuk
Wetaskiwin, AB

Prayer Topics for 2027 – The Lord is Our Shepherd

Psalm 23 describes how the Lord cares for each of His sheep and the entire flock of His people. Let us, as a church family, say: *"The Lord is our shepherd; we shall not want." (Psalm 23: 1)*

From John 10, we know that Jesus is the Good Shepherd of our souls. His people, saved by grace, hear His voice and follow Him throughout their lives (John 10: 2–4). God's people can testify to His faithfulness and manifold daily blessings. Surely, we shall not lack anything if we follow the Good Shepherd in the New Year, despite any hardships we may face. Let us pray, listen and remember these words: "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand" (John 10: 27–28).

Harry Klinger
Winnipeg, MB

1. He Leads Us to Green Pastures

"He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters." (Psalm 23: 2)

Amid life's busyness and demands, Jesus provides a place of rest for our souls. This is a quiet place of green pastures where we can study our Bibles and pray. Jesus asks us to find such a secret place daily, where God hears our prayers and rewards us. He teaches us to pray the Lord's Prayer as we rest in Him, and He provides the still waters our souls long for (Matthew 6: 6–13). As we draw near to God, He draws near to us with His Spirit. This will have a soothing and calming effect on our souls. It is a well of life from which we draw our spiritual strength and through which we can become a blessing to others, as Jesus promised in John 7: 37–38: "Jesus stood and cried out, saying, 'If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.'"

Let each of us take time to:

- Find the green pastures where we can pray for the Lord's strength and guidance (Matthew 6: 6–13).
- Drink of the still waters and be filled with the living waters of the Holy Spirit (John 7: 37–38).
- Pray for our families and churches so that they may bless others with the Good News (Ephesians 6: 18–20).

2. He Restores Our Souls

"He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake." (Psalm 23: 3)

No matter how difficult our lives become or how weary we are, the Good Shepherd promises to restore our souls. At times in our lives, we need the refreshment or even the restoration of our souls. If we have faith and pray, we know that the Lord Jesus can restore our mind, body, and soul! He will always lead us on the narrow way of life that is holy and righteous. David pleads in Psalm 31: 3, "For You *are* my rock and my fortress; therefore, for Your name's sake, lead me and guide me."

Let us pray in His name:

- To restore and refresh our souls when we are hurt or emotionally weary.
- To take up our cross daily and follow in His holy steps (1 Peter 2: 21).
- To be an example of faith for our families, those around us, and our church family (1 Timothy 4: 12–16).

3. You Are with Us

"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for You are *with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me." (Psalm 23:4)*

We live in a fallen world that brings much grief, trials and sickness. Jesus made this clear when He said that in this life we would have troubles, but in Him we will have peace in spite of the hardships. We are to be of good cheer as He has overcome the world and will be with us. There are times in our lives when we are walking through a wilderness where the shadows of death draw near. Yet the Good Shepherd is still with us, comforting us with His Word and His Spirit. His children are never alone as their Shepherd watches over them to protect and lead them to safety. With eyes of faith, we see that our Lord Jesus continuously does this in our lives, and we are comforted and held close by the Shepherd of our souls.

Let us draw near to our Good Shepherd:

- With all our daily sorrows, burdens and trials, let us find rest for our souls (John 16:33).
- Let us be encouraged, as God's people, to serve Him in our time (Acts 9:31).
- Let us pray for the comfort of those who are suffering in our church family (2 Corinthians 1:3–4).

4. Our Cup Runs Over

"You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; my cup runs over." (Psalm 23:5)

What an amazing privilege that we as God's people get to sit at His table of grace! No matter how many enemies we face in life, our Good Shepherd has provided a spiritual table of goodness for us. We sit at the table of communion and break bread and drink fron the cup in remembrance of our Lord Jesus' great sacrifice for us. This act lifts our hearts with thanksgiving. As we sit at the table of prayer, He anoints our heads with the oil of His Spirit. This brings us gladness and joy in His presence, and we realize that our cup of grace overflows!

Let us sit at the table of our Lord and:

- Resist the devil and instead worship and draw near to God as He draws near to us (James 4:7–8).
- Ask Him to anoint us with the oil of His Spirit and His grace (1 Corinthians 1:2–9).
- Share His love with others as He blesses us with an abundance of goodness (1 Thessalonians 1:2–5).

5. He Provides Goodness and Mercy

"Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord *forever." (Psalm 23:6)*

This is a wonderful promise of the Good Shepherd to lovingly care for us. He will lead us as a flock to green pastures and living waters all the days of our lives. We will in no way be lacking in any good thing as He cares for us and delivers us from all harm (Psalm 34:6–10). Do you believe this and trust Him to care for you daily? Have you experienced this abundance from the hand of God as you serve Him? Let us reflect on the goodness and mercies of God in our lives and bless His holy name! One day, with the Lord Jesus, we will reach our eternal heavenly home (Hebrews 11:13–16).

Let us pray to the Good Shepherd and:

- Come to His throne and obtain mercy and grace in our daily lives (Hebrews 4:16).
- Serve Him out of love and thank Him daily for His saving grace and untold blessings (Psalm 103:1–5).
- Run the race of faith and encourage one another to always look to Jesus (Hebrews 12:1–3).

Longing for Home

Often, in this dark world of shadows,
A deep sense of longing fills me
For that bright place where heaven beckons,
For my home in eternity.

No longer do I want to dwell in
This cruel, wicked sinful world,
Where wrong and vice are so compelling
And Satan's lies like darts are hurled.

How bitter is the flood of sorrow,
So hard and steep the path ahead!
The path I walk today, tomorrow
Seems full of trials which I dread.

The cities here on earth feel gritty.
The houses often grey and cold.
The golden streets of God's fair city
Are marvelous and won't grow old.

I hear the bird songs sweetly ringing.
"Come home, come home" they seem to say.
Yes, when I hear the robin singing,
My aching heart longs for that day.

And how I love the gorgeous flowers,
The roses with resplendent glow!
Yet fairer still are Eden's bowers
Than earthly gardens here below.

Yes, even rosebuds, red and cheery
And hopeful seeds, when they are sown,
Do not entice me. I am weary.
I'm drawn away; let me go home!

My heart is filled with fervent longing
To be with God on heaven's shore.
I wish my soul had wings, prolonging
The waiting time on earth no more.

Käte Dorn