

# **EVANGELISM 101**

(True Stories & Lessons on Evangelism & Discipleship)

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### **EVERY CHRISTIAN SHOULD WITNESS**

One of the first things that Jesus said to His would be followers was "Follow Me, and I WILL MAKE YOU BECOME fishers of men" (Mk. 1:17, NASV).

This command was expanded upon when we see that evangelism was the real mission of Jesus Christ when He was on this earth, "Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also: FOR THEREFORE CAME I FORTH" (Mk. 1:38).

Christ not only began His earthly ministry with evangelism but He also ended it with the command of the Great Commission. "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel TO EVERY CREATURE. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe..." (Mk. 16:15-17). Verse 20 tells us that the disciples obeyed that command as "they went forth, and PREACHED EVERY WHERE, the Lord working with them, and confirming the Word with signs following" (Mk. 16:20).

### **WHAT IS EVANGELISM?**

The phrases "preach the gospel & bring glad tidings" is the Greek word "euaggelizo" and means "to evangelize." Success in evangelism is not to see how many people we can win but

rather it is sharing the good news of Jesus Christ and trusting God for the results. Jesus said, "No man can come to Me, except the Father which hath sent Me draw him..." (Jn. 6:44).

### **WHO EVANGELIZED?**

Ephesians 4:11-12 states, "It was He who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service..." (NIV).

This must mean that the true purpose of God in giving the prophet, evangelist, pastor and teacher is to prepare God's people to do the work of the ministry.

In Acts 8:4 it states, "The believers who had fled Jerusalem went everywhere preaching the Good News about Jesus!" (LB). In comparing Acts 8:1 it is clear that everyone except the apostles went everywhere and evangelized. Such was the result that within 300 years the whole Roman Empire was exposed to the gospel of Jesus Christ. Why? Because everyone evangelized!

### **WHERE DID EVANGELISM TAKE PLACE?**

Where did the believers evangelize? In the temple area, common to the Jews (Acts 2:1-46), in the synagogue (Acts 14:1), throughout entire cities (Acts 8:5), in the desert (Acts 8:26), on the bank of a riverside (Acts 16:13-15), in jail and prison (Acts 16:23), and according to Acts 20:21-22, it was publicly and from house to house. A paraphrase of Acts 1:8 would state evangelism begins in your own home town, then surrounding cities, your state, country and then to the world. Evangelism begins where you live, anywhere there are people.

### **WHAT WAS THE METHOD & APPROACH TO EVANGELISM?**

By studying Jesus' methods of evangelism we can conclude that true evangelism uses all the scripture, the whole counsel of God, in reaching people. The reason why one set of scriptures or one approach to evangelism does not work with everyone is that men's hearts are in different spiritual conditions (See Mt. 13:18-23; Mk. 4:14-20; Lk. 8:9-15). Jesus' approach to the woman caught in adultery was pure grace (Jn. 8:3-11). Jesus' approach to the woman at the well required a word of knowledge (Jn. 4:16-18; 1 Cor. 12:8). To Zaccheus it took a dinner invitation (Lk. 19:1-10). To the rich young ruler Jesus ministered the law (Mt. 19:16-22; Mk. 10:17-27; Lk. 18:18-27). It took the law to show this man the need of the Saviour (See Gal. 3:24). (Tract No. 9, "[Do Good People Go to Heaven?](#)" is a good tract to use with this kind of individual.)

### **SALVATION IS FROM THE HEART**

The idea that evangelism is a method such as a salesman approach is false. Jesus allowed the rich young ruler to walk away (Mk. 10:21-22). We are not after quick decisions, but rather converts that will go on to become true disciples. Bill Fay, in his excellent booklet on witnessing states, "We need to get away from a 'win them' mentality. People do not put their faith in Christ because we cleverly 'force' them to believe. We must realize that if we 'win' someone to Christ,

he's probably not saved. D.L. Moody, the evangelist, was riding on a train when a drunk came up to him and said, 'Mr. Moody, I'm one of your converts.' Moody replied, 'I'm afraid you are, because you're obviously not a convert of the Lord's'" (How Can I Share My Faith Without an Argument? by Bill Fay, p. 6). R.A.Torrey said, "One of the great faults of Christian work today is haste. We are too anxious for immediate results and therefore do superficial work. Many of those who followed Christ came to Him slowly. Nicodemus, Joseph of Arimathea, Peter, and even Paul - although the final step in Paul's case seems very sudden - are cases in point. Three days after Jesus appeared to Paul on the way to Damascus, Paul came out into the light and openly confessed Christ (See Acts 22:16). One man with whom slow but thorough work has been done, and who at last has committed his life to Christ, is better than a dozen who are rushed through the sinner's prayer and think they have accepted Christ when in reality they have not. It is often wise to plant a truth in a man's heart and leave it to work. The seed on rocky ground springs up quickly, but it withers just as quickly" (How to bring men to Christ, by R.A.Torrey, pgs. 87-88).

Scripture reveals a vast difference between trying to twist someone's arm to get them to say a sinner's prayer, and one crying from the heart (without manipulation) for mercy from God and forgiveness of sins.

Notice the following scriptures reveal that salvation results from the free will heart response of people (resulting in conversion) and not by well meaning people pressuring premature decisions.

"Therefore, let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus whom you crucified both Lord and Christ. When the people heard this, **THEY WERE CUT TO THE HEART** and said to Peter and the other apostles, '**BROTHERS, WHAT SHALL WE DO?**'" (Acts 236-37, NIV). Notice who asked what to do? It was the people under conviction.

"And Philip opened his mouth, and beginning from this Scripture he **PREACHED JESUS** to him. And as they went along the road they came to some water; and the eunuch said, 'Look! Water! What prevents me from being baptized?' And Philip said, 'If you believe with all your heart, you may.' And he answered and said, 'I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God'" (Acts 8:35-37, NASV). Notice that when Jesus was preached it was the eunuch asking how he may respond. His heart was open and wanted Jesus.

"And on the Sabbath day we went outside the gate to a riverside, where we were supposing that there would be a place of prayer; and we sat down and began speaking to the women who had assembled. And a certain woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple fabrics, a worshipper of God, was listening; and **THE LORD OPENED HER HEART TO RESPOND** to the things spoken by Paul" (Acts 16:13-14, NASV). Notice that the Lord opened Lydia's heart to respond and she did!

A jailer said to the apostle Paul, "What must I do to be saved?" (Acts 16:29-31). Again, a man under conviction, who had just witnessed an earthquake, realized his need for salvation. It was the unbeliever who asked how to be saved. Again this is evidence of an open heart that wanted Jesus. No manipulation was involved.

A rich man asked Jesus, "Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" (Mk. 10:17). This man asked the right question to the right person.

A thief knew he was a sinner and under just condemnation. Out of his heart's need he cried for Jesus salvation. "Lord, remember me when you enter into your Kingdom." And Jesus said, "Today (at your death) you will be with me in paradise" (Lk. 23:42-43).

A tax collector humbled himself before God, beat his breast, and cried, "God be merciful to me a sinner!" God accepted him, forgave his sins and declared him in right relationship with God (Lk. 18:9-14). This man's heart was opened and prepared to receive God's grace because he knew his need for the Saviour.

Anyone that has done a lot of evangelism is aware of the problem that I am addressing. Evangelism takes discernment and skill at using God's Word. It also should not stop short of an invitation to receive Christ as both Lord and Saviour. But it should never be manipulative. (For a somewhat controversial, yet informative, booklet see "Prayer, Repentance & Salvation" at this website.)

### **SOME HELPFUL METHODS OF APPROACH**

If we ever needed discernment and the power of the Holy Spirit it is in evangelism (Acts 1:8). I hesitate to give a method lest it is turned into a formula. But I also believe that through prayer and reliance upon God that these methods may be very helpful in beginning a life of fulfillment by obeying the Great Commission.

**Approach No. 1** is what I call prayer walking. Prayer walking is when you knock on doors and ask individuals if they have any prayer requests that you could pray for. It is non-threatening because you are not presenting some form of dogma but rather showing that you care about them and want to pray for them and their family. We have had great success with prayer walking.

One example is that around Christmas I was knocking on doors and asking individuals if they had any prayer requests that I could pray for. A lady named Debra answered the door and said that she had just lost her job, her car had been stolen, she had no money to give presents to her children and she was living with her sister. I told her that it was no coincidence we met, I prayed with her, told her that Jesus was calling her to Himself and offered her a tract which she took, and I left.

A few days later I returned and gave her some money. She was overwhelmed that anyone cared.

After Christmas I returned to find she was in the hospital. When I visited the hospital she immediately recognized me and thanked me for helping her and her children. I told her of God's love and the gospel. She immediately wanted to be saved. I told her I could lead her in prayer but why not tell Jesus what she had just told me. She called out to Christ from her heart for the salvation that He offers. And I was the one to witness the fact. The key to true soul-winning is to

get the person to go directly to God for themselves, through Jesus Christ, for the forgiveness of their sins and eternal life.

Lately, we have seen some good results through pray walking, as a local church and I have gone out on Saturday mornings. Several people have turned to Christ.

**Approach No. 2** is the use of a tract. The real purpose of a tract is to open a conversation with a stranger so that you may talk. The most effective tract I use for this purpose is the testimony tract about the [Death of my Daughter](#). Some people have said, "Well I don't have a testimony as powerful and dynamic as that." I say, "You don't have to, use mine!" Joe Rose, one of my friends and companions on our evangelism ministry team, tells my testimony better than I do, with great results! You can do it to!

This is the way I usually start. "Hi! My name is Don Krow and we are in your neighborhood today praying for people's needs. By the way, are there any needs that you have that you would like for us to pray about, or prayer requests that you have that we could take back to our church and pray for?" "No, not at this time." "By the way I would like to leave you this pamphlet about my daughter. I have two daughters, twins actually, and they will be sixteen years old in December. One of them was stillborn, you know what that is? Well, she is alive and perfectly normal in every way. She was dead for around eight minutes. This pamphlet tells you how this miracle took place, would you like to have it? In fact if you've got a few moments I'll tell you the story." See the tract "[The Death of my Daughter](#)" for the full story. (Every time I tell the story I then proceed to give the gospel. The story is the open door to present the gospel.) I usually say something like this, "Since the time that happened with my twins, I've studied the Bible a lot. This is what I discovered. There is a kingdom of darkness and there is a kingdom of God's dear Son. When Jesus came to earth the Jews thought He was going to be a political Messiah that would put down their enemies and destroy Roman rule. But Jesus said, 'My kingdom is not of this earth.' Jesus was calling people into His kingdom and rule by repentance (having a change of heart & mind) and turning to Him for the forgiveness of their sins through His shed blood. I don't know where you are in all of this. Have you ever heard this message before?" Depending on how a person responds at this point will determine if I leave or go right into the Word. I always leave tracts to then reinforce the message.

If you sense any open response then go directly to the scriptures. I find that the words of Jesus spoken to the lost are very powerful and convicting. I recommend reading R.A. Torrey's book, "How to bring men to Christ," to give you many, many examples of how to use the scriptures in winning souls. Let me give you just one: "Many years ago, I noticed a white-haired man in a meeting who did not stand up to acknowledge that he was a Christian. At the close of the service, I walked over to him and said, 'Are you a Christian?' He said he was not. I was sure he was interested, so I asked him the direct question, 'Would you become a Christian tonight if I would show you the way?' He replied that he would.

I opened my Bible to Isaiah 53:6 and read the first part of the verse, 'All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way.' I then said to him, 'Is that true of you?' and he answered, 'Yes.'

'Now,' I said, 'let us read the rest of the verse. 'And the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.' What has the Lord done with your sins?'

He thought a moment and said, 'He has laid them on Christ.'

'What then,' I said, 'is all that you have to do to be saved?'

He replied promptly, 'Accept Him.'

'Well,' I said, 'will you accept Him tonight?'

He said, 'I will.'

'Let us kneel down and tell God so.' We knelt down, and I led in prayer. He followed in a simple way, telling God that he was a sinner, but that he believed that God had laid his sins on Jesus Christ. He then asked God for Christ's sake to forgive his sins.

When he had finished, I asked him if he thought God had heard his prayer and that his sins were forgiven. He said, 'Yes.' I then asked him if he would begin to lead a Christian life at once, set up the family altar, and openly confess Christ before the world. He replied the he would. Some months later, I met his pastor and found that he had gone to his home in a distant city, set up the family altar, and united with the church. Apparently all that this man was waiting for was for someone to make the way of salvation plain to him" (How to bring men to Christ, by R.A.Torrey, pgs. 27-29).

Examples of scriptures that I use in evangelism and the questions I ask are as follows:

**Matthew 22:35-38** If this is the great commandment of scripture what do you think the greatest sin might be? (The purpose of this question is to show a person his need for the Saviour.)

**Mark 8:36-37** What are you exchanging for your soul? You said you didn't want Christ at this time, what are you exchanging for your soul?

**Luke 12:16-21** Jesus said that any of us are foolish to think only of all we can get out of this life and not about the things of God.

**Luke 13:1-5** Do you think that these people were terrible sinners because they suffered such things? Jesus said unless we have a change of mind, a change of heart toward God that we will in like manner perish as these people did.

**Luke 15:1-10** Don't you see that God rejoices over all who have a change of mind and heart and turn to Him?

**Luke 16:19-31** Have you ever had a friend that died? Have you ever realized that this dead man had a request for the living, that they may repent lest they come to this place of torment?

**Luke 18:9-14** Tell this story in your own words. Emphasize that those who humble themselves before God, find His mercy.

**Romans 3:23** Is this true of you?

**Romans 6:23** Do you want your wages?

For those who think they will go to heaven because they are basically a good person (this includes about 60-70 percent of those we talk to), I tell them if they compare themselves to other people they might look pretty good, but if compared to God's standard of righteousness they indeed with come short. I then show them Romans 7:7, 12 and also Exodus 20:3-17 and explain the material found in tract no. 9, "[Do Good People Go To Heaven.](#)"

For a real understanding of how to use Scripture and questions in ministering to others please obtain the book, "How to bring men to Christ," by R. A. Torry.

**Approach No. 3** is similar to No. 2, that is, use a testimony. People may argue with your theology, but not your personal experience or testimony. I use my testimony, but also use others. That's why I wrote tract no. 11, "[Do You Believe in Miracles.](#)" This is a testimony of how my wife received a healing. I find that these testimonies work similar to the accounts recorded in the gospels, except that they are modern day miracles. The whole point is as John's Gospel states, "These are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His name" (Jn. 20:31).

I encourage my evangelism partners to write their own testimony in tract form. A friend (Joe Rose) has written three of the tracts on this website and uses often his testimony in conjunction with mine. Sometimes he shares mine. Use your testimony in conjunction with others and always salt and pepper it with Scriptures in between. Real success in soul-winning results from using God's Word. Testimonies, tracts, etc. are only a means to an end, that is, to present the gospel of Jesus Christ.

## HELPFUL RESOURCES

Book - "How to bring men to Christ," by R. A. Torry, Whitaker House Publishers. (This book takes you step by step in using the Scriptures in leading others to Christ.)

Booklet - "How Can I Share My Faith Without an Argument?" by Bill Fay, Radio Bible Class, Grand Rapids, Michigan USA 49555-0001. (This booklet gives you a step by step approach in sharing your faith. This booklet has been very helpful in evangelism work.)

Booklet - "What the Lord God has to say about Prayer, Repentance and Salvation" by James Brand. (This is a somewhat controversial booklet with some things for us to think about.)

Book - "Hell's Best Kept Secret" by Ray Comfort. Whitaker House publishers. (As Christians we are not under the law, but the law does have a proper place in leading people to Christ. This book comes from that perspective and gives us a lot of things to think about.)

Book - "Evangelism A Concise History" by John Mark Terry. Broadman & Holman Publishers, Nashville, Tennessee USA (A great book that gives evangelism history throughout the church.)

Book - "Power Evangelism" by John Wimber. Harper & Row publishers. (A good explanation of the Kingdom of God vs. the Kingdom of Darkness and the place of the gifts of the Holy Spirit in evangelism.)

**At one time I wrote a letter to my Dad since it was hard for me to talk to him about my Christian faith. This letter has been used by other people also to witness to their family. I encourage you also to copy it and use it to witness to your family.**

## AN OPEN LETTER TO MY DAD

Dear Dad,

Wendy and I will be looking forward to seeing you and Mom very soon. The babies should be here within a few weeks.

As I was riding the motorcycle on the way to my janitorial job, my mind kept going back to you and some of the things experienced in my childhood. You know, it always has been hard for us to talk on a father to son basis (which is probably not unusual for many families).

The reason that I'm writing this letter is because I want you to know the truth -- the truth about life, about Christianity, about things you knew to be wrong such as hypocrisy (pretending to be something that you weren't).

The disciples asked Jesus one time, "What would be the sign of your coming, and of the end of the world?" Jesus answered, "Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ (or I am of Christ); and shall deceive many." "And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many" (Mt. 24:3,13).

How do we know or how can we know truth from error? Well, the first thing is to take by faith that the scriptures are the very God-breathed words of God (2 Tim. 3:16). Today I am writing you a letter. I presume that you are not just reading one sentence from this letter and then telling Mom that such and such is what Don said in his letter. Much preaching today is like reading one sentence from a letter; frankly in doing that you can make the Bible say anything you want it to. The apostle Peter warned that many people would distort the scriptures to their own destruction (2 Pet. 3:15-17). This is where the word "heresy" is derived from. "Heresy" comes from a Latin word which means "to take or choose." Many people today are taking or choosing which part of the Bible they would like to believe. (The result is the many church denominations that we have today.)

Jesus said when He left this earth He would send the Spirit of truth to guide us into all truth (Jn. 16:13-14). The apostle John again speaks in the epistle of first John of men that would seduce, that is, try to lead a person astray. He says, "These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you. But the anointing which ye have received of Him abideth in

you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of ALL things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in Him. And now little children, abide in Him; that, when He shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him at His coming. If ye know that He is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of Him" (1 Jn. 2:26-29). Let me share with you what I see from these verses: (1) Men will try to lead you astray (knowingly or unknowingly). (2) The Spirit of truth will teach you. (3) The Spirit of truth's teaching that causes you to abide in Christ, will produce a fruit or character of life that will cause a person not to be ashamed when Christ comes. (5) Those that are truly born again are those whose faith in Christ's redemption and Word brings forth a fruit which is doing righteousness.

You see, 70 or 80 percent of Americans claim to be born again. But if that were true we would have a nation that practiced righteousness (and that is not the way it is). You see, the apostle Paul also made a statement against the religious Jews of his day that claimed to be the people of God by saying, "For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you" (Rom. 2:24). In other words these religious Jews were talking the talk but not walking the walk. They claimed the true God but conducted themselves in such a way that caused other people to think less of God. In other words, "If their God is real and they live like that, I don't want anything to do with their God." Well, Paul goes on to say, that the problem is not with God but with man's heart (Rom. 2:28-29).

Jesus was asked one time if there were few that would be saved? "And He said unto them, Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able" (Lk. 13:23-24). For "Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from Me, ye that work iniquity" (Mt. 7:21-23).

You see, these people were religious enough and claimed many wonderful works but yet they were turned away from the kingdom. Why? Because they worked iniquity. You see, Jesus saves people not only from the penalty of sin but also from its power. Not to sin and continue a lifestyle of sin but FROM SIN. Is this sinless perfection? No. Is it a change of direction? Yes.

Jesus says, "A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit." "Wherefore by their fruits you shall know them" (Mt. 7:17-20; 3:10; Jn. 15; Lk. 13:7-9). You see, being born again is likened to an incorruptible seed (1 Pet. 1:23). And what kind of fruit does an incorruptible seed bring forth? What kind of fruit would a corrupt seed bring forth? Fruit after its own kind.

The apostle James speaks about the true religion and the pure religion when he says, "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction and to KEEP HIMSELF UNSPOTTED FROM THE WORLD" (Jas. 1:27). Don't get me wrong, we are saved by faith in Christ alone. But we can tell what we believe by what we do. We are not saved by works but works are the test that reveals if our faith is real (Jas. 2:18). See Titus 1:16.

In our western civilization, to believe in Christ has come to mean no more than to acknowledge some facts about Him. Or to use natural terms I could say, "Do you believe that is a tree?" You said, "Yes, I believe that is a tree." "Do you believe Jesus died for your sins?" "Yes, I believe Jesus died for my sins." It is very possible that this kind of faith could be no more than demons faith (Jas. 2:19) or mental assent to some facts. In the Bible the words "believe" and "faith" mean much more. If I said, "Your house is on fire!" If you believed me that would produce an action which would be getting up and running out of the house. If you really believe that Christ's sacrifice (redemption) saves you from sin you're not going to be living in sin (Rom. 6). These things go together just as much as running out of the house that is on fire. Christ's redemption is not only that which saves a man from the penalty of sin, but it is also the great act of God whereby we have been enabled by God's Spirit (as He applies the truth of redemption to our hearts) to never go back into a lifestyle of in again. For those who continue a lifestyle of sin, the question is, "Do they really believe what they say they believe?" This is why the Bible says, "Examine and test and evaluate your own selves, to see whether you are holding to your faith and showing the proper fruits of it" (2 Cor. 13:5; AMP).

Don't get me wrong, its not that doing good things or deeds could ever deal with the problem of sin. For forgiveness comes only as a gift through the shedding of Jesus' blood. What good are good deeds in the light of redemption? They could never remove one of our sins. God through Jesus has paid on our behalf the wages of our sins which was eternal death (Rom. 6:23). "Who was betrayed and put to death because of our misdeeds and was raised to secure our justification - our acquittal, and to make our account balance, absolving us from all guilt before God" (Rom. 4:25, AMP).

But is there not also a second meaning in the idea of God declaring man righteous through the redemption of Christ? Does not God make man upright (that is, giving him a new heart and change in his direction) as well as recognize him as upright? For example, I could never keep a pig away from a mud hole. Why? Because it is the nature of a pig to wallow in mud. But if I could somehow put the nature of a lamb into the pig then I wouldn't have to worry about the pig wallowing in the mud. It isn't the nature of a lamb to wallow in mud. So in Christ a new nature of Christ has been placed into the believer (Eph. 4:24). This explains the many scriptures that say, "If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of Him" (1 Jn. 2:29). "And every man that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure" (1 Jn. 3:3). "Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as He is righteous. He that committeth (continues in) sin is of the devil" (1 Jn. 3:7-8). "In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother" (1J n. 3:10). "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Phil. 2:12-13). You work out that which God has worked in you. That is the fruit of your faith or as Hebrews 6:9-10 states, "Beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that ACCOMPANY salvation, though we thus speak. For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward His name." That which accompanies (to co-exist or occur with) salvation are the good works which God hath before ordained that we should walk in (Eph. 2:10).

Yes it is possible for a person to have said the sinner's prayer, asked Jesus into their heart, without having really repented of their sins (repent: a change of mind, a change of heart that turns away from sin to God). These are people that Jesus said "draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from Me" (Mt. 15:8).

Yes, Jesus is after the hearts of men, they that have taken on the yoke of His kingdom (Mt. 11:28-30), they that will live by their King's (Christ's) commands (Lk. 6:46), they who have turned aside from sin unto Him (1 Cor. 6:9-10).

God is calling you, I know because there's a special love in my heart to see you enter the kingdom and I pray to this end. Love, *Don*

**We write our own tracts for the purpose of evangelism and discipleship. We encourage others to do the same also. People want to relate to something real in your life instead of a generic tract purchased at your local Bible book store. Your own personal tracts give you the opportunity to tell your story and your testimony. We also invite you to use our tracts. Feel free to reproduce them and use them for God's glory. You can do this by typing them into your computer and running them through a copy machine. Many of our tracts are being circulated in many parts of the world.**

## KROW TRACTS

### WHO IS JESUS CHRIST?

Almost every major religion today acknowledges the existence of Jesus Christ. Even our calendar years center up on this historical figure, with the use of A.D. & B.C.

Here is a question I would like you to consider. In fact it is the same question that Jesus Christ, at one time, asked His disciples, "Who do men say that I am?" Before you consider answering the question let me say this, **Jesus Christ was either insane, a lunatic and deceiver, or He is who He claims to be. It is impossible for Him to be a good man or teacher if indeed He was a liar and a deceiver.**

The answer to the question, "Who is Jesus Christ?" must be **revealed to you by God Himself** as stated in Matthew 16:17 **or you just will not know!**

Now before you answer "Who is Jesus?", let me tell you who some other men and women thought Him to be. Some said He was John the Baptist, Elijah, or that one of the prophets of long ago had come back to life (Lk. 9:19). But Jesus asked, "*What about you, who do you say that I am?*" (Lk. 9:20). **Why is this question of such a vital nature?** God has stated that in all the world salvation is to be found in no one else but His Son (Acts 4:12). To have a faulty view of Jesus Christ could have the most serious eternal consequences. When a man asked one day what must he do to be saved, the apostle Paul replied, "*Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved...*" (Acts 16:31). Believing in the Scripture does not mean just acknowledging some

mental credence. **To rely upon, trust and commit ourselves to the Lord Jesus Christ we must understand who He is. First of all, He is the Lord.** The word "Lord" implies Master, Ruler, the one who has the right to control your life. This word also implies deity. **Secondly, He is Jesus.** The word "Jesus" means "God is salvation" and implies Jesus' saving work. Savior implies "one who rescues another." It is very much like a person who rescues another person from drowning, so that they might live. So, Jesus rescues people from perishing so that they might have eternal life. **Thirdly, He is "Christ" a "King"** (Lk. 23:2). "Christ" is a word that means the Messiah, the "anointed" to rule. The Bible says to enter His Kingdom we must be "**converted,**" which means we must turn around, change our direction, change our course by coming out from under the jurisdiction, control, and possession of the kingdom of Darkness (Col. 1:13-14). The apostle Paul describes this as **turning from darkness to light, and from Satan to God** so that we might receive the forgiveness of our sins (Acts 26:18). This is another way of describing "repentance." **Repentance is not man's self effort to clean up his life, rather repentance is to recognize one's sin, to hate it and turn one's back on it by fleeing to Christ.**

*The Scriptures* teach that we are in a conflict between two kingdoms and two kings (Mt. 6:24; Col 1 :13-14). In times past we have all followed the god of this world in the kingdom of darkness (See Eph. 2:1-5). The question is, are you willing to give up and give control of your life to Jesus Christ? Are you now willing to follow the King (Jesus) and accept His sacrifice for the forgiveness of your sins? (Acts 5:31) To "follow" means to come or go after; move behind and in the same direction; to come or go with; to accept the guidance or leadership of; to adhere to the cause or principles of; to be governed by; obey; comply with (Jn. 10:27-28; Rom. 10:9-10, 13).

*Many people feel they can ride the fence. That is to say "I'm not serving Jesus Christ, but I'm certainly not going to serve the devil." The Bible does not teach this. Jesus said, "No-one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other...." (Mt. 6:24). You cannot be saved from what you deliberately want to hold on to.*

*What Kingdom are you in? What master are you serving? Jesus Christ or the god of this world (Satan)? A kingdom in the Bible was the realm in which either Satan or God was in control. One's kingdom is the people over which one has authority or rule. Through Jesus' sacrificial death He has become the means by which your sins may be forgiven. Would you turn to Him today for newness of life, by confessing with your mouth, Jesus as your Lord (Master and Savior) and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead to secure your salvation? (Rom. 10:9-10)*

*The word "gospel" means "good news" and carries the basic facts of Jesus Christ's death and resurrection as the means of obtaining forgiveness of your sins and right standing before a Holy God (1 Cor. 15:3-4; 2 Cor. 5:21). Jesus' command was that repentance and the forgiveness of sins should be preached to all the nations (Lk. 24:47).*

*Would you consider changing your mind and turning to Him so that you might discover who Jesus Christ really is?*

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**Discipleship Evangelism P.O. Box 17007 Colorado Springs, CO 80935-7007**

## **THE DEATH OF MY DAUGHTER**

**BY DON KROW**

Please don't be upset when I say, I have the same basic needs that you have. The need for love, acceptance, communication, a solid faith in God and a purpose in life.

I had a most unusual experience happen to me on December 14, 1981 which I would like to share with you. On that day my wife gave birth (it happened to be a home birth) to identical twins. The firstborn was perfectly normal in every way. The second was what is known to the medical profession as stillborn. Of course you know that "stillborn" means "dead." At this point I **HESITATE TO TELL YOU THE REST OF THE STORY BECAUSE IT IS SO UNUSUAL AND ALMOST UNBELIEVABLE.**

Regardless of what our natural mind tells us, there is a spiritual realm that is involved in this world. Before God, what I am telling you is the truth. A midwife that had worked at a high risk maternity center in El Paso, Texas tried to revive my second child with all medically known procedures and eventually gave up. At this point, I had accepted her death, but wanted to hold her. As I reached to pick her up, I **WAS SUDDENLY KNOCKED BACK AND PARALYZED** momentarily by an evil force. The Bible calls these evil forces, demons. I **KNOW IT SOUNDS BIZARRE**, but I took authority over this demon in Jesus' Name and commanded it to leave. I then began to command life to come into the child. At this point the child took a breath and then ceased to breathe. Again I said, "I command you to leave and life to come into this child in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ." **AT THAT MOMENT THE CHILD BREATHED AND THIS TIME CONTINUED TO BREATHE. SHE IS NOW 28 YEARS OLD.** Because I had a tape recorder going during this birth, I was able to time the events that took place. **MY DAUGHTER WAS NOT BREATHING ON HER OWN UNTIL A PERIOD OF 8 MINUTES** had transpired. You know and I know that even though she is alive today, **SHE SHOULD HAVE BRAIN DAMAGE.** I want you to know that she is perfectly normal in every way and excels in her school work.

Since the time of the twins' birth I've studied the Bible a lot. I have discovered that there is a conflict between two kings and two kingdoms (Col. 1:13-14). What do you think a person would need to do to enter God's kingdom? Keep God's law? Live the best he can? etc... If that is your answer then tell me, Why did Christ die? The Simple English New Testament states, "If the law could have made us right with God, then Christ died for nothing!" (Gal. 2:21). According to this verse, do you see any other way to heaven except through Jesus Christ? Jesus said..."I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me" (Jn. 14:6).

Would you consider turning to Him today for the forgiveness of your sins and the newness of life that He offers? (2 Cor. 5:17)

I would like to talk to you about this, because I care about you. You may contact me or someone who knows me at [WJoKrow@aol.com](mailto:WJoKrow@aol.com)

## 4 KINDS OF PEOPLE

Jesus said there are "4 kinds of people," that is, there are 4 kinds of hearts. The "heart" is the most central part of man. It includes the mind, will, emotions, affections, etc. It makes up the character and determines what one really is.

In describing the "4 kinds of people" the teaching of Jesus is this:

(1) The 1st kind of person is the person who doesn't really believe the claims of Jesus Christ. He is following his own philosophies. He may be an agnostic or atheistic, a believer in Eastern philosophies, or gurus. His philosophy of God may be a god of his own making.

This person may believe that Jesus was a good man or teacher just like other prophets - Mohammed, Buddha, Confucius, etc. - But they have never come to realize that Jesus was what He claimed to be, "the Only way to God the Father" (Jn. 14:6), or else He was the greatest deceiver the world has ever known. If He wasn't what He claimed to be, then to follow Him would be to follow a liar.

This 1st kind of person, Jesus says, never comes to believe His claims (Lk. 8:12).

(2) The 2nd kind of person described by Jesus Christ is a person who hears about the good news of Christ salvation and responds with some kind of belief. They may have responded at a church camp, walked the aisle of a church, said a little prayer, etc. Jesus said they "believe for a while" (Lk. 8:13), but then when times get rough (peer pressure from their friends, family, etc.), they fall away. In other words, their belief lacked one major ingredient, COMMITMENT. A committed faith is that which perseveres, will never give up, and will follow Christ no matter the cost. This "faith" can be described as "faithfulness." The apostle Paul described a faith that does not continue to follow Christ as a faith that is "vain" (See 1Cor. 15:2). "Vain" means "not yielding the desired outcome; unsuccessful."

(3) The 3rd type of person that Jesus describes is a person who has investigated the claims of Jesus Christ, but other things seem to take priority. Cares of this life (such as boyfriends, girlfriends, family, getting ahead, etc.) are the real priorities of their lives. Riches, money, having fun, pleasures of life are the focal point of this person's heart (See for yourself: Read Mark 4:19 & Luke 8:14). According to Jesus this person's priorities have kept them from becoming a real disciple of Jesus (Luke 14:26).

(4) The 4th type of person that Jesus describes is a person with an honest and good heart, that is, a heart that has been softened by repentance, a heart that has a right attitude toward God. This person will not swerve from their purpose (Luke 8:15). They have received the forgiveness of their sins through the blood of Jesus Christ and have turned from the kingdom of darkness

unto the kingdom of God's dear Son (Col. 1:13-14). They follow Jesus Christ and will continue to do so. Do they make mistakes? Yes. Are they perfect? No. But they have had a CHANGE OF DIRECTION, A CHANGE OF HEART, that led to a COMMITMENT to the one who loves them and died to take away their sins.

Can you see that 3 out of the 4 kinds of people that Jesus described, failed to keep God's Word as their first priority? God's Word could do the same in your life as it did for the 4th kind of person.

Where are you in all of this? Why don't you consider making Psalms 51:9-10 your prayer? "Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me."

Can't you see that calling upon Jesus must proceed from your heart? THE ONE WHO LOVES YOU IS WAITING TO HEAR FROM YOU. "For whoever calls on the Name of the Lord shall be Saved" (Rom. 10:13).

## **A BOTTLE OF TAYLOR'S PORT WINE**

**BY JOE ROSE**

When I was 14, I stole a bottle of Taylor's port wine from my grandmother's bar, drank it in my bedroom, and then passed out on the floor. My drinking soon progressed to marijuana, and when I was 15, I tried hash, acid, and many other drugs. Getting drunk and high was my way of gaining acceptance. I knew I could always find somebody to be with and party with, if I was getting stoned or wasted. Besides, I liked the way it felt getting buzzed.

I'd get up on the weekend and have to ask one of my friends where we were the night before because I blacked out much of the evening. I continued this lifestyle through my twenties and in 1986 after 16 years of "just a couple more beers," a failed marriage, and job burnout, I was tired of life and considered suicide.

**IS YOUR LIFE A MESS TOO?**

**ARE YOU UNHAPPY WITH WHAT'S GOING ON IN YOUR LIFE RIGHT NOW?**

**ARE YOU SAYING, "THIS IS STUPID, WHY AM I EVEN READING THIS?"**

**WOULD YOU LIKE TO JUST TAKE A PILL AND WAKE UP ON THE OTHER SIDE?**

**IF YOU ANSWERED "NO" TO THESE QUESTIONS ---DON'T READ ANY FURTHER---**

**IF YOU ANSWERED "YES" TO ANY OF THESE QUESTIONS, PLEASE CONTINUE READING.**

I met a man named Brooks, who told me how God had helped him many years ago, overcome personal failures in his life. He asked me if I was saved. I asked, "Saved from what?" He then asked me if I believed in heaven. I answered, "Yes." He asked, "Are you going there and why?" I answered, "Yes, because I am basically a good person and never killed anyone."

He explained to me that the problems I was facing in my life were only symptoms of a greater problem. This greater problem was that I was a sinner and not in touch with God. I was spiritually dead and as a result I kept making mistake after mistake in my life. Brooks explained that Jesus says I need to be born again to escape future judgment for my sins and come into friendship with Him. By accepting Jesus as my Saviour, and repenting from my sins, is the only way I will get to heaven (Jn. 14:6; 3:3).

I thought that he was a fanatic and I would leave in a couple of days (I was staying with him for a few days while looking for a place of my own). But the more he talked, the more I realized that the things I saw as my problems, were really only symptoms of a greater problem, THAT I NEEDED JESUS IN MY LIFE. I needed to be born again. I decided to call on Jesus, and accept Him as my Lord and Saviour, then I was born again.

Once I called on Jesus as my Saviour, a funny thing happened. God removed the desire for alcohol and drugs from my life. I felt like I had been a slave to drugs and alcohol for 17 years and now, because of Jesus, I was free from this bondage. I have lived in this freedom for 11 years.

FRIEND, IF YOU HAVE PROBLEMS IN YOUR LIFE THAT ARE STOPPING YOU FROM MOVING FORWARD, IF YOU ARE CONSIDERING SUICIDE, IF YOU ARE BURNED OUT IN YOUR JOB, MARRIAGE, OR LIFE IN GENERAL, PLEASE CONSIDER CALLING ON JESUS, AND ASK HIM TO BE YOUR LORD AND SAVIOUR. HE DESIRES FOR YOU TO ESCAPE THE WRATH TO COME AND RECEIVE ETERNAL LIFE WITH HIM. ALL WHO CALL UPON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED (Rom. 10:9-10, 13).

## **THE KING AND HIS KINGDOM**

In the Old Testament, what made Israel distinct from all other nations is that it was a theocracy. In other words, it was ruled directly by God (Isa. 43:15). Later in Israel's history they wanted to be like the other nations of the world, to be ruled by an earthly king (1 Sam. 8:5-19). So God granted their request and chose for them a king named Saul (1 Sam. 10:24-25). Later because of Saul's disobedience, God raised up David to be king, a man after His own heart (Acts 13:21-22; 1 Ki. 15:3).

When God chose a king He would send a prophet to anoint that one with oil. This typified the Holy Spirit coming upon this one to empower and anoint him to rule. At this time the Spirit of God would come upon him and change his heart to rule in righteousness, for God was with him (1 Sam. 10:1, 6, 7, 9).

The anointing to rule (or to be king), is where the idea of the Messiah comes from. The word "anointed" in Hebrew is Mashiach (Messiah) and translated Christos (Christ) in Greek. The Old Testament prophets prophesied that in the future the Messiah (or Anointed One) would come, and the God of Heaven would set up a kingdom which would never be destroyed (Dan. 2:44,

7:14, 27). In the Scriptures, if you notice, Jesus never explained to the Jews what He meant when speaking about the kingdom. It was an Old Testament concept that they were already looking for (Isa. 9:6-7, 11:1-6; Dan. 2:44; 7:13-14, 18 and 27).

It is impossible to understand the messages of Jesus without a basic understanding of the kingdom. The Kingdom was the message that Jesus spoke and the only one he instructed his disciples to preach (Mk 1:14-15, Lk. 9:1-2; Acts 28:23-31; Lk. 16:16; Mat. 24:14). This message was also referred to as "salvation," or the offer of "eternal life" (See Heb. 2:3; Matt. 19:6 cp. Matt. 19:23; Acts 28:23-24, 28, 30-31). Within the phrase "the Kingdom of God" is the idea of a group of people that would be ruled by God. In order to enter God's Kingdom conditions had to be met. A change of heart was required. This change of heart is what the Bible calls repentance. It was a change of heart towards God, that is, it was a turning away from Satan, sin and its ways, unto God, Christ and His ways. As one turns God offers (as a gift, through Jesus' shed blood), the forgiveness of sins and everlasting life (Rom. 6:23). This "good" news" is referred to as the "gospel of grace" or the preaching of the "Kingdom of God" (See Acts 20:24-25).

The Kingdom of God is characterized by grace (Matt. 20:1-16) and has come quietly and secretly in the ministry of Jesus (Matt. 13:33). It will one day in the future come to a glorious and visible consummation (Matt. 13:36-43). Until then, those who belong to His invisible Kingdom are those in whose lives the Kingdom takes visible form (Acts 26:20). They are the light of the world (Matt. 5:14), the salt of the earth (Matt. 5:13), and those who live by their King's commands (Jn. 14:15; 1 Jn.3:10). They are those who have turned aside from sin to Him (1 Cor. 6:9; Gal. 5:21; Eph. 5:5).

Have you turned from darkness to light, from the authority (or rule) of Satan unto God to receive the forgiveness of your sins (Acts 26:18)? Have you been given a new heart and a new spirit that causes you to walk in God's ways (Ezek. 36:26-27; Acts 11:15-18)? Have you accepted the yoke of the Kingdom, to submit your life to His rule and reign (Mat. 3:1-2, 6; Rom. 6:13, 21-22)? Have you called upon God for the forgiveness of your sins (Lk. 18:13-14)? If so, then God has granted you the privilege of turning to Him to receive eternal life. Acts 11:18 states, "When they heard these things, they...glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life."

## **THE UNHAPPY HOOKER**

BY PHYLLIS NICHOLAS

The rumble of traffic was deafening. Dust and exhaust fumes stung my eyes as I leaned against a telephone pole. Four o'clock on Tuesday afternoon; I hadn't had a bath in days.

If I don't get a trick soon, I thought, I'll be a dead duck.

At age 19, I was already hopelessly strung out on heroin. My family had all but deserted me. I was the world's worst hooker.

"Oh God, how did I get here?" I moaned. I was determined not to cry, because my little boy, Billy, was probably at home crying his heart out right now. Paul, my pimp/husband, would kill me or at least try to if I didn't bring home some money.

"Oh God, please help me!" I fought back the tears and planted myself on a nearby bus stop bench. As the sun went down, I felt the cold sweats coming on. I needed some dope soon or I wouldn't be able to work at all. This was the common predicament: Get a fix so you could get out on the streets to sell your body to get another fix. The problem was that it invariably got worse, never better. With all the hazards -- the cops, the nuts, the occasional rip-off -- life was not worth living. It wasn't worth dying for either.

### **Losing faith**

As a child, I learned to love God and the Bible, but somewhere along the way I got lost and turned to drugs. It broke my father's heart when I married Paul, a junkie from New York City. After two years of marriage, hopeless poverty, and the birth of my son, he walked out on us.

I decided to turn my son over to my parents and try to kick heroin. I went to drug treatment programs, recovery homes, hospitals, and psychiatrists. Nothing helped. I desperately wanted to change but couldn't find anyone or anything to help me.

### **Hopelessness**

In this hopeless state I shot more dope to ease the guilt and pain. Often I'd go to bed in some cheap motel room, hoping to die during the night. That way I wouldn't have to face another day on the streets trying to sell myself for another fix.

I overdosed many times, but by some miracle my life was spared. Paul used his fists on me as a motivational tactic. I suffered from severe malnutrition. Infections roared through my body from using dirty needles. Still, I survived.

Once when I was with some acquaintances on a drug run, our Volkswagen was broadsided by a big Ford Ranchero. I was knocked unconscious and all my friends had broken bones. The passenger in the front seat was crushed almost to death, while I suffered only a skinned knee. Why was I still alive?

### **Partners in pain**

One day while in another drug recovery house, I met Patrick. He strengthened me with the love I had so hungered for, but he too was a slave to drugs. For thirteen years we struggled together to free ourselves from addiction. In and out of prisons, from one treatment to another, we would always find ourselves worse off than before.

The night Patrick was released from San Quentin we holed ourselves up in a ratty hotel, shooting heroin and cocaine. For some reason Patrick began telling me how he had read the

entire Bible while doing his time. Then after a long silence he looked at me with an unusual light in his eyes. "I'm gonna see my Lord. I'm gonna walk hand-in-hand with Jesus."

I considered his sunken face and his gaunt frame. His eyes were deep blue pools of misery. But somewhere deep down inside I felt a tiny glimmer of hope.

### **Busted**

A loud slamming split the silence. Two cops busted down the door, handcuffed us, and took us off to jail.

The jail was cold and crowded. I stood for hours in a holding cell filled with smoking, spitting, angry females. Eventually I was assigned to a dormitory and a bunk.

Days later I got a phone call. The voice on the other end said, "Patrick was released from jail two days ago. This morning the police found him dead down by a creek with a needle still in his arm."

My knees buckled; I went into shock.

### **A voice from the gloom**

I don't remember being released from jail. I found myself walking the streets again, confused and desperate. My clothes were wrinkled and dirty; I had lost my shoes somewhere.

I was mad. I raced to consume as much dope as I could, but couldn't seem to kill the pain anymore. My heart turned to stone as I drove myself to make more money. One evening I came across a silver Porsche. The driver was drunk, so I stole the money in his pockets. Counting hundred dollar bills, I told myself, Tomorrow I'm gonna get me a real good fix.

At midnight I knocked on a friend's door, begging shelter for the night. A voice from behind the door yelled, "Go away! We don't want you around here anymore!"

I walked down the dark street alone, my bare feet slapping the pavement.

Then from behind me I heard a voice call my name: "Phyllis, I'm going to save you."

I turned to look, but in the gloom I saw no one.

### **A revolving door**

I spent the night in a sleeping bag down by the creek. When the sun broke through the trees the next morning, I was already on my way back from the connection's house across the freeway. From the overpass I spied the burnt-out wreck of an old Volkswagen in the vacant lot below. Pat and I had often gone there to fix.

I climbed through the hole in the fence, pushed my way through the bushes, and climbed into the car. The sun beat down on the dusty windshield as the aroma of cooking heroin filled my head. My hands shook as I drew up the dope into the syringe. "I wonder what it's like to die?" I whispered.

Poising the needle over a good vein, I suddenly found myself being throttled by a big arm. The cop dragged me kicking and screaming from the car. My last fix fell into the dirt.

From the back seat of the patrol car, I watched those shabby streets pass by, one by one. The name of Jesus brushed across my lips.

### **The Book**

In the dorm I braced myself for weeks of sleepless agony. Opening the drawer of a metal locker near my bed, I found an old beat-up Bible. I pulled it out and tried to read, but my anxiety was mounting. I was so weak from not getting a fix. Disgusting scenes flooded my mind: my mother's disappointment, my father, and my little boy. All those people I had hurt. . . .

Anguish ripped deep into my heart. I remembered how I had loved the Bible as a child, but nothing made any sense at all. I began to cry.

### **The messenger**

I knew that somehow this old Book held my answer, but bitter tears clouded my vision. My heart ached with every breath. "Oh God, what have I done?"

When I looked up, a lady was standing at the foot of my bed. I guessed she was a chaplain. She never said a word as she approached me and reached for my Bible. I handed it to her, apologizing for the mess I'd made of it. She took it from my hands and silently turned the pages. Then, she placed it gently back on my pillow, laying her finger on Psalm 40.

I began to read:

I waited patiently for the LORD; and He inclined to me, and heard my cry. He also brought me up out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my steps. He has put a new song in my mouth -- praise to our God; many shall see it and fear, and will put their trust in the LORD (Psalm 40:1-3, NKJV).

### **The miracle**

I don't know what happened after that. I didn't see the woman go. I only know that the next morning I awoke from a deep, peaceful sleep. I was totally healed -- no pain. I felt amazing vitality in my body. The tormenting blackness of over 15 years of heroin addiction was gone. What so many doctors, psychiatrists, and treatments could not cure, God healed in a moment.

I was ecstatic. "God, thank You! I love You. I'm so sorry for being such a horrible person. Please God, if You can forgive me, I'll make it up to You somehow. I'll tell the world what You've done for me."

From that moment, I immersed myself in the Bible. God became my closest friend. If I wasn't talking to Him, I was telling anyone who would listen about how He set me free.

When my mother came to visit me in the jail, tears filled her eyes. Little Billy was jumping up and down on her lap, pressing his nose against the glass partition.

"Phyllis, I haven't seen you like this in years," my mother said. "Your face is glowing. You used to look like death most of the time. I can't quite explain it; you just look so . . . alive, so different!"

Mom wept and so did I. "I don't know how to explain it either, Mom. I only know that God has healed me and that I'm never going back to that hell again."

### **Blessings in jail**

God blessed my time at the jail. Soon several women scrounged up Bibles. At night after supper we'd sit on the floor between bunks to read the Bible and sing.

On the weekend I attended church service given by the men's chaplain. Afterward I ran up to him and asked, "Can you please tell me the name of the lady that works here? I need to thank her for the incredible way she's helped me."

He looked at me through his spectacles. "I'm sorry young lady, but I haven't had any help here for over ten years.

The next day, determined to find the lady, I checked with the desk sergeants on every shift. The answer was always the same: "We don't show anybody fitting that description. If she came in here, she'd be in the computer."

That night, with my hopes dampened, I prayed, "God what's going on here? I've done everything I know to do."

I flipped open my Bible and started reading about Peter in prison. An angel set him free but he didn't realize it until he was walking down the street, a free man. I then understood that God had sent a messenger to me to point me to freedom.

### **A lasting freedom**

It was hard to leave those women behind when my release date finally arrived, but at least they had their Bibles. The Bible I had read was still in the drawer by my old bed, waiting for the woman who would take my place.

God made sure I survived my brushes with death so I could come to know Him. He has given me a wonderful husband and family to fulfill the love I'd hungered for. I don't have to sell my body to survive. Instead I live in God's unconditional love for me, telling others what He's done in my life. Because of this I find new treasures, new adventures, and new strength to face tomorrow.

## THE PARDON

In the 1100's in England people who couldn't pay their debts were placed in debtor prisons. Also people who expressed political views that were not in harmony with the king or reigning monarch could find themselves sentenced to royal prisons.

It was not until the 1700's in America that criminal prisons, as we know them, came into being. Up until that time, offenders of public law were flogged in the public square or if the offense was serious enough, sentenced to public execution.

In 1790, the Quakers in Pennsylvania built what has become known as a "penitentiary." This was a place for penitents. People who felt or expressed sorrow for their sins or misdeeds.

The penitents worked hard each day and were separated by their cells. The Quakers believed that this separation would cause these people to think about their sins and repent, that is, have a change of mind, a change of heart that caused one to turn away from evil.

In Acts 24:24-25, the story is told of the apostle Paul, who spoke to a man named Felix, about faith in Jesus Christ. As Paul talked about righteousness, self-control, and about a time when God would judge everyone, Felix became afraid and said, "That's enough for now! You may leave" (NIRV).

It is uncomfortable to think that we must answer for our deeds. "For there is going to come a Day of Wrath when God will be the just Judge of all the world. He will give each one whatever his deeds deserve" (Rom. 2:5-6, LB).

In 1829, a man named George Wilson, robbed the United States mails, killing a person in the process. Later he was caught, found guilty and was sentenced to die for his crime. Some friends intervened in his behalf and were able to speak to the then President of the United States, Andrew Jackson. President Jackson gave a pardon on Wilson's behalf. When Wilson was informed of this pardon he refused to accept it!

An appeal was sent back to President Jackson asking to advise. The President, not knowing what to do, turned to the United States Supreme Court for an answer. The Court gave this ruling: "A pardon is a piece of paper, the value of which depends upon its acceptance by the person implicated. It is hardly to be supposed that a person under the sentence of death would refuse to accept a pardon; but, if it is refused, it is no pardon. George Wilson must die." The sentence of

death was carried out upon George Wilson, even though a pardon was lying in the Sheriff's office.

The Bible tells us that God was in Christ, restoring the world to Himself, no longer counting men's sins against them...as Christ's ambassadors...we beg you, as though Christ Himself were here pleading with you, RECEIVE THE LOVE HE OFFERS YOU - be reconciled to God [that is, come back to Him and receive His pardon] (2 Cor. 5:19-20, LB).

Can't you see that the pardon is there waiting for you? But it must be received in order to avoid the Day of God's Judgment. "The Wages of Sin is Death" [separation from God eternally] (Rom. 6:23). Who earns those wages? You and I do, as sinners. DO YOU WISH TO TAKE YOUR WAGES or the pardon that God so freely offers you today?

God says, "I call heaven and earth to witness...that today I have set before you life or death, blessing or curse. Oh, that you would choose life; ..that you might live!" (Dt. 30:19, LB).

If you would like to know more about Jesus Christ and His great pardon provided for you, please contact us.

## **SOMEBODY LOVES ME!**

A breeze gently blew the curtains at my kitchen window. I felt so alive as I sat there feeling the cool fresh air against my face and thinking about all the things that had taken place in my life to bring me to this day. A day that caused me to turn to Christ, a day for me to believe that He really loved me.

For many years I had been fighting a continual battle in my mind from which there was little relief, and I had grown weary to the point of looking beyond myself for help. The thoughts would go something like this, "You don't fit in here ... You're not good enough to be doing this or to be with these people... You don't belong here... Nobody cares what you say or do... Nobody really loves you... You should leave and find out where you really belong..." There was a constant fear of rejection that colored my thoughts.

What I longed for was to be loved unconditionally, but I never believed anyone could ever really love me this way. What I believed was that I just wasn't good enough to be loved for who I was.

The light of understanding began to shine into my thoughts as I began to look at God's Word and see what was said about the Heavenly Father's love for those who belong to Him. A love and acceptance given freely, not based upon performance, but on belonging. Somehow I thought that the most important thing in gaining acceptance was how I acted and how I looked, in other words, my performance. I was seeking performance based acceptance that could never be achieved. It was a dead-end road. It could never be accomplished. This frustration led me to the One who had paid the price for my acceptance on the cross, Jesus. He took down all the barriers that sin had caused and now nothing can separate me from His love. Nothing except me not being able to believe that it was really true.

I remember the day I realized that I was afraid to believe that God loved me. This was the turning point. I was afraid that He was like all the other people in my life who had told me that they loved me but didn't really mean it, their actions proved otherwise. I had learned not to trust anyone. Now I had to make a decision to trust God. This was really hard, but I decided to believe, not because I felt good enough to be loved by God, or had achieved by my performance and deserved to be accepted, but because of what God had said in His Word, that is, for me to not believe Him I would be really missing the mark for what He had for me, it is called sin.

From the deepest part of my being I turned to God and away from my fears, the fears that had held me captive all of my life. With trembling and tears, as an act of my will I said "I believe you love me Father, not because I feel it, but because you said that you do." At this point it was as though the door of my heart, which had long ago been sealed shut began to open, though only a crack of light could be seen it was enough. From the other side a flood of light began to pour in as if by the strength of some unseen divine hand the rusty hinges gave way and the door of my hear swung wide open! It was the light of God's wonderful, unconditional, love that was pouring into my being and setting me free!

God's love healed my hurting hear, not because I deserve it, but because I let Him. His love is greater than I can understand, it had changed my life. Listen to what was said long ago about God's love...

"...If God is for us, who can be against us? he that did not hesitate to spare his own Son but gave him up for us all – can we not trust such a God to give us, with him, everything that we can need? ...Can anything separate us from the love of Christ? Can trouble, pain, or persecution? Can lack of clothes and food, danger to life and limb, the threat of force of arms? ...No, in all these things we win an overwhelming victory through him who has proved his love for us. I have become absolutely convinced that neither death nor life, neither messenger of Heaven nor monarch of earth, neither what happen today nor what may happen tomorrow, neither a power from on high nor a power from below, nor anything else in God's world had any power to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord!" (Romans 8:31-39).

The deepest need of my being, the need to be loved and to belong has been fulfilled and satisfied by the One who is love, the Heavenly Father. He loves you too. Would you turn your heart to Him and believe that Jesus died to give you that total acceptance you have been longing for?

## **A TRUE STORY ABOUT LOVE**

I would like to tell you a true story about a man who one day fell deeply in love with a prostitute. After marriage and having several children, this woman, again, began to go back to her old ways. As a result of her lifestyle she became destitute and lived on the streets. After much searching, her husband finally found her and said, "You shall not be a prostitute, and shall

not lie with another man, I will be only yours and you shall be only mine." He said this because he still loved her very much!

Did you know this man was named "Hosea," his wife was "Gomer" and their story appears in the pages of the Bible? God had this story recorded to illustrate His great love for us, even though we may have been uncaring and unconcerned about a relationship with Him. "Love" is one of the greatest themes of the Bible and it has caused God to reach out for us even when we were uncaring about Him (Rom. 5:8).

Jesus told a story one day after the religious leaders complained to Him for welcoming sinful people to eat with Him. He said, "If you had a hundred sheep and one of them strayed away and was lost in the wilderness, wouldn't you leave the ninety-nine others to go and search for the lost one until you found it? And then you would joyfully carry it home on your shoulders. When you arrived, you would call together your friends and neighbors to rejoice with you because your lost sheep was found.

"Well, in the same way heaven will be happier over one lost sinner who returns to God than over ninety-nine others who haven't strayed away!" (Luke 15:3-7, LB).

Are you the little lost sheep that Jesus is looking for? The prophet Isaiah said, "We are the ones who strayed away like sheep! We, who left God's paths to follow our own. Yet God laid on Him (Jesus) the guilt and sins of every one of us!" (Isa. 53:6, LB).

During the Civil War, a young soldier was answering his sister's letter in which she had appealed to him to become a Christian. The Chaplain who was standing by saw that this young man needed to come to a decision. So he began to plead with the soldier to give his life to Jesus Christ. Finally the soldier voluntarily knelt beneath a shelter-tent and deliberately consecrated his life to the Saviour's care and service. Shortly thereafter, in a battle, the soldier was killed. The Chaplain's words are as follows, "As I said earnest words of prayer over the grave in which we buried him, and as I looked down into his dead face, I was glad that I waited that memorable night until he knelt by my side and gave himself up to his loving and waiting Saviour" (Individual Work for Individuals, p.89-90).

What about you? **THE ONE WHO LOVES YOU IS WAITING TO HEAR FROM YOU!**

In the Bible, a tax collector humbled himself before God, beat his breast, and cried, "God be merciful to me a sinner!" God accepted Him, forgave his sins and declared him to be in right relationship with God (Luke 18:13).

What will be your response? Will you be like the man who said to himself, "You have enough stored away for years to come. Now take it easy! Wine, women, and song for you!" But God said to him..."Tonight you die. Then who will get it all?" (Luke 12:19- 20, LB).

What response will you make today? The soldier that the Chaplain talked to thought he could wait. I'm glad he didn't.

There is not a greater love than this, Jesus Christ voluntarily laid down His life for you! (1 Jn. 3:16) This was the supreme act of love for you, "That while we were sinners Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8). Through this act He is willing to bring you into His Kingdom and manifest His love to you forever (Jas. 2:5).

In the Bible, a thief cried out, "Lord, remember me when you enter into your Kingdom." Jesus said, "Today (at your death) you will be with Me in paradise" (Luke 23:42-43). It's by grace (God's Kindness) we are saved (Eph. 2:5).

Will you consider calling on His Name today? It is to Him that you must respond. You have the freedom to choose.

## **CAN WE REALLY TALK TO THE DEAD?**

**BY JOE ROSE**

I grew up in a little coal mining town in Pennsylvania, called Scranton. Horoscopes, astrology and tarot cards were the accepted way of predicting things to come. At night, my mom and grandma would have seances in our living room. They would read tarot cards, and talk to the spirits of those who had died years before. Mom and grandma said they would "get messages" from spirits. Sometimes I would hear knockings, other strange noises, and even actual voices of the spirits, in our living room. One night my grandma said she saw "Lucky Lucy" going down. The next morning we read in the paper that a plane named "Lucky Lucy" crashed shortly after my grandma said she saw it go down. We saw spirits materialize, tables levitate, and spirits talk through people in trances.

FRIEND, CAN WE REALLY TALK TO THE DEAD?

CAN WE REALLY TELL THE FUTURE BY READING TAROT CARDS AND COMMUNICATING WITH SPIRITS?

ARE THESE KINDS OF THINGS FOR REAL?

What I have learned by studying scripture is this: In Luke 16:19-31, Jesus tells the story of a rich man and a beggar. "There was a man who always dressed in fine clothes and was so rich that he was able to feast and party every day. One day Lazarus, a diseased beggar, was laid at his door. As he lay there longing for scraps from the rich man's table, the dogs would come and lick his open sores. Finally the beggar died and was carried by the angels to be with Abraham in the place of the righteous dead. The rich man also died and was buried, And his soul went into hell. There, in torment, he saw Lazarus in the far distance with Abraham. 'Father Abraham,' he shouted, 'have some pity! Send Lazarus over here if only to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am in anguish in these flames.' But Abraham said to him, 'Son, remember that during your lifetime you had everything you wanted, and Lazarus had nothing. So now he is here being comforted and you are in anguish. And besides, there is a great chasm separating us, and anyone wanting to come to you from here is stopped at its edge; and no one over there can

cross to us.' Then the rich man said, 'O Father Abraham, then please send him to my father's home-- For I have five brothers-- to warn them about this place of torment lest they come here when they die.' But Abraham said, 'The Scriptures have warned them again and again. Your brothers can read them any time they want to.' The rich man replied, 'No, Father Abraham, they won't bother to read them. But if someone is sent to them from the dead, then they will turn from their sins.' But Abraham said, 'If they won't listen to Moses and the prophets, they won't listen even though someone rises from the dead'" (LB).

In this story, Jesus clearly tells us that neither those in hell or in heaven can return to earth and communicate with us, but that we have Moses and the prophets in the Bible, which is God's Word.

In Deuteronomy 18:9-12, the Bible says, "When you enter the land the LORD your God is giving you, do not learn to imitate the detestable ways of the nations there. Let no one be found among you who sacrifices his son or daughter in the fire, who practices divination or sorcery, interprets omens, engages in witchcraft, or casts spells, or who is a medium or spiritist or who consults the dead. Anyone who does these things is detestable to the LORD, and because of these detestable practices the LORD your God will drive out those nations before you" (NIV).

In 1986 I realized that necromancy (attempting to talk to the dead), consulting with familiar spirits (devils), predicting the future by tarot cards, reading horoscopes, are all abominations to God. Jesus is calling each one of us personally, into a relationship where we look to HIM for direction and guidance. We don't need to ask familiar spirits (devils) what we should do. We have a loving and all powerful God, who is Jesus Christ the Lord. We can ask Him for wisdom and He will never hold back, if we ask in faith (James 1:5-7). God is calling you to accept Jesus as your personal Saviour, repent from your sins and receive eternal life (Rom. 6:23, 10:13).

Please consider calling on Jesus to be your personal Lord and Saviour. He will give you eternal life with Him in paradise (Rom. 10:9-10). He will also give you the Holy Spirit (Lk. 11:13).

## **FOLLOW ME!**

Jesus Christ was the greatest teacher of "metaphors" that the world has ever known. A "metaphor" is a figure of speech in which one thing is likened to another by speaking of it as if it were that other.

One day, as multitudes of people were following Jesus, probably because of the great miracles, food, and blessings he was providing, He turned and said to them, "If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple" (Lk. 14:26).

The word "hate" in the original language that the New Testament was written in, is a word that actually means "to hate or detest." It is used in these New Testament verses as actual "hatred" (Mt. 24:9; Mk. 13:13; Lk. 1:71; 6:22; Jn. 15:19, 23; 17:14; Titus 3:3; 1 Jn. 3:13). Elsewhere in Scripture, God tells us to "Honor your father and your mother" and for "husbands

to love their wives" (Ex. 20:12; Eph. 5:25). Why is Jesus telling us now to hate them? Jesus is using a word of comparison. Jesus is saying for you to follow Me, you must place Me above the closest human relationships, and oh yes, even above your own selfish desires. Jesus is calling people to make Him the preeminent reason for their existence.

Furthermore, Jesus said, "And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me, cannot be My disciple" (Lk. 14:27). Those that heard Jesus speak that day they knew exactly what He was saying. It has been estimated that perhaps as many as 30,000 crucifixions had been performed under Roman authority during Jesus lifetime. It was not uncommon for the people of that day to see people carrying their own cross as a death march for their own crucifixion. Jesus was saying in fact, "Are you willing to suffer embarrassment, reproach, rejection, persecution and even possible death for my sake?" The "cross" represents our willingness to suffer because of our relationship with Jesus Christ. It will cost you to be His disciple. Jesus asks you to count the cost and gives you two examples.

Example No. 1 is found in Luke 14:28-30. "For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has enough to finish it- lest, after he has laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all who see it begin to mock him, saying, This man began to build and was not able to finish." Jesus said this man counts the cost before he begins to build. Is it going to cost me \$10,000 to build this tower? Is it going to cost me \$20,000? Can I afford this?

Example No. 2 is found in Luke 14:31-32. "What king, going to make war against another king, does not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is still a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks conditions of peace." This man is considering the question, What will this war cost me? Will it cost me my 10,000 men? If I am defeated will it cost me my kingdom? If I cannot win this war I must give up and ask for conditions of peace. If I can't win can I afford not to do this?

Now Jesus is asking, Can you afford to follow Me? But can you afford not to follow Me? So Jesus is now stating the cost. "So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has, cannot be My disciple" (Lk. 14:33). To follow Jesus it will cost you EVERYTHING. In place of losing everything, you will find everything that you've ever been looking for. It's a paradox isn't it? Giving up and losing your life to find His life. "He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it to eternal life" (Jn. 12:25). You see, the quality of life that you keep trying to find in all the wrong places and brings you so much disappointment and pain is not really life. Eternal life, can only be found in Jesus.

Consider the claims of Jesus Christ. He was who He claimed to be or He was a liar and a deceiver. His claim is this, "I am the Way, the Truth, the Life, the ONLY WAY to God the Father" (Jn. 14:6).

**I LIKED THE WAY IT FELT GETTING BUZZED!**

**BY ROCKY FORRY**

At the age of 15, I smoked my first joint. I was intrigued by the way pot made me feel. As time went by, I kept a bag of dope on me wherever I went. First thing in the morning, I needed that rush to start the day. Throughout the day, I took hits to keep me "buzzed." This continued for 14 years. I told people that I could quit whenever I wanted to; I just didn't want to stop. When my baggie of drugs was low I became nervous and anxious. All I could think about was a way to get high. I couldn't relax until my drugs were replenished. If drugs like coke, hash, and mescaline were available, I could not resist them. I was in bondage.

**Is your life a mess too? Do you have problems in your life that are stopping you from going forward? Would you like to just take some pills and end it all? Are you saying, "This is stupid. Why am I even reading this?" Continue to read, and you'll find out why.**

One time, Dr. R.A. Torrey had a man come to him with this request: "I have come to you to see if there is any way to overcome my habits." As a young boy, he had made a profession of faith in Christ, but as he got older, he had gotten in with the wrong crowd. He could not break away from his addictions.

Dr. Torrey told him that he had only come to understand half the gospel - the gospel of the crucified Savior for the forgiveness of sins. But Jesus Christ is also a *risen* Savior and Lord. In Matthew 28:18, Jesus said that all power in heaven and in earth had been given to Him. Dr. Torrey said, "Now, will you trust the Lord to save you from the power of your sins?" The young man said that he would. Then he and Dr. Torrey knelt down together before the Savior. He confessed his addictions to the Lord, and trusted Him to be the power to resist these things. Some time later, Dr. Torrey received a letter from the young man, telling him how he had found constant victory by going to and trusting the risen Savior to deliver him.

My friend, I have been free from drugs for the last 17 years, and all because there is a living Christ.

## HOW MANY WAYS ARE THERE TO GOD?

When you are traveling down the highway you are consistently looking at the highway signs to determine your destination. In Jesus' teaching, He speaks of a broad road that many are on, that leads to destruction. The amazing thing about this highway is that it is marked with the highway signs of "heaven," "blessings," "all roads lead to God," "Whatever is truth for you is truth," etc. But Jesus says, that the true road, the true gate, the true passage way is narrow and must be searched for and sought after to be found. "Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way (passage) which leadeth unto life, and FEW there be that FIND it" (the words of Jesus found in Mt. 7:14). The word "narrow" in this passage means so narrow that you must enter alone. You will bring no baggage, you will not go in groups, you must enter alone, for this is a decision that must be made by only one individual at a time.

Jesus says, "ENTER ye in at the STRAIT GATE: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and MANY there be which go in thereat" (Mt. 7:13). In the language that the New Testament was originally written in this word ENTER is in the aorist imperative tense. This means that Jesus is asking for a definite and specific action upon those that are hearing His words. It is a COMMAND, ENTER the strait gate. Jesus is not asking them to admire the gate, or ponder and think about the gate, but to ENTER IT.

In these two verses (Mt. 7:13-14), Jesus is stating that there are 2 gates (the strait gate & the wide gate), 2 ways (the broad way & the narrow way), 2 groups (many & few), and 2 destinations (destruction & eternal life). Is it not a sobering thought that Jesus said, "Broad is the way that leadeth to destruction and MANY there be which go in thereat"? The word "many" means "a large indefinite number of persons; the masses," while "few" indicates "a very small number." Have you ever considered what road you may be on? Jesus' command is to ENTER the STRAIT GATE. This is a metaphor that symbolizes Jesus as the only way to God the Father and the forgiveness of your sins. Jesus uses the same kind of speech when He says that "I am the Way" (Jn. 14:6), and "I am the door" (Jn. 10:9). This is Jesus' claim. Have you ever considered it seriously? Scripture states that there is no other person, no other name except JESUS CHRIST by which a person can be saved (Acts 4:12). To be "saved" means to make whole, to be whole, to heal, and rescue from the penalties of Divine Judgment caused by your sins. Aren't you really tired of all the heartache, pain, loneliness, fear and despair that sin and its effects have dealt you? Jesus said, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath sent Me to heal the broken-hearted, and set at liberty them that are bruised" (Lk. 4:18).

## **A DEAD MAN SPEAKS!**

One time, hundreds of years ago, a rich man died and to his surprise found himself in a place of the most horrible conditions. He requested that someone might go to his father's house and testify to him and his five brothers. We are not told what he requested to be testified but we do know that it involved a request for them to listen to God's Word and to repent. To "testify" of something means "to confirm a thing by testimony and cause it to be believed." The rich man said if one went unto them from the dead, they would repent. The rich man was told that if they would not hear God's Word (the Scripture), neither would they be persuaded by one that came back from the dead (Lk. 16:19-31). How many times have you heard people mock and ridicule those that are trying to find God's saving plan?

The Scriptures claim, and they cannot be broken (Jn. 10:35), that Jesus Christ is the Way, the Truth, and the Life and no one can come to the Father except through Him (Jn. 14:6). As you consider this claim, please remember that Jesus Christ was either who He claimed to be or He was a liar and a deceiver. He said that repentance and forgiveness of sins must be preached in His Name among all the nations (Lk. 24:47). Through His death and resurrection for our sins, we are offered a free gift of righteousness (Rom. 5:17). Would you consider turning to Him for the forgiveness of your sins and the newness of life that He offers? (2 Cor. 5:17) I would like to talk to you about this, because I care about you. God Bless You!

## LOOKING INTO DEATH, IT'S TRUE FACTS!

**WHEN DO WE DIE?** It has been discovered through medical science that different parts of the human body dies at different rates. The brain can die without oxygen as quickly as four minutes, kidneys thirty minutes, eyes six hours, and fingernails several days after a person has been declared clinically dead.

Some doctors now believe that death occurs when the brain dies and measures no brain waves for more than thirty minutes.

God, on the other hand, has told us hundreds of years ago exactly when death occurs, "For as **THE BODY WITHOUT THE SPIRIT IS DEAD**, so faith without works is dead also" (Jas. 2:26). According to this Scripture death is not ceasing to exist but rather it is a separation. A separation of the spirit/soul from the physical body.

A German doctor named Josef Issels told of a woman close to death whom he visited in his clinic in Bavaria, Germany. As he was making his rounds he approached this woman's room and greeted her. The woman told him that she had left her body and had seen a woman in room 12 who was writing a letter to her husband. She described in great detail the letter and its contents. Dr. Issels quickly walked to room 12 and discovered to his surprise everything the woman had told him down to the last detail. As he returned to the woman's room to demand an explanation he discovered that she had died. If we are to believe the Biblical account of God's Word we must conclude that this woman did indeed leave her body and described things that she had seen in the physical realm before departing from this physical realm on a permanent basis.

A former policeman of the Louisiana State Police Department who had a near death experience stated, "The spirit, when removed from flesh, can see and communicate with other spirits. It can "see" and "hear" those things of the physical world also, but it cannot communicate with that world except through a physical body. Not only does the spirit of man need a physical body through which to communicate to this physical world, but so do all the spirit beings (demons & angels). The only way open for clear, concise communication from spirit beings to physical beings is through physical bodies...It is impossible for the soul or personality of any spirit to be reflected to this physical world except through a physical body" (Demons, an eyewitness account, pgs.3- 4).

At death the spirit is released from the physical body and is no longer capable of contacting the physical world. Thomas Edison spent years trying to develop a telephone in which the dead and the living could communicate. He also developed a blueprint from which a model was made. The only problem was it didn't work.

**SO WHAT IS BEYOND THE GRAVE?** For a true Christian the Bible says, "To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord" (2 Cor. 5:8). For those who have not truly repented of their sins, the Bible gives us a glimpse of a most horrible condition. The story is found in Luke 16:19-31 and was told by Jesus about a rich man who had died. The odd thing about this story is that the dead man (although conscious in another realm) had a request for the living on

earth. It involved the necessity of hearing and obeying God's Word. It was a request for someone to testify to the living and plead for them to repent. "Repentance" is a request for a man or woman to change their mind, to change their heart and turn to God from sin to receive His mercy and grace. The "good news" of the kingdom is that God accepts imperfect people through the blood of Jesus Christ. "Forgiveness" means that God is willing because of Jesus Christ death upon the cross, to pardon us, that is, to pass over our offenses without punishment and to let them go as if they had never been committed (Heb. 8:12). The scripture says, it's by God's grace we are saved (Eph. 2:5, 8-9).

Needing forgiveness in any meaningful sense of the word presupposes our guilt (Rom. 3:10; 6:23). "Conversion" means "a turning to God." Would you be willing to turn to God and Jesus Christ for your personal salvation from sin. Would you be willing to cry out to God from your heart for the forgiveness that you so desperately need. Go now to Psalms 51 in the Bible and make it your sincere prayer. Go directly to God through Jesus Christ, for it is He to whom you must be reconciled (2 Cor. 5:20).

## **I'M SO SORRY! BUT NOT REALLY**

One night, on the streets of Colorado Springs, I spoke to Mike. He reluctantly let me speak to him about the person of Jesus Christ. He told me that he had turned to Jesus Christ at one time while he was in jail. Obviously, his one time faith of long ago was not yielding any real change in his life today. And why is that such a common story in so many lives? Why have so many one time professions of the faith fallen away?

How would you like it if you knew that the girl that you were about to marry was going to be untrue? Would you go ahead and commit your life to that kind of relationship? I seriously doubt that you would. Why? Because the essence of "marriage" is to forsake all others and to cleave in love to the one you've chosen.

Jesus Christ has likened the relationship to which He has called us to a marriage relationship (Rom. 7:4). Some who have said "Yes" to this relationship have remained true. Some have been unfaithful and are committing spiritual adultery (Check it out for yourselves by reading James 4:4). Others have not even met the conditions to begin a relationship although they thought they have. The apostle Paul one time asked some professing Christians, "Check up on yourselves. Are you really Christians? Do you pass the test?" (2 Cor. 13:5, LB). Jesus said, Not every one that has just said Lord, Lord will enter His kingdom (Mt. 7:21-23).

So what is necessary to have a lasting relationship? In any lasting marriage relationship we must forsake our adulterous lover and cleave to our spouse. If, in this relationship, we are unloving, wrong or unfaithful this is called a "transgression" against our "vows." At these times, it is required that we turn, return, or turn back from that which would hinder our relationship and ask for forgiveness. This is called "repentance." "Forgiveness" in any meaningful sense of the word presupposes guilt. Undoubtedly repentance is specified as the condition for "forgiveness." What would you think if a man raped your daughter and said, "Please forgive me, but if I get a

chance I will do it again." He would be asking for forgiveness while not turning from his sin and seeing it was wrong and despicable. "Repentance" involves a change of heart, and a change of mind for the better. It turns from Satan to God and from sin to Jesus as the Saviour and Deliverer from the penalty and power of our sins. This is not perfection, this is a change of direction. True Christians have turned to a New King and a New Kingdom for Jesus said, "No man can serve two masters" (Mt. 6:24).

In Jesus' teachings and examples there are several instances of a faith that lacked true repentance (Jn. 8:30-38, 44; Lk. 8:13). Let me give you just one example: "Now when He (Jesus) was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, MANY BELIEVED IN HIS NAME when they saw the signs which He did. But JESUS DID NOT COMMIT HIMSELF TO THEM, because He knew all men, And had no need that anyone should testify of man for HE KNEW WHAT WAS IN MAN" (Jn. 2:23-25). Here we see many people putting some kind of mental assent or belief in Jesus but Jesus would not commit Himself to them for He knew what was in them. In other words, the kind of faith that they had in Him was not a faith that committed unto Him, so therefore, Jesus would not commit Himself unto them. Could it be possible, my friend, that the kind of faith that you have put in Jesus is a non-committed faith that has been unwilling to go the distance? Jesus said that some people hear His word and receive it with joy but believe only for awhile and fall away in the time of temptation (See Luke 8:13). Temporal faith is not saving faith (Read 1 Cor. 15:2; Col. 1:23). The Lord is longsuffering toward us and not willing that any should perish (2 Pet. 3:9). Would you be willing to turn or return to the One who loves you? "Forgiveness" is a "relationship" word and the goal of God's forgiveness is to have a relationship with you. Are you the lost sheep in which Jesus would leave the ninety-nine just to find you? (Luke 15:4-7) He loves you that much.

## DO GOOD PEOPLE GO TO HEAVEN?

I often ask people, "What do you think a person has to do to go to heaven?" Most people respond by saying something like this, "Do the best you can, Live a good life, observe the golden rule, keep the 10 commandments, etc." But I'd like to ask you, "Has anyone really kept the 10 commandments?" The 10 commandments are indeed God's standard of righteousness (Rom. 7:12), but who has ever kept them?

Most of us have a tendency to compare ourselves with other people. If you compared yourself to me or some church member that you've known, you may look pretty good. But have you ever compared yourself to God's standard of goodness, the 10 commandments?

The 10 commandments are found in both the Old & New Testament Scriptures (Ex. 20; Rom. 13:9-10; Jas. 2:10-11). Instead of comparing our lives to others, let's look at the 10 commandments and see how we do.

1. YOU SHALL HAVE NO OTHER GODS BEFORE ME (Ex. 20:3). Has God always been first in your life? Do you love Him more than your closest earthly relationships? Jesus said our love for God must be preeminent compared to all other relationships (Lk. 14:26). What about it, have you broken this commandment?

2. YOU SHALL NOT MAKE YOURSELVES ANY IDOL (Ex. 20:4). This involves an idol made with hands or with our minds. Anything that we exalt before God is an idol in our lives. Any false representation of a god of our own making is an idol. Many people's idea of God is that He doesn't mind a lie, or even if we steal as long as it's something insignificant. If it is not the God of the Bible it is a graven image of man's own "making!" I'm not judging you - I'm asking, Have you broken this commandment?

3. YOU SHALL NOT TAKE THE NAME OF THE LORD YOUR GOD IN VAIN. Have you ever used the Name of Jesus Christ as a "4-letter word"? Hitler's name wasn't despised enough to be used as a curse word. Are you guilty or innocent of breaking this command?

4. REMEMBER THE SABBATH DAY, TO KEEP IT HOLY (Ex. 20:8). Have you always set aside a time, a day, to honor & worship the Lord?

5. HONOR YOUR FATHER AND YOUR MOTHER (Ex. 20:12). This is the first of God's 10 commandments that ends with the promise of long life on this earth and days full of blessings (Eph. 6:2-3).

What about the sins of your youth? Did you always honor your father & mother? Have you forgotten?

6. YOU SHALL NOT MURDER (Ex. 20:13). Jesus said that ANGER is the real heart of this commandment (Mt. 5:22). When we are angry with another we are saying, "You are my problem. If you were not here I wouldn't have this problem." Jesus says this is murder begun. What about it, who has not been guilty of breaking this commandment?

7. YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY (Ex. 20:14). Jesus interpreted this commandment to mean that looking upon a woman with the view of lusting after her is the breaking of this command (Mt. 5:27-28). If you've lusted after a woman you've committed adultery.

8. YOU SHALL NOT STEAL (Ex. 20:15). Have you ever taken something that belonged to someone else? Someone's wife, someone's possessions, a pencil, anything irrespective of its value?

9. YOU MUST NOT LIE (Ex. 20:16). How many lies does it take to make a liar? Have you always told the truth?

10. YOU SHALL NOT COVET (Ex. 20:17). "Covet" is the DESIRE to have what belongs to someone else. Your neighbor's house, wife, possessions, anything.

The only problem with trying to be good enough to go to heaven is the fact that not only have we broken the 10 commandments, there are over 613 commandments in the Old Testament and hundreds in the New Testament. James 2:10 in the New Testament says that whoever keeps the whole law yet messes up on just one point is GUILTY of breaking the law. No one will ever be good enough to go to heaven by keeping God's law; for His law only reveals our sin (Rom. 3:19-20).

This is why Jesus came! We all need a Saviour! The word "Saviour" has the idea of "one who can rescue you from the penalty of your sin." Jesus rescues people from perishing so that they might have eternal life (Mt. 1:21).

My friend, to be good enough to go to heaven we must have a righteousness that equals God's (2 Cor. 5:21). The "good news" of the gospel is that not only will Jesus forgive your sins, but He is also offering - freely - His very own righteousness as a gift (See Rom. 5:17). Do you need a new start in life? A relationship with the God of heaven who loves you very much? God is ready to have compassion on you, to fall on your neck and kiss you (Lk. 15:20-24). Would you consider turning to Him through Jesus Christ? Accepting Him as your personal Saviour & following Him as your Lord? He loves you very much!

## DO YOU BELIEVE IN MIRACLES?

**BY DON KROW**

Do you believe in miracles? May I tell you about one that happened to my family?

A "miracle" is an extraordinary or unusual event this is considered to be a manifestation of Divine power.

My wife and I have been married 21 years. Since the time she was 4 years old she had suffered from "asthma" which is a respiratory disease that often arises from allergies and is characterized by difficulty in breathing, tightness of the chest and coughing. This condition is incurable and is usually treated by the use of inhalators and various other medications.

After we were married, we moved to west Texas where its known for its notorious dust storms. It is not unusual to see a dark cloud form and within 20 minutes you are in dust so thick that you have to turn on your car lights just to see to drive. It was within this background that my wife could have died or almost died if it had not been for the miracle.

My wife, day after day, had to be propped up in bed in a fetal position just to try breathe. Night after night, I prayed for God's healing to come to her. After months of this kind of thing going on, we were at the end of ourselves. It was at this time that we intensified our seeking of God by adding fasting along with our prayers. Within a few days, some supernatural things began to happen. It was revealed to me through prayer that my wife's real problem was not asthma but rather fear. There is a natural fear that is normal (like, "I can't breathe") and there is a supernatural fear that is abnormal that drives and torments people. The scriptures declare "God

hath not given us the SPIRIT OF FEAR; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind" (2 Tim. 1:7). When we discovered this was my wife's real problem I immediately resisted and rebuked this foul spirit of fear (See James 4:7). She was instantly healed and delivered from fear and asthma that day. That has been almost 20 years ago now, and she has remained healed.

A few weeks ago, in Kit Carson, Colorado a woman told me about her baby who at 17 months had brain damage and was partly brain dead. The baby was lifeless in the hospital with all kinds of tubes and things hooked up to it. This woman told me she got angry at God & began to curse. When she finally calmed down she told God that she was sorry and would give her child to Him if He would heal him. Immediately the lifeless child stood up in the hospital bed with all of the different tubes attached to him. This lady began to say, "Jesus has just healed my baby!" She ran and called her husband, "Jesus has just healed our baby!"

He said, "What?"

She said, "Jesus has just healed our baby!" That baby is now grown up and is a 4.0 student in college."

Why am I sharing these true stories with you? When the apostle John wrote down the true stories and miracles that Jesus had done, he said that the reason for him doing so was this: "These are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His Name" (Jn. 20:31).

Isn't it time that you started thinking about spiritual things? "Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them. And the multitudes with one accord heeded the things spoken by Philip, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did... and when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women" (Acts 8:5-6, 12). Have you ever considered turning to Him for the forgiveness of your sins? Accepting Him as your personal Saviour and following Him as your Lord? He loves you and wants to give you the miracle of His Salvation!

## A RESPONSE

The dictionary says that to "respond" means "to answer - in any way, to return an answer, or to act in response."

The Bible describes several different responses that people have made to the gospel of Jesus Christ and **THEY HAVE NOT ALL BEEN POSITIVE!**

In Acts, chapter 7, Stephen testified of Jesus Christ the Messiah and was **KILLED** for his efforts. Notice: Stephen's "words stung them to fury and they ground their teeth at him in rage" (v. 54, Phillips translation). "Then they mobbed him, putting their hands over their ears, and drowning out his voice with their shouts, and dragged him out of the city to stone him" (v.v. 57-58, LB).

In the New Testament, Jesus told a group of people one time, "You are trying to kill me - all because I told you the truth I heard from God" (Jn. 8:40, LB).

In Acts 24:24-25, a man named Felix heard the apostle Paul speak of the Christian faith and basically said, "GET OUT OF HERE I DON'T WANT TO HEAR ANYMORE!"

One day, I prayed over a few names in the Colorado Springs phone book and sent a personal letter to these individuals. I described a miracle that God had done within our family. I also asked these individuals to consider the claims of Jesus Christ.

I received a phone call at my home from a lady named "Carol" who immediately began to revile me and tell me that I can't get away with this. I had hoped that if she had hardened herself to Jesus Christ and His claims that she could have thrown my letter away, just as she would do with anything that she considered to be junk mail. But no, she would not be content until she had threatened me with going to jail.

I thought at this point, "Is this gospel true?" "Yes it is, and anyone will get the same response at some time if you are willing to tell others about it!" (See Matthew 5:10-12).

Have you ever thought of what makes people respond in a negative way to the gospel of Jesus Christ?

Yet others, after hearing the good news of Jesus death for our sins, have said, "How can I respond? What shall I do?" (See Acts 2:37-38).

One man said, "Here is some water, What keeps me from being baptized?" (See Acts 8:35-38).

A jailer said to the apostle Paul, "What must I do to be saved?" (Acts 16:29-31).

A rich man asked Jesus, "Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" (Mk. 10:17).

A thief cried out, "Lord, remember me when you enter into your Kingdom." And Jesus said, "Today (at your death) you will be with me in paradise" (Luke 23:42-43).

A tax collector humbled himself before God, beat his breast, and cried, "God be merciful to me a sinner!" And God accepted Him, forgave his sins and declared him in right relationship with God.

**WHAT WILL BE YOUR RESPONSE?** Will you be like the man who said to himself, "You have enough stored away for years to come. Now take it easy! Wine, women, and song for you!" But God said to him, "Fool! Tonight you die. Then who will get it all?" (Luke 12:19-20, LB).

I don't have to talk to you, or give you this pamphlet and risk your rejection. But I will, because I love you and am willing to seek your welfare (what's best for you), regardless of how

you treat me. Your real response will be to God, not to me. Which of the responses that the Scripture declares will you make?

## THE GIFT

My name is Don. One day I was sitting in my office, when an old friend happened to drop by. He was in a desperate situation, had just been through a divorce, and owed a \$50,000 debt. His debt must be paid within a few days or all of his property, house and assets would be seized within a short time. On top of all of that he had lost his job and didn't even have enough money for daily food.

Because I loved my friend, whose name is Jack, I decided to do two things:

(1) I offered Jack a job. I told him that at least he would have some income to help with his daily necessities.

(2) The second thing that I offered to do was to loan Jack the \$50,000. I said, "Jack, I do have \$50,000 but it is my entire life savings. I am willing to loan it to you if you promise to pay me back. When you get your pay check you can begin to make me some kind of payments." Jack was thrilled and promised to do so.

Jack, at first, made a few payments and then the problem began. I don't know what Jack does with his money but he certainly didn't fulfill his promise to pay me.

How do you tend to act around someone, when you owe them and don't pay them or can't pay them? Do you call them up on the telephone and say, "Let's have lunch!" or "Let's play golf tomorrow!" No, you do everything possible to avoid them. In other words, you don't want to hang around a person you owe, and have a debt to.

Jack couldn't look me in the face. So, one day he just didn't show up for work. I later heard that he had taken a boat, late at night, and had gone to South America.

Cliff, another friend of both Jack and myself, had heard about the \$50,000 that had ruined our relationship.

I like Jack and wish we could be friends, in fact I would like to have him work for me again.

Cliff, being a wealthy man, offered to pay Jack's debt so that we might be reconciled. So he pays me and the debt is cleared. Now as far as my "accounts receivable" is concerned, What is there? Nothing, it is clear! The problem is, Jack doesn't know it.

So Debbie, another friend of ours, gets on a boat and goes to South America and finds Jack.

"Jack," Debbie says, "I've got good news for you! Cliff has paid off your debt, Don has written it off his books, You don't owe a thing! Don says he even wants you to come back and work for him."

Now what are Jack's choices? How many ways can he respond?

(1) Jack could say, "No. I don't believe it. It's a trap. Don's just saying that to get me back on U.S. soil so he can have me arrested."

(2) Jack could deny he owed the debt. He could say, "Don is a crook and is trying to get money that I don't owe." It is an insult to tell someone to pay a debt that they don't owe.

(3) Jack could say, "Really! You mean the debt is over, I can go back to the people that care about me and get on with my life?" The answer is "Yes! Come on back."

You see, the point of this parable is this: The gospel message of Jesus Christ is "good news." Jesus paid the debt of sin for the whole human race. But the world doesn't know it. When you pick up a newspaper you are reading about things that have already happened. God has done something that is to be shared as "good news." Christ has died for your sins. The burden is not on you to fix the problem. Don't deny the debt of your sins, rather come back to the Saviour that has paid the price to bring you back into friendship with the Living God.

Salvation is an accomplished fact that has already been paid for by the death of the Saviour. Your part is only to "come back" and accept the mercy of a loving Saviour.

Can you see that salvation is by Grace? It's all based upon what God has done for you. He has paid the debt of our sins so that we may have eternal life and a right relationship with Him.

Would you like to come back (we've all gone astray), and receive this gift of right standing with God?

The Scriptures say, that "they which receive the abundance of grace (God's kindness) and the Gift of righteousness (right standing before God) shall reign in life...(Rom.5:17).

## THE GOSPEL

There are over 32 sermons and discourses preached in the book of "Acts." "Acts" is a historical book in the Bible that describes what the early New Testament disciples actually believed and taught. The word "preach" defined by the dictionary means "to expound upon, especially to urge acceptance of or compliance with."

Please take time to read these sermons and discourses and study their content and response in detail (the apostle Peter, Acts 2:14-41; 3:11-26; 4:8-12; 9:32-35; 9:36-43; 10:34-48; 11:4-18; 15:6-11; the apostles, Acts 5:27-33; Stephen, Acts 7:2-53; Philip, Acts 8:4-17, 26-40; Ananias, Acts 9:1-19; 22:12-16; Saul, Acts 9:19-22; various believers, Acts 11:19-21; Barnabas & Saul (also known as Paul), Acts 13:4-12; 14:1-7, 8-18, 21-22; Paul & Silas, Acts 16:25-34; 17:10-12; and the apostle Paul, Acts 13:16-42; 16:11-15, 25-34; 17:1-9, 22-34; 19:1-7, 8-10; 20:20-21; 24:10-25; 26:1-24; 28:20-30). Through studying the early disciple's messages we discover these revealing facts:

First and most important is that Jesus Christ was crucified for our sins and that He arose the third day from the dead. Jesus said that this event revealed God's great love for you and for me (Jn. 3:16; Rom. 5:8). This great act is referred to as "reconciliation." "Reconciliation" means to re-establish friendship between God and man. Secondly, it means to settle or resolve the barrier that was caused by sin. "Reconciliation" referred to in scripture is a provision of God's grace. "Grace" is God doing for us in our weakness what we could not do for ourselves (2 Cor. 12:9).

We must realize that "sin" is the problem that has kept us from a relationship with God. From the Old Testament we see that "sin" is so serious that it demanded punishment by death. Ezekiel 18:20 states, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." The shedding of blood in the Old Testament sacrifices connected this penalty with its worshippers. Because of God's great love, Jesus Christ was sent to die on the cross. **HOW SHOULD WE INTERPRET THIS EVENT?** This event can only be interpreted as we realize that sin results in death, that is, banishment from God's presence and eternal ruin. The "Good News" is that Christ has taken it upon Himself to bear the penalty of our sins and now offers us "forgiveness." "Forgiveness" is a relationship word, the goal of "forgiveness" is a relationship with God. "Forgiveness" means that God is willing because of Jesus Christ's death upon the cross, to pardon us, that is, to passover our offenses without punishment and to let them go as if they had never been committed (Heb. 8:12). There is no condemnation because of Jesus Christ, that is, as believers, we never will have to face judgment for our sins (Rom. 4:7-8). The scripture says, it's by God's grace (His favor) we are saved (Eph. 2:5, 8-9).

Is there a response that we must make to this wonderful news? Yes. Needing "forgiveness" in any meaningful sense of the word presupposes our guilt (Rom. 3:10; 6:23). By studying these early sermons in "Acts" it is revealed that we must "repent" (Acts 2:38; 3:19; 5:31; 8:22; 11:18; 13:24; 17:30; 19:4; 20:21; 26:20). "Repentance" is a gift that God grants people who want to be "saved." It is a new attitude, a change of heart that results in one turning to God and away from sin. "Repentance" involves turning from sin to God ... to receive His mercy and grace (Acts 26:18). This response is accompanied by "faith." "Faith" is reaching out to trust God's provision of grace. It involves committing oneself to the Person and redemptive work of Jesus Christ. The Bible says, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ [give yourself up to Him, take yourself out of your own keeping and entrust yourself into His keeping] and you will be saved" (Acts 16:31, Amplified Bible).

An example of how one must trust Christ is expressed by the story of a pilot who crashed in the ocean. As he saw a piece of raft wood floating by he really believed that the raft could save him. He finally perished as he saw the raft float away. Even though he believed it could save

him, it did not save him. In order for that raft to save him he must throw himself on it, cling to it, rely on and trust himself to it. Saving "faith" is throwing yourself on, clinging to, relying and trusting yourself to Jesus Christ and his saving work for you upon the cross. It is trusting Jesus ALONE for your salvation (Gal. 2:21; 5:4).

This decision to trust Jesus Christ ALONE for your personal salvation was also publicly expressed by an act of believer's "baptism." "Baptism" publicly identified a person as having accepted Jesus Christ and his redemptive work. It was expressed at the time of conversion (a turning to God) or shortly thereafter (Acts 2:38, 41; 8:12, 35-38; 9:17-18; 22:16; 10:43-48; 16:14-15, 30-34; 19:1-6).

God's offer of the forgiveness of sins through Jesus Christ, also included the wonderful gift of the indwelling of His Holy Spirit in the life of the believer. In this way, Jesus' presence will always be with them (Heb.13:5). The scriptures that speak of the Holy Spirit's indwelling and filling for empowerment in the book of Acts are:(Acts 1:5, 8; 2:1-4, 18, 33, 38-39; 4:31; 5:32; 6:5; 7:55; 8:14-17; 9:17; 10:43-46; 11:14-18; 15:7-9; 19:1-7).

Would you be willing to accept Jesus Christ as your personal Saviour and follow Him as Lord? Have you considered crying out to God from your heart, in trusting faith, so that you might receive His wonderful gift of salvation (Acts 2:21; 8:22). Go now directly to God through Jesus Christ, for it is He to whom you must be reconciled (2 Cor. 5:20).

## HOW CAN A MORTAL BE RIGHT WITH GOD?

Thousands of years ago a man named "Job" asked, "How can a man be righteous before God?" (Job 9:2).

Have you ever considered this question? What do you think a person must do to be in right relationship with God?

Check below what you think:

- 1. Try to keep the 10 Commandments.
- 2. Do the best you can.
- 3. Live a good life.
- 4. Do good deeds.
- 5. Believe in God.
- 6. Pray.
- 7. Fast.

- 8. Give to the poor.
- 9. Join the church.
- 10. Attend church regularly.
- 11. Give money to the church.

This may surprise you! All the things mentioned previously, cannot give you a right relationship with God.

### **EXPLANATION:**

**No. 1** - The Bible says: "No one can ever be made right in God's sight by doing what the law commands. For the more we know of God's laws, the clearer it becomes that we aren't obeying them; His laws serve only to make us see that we are sinners" (Rom. 3:20, LB).

**No. 2 & 3** - The Bible says: "No one anywhere has kept on doing what is right; not one" (Rom. 3:12, LB).

**No. 4** - The Bible says: "He saved us - not because we were good enough to be saved, but because of His kindness and pity - by washing away our sins" (Titus 3:5, LB).

**No. 5** - Giving mental assent about God or some facts about Jesus cannot save you. The Bible says: "You believe in the one God - that is creditable enough, but demons have the same belief, and they tremble with fear" (Jas. 2:19, JB).

**No. 6, 7 & 8** - The Bible says: "There was a man...named Cornelius...He was a religious man; he and his whole family worshiped God. He did much to help the Jewish poor people, and was constantly praying to God" (Acts 10:1-2, TEV). As he fasted an Angel said to him, "Find Simon Peter! He will tell you how you and all your household can be saved!" (Acts 11:13-14, LB). The point is that Cornelius prayed, fasted, gave to the poor and believed in God but was not "saved."

**No. 9, 10 & 11** - Sitting in a garage doesn't make you a car. Sitting in a church doesn't make you a Christian. The Bible says: "If by grace, then is it no more of works" (Rom. 11:6). You can't be good enough to earn a right relationship with God!

You see, the real problem is that all have sinned (Rom. 3:23), and not one of your righteous deeds could remove your sins.

God determined that the just punishment for sin would be ETERNAL SEPARATION FROM HIM. This separation is also referred to as "death." "The wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23). "The soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Ezek. 18:4). "Depart from Me, ye that work iniquity"

(the words of Jesus, Mt. 7:23). "It will be their punishment to be lost eternally, excluded from the presence of the Lord..." (2 Th. 1:9, JB).

Because of God's great love for us He devised a plan. This plan was to place the death penalty for sin upon His Son, Jesus Christ. That's why Christ suffered & died - - it was for OUR sins.

Now that the wages of OUR sins have been paid for by Jesus Christ, God offers forgiveness and eternal life to all who will repent & believe upon Him. "I have had one message for Jews and Gentiles alike - the necessity of turning from sin to God through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 20:21, LB). "Believe in and on the Lord Jesus Christ - that is, give yourself up to Him, take yourself out of your own keeping and entrust yourself into His keeping, and you will be saved" (Acts 16:31, AMP).

To those that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, there will be a Day of Judgment (Consider Acts 24:24-25).

Will you be like the rich man who thought about spiritual things a little too late? "You have enough stored away for years to come. Now take it easy! Wine, women, and song for you!" But God said to him..."Tonight you die. Then who will get it all?" (Lk. 12:19-20, LB).

Or will you be like the tax collector who humbled himself before God and said, "God be merciful to me a sinner!" God accepted him, forgave his sins and declared him in right relationship before a holy God (Lk. 18:13-14).

Because of God's kindness He is willing to SAVE you from the penalty of your sins. He loves you & is WAITING TO HEAR FROM YOU! Will you call out to Him today and receive His free gift of salvation?

## **MY EXPERIENCE WITH A DEMON POSSESSED GIRL (A True Story)**

Jesus Christ spent one-fourth of His earthly ministry healing the sick and casting out demons. Acts 10:38 states, "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were OPPRESSED OF THE DEVIL." 1 John 3:8 says, "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, THAT HE MIGHT DESTROY THE WORKS OF THE DEVIL."

I used to think that demon possession was something that happened only in foreign countries such as India, Africa, etc., that is, until the night I happened to visit a Baptist church in Dallas, Texas.

We were standing in the church, singing from the song book, when suddenly, a young girl about 19 years of age, fell on the floor and began to have what I thought was a seizure.

A medical doctor that attended that church told several of us to take the girl to a near by house belonging to one of the church members, and there he would examine this young woman. By the time the girl got to the house, her eyes were dilated and a masculine voice was speaking from her. Although this girl was a United States citizen and had never traveled outside of America, she was speaking in a foreign language that seemed to be German, and at other times in English.

This unclean spirit, which the Bible also calls a demon or devil, immediately began to accuse me and say in a loud masculine voice, "You're going to Hell!" "No, I'm not!," I replied, and we argued that way for awhile. It seemed this demon had authority and power over me and I was not getting very far with it, when suddenly, I had an idea.

I turned in the New Testament to Philippians 2:6-11 and proceeded to read these verses out loud -- "That at the Name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth: And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Suddenly in a loud voice the demon screamed, "Shut up! Don't say that! I can't stand that!" I thought to myself, "This is quite a reaction." So, again, I began to read the scriptures out loud. "Stop that! I can't stand that!" the demon cried. So again I read the scriptures. This time the demon in the little girl began to make the girl hold her ears. I continued to read and this time the demon threw the girl on the floor and she began to bow before me at the Name of Jesus.

This is the first time in my life that I realized the power that is in God's Word, the Bible. The demons had the upper hand over me until I read them the scriptures. This is the first time that I also realized that every time I began to read the Bible, I was distracted. I remembered all the things that I hadn't done that day, I suddenly became hungry and had to go to the refrigerator, etc., something always distracted me. Now I realize that there is something in God's Word the Bible that Satan doesn't want you and me to know.

To make a long story short, Patti, the demon possessed girl was delivered from many demonic spirits over the next few weeks. It was Jesus' Name, faith in His Name and the power of God's Word that brought forth this miracle. Patti is now a beautiful Christian woman, who married one of my best friends and who is raising her children in the knowledge of the Lord.

My friend, have you realized that there is a Kingdom of Darkness and a Kingdom of God's Dear Son? The apostle Paul's commission from the Lord Jesus Christ was to "turn people from darkness to light, and from Satan unto God, that they may receive the forgiveness of their sins" (Acts 26:18). A "kingdom" in the scriptures were the people over which one has authority or rule.

What Kingdom are you in? What master are you serving? Jesus said, "No man can serve 2 Masters" (Mt.6:24). Would you consider turning today to Jesus Christ as the Saviour from your sins and following Him as your Lord?

## FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT

There are many different ways to describe the experience of being "saved" in terms that the Bible uses. For example in John 3:3 it is referred to as being "born again"; in Matt. 18:3 as "conversion"; in Mark 16:16 as "believing and being baptized"; in Col. 2:13 as having been "forgiven" of all trespasses; in Rom. 6:23 as having received "eternal life"; and in Rom. 8:9 as having received "the Spirit of Christ." Although many terms are used, they all basically mean the same thing.

In like manner, the experience which is subsequent to and distinct from salvation is described as: "the baptism with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 1:5); being "filled with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:4); "the Holy Spirit falling on" someone (Acts 11:15); and having "received the Holy Spirit" (Acts 19:2). These are synonymous terms referring to one and the same thing.

There are many examples in the New Testament of the difference between salvation by the quickening of the Spirit, and the Baptism with the Holy Spirit. For example: In John 20:22, Jesus' disciples received the Holy Spirit but a few days later were actually baptized with the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1-4). The Samaritans, in Acts 8:12, believed upon Christ and were baptized and saved, yet were baptized with the Holy Spirit several days later (See Acts 8:16-17). In Acts 19:1-7, the apostle Paul found several disciples who had believed upon Christ, but had not received the baptism with the Holy Spirit. Verse 6 states that "...when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied."

Dr. R. A. Torrey, the first president of Moody Bible Institute, wrote: "It is evident that the baptism with the Holy Spirit is an operation of the Holy Spirit distinct from and additional to His regenerating work...A man may be regenerated by the Holy Spirit and still not be baptized with the Holy Spirit. In regeneration, there is the impartation of life by the Spirit's power, and the one who receives it is saved: in the baptism with the Holy Spirit, there is the impartation of power, and the one who receives it is fitted for service...(The Person & Work of the Holy Spirit, by R. A. Torrey, pgs. 174, 176).

Now that you've received Jesus as Lord, Master and Ruler of your life, are you willing to receive what He has for you? Do you believe this promise is valid for you today? (If not, read Acts 2:38-39 and 1 Cor. 1:7, which states that the Holy Spirit and His gifts are all valid and in operation for us today until the second coming of Jesus Christ.) Do you need power to witness? (Acts 1:8 states that you "shall receive power, after the Holy Ghost is come upon you.) Are you afraid of manifestations of the Holy Spirit? Mark 16:17 says, "Signs shall follow them that believe..." " Do you believe this is for you? Jesus said, "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?" (Luke 11:13)

## THE CONSCIENCE

One day Joe and I were talking to Bill and Steve at the lake. The question was brought up, "How could people possibly be held accountable before God, who have never heard of God or Jesus Christ?" I said, "Bill, if you went to visit Steve at his home but he was gone and his wife

was there... What if it happened that you entered into an adulterous affair? Would you feel guilty for violating your friend's wife, even though you had never heard of the 10 commandments or read the Bible? Where did you get that information, that sense of guilt and a certain amount of feeling of accountability?

You see, God has given, through the conscience, the ability to sense right and wrong and to feel guilt for your wrong. The conscience is the self-judging function of the heart, that either accuses or excuses one's self, in regard to their conduct. It is the faculty which recognizes the distinction between right and wrong and demands that one do right and avoid wrong. It also makes one know that he is known and shall be Judged. Although it is true that the conscience is not infallible and can make mistakes because of being trained by wrong information (Rom. 14:2), it monitors between what is right and wrong.

The scripture tells us that a good conscience plays a vital part in the ability to operate in faith (1 Tim. 1:19) and that also it is only the blood of Christ that has the power to clear, purge and cleanse the conscience (Heb. 9:14).

One day, the apostle Paul shared the Christian faith with the then Roman governor of Judea and his wife. The scriptures state, "...Felix came with his wife Drusilla, who was a Jewess; and he sent for Paul and listened to him talk about faith in Christ Jesus. But as he continued to argue about uprightness, purity of life (the control of the passions), and the judgment to come, Felix became alarmed and terrified and said, Go away for the present; when I have a convenient opportunity, I will send for you" (Acts 24:24-25; AMP Bible).

Why did Felix become so uncomfortable? Why did he actually become afraid? You see, the conscience was functioning as a kind of law court in the human heart, that was pointing out his wrong and warning him of eternal doom.

A homosexual told me the other day, that Christianity accuses him of being an evil person. No, my friend, Christianity doesn't sentence you and tell you you're a bad person, it is your conscience and my conscience saying, if we will listen, "I need a Saviour, the forgiveness of my sins, a changed heart and life, a new conduct and way of living." This sense of guilt is to lead you to the only one that can purge your conscience and give you peace within. It is Jesus, your Saviour (1 Jn. 2:2).

Will you consider looking for the true answer to human guilt as the tax collector did in Luke 18? The tax collector humbled himself before God, beat his breast in sorrow and cried, "God be merciful to me a sinner!" God accepted him, forgave his sins, purged his conscience and declared him to be in right relationship with Him (Luke 18:13-14).

This tax collector understood guilt, sorrow for sins and cried for the mercy of God. The Bible says because he humbled himself before God that he found true peace within (Luke 18:14; Romans 5:1).

There is only one answer for the accusing conscience within. It is to be justified (declared righteous) by accepting the shed blood of Jesus Christ for your sins (Rom. 5:9).

Will you accept the Saviour upon which God has laid your sins? Will you follow Him as Lord (your boss) and find peace within?

"All we like sheep have gone astray" (Isa. 53:6). Is that true of you? Why not return to Him, as all of us must do? (2 Pet. 3:9)

## WHAT HAPPENED TO JOHNNY?

Johnny was visiting the local church one day when the preacher began saying, "I know someone here needs to be saved!" Everyone began to look around. Johnny was getting uncomfortable and unconsciously moving about in his seat. As the preacher continued to preach, again he said, "I know that someone here needs to be saved!" Finally someone pointed to Johnny. A well meaning friend then said to Johnny, "That must be you!" Johnny was helped down the aisle to the minister. Brief words were spoken, then Johnny was asked to repeat a prayer. Johnny said the sinner's prayer, but his life never changed.

Have you ever met anyone like that? They said everything the preacher said, but their lives were not changed. On the other hand, Sally said the sinner's prayer and Sally's life was transformed. There was a turning around, a change of mind, a change of heart in Sally.

What was the difference? Johnny went through a form and said the right things, but Sally dealt with a person (Jesus Christ). She turned from sin to Him in repentant, childlike faith.

How do you know that you are saved? What were you saved from? Salvation is when Christ saves you from the penalty and power of sin, through His redeeming blood. "And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure" (1 Jn. 3:3; NASV). When a person comes in repentant faith to Jesus Christ and His shed blood for the forgiveness of one's sins, God places a new nature within. That doesn't mean one is perfect but it does mean new desires for God and His ways.

If I took a pig and put him in a bathtub, cleaned him up, painted his hoofs, put a bow on his head and sprinkled a little perfume on him, he sure would look pretty. But what would happen if I let him out of my house? He would go to the mud hole and wallow in the mud. Why? Because he has the nature of a pig.

If I had a lamb and it fell in a mud hole, it would struggle to get out. Why? Because it is not the nature of a lamb to wallow in mud.

Because of the new nature that has been placed within the believer he may fall into sin, but he will not want to continue there. Why? Because he now has the nature of the Lamb of God.

What kind of faith in Christ do you have? Johnny's faith, which only amounted to intellectual assent (also referred to as demons faith or dead faith - Jas. 2:19-20), or Sally's faith which was from the heart (Rom. 10:10)?

Have you had a change of heart? Have you truly repented? Repentance is a gift that God grants people who want to come to Him to be saved. It is a new attitude, a change of mind, a change of heart THAT RESULTS in one turning from sin to God, and ultimately, to His ways.

In Matthew 3:8, John the Baptist said, "Bring forth fruit that is consistent with repentance [let your lives prove your change of heart]" (Amplified Bible). The apostle Paul said in his preaching to the Gentiles "that they should repent and turn to God, performing deeds appropriate to repentance" (Acts 26:20; NASV). From these scriptures we can see that "repentance" is "a change of heart, a change of mind" and that good works are the FRUIT (or evidence) of that changed heart.

Have you had a change of heart toward God? Have you turned from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of God's dear Son? Have you trusted Jesus Christ and His shed blood for the forgiveness of your sins?

Jesus Christ's commission to the apostle Paul was to open people's eyes, so that they may TURN FROM darkness TO light, FROM the power of Satan UNTO God, so that they may receive the forgiveness of their sins (Acts 26:18). Has this happened to you?

## **THE GOOD NEWS FOUND IN THE BOOK OF ROMANS**

In the year A.D. 57, a man named Paul wrote a letter to some Christian believers in Rome. In this letter, Paul gave one of the clearest understandings that has ever been written on the subject of the gospel of grace.

No matter what church you attend I'm sure you have heard the all familiar term "the gospel." But what is it? We've all been told to go preach the gospel to every creature, but how can we, unless it is clearly understood?

In Paul's letter to the Romans the gospel is clearly defined.

The story that unfolds in Romans can be likened unto a large court room drama. Sitting on the bench as judge is Almighty God. Those on trial are the whole of humanity (mankind). And the prosecutor or district attorney is the apostle Paul. He has just charged all of mankind with breaking God's law. The Jews with God's written law and the Gentiles with breaking the moral laws of their conscience. The verdict is about to be read. God will find all men "guilty." Guilty of a lawless attitude toward Him, impurity in thought, and missing the mark or standard of His perfection.

Why have you thought, "I am basically a good person, I should be able to enter God's heaven," when God says, "There is none righteous, no, not one." (Rom. 3:10)? Does this not include you? God says, "There is none that doeth good, no, not one" (Rom. 3:12). Would you argue this point on the Day that He judges the secrets of our hearts? (See Rom. 2:16)

If we visited a penitentiary and there met a murderer, robber and someone there for tax evasion, would there be a difference in these men? Yes, but in the eyes of the law there is no distinction. Why? For all are guilty of breaking the law. The Bible says that whoever keeps God's law and yet fails in one point is guilty of breaking His law. How many lies does it take to become a liar? How many times does it take lusting after a woman to make one an adulterer in his heart? You cannot say you are basically good, when God says there is none good not even one (Rom. 3:23). Please take time to read the 10 commandments (Ex. 20). The apostle Paul said, "I had not known sin, but by the law" (Rom. 7:7). No one has met the standard perfectly that God's law demands (See Rom. 3:20).

Friend, don't you see that you need a Saviour and the forgiveness of your sins?

You are now in for a big surprise in the eternal law court of God. Just at the time when God begins to read His verdict that we are guilty, an unexpected character enters the court room. It is a substitute that is willing to pay the fine for mankind's guilt. His name is Jesus Christ and He has paid your fine in full. The wages of your sin is eternal death (Rom. 3:23). Do you want your wages, or do you want the mercy and grace that is offered to you by Jesus Christ?

The gift that God now offers you is acquittal in the eternal law court of God. In the Bible it is called being justified or declared right before God, because Jesus has paid the wages of your sins. The Bible says, "Since Christ's blood has made us right with God, even more we will be saved from God's punishment through Christ." (The Simple English Bible) Do you want this acquittal? Do you want this pardon? The value of a pardon depends upon its acceptance by the person to whom it is offered.

Jesus took your sins and offers you His own righteousness for your acceptance before God (See 2 Cor. 5:21). Will you receive His gift? Tell Jesus today that you will trust Him as your Saviour and follow Him as your Lord. "For WHOSOEVER shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." (Rom. 10:13). Are you a WHOSOEVER? Then call on Him ... He's waiting to hear from you.

### **THE FREE GIFT OF RIGHTEOUSNESS**

According to the Bible mankind's greatest need is for righteousness, that is, to be in right-standing, or a right-relationship with a holy God. WHY? According to scripture "all have sinned" (Rom. 3:23). God sees all men as lost, without hope and without God in this world (Eph. 2:12). We are sinners by nature through the fall of one man, Adam. It is also true that we are sinners by practice, that is, our actions and deeds also fall short of the standard of God's perfection. You cannot say, "I am basically a good person!" when the scriptures declare, "all are falling short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23b) and "there is none righteous, no, not one" (Rom. 3:10).

My friend, do you see that you need a personal Saviour, one who will save you from your sins?

God offers us, as a gift, the righteousness that we all so desperately need. In fact this righteousness is not the righteousness that you can produce (See Titus 3:5), rather, it is a

righteous that equals God's righteousness (2Cor. 5:21). In fact it is God's own righteousness that He offers us freely through faith in Jesus Christ (Rom. 3:22).

Notice what the scripture says, "But now the righteousness of God WITHOUT THE LAW is manifested (that is, revealed)" (Rom. 3:21). The first thing we notice here about God's righteousness is that it is not derived from the law. There is no definite article in this verse, in the Greek text, which would indicate that the righteousness which God offers man is APART FROM LAW or THE PRINCIPLE OF LAW. Therefore this scripture may read, "But now the righteousness of God without law is revealed." AND WHAT IS THE PRINCIPLE OF THE LAW? The principle of the law says that men are accepted by God by doing, achieving, or fulfilling certain standards. SO IF MEN ARE NOT MADE RIGHTEOUS BY THE LAW, THAT IS, BY BEING AND DOING RIGHTEOUS ACTS, THEN HOW ARE WE MADE RIGHTEOUS BEFORE A HOLY GOD? Verse 22 of Romans 3 tells us when it gives a description of the kind of righteousness that God offers, it is a "by faith in Jesus Christ righteousness." These five words in the Greek text are a combined adjectival phrase which modifies the righteousness of God. In other words this phrase describes the kind of righteousness God offers by saying, it is a through - faith - in - Jesus Christ - righteous that makes men acceptable before God.

Are you tired of dealing with guilt? Would you like to come to the Saviour to be totally righteous and have right standing with God? The blood of Jesus was shed in order to provide this gift for you (Eph. 1:7). This is what the scripture says, "This gift is from God, and it is very important to me. Because if the law could have made us right with God, then Christ died for nothing!" (Gal. 2:21; The Simple English Bible).

Have you ever considered repenting from your dead works? (See Heb. 6:1) Dead works are the things people trust in to get them to heaven. They may involve living a good life, keeping the 10 commandments, loving others, church attendance, etc. Can you see that none of these things will meet the standard of God's own righteousness? It will take God's own righteousness to get you to heaven.

The Bible says, "It is certain that death reigned over everyone as the consequence of one man's fall (Adam), it is even more certain that one man, Jesus Christ, will cause everyone to reign in life who receives THE FREE GIFT THAT HE DOES NOT DESERVE, OF BEING MADE RIGHTEOUS" (Rom. 5:17, Jerusalem Bible).

My friend, when we all stand before God we will be anything but innocent, in fact we will be utterly guilty. Yet God in His amazing grace, offers to treat you as if you were an innocent man because of the blood of Jesus shed for you (Rom. 5:9).

Will you turn to Christ today for His free gift of salvation?

## THE DEATH OF PRINCESS DIANA

Quoting a doctor who treated Princess Diana at the scene of the August 31, 1997 accident, the daily Le Parisien said "...When the first emergency medical workers reached Diana in a Paris tunnel, she appeared to have minor injuries and her face was untouched."

"She was very agitated, half-knocked out but conscious," said the doctor.

Diana repeatedly murmured "Oh my God" as doctors and paramedics began to treat her injuries, firefighters sought to free her from the car and police pushed back the photographers who had been "taking pictures just a few centimeters from her face," the paper quoted the doctor as saying.

"Leave me alone, leave me alone," Diana said, just before the oxygen mask was placed over her face, and she lost consciousness, the doctor told Le Parisien.

The body of Diana's companion, Dodi al Fayed, had been thrown 20 yards from the car by the force of its impact with a concrete pillar in the Pont de l'Alma traffic tunnel, the doctor said. He was dead when the first emergency workers reached him (Associated Press).

What can we learn from all of this? Jesus one time used a similar tragedy to bring forth a spiritual lesson. It appears that some Jews were on their way to offer a blood sacrifice to Jehovah at the Temple in Jerusalem. At that time Pilate, the then Roman governor caught them, killed them, and mixed their own blood with their animal sacrifices.

Jesus did not take time to explain the "whys" of this tragedy but rather taught an eternal truth. He said, "Do you think that these Jews were worse sinners than others because they suffered such a thing?"

No! not at all! Don't you realize that unless you repent and turn to God by leaving your evil ways that you likewise will be eternally lost?"

Then Jesus used this illustration: "What about the 18 men who died when a large tower fell on them in Jerusalem? Were they more guilty offenders of God's ways than the rest of mankind? No, not at all! Don't you see that you too will be eternally lost unless you have a change of heart and turn to God?" [Read it for yourself from the words of Jesus - [Luke 13:1-5](#).]

My friend, God did not send His Son into the world to condemn and judge you! But that you might find salvation and be found safe from eternal death through Him. The person who believes, clings to and relies on Christ will never face rejection or incur damnation [Read it for yourself from the words of Jesus - [John 3:16-18](#).]

If we may help you find this wonderful gift of God's salvation plan, then please contact us.

## THE BLIZZARD

On October 25, 1997, the Governor of Colorado, Roy Romer, declared a State of Emergency to bring aid to the snowbound citizens of his state. With whiteout conditions continuing for

several days the snow and icy winds made it illegal to operate motor vehicles on public streets. There were snow drifts up to 20 feet in places, and wind gusts that reached up to 50 mph. Wind chill factors dropped to 25 degrees below zero. The Army brought in over 40 Humvees (all terrain vehicles) to assist in the search and rescue of those stranded. Fire Stations and Malls became shelters for the stranded motorists being rescued. Schools and businesses were closed, not even the snow plows were running. The storm was said to be one of the worst of this century.

At our home 8 foot snow drifts were piled up against the house and almost completely covered our cars. We had never seen a blizzard like this before (and this was in mid October). We could hear the faint meowing of our cat somewhere out there under several feet of snow. We later discovered that she was stuck in the window well of our basement. Our son was able to rescue her by opening his window and letting her in. She was mighty grateful, although a little confused and disoriented. A little while later we heard what sounded like a bird trying to fly around inside our wood stove insert. It must've fallen down the chimney. After figuring out how to dismantle the stove insert we were able to rescue the bird who was totally exhausted but in good shape. A bit frightened and cold the bird had suffered a broken beak. As we set him down outside, in a few minutes he flew to the safety of a nearby tree for shelter.

This experience later made me think of the scripture I had been reading in Luke 12:6-7. "What is the price of five sparrows? A couple of pennies? Not much more than that. Yet God does not forget a single one of them. And he knows the number of hairs on your head! Never fear, you are far more valuable to him than a whole flock of sparrows" (LB).

When someone is valued they are considered as highly regarded and much esteemed. They are prized, significant and treasured. Have you ever considered the value that God has placed on you? In the Bible God tells us we are offered redemption through Jesus' blood. That means God offers to rescue us from the penalty of our sins because He values us. Read it for yourself in Eph. 1:7; Rom. 5:8 and John 3:17.

Jesus one time illustrated this truth by telling this story: A woman had ten valuable silver coins and lost one. She wouldn't rest until she had lit a lamp and looked in every corner of her house. As she sweep every nook and cranny of the house she finally found it. She then called her friends and neighbors to rejoice with her.

Jesus said that in the same way the woman rejoiced with her friends over finding the valuable coin, that God, the Heavenly Father rejoices (in the presence of the angels) over one person who was lost and is found (Luke 15:8-10).

Could this be true of you and me, the possibility of us being lost? Have you considered turning or returning to the Father who loves you? He is looking for you and you are valuable in His sight. "For the Son of man has come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10).

## **THE PAIN OF INFIDELITY**

It has been said that 75% of all couples will need counseling at some time. 1 out of 2 married couples will divorce eventually with the average duration of the marriage being 7 years.

For people drawn together only by sexual attraction the marriage will be only a 3 to 5 year duration. 50% of marriages within the first 5 years will experience an extramarital affair. 37% of ministers will be involved in inappropriate sexual behavior with someone in their church. Although love, marriage and relationships are foundational to our well-being, there is no other subject that has started with such hope and expectation that has failed so regularly as love.

John and Sally were married for 20 years, with two children, Judy (17) and Trey (12). Sally was devastated when John told his wife he'd been seeing another woman and wanted a divorce. They had always struggled to communicate but Sally never thought it would come to this. After John moved out and found his own apartment he never witnessed the continual heartache, confusion and rejection he caused his wife and children. Only briefly did John ever stop by, even then it was only a cold and uncaring visit.

Several months after John left his family he finally met his match. Judy his 17 year old daughter had written her Dad a letter.

Dear Daddy,

I wanted many times to sit and talk with you but I know as a family we may never see you again. I realize that you're dating another woman and that you and mom may never be together again. I can't accept this and every night I cry myself to sleep thinking about you and our family. Trey also as well as mom is very hurt.

Dad, I dreamed last night that we were all involved in a car accident. Trey and I were riding in the back seat and mom was driving. Suddenly we looked up and a car had swerved into our lane and was heading right for us. As it came closer we looked and it was you driving. We had a terrible crash. Mom was thrown into the steering wheel and a piece of the gear shift almost pierced her heart. Trey was thrown from the backseat into a window and his head went through broken glass. I was thrown out of the car and broke my arm and leg. We were all laying there at the accident and didn't know how to help each other. What is worse is that we didn't know what happened to you.

Later, in the hospital mom, Trey and I missed you very much. We often talked about you and wondered if you were hurt as bad as we were. Were you hurt and in pain as we are? We need to see you and are here for you, because we love you.

Your daughter,  
Judy

A week after receiving this letter John came home. He told Judy he had hurt them so bad that he thought he could never return. "I never knew the extent of pain that I caused you and the truth was that I hurt pretty bad myself. I want your mother and I to seek counseling."

Did you know that the true pain of this story is told by God in relating His relationship to you? God speaks of all of us as having gone astray (Isa. 53:6). He states, "You are like an unfaithful wife who loves her husband's enemies. Don't you realize that making friends with God's enemies...makes you an enemy of God?" (Jam. 4:4; LB). "For your Maker is your husband; the LORD of hosts is His name" (Isa. 54:5).

The Bible shows us that a good marriage is a small scale model of what our relationship with God should be (Eph. 5:31-32). In a marriage relationship there should be a "knowing" (Gen.4:1), a "oneness" (Gen. 2:24), being ravished by love (Prov. 5:19), cleaving (Gen. 2:24), joining (Mt. 19:6), and a forsaking of all others (Gen. 2:24). Marriage involves a covenant (vow) that forsakes others to refocus your lives on each other (Gen. 2:24; Ezek. 16:8).

In relating these principles the Lord said to the prophet Hosea, "Go and marry a girl who is a prostitute, so that some of her children will be born to you from other men. This will illustrate the way my people have been untrue to Me, committing open adultery against Me by worshiping other gods" (Hosea 1:2, LB).

What about it?! Isn't it time you turned or returned to the God who loves you? "Come, and let us return unto the LORD...I don't want your sacrifices - I want your love; I don't want your offerings - I want you to know Me (says the LORD)" (Hosea 6:1, 6).

King David in the Old Testament committed adultery with Bathsheba and killed her husband to cover it up (2 Sam. 11-12). After being confronted by Nathan the prophet for his sin, David cried out, "Against you LORD, ...have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight" (Ps. 51:4). "Sprinkle me with the cleansing blood and I shall be whiter than snow" (Ps. 51:7). "Then I will teach your ways to other sinners, and they - guilty like me - will repent and return to You" (Ps. 51:13, LB). What about it?! Do you need the forgiveness that God so freely offers? Do you need to turn or return to the God who loves you?

## **TO LOVE & BE LOVED**

Have you ever tried to work out in your own mind a understanding of mankind's greatest need, that is, to love and be loved?

Almost everything it seems is more important in today's society than learning the principles of love. Men spend years going to school, learning skills so that they may prosper materially, yet so little energy is spent in understanding man's greatest need which is to know love and to love.

In our English vocabulary we have only one word "love" that means many different things to different individuals. You may be in love with a person and later discover that their understanding of love is only sexuality and selfishness. It is no wonder that we are so confused. "Love" means many different things to many different people depending upon who you ask.

In the Bible there are many different Greek and Hebrew words that are translated into English as love. The basic words in Greek were Eros, Phileo and Agape.

The Greek word EROS is not found in the Bible probably because of its pagan origin in Greek mythology. Although the word is not found the concept is alluded to in several passages of Scripture. Genesis 2:24 states, "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh." 1 Corinthians 7:4-5 says, "The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife. Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye

may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency." This particular kind of love is to be shared only between two individuals in holy matrimony. Hebrews 13:4 states, "Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge." This is saying that God has created sexuality, that it is good but only if it is used within the boundaries for which it was intended. It was intended to produce a "one flesh bonding" that would strengthen a marriage. It was intended for procreation as well. It is also intended to produce mutual pleasure in a committed marital relationship of faith and trust. The sexual union of becoming one is fulfilling and powerful if used in its proper context of the marriage covenant. If used outside of marriage it becomes one of the most ugly and heartbreaking experiences that could happen to people. Proverbs 6:32 says, "But whoso committeth adultery with a woman lacketh understanding: he that doeth it destroyeth his own soul." Again, I say, sexual love is given by God to be expressed only in a marriage covenant and was never intended to be shared with anyone outside of their own marriage. It is a love limited to two individuals, male and female within a marriage covenant of love and faithfulness.

A second word used in Scripture is PHILEO. This word and its related forms are used around seventy-two times in the New Testament. It is a love of feelings. It delights to be in the presence of the ones it loves. It is friendship love, a love that comes and goes in intensity and feelings. It's the love we all like, a warm tender feeling of affection that delights to be in the presence of another. It will never sustain a marriage because it is somewhat conditional. It responds with delight to the warm tender caring nature of others. If that caring stops or unkindness is substituted it draws back and its feelings diminish.

The only love that can endure is God's love. It is called AGAPE. It causes freedom to those living within its boundaries. It is described in 1 John 5:3 and 2 John 6. "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous." (1 Jn.5:3). "And this is love, that we walk after his commandments." (2 Jn.1:6). AGAPE love always seeks the welfare and benefit of others. I cannot say I love someone and destroy them by my covetousness, lying, cheating, breaking up their family, etc. Love must stay within the boundaries of God's commandments in order to not hurt others or yourself. Jesus described this love in Matthew 7:12 when He said, "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets." Notice what Jesus said and didn't say. He didn't say, "Why don't people love me? Don't they know I'm hurting? What's wrong with those hypocrites?" No! instead He said, "Whatever you would want someone to do for you, do to them." You see, to be loved you must first love. "We love him (God), because he first loved us" (1 Jn. 4:9). Romans 5:8 says, "But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us." Jesus didn't want to go to the cross, die and suffer for our sins! He prayed, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt." And he went to the cross and suffered pain and shame to seek the welfare and benefit of us regardless of how he felt. "This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers" (1 Jn. 3:16).

Jesus loved us while we were sinful, ungodly and cared nothing for Him. He sought our welfare and good even when He didn't feel like it. He came to give sinful people a relationship of

friendship and goodwill with a holy God. He did this by paying the penalty of death that our sins deserved and thus secured life for us with Him.

God is not mad at you. He likes you! He loves you! Jesus said, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls" (Matt. 11:28-29).

## DO YOU WANT TO KNOW A SECRET?

**Have you ever tried to read the Bible yet couldn't understand it?** Jesus said that the secrets about God's Kingdom are revealed only to those who are willing to accept God's rule in their lives. Listen to what Jesus said, "Unto you (the followers of Christ) it is given to know the mystery (secrets) of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without (outside of God's kingdom), all these things are done in parables (hidden truths)" (Mark 4:11).

What is the Kingdom of God is the rule of God. "Since, however, this earth is the scene of universal rebellion against God, the Kingdom of God is the sphere in which, at any given time, His rule is acknowledge (W. E. Vine).

The Bible tells us that the god of this world has blinded people's minds (2.Cor. 4:4), that the kingdoms of this world are being controlled by Satan (Mt.4:8-9), that Satan is the prince of the power of the air and that he is working in people (Eph.2:2), and that he has taken people captive (2 Tim.2:25-26). This is a clear demonstration of the conflict between Jesus and Satan that is occurring in this present world. The battle is over the hearts, minds, ownership, and rule of individuals. To prepare people for God's rule of righteousness in their hearts, Jesus began preaching. "Repent (turn from sin, and turn to God), for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand" (Matthew 4:17).

The mission of bringing the **reign** of God into people's lives, was given by Jesus to His disciples through their preaching efforts (Lk.16:16; Mt.24:14; Lk.9:1-6, 59-60;10:1-11; Acts 8:5,12; 19:8-10; 20:24-25; 28:23-31). Within this gospel message is the offer of the forgiveness of sins and eternal life (Lk.24:47; Mat.25:34, 46). Jesus speaks of this when He says, "I am sending you (the Apostle Paul) to open people's eyes and turn them from darkness to light, from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins..." (Acts 26:18). The Apostle Paul described this gospel as God's power to deliver from darkness, and translate one into the Kingdom of God's dear Son (Col.1:13). Is it through redemption (Jesus blood) that the forgiveness of sins is being offered (Col.1:14).

When a disciple named Philip went down to the city of Samaria, he preached Christ to them (the word "Christ" means "anointed" to rule, the anointed King). When people believed Philip's preaching concerning the Kingdom of God (accepting God's rule and reign in their lives), and the person of Jesus the Christ, they were baptized, both men and women (Acts 8:5, 12). It was in this way that they were acknowledging their repentance from sin and allegiance to Jesus as **King** of their lives.

The announcement of the Kingdom, was the proclamation that God is now acting through Jesus, to deliver people from their bondage to Satan and sin. On the cross, Jesus gave Himself for our sins, to deliver us from this present evil world (the authority of Satan's domain and rule), and to purchase us completely for Himself (Gal.1:4). First Corinthians 6:19-20 states, "Ye are not your own. For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, what are God's."

What kingdom are you under? What master are you serving? Jesus said, the time is fulfilled and the Kingdom (or Rulership of God) has come in Him (Mk.1:15). Will you turn to God (through Jesus), for the forgiveness of your sins and the new life He now offers? Will you give your allegiance to Him?

## **THE DEVIL HAS ENTERED ME!**

BY R.A. TORREY

One time I received a letter, a very heartbroken letter, from a father who was a Presbyterian minister. He wrote that he had a son who was in awful spiritual darkness. The son thought that he had committed the unpardonable sin, and he was plunged into absolute despair. Would I take him in at the Bible Institute? I replied that though I had every sympathy with him in his sorrow, the Bible Institute was not for the purpose of helping cases like these, but to train men and women for Christian service. The father continued to write, beseeching me to take his son, and got other friends to plead for him. Finally I consented to take the young man. He was sent to me under guard, lest he might do some rash thing by the way.

When he was brought to my office, I showed him a seat. As soon as the others had left the room, he began the conversation by saying, "I am possessed of the devil."

"I think quite likely you are," I replied, "but Christ is able to cast out devils."

"You do not understand me," he said, "I mean that the devil has entered into me as he did into Judas Iscariot."

"That may be," I answered, "but Christ came to destroy the works of the devil. Now He says in John 6:37. 'Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out.' If you will come to Him, He will receive you and set you free from Satan's power."

The conversation went on in this way for some time: he constantly asserting the absolute hopelessness of his case, and I on my part constantly asserting the power of Jesus Christ and His promise, "'Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out.'" After a while I sent the young man to his room. Days and weeks passed, and we had many conversations, always on the same line, and I always holding him to John 6:37.

One day I met him in the hall of the Institute, and made up my mind that the time had come to have the battle out. I told him to sit down, and I sat down beside him.

"Do you believe the Bible?" I asked.

"Yes," he replied, "I believe everything in it."

"Do you believe John 6:37?" I asked.

"Yes, I believe everything in the Bible."

"Do you believe that Jesus Christ told the truth when He said, 'Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out'?"

"Yes, I do; I believe everything in the Bible."

"Well, then, will you come?"

"I have committed the unpardonable sin."

"I replied, 'Jesus does not say, 'Him that hath not committed the unpardonable sin that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.' He says, 'Him that cometh to Me I will in on wise cast out.'"

"But I have sinned willfully after I have received the knowledge of the truth."

"Jesus does not say, 'Him that has not sinned willfully after he received the knowledge of the truth that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast our.' He says, 'Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out.'"

"But I have been once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have fallen away, and it is impossible to renew me again unto repentance."

"Jesus does not say, 'Him that has not tasted of the heavenly gift, and has not fallen away, if he cometh to me I will in no wise cast him out.' He says, 'Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.'"

"But I am possessed of the devil," he answered.

"Jesus does not say, 'Him that is not possessed of the devil that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out.' He says, 'Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out.'"

"I mean that the devil is entered into me as he did into Judas Iscariot."

"Jesus does not say, 'Him that the devil has not entered into, as he did into Judas Iscariot, that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out.' He says, 'Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out.'"

"But my heart is hard as a millstone."

"Jesus does not say, 'If a man's heart is soft and tender, and he come to Me, I will in no wise cast him out.' He says, 'Him that cometh to Me, I will in no wise cast out.'"

"But I do not know that I have any desire to come."

"Jesus does not say, 'Him that hath a desire to come, and comes unto Me, I will in no wise cast out. He says, 'Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out.'"

"But I do not know that I can come in the right way."

"Jesus does not say, 'Him that cometh to Me in the right way, I will in no wise cast him out.' He says, 'Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out.'"

"Well, I don't know that I care to come."

"Jesus does not say, 'Him that careth to come to Me, and comes to Me, I will in no wise cast out.' He says, 'Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out.'"

The man's excuses and subterfuges were exhausted. I looked him square in the face and said, "Now, will you come? Get down on your knees, and quit your nonsense."

He knelt and I knelt by his side.

"Now," I said, "Follow me in prayer."

"Lord Jesus," I said, and he repeated, "Lord Jesus."

"My heart is as hard as a millstone."

"My heart is as hard as a millstone," he repeated.

"I have no desire to come unto thee."

"I have no desire to come unto thee."

"But thou hast said in thy Word."

"But thou hast said in thy Word."

"Him that cometh to Me I will no wise cast out."

"Him that cometh to Me I will no wise cast out."

"Now the best I know how I come."

"Now the best I know how I come."

"Thou hast said, 'Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out.'"

"Thou hast said, 'Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out.'"

"I believe this statement of Thine."

"I believe this statement of Thine."

"Therefore, though I don't feel it, I believe thou hast received me."

"Therefore, though I don't feel it, I believe thou hast received me."

When he had finished, I said, "Did you really come?"

He replied, "I did."

"Has He received you?"

"I do not feel it," he replied.

"But what does He say?"

"'Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out.'"

"Is this true? Does Jesus tell the truth, or does He lie?"

"He tells the truth."

"What then must He have done?"

"He must have received me."

"Now," I said, "go to your room: stand firmly upon this promise of Jesus Christ. The devil will give you an awful conflict, but just answer him every time with John 6:37, and stand right there, believing what Jesus says in spite of your feelings, in spite of what the devil may say, in spite of everything."

He went to his room. The devil did give him an awful conflict, but he stood firmly on John 6:37, and came out of his room triumphant and radiant. Years have passed since then. Though the devil has tried again and again to plunge him into despair, he has stood firmly on John 6:37, and he is today being used of God to do larger work for Christ than almost any man I know.

## **THE HORSE THAT GOD HEALED**

(A True Story by John Wesley - Founder of the Methodist Church)

In his personal diary John Wesley on March 17, 1746 records this true account of the healing of his horse. "I took my leave of Newcastle,...my horse was so exceedingly lame that I was afraid I must have lain by too. We could not discern what it was that was amiss; and yet he would scarce set his foot to the ground. By riding thus seven miles, I was thoroughly tired, and my head ached more than it had done for some months...I then thought, **"Cannot God heal either man or beast, by any means, or without any?" Immediately my weariness and headache ceased, and my horse's lameness in the same instant. Nor did he halt any more either that day or the next. A very odd accident this also!"**

My friend, God says He cares even for the sparrows. **If God even cares for the animal creation how much more does He care for you?** "Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God? But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore: **ye are of more value than many sparrows**" (Luke 12:6-7).

John Wesley toward the end of his life gave this amazing testimony of God's personal care for him. "This being my birth-day, the first day of my seventy-second year, I was considering, **How is this, that I find just the same strength as I did thirty years ago?** That my sight is considerably better now, and my nerves firmer than they were then? That I have none of the infirmities of old age, and have lost several I had in my youth? **The grand cause is, the good pleasure of God**, who doth whatsoever pleases Him. The chief means are, 1. my constantly rising at four, for about fifty years. 2. my generally preaching at five in the morning, one of the most healthy exercises in the world. 3. my never travelling less, by sea or land, than four thousand five hundred miles a year (10:9; June 28, 1774).

John Wesley (1703-1791) founder of the Methodist Church was convinced that all the world needed to hear the good news of Christ's salvation and for this purpose he gave his entire life. What is the purpose of your life? Jesus said, "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Mark 8:36-37).

What now are you exchanging for your soul? The love of money, the lust for things, drugs, alcohol, sex, etc. What God (or gods) are you serving? Jesus said, you cannot serve two masters (See Mt. 6:24). Will you make a decision today to follow Jesus the Christ? Jesus said, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish" (John 10:27-28).

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| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>I AM DAMNED, LOST FOREVER!</b></p> |
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(A True Story by John Wesley - Founder of the Methodist Church)

John Wesley (1703-1791) founder of the Methodist Church was convinced that all the world needed to hear the good news of Christ's salvation. Instead of confining himself to the churches, John believed his call was to travel from place to place and reach the working class people. His travels took him over 250,000 miles (when travel was by horseback or walking) he preached the gospel in the market places or any place a crowd would hear him. His contribution

to the gospel cause included being a pioneer in the publication of a monthly magazine and the invention of the gospel tract in evangelism.

In his personal diary of October 23, 1739 he records this personal and true story: At eleven I preached at Brarfield to about three thousand, on the spirit of nature, of bondage, and of adoption. Returning in the evening, I was exceedingly pressed to go back to a young woman in Kingswood... I went. She was nineteen or twenty years old; but, it seems, could not write or read. I found her on the bed, two or three persons holding her. It was a terrible sight. The thousands of distortions of her whole body showed how the dogs of hell were gnawing her heart. The shrieks intermixed were scarce to be endured. But her stony eyes would not weep. She screamed out, as soon as words could find their way, "**I am damned, damned; lost forever!** Six days ago you might have helped me. But it is past. **I am the devil's now.** I have given myself to him. His I am. Him I must serve. **With him I must go to hell.** I will be his. I will serve him. I will go with him to hell. **I cannot be saved.** I will not be saved. I must, I will, I will be damned!" **She then began praying to the devil.** We began: "Arm of the Lord, awake, awake!" She immediately sunk down asleep; but as soon as we left off, broke out again, with inexpressible vehemence: "Stony hearts, break! I am warning to you. Break, break, poor stony hearts! Will you not break? What can be done for stony hearts? I am damned that you may be saved. Now break, now break, poor stony hearts! You need not be damned, though I must." She then fixed her eyes on the corner of the ceiling, and said: "**There he is: ay, there he is! Come, good devil, come! Take me away. You said you would dash my brains out: come do it quickly.** I am yours. I will be yours. Come just now, Take me away."

**We interrupted her by calling upon God:** on which she sunk down as before: and another young woman began to roar out as loud as she had done. My brother (Charles Wesley) now came in, it being about nine o'clock. **We continued in prayer till past eleven; when God in a moment spoke peace into the soul, first of the tormented, and then of the other. And they both joined in singing praise to Him who had "stilled the enemy and the avenger."**

My friend, if John and Charles Wesley could pray until they saw the demons of hell leave the tormented persons, then why do we think things are different today? God has called us (through Jesus Christ) to repent (have a change of heart and mind) and turn to Him for the forgiveness of our sins and the eternal life that He offers. Will you make a decision to follow Christ today?

## A MUSLIM ASKED, WHO IS JESUS CHRIST?

I am Timothy Abraham (this is my Christian alias), a simple Egyptian from the Delta region. Farms surrounded me from every side with streams of the luxurious Nile river endowing life with fertility. I had a strong Islamic upbringing in my childhood, studying in the village shop for teaching the Quran (al-Kutaab). They taught me to fear God (Allah in Arabic) who created the Heaven and the earth in six days. There was not a single reason to doubt a religion which emphasized fearing God, doing good work and living a moral life. The recitation of the Quran was meant to produce a sense of tranquillity. I enjoyed the Sufi circle of worship, as they adored the person of Muhammad. This was Abu-al-azayem's group. I was searching for more closeness with Allah Almighty.

One evening around 7:00 p.m. in al-Mahatta mosque, having finished praying al- Maghrib prayer, I was introduced to Muhammad Imam and Sulleiman Kahwash. They were vitally influential in incorporating me into their group "The Muslim Brotherhood -- i.e. al-Ikhwan al-Muslimin." They encouraged me to be a devout Muslim and fast on Monday and Thursday of every week and break the fast with them in the mosque where we ate bread, cheese, palm dates (tamr), and delicious salad. I diligently imitated every thing the Prophet Muhammad did, even the sitting posture of the Prophet as he was eating. They were so kind to me. They also saw in me the potential of being an eloquent speaker. Therefore, Sulleiman Hashem, the leader at the time, approached me gently, "Ibrahim, you are called by the Quran's teaching to proclaim the message of Islam "da'awah." "My Allah!" I pondered. "I am just 14 years old and I am easily intimidated." Nevertheless, Sulleiman gave me a stack of books to study in preparation for the sermon I was to deliver the next day. From then on, it became customary for me to preach a sermon on the first Monday of every lunar month. I was filled with zeal as my leaders had arranged for me to go across the neighboring towns, preaching from mosque to mosque. I zealously wanted everyone to follow the Tradition of the Prophet Muhammad, and subsequently, my sister had no choice but to obey my Quranic command and wear the veil which indicated modesty. I needed my father's approval. I wondered if he had ever heard his son, the 14 year old Muslim evangelist preach. To my astonishment my father was sharply criticized by people for having a son who was now a "fanatic." My father became wrathful over my Islamic radicalism and thoughtlessly punched me in the teeth. Today my front tooth is a fake one. It reminds me of my former perseverance to the point of death to be a zealous Muslim fundamentalist and my willingness to be persecuted for my commitment. My father burnt my Sunni (mostly wahabi and salafi) Islamic library.

I was never daunted by any of this and continued to preach Islam everyday in the morning parade (taboor as-sabah) as well as in every mosque where I went to teach. It never occurred to me for a second that Islam could be wrong. In my pursuit to propagate Islam everywhere, a magazine came into my hands which had pen pal addresses from the United States. I chose one at random and wrote, hoping to convert the man into Islam. I wrote to John from Pennsylvania, USA back and forth for two years, each trying to convert the other. I read every book I could get hold of to refute the Bible. To make things worse, I had no respect for the Bible as I put my feet and shoes on it since the Quran taught me it was corrupt.

Then John surprised me by coming to visit me in my village. That was the first time I saw a real Christian. His sincerity, frankness, genuineness, and openness impressed me. John stayed with me for two months. He had an amazing prayer life which served as a model for me in my latter life. I did not know that Christians prayed until I saw a "living epistle" right in the middle of my house, a man from a far off land who became one of us and genuinely incarnated the love of Christ. John had an amazing prayer life, for he prayed more than he talked, speaking the words of the Bible. I became jealous of John's intimacy with God and increased my recitations of the Quran.

The Quran presents a god who is on the look out for ways of tormenting his slaves. A Muslim may do as many good works as possible in this world and on the Day of Judgment God weighs the deeds of every individual in a "balance." The good deeds will be placed in one pan of the balance, and the evil deeds in the other. If the good deeds are heavier, then the believer will go to

the paradise described in Quran as a place of sexual pleasure and frolicking with the wide-eyed huris (sura al-Waqia 56:20-23). However, Christ our Lord said "For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels of God in heaven" (Matthew 22:30). My Muslim friend, according to Islam, if your evil deeds are heavier, you will be cast into the fires of hell. It looks like you would need to be only fifty-one percent good to get into paradise. Yet you remain absolutely unsure whether or not you are going to heaven. All you say, my Muslim friend, is, "Only God Knows!" You hope for the mercy of Allah and hope that the angels or the Prophet will intercede for you in the last day, so you will be saved from Hell.

I was like you my Muslim sister or brother, right in the same boat until I knew that you can be absolutely sure of going to Heaven. Tears well up in my eyes just to recall how lost I was and now that I am found. While trembling in tears, seeing the majesty of God, I rejoice to know that I have eternal life for certain.

God in the Bible is both just and merciful. His justice requires that everyone be punished in Hell, for He is perfect 100 percent. No matter how hard we try to please God, we always fall short of His perfection. Our good works will not bring us closer to God. God saw our insufficiency, and decided to pay the penalty Himself. He sent His Word Isa Al Masih (Jesus Christ), who is absolutely sinless and faultless to carry the punishment of our sins on the cross. What can you say to the Judge when He chooses to pay your penalty for you? The Bible says in John 3:16 "For God so loved the world that he gave His only Son, so that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life." It is because God loves us that He sent His Word, Jesus Christ, to die for us. Islam never grants us the assurance of going to Heaven, but Christ absolutely does! Praise God! Thank you, my Lord, for sovereignly choosing to pay the price Yourself in the Person of Your incarnate Word, the Lord Jesus Christ, Who is the express revelation of the nature of Allah Almighty.

After John left, his influence stayed. I thought I would depress John by saying, "John, your visit made me a stronger Muslim in the faith and do not try to convert Muslims anymore." Yet John prevailed in his supplication and prayers. His intercessory prayer moved to LORD to wake me up in the middle of the night as I had no sleep or rest. Inner conflict reached its zenith. Restless, I reached out to my Bible and opened it at random.. I found, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" I remember one day in the heat of a debate between me and John, I made fun of the Bible and said, "John, your Bible is the most absurd thing! How can you believe the story of Saul who became Paul, the servant of the Gospel?" John said, "The story is true, and that is why I am patient with you. You will be another Paul one day!" I replied, "John, you must be out of your mind to think for a second that I could leave the religion of all religions, Islam!" Reflecting on "Saul, Saul ..." I said Lord! Me? Me persecute You? I did nothing to You in person ... I remember I turned in a female medical student to the police ... but I did nothing to You. Is it true that He who touched one of Your people touches the apple of Your eye?"

Islam denies the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus Christ because the Quran intended to deprive the Jew of the victory they claimed was their in Jesus' death. The Quran asserts that God put somebody who looked like Him on the cross in the place of Jesus. Now my Muslim friends, God is not in the business of fraud, for if he had wanted to deliver Jesus from the cross, He could have done it miraculously without having to deceive and put Jesus' likeness on someone else. This

Quranic error is too blatant, and proves that the Quran has no divine origin. What is more, the Quran is self-contradicting, for while it claims that the Jews did not really kill Jesus it also affirms very distinctly the reality of Jesus' death in the sura of the family of Imran 3:47/54 - 48/55 as it states:

When God said: "OH JESUS, I SHALL CAUSE YOU TO DIE, AND THEN I SHALL RAISE YOU UP TO ME."

My Muslim friend, my goal is not here to proselytize you, but to raise the ultimate questions, Who is Christ? Was he crucified? And how does this affect you? If the whole history of humanity revolves around Christ, then my entire life and existence should revolve around Him too. Denying the cross of Christ is contradicting history itself. Muhammad himself is claimed in the Quran to have been urged, by God, to refer to the People of the Book (the Jews and the Christians) is he in doubt concerning the Quran?:

"And if thou (Muhammad) art in doubt concerning that which we reveal unto thee, then ask those who read the Scripture (that was) before thee." Sura Yunus 10:95

For the first time in my life, I began asking the question "why?" and challenged everything I took for granted. All postulates were critically examined. This got me into trouble in an authoritarian society. Questions, they say, fly in the face of Allah. Obey. That is All. In the Islamic Brotherhood, our motto was "samaana wa ataana" i.e. "we have heard and obeyed." After years of study, I came to two logical conclusions: The Bible is the inerrant Word of God, and Jesus is the Word of God. I began to see it was possible for Jesus to be God. Intellectually, I accepted all the claims of the Christian faith, but in my heart I still feared being struck dead for calling the Almighty God "My Father." I needed a miracle! The Bible teaches us that no one can say, "Jesus is Lord" except by the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:3). No wonder every Salvation experience is one of a miracle of birth out of death into eternal life!

From the depth of my heart, in the midst of inner conflict, I cried out to Allah, even in the mosque, "Lord, show me the truth! Is it Jesus or Muhammad? Could it be that You are my Father? Show me the truth, and the truth you lead me to I will serve all my life whatever the cost may be!" I burst into tears since I knew the cost could be outrageously too high for a weak, thin person like me. For how could I afford to be cast out of my family and sleep on the streets like a homeless person? And what if my leaders in the Islamic Brotherhood would find out about me? And what if they, in their Islamic righteousness and zeal, rush on to defend Islam and kill me? According to the Islamic religion, an apostate should be given a three day opportunity to recant, and after that the infidel's blood is legitimately shed in the name of Allah! The words of the Prophet Muhammad kept ringing in my ear, "Any person (i.e. Muslim) who has changed his religion, kill him." This tradition has been narrated by AbuBakr, Uthman, Ali, Muadhibn Jabal, and Khalid ibn Walid. Yet I persisted in asking God to guide me.

Guide me, O Thou great Jehovah, pilgrim through this barren land; I am weak, but Thou art mighty.

One night Christ appeared to me in a dream and said with a tender sweet voice, "I love you!" I saw how obstinately I had resisted Him all these years and said to Him in tear, "I love You, too! I know You! You are eternal for ever and ever." I woke up with tears all over my face filled with abundant joy, believing that Christ Himself touched both my mind and my heart, and I yielded. I was filled with great passion for Christ, jumping up and down, singing praises to His name and talking to Him day and night. I would not even sleep without God's inerrant Word, the Bible, next to my chest.

I experienced what a "spoiled child" of God would: God would give me anything I ask for in prayer. But then the Lord wanted me to love Him and worship Him for His own sake, not for what I get from Him. I tried to keep my faith secret and so was baptized secretly in a pastor's house.

Filled with the joy of salvation I could not hide or deny Christ anymore. Therefore, when my childhood friend asked me if Christ was crucified, I answered, "Yes!" and explained why. He prayed with me to receive Christ. He was shaking and perspiring every time he prayed with me. He could see how mighty the name of our Lord Jesus was. My former leaders in the Islamic fanatical group, desiring to know who the spearhead was, threatened to kill him if he would not tell them everything about my evangelism. Sadly, he betrayed me and I was beaten up in front of the mosque where I had formerly preached Islam zealously. In their sight I was a blasphemous infidel who deserved to be killed unless I would recant. They regarded my conversion as the most horrendous form of desecrating Islam and the Quran.

Since my secret conversion was now made public and Muslims plotted to kill me, I had to flee. I was hunted by Muslims from my village in the Delta, to Ismalia until I arrived in Cairo where my Christian friends lived. Yet Christians were not willing to shelter me and I had to go back to the village, seeking refuge in His protective hands. I came back from Cairo and found an angry mob of Muslims filling up our house. My mother was wearing the garment of mourning, dressed in black as is the custom in Egypt. To them by deserting Islam, I was dead!!! Muslim women yelled at me, "Your mother doesn't deserve all this from you. Why cause her all this grief?" Another woman lamented, "Poor mother! Here son left her for the Christian infidels. If I were her, I would kill my son for running after the infidels like a dog." I received a letter from a friend in Jordan who reported that my father was walking down the streets in Jordan weeping bitterly as Muslim laborers there reproached him severely. He stayed sick in bed for a month because of this until he and I talked on the phone.

It is absolutely unforgettable that outraged Muslims broke into our house barbarically. My mother knelt down at the feet of our neighbor "Sayed" begging him to spare my life and kill her instead. In such indescribable agony, my mother disowned and disinherited me before all people in my village. I love my mother more dearly than any person in this world, but no human power, regardless of how gigantic it is, can separate me from the love of Christ. I will always live for Jesus.

My Bible, all my Christian books, and music tapes were confiscated and burnt. I decided to flee from the Delta region to Cairo. Even though the police were tracking me down, the Lord

blinded their eyes and protected me. In Cairo, I was hiding at M.'s, an Egyptian Baptist friend who was comforting me all the time. I broke down when he read,

"So they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name." (Acts 5:41)

I am grateful to God for providing this friend, M., who disciplined me, teaching me to live a victorious life rich in worship and thanksgiving. He gave me a pocket Arabic New Testament and told me frankly that his parents were afraid. Also I was told that if they continued to hide me they would be in jail forever. I had nowhere to go. So, upon the advice of my secret pastor, I went back to the village, hiding the Arabic New Testament in my socks, praying that it would not fall out. I was eventually arrested and released repeatedly. I learned what it means to have God as my only Hiding Place. In prison, my Savior knows I have come to experience true peace. I was not shaken because I saw Christ in prison, not myself. I sang songs of joy in the midst of tears, anticipating the shining Morning Star to come and deliver me. I decided to hide the Bible in a place where the police could not confiscate it -- in my heart by memorizing it. I have since made it a habit to sleep with my Bible by my side. Five years later, I managed to flee Muslims' attempts to kill me and I was shocked to find out that there are some professing Christians in America who attack the Bible for which I was willing to die. God's word has given me promises of faith which I apply as a little child and pray them through in confidence. The gates of Heaven open open as we pray through God's Word. His word speaks life!!!

Once when I went to give my mother a Mother's Day gift, she asked me rhetorically, "Mother's Day gift?" I answered, "Yes" every time she repeated the question. She looked at me with such crushing grief and said, "My son, whom I waited 15 years to have and finally was born is now dead. I disown you till the day of judgment, Ibrahim." I cried but Christ touched my heart and said, "I am your family now! I am your father, brother, mother, sister, friend, and everything to you, Timothy, now." I cannot forget those days when my mother would call the police to arrest me. She even went to a witch to put a curse on me and bring me back to the fold of Islam. The witch said, "Your son is following a path which he will never forsake and he will be victorious all his life as long as he walks in it." These words, from the mouth of a witch, brought my younger brother to know Christ. The testimony of demons about our victorious Lord renders skepticism and unbelief absurd (Please read Romans 8:35-39). You also can be more than a conqueror through Christ, your Victor who loves you! Believe it!

I lost my Bible and all my Christian books were confiscated. All I had was the radio. I went sneakily to get my radio to listen secretly to Voice of Hope, searching for some comfort-songs in the night. (By the way, I speak now publicly over Voice of Hope since I live in a free country, America). Yet my mother caught me and she immediately snatched the radio out of my hand and beat me on the head with her shoes. I was just 20 years old at that time. I prayed for a Bible and the Lord heard me. I went to pick up a Bible package from the post office. The head of the post office, Kamal, slapped me forcefully and punched me in the face. I saw all kinds of terror...I was crying from the intensity of pain. He said to me, "You just go after these Christian infidels, leave Islam and we will wipe you out. We will send you behind the sun!" I felt trapped praying fervently to leave Egypt and practice my faith in Christ. Father of comfort, you never left me. Please remind me of your Son hanging on the cross crying out in the depth of agony," My God,

my God why have you forsaken me?" Lord Jesus, they all forsook you, and yet You found rest in Your Father. I need to depend on the Father as you did".

After 3 years, I decided to move to Cairo which was not any safer. The last time the police had arrested me they said, "According to us, you are an infidel who has committed high treason. Next time we arrest you, it will be capital punishment." To make it worse, the "Christian" landlord told me he could not shelter a fugitive criminal anymore. I was not welcome in my own country anymore. Nevertheless, the Lord intervened, and a Palestinian evangelist, Anis Sharrosh, introduced me to Dr. Paige Patterson. He began to help me apply for a visa to the United States. At first, I was denied the visa, but Dr. Patterson did not give up. Finally, I was granted an entry visa, and I was supernaturally able to leave Egypt. Lord, You never deliver your children out of bondage to bring them back into it...Help me to live somewhere to practice my Christian faith without the police harrassment. Lord, please do whatever it takes so I don't have to live in an environment where people would force me to go into the mosque. You want your children to worship freely even if this means fleeing for their lives like me so that Christ becomes all in all.

If it had not been for Dr. Patterson, I would have been history today. I was scheduled to be executed, and God saw that He had more work for me to do. So, he used Dr. Patterson in supernaturally rescuing my life. God Almighty is a Father of the fatherless (Psalm 68:5), and when my father and mother forsake me, as David declares, the LORD holds me to Himself. Is God the Almighty, Your Heavenly Father, my friend? (Galatians 4:6) God the Almighty and Majestic One delights in you personally (Proverbs 8:31).

Lord, may I never be secure or seek easiness in life at the expense of union with You. Didn't you tell us Lord, "And you will be hated by all on account of My name, but the one who endures to the end, he shall be saved" (Mark 13:13)? Please don't let me rush your salvation, Lord, in the midst of trouble, but please give me patience so I can endure hardships as a soldier of the cross of Christ! Lord, may Your love consume me to such an extent that the doing of your will would be the real bread of my life. In Christ's name, amen!

## **PRAYER, REPENTANCE & SALVATION**

**"What the Lord Spoke to me, Evangelist James Brand, in the Philippines in 1982."**

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God called me as an evangelist in 1962 and I have been walking in that calling ever since. I have witnessed and ministered the gospel in America, Asia, and particularly Taiwan, Hong Kong, China, and the Philippines. This includes pastoring and radio ministry. During all this time the Lord has given me a vision and revealed to me that there is a serious problem worldwide in evangelism regarding the manner of leading the lost to pray.

The Lord spoke to me in 1982 while in Manila seeking Him earnestly regarding why people, during an altar-call, would often try to repeat my words in prayer as tho they were their own and

then they seemed to expect me to lead them in reciting or repeating "personal prayer for salvation." It was then that the Holy Ghost spoke to me so very clearly, "TEACH THESE PEOPLE TO PRAY, NOT TO REPEAT AFTER ANY MAN A FORM OF PRAYER OR SIMPLY RECITE THEIR WORDS!" This came as a great revelation regarding a serious error in the church and most especially in the area of evangelism. Prayer and crying out to God for forgiveness and salvation is to be spontaneous and completely FROM THE HEART, not a matter of a minister or an evangelist putting words in the mouth of the one seeking the Lord for mercy and salvation. This is very, very crucial. One seeking to repent and be saved should not be taught to parrot the words of another, THEY MUST CRY OUT TO GOD FOR THEMSELVES FROM THE HEART, LEST THEIR PRAYING BE A MERE PRETENSE, A RITUAL, A SORT OF CASUAL REPEATING OF "A SINNER'S PRAYER" THAT IS THE FORM AND PRAYER OF ANOTHER AND NOT TRULY THEIR OWN. This is a revelation from the Lord and it is in complete agreement with His Word.

At this point, let us consider carefully what the Holy Bible teaches and illustrates regarding prayer and repentance unto salvation.

We have four prime examples from the Bible that illustrate very clearly how a repentant sinner prayed and was justified in the sight of God. The first is found in Luke 18:9-14. In this parable from our Lord, the Pharisee stood and prayed a kind of casual, self-righteous prayer that did nothing to touch the heart of God. But the publican we read in verse 13, "standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner." In the very next verse our Lord tells us that it is this man who went down to his house justified before God and not the other. The reason? One humbled himself and confessed and prayed FROM THE HEART, while the other did not.

Let us consider next the two thieves on the cross who made their confession before Christ on Calvary. We find in Luke, chapter 23, beginning with verse 39, that one of the thieves railed at Jesus and challenged Him, saying, "If thou be Christ save thyself and us." But immediately the other thief rebuked this railing accusation against our Lord and boldly declared, "Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? For we indeed are justly condemned; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing wrong." Then he turned and said to Jesus, "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise."

Did you notice that in both of these instances it was a completely spontaneous confession: no one was putting words in their mouth. No one TOLD THEM what to say. They sought God from their heart and He heard them in their own words and in their own way. There was no rote or ritual or repeating, only a heartfelt cry unto the Lord for mercy and forgiveness. -- This is what God responds to.

A very clear instruction is found from God in Jeremiah 29:12-14a. In this passage the Lord exhorts those who would seek Him, "Then shall ye call upon Me, and ye shall go and pray unto Me, and I will hearken unto you. And ye shall seek Me, and find Me, WHEN YE SHALL SEARCH FOR ME WITH ALL YOUR HEART. And I will be found of you saith the Lord: and I will turn away your captivity." Please understand that this DOES NOT SAY, "I shall be found

of you if you just repeat this sinner's prayer after the minister or evangelist!" No! He said **WHEN YOU SEEK ME WITH ALL OF YOUR HEART! GOD WANTS TO HEAR OUR OWN HEARTFELT PRAYER AND CONFESSION**, not something someone else puts in our mouth to help us out or make it easier. **THERE MUST BE REAL CONVICTION BEFORE CONVERSION, AND OUR CONFESSION MUST BE WITH REAL HUMILITY AND WITH A SPONTANEOUS AND HEARTFELT PRAYER.**

What does the Bible say about conviction and godly sorrow that brings repentance unto salvation? Paul, in 2 Corinthians 7:10-11, spoke of a "godly sorrow that worketh repentance unto salvation that is not to be repented of." That is, unless there is a godly sorrow and conviction over sin, there is no real repentance leading to forgiveness and salvation. It's that simple. A mere rote repeating of words or ritual will not do it. **ONE MUST SEEK GOD WITH ALL OF THEIR HEART, ONE MUST HAVE GODLY SORROW OVER SIN LEADING TO REPENTANCE, AND MUST CRY OUT TO GOD IN RIGHT EARNEST FROM THE HEART TO RECEIVE SALVATION, OTHERWISE IT'S JUST A RELIGIOUS FORM OR A PRETENSE THAT GOD WILL NOT HONOR.** "The LORD looketh upon the heart." Therefore, your prayer to Him must be from the heart, not words put in your mouth from another.

Let us read through a few more important scriptures that touch on this vital area of prayer and seeking God acceptably:

"We then, as workers together with Christ, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain. (For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I helped thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold now is the day of salvation) [2 Cor. 6:1-2].

"Seek ye the LORD while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near: Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the LORD, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon" [Isaiah 55:6-7].

"The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit" [Psalm 34:18].

"Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving-kindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. **FOR I ACKNOWLEDGE MY TRANSGRESSIONS: AND MY SIN IS EVER BEFORE ME. AGAINST THEE AND THEE ONLY HAVE I SINNED, AND DONE THIS EVIL IN THY SIGHT...**

**CREATE IN ME A CLEAN HEART, O GOD, AND RENEW A RIGHT SPIRIT WITHIN ME.**

**THE SACRIFICES OF GOD ARE A BROKEN SPIRIT: A BROKEN AND A CONTRITE HEART, OF GOD, THOU WILT NOT DESPISE" [Psalm 51:1-4a, 10, 17].**

"Blessed are they that keep His testimonies, and THAT SEEK HIM WITH THE WHOLE HEART" [Psalm 119:2].

Many other scriptures could be given because the Word of God is full of this truth: WE MUST SEEK THE LORD FOR OURSELF AND FROM THE HEART, NOTHING LESS WILL DO; NOTHING LESS WILL HONOR GOD AND BRING THE PEACE OF GOD AND THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS.

In our third illustration from the Bible we find that David was confronted with his sin by the Prophet Nathan, not only publically but even in the King's own court. In 2 Samuel 12:13, we see that David openly acknowledged his sin and repented before the Lord and the people. No one TOLD him what to say; it is clear he prayed and sought the Lord in his own words and with a humble and broken heart. The prayer quoted above from Psalm 51 is well known throughout the world as David's prayer of repentance. It is a beautiful prayer and a model prayer of the repentant heart, but God does not want us simply reading or reciting this prayer either as tho it were our own confession and prayer before the Lord. Again I must emphasize THE LORD WANTS EACH PERSON TO CONFESS AND PRAY BEFORE HIM IN THEIR OWN WORDS AND FROM THEIR OWN HEART WITHOUT TRYING TO TAKE SOMEONE ELSE'S WORDS OR PRAYER AS THEIR OWN. This is absolutely essential and crucial. One of the main reasons so many of our churches are full of unconverted, unsanctified, and uncommitted "Christians" is that many of these people may have recited "a sinner's prayer" once or twice or even many, many times over and over again, BUT THEY HAVE NOT PRAYED THRU FROM THE HEART AND IN THEIR OWN WORDS THAT THEY MIGHT TRULY REPENT AND TRULY BE SAVED. What could be more tragic than that?

Am I exaggerating? No sir, I am not exaggerating at all. There's an old proverb and I think we've all heard it: "You can lead a horse to water but you can't make him drink." Well, let me say "You can lead a sinner to the Living Waters, but you're way out of line if you dunk his head in the river and try to make him drink!" As ministers and evangelists we can preach the gospel and plead with the lost and allow the Holy Ghost to convict of sin and righteousness and of coming judgment, BUT WE CAN ONLY LEAD THEM TO THE FOOT OF CALVARY. THEY MUST PLEAD AND SEEK AND PRAY AND REPENT BEFORE GOD IN THEIR OWN WORDS AND FROM THEIR OWN HEART...IT IS WRONG, WRONG, WRONG FOR US TO TRY TO PUT THE WORDS IN THEIR MOUTH AND MAKE IT ALMOST A ROTE PARROTING OF PRAYER RATHER THAN URGE AND EXHORT THEM TO SEEK GOD OF THEIR OWN UNTIL THEY BREAKTHROUGH INTO A PLACE OF MERCY, GRACE, AND PEACE. LET PEOPLE GET DOWN ON THEIR FACE BEFORE GOD AND STAY THERE UNTIL THEY'VE STRUGGLED THROUGH WITH SIN AND REPENTANCE AND MAKING IT RIGHT WITH CHRIST AS THEIR PERSONAL SAVIOR AND LORD. ANY THING LESS THAN THIS AND PEOPLE GO AWAY EMPTY AND UNCHANGED. People must prove they mean business with GOD before He'll do business with them. No more religious games or any of this casual, pretense of prayer. Let's get real before God and do it the way the Bible clearly teaches by precept and example.

Finally, our last illustration from scripture is that of the Prodigal who returned to the Father when he came to the end of himself and saw his true spiritual condition. At this realization he

makes a confession and the ACTS UPON that confession. In Luke 15, verses 18 & 19 we read: "I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and I am no more worthy to be called thy son; make me as one of thy hired servants." -- There was the confession. In the very next verse we read, "AND HE AROSE, AND CAME TO HIS FATHER..." --There was the act of repentance and returning to SERVE God our Heavenly Father. You search the Bible from Genesis to Revelation: THERE IS NOT ONE SINGLE INSTANCE OF A SINNER REPEATING A PRAYER LED WORD-BY-WORD BY ANOTHER. NOT ONE. IN EVERY INSTANCE YOU WILL FIND SPONTANEOUS, INDIVIDUAL, HEARTFELT PRAYER THAT SEEKS OUT AND SEARCHES OUT GOD'S MERCY AND FORGIVENESS. Think about that. And if you need to : change your ways.

Please pray about what I have shared with you here. I know the Lord has spoken to me about this problem. I pray that He speaks to you by His Spirit and thru His Word. God bless you.

"But what saith it? the word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach;

That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

For WITH THE HEART man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" [Romans 10:8-10].

## LET'S GET OUR MESSAGE STRAIGHT

(1) The proclamation of the gospel of the Kingdom was the only gospel preached by Jesus (Mk. 1:14-15), John the Baptist (Lk. 16:16), commissioned to the twelve (Lk. 9:1-6; Mk. 6:7-130), then to the seventy sent out by Christ (Lk. 10:1-12,16), Peter (Acts 2; 2 Pet. 1:10-11), Philip (Acts 8:5-8, 12), the apostle Paul (Acts 14:19-22; 19:8-10; 20:20-27; 28:23-31), James (Jas. 2:5), John (Rev. 1:9; Jn. 3) and all Christians throughout the end of the age (Mt. 24:14). Within that message is the proclamation of Jesus as Lord and King and his redemptive work (Rom. 10:9-10). (2) And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations (Luke 24:47). (3) Then they that gladly received his word were baptized... And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine... (Acts 2:41-42). (4) Jesus said, "Follow Me!" (Luke 9:23).

If one were to suggest that the time would come when a group of evangelical Christians would be arguing for a salvation without repentance, without a change of behavior or lifestyle, without a real avowal of the lordship and authority of Christ, without perseverance, without discipleship, and a salvation which does not necessarily result in obedience and works, and with a regeneration which does not necessarily change one's life, most believers of several decades ago would have felt such would be an absolute impossibility. But believe it or not, the hour has come. (Richard P. Belcher).

The terrible thing is that so many preachers today, under the pretence of magnifying the grace of God, have represented Christ as the Minister of *sin*; as One who has through His atoning sacrifice, procured an indulgence for men to continue gratifying their fleshly and worldly lust.

Provided a man professes to believe in the virgin birth and vicarious death of Christ... Those preachers who tell sinners they may be saved *without* forsaking their idols, *without* repenting, without-surrendering to the Lordship of Christ are as erroneous and dangerous as others who insist that salvation is by works and that Heaven must be earned by our own efforts (Arthur Pink). Any professed faith in Christ as personal Saviour that does not bring the life under plenary obedience to Christ as Lord is inadequate and must betray its victim at the last (John MacArthur).

*Something to think about:* A.W. Tozer states, *Now, it seems odd that none of these teachers ever noticed that the only true object of saving faith is none other than Christ Himself; not the "saviourhood" of Christ nor the "lordship" of Christ, but Christ Himself. God does not offer salvation to the one who will believe on one of the offices of Christ, nor is an office of Christ ever presented as an object of faith. Neither are we exhorted to believe on the atonement, nor on the cross, nor on the priesthood of the Saviour. All of these are embodied in the person of Christ, but they are never separated nor is one ever isolated from the rest. Much less are we permitted to accept one of Christ's offices and reject another. The notion that we are so permitted is a modern day heresy, I repeat, and like every heresy it has had evil consequences among Christians.*

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