



# Foundation of Faith

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THE MOST MONUMENTAL  
DRAMA IN WORLD HISTORY

SINCE HE AROSE . . . .

HOW MERCIFUL IS GOD!

CHRIST IS RISEN!

WHAT THEN SHALL I DO WITH JESUS?

**FROM DEATH TO LIFE**

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## *Editorial*

*Dear Reader,*

*We are happy the cold days are behind us and nature has newly awakened from its winter sleep. The crocuses and tulips have shown their magnificent colors and ushered in the spring.*

*It is precisely as the wise Solomon experienced it: "For lo, the winter is past . . . the flowers appear on the earth; the time of singing has come, and the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land" (Song of Solomon 2:11-12).*

*Yes, nature has awakened, and new life has appeared. A single grain of wheat buried under the earth and seemingly dead, begins to break through the dark soil, forming delicate little leaves that grow and bring rich fruit. From a single grain comes much fruit: 30-, 60-, and 100-fold every year.*

*Yes, to the seeking Greeks who came to Philip and pleaded, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus," our Lord answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain" (John 12:24).*

*As creation awakens anew every year, so even our Creator, the Son of God, gave His life once and for all to be martyred and crucified. He was also buried like the grain of wheat under the earth, being laid in the tomb. But how much more gloriously and mightily did He break the tomb and seal and rise up victoriously and triumphantly! Our Lord Jesus Christ abolished death and brought life and immortality to light (see 2 Timothy 1:10)!*

*Today we proclaim this to you again with this edition of the Foundation of Faith.*

*H. D. Nimz*





FROM DEATH TO LIFE

# I Would like to Die on Good Friday

*There are many legends, and many splendid historical facts, surrounding the great German-Italian-English composer George Frideric Handel (1685-1759). The details of his life, and devotion to God, however, are inspiring on many levels.*

**M**y God, my God, why have You forsaken Me?" The stooped man, who habitually strolled through London at night, uttered this cry in a moment of discouragement at the sight of a church towering out of the darkness. He was George Frideric Handel, who had composed music for the English aristocracy and the continent and had been showered with accolades by royal heads for thirty years.

But an intermittent illness—a mysterious paralysis—the need to declare bankruptcy, and the death of his patron, Queen Caroline, had plunged him into despondency. An icy winter also held England in its grip.

When Handel returned to his lonely apartment that night in 1741, he saw a sealed parcel on his writing desk. It contained the requested "Spiritual Oratorio" from the poet and librettist, Charles Jennens, after Handel had already worked out large portions of the text, directly from the Holy Scriptures. Jennens' accompanying letter informed Handel that it was ready to set to music. At first, the master casually leafed through the text, but then it seized

his attention and would not let him go. These words began to grip him: "He was despised and rejected . . . He trusted in God . . . I know that my Redeemer lives . . ." and "Hallelujah!"

Handel sensed the usual fire igniting within, and celestial sounds soon reverberated within him. For twenty-four days, he worked as if in a daze, almost without rest and food. Then he fell, exhausted, onto his bed and slept like a dead man for seventeen hours. On his desk lay the score to "Messiah."

Because the spiritual work had so encouraged and inspired its creator, a miracle from God, legend has it that Handel donated all the proceeds to the poor or needy. The premiere in Dublin in 1742 was a huge success, and after this triumph, London would flock to hear the work a year later. Following the example of the King, all the listeners arose during the "Hallelujah Chorus" and reverently remained standing until the end.

On the evening of April 6, 1759, the already-blind master attended a performance of his "Messiah," which, until then, had taken place once a year. When "The Trumpet Shall Sound" began, he was afflicted by a weakness. Recognizing that his death was not far off, the seventy-four-year-old said, "I would like to die on Good Friday!" On Good Friday weekend, 1759, George Frideric Handel passed away.

Adapted from J. von Luer

# Jesus *Lives!*

One Easter Sunday, the evangelist Torrey was preaching to a huge crowd in the streets of London.

A man from the audience interrupted his fervent sermon with the question, “How do you know Jesus really arose from the dead?”

While Torrey was formulating an answer, a stranger stepped out of the crowd and responded, loudly enough for all to hear, “I am a machinist, and my job involves monitoring steam pressure. How do I know how much pressure the steam is exerting? I can’t see the steam itself,

but I can see a small indicator needle—it tells me how great the pressure is. Well, I was an alcoholic, hopelessly addicted, and the power of Christ proved great enough to pull me up out of the gutter and change my life completely. That’s my indicator. My personal experience shows me that Christ is risen from the dead.”

The machinist’s simple testimony was much more effective than any intellectual argument could have been, no matter how eloquent. The risen Savior personally reveals Himself to those who believe in Him, and everyone looking to Him for salvation will have the same experience.

## What Then Shall I Do with Jesus?

Pilate said to them, “What then shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?” They all said to him, “Let Him be crucified!” (Matthew 27:22).

At Easter, we celebrate the greatest event in Christian history, an event the prophets wrote about and Christ fulfilled. It is the day on which God’s Son, the Son of Man, victoriously arose from the dead. What a glorious outcome during a most appalling week, when His enemies crucified Him and let Him die a humiliating death.

How great was the Lord Jesus’ burden the night He celebrated the Passover with His disciples! He was fully aware Judas had agreed to betray Him for thirty pieces of silver.

So many people also betray their Lord. Even though Jesus paid such a high price for the salvation of their souls, they sell their souls for a perishable asset, for excessive pride, or for fleeting lusts of the world.

The night in the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus had victory in the grievous battle against the powers of darkness. We cannot even fathom the anguish He suffered there. But He won the victory and said, “Not my will, but Yours, be done.”

Shortly after, the Son of God was in the hands of His enemies. And while they nailed Him to the cross and provoked Him through awful torture, He prayed, “Father,

forgive them.” Oh, we have such a wonderful Savior! He had all the reason to despise these sinful people, but He prayed for them instead.

From that point forward, the people no longer had power over Him. He paid the incredibly high price. When He hung His head and died, the earth quaked and the veil of the temple, which could only be handled by holy hands, was torn in two from top to bottom. Yes, the old passed away, and a new era began. The King of all Kings fulfilled the promise of salvation, which was given to the people.

They laid Him in a grave, but it could not hold Him, even though the guards held watch. The body of Jesus was crucified and put to death, but His enemies could not win this battle. He broke the shackles of death and the grave and arose victoriously.

He lives; yes, He lives today! He says to us, “Because I live, you will live also” (John 14:19). Dear reader, have you accepted His sacrifice, or are you still adding more thorns to the crown His enemies placed on His head? Are you still finding fault in Jesus and crucifying Him by living in sin, even though He gave His life for you, wanting to save even you from sin? What will you do with Jesus?

G. M. Estell



FROM DEATH TO LIFE

# *The Most Monumental Drama in World History*

Jesus makes His way down the agonizing pathway to His own execution, along with two convicted criminals. “And a great multitude of the people followed Him” (Luke 23:27). Rough soldiers, with their commander, lead Jesus tethered to a rope, like an animal going to slaughter. Suddenly, the procession comes to a halt. What is the cause for this? The people in the crowd collide with one another. Oh! The man carrying a cross has collapsed! Who is it? Jesus of Nazareth, nearly unconscious, is sprawled on the ground under the weight of the cruel cross. How He quivers and quakes beneath the heavy load! And now vicious soldiers kick and strike Him with brute force, wrenching Him to His feet once more. Jesus tries again and again to lift Himself, but He crumples once more. All prodding and beating is in vain, for His strength has completely abandoned Him.

Consider how weary, weak, and exhausted Jesus had to have been after His battle in Gethsemane. After a sleepless night, the High Council, while under examination of the governor, performs a grueling, demoralizing interrogation. After Jesus endures the piercing blows of a whip, tearing bloody gouges into his shoulders and back (see Psalm 129:3), it becomes clear to us He is in no

position to carry that heavy wooden cross. The cross is then placed on the shoulders of a man named Simon of Cyrene.

Eventually, they arrive at a small hill called Golgotha, which is translated as “place of a skull.” Here the most incredible and triumphant event in world history would take place. The executioners hand out a numbing drink to the condemned, a mixture of wine and myrrh, like morphine, to dull the first torturous agonies of the men about to be crucified. We read that after having tasted the drink, Jesus refused it. He was ready to endure His bitter death in full consciousness. In our place, He was willing to suffer the most hellish torment and to drink every last drop of the bitter cup in complete obedience.

A gripping drama unfolds before our eyes. The sensational hour has arrived. The redeeming sacrifice heralded for centuries is about to be made for a lost world. Jesus is about to carry out His Father’s most difficult commission: to give His life as an atoning sacrifice and to fulfill His actual mission on earth. Rough, hostile soldiers callously attack the King of Glory like hyenas and tear the clothes off his body. Then they heave Him onto the beam, as if they were dealing with the scum of the earth.

The most dreadful scene of the Passion story is now upon us. All hell breaks loose and gruesome brutality enters the stage. These men, like tigers in human form, stretch Jesus onto the cross. Crossing his feet, they drive strong nails with their hammers into His hands and feet, through the spots where many sensitive veins and nerves intersect. Can you hear the dull blows of the hammer thudding on Golgotha?

Have these blows awakened and softened your heart? See how that innocent blood of the Lamb of God sprays and flows. Have His warm drops of blood flowed onto your heart yet? Shouldn't heaven be appalled by this bloody drama? The daughters of Zion weep. Yet Jesus endures patiently and quietly on the beam, as a sheep that is silent before his shearer. He could have opened His mouth and spoken of the curse and judgment. But He doesn't. Nor does He harbor thoughts of vengeance. He can do nothing other than love. He knows it's the only way to complete the plan of salvation.

Then Jesus' cross is erected so He is hanging only about a meter above the ground. The slightest movement causes Him unbearable pain.

The cross consisted of a long beam and a cross beam. In the middle of the vertical long beam, a horizontal woodblock protruded on which the executed rested his weight. It would be impossible for his pierced hands alone to bear the weight of his entire body. In this manner, the body weight would be somewhat distributed.

The most torturous and dreaded of all death penalties was crucifixion. It was a punishment the Romans only administered to slaves, robbers, dangerous criminals, and insurgents. If a Roman citizen deserved the death penalty he would be decapitated, but never put to death by this dishonorable means of execution. Such a disgraceful, horrible, and drawn-out method of torture, invented by the gruesome ingenuity of man was abhorrent to the Jewish people, and yet was chosen for Jesus. The Romans were then forced to crucify the Messiah. It is said even the roughest Roman onlookers trembled at the unspeakable agonies a crucified person had to endure. Cicero describes it as "a most cruel and disgusting punishment." The Roman philosopher Seneca dramatically and precisely describes crucifixion with the agonizing words: "wasting away in pain, dying limb by limb, or letting out his life drop by drop."

Due to the forced and unnatural posture of the body, each limb was being pulled out of socket, so that muscles and nerves that hung freely were wrenched in

indescribable torture. After an hour or two, the blood in the veins became stagnant. Due to lack of circulation, terrible muscle cramping in the calves set in, accompanied by spasms from constricted limbs and often catalepsy. Congestion of blood around the heart would lead to cardiac arrest. Because of the unnatural congestion of blood and the swelling of the main arteries leading to the head, heart problems, anxiety, a burning fever, and a terrible headache would develop. At this point, an incredible thirst would set in as a dreadful fever permeated the body. This would explain the reason a numbing morphine-like drink was offered before the crucifixion.

Generally, a crucified person did not suffer for only a few hours. The heartier ones could last for 24 to 36 hours on the cross before perishing. In the last stages of life, most became delirious, begging and screaming until becoming enraged. In this grotesque condition with all limbs convulsing, a laborious wheezing would set in, and the tortured victim would eventually succumb to heart failure.

Not only did Jesus suffer all this, but He also died out of love for you and me. His dying was a sacred death, dying in the will of the Father, in the peace of God.

Dear reader, have your sins convicted you in light of this awful spectacle? Listen to the suffering and dying Love whispering, "But you have burdened Me with your sins, you have wearied Me with your iniquities." "But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities" (Isaiah 53:5). Do you not realize how hideous sin is and how horrifically it raged at the cross? Can you not see how unfathomably deep this love is? Why don't you come right now, weeping at the foot of the cross? Oh, that you would just repent and realize your transgressions! The way to the heavenly Father is through Jesus Christ. The Righteous One wants to make you righteous because He carried your sins. The blood of the slain Lamb longs to reveal the way to the Most Holy. It wishes to clothe you with garments of salvation, to destroy all your self-made pious rags. Oh, that you could truthfully testify of your own joy of salvation:

Christ's blood and righteousness alone  
Can cleanse my garments and atone;  
So on that day of judgment great,  
I'll enter in through heaven's gate.

H. Begemann

# Look to the Cross

**C**lose to the German-French border is a small village church. A master artist from the Middle Ages created an entryway with a crucifixion scene. The centerpiece is the cross. Around the cross are the figures we know from biblical history. The gaze of these figures is toward the cross.

Then came the world war. Shrapnel destroyed the masterpiece and tore the cross with the crucified One out of the group of people. What remains is a terrible scene. All the people are standing there as before, staring at the spot where the cross stood. But there is nothing left. The people are staring at a void. Similarly today, many people stare at a void in their lives.

## **Our death would be a plunge into the deep.**

Wilhelm von Kügelgen (1802-1867) tells in his book “An Old Man’s Reminiscences of His Youth” of the death of his father at the hands of a murderer. When his mother received the terrible news, she was in a daze for some time. But then she summed up her innermost feeling with the words, “I do not carry the cross—the cross carries me.”

We have lost this view of the cross. We are prepared to speak in unison with those of more than two thousand years ago, “Come down, that we may see and believe!” We want to see Him as He descends from the cross. But what would the picture of Good Friday look like then? Two men who are bound for hell, two crosses laden with sin and curse. And the cross in the middle? That cross would be empty.

Had He come down from the cross, there would be no forgiveness, no return home to the land of glory, no light in the window of the Father’s house that shines upon us like a friendly star in the dark night, no hand reaching for us when the world passes from us in death. Then our death would be a plunge into the deep.

## **What would our lives be?**

We would be dragging around chains that we hated more each day. We would need to awaken sullen in the morning to be hounded throughout the day in cruel bondage.

No attempt could possibly allow us to escape this cruel prison. We would cry tears that nobody would dry and that would burn like fire. Sighs heard by no one would be wrung from us, only to bounce off the ceiling of our chamber and lie like lead weights on our soul. Dull eyes, a futile existence, hopeless dying; that would be our life if He had come down from the cross.

But He did not come down. He thrust His hand so deeply into the misery of humanity that He couldn’t pull it out without bringing the lost ones who believe on Him back home.

## **The Two next to Jesus**

Two were hanging next to Him on their crosses. Both were murderers, both had reviled Him. Then one side became silent. God started working on a desperate heart.

The man on the right looked and listened. He didn’t understand everything, he only anticipated it. But he was overcome by the impending death of this Holy One who was bleeding to death out of love. It washed over him like a ray of hope. He was already sinking in the sea of sin and ruin. But with one last leap, he saved himself, and with a grasp of faith he reached for this Savior: “Jesus, do not forget me!” He received a clear response: “Today you will be with Me in Paradise.”

And the man on the left? Christ couldn’t help him. There was no penance, no seeking his Savior’s hand. He drifted into ruin with a bold, acidic mouth and a hard heart.

## **The Separating Rift**

It was the same Good Friday when they died. It was the same soldier who broke their legs with his club. They were both buried in the same place. But when they awoke, one went through the gates of paradise, and the other went to the place of eternal torment.

All three crosses speak to us today. They call out to us to make a personal decision, to either accept the gift of salvation, or to accept eternal loss. A line bisects humanity’s closest bonds. On which side are you?

Emil Weber



# The Death Cry of Our Savior

*“And when Jesus had cried out with a loud voice, He said, ‘Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit.’ Having said this, He breathed His last.” (Luke 23:46)*

This was the last call of our suffering Redeemer. Immediately afterwards, He bowed His head and died. This call followed shortly after He cried, “It is finished!” He didn’t want to be released from His suffering until He had completely paid the price for what we owed. He wanted to have done everything to purchase our salvation.

We read that Jesus made two loud statements on the cross. One, “My God, why have You forsaken me?” and then His last death cry. One of the old church fathers remarked, “Christ does not lose His voice when death approaches. As the conqueror of death, He summons death in a loud voice, since death would not have dared to approach its conqueror.”

Jesus’ last call clearly testifies that He died as the Son of God. From the first to the last word, He clearly states where He came from and where He was going. Jesus’ first statement in the Bible is “Did you not know that I must be about My Father’s business?” (Luke 2:49). Yes, even God, the Father, testified from heaven, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (Matthew 3:17).

Jesus Himself freely and openly confessed this truth. Because He professed to be the Son of God, the Jews repeatedly wanted to stone Him (cf John 5:18; 10:33). As He hung on the cross, the Jews mocked Him and shouted the same words Satan once used: “If you are the Son of God” (Matthew 27:40). And now the scoffers and everyone else had to see and hear how Jesus also died as the Son of God.

The Father in Heaven responded to the death call of His beloved Son with an earthquake, so even the Roman centurion and those who were with him were convinced of the deity of Christ: “Truly this was the Son of God!”

(Matthew 27:54).

Just as Jesus had cried out at the beginning of His suffering, He also cried out now, “Father.” In Gethsemane, He had prayed, “O My Father, if it is possible” (Matthew 26:39). When cruel hands nailed Him to the cross, He said, “Father, forgive them” (Luke 23:34). Even at the end of His suffering, He felt the closeness of His heavenly Father.

This call of Jesus also testifies to the fact that He died as a mediator between God and men. That’s why He had to be fully God and fully human. As our Mediator and Savior, He gave “His soul [as] an offering for sin” (Isaiah 53:10) and gave “His life a ransom for many” (Matthew 20:28). The great Atonement for the sins of the world was now willingly offered, given to the Father and accepted by God.

Although He died on the cursed cross, in between two evildoers, despised and ridiculed by the world, He died as the righteous, holy Son of God. He died with the name of the Father on His lips. When God turned His face from Him for our sin, Jesus called out, “My God.” But now, when the guilt of sin had been paid, He cried out again, “Father.” He died as a beloved child surrendering to His Father. When our hour of death comes, He has given us the glorious privilege of dying just as fearlessly.

Whoever wishes to place his soul into the hands of God when death approaches must already have entered into a relationship with God. For this reason, Jesus came into a fallen world estranged from God to unveil a loving Father, whose heart beats for the sinner and desires none to be lost. Through Jesus Christ and through Him alone, it is possible to become a child of God and call God your Father. “But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name” (John 1:12).

Jacob Greiner

# Christ is Risen!

**E**aster morning slowly dawned as the darkness of night dissipated. Darkness had descended upon Golgotha as the Prince of Life hung His head, died, and was laid to rest in the tomb. Darkness rested upon His followers even on that first Easter morning. Then, very early that same morning, the women went to the tomb of the Lord. They were looking for the One they loved, the One Who had so drastically been taken from their midst by a shameful death. They were looking for Him in the grave. They sought Jesus, the Way, the Truth, and the Life, in the grave. Among the dead, they were looking for the One Who had raised the dead.

What a victory it was for the powers of hell, sin, darkness, and death that Jesus was laid to rest in a tomb! Were righteousness, truth, love, and life in this tomb as well? If Jesus remained in the tomb, what would this world be, other than a gigantic tomb itself, devoid of light and hope? Then the women would have had reason to say, "Who will roll away the stone from the . . . tomb for us?" In the deep darkness of their Easter night, they continued onwards, even after the bright Easter sun had already risen from behind the Mount of Olives. Morning had come.

Easter morning had arrived, and they did not know it. The light only dawned on them slowly, allowing them to see the great event which had taken place earlier that morning. The stone was rolled away; the tomb was open; the grave was empty. Jesus was not in the tomb. He was not there. He had risen! The wonderful greeting of the angels announced it. Suddenly, there was a blinding light that shone into their midnight darkness. He is risen! The power of the One Who had truly died broke the shackles of death and the chains of the grave. Life lives! Truth is

victorious! Love triumphs over deadly hatred! Death is swallowed up by victory! Praise God, Who has given us the victory through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

The sacrifice of Good Friday is truly a sacrifice for our sins. We are justified. "Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us" (Romans 8:34). Oh, blessed Easter morning! A new day has dawned for our old world. Jesus lives! He is risen! "Tell His disciples" and all people.

In Mark 16:8, we read that the first witnesses of the resurrection "said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid." The same can be said today concerning many weak, nominal Christians who say nothing to anyone about the power of Easter, about the hope of Easter. Let's not neglect to fulfill our duty, which is to "proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light" (1 Peter 2:9).

Let us joyfully witness and proclaim, "Christ has risen!" Who dried the tears of Mary Magdalene as she stood weeping at the grave? Who turned her sorrow into joy? It was Christ, the Risen One. Who took the load of guilt from Simon Peter's heart and reinstated him as apostle after he had lost his claim by denying his Lord? It was Christ, the Risen One. Who explained the Scriptures to the disciples on their way to Emmaus, who could not understand why Christ needed to be crucified? Who set their hearts aflame? Who revealed Himself to them as He broke bread? It was Christ, the Risen One. Who spoke peace to the disciples and gave them new hope when out of fear they were secretly assembled behind closed doors? Who transformed them from shy, hesitant lambs into brave lions that could no longer be intimidated by their enemies? It was Christ, the Risen One. Who transformed

Saul, “still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord,” into Paul? Who made him willing to be a chosen vessel to bear the name of Christ before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel? It was Christ, the Risen One.

You martyrs, from Stephen on, what has allowed you to joyfully bear witness till death? They died by the sword, burning at the stake, and being torn by wild animals. Was it a dead Jesus, forgotten and decayed? No, it was Christ, the Risen One. People from all over the world who bow before the cross, confess their sins, and are baptized in the name of the Crucified One, are witnesses that Christ is risen.

The church of God rests on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, of whom Jesus Christ, the crucified and Risen One, is the chief cornerstone. The church has survived history through many hundreds of years despite being hated, despised, and often persecuted with attempts to obliterate it. Yet the church is alive and has remained alive through “honor and dishonor, by evil report and good report; as deceivers, and yet true; as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold we live; as chastened and yet not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things” (2 Corinthians 6:8-10) because Christ is risen. He is the First and the Last, and behold, He lives! He makes all things new. He must reign until all His enemies have been defeated, until every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. Christ is risen, indeed!

### *The Greeting of the Resurrected One*

*Comforting words from the mouth of the Savior,  
Blessing and peace in the twilight of day;  
To the disciples, the Lord grants His favors,  
He grants them peace and ends their dismay,  
Peace from above that will not fade away.*

*Blessings and peace! How we all love to hear this,  
Meant for our friends and the loved ones we meet.  
Those who are traveling far, what do they wish  
For those back at home, but blessing and peace!  
Yet Christ brings that peace that never will cease.*

*Peace for the soul, that is really what matters;  
A mortal's blessing would not be enough.  
How could that comfort these souls, tense and shattered?  
Here is a message from heaven above,  
God's mighty blessing, a blessing of love!*

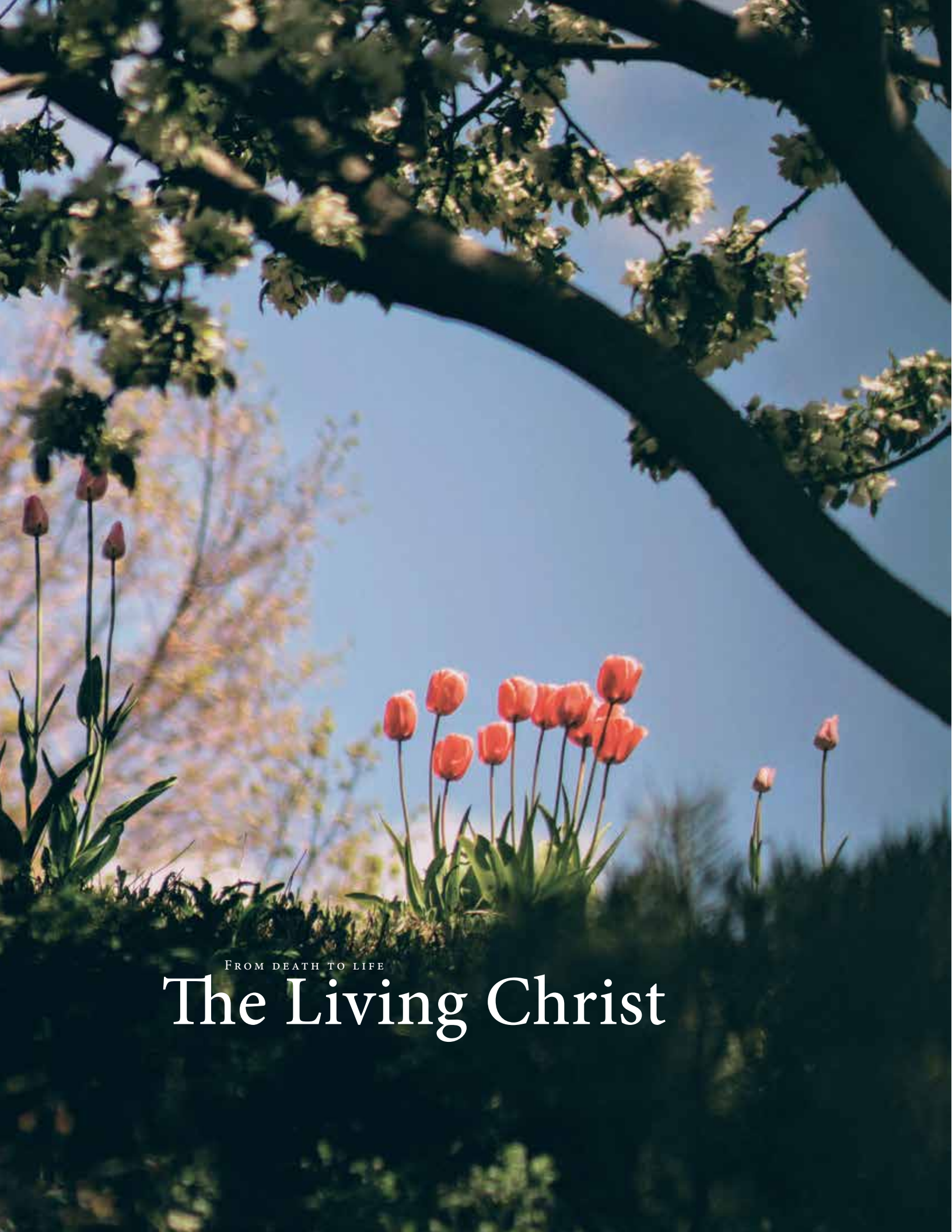
*Blessings and peace from the wounds of the Savior  
Freed the disciples from doom and despair.  
You can find peace and rest from your labor,  
Freedom from sin and the guilt that you bear,  
If you ask Jesus and seek Him in prayer.*

*Blessing and peace from the grave which is empty;  
Christ gained the vict'ry o'er sin, shame and death,  
Eternal life with abundance and plenty,  
Hope for the future for all that have breath;  
We too shall rise since our Lord conquered death.*

*Greetings of peace are for all who are weary;  
Jesus will comfort the hearts in dismay.  
He hears the sighs of the sad and the dreary;  
He still hears prayer and comforts today,  
Strengthens and guides as we go on our way.*

*Blessings and peace, let us prosper this message;  
There is still hope for those living in sin.  
An urgent appeal to souls still in bondage,  
Jesus can save you and give peace within;  
Come to the Savior and be born again.*

*Blessing and peace from the Lord who is risen,  
Hope that's secure and transcends this poor life.  
Let us believe and take part in His mission;  
Blessing and peace despite struggle and strife,  
Those who believe, shall have eternal life.*



FROM DEATH TO LIFE

# The Living Christ



**T**he disciples' salvation depended on the fate of their Lord Jesus. They had pinned all of their hopes on Him, so when He died on the cross, they thought it was all over. By all appearances, Christ's three years of teaching had ended as a major failure, with His enemies carrying the day. No longer able to live in fellowship with Him, the disciples seemed left with no option but to return to their former occupations, discouraged and broken-hearted.

They could not preach the message of a dead Christ. Who would believe in such a Savior? Who would accept a messiah who had professed to help others but had not been able to help himself? Could people be expected to believe that such a savior truly had the power to save? What could he do for others? Nobody would trust in a dead messiah.

However, the resurrection changed all of this. It gave them a living Christ. This glorious event confirmed the truth of everything He had said and taught. It awakened a living hope in all the disciples, as Peter himself testified, and it gave them their beloved Lord back. Far from being weakened by death and the grave, He returned immortal and powerful, as King of Kings. Now, they could preach His name without shame. Now, a living Christ worked with and through them, a Christ Who had been raised to the right hand of the living God and Who had the power to save and protect from sin.

The great difference between Christ and the rest of humanity became apparent with His resurrection. When a teacher dies, his students are left with only his teachings to remember him by. The Lord's disciples, however, were in a very different position: Their Teacher returned to them. They still had His teachings, and Him as well.

Abraham, Moses, David, the prophets, and John the Baptist had died and remained in the grave. That's what they expected of Jesus too, so they went to the grave. However, when they arrived, the angel asked them, "Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen!" (Luke 24:5-6). This Jesus wants to be with us in our daily lives, for we serve a living Christ.

We read the disciples did not know the Scripture that Jesus would rise from the dead. They would have been familiar with the prophecy itself, and Jesus had personally told them the same thing, but still they had not truly understood.

Can the same be said of us and the well-known story of the resurrection of Jesus? Are the historical facts related in the Bible all we know about it? Or have we comprehended and experienced its significance in our own hearts? Is Jesus alive for us and within us? Does He reveal Himself to us? Do we know Him? Do we walk with Him? Has He become our inheritance, or are we content with only His teachings?

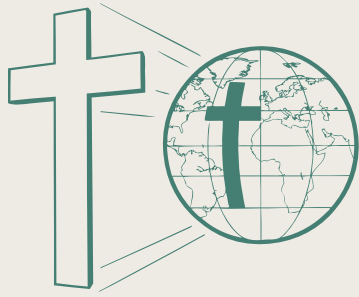
No matter how fiercely we defend the written Word, no matter how precisely we understand it, if the love of Jesus is not our driving force, we can't be victorious. Only in communion with Jesus do we find the satisfying riches of lasting peace and eternal life. There is no life outside of Jesus. The living Christ wants to have living fellowship with us. Christ is the core of Christianity—the only source of true life and sustenance. Doctrine, rules, and regulations only serve their purpose if they help to bring us into closer communion with Him. This is essential for us to be real Christians.

After the two disciples had met the risen Lord on the way to Emmaus on that first Easter Sunday, they joyfully returned to Jerusalem to share the good news with the others. The distance between Jerusalem and Emmaus is approximately twelve kilometers (7.5 mi). Although the disciples were tired from the journey, we read, "So they rose up that very hour and returned to Jerusalem" (Luke 24:33). They had seen Jesus again! They had to let the other disciples know.

Have we recognized Jesus in all His glory, and does that drive us to share the message with others? The revelation of the risen Lord motivated those two disciples to do so, and the revelation of Christ in our hearts will inspire us to do the Lord's work too.

The first day of that week marked the beginning of a new experience, a new era. Before that day, the disciples knew Jesus only in the flesh, and so their hopes had been dashed when He died. Now, they came to know Him in spirit as well. Death had lost its power, and they were reunited with a living Christ. The resurrection of Jesus transformed their sorrow to joy, their weakness to strength, and their defeat to victory. "The Lord is truly risen!" was now their triumphant cry. From this time on, Christianity has had the power to drive the kingdom of Satan out of people's hearts, supplanting it with the kingdom of God.

You, too, can have the same experience. Sadness can be turned to joy, death to life, and defeat to victory if Jesus becomes the living Truth in your life.



# Radio Program Message of Salvation

Friedrich Krebs, Kitchener (ON)

## Since He Arose . . . .

**T**he resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ is and remains a definite fact. The writers of the Bible often referred to it in their writings. Paul wanted to remind his readers that a new and very significant time had come with the resurrection of Jesus. Therefore he used the words, “and declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead” (Romans 1:4).

Now the omnipotence of God had been visibly confirmed before all the world.

Now the crucified Christ stood as the visible victor in a radiant life.

Now the devil was disempowered, and the triumph of hell was broken forever.

The prophetic word from Isaiah 25:8, “He will swallow up death forever” was fulfilled. In relation, Paul wrote with overwhelming joy, “Death is swallowed up in victory. O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?” (1 Corinthians 15:54-55).

Now all fear, trembling, and dread of death could cease.

Now there was a way to eternal light and eternal life.

Now there was a firm foundation for faith, confidence, and hope. Paul wrote to the Corinthians, “And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty. . . . But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the first-fruits of those who have fallen asleep” (1 Corinthians 15:14, 20).

With the resurrection of Jesus, a great change had taken place, which was favorable to all men. How can

the fact of the resurrection of our Lord be explained? We want to draw on the infallible testimony of the Bible.

On Easter morning, the first thing Jesus’ disciples saw at the tomb of their Lord was that the sealed grave was open. And the first thing they heard was, “He is not here; for He is risen, as He said” (Matthew 28:6).

The Roman guards, whom Pilate himself had ordered to guard the tomb, came into the city and told the high priests everything that had happened. But what had happened? The sealed tombstone had been rolled away. The tomb was empty, and Jesus was no longer in the grave, no longer dead.

The Jewish High Council assembled to discuss a way out. They couldn’t change the facts of what had happened, so they offered the guards a large sum of money and advised them to say, “His disciples came at night and stole Him while we slept” (Matthew 28:13).

The women who had come to anoint the body of Jesus were seized with fear but at the same time “great joy.” They immediately grasped the resurrection in faith and hurried off to announce the event to His disciples. They were the first witnesses of the resurrection.

Many testified that they had seen the risen Lord. He had shown Himself to the women; He had repeatedly appeared to all His disciples, and Paul affirmed in 1 Corinthians 15:6 that “after that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once.” There could be no better evidence, and all who saw Jesus were confirmed witnesses to His resurrection.

The fact of the resurrection became the central part of their preaching. Peter already addressed this point in



his first sermon in Jerusalem: “This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses. . . . Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, Whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ” (Acts 2:32, 36). No one would dare to spread such a message of their own accord. The message of the resurrection could not be refuted.

“By the resurrection from the dead,” Paul wanted to make it clear to his readers and future generations that great events attributable to our Lord alone and to His power have happened since His resurrection. Peter calls Christ the “Prince of life.” And since the time Christ arose, there is ongoing evidence of His life, power, and mighty ministry.

In this way, He also appears to us, and consequently we too can experience Him as one whom we do not see as

if we see Him. Since the time of His resurrection, He has proved Himself to be “with power” to many people, especially those who have experienced grace and obtained the right to be called children of God.

Therefore, we do not seek  
the “living” among the dead,  
because Easter proclaims the  
fact of His resurrection and  
His life.

Therefore, we do not seek the “living” among the dead, because Easter proclaims the fact of His resurrection and His life. That should give us courage and fill us with great joy. Jesus wants to have an encounter with those who mourn, those who grieve and are despised, and fill them with the same comfort and joy His disciples experienced at His tomb that

Easter morning.

May the bright ray of Easter faith fill your heart. May the resurrected Christ meet you and all of us over and over again and testify to His grace, healing, and strength in us.

# How Merciful is God?

*“For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.” (1 Corinthians 1:18)*

Strange! First he ran to the swimming pool and stuck just his toe in, and then right after, he jumped from the highest diving board. When someone acknowledged his action, he announced, “I am a professional swimmer. One night, back when I had trouble swimming, I went to the pool and wanted to jump from the tower. As I stood with outstretched arms, the moonlight drew my silhouette on the wall across from me. It was the shape of a giant cross. Even though I wasn’t a Christian, I stood there deep in thought for a long time. An old song I had to learn in my younger years came to mind:

“He died, so that I could live, He died for my eternal salvation. With joy we will travel heaven bound, saved by His precious blood.”

I don’t know how long I stood there with outstretched arms, or why I didn’t dive. But, finally I turned around, and climbed back down the ladder. I was just going to dive in from the edge of the pool. Coming down the ladder, I noticed there wasn’t even water in the pool. It had been let out the previous night! Had I jumped in . . . . The cross stopped me. It saved me. I was so thankful that I knelt down and prayed at the edge of the pool. It became clear to me that though the silhouette of the cross saved my life, my soul needed to be saved as well. So, I confessed my sins to God and gave myself to Him.

That night I was saved twice. I still have a healthy body, but more importantly, my soul is saved for all eternity.

Perhaps you understand now why I first dip my toes into the water before I jump in.”

*Leben ist mehr, CLV, 2010*

# The Treasure of Hardship

Suffering and hardship. We don’t normally get excited about suffering and hardship, but they are some of the few things we are promised and guaranteed to face in our short time before eternity. So here’s a tough question: if God is good and He has promised we will face suffering when we serve Him, can suffering be a good thing?

We have heard how silver and gold are purified by the smelter’s fire, how the impurities and unrefined bits within the raw chunks of precious metal rise to the surface. We are a lot like that too. The trials of life come at us and turn up the heat, and we begin to suffer. In those times of stress, we learn a lot about our character; in those times of stress, we learn a lot about our need for faith in a God so much more perfect and wonderful than we are.

When we are living unrighteously, the trials of suffering are good for us and are a gift to us. They bring us to the end of ourselves, and in proper order, to our knees if we do not harden our hearts. They show us the utter bankruptcy of our own strength, the foolishness of our attempts at wisdom, and our complete lack of control.

We’re forced to conclude, we cannot be trusted; only God can. It’s better to suffer for our unrighteousness in this life and cast ourselves upon God than it is to face Him in the next with no excuse. In this way, suffering is a great divine kindness that awakens us.

When we live righteously with God, the fires of trials allow God’s character to shine in us and be worked deeper into our souls. When we lean into the suffering with our trust in God’s faithfulness, He proves Himself to us over and over again. Those around us can’t help but notice how great our God is in the midst of our afflictions.

The tool a jeweler uses to refine precious metals is called a crucible. This word comes from Latin, and the first part of it comes from the root word “crux-,” which means cross. We are refined, others are inspired or convicted, and God gets the glory. This is suffering in good order. What a treasure! Take up your cross. Gold shines brightest and has the most value when all the dross has been taken away; that’s when it reflects the image of its Purifier the most.



Psalm 12:6 - "And the words of the LORD are flawless, like silver purified in a crucible, like gold refined seven times" (NIV).

Proverbs 17:3 - "The crucible for silver and the furnace for gold, but the LORD tests the heart" (NIV).

Zechariah 13:9 - "I will bring the one-third through the fire, will refine them as silver is refined, and test them as gold is tested. They will call on My name, and I will answer them. I will say, 'This is My people'; and each one will say, 'The Lord is my God.'"

Anthony Zerbin  
Edmonton, AB

## Lessons From School (4)

Sometimes it seems as if a Christian in a new environment must quickly become an expert in all religious matters. My objections that this was solely for my faith, not for religion in general, were liberally brushed aside with, "It's all the same." During one of these discussions, when my opinion would be called upon, a classmate proudly stated, "I am an atheist." Another colleague, having recently immigrated from Morocco, had no concept of this. "What is that?" she asked me. I mulled this over. "He is a heathen," I finally explained. Strangely enough, she immediately understood that expression. But the atheist indignantly disagreed, "I do not believe in Odin or Thor or anything like that." I explained that was completely irrelevant. If he did not believe in the one true God of the universe, then he was definitely a heathen. The next time we were questioned by a teacher regarding our religious affiliation, he answered, "I am a heathen." However, he tried to talk me out of my "gullibility." Before the oral exam—the final exam before graduation—I nervously paced up and down the hall praying for a successful outcome. The atheist came towards me. "Praying does not help," he declared to me. "Oh, yes," I countered, "for He gives to His beloved even in his sleep" (Psalm 127:2, NASB). "God is dead!" he yelled across the hall. "Nitzsche is dead and that raises questions," I said, continuing my journey of faith in the Risen One. The test went very well—I did not have to skip a single answer. My colleague was far less successful. "You're so lucky! You were questioned on the easiest ones!" he commented on my exam topics. "Did I not say the Lord gives to His beloved in their sleep? You should not be so impious, Henry." God justified my faith, which I had to defend in a public dispute, to the best of my ability. And for that I am grateful to Him.

Corinna Kowalski, Hamm, Germany

### VERSE OF THE MONTH

"Teach me what I do not see;  
if I have done iniquity,  
I will do it no more."  
(Job 34:32)

**Job is introduced to us in the Bible as an extraordinary person. It is said of him that he was a blameless and upright man, fearing God and shunning evil. God's favor rested upon him, and he truly was a blessed man.**

**This fact did not deter Satan from sorely tempting him to the point where Job very nearly lost everything he had: his family, his friends, his lands, his riches, and his health. However, his faith and belief in God were the things he did not relinquish, even when he didn't understand God's way with him and struggled greatly with it.**

**Eventually, his young friend Elihu managed to counsel him to an encounter with God, which brought his life to a spiritual turning-point.**

**One valuable piece of advice he gave was the above-mentioned Bible verse. Could this perhaps be beneficial to us as well? Is it possible Satan has managed to blur our vision for things threatening to separate us from God?**

**Let's pray, "Lord, teach me the things I don't understand or see, and if I have done wrong in the past, I won't do it anymore. Please guide and help me in this and change me by Your saving grace."**

## *Experiences With God*

*“Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever” (Hebrews 13:8).*

I am thankful to my Savior that I am His child and am able to experience Him in my daily life.

I would like to tell of one event that occurred some time ago, but that I’ll keep forever in my memory.

In September of 2016, there was to be a baptismal service in the church at Eppingen (Germany), to which our church from Pforzheim was invited. We decided to attend as a family, and looked forward to that time with joy and anticipation. However, as often occurs with such joyous, blessed occasions, the enemy isn’t asleep.

On the evening before this service, I bent over in our bath to pick up an object and as I stood up, I hit my head on the corner of the bathroom cabinet, so hard that I “saw stars.” I became very dizzy, and in the next hour it became clear to me that I would probably have to stay home on Sunday. During our family devotions, we brought my situation to God. When I awoke the next morning, the dizziness was still present but not as severe as the previous evening.

Various voices arose inside of me, as well as my reasoning. However, a very soft voice said to me, “Go in the belief that I am able to make everything well.” Placing my trust in the Lord, we drove to Eppingen.

Initially, doubts arose, telling me that I may have acted foolishly. However, as we were sitting in the sanctuary listening to the sermon, I glanced up and saw a verse hanging on the wall, which awakened my faith and strengthened it. On it was written,

“Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.”

Through my spiritual eyes, I saw that Jesus was unchanging and that His omniscience and greatness was so overwhelming. He was there yesterday, tomorrow, and even today. He not only helped in the past and will help in the future, but He is the same today for you and me.

In the quiet, I simply prayed for help in faith. In that hour, I was able to experience minute by minute how my dizziness gradually lessened. After the service, it was all gone!

God deserves honor, praise, and thanks.

Dear reader, I would like to encourage you, regardless of how hopeless or difficult your situation may seem. God wants us to come to Him full of trust, so we may see how He is holding His hands open towards us to send us the help we need.

Larissa Rotfuß, Keltern



CHILDREN'S CORNER

## *Last Words before Easter*

**I**t was Palm Sunday, the last Sunday before Easter. “Mom, why is there such a big crowd there?” “That’s Jesus, Philip, the man who recently raised Lazarus from the dead. Do you remember?” “Oh yes, that’s the good man who took us kids in His lap, and hugged us tightly, and lovingly, and blessed us . . . although His disciples wanted to send us away.” “Yes, that’s Him. We want to go and see what He does and why there are so many people.” “Oh, He rides a donkey! And people are putting clothes on His path as if He’s a king! Mom, will He be the new king?” “Maybe . . . I don’t know. But we hope so much and wait for a king who could finally free us from the Romans.” “Yes, He will become our new king! He is so good to our people and even to children, like no other king would be!”

Yes, that’s how people hoped and waited on this Palm Sunday for Jesus to become the new king. They waved at Him with many palm branches and shouted, “Hosanna! ‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord! The King of Israel!’” (John 12:13). But there was a group of Pharisees who didn’t want the Lord Jesus to be king at all. They envied and hated Him so much, they even wanted to kill Him. How sad that even Judas, a disciple of Jesus, was so dishonest and ready to help the evil Pharisees by betraying Jesus. Just a few days later on Thursday, Judas led a large group of soldiers to the Garden of Geth-

semane, where Jesus had just taken His disciples. The soldiers bound Jesus like a criminal and led Him first to the Pharisees, then to the Roman governor Pilate, to give orders to kill Jesus. But Pilate didn’t want to kill Jesus, because he had seen that Jesus was innocent and had done no wrong. But the Pharisees had persuaded people and everyone was shouting, “Crucify Him, crucify Him!” People believed the lies the Pharisees had devised about Jesus and preferred that Pilate release the robber Barrabas, but kill Jesus. Pilate was afraid of the Jews and allowed them to crucify Jesus. So Jesus was nailed to the cross and had to die. But Jesus didn’t die because the Pharisees or the Jews wanted it, but because God in heaven had planned it that way. Jesus had to die for all mankind and shed His blood, so that we could be freed from our sins and all of us could one day go to heaven. Jesus was laid in a tomb cut out of the rock. This grave was then blocked with a large stone. But the nice thing is that Jesus didn’t have to remain in the tomb forever. On the third day, Easter Sunday, an angel came and rolled this big stone away from the grave. Jesus rose and came out of the grave. The tomb was now empty and Jesus was victorious! That’s why we celebrate Easter to this day.

Dina Grötzinger,  
Eppingen, Germany

# *A Good Remedy For Sleeplessness*

**T**hanks for asking, neighbor. Things are going better with my wife. Except nights, those long, sleepless nights. The poor woman rolls around and finds no rest. The doctor shrugs his shoulders and is unable to offer any further advice. There are all kinds of medicines, but over the long stretch, they may harm her more than help.”

Mr. Ruhl, the neighbor, stood up and said, “I know of another remedy that will certainly help. At a time when I suffered from sleeplessness, I tried this, neighbor. If everything else fails, this brings the needed rest.”

“And what would that remedy be?”

“It’s the blessed ABCs.”

“Never heard of it.”

“Really? Here it is: you recite Bible verses that begin with each sequential letter of the alphabet. For example, ‘Abide in Me, and I in you;’ ‘Be thankful to Him, and bless His name;’ ‘Commit your way unto the Lord, trust also in Him;’ and so on until you reach Z.”

Barth noticed something. Ruhl knew his Bible. He attended church regularly, more often than Barth did himself. But what about those Bible verses? No, this wasn’t for him. And there’d be no way he could quote six verses. But his wife? Should he tell her about this?

He decided it wouldn’t be fair to keep it from her, so he told his Lene exactly what the neighbor had said, thinking that if it didn’t help, it couldn’t hurt. At least he might be able to sleep.

However, this made sense to his wife. “The whole alphabet?” she asked. “There are 26 letters in the alphabet, so that means 26 Bible verses. I’m not sure I know that many verses, but I’ll try it.”

Barth mumbled, “Silly stuff!” However, after a little while, his wife asked him, “Help me.” He became annoyed

and retorted, “Pay attention at church or find them in the Bible yourself, but don’t bother me with this! I paid for the medications for the sleeplessness without grumbling because that was needed, but leave me alone with your verse searches!” He got up and left to spend some time at his usual spot at a table in the local pub.

He couldn’t stop thinking about this Bible-verse remedy, and grumbled about it at the pub. “My wife is sitting at home and paging in the Bible to gather verses. She probably mixes those with her sleeping powder. Crazy!”

The owner was one of those rare businessmen who knew about more than just making money, and suggested it might not be a bad idea. “Wait and see if it works for your wife. Thinking about eternity has never hurt anyone . . . for anyone who truly believes,” he added.

“She believes alright,” spouted Barth and then added, “Okay, I won’t say anything more to discourage her.”

When he arrived home, his wife was already in bed, but couldn’t sleep. She was repeating Bible verses quietly. She reached over and said, “Rest in the Lord.” Barth listened and laughed.

“Franz, I am stuck. The S is next. Help me with a verse.”

“Sleep,” he said and thought he had told a good joke. “He who keeps Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep,” said his wife quietly. “But that doesn’t start with an S. Hmm, I think I’ve found one: ‘Seek, and you will find.’ See, just thinking about it works. And it’s true what Mr. Ruhl said; you become calmer doing this.”

Barth wanted to retort with a sharp answer, but he thought better of it. His wife was sick and he had to have patience with her. He undressed quietly and climbed into bed. As usual, after some time, he looked over at his wife and noted to his amazement that she was asleep. He became suspicious. Were those pious verses responsible for



this? Nonsense! She was just tired from her workday.

Now, he was lying awake and couldn't fall asleep. He began to think things over. In his mind's eye, he saw old Mr. Ruhl standing before him with his large Bible in his hands. Without thinking about what he was doing, he grabbed the Bible and began to look for a verse that began with A. There was one: "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." This thought captured his mind and would not leave him. He wanted to think of something else but he couldn't. He looked for a verse that begins with B but was unable to find one. Next to him, his Lene continued sleeping soundly, while he had to stay awake.

He turned over a bit too loudly, and his wife woke up and asked him worriedly if there was something wrong. She even offered to get up and make him a tea.

"Not necessary, Honey. I'm missing a Bible verse, one that begins with B. I didn't get further than that." That sounded pitiful, but his wife was able to help. "Believe on the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved."

They discussed this for a short time, and each fell deep into thought. It was quiet in the room until Barth said, "Mr. Ruhl isn't wrong. Tomorrow I'll look for Bible verses, otherwise things will be reversed for us and I'll be the one having sleepless nights!"

From then on, Mr. Barth and his Lene did their ABCs together. These ABCs have become blessed ones for them because now his wife is able to sleep, and he has peace, which he was unable to find anywhere else: the peace for his soul through the blood of Christ.

## *Vivit!—He Lives!*

**K**äthe Luther, wife of Martin Luther, was a woman of wisdom and intelligence. She kept a close eye on her husband's joys, sorrows, and tribulations, and also when he had a lot of disappointments to bear toward the end of his life, Käthe commissioned a master stonemason to install a new doorway in their house. She had the archway's keystone engraved with the Latin word, "Vivit." Everyone going in and out knew this meant: He lives!

Nobody could enter their home without being reminded that Jesus lives. And nobody could leave without seeing the message for a second time. No matter what direction a guest's conversation with Luther might take, the last word would invariably be the doorway's *Vivit*.

First, this message was meant for the man of the house himself, in times of trial, doubt, and defeat.

The One Who lives and Who is risen from the dead is strong when we are weak. When our strength nears its end, His power increases all the more. *Vivit!—He lives!* That is the message that sustains us.

This word should be engraved in our minds. In fact, we should have it standing on our desk, painted on the wall, or hung from a nail where we can see it when we're feeling down.

*Vivit!—He lives!*

Imagine the joy these words spark in the heart of a mother awaiting news of her son's motorcycle accident. Whatever you may imagine, and whatever she may feel, there is no comparison to the joy brought by knowing that Jesus lives.

He lives! And not only He, for He himself tells us, "Because I live, you will live also" (John 14:19).



# On the Road of Salvation

Part 4

Manna—Bread From Heaven

Ron Taron

*God's Plan of Salvation in the History of Israel*

*“Then the whole congregation of the children of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness. And the children of Israel said to them, ‘Oh, that we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the pots of meat and when we ate bread to the full! For you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger.’ Then the LORD said to Moses, ‘Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you. And the people shall go out and gather a certain quota every day, that I may test them, whether they will walk in My law or not.’” (Exodus 16:2-4)*

**T**he Israelites had now been travelling through the desert for several weeks. God had freed them from slavery in Egypt by His almighty hand, forging a path through the Red Sea for His people, while destroying their enemies. How easy it had been for Israel to sing that glorious song of victory! Now they were free, their enemies defeated, and from now on everything would be wonderful. But then the reality of everyday life began. The celebrations came to an end, the daily marches through the desert quickly became tiresome, and their food supply began to dwindle. Suddenly, things didn't seem so rosy anymore.

Isn't this similar to our spiritual journey? A genuine salvation experience often results in great joy and enthusiasm. “Why didn't I give my life to God sooner? Life as a Christian is wonderful and the path to heaven is glorious and full of joy!” And then the first real spiritual battle blindsides us, the mountaintop experiences fade away, and we are assailed by doubts. “Am I really on the right

path? Is everything in order? Why does it seem so dark all of a sudden? Was my salvation experience genuine? Why is serving God so difficult?”

And suddenly Egypt doesn't seem to have been so bad. “Everything was so much easier there. We had all the bread we needed. Where are we going to get food in the middle of this desert?” The Israelites were so discouraged that they complained God should have just let them die in Egypt. But God had known all this would come and had prepared for it. “Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you” (Exodus 16:4). God is showing He would care for them personally. He wanted to rain bread down upon them. Not sparingly, but as a cloudburst . . . in the middle of the desert. He would give daily, but they would have to go out and gather it. Truly, God has an abundance, but we have to want it and go after it.

Here is an important lesson: just as man cannot live without physical food, his spiritual life cannot be sustained without spiritual nourishment. Yet, so many

Christians believe they can make it without sufficient spiritual sustenance, the Bread of Life.

“And the people shall go out and gather a certain quota every day, that I may test them, whether they will walk in My law or not” (Exodus 6:4). God could have arranged it so every Christian would have the whole Word and counsel of God imprinted into their mind and memory from the time of their salvation, enabling a river of life to supply all their needs for all time. Yet He wanted to see, or “test” if their love would cause them to seek God’s will every day for their lives.

### **Spiritual Manna**

Pursuing spiritual manna, or the food of the soul, requires more than a mechanical fulfilling of laws. For those who will go out and gather it, it will be Spirit and life. This manna, God’s Word, is more than a mere book or a lifeless letter. God rains it down from heaven. It comes from God’s throne of grace. It is the amazing, living Word of God. It is a love letter, written to you by God. Additionally, it is a personal invitation to an encounter with God. This manna enables us to experience a relationship of the heart with Almighty God.

How the soul thrives on this manna! Jeremiah says, “Your words were found, and I ate them, And Your word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart; For I am called by Your name, O LORD God of hosts” (Jeremiah 15:16). We could simply say, “God’s Word is my life!” And when we begin to understand that, according to John 1, Jesus is the incarnate, living Word of God, the Bread of Life, making spiritual manna becomes even more precious to us. Jesus once said, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God’” (Matthew 4:4).

### **“And the people shall go out and gather every day”**

How do we receive spiritual manna? We must desire it and go after it ourselves. “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, For they shall be filled” (Matthew 5:6). David says in Psalm 25:1, “To You, O LORD, I lift up my soul.” Do you also have such a longing for your soul to be filled with God and His Word? If not, you can gladly ask Him for it. Just pray, “Lord, give me a longing, a hunger, for your Word.” He will surely answer such a prayer.

Go daily and gather. This will require some effort. Snoozing an extra 10 minutes in the morning will not enable us to “gather.” Grabbing our electronic devices

first thing, to inhale the latest world events or to get up to speed on all our social media feeds, or any other distraction from God’s Word will rarely lead us to gathering manna. “Go” and gather. Daily.

### **No Life without Manna**

We all know we require nourishment to live. This is no different in the spiritual realm. Without constant sustenance, our soul is actually in the process of dying. Without heavenly manna we won’t have the power to be victorious. Satan succeeds in causing many Christians to fail by weaning them from gathering manna every day. Things will work for a while. We can skip a few days or get by with quickly reading a couple of verses hurriedly and speaking an oft repeated prayer. But from skipping a couple of times, it quickly becomes a habit . . . and the soul begins starving. Never forget that manna from heaven is a gift of God’s grace. You need it. You can’t live without it. And therefore, God commanded His people, “And the people shall go out and gather a certain quota every day.” Expend the effort to come into God’s presence and delve deeply into His Word, until you receive your needed measure to live a life of victory every day.

In Exodus 16:19-21 we read, “And Moses said, ‘Let no one leave any of it till morning.’ Notwithstanding they did not heed Moses. But some of them left part of it until morning, and it bred worms and stank. And Moses was angry with them. So they gathered it every morning, every man according to his need. And when the sun became hot, it melted.” God’s Word never spoils, but God wanted to clearly show His people that they would need His Word every day. They need to gather enough in order to have sufficient strength so they can look back on a day of victory and wonderful fellowship with God each night. “When the sun became hot, it melted.” When the heat of the day has begun, it’s usually too late to return to gathering manna. Have quiet time with God before the clamor of the day begins, or you will find that His blessings will melt away and be lost.

Dear brother or sister, God has heavenly manna for you. In Israel’s day the manna had a beautiful taste like wafers made with honey. Yet how much better is the Bread of Life that comes from heaven, from the mouth of God! It will nourish and completely satisfy your soul. Go and gather. Daily manna means life, but if you neglect to consume it, inevitable spiritual death will follow. God will test you as He tested Israel, and will richly bless you as you seek Him.

## Experiences With God

### God's Math is different

#### 1. Unemployment

In Germany, people lose their jobs every day. In the spring of 2016, after 15 years of employment with a company, the business owner, with a heavy heart, handed me my termination slip along with a bouquet of flowers. I now belonged to the millions of people who had to notify the authorities that they were seeking work.

With confidence, I began searching for a new job, sent out resumes, and waited for a positive answer. Sadly, after six months, I still didn't have a job. Softly, worries began knocking at my heart's door. I had years of experience and very good references, so why didn't I have a chance in the job market? "Your way, o God, is holy" (Psalm 77:13). Since my termination in the spring of 2016 until spring 2018, God led me on a "holy" but not easy path to the goal.

#### 2. German Federal Armed Forces Barracks

Before God allows anything great to happen, He begins on the bottom "step." The first "step" was difficult. Unexpectedly, I was offered temporary employment, but only for six months. My workplace was in a cold, large garage, previously an English Federal Armed Forces barrack. My scope of work was processing a daily registry of refugees from the east, who were streaming into Germany in large numbers in 2015 to 2016. Unfortunately, this stream of refugees did not ease soon. After six months, my employment contract was extended for another six months. Even though the working conditions in the barracks were rough, as a family we were very thankful that I was able to have this temporary job.

The twelve months in the Armed Forces barracks passed by very quickly. Frenzied, I sent out more resumes. I was aware that when this job finished, I could be standing on the street again. But God had already planned my next step. Just when my twelve months were up, He placed me on the second "step."

#### 3. New Job Offer

I received two job offers at the same time. Unfortunately, neither was very promising. Both were temporary, for only a few months. I had to make a decision. In the end, I

decided to take the 6-month job offer at the federal office in the Immigration and Refugee Department. I can joyfully testify, when God has a plan, He carries it out to the end. Shortly after my orientation at the federal office, my employment contract was extended to two whole years. I was so thankful and full of joy!

#### 4. Test of Faith

After the two years were over, all temporary employees at the federal office were asked to decide if they wished to have a permanent position. Of course, most people accepted. Unfortunately, the job proposal came with a challenging stipulation. Everyone had to undergo a lengthy intelligence test and succeed with a certain minimum percentage, and be prepared to relocate within Germany. At this time, my faith began to waiver. I knew I could not achieve this goal. The numbers and the expectations were way too high for me. My Father in Heaven did not overlook my weak faith and provided a wonderful way to strengthen it.

One day, a very kind cleaning lady entered the office. She tidied up the room and upon leaving wished everyone God's blessings. Over time, we had good conversations. Darja, this young lady, told me several of her faith experiences. I rejoiced that I had found a true born-again Christian in this happy, simple young woman. In one of our conversations, I told her about my concern regarding the high expectations of the federal office: the test, percent expected, selection, and relocation. Darja looked at me with a happy expression and said, "God's math is different. Where we put a period, He places a comma, and life goes on. I will pray. You will remain here." Thoughts popped up in my heart. "This dear lady doesn't know how complicated the process is with the federal office. She isn't aware how hard the test is and how high they expect your percentage to be." However, I held onto the comment she made: "God's math is different." Shortly after I had successfully completed the test procedure, I received the irrevocable job assignment: a permanent job offer, coupled with relocating to Heidelberg. Moving from Herford to Heidelberg could only be prevented by a miracle from God—in human eyes, all doors were closed.



Devotedly and without ceasing, Darja prayed to God for me. Every morning, she awoke an hour earlier and prayed earnestly for an intervention from God. I shared my prayer request with my brothers and sisters in the church and with relatives and friends. Many kind people were praying for what seemed like a hopeless situation. I was thankful for every prayer.

##### 5. *The Answer*

God loves to surprise us! There is no official statement here on earth that He cannot change. Where we put a period, He places a comma. God's intervention was powerful. After I had almost finalized my accommodation in Heidelberg and was focusing on the actual move, an office order came directly and suddenly from the Federal Minister of the Interior for Building and Community. He mandated that every employee of the federal office remain at their place of location. Praise the Lord! My amazement at God's mighty power was indescribable. God answers

prayer! "O Lord of hosts, blessed is the man who trusts in You!" (Psalm 84:12). "Happy is he who has the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the Lord his God" (Psalm 146:5).

Shortly after this administrative decision, Darja, the kind cleaning lady, told me she had to change jobs. God placed this devoted young lady in my life for a short time just for me, at a time when I was in desperate need of prayer support. May God bless Darja and everyone who prayed for me.

Since the spring of 2016 until spring 2018, God has led me safely to the goal. It was three long years from one "step" to the next. Looking back, we as a family are very thankful for God's leading. Often, it wasn't easy. We had a lot of sleepless nights and a lot of unanswered questions. But one thing we understood: "God's math is different. Where we put a period, God continues writing the story of our lives!"

Nelly Habenstein Ulmer, Herford (Germany)

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*„And call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you will honor me“ (Psalm 50:15).*

This Bible verse has been a comfort to me in the past several months. God's promises are there for us and He never fails us. I thank God for His gift of salvation, that I can be a child of God and that He has given me peace and joy in my heart.

In June 2018 I had a total hip replacement and the surgery was very successful. Finally after many years of discomfort, I was able to walk without pain and without a limp. I thank God for His help during this time.

A few months after this surgery, I started having pain in my lower abdomen. A CT scan detected diverticulitis. Antibiotics were prescribed, but after ten days my pain was still there. A month later, another CT scan showed that the infection had not cleared. Again I was on antibiotics for seven days. Since the pain was unbearable, I was admitted to the hospital. The CT scan again showed severe diverticulitis. For a week, antibiotics were administered intravenously and orally. However, after a week the CT scan still showed nothing had changed. It was

decided that surgery was the only option to get rid of the infection. Approximately one foot of my colon was removed with a loop ileostomy. After a hospital stay of two weeks, I was able to go home. After four weeks, I was again admitted to the hospital for surgery to reverse the ileostomy. Since then I have been recovering remarkably well, as my appetite has returned and I am slowly returning to a normal diet.

I thank God for my church family here in Swartz Creek, who faithfully prayed for me during these many months. I also thank the many other relatives and friends in the USA and Canada who were also praying for me. It was so encouraging to know that even during times when I was unable to pray, there were prayer warriors who thought of me and prayed for me. God answered your prayers!

I praise God that He is the same yesterday, today and forever.

Your sister in Christ,  
Gerlinde Schuler  
Swartz Creek, USA





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## Announcements

### *Easter Conference in Hamm, Germany*

April 19<sup>th</sup> - 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2019

Further Information:

[www.gghamm.de](http://www.gghamm.de)

### *Fest in Winnipeg, Manitoba*

May 18<sup>th</sup> - 19<sup>th</sup>, 2019

### *Pentecost in Herford, Germany*

June 8<sup>th</sup> - 10<sup>th</sup>, 2019

### *Fest in Aylmer, Ontario*

### *50th Anniversary of the Congregation*

June 29<sup>th</sup> - 30<sup>th</sup>, 2019

### *Bible Course in Neustädt, Mexico*

July 22<sup>nd</sup> - August 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2019

### *Youth Seminar in Tuningen, Germany*

July, 28<sup>th</sup> - August 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019

### *Fest in Chilliwack, BC*

August 3<sup>rd</sup> - 4<sup>th</sup>, 2019

### *Camp Meeting in Blaubeuren, Germany*

August 17<sup>th</sup> - 24<sup>th</sup>, 2019

## **Behold!**

*Behold, it has happened; behold far away  
On Calvary's hilltop, behold in dismay.  
Incomprehensible, pure, true, and holy,  
Jesus subjected to torment and folly;  
Sentenced to death amid scoffing and laughter,  
Yet Jesus forgives those who planned His disaster.*

*Behold His great love, for He healed blind and lame;  
Forgave wretched sinners, did not seek out fame;  
Healed sickness, fed hungry and helped everyone.  
He fasted and prayed that God's will may be done.  
They crucified Jesus to die on the tree,  
The Lord of salvation, who set our souls free.*

*Behold, how He wrestled for you and for me,  
As He prayed in anguish in Gethsemane.  
Why did He willingly drink that bitter cup,  
And despite the torment would never give up?  
So that you, oh sinner, may draw near to Him,  
Find eternal life and be freed from your sin.*

*They blasphemed and mocked Him and beat on His brow;  
"If You are the Savior, then save Yourself now."  
And yet as they mocked Him, He said not a word;  
He took it all silently, Jesus our Lord.  
Out of pure hatred they killed the Son of Man;  
Still it was all done according to God's plan.*

*He did it for you and He did it for me,  
To bring us salvation and set our souls free.  
Because when He died, He atoned for our sins;  
Without Christ, the Savior, we never could win.*

*All of God's plan was not completed as yet;  
His grave was secured, a large stone had been set  
So none could have access to where He now lay;  
But Mary approached it with tears anyways.  
But wonder of wonders, what does she behold?  
The grave—it is empty, and what was she told?*

*Since Jesus is risen, there's no need to dread:  
"Why do you seek the living among the dead?"  
Behold, Christ now lives and reigns with the Father;  
Repent of your sins, and live right thereafter.  
Oh, choose the good path and in prayer seek God's face.  
Behold, don't neglect such great mercy and grace.*

Angelika Vogt