



Foundation of Faith

The Secret to *Growth*

Ornamental Trees or Fruit Trees?

Then He Could Sleep Peacefully

The Curse of Unbelief

Do We Need a Revival?

Experiences With God

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Editorial

Dear Reader!

We read in Exodus 23:14-16 that God commanded the people of Israel to celebrate three special feasts each year. One of them was the Feast of Ingathering at the end of the year. This was similar to the holiday of Thanksgiving for us today. A special note was included in God's command: "None shall appear before Me empty."

We should celebrate our feasts to God's glory. Why? God is the Creator of the heavens and earth. Before creation, the earth was desolate and void and without life. When God spoke His mighty "Let there be . . .," light and life, godly blessings, the workings of God, and the flourishing of creation came. Then God placed humans, including you and me, in the middle of His other works of creation! Through God's plan of sowing and harvesting, we receive the wonderful blessings of harvest every year. We should all thank God from our hearts, not only once a year but every day.

The Bible declares that we should not only think of earthly blessings and natural gifts: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ" (Ephesians 1:3).

Dear Reader, through Jesus' blood and wounds, and His death and resurrection, we have salvation and access to God. Heavenly treasures are offered to us all: grace, peace, and all kinds of spiritual blessings.

Yes, if the Lord offers and gives us so much from His fullness, then we should thank Him with heart, mouth and hands. Then we will not come before Him with empty hands. And when we are reminded that as heavenly citizens we will one day inherit all things with Christ and receive the crown of eternal life, then, my dear Reader, give thanks, praise, and honor, and do not appear empty-handed before Him.

H. D. Nimz

A Bible Returns Home

A doctor shares the following story:

My mother was a Christian. She prayed and hoped for my eternal welfare even when it appeared there was nothing to hope for. I left the home of my family as an unbeliever, and lived through the first part of my career in unbelief. I did not search for Jesus Christ; in fact, I forgot all about Him. I passed my exams, and I had a good future ahead of me.

As an assistant doctor in a hospital, I saw much human suffering. But it wasn't just suffering I saw. In addition to pain and despair, I also saw patience, hope, and confidence.

One day, a man who worked as a mason was brought into the hospital. He had been going up a ladder carrying a tub of mortar. The ladder began moving, and he fell to the ground. He was injured so badly that there was no hope for his recovery. Everything possible was done to ease his pain. The man knew he would die, and he remained completely conscious. I asked if he had relatives with whom he would like to speak. He shook his head and said he was here alone. However, he didn't live far away, and if his landlady was told of his situation, she might want to come and visit him. He still owed her some money, which he wanted to give her.

His wish was fulfilled. His landlady visited him two or three times. I myself never saw her, so I don't know what the two spoke of.

The man lived another week after his accident. He spoke few words during this time, but I did notice he had an extraordinary sense of peace about him. I wondered about this, because his pains must have been great from time

to time. This man died, and I was there when he was buried.

"What should we do with this, doctor?" a nurse asked me as she held up a book. "What is that?" "The Bible of the deceased. His landlady brought it upon his request. He also read in it."

I looked at the Bible. I couldn't believe my eyes! This was the same Bible that had belonged to me when I left home, but I had sold it. My name, written by my mother, was still inside.

I possessed enough self-control not to show my feelings. In an indifferent manner, I said to the nurse, "The man has no family. Just give the book to me."

I took the book home with me. The Bible had been well used, as shown by the many marks and underlined verses. They were witnesses to its regular use. I mostly read the underlined verses, which no doubt had comforted the owner and were a light on his path. No wonder he was peaceful and joyful going to his death! He was poor and unknown in this world, but now it became clear to me that he was rich in his faith and was an heir of the Kingdom of God, which God promises those who love Him.

Need I say more? Should I also say that this wonderful event caused a change in my life? The accusations of my now awakened conscience almost drove me to despair, until I understood the Word that Jesus came into this world to save sinners. I may now say that I love my found-again Bible more than all the books in my library. The gospel it contains brought me to salvation through faith in Jesus. ■

A Surprising Discovery

A pastor writes:

One evening at a church service, I spoke with a man who said, “You don’t even need to talk to me, because you won’t be able to help me.”

“Well, I can’t help you, but Jesus is able to help you,” I said.

“No, no, I am a godless person. No one can help me.” That was his answer.

I then opened my Bible to Romans 5:6 and pointed to this verse with my finger. “There, read that!”

He read, “Christ died for the ungodly.” He appeared

to not trust what he had read, because he read it another time and said, “Christ died for the ungodly! I have never read that in the Bible.”

His hands began to shake, and he was deeply moved. With tears in his eyes and a shaky voice, this strong man cried out, “I had no idea that Jesus loved me so much.” Then, with great anguish, he said, “Oh God, save me for the sake of Jesus.”

His pleas were heard and answered. Before he left the service, he grabbed my hand and said one more time, “Oh, I had no idea that Jesus loved me so!” ■

Then He Could Sleep Peacefully

Long ago, a banker from Virginia, who bragged about being the president of an atheist’s association, was on a journey. He happened to be traveling through a forest in Kentucky where bandits had made travel unsafe. He lost his way, and it became dark before he could find the correct path. As he was carrying a substantial sum of money, he became quite nervous.

After noticing a light in the distance, he hesitantly walked closer, and knocked on the door of the plain house. A woman opened the door and told him that her husband had gone hunting but would be home shortly. She would gladly give him a place to sleep. The banker was satisfied, tied up his horse, and stepped inside.

Soon the hunter came home wearing deerskin clothing and a cap made from a bear hide, making him look almost like a wild animal. The banker, unnerved by this sight, reached for his purse to assure

himself that his pistol was available, should he need it.

The couple offered him a bed to sleep, but he answered that he would rather sit by the fire. They tried to convince him to sleep, but it was in vain, as his fear grew more and more.

“If you really don’t want to sleep, I won’t try to convince you any longer. But before I lie down to sleep, I will read a chapter in my Bible as I do every night,” said the hunter.

At that moment, the unbeliever felt his fear vanish, and it was replaced by a warm sense of security. The Bible convinced him that this was not a bandit’s home. When the hunter knelt down to pray a simple prayer, the banker knelt as well and prayed along with his host.

After that, he no longer ridiculed the Bible. He became a true Christian and often told this story to show how foolish atheism is. ■

The Secret to Growth

“[That we,] . . . speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ.”
(Ephesians 4:15)

We have likely all heard the expression, “if you’re standing still you’re going backwards.” Spiritually speaking, this is true in every case. Whoever stops growing spiritually is not only in neutral, but is going backwards. Therefore, it is important that our lives show continual growth and increase so we become more and more like Christ.

I once saw several lines drawn on a wall inside a house with various dates written next to them. They showed how much the child living in the home had grown in a month or a year.

We need to ask ourselves, how much have we grown spiritually? Today we want to explore the secrets of growing and moving forward spiritually.

Remain in a living connection with Jesus.

We read in the words of our Lord in John 15:4, “Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me.”

From this verse, and others, we clearly see that the secret of growth is dependent on a constant connection with Jesus. It is an incredible blessing to be connected to Jesus, the source of life, for from Him flows a stream of grace and strength. Jesus helps us and constantly leads us from victory to victory. He always gives us what will serve us most for our spiritual advancement.

Always fix your eyes on heavenly values.

It is easy for us to begin to look away from Jesus and onto the insignificant things when we become spiritually “lazy” and forget to watch and pray (cf Mark 14:38). With a heavy heart, Paul had to report of a man, Demas (cf 2 Timothy 4:10). He was once an eager coworker in the kingdom of God, but then he began to love the world. His eyes were no longer focused on heavenly values but on the things of this world. No visible growth was evident, only a sad loss.

We should always look up to Jesus and the heavenly kingdom, and search for the hidden treasures in God’s

Word, where we find the secret to spiritual growth. When the world with its sparkling appeal tries to win our attention, we should be even more diligent to turn our focus to the Word of God and His promises in order to apply it to ourselves in faith. This is the secret to growth for all of us.

Remain faithful and trustworthy before God and man.

The Lord is faithful to us, and He wants us to demonstrate our faithfulness in return, in every aspect of our lives. God’s Word admonishes us in 1 Corinthians 4:2, “Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful.”

When faithfulness is extended to us by people, we experience contentment and the confidence that they will continue to be good to us. Loyalty and faithfulness are essential in developing a strong relationship. Neither good words nor good deeds on their own can take the place of a faithful heart.

In order to grow spiritually, we must always remain loyal as we follow Jesus. Our hearts must be free from care about the things of this world. It can easily happen that little things at first creep into our lives, which then can gradually do great harm to our growth. Therefore, it is important that we immediately take a stand against anything that may adversely affect us in any way.

We all realize the way of the Lord is sometimes different than we would imagine. But regardless, our Lord requires us to follow Him faithfully. Faithfulness in Him always awakens trust, builds us up and strengthens us, which leads to spiritual growth. Our Lord only wants for us what will serve to our spiritual and eternal benefit, and therefore He urges us to grow spiritually. Our focus should constantly be on Him alone, drawing us even closer to Him. Our hearts should be connected to His in all faithfulness so that nothing can separate us from His side.

If we are faithfully connected to the Lord, growing in Him, then the fruit of the Spirit will become visible in our lives. ■

David Goertzen
Swartz Creek, Michigan

The Blessing of Giving

The topic of giving has often been spoken and preached about. Continuing to reach immortal souls and other kingdom work requires material goods in order for God's kingdom to grow and move forward. However, if Christians have not consecrated their earthly possessions entirely to the Lord, and do not give, the work in Christ's vineyard will progress very slowly.

Why is it our duty to give, and what should our motive be in giving? In Matthew 6:1-3, we read, "Take heed that you do not do your charitable deeds before men, to be seen by them. Otherwise you have no reward from your Father in heaven. Therefore, when you do a charitable deed, do not sound a trumpet before you as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory from men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. But when you do a charitable deed, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing."

A young boy, Louis de Gasparin, resided in southern France. While listening to a sermon from a missionary, he was so deeply moved that he whispered in his nanny's ear and asked if she could give him a "Napoleon" (a gold coin, at that time worth approximately 20 Francs) to give to the pagans. She whispered in return, "That is a lot of money!" He whispered again, "I have so much of my own money at home." The nanny thought it would be better if he spoke to his mother first. During the closing hymn, Louis ran breathlessly to his mother's lap to ask her his question. "How about if you give only half that amount?" his mother answered. "No, I would rather give it all." His mother gave him four five-franc-coins. The young lad said, "Oh mother, give me one gold coin instead, so I can put it between two copper coins, and then nobody will see how much I'm putting in the collection bag." This satisfied the mother, and she gave her son the gold coin.

It doesn't matter what we give, nor how much, but rather what the motives are in giving. God's Word tells us, "So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver" (2 Corinthians 9:7).

"Not grudgingly or of necessity"—doesn't this explain enough? We are to give cheerfully. Let's not give as a certain businessman gave. When he made his contribution to the church, he instructed his bookkeeper, "Enter that expense as a loss." When we give a contribution, we're to do it with a cheerful heart, not because it is our duty nor only to gather treasures in heaven. We read in Scripture,

"God loves a cheerful giver"! A gift is only pleasing to God when we give with a cheerful heart, and recognize that giving is a privilege for us.

In Acts 20:35, we read, "I have shown you in every way, by laboring like this, that you must support the weak. And remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'" Who understands these words correctly and acts accordingly? Does it really bring more joy to give one hundred dollars than to receive them? Perhaps this sounds a bit strange. Nevertheless, it is true. "It is more blessed to give than to receive"! These words were spoken by Christ. Don't you often experience this same feeling when you receive a gift, as if you aren't worthy of it, causing you to feel duty-bound to give something in return? However, when your gift is given from the heart, you will experience a joyful blessing, and will find that you have drawn nearer to your heavenly Father.

We can group givers into three categories: The first group gives joyfully as they are directed by God. The second group gives because they consider it their duty. The third group gives because they feel pressure by others, or because they personally benefit in some way through giving.

We can see in the lives of many Christians that sacrificing is truly a blessing. Let's begin with Christ Himself, then Paul and Peter and all the other apostles and men of faith. How much they sacrificed and suffered! Yet what joy radiates from their words written in the Bible! Many other men and women could be listed with them. It is not a fictional narrative; it is a divine truth: "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

It doesn't always have to be money we give to the Lord. We can give our time, our knowledge, and our talents. We can consecrate our lives completely to His service, living for others and not for ourselves. The greater the service, the greater the reward and blessing.

We want to do our best. Let's also be wise and remember that God will not ask us to give more than we are capable of giving. But we want to take care not to miss opportunities to do good wherever we are able, resolving to be cheerful givers, not grudgingly or of necessity. "He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully" (2 Corinthians 9:6). ■

L. B.

GOD'S PEACE

A Good Reason to Be Thankful

*And let the peace of God rule in your hearts,
to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful. (Colossians 3:15)*

God's children should be the most thankful people, because we have the most reasons to be thankful. With each new day, we have something to look forward to and most of all to eternity: "giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light" (Colossians 1:12).

When we are rejected or overlooked, even in unimportant temporal things, we may feel anything but thankful, which then spills over into our day desiring to make us unthankful. In truth, how foolish it is to let something relatively insignificant determine our mood when "the Father . . . has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints."

God's love, through His only Son Jesus Christ, has made it possible for every soul to qualify for salvation and "the inheritance of the saints." Sadly, just like hurt people often hurt others, people who feel rejected and overlooked

in everyday life often reject and overlook the salvation which gives us a living hope, and brings peace, joy, and a thankful outlook in general.

Could it be that salvation is often rejected because we as Christians fail to let the peace of God rule in our hearts, and therefore seem unthankful and unsatisfied, even though we are "partakers of the inheritance"? The Psalmist writes to remind us of the importance of giving thanks for God's goodness, of His love for us when we were unlovable, and of telling about the wonderful works God has done in our lives. "Oh, that men would give thanks to the LORD for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men! Let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving, and declare His works with rejoicing" (Psalm 107:21-22).

How powerful is the testimony of a thankful person who proclaims the love of God in his life! Just like our chance of getting a job is much better when we know

someone in the company who puts in a good word for us, our lives as Christians will have a powerful impact when we show the world a life of thanksgiving, and display the wonderful works God has done in our lives.

The Psalmist also writes in verse 22, "Let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving." Being thankful sometimes requires a sacrifice on our part, and most of all, "let the peace of God rule in your hearts" (Colossians 3:15a).

The more we let the peace of God, instead of our will, rule our hearts, the more thankful we will be, and the more effective our ministry for the Lord will be.

Colossians 2:6-7: "As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving." ■

Peter Goertzen
Barrhead, Alberta



Sowing and Reaping

The cycle of sowing and reaping is a constant in this world. We see it not only in the natural world but also in the lives of everyone on earth. Each of us is always sowing, regardless of the season, spreading more seeds every day. The sad thing is that many people sow bad seeds and still expect a good harvest. This is clearly impossible at both the physical and spiritual levels, but when it comes to the latter, many people forget they will one day reap what they have sown.

It is in our human nature to sow only bad seeds; however, this changes when we find God. We then want to sow good seeds, and the more fully we surrender our-

selves to the Lord, the better the seeds we can sow, yielding a good and rich harvest for eternity.

Unfortunately, many people still fool themselves. Although they love the world, they hope to one day reach and forever enjoy eternal glory. They build their lives on a false hope. It is false because love for the world can never bring forth eternal fruit: “And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever” (1 John 2:17).

It is an immutable law that “whatever a man sows, that he will also reap” (Galatians 6:7). Not until their deathbeds do many people realize they have failed to secure their eternal salvation. Wheth-

er they want to or not, they must reap what they have sown, for “he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption” (Galatians 6:8).

In the midst of the world’s chaos, so many people are called to eternity completely unprepared. The greatest horror of their situation is that when they finally recognize their mistakes, they can no longer make things right. They cannot take back the evil seeds they have sown, and because they did not sow any good seeds, they cannot expect a good harvest either. Therefore, “let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart” (Galatians 6:9). ■

Ornamental Trees or Fruit Trees?

The Holy Scriptures often use trees as a symbol for people. We read in Psalm 1:3: “He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper.”

When admiring God’s handiwork in trees, we observe leaves and sometimes fruit. The leaves are the embellishment of the tree that draw attention to it. There are ornamental trees whose beauty we enjoy; however, they do not bear fruit. The quoted Psalm, however, speaks of a tree whose leaves do

not wither and that brings forth its fruit in its season. This reveals an image of the life of a child of God, a person who has received forgiveness of sins through the Lord Jesus. This person bears fruit for his Lord and Master.

Is this your wish also, dear child of God, to bear fruit? You will find valuable tips in this Psalm. To begin with, the evil influence of the ungodly must be avoided. “Walking and standing” in the path of the sinners and “sitting” by the scornful prevents spiritual growth and robs a person of the presence of God. Included in this is all liter-

ature which hinders us from drawing nearer to the Lord.

How about when we read the Bible, God’s inspired Word? Do we think about God’s Word? Are we planted by the rivers of His Word? Are our roots longing for this living water? If yes, then we will bear fruit. God gives us success for our service.

Let us look to Jesus Christ, Who has gone this way before us. He has created a path for us. Jesus Christ lived on this earth and glorified His Father. Let us follow Him as true servants. ■

R. M.



Trust in God's Word!

There are many people who do not believe that God's Word actually means what it says. They may pray, lament, shed tears, and fret because they fear being lost, but to trust in God's Word and to submit to it seems to be too much for them.

Precious Soul, if you are weary and your heart is burdened, then the Lord has an invitation for you. He says, "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28). But the enemy may whisper, "There is an unforgiveable sin, and maybe you are guilty of it, so this promise is not for you." Then you give up and do not trust the Word of the Lord. Don't listen to the lies of the enemy. Listen to the truth of God's Word instead:

"Ho! Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat. Yes, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price" (Isaiah 55:1). The invitation continues: "Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good, and let your soul delight itself in abundance" (Isaiah 55:2b).

If you hunger and thirst for righteousness, and feel godly sorrow because you have sinned, then ask God for forgiveness and believe God's promise that He will do as you ask. You will experience His peace, and your burden will be lifted. The promise in Isaiah 44:22 is for you: "I have blotted out, like a thick cloud, your transgressions, and like a cloud, your sins. Return to Me, for I have redeemed you." Isaiah 1:18 states, "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be white as snow."

God takes no pleasure in the death of a sinner but wants everyone to turn back to Him and live. He commands all people everywhere to repent, since that is the only way back to God. "And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart. I will be found by you, says the Lord" (Jeremiah 29:13-14a). Do you believe that God means what He says? If you believe, you will find help, but if you don't believe God's Word, then you won't get the help you need, because "without faith it is impossible to please God" (Hebrews 11:6). We attain the righteousness of God by faith. "Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 5:1). Repent and believe the gospel.

Praise God, His word is true, whether we believe it or not. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). ■

God's Word

*The Word of God, through the Spirit,
Will not ever lose its power.
Though foes may seek to destroy it,
And though people misemploy it,
It still stands firm, like a tower.*

*The Word of God, the Spirit's sword,
Remains forever unchanged.
And though false science hates the Word,
Philosophy won't trump the Lord.
Though scoffers mock, the truth remains.*

*And though they use technology,
The faithful Word is the same.
Despite all boastful vanity,
The Word of God stands faithfully:
"It is written," will remain.*

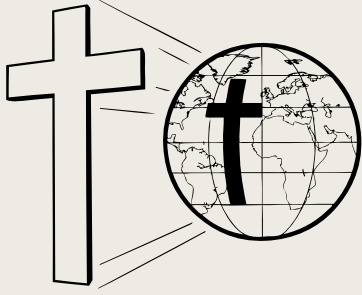
*Times and fashions may be swaying,
Trends to go against the Word.
Child of God, do not be straying,
Resist what the world is saying;
Always follow Christ the Lord.*

*Do not forget the agony
That Christ suffered on the cross;
Remember on that cruel tree,
He bore your sins to set you free.
Eternal life, how high the cost!*

*May love be the motivation
That keeps you true to the Lord.
Questionable situations,
Worldly pleasures and temptations,
Avoid them, cling to the Word.*

*The Word of God, through the Spirit,
Will not ever lose its power.
A mighty sword, let's employ it;
The gates of hell cannot destroy it.
It still stands firm, like a tower.*

Paul W. Benner



Radio Program Message of Salvation

Friedrich Krebs
Kitchener, ON

They Came to the King at Harvest Time

*“Then three of the thirty chief men went down at harvest time and came to David.”
(2 Samuel 23:13)*

When we visited southern Germany a few years ago, I was often drawn outside to view the vast landscape, where I repeatedly stopped to admire the splendid flowering canola fields. I listened to the sweet humming of the bees, which had seized the opportunity to do their work with astonishing diligence. Along the paths, the flowering fruit trees attracted my eye. On the fields, the grain sprouted from the green stalks, and the whole glorious sight hinted at an approaching harvest.

With great expectation and joy, the farmers look forward to a good harvest. As they prepare their fields in the spring and plant the precious seed in the ground, they are most certainly thinking of the harvest. All sowing happens in hopes of an abundant harvest. Then, after a good summer of ripening and waiting, the grain is cut, the fruit is picked, and the root vegetables are collected. The long anticipated joyous occasion has arrived!

As a child, I loved to follow my father to the fields just days before the harvest. He would check to see when the harvesting could begin. Everything was carefully prepared for the first harvest day. I remember the sound of the scythes mowing the field borders to prepare the way for the machines. With this preparation a certain joy was already palpable. Then came the day when out in the fields we could see the farmers

busy with the harvest. These were happy days!

A plentiful harvest is such a blessing and gives no cause for sadness. The harvest is truly a great blessing for the sustenance of everyone on this earth. “The Lord has been mindful of us; He will bless us” is the prayer in Psalm 115:12. It is therefore a good custom to celebrate Thanksgiving in God’s honor. Thanksgiving Day gives us the best opportunity to offer our Lord His due and a pleasing peace offering of our hearts and lips. In 2 Samuel 23, we read of three noblemen who came to King David at the time of the harvest. They were heroes and wanted to honor him and show their support.

This is a good example for us. We too should approach our King with thanksgiving and show Him how much we appreciate His care and His manifold blessings. Year after year, He has faithfully given us a harvest and made His promise true: “While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, winter and summer, and day and night shall not cease” (Genesis 8:22). It should not be taken for granted that we bring in a harvest every year, for the harvest is our bread, and bread is our life!

It was just days before the harvest. The undulating harvest fields made a very pleasant impression. On a Sunday afternoon, a farmer and his son had gone out to visit his cornfields. As he grabbed the individual ears of corn, a shock ran through him. His son looked



into his pale face and asked, concerned, “What is it, Father?” “We will not have a harvest this year!” he said with emotion. “This corn is diseased!” Someone had used an incorrect or overly potent herbicide, and most of the kernels were black.

No harvest. What a devastating discovery! Sometimes, there are reasons for a non-existent harvest. One thing is sure: man does not have the power for growth and thriving. The harvest is always a gift from God, and we owe it to Him alone.

In addition to the harvest of grain and fruits, which are truly vital for us, there is also the sowing and harvesting in our spiritual lives. God provides us with many gifts and material goods to sow, in order to receive a personal-life harvest. What does the Bible tell us about this? In 2 Corinthians 9:6, we read, “He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.” The prophet Hosea wrote, “Sow for yourselves righteousness; reap in mercy” (Hosea 10:12). The experienced Solomon said, “He

who sows iniquity will reap sorrow” (Proverbs 22:8). We observe good and evil sowing methods, of which Paul reminds us through the unchanging principle, “Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap” (Galatians 6:7). It cannot be any different.

We sow with our words and works. Someone wrote, “That there will be an ‘autumn’ in our lives should not make us sad. But it will be terribly sad when ‘autumn’ arrives and nothing has grown!” Yes, an autumn without fruit and without harvest would be a terrible calamity. Therefore, let us pray with the poet, “O Savior, teach me to only dedicate my years to Your ministry; from today to the grave, let me sow seeds for an everlasting life.”

Even if we sometimes have to sow the good seed with tears, God’s Word tells us that we will reap with joy. Therefore, the natural harvest, as well as the blessed life harvest, gives us every reason to go to the King and give Him our most reverent thanksgiving and worship. ■

Should we not also approach our King with thanksgiving and show Him how much we appreciate His care and His manifold blessings?

Lists of Gratitude

Compiled by some young people from Bolivia

Thank you . . .

- . . . for a family that prays for me and is a great support to me.
- . . . for my friends.
- . . . for the sunsets and the stars.
- . . . for God's Word—Bible verses that encourage.
- . . . for music!
- . . . for good health.
- . . . that God has a plan for our lives.
- . . . for the church and the youth.
- . . . for the role models in my life.

I thank God . . .

- . . . for the good times we live in.
- . . . for food.
- . . . for water.
- . . . for the Bible.
- . . . for my job.
- . . . for the church.
- . . . that He has forgiven my sins.
- . . . for my health.

I am thankful for . . .

- . . . salvation. I am so happy that Jesus opened a way for us to be saved and that we can live a better life today and tomorrow—in heaven.
- . . . my friends. The capacity to develop different friendships, to encourage each other, and to be happy and have fun with one another.
- . . . the possibility to travel far by plane or car.
- . . . our voices. I am very thankful God has given us the remarkable ability to talk with one another, to build each other up, and to sing songs of praise in order to glorify Him.
- . . . education. I am thankful that we can implement our ideas and learn to articulate ourselves.
- . . . temptations and difficult trials. They help us to recognize our need for God and our dependency on God. They strengthen us on our journey with Him and help us to understand and help others who are going through the same things.
- . . . freedom. The freedom to express ourselves, our ideas, our beliefs, etc.
- . . . chocolate. I am very thankful for this delicious treat!

Here is my list of thanksgivings. Thank You . . .

- . . . for a life with Jesus (prayer and Bible reading).
- . . . that life on earth has a purpose and that it already has a goal, even when we don't understand everything.
- . . . that God does not answer all prayers (but has better plans for us).
- . . . for family and the church family.
- . . . for tasks and work to do.
- . . . for music and education.
- . . . for provision (we have everything we need).
- . . . for technological advancement (washing machines, communication via WhatsApp).
- . . . for my job.
- . . . for the congregation.
- . . . that He has forgiven my sins.

Lessons from School (9)

Trials

Looming large at the two-year mark of my medical degree in Germany was the first state exam. It is one of the greatest obstacles on the path to graduation, but anyone who passes is statistically very likely to make it all the way through and become a doctor. I had never been so stressed in my life: I suffered mood swings, lost ten pounds, and spent my nights dreaming about the same material that occupied my days. The written examinations came and went, but I was far more afraid of the oral exam that was to follow. I had prayed about it a lot, and God had given me the assurance that I would pass. He had even promised me a specific grade, but in the night before the exam, I felt a terror like never before. Although I trusted God, I was on the verge of panic. I went straight to my dad's office, where I broke down in tears and asked him to pray with me. He consoled me, saying that he too had God's assurance that I would pass. After we prayed together, I went to bed and was actually able to sleep.

The oral exam consists of three professors quizzing four students at a time, each on his subject of expertise. As the first question came my way, my mind went blank. Seeing that I was unable to answer, the professor looked at me with some disapproval and asked, "Not a good question?" I shook my head, horrified at how things were going, and he changed the subject. How was I supposed to pass, having refused the first question? The exam continued, with the final questions coming from the biochemistry professor, an amiable man who met me with a reassuring smile. His kindness did little to ease my fear; despite his best intentions, he had no way of knowing where my knowledge gaps lay. He began slowly, and I felt like he wanted to chat with me a little to help me relax. He started by asking only about things that I knew, and when I thought that he was about to get to the real interrogation, he glanced at his watch and announced that the exam was over. I had passed—precisely with the grade that God had promised me. I was so thankful and relieved. A few days later, I went to see the friendly professor, who was the head of the examination board and therefore had the final word in assigning grades. When I thanked him for giving me a break on the exam, he laughed, remarking that I had not done all that poorly, and said, "Now comes the boring part of your degree." After all this excitement, that was just fine by me! ■

Corinna Kowalski
Hamm, Germany

VERSE OF THE MONTH

"For a good tree does not bear bad fruit, nor does a bad tree bear good fruit. For every tree is known by its own fruit. For men do not gather figs from thorns, nor do they gather grapes from a bramble bush."

Luke 6:43-44

Just as there are good and bad fruits in nature, so it is in the lives of people. Every gardener or farmer expects to find a good crop in autumn from the seeds he sowed. In the same manner, God would also like to see fruit that is pleasing to Him, in your life and mine.

Jesus goes on to explain in Luke 6 that the way we live and whatever radiates from our lives is dependent on the nature of our hearts. If the heart is evil and unclean, it is impossible to produce good fruit. If the heart is pure and noble, then it cannot bear bad fruit. Even if someone is able to fake it for a time, sooner or later the bad will surface.

Only a heart cleansed through the blood of Jesus can consistently produce good fruit through strength from God. This fruit, according to Galatians 5:22, is "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control."

Let us pray for a blessed life, filled with good fruit.

Experiences with God

*If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins
and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9)*

My name is Delfina Froesse. I am 18 years old and I live in Mexico. I grew up in a Christian home and from an early age accepted the Lord Jesus into my heart. My love for God's Word grew stronger each day and I had a strong prayer life. After some years I stopped bringing my worries to God, thinking He probably wouldn't help me anyway; I had stopped praying. Even though I knew God was there, I had no interest in restoring a relationship with Him. It came to the point where I didn't care where I would spend eternity. God had stopped knocking and speaking to my hardened heart. I was completely lost. I lived like this for a few years, knowing full well that I was a sinner, condemned to go to hell. I was so afraid of losing control over my life by trusting God, so I pushed Him away.

In July 2017 during the Youth Bible Days, one topic was entitled "The Master is calling."

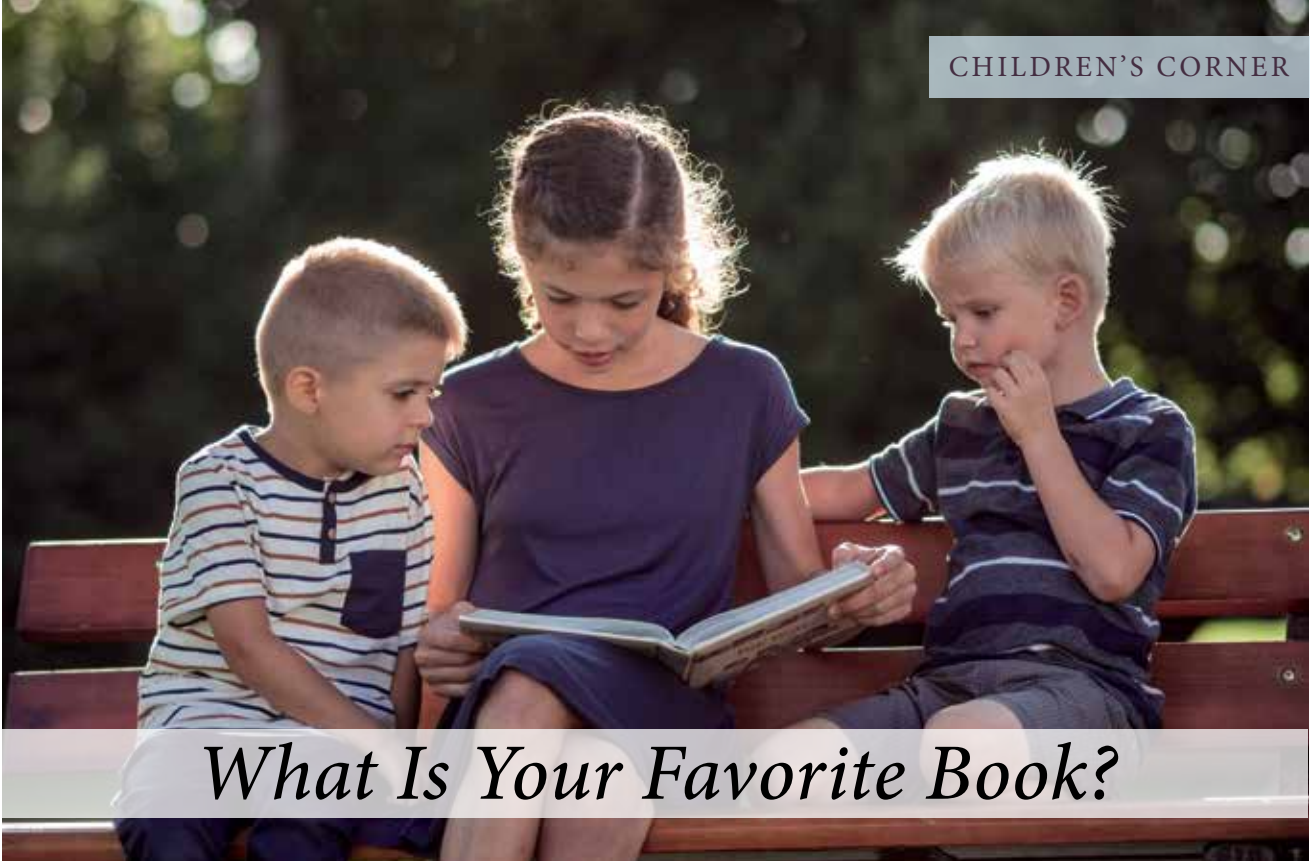
The pastor told us it was either heaven or hell, no in-between. If we kept rejecting and postponing God's call, it would grow quieter and quieter and eventually stop. "What is it that holds you back?" After years of closing myself up, these words deeply spoke to me. When they gave an opportunity to come to the altar, I didn't stand up. I felt guilty and ashamed, but I was too much of a coward to go back to pray with a preacher.

In October, when we had special services, I pleaded and cried to God to give me just one more chance. I knew I didn't deserve it, but I found mercy in His eyes and I was saved. I am now at peace. My desire is to be a light, and to share the forgiveness and love I experienced. I'm eager to see how God will use me in His Kingdom, and I would like to ask for prayers so I can be a testimony of Christ's love. ■

One day, early in the morning, after working the night shift at my job, I headed home. We had formed a carpool with other colleagues, and today it was my job to get everyone home safely. While my colleagues talked excitedly amongst themselves, I became increasingly tired. I desperately hoped to reach

the city soon. I silently prayed to God to keep me from falling asleep. Suddenly, I noticed a power come over my body. And so, by the grace of God, I arrived home safely, praise be to God. ■

Nikolaj Galva
Pforzheim, Germany



What Is Your Favorite Book?

The Ethiopian Queen Candace had a court official who managed all her treasures. Surely this man had everything he wanted and he should have been really happy and satisfied. And yet he lacked something: God, yes, peace with God. Please believe me that nothing on this earth can make you rich and happy if you are missing that one thing. You too must look for it until you find it.

How did this court official find it? He willingly paid a price for it. He requested an extended vacation to take a long journey. He traveled to Jerusalem, where the temple of God stood. He hoped to find God. Once there, he visited the magnificent buildings, the temple halls, and columns. He also prayed to this living God; but despite all this, he was not entirely happy. He had not found what his heart longed for.

So he had to go home again. At the time, the journey was not as fast as it would be today by train, car, or plane. He had to travel in a hot carriage for many days. For the monotonous ride, he brought along something to read. It was the Holy Scripture he had bought in Jerusalem and in which he now read aloud. In it was written of a man who had suffered, quiet and patient as a lamb, and was eventually slaughtered. "I wonder who that was?" he mused.

He was so engrossed in reading that he did not notice a man come alongside his carriage and listen. This

man was so familiar with the contents of the book that he joyfully asked the court official, "Do you understand what you are reading?" He replied, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" (Acts 8:31-32)

The name of the man was Philip and he was a disciple of the Lord Jesus, and he was glad to be able to speak of his Savior. He sat down on the wagon and explained to the court official that this lamb is the Son of God. He allowed Himself to be slaughtered in order to carry the just punishment for our sins so that mankind would be free from it and would gain peace with God. He continued to tell him that this Son of God, Jesus Christ, had already come and that the judgment was brought against Him when He allowed Himself to be nailed to the cross.

Now the court official understood the word he had read and accepted the Lord Jesus in faith and was also baptized by Philip. Then he went on his way rejoicing.

Dear children, all of this is in the Bible. Do you know the Bible? It shows us the way to a happy, happy life. If you sincerely repent of your sins and honestly confess them to the Savior in prayer, then you, too, can accept in faith that the Lord Jesus died for you and washed away all your sins. Then your life will be full and happy. Read your Bible every day and let it become your favorite book! ■

E. W.

The Blessing of Family Prayer

A young girl, whose godly mother had passed away, had spent 6 years with friends of her mother, who were also believers. After that, she returned to her home. At the home of her mother's friends, she was accustomed to having family devotions and praying together in the morning and in the evening, asking the Lord for whatever she needed, physically or spiritually. She found it to be quite different in her father's house. When they sat down to supper, no blessing was spoken, and when it was bedtime, each member of the family went to bed without prayer. Her father's house was without prayer. This made her very sad, and she could not feel at home there. Her father soon noticed. It hurt him, and he wanted to know the cause.

"Dear daughter," he said to her one day, "you don't seem to feel as at home here as I wish you would." After some hesitation, the young girl replied, "I don't feel safe here." "Not safe?" the father asked, astonished. The girl replied, "I am afraid to live under a roof where nobody prays." This remark struck deeply into the father's heart, and his house was soon transformed into a house of prayer, light, and peace, allowing God's blessing to be enjoyed once more.

What a remarkable truth lies in the observation of this godly child: "I do not feel safe here. I'm afraid to live under a roof where nobody prays."

Have you thought about this, my dear reader? You can certainly admit that in a house where no prayer to God is uttered, the blessing of God cannot exist. Will God's pleasure rest on a man whose family receives rich daily blessings from their heavenly Father's hand and still he does not offer God thanks, together with his family? What kind of influence would such ungratefulness have on teenage children? They will certainly follow their father's example, and in the end, he will reap the same ingratitude that he sowed.

What a blessing rests on a family where prayer is practiced as an essential part of everyday life! What an influence it has on the whole house and on each member of the family! The children will grow up "in the training and admonition of the Lord" and someday will show gratitude to their parents, who led them to the Lord early in life. If the blessing is not immediately visible, it will reveal itself later in life.

What a responsibility a prayerless father loads on himself! Will he be able to die peacefully, knowing on his deathbed how little concern he showed for his family's spiritual well-being? How will he answer for this on the Day of Judgment, when the souls entrusted to his care will accuse him before the throne of a righteous God?

Although men have been given the responsibility to lead their families in prayer and devotion, and have been ultimately entrusted with the spiritual welfare of their families, some try to escape these duties through excuses and apologies. But in the end, they all share one thing in common. They lack the strength of will and character to overcome any difficulties they may encounter, however easy it might be to overcome them. Why is this will missing? They're missing a righteous, God-centered heart. "It is good to give thanks to the LORD, and to sing praises to Your name, O Most High; to declare Your lovingkindness in the morning, and Your faithfulness every night" (Psalm 92:1-2). Where this is missing, the heart's desire to pray is naturally missing as well, both in the family circle as well as individually.

"Therefore strengthen the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees, and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be dislocated, but rather be healed" (Hebrews 12:12-13). May God give us more zeal and desire to pray and to pour a spirit of prayer on our families! Then His blessing will rest upon us. ■



A Daily Prayer

I and my house, we'll serve the Lord;
All of our days, we'll trust His Word;
 We are His faithful servants.
Lord, be the Master in our home,
All that we have, it is Your own;
 Oh, let our love be fervent.

O, let your Spirit work in us!
At all times, may we have enough
Of strength, so we may flourish!
O, let the sunshine of Your love
 Illuminate us from above
And fill our hearts with courage.

Pour out Your peace upon this home,
Upon this house and all we own;
 Bind us in love forever.
Love gives us pow'r to watch and pray
And to be faithful every day,
 Humbly striving together.

O, let our home's foundation be
Built on Thy grace, for all to see;
 Our God is always faithful.
In the dark night, let it be known
That we trust in Your help alone.
With childlike faith, we're grateful.

And if we gain prosperity,
Let pride and boasting never be
Vices that show their presence.
 For if we lose humility,
How tragic would our state then be;
We would have lost the essence.

Lord, we plead in sincerity,
O may the Holy Spirit be
Always our guide forever.
How lovely, chaste, and orderly
Is such a home in harmony,
With God's eternal favor.

K. J. Ph. Spitta



Announcements

Convention in Edmonton, Alberta

October 12th - 14th, 2019



On the Road of Salvation

Part 9

The Curse of Unbelief

Ron Taron

God's Plan of Salvation in the History of Israel

“The LORD your God, who goes before you, He will fight for you, according to all He did for you in Egypt before your eyes, and in the wilderness where you saw how the LORD your God carried you, as a man carries his son, in all the way that you went until you came to this place. Yet, for all that, you did not believe the LORD your God, who went in the way before you to search out a place for you to pitch your tents, to show you the way you should go, in the fire by night and in the cloud by day.” (Deuteronomy 1:30-33)

Moses is looking back to the time when he had sent out the twelve spies and God had commanded Israel to take possession of Canaan. He reminds the Israelites how God had miraculously brought them through the desert, how He had blessed them with His presence day and night, and had showed them the road to travel. But when it was time to take possession of the Promised Land, they were overcome by fear and refused to obey. They had murmured and complained the whole time they were in the desert that God had not brought them to their new homeland, and now when it was time to possess it, they wouldn't do so! Why? The answer is given here in our text: “Yet, for all that, you did not believe the LORD your God.”

What caused Israel's Unbelief?

As Moses reminded them, they had personally experienced God's great works among them. Repeatedly He had worked miracles, saved them, sustained and protected them. With God fighting for them, no enemy was able to touch them. In addition, God was present among them in the pillars of cloud and fire. He always directed their paths perfectly. Try to imagine that in every situation in your life and in every decision you

need to make, God would show you exactly what to do! Israel was blessed with all this and more; yet when it came time to cross over to Canaan, they couldn't believe that it would be possible.

What caused such a lack of faith?

1. The Israelites believed men more than God. Ten spies told them taking Canaan was impossible. Two contended that they could overcome with God. But Israel let themselves be discouraged by men who had no faith.

2. The Israelites looked at the giants. Yes, as we will yet see, there will be giants on our path when we endeavor to enter spiritual Canaan. But what are all the adversaries in this world if God is with us?

3. Somehow, the Israelites believed they needed to cross the Jordan and conquer the land through their own strength. Sure, they wanted God with them, but in the end, they wanted to be in control of their own destiny. Many of God's children find themselves in a similar predicament when endeavoring to enter the spiritual Canaan. They desire to experience sanctification and enter the land of rest, but to give up complete control of their lives to God is too terrifying! What if . . . ? And then unbelief follows: “I just can't trust God unconditionally!”

4. Israel forgot the omnipotence of God and the many demonstrations of His power they had already experienced. In the face of the coming battles, they just saw the danger, and their faith failed them. They thought their future, and their children's future, were forfeited if they crossed Jordan.

Unbelief and the Spiritual Canaan

The writer of Hebrews says in Chapter 4:1-3a: “Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let



us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it. For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them; but the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it. For we who have believed do enter that rest . . .”

In verses 9-11 he expands on these points: “There remains therefore a rest for the people of God. For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His. Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience.” God’s Word warns us to be diligent to come to “rest” or to die to our own works, so that only God works in us. This is the experience of entire sanctification, where man lays his all onto the altar of sacrifice, where the Holy Spirit takes complete possession of him and fills him with Himself. Dear Reader, have you had this experience, or are you hesitating to enter that wonderful land of rest that God has prepared for you?

Do you believe you absolutely need this experience, that you must come to this “rest” if you are to stand before God? Paul writes in 1 Thessalonians 4:3, “For this is the will of God, your sanctification . . .” And in Romans 12:1, “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.”

Just as it was back then with Israel, many Christians just don’t believe they need this rest God has for them. But those unbelieving Israelites died in the desert and didn’t make it to the promised land, and now the writer of Hebrews says to us that we need to take their fate as an urgent warning. Dear brother or sister, don’t let unbelief rob you of this precious experience. It is God’s will for you.

For many, the Anakim, the giants, are hindering them from entering Canaan. They look at the giants which rise up so frighteningly and powerfully before them, and they just can’t believe. There is, for example, the giant “Unbelief.” “I won’t make it anyway; I just know I can’t. I’ve tried it already, and I just can’t make it. It’s probably just for others who are better than me, but it’s not for me.” This giant offers many more deceptive thoughts.

We also have the giant “Discouragement.” “I’ve tried so hard to cross the Jordan, to experience sanctification, but I’ve never been able to make it. Every time, this giant forces me back, and it just seems so hopeless. I just don’t have the wherewithal to try again, and I’d best just give up.” We must ask if that’s the voice of the Holy Spirit, or the voice of the enemy? Don’t let the giant “Discouragement” keep you from the wonderful inheritance God has for you!

The giant “Feelings” will try to toss you like the waves of the ocean. At some point you almost believe you’ve made it across the Jordan, but the next day everything seems so dark again, and your feelings want to prove to you that you are not sanctified. Brother, sister, just take the step and consecrate your all to God, and let Him take care of sanctifying you. Dear Soul, He’s lovingly waiting for you and will gladly do the work in you if you’ll just let Him!

There are many other “giants” that will try to keep us out of Canaan. For example, “I want to,” “I need to work hard to become good enough for God to sanctify me,” “You will fail anyway,” and the list continues. These giants are all related to unbelief. Precious child of God, just believe that God, Who saved you from hell, will sanctify you just as readily. Trust Him, obey Him, and cross the Jordan with Him into the beautiful Promised Land of rest! ■

Do We Need a Revival?

Many believers perceive the necessity of a revival, since people in our time are generally defined by spiritual emptiness. Even among believers, self-centeredness, shallowness, love of worldly pleasures, and indifference towards God's expectations seem to be creeping in. For this reason, the question arises concerning the need for a cleansing. We believe this question can be answered. But when does this revival begin?

We can conclude from biblical accounts and even historical events that we may become informed.

Many ages ago, Daniel lived in a similar time of crisis. Seventy years had come to pass, just as they were prophesied by the prophet Jeremiah. Now Daniel sought the face of God to ask for the revival of his people. This revival was necessary in order to re-establish the territory and the place where God's plan for them could be manifested.

Daniel knew how necessary this revival was. Let us examine his personal behavior during this time.

"Then I set my face toward the Lord God to make request by prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes. And I prayed to the Lord my God, and made confession, and said, 'O Lord, great and awesome God, who keeps His covenant and mercy with those who love Him, and

with those who keep His commandments, we have sinned and committed iniquity, we have done wickedly and rebelled, even by departing from Your precepts and Your judgments. . . . And now, O Lord our God, who brought Your people out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand, and made Yourself a name, as it is this day—we have sinned, we have done wickedly!" (Daniel 9:3-15).

And what was the answer to this humble prayer? "Yes, while I was speaking in prayer, the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, reached me about the time of the evening offering. And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, 'O Daniel, I have now come forth to give you skill to understand. At the beginning of your supplications the command went out, and I have come to tell you, for you are greatly beloved; therefore consider the matter, and understand the vision'" (Daniel 9:21-23).

Gabriel then explained the mystery of the seventy weeks (in reality, years) that were to be fulfilled with the coming of the Messiah. This Messiah would establish His kingdom, which no earthly might or power could destroy. The heavenly messenger further announced the defeat of the Persian and Greek empires. Daniel was used by God to awaken His people

for the preparation of these revolutionary, life-altering events.

What can we learn from this account? For one thing, we can determine that revival begins with an honest confession of our own shortcomings. Daniel, who lived a life pleasing to God, turned to Him with fasting, prayer, and confession. As God's children today, many of us have the notion that such confessions are only for sinners. Daniel believed otherwise. Throughout the ages, sincere believers acknowledged the necessity of personal admission of neglect, problems, and mistakes, and therefore expressed them. All of these people experienced that after their humble submission to the mighty hand of God, they were newly cleansed, restored, and equipped for service.

In his time, the prophet Isaiah sensed the need for a revival for the people of Israel and therefore called out, "For Zion's sake I will not hold My peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until her righteousness goes forth as brightness, and her salvation as a lamp that burns" (Isaiah 62:1). Humble admission of an inadequacy must precede every revival. If we only try to purify the weaknesses of some of the children of God, we are not doing the congregation a good service. We just cannot assume that God might be generous and overlook pride, vanity, love of the world, etc.



Furthermore, we can glean from this account that revival not only occurs as a result of a personal realization of its necessity but also of a corporate, unified conviction. Daniel prayed four times, “We have sinned.” Daniel also bore the burdens along with his people. He shouldered the burden of their sins as his own, having been their spiritual leader. Today, we seem to be quite reluctant to admit that perhaps some of the weaknesses we see in others are partly due to an inadequacy on our part. Dear Reader, could it be that our own children have not yet sought the Lord due to our own disengaged attitude towards God’s kingdom? Is it possible that you might even have repeatedly criticized your brethren in the presence of your children? Has your Christianity become a formality or ritual? If

so, then you have heaped sin upon yourself for the shortcomings of your neighbor. Daniel’s fervent prayer originated out of zeal and the burden that he carried for his people. Perhaps it applies to us, like someone once said, “We need more fire in our prayers!” I don’t mean a formal, flamboyant recitation. I speak of an inner enthusiasm of the heart.

We might ask, how long has it been since we have felt a true burden for men, women, and children whom God has not yet saved? How long has it been since our hearts have earnestly yearned and desired a revival? When was the last time you fasted because you were seriously concerned about the salvation of your neighbor? Are you only a Christian by name? What do you do for Christ and the church? Do you just barely partic-

ipate? Are you only interested in controversial religious issues? We find millions of people today who profess to believe in the living God but in reality are ashamed to profess Him, if it comes right down to it. The Christian faith suffers more damage from lukewarm professors of faith than by outright enemies and opponents. Profanity or blasphemy to the worst extent is not only godlessness but also a mere lip service.

Isn’t it time that you and I, all of us, like Daniel, seek the Lord our God with prayer and fasting so that He might grant us a revival so greatly needed by His people, along with the whole world? Revival can begin when individuals or larger groups of God’s children bow down before Him and genuinely ask, “Lord, revive Your people, and start with me!” ■

When The Church Prays

“Peter was therefore kept in prison, but constant prayer was offered to God for him by the church.” (Acts 12:5)

It was March 2018 and I was preparing for our Kenya missions trip. I went to see my doctor, as I had on my two previous trips to Kenya, for any required vaccinations. For the first time the doctor asked me if my travel insurance was up to date. I said I thought so. He mentioned that another missionary about my age had traveled to Ethiopia and died there and needed to be transported home. I wondered why he told me this story, as I already had some misgivings about this trip, yet had decided to go after having been asked repeatedly to accompany the team. There would be a team of 12 going, led by Pastor Gerald Krebs and his wife. Additionally, my son Thomas was to accompany us and represent the Gideons, who had printed the Hope magazine in both English and Swahili for us to give to our local brethren there. I thought this a great opportunity to spread the Good News with the team and, if needed, I could always lean on them. Little did I know how much I would need to lean on them and on the prayers of many other saints.

The flights from Toronto, Canada to Nairobi, Kenya, starting on March 12 were uneventful but long. Travel time to Nairobi was over 20 hours! Arriving in the capital city of Kenya, we were greeted by a number of our dear brethren who had come to meet us and take us further to their villages. Soon we were off in crowded vehicles to our new home base some three hours northeast of Nairobi. As we settled into our motel rooms, we began to plan our daily mission trips. One of the first activities I enjoyed participating in was taking the new Hope magazine to the streets. How the locals enjoyed receiving these beautifully printed magazines with pictures from Kenya and filled with Scripture! Some were prayed for and all were invited to attend our worship services.

After our brief street mission, plans were made for us to divide into groups and visit the different churches. The church of God movement had been growing

and reaching many new communities over the years. Praise God for adding to His church and blessing the ministry in Kenya. In typical fashion, I traveled in a van filled with many other travelers to reach a more remote church. It was hot and most of the roads were very bumpy. After a long, strenuous journey, we began with a time of singing and fellowship, followed by the preaching of God’s Word. With the sharing of a meal the day was soon gone and we returned to our home base for supper. This would again repeat itself the next day.

Since this was my third trip to Kenya, I should have realized I needed more time to rest and settle in before embarking on strenuous mission day trips. As the days wore on, I became weaker and was unable to eat much food. My sleep was not satisfying and one morning I awoke not rested. After getting up, I noticed that something with my heart had changed. It seemed to be more stressed and this sensation would not go away. By the end of the day I felt much weaker. A sister who had joined us on the trip was a nurse and she measured my blood pressure that evening. It was very high and I was taken to a local health clinic with limited services. I was given some medication to lower my blood pressure. The next night, feeling even weaker and almost unable to eat, I remember walking toward the washroom and awakening on the floor. I had collapsed and that morning our nurse measured my blood pressure again, which manifested a severe drop.

At this point, I was spending most of my time in bed and was so weak that after walking around the motel, all I wanted was to lie down again. Brother G. Krebs consulted with a doctor friend in Edmonton, Alberta, and after some deliberation, decided it was best if I returned home as soon as possible. At this time my son was with the Gideon’s team distributing Scriptures in another part of Kenya. He was contacted to come and escort me home.

The next day, Thomas came to travel with me and we changed our flights to fly back on Tuesday, March 20th. After three hours of driving, we arrived back in Nairobi and stayed overnight in a hotel. Again I was

exhausted and wondered how I would survive the trip home. The next morning, we took a taxi to the airport and Thomas witnessed to the driver about Jesus and His saving grace. The taxi driver stated he was also a Christian and Thomas said he hoped to see him in heaven one day. Once in the airport, we had to walk a long way to our gate. Although my son carried all my bags, the walk through the large airport and checks at the gate were exhausting to me. I was thankful Thomas kept reminding me to drink and supplied me with water and juice to strengthen me.

Once on the flight, I wondered how I would be able to sit more or less upright in an economy seat for the 9 hour flight to London, England, as I just wanted to lie down. I was unable to rest much during this flight. I learned from Thomas that my family and many of the dear saints were praying for me. I could only rest in the assurance, that although I was almost too weak to pray, others were carrying me on wings of prayer.

After a long travel day, we arrived in London. Again I faced a large airport where we had to transfer from one terminal to another to find our gate. I asked that we stop and Thomas went to find me something to eat to strengthen me as I sat and waited. We continued on through this massive airport, finally arriving at our gate. I thought maybe we could upgrade our seats so I could lie down on the flight. Then I heard the announcement that the flight was full and my hopes seemed dashed. We got into the boarding line, where I held onto the posts lining the route to keep from swaying. In my heart I thought this final flight was not going to end well for me.

As we got to the front counter and showed the attendant our tickets, we were surprised to hear, “Harry and Thomas Klinger, we have new tickets for you.” New tickets, when none were asked for! She took our tickets and gave us two new ones saying, “These are first class tickets. Please enter the plane and turn to your left.” We were stunned and overjoyed to find two new seats that were spacious, and able to be reclined! What a God-send and life saver. I could only praise God in my heart!

But how did we receive first class tickets on a full flight without even asking? Later we learned that a group of dear sisters had been praying for our safe journey home and that some of them had specifically prayed that we would receive first class tickets to fly home. And God had answered those prayers! What a miracle that gave me the comfort and strength to fly for the last 8 hours from London to Toronto. I arrived home greatly weakened, but by God’s grace a seemingly impossible journey was made possible. Thanks be to God and all who prayed for my safe return home.

My recovery was slow and lasted for weeks. My doctor examined me and said I had faced the perfect storm of events that stressed me to the point where my heart was traumatized and my blood pressure was severely affected. Over the following weeks I slowly regained most of my strength. Praise be to God for the prayers of His saints. Let this be an encouragement for all of us to pray for one another in times of need.

(For a full report of the Kenyan Mission Trip, see the *Foundation of Faith* report published in July 2018.)

Harry Klinger
Winnipeg, Manitoba



Experiences With God

I have been attending services at the church of God for several months.

Because my family moved around a lot during my childhood, I am familiar with many different denominations, but I feel most at home here, at the church of God.

In Mexico, we used to learn about God's Word at school. I loved these classes but did not give them much thought outside the classroom, although I found the stories interesting and their lessons valuable. Eventually, we moved to Canada as a family. In Canada, the Bible is not taught in public schools, and so God did not cross my mind for many years. We moved back to Mexico when I was 14, and everything changed.

It was lunchtime when my mother stepped into the room and announced that she had to go to the hospital. She told me how much she loved me and asked me to take good care of my siblings if she did not come back. We hugged, and she left.

For a moment, I stood frozen, unable to move. Then, I went outside. I felt so alone and full of fear. I thought, "Am I really all alone in this world now? Is there nobody left to watch over me and protect me?" This thought terrified me. It was in this moment that I began opening my heart to God, trusting Him to set everything right and orchestrate things for the best. With this, I felt a heavy burden lift from my shoulders.

My mother came home a few days later. I thanked God, and from that day on, everything changed. I accepted Jesus into my heart, and He blessed me with His grace. I have also learned not to take anything for granted. When I am troubled, I pray to God, secure in the knowledge that I can entrust it all to Him.

I know I still have a lot to learn and far to grow in my walk with Christ. However, I also know that I do not need to worry about the future because God is always with me. In keeping with Jesus' example, I was recently baptized, showing the world that I love and trust God. ■

Vanessa Reimer
Rosal, Mexico

"Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life." (John 5:24)

I would like to share my testimony to the glory of God. This verse constantly reminds me

of what Jesus promised us in His Word. I truly believe that I crossed over from death to life, and I feel it too. I've experienced what it means to be "born again!"

I grew up in a Christian home and attended the church of God since birth, surrounded by praying parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins. All were such an

incredible example to me. God began speaking to me at an early age, but the devil was always more than happy to help me add to my list of excuses about why I should reject the Lord's calling. I thought to myself, "Life would be too boring, Christians aren't allowed to have any fun, they have far too many strict rules." So I went about my

life without God, rejecting Him for over 5 decades. As I grew older, my heart hardened and I became more and more unhappy, miserable, bitter, and depressed. Yet God kept speaking to me. It seemed nothing in my life was going right.

Then, in 2017, everything took a turn for the worse when just before my birthday I had a complete mental breakdown. I was a mess! I just sat at home crying, struggling with anxiety, depression, and loneliness. It was horrible! I couldn't work or go anywhere. I wasn't even capable of driving my car. Medications didn't really help either. God started speaking more! I begged the Lord for help, as I felt I was literally losing my mind.

Over the next couple of years things in my life seemed to get a little better, but ultimately they were getting worse, much worse. In the middle of all the turmoil and confusion that was my life, I even lost the job I loved so much. At that point I fell into the deepest, darkest depressive state of my life. Everything seemed completely hopeless and out of control. Now God was really talking to me!

I was always stubborn and thought I could fix anything in my life all by myself. I was far too proud to ever ask for help. However, I had no clue at this point how I could fix the mess which was my life. I felt so empty and my existence seemed so purposeless. Most things I always enjoyed were no longer fun for me. I was in a dark, lonely place, all alone. I really needed help.

It's amazing how God can bring even the most proud and stubborn people (like me) to their knees. I hadn't read the Bible much in de-

cadecades, but I did remember this verse from my childhood days in Sunday School. (Sunday School teachers, realize that 45 years later I still remembered. Children don't forget, praise the Lord!) Matthew 11:28: "Come to Me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest." My burden had become unbearable.

I finally composed a text to our pastor, asking just to talk to him, but I deleted it. Satan was working overtime on me, but so was God. The following morning, I wrote another text, but I just sat and looked at it for quite some time. I delayed and delayed. The send button almost seemed to be flashing at me. Satan was screaming in my head, "Don't do it!" I started to cry and break down, and finally I said out loud, "Satan, you are not going to win this time!" and then I pushed the send button. "Praise the Lord!" It wasn't long before our pastor answered my text. He said he would love to meet with me but couldn't till much later that evening, as they were just in the midst of moving. My heart sank. The devil was still yelling in my ear, saying, "See, I told you! The pastor is really busy and doesn't have time." I was really scared. I thought, "That's 8 more hours for Satan to pester me and possibly convince me to change my mind." Those were the longest 8 hours of my life. I'm sure God also had a reason for this delay.

Later that evening, I met with our pastor. We talked, read Scripture, and prayed together. I cried out to the Lord, begged Him to forgive all my sins, and pledged my life to Him. Praise and all glory be to God's holy name! All my

sins were forgiven, and that overwhelming burden of guilt, worries, anxiety, depression, and bitterness was gone, totally gone! God truly still does answer prayers today. I'm so happy and thankful for all God has done for me, especially for His amazing grace.

As a truck driver traveling through mountain passes in all weather conditions, I stared death in the face on many occasions, but God spared me, always bringing me home safely. For all this I will be eternally grateful.

I would like to thank all of you who prayed for me over all the years, especially my dear wife. Also, my parents and in-laws. My parents prayed for me every day for over half a century. Never giving up hope, always trusting and believing that God answers prayers. He sure did in my case! What an incredible example and display of faith that has been for me. From the bottom of my heart, thank you to all of you. If I have offended or wronged anyone, I humbly ask for your forgiveness.

I pray that my testimony can be a blessing to all my brothers and sisters. I also pray that it can be an encouragement to those who haven't found the courage yet to take that leap of faith. I promise you will not regret it.

I want to be obedient to God's Word. This summer, I was also blessed to have the privilege of being baptized. What an honor that I can finally say, "I belong to the family of God!" I ask that you all continue to support me in prayer in my walk with the Lord. May God bless you all. ■

Harv Peter
Chilliwack, BC

The Autumn Winds Are Blowing

The autumn winds are blowing,
The summer's fading fast;
The foggy mists are showing,
The flowers will not last.

Dark clouds and shadows cover
The land, with shades of gray.
The summertime is over;
What does the Master say?

"It is the time for harvest,"
O hear His voice, so mild;
"Of all the treasures guarded,
Where is your fruit, My child?"

How joyful is the springtime,
When birdsong fills the air;
How summer blossoms smell fine
In meadows bright and fair.

But birdsong sweet and flowers
Are faded now and mute;
For after sun and showers,
The Master seeks your fruit.

The fruit that grows in silence
Is flavored by God's love,
Is peaceful, without violence,
A treasure from above.

With love that's undiminished,
A heart that seeks God's will,
Transformed into His image
Yields good fruit, to the fill.

