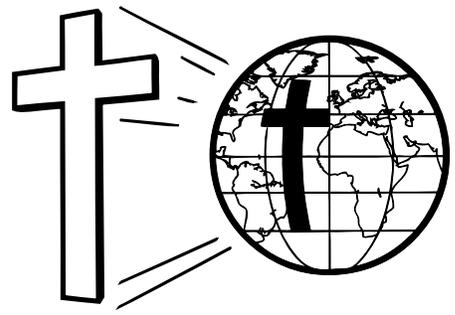


Foundation of Faith



COMFORT

HOW TO OVERCOME FEAR

**GOD'S FAITHFULNESS—
OUR COMFORT**

**CAST
ALL YOUR CARES ON HIM!**

THREE KINDS OF FAITH

**AVOID
FOOLISH CONTROVERSIES!**

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Editorial

Dear Reader,

At some point in our lives, all of us experience hardship and afflictions. Life is not always a bed of roses. Difficulties are inevitable. Clouds obscure the sun, and storms and rain darken our path. In Isaiah 38:17, King Hezekiah declares: "Indeed it was for my own peace that I had great bitterness." Pain and suffering, even mortal agony had come upon him. But he prayed to and received comfort from the almighty God, so that he was able to joyfully declare: "But you have lovingly delivered my soul from the pit of corruption."

The disciples were privileged to walk with the Lord. They experienced signs and wonders as well as His continuous care and assistance. Yet, Jesus said to them: "Most assuredly, I say to you that you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice; and you will be sorrowful" (John 16:20).

Yes, faithful children of God must also pass through the vale of tears. They will inevitably face situations in which they will be unsure of what to do. Darkness threatens to envelop them. All hope seems to dwindle. There seems to be no light, no comfort, and no answer to their questions.

The Lord, however, understands every situation and circumstance that His disciples confront. Thus, the following words are directed at all of His followers: "These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world" (John 16:33).

Initially, Christ's disciples could not comprehend their Master's arrest and sentencing culminating in His death on the cross of Golgotha. However, upon His victory over death, His resurrection, their sadness turned into joy. Triumphantly they declared: "Christ lives! O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?" (1 Corinthians 15:55). After night and darkness, a beautiful morning dawned. Joy and certainty drove out suffering and doubt and dried their tears. The Lord Jesus had become their comfort, their help, and their salvation.

Dear reader, this same Lord also wants to be our comfort and help and direct and guide us through the uncertainties of life!

H.D. Nimz

Fatherly Comfort

Shortly after the slaughter at Gravelotte (a town on the French/German border), a father was called to the deathbed of his son. The doctors had given up on him, and it was the father's duty to tell his son. The young man was terrified about the impending passage from this life to the next, so he requested, "Prepare me for death. I know you can. You have shown the way to so many people. But please, make it so clear that I can understand it."

At that moment, the father remembered an incident that had occurred during his son's school years, and then began, "Do you remember the day you came home from school and I needed to discipline you? You became so upset and yelled at me with some rude and nasty words." —"Yes, Father. A few days ago I remembered this incident and it's been troubling me. That's why I wanted to see you one last time, to ask you again for forgiveness."

"Do you still remember," responded the father, "when your quick-tempered disposition had calmed down, you came inside to me, put your arm around my neck, and said, 'My dear father, I am so sorry that I hurt you. It was not your loving son who did that. I did it out of anger. Can you forgive me?'" —"Yes, I still remember this vividly."

"Can you still remember what I said to you, as you were crying in my arms?" —"You said, 'I forgive you

with all my heart,' and then you kissed me. I will never forget your words." —"Did you believe me?" —"Of course! I have never doubted your word." —"Were you happy afterwards?" —"Of course, and since that time I loved you more than ever before. I'll never forget how lighthearted I felt, when you looked at me so kindly and said, 'I forgive you with all my heart.'"

"See, that is the way you come to Jesus. Tell Him, 'I am sorry!' Just like you told me. And faster than your father's love forgave you, He will also forgive you. He promises this in His Word. You must believe His Word as you believed mine." —"Dear father, that I can understand. I'm so thankful that you came and were able to explain this to me."

Against all expectations, the young man became healthy again. Yet the seeds planted during the fearful grips of death thrived toward maturity and bore much fruit.

How wonderful that such a great love is available for every sinner, and that God's grace and forgiveness is abundant. We should not only grasp this during the trials of life, or at death's door. Rather, even on good and healthy days, our Father's great love should be the light of our hearts and the joy of our lives.

Loving Your Neighbor

"Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them" (Matthew 7:12).

George Washington had a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to teach a message about loving one's neighbor. He was riding across the land with a group of people of high position when the last horse, while jumping over a loosely-erected stone wall, knocked down a few stones and formed a substantial hole in the wall. Washington suggested that the procession stop and fix the damage to the wall, but the others responded to this suggestion with an apathetic shrug of their shoulders. Washington said no more and rode on with them.

When the meeting was later adjourned and they

were riding on their way home, one of the men found Washington at the damaged stone wall, carefully layering the stones into the hole that had been made. "Why, Sir General," he said astonished, "your rank and your position forbid you to do such work." —"No," countered Washington, as he solemnly examined his completed work, "I am exactly the right man for this." By his conduct, Washington preached a sermon that was better understood than words. Mere words would have bored the man, but this act spoke for itself.

When you want to convince someone of your love from the deepest part of your heart, speak as little as possible about it. Show them through your actions.

Be of Good Cheer and Have Courage

*O my soul, be of good courage,
Trust in God and do not fret.
Look to Jesus, and His promise,
Let your hope on Him be set.
He will keep what He has promised;
Do not fear life's wildest storms
Even in the fiery furnace
He can keep you from all harm.*

*Storms will come and go with fervor.
Change will constantly be found.
Come what may, be true to Jesus;
He alone is solid ground.
Trust in God, He'll give you vict'ry;
Live for Him, do not dismay;
After storm clouds, sunshine follows,
After night, the light of day.*

*No, you never will be tempted
More than you can bear and stand.
God has promised this, have courage;
In the darkness, grasp His hand.
All things work for best, dear Christian,
There's a blessing in each trial;
As we bring our cares to Jesus,
Let's press onward, mile for mile.*

*When our life's work has been tested;
When we have been proven true;
Oh the joy we'll have in glory!
Trust in God, He'll bring you through.
We will see our Lord in glory,
We'll forget all woe and strife;
That we've suffered here with patience,
Once we get the crown of life.*

*So my soul, be of good courage;
Trust in God and do not fret.
Fight the good fight, pray, be patient,
You must keep on going yet.
Keep the fear of God within you;
Love His word, keep His commands;
Look to Jesus and His promise,
What He said will ever stand.*

*Time is short, the days are fleeting,
Soon our pilgrimage will end.
We will leave life's tabernacle,
Scorn the hardship, trust, my friend.
We will sing with saints in chorus
When we see our risen Lord;
Peace and joy and rest forever
Is for all who love His Word.*

W. Ebel



Casting All Your Care on Him!

“Casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.” (1 Peter 5:7)

The cares that you carry drain your strength. You are to cast them upon the Lord. Your anxious care and God’s care are two completely different things. His care, though loving and all-encompassing, causes Him no anxiety. However, our care burdens our mind with its wearisome torment. You are therefore to cast your foolish care upon the Lord, for His care is wise.

There are admittedly cares that we should not cast upon the Lord because they are unjust. The preoccupation with becoming wealthy, or being famous among people, and other such cares. Can I ask God to carry such a care for me? If you are tormented by such cares, fling them away from you, otherwise they will burn into your soul. You should pray about such things only as far as asking God to free you from such cares. Be humble in your desires and live within your means. Then your unnecessary cares will suddenly diminish.

The apostle says: “Cast your care upon the Lord.” He does not say “lay.” He uses a much stronger, expressive word. The action requires some effort. It is no child’s play to cast your care upon the Lord when the cupboards are bare and your children only have worn out shoes. Then you must act in faith. You must apply the full strength of your soul until you are successful in lifting the burden and casting it upon the Lord. After all, this effort is nowhere near the effort needed to carry this burden on your own. In contrast, how heavy is the burden of waiting for human help that does not arrive!

Therefore cast your burdens upon Him! You can share your need with others in order to obtain their support, for we are to carry each other’s burdens. You

can ask for help from friends and so practice humility. However, asking for God’s help must come first. It is noteworthy how those who completely rely on God often miraculously receive help. It is not wrong to turn to our spiritual family for help. There are so many who are glad to help, but need to know where help is needed. However, never put a person in God’s place. He alone can remove the cares and carry the burden for us.

There is also a way of making burdens light that is exactly the opposite of casting them upon the Lord. I am referring to indifference. It is unacceptable for a Christian to say in reference to a problem: “I do not care.” Whoever takes this lightly may also make light of incurring debt and breaking promises. Each person must care for his business and his family. The apostle says: “But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever” (1 Timothy 5:8). Casting your care upon the Lord is the opposite of carelessness and arrogance.

It is just as wrong to try to avoid the consequences of misconduct by casting them upon God. Someone may incur debts even though he is aware of the impossibility of ever repaying them. Another may lie in order to avoid a loss or another may get involved with gambling in order to make quick gains. Illicit self-help is a rejection of God’s help and an act of disobedience. Whoever does what is right, no matter the cost, is casting his cares upon the Lord. Our concern must be to please God. We can calmly leave all the other cares with Him.

How do we tackle casting all our cares upon God?



In order to lift the heavy burden, we need the hand of prayer and the hand of faith. We bring our care to the Lord in prayer and ask Him for help. By faith we are confident that God can and will help. Prayer unfolds the list of our concerns before God, and faith says: “I believe that God cares for me. I believe that He will help me through this situation and that it will serve to His honor and glory.”

If you have taken the cares from your shoulders and cast them upon God, then take care not to take them back again. How often have I unloaded my cares through earnest prayer, but after a time, to my shame, I realized I was carrying the same load that I thought I had cast off. Is it wise to place your feet back in the shackles when they have already once been removed? Sometimes, when I have uselessly struggled with a difficulty, I have carried it before the throne of God with a fixed determination to no longer torture myself, but to leave it all in God’s hands. I have never seen some of these cares again; they melted like the frost in the morning sun and left behind a blessing. Other trials remain, but they no longer oppress me, for I have thrown off the yoke.

It is the Lord who commands us not to worry. It is His command that we do not worry, but it is our privilege that we do not have to worry. Furthermore, we are to cast the worldly cares upon the Lord so that we have

the time and strength for more important concerns. If the Lord has broken your heavy yoke of care, then you need to take upon you His easy yoke. You must concern yourself with loving Him more, serving Him better, understanding His Word better, experiencing His fellowship, and living your life so that you do not grieve the Holy Spirit. You will always have such holy cares and they will grow as you grow in faith. In a certain sense, we can also cast these cares upon the Lord. We can await the Holy Spirit’s help, for “it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure” (Philippians 2:13). However, he only works in

us if we truly want Him to. Therefore earthly plans and endeavors cannot take over our inner being.

It is such a great privilege to cast our cares upon the Lord. If I was on trial and a famous lawyer came and offered to represent me purely out of friendship—how happy I would be! I would not have a single worry and I would tell anyone who came to speak to me about the issue: “Go talk to my lawyer, it does not concern me!” You must do the same for your sly enemy, Satan, who rejoices when you are full of cares and disgruntled. Tell him: “The Lord rebuke you, Satan!” (Zechariah 3:2).

The Lord certainly cares for His own.

**We bring our care to the
Lord in prayer and ask
Him for help. By faith we
are confident that God
can and will help.**

C. H. S.

Later

As the saying goes, we can only understand life looking backwards, but we have to live looking forward. We often stand before a “why?” There are many things that we can not comprehend now, but in eternity we will see that everything had a purpose.

The word “later” is wonderfully suited to explain apparent contradictions. Tomorrow, everything will look different than it does today. For this reason, the Holy Bible unlocks our understanding about times of affliction.

“Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness” (Hebrews 12:11). Along the paths on which God leads His children there are often prolonged times of darkness and dreariness. But the future makes everything clear and bright. The gloomy clouds that cover the sky today disappear tomorrow. And when the sun cheerfully shines, lighting up the blue sky, the flowers suddenly appear to be so lovely again, the grass is once again green, and life seems so much nicer. The tears that you shed today will tomorrow become like lenses through which your eyes, brightened once again, look at the world and see God’s countenance in His radiant goodness.

That some things appear dark in our lives today is partially due to our ignorance and our limited understanding. Our knowledge is fragmented. “For now we see in a mirror, dimly” (1 Corinthians 13:12). We have only acquired the most basic knowledge and are not yet ready for the difficult, hard-to-understand, or abstract things.

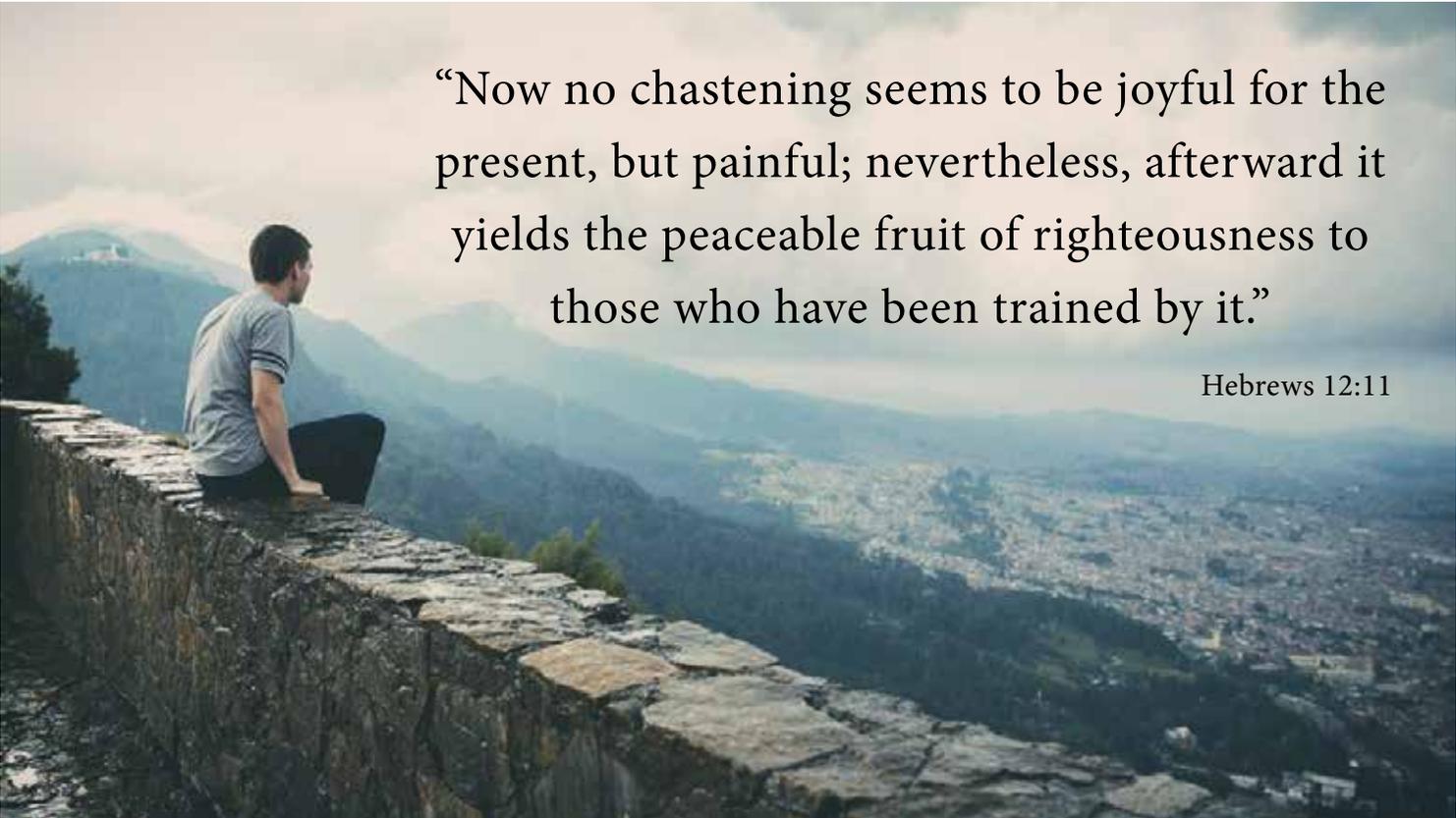
A new student arrives at a secondary school. The teacher hands him a Greek book and asks him to read a few sentences on a specific page. The student does not understand a single word of it. He doesn’t even know the alphabet. To him it’s only hieroglyphics or mysterious characters. The years pass. He works hard and perseveres in learning the language. Gradually he comes to the point of mastering it.

The day of the exam arrives. The teacher lets him read from the same page again that had put him in such an

embarrassing dilemma at his arrival. But now he easily understands everything. Without any kind of difficulties, he reads and translates every word. In every line, he recognizes special beauty. Every sentence contains a precious truth. It is a chapter from the Gospel of John, words that the Lord Jesus Himself spoke, so rich in love, wisdom, and the light of eternity. And while he reads, the words touch his heart and ignite a warm joy in his soul. Every line glows from the hidden fire of godly love. His matured understanding has allowed him to understand the secret and access these precious treasures.

We are all students in God’s school. The book of foreknowledge is written in a language that we do not yet understand. But through the years, we experience much and arrive at a more mature understanding. The longer we learn, the brighter the formerly depressing darkness becomes. At the end of school, the once confusing pages become clear and obvious, similar to how the first books we read were difficult as children, but became simple in adulthood. Then we will recognize that the golden treasure of wisdom lay in the formerly incomprehensible lines and that the book of foreknowledge is nothing else than a letter of godly love.

A little girl comes running to her father. He is preoccupied by inner doubts, which his child does not notice. She asks him: “Father, what is a poem?”—“Something beautiful,” is the answer. He opens a book and shows her a poem. She looks at it with curiosity. Then a shadow falls over her little face: “I can’t see anything nice about it!” The father reads a few verses aloud. She enjoys being read to, but she still does not understand that a poem should be beautiful. She finds flowers, stars, and other things beautiful, but poems are completely different. Her father tells her that when she is older, she

A man in a light blue t-shirt and dark pants is sitting on a stone wall, looking out over a vast valley. The valley is filled with green fields and small villages, surrounded by rolling hills and mountains under a hazy sky. The stone wall is made of large, rough-hewn stones.

“Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.”

Hebrews 12:11

will certainly take pleasure in beautiful poems. But the doubting, worried father has learned more from this than the child. He realizes that he too must wait until he is more mature in order to see the wisdom of God's glorious and perfect ways, which are currently unknown to him.

Aren't we all like little children? The thoughts of God are like exquisitely beautiful poetry. But we have to learn much more before we can read the glorious truths and the wisdom of His thoughts in those lines. We will be reminded every so often that everything the Lord does is good, that every cup of sorrow will become a blessing, that God's love always sends us the best in response to our prayers, even if we do not immediately recognize it as such. “What I am doing you do not understand now, but you will know after this” (John 13:7). “After this”—that is the key. Perhaps already in this life, but certainly in the great eternity, we will recognize that every leading of God, even those paths that hurt us or that seemed wrong to us, were best for us and our salvation. When in eternity we stand before Jesus' throne, we will surely realize that the most priceless blessings of our lives flowed from our most painful and afflicting experiences.

When we observe a sculptor in action with a hammer and chisel, we initially see a raw block of marble without a trace of a nice shape! We are amazed, however, when we

see the creation after its unveiling! In its unfinished state, the column did not look appealing. In the same way, what God wants to make out of us is still in the process of transformation.

In the Bernese Oberland in Switzerland, a stream flows with wild rage into the valley as if it wants to cause damage and bring ruin to the peaceful villages in the valley. But where it falls three hundred meters straight down the steep mountain wall, the winds catch it and carry it as a gentle, misting rain into the valley where the fine mist keeps the meadows fresh and green throughout the year. Oftentimes, pain threatens to destroy us like a raging mountain stream. But the moving of the Spirit dampens its raging so that He sinks into our hearts like a gentle, quiet rain, refreshing and helping us up and giving us new blessings in all areas of our lives.

Do we not want to learn to trust God steadfastly even in the darkest hours of our lives? Soon the dawning morning, with a gentle light, will break over everything that wanted to scare us in the terror of the night. If furrows are being plowed deep in our hearts, they are an assurance of the rich fruit to come. Even the dark clouds that swirl around our heads, threatening harm, will pass on over us after friendly raindrops fall that give life and transform barren land into fields of flowers.

J.R.M.

God's Faithfulness— our Comfort

The praise song of God's faithfulness resounds in glorious harmony throughout heaven and earth. This song of praise also rings out loudly and poignantly from the books of our Bible. From the books of Moses on through the book of Revelation chimes forth the never-ending splendor of God's faithfulness. Even in the extreme depths of life, this song of praise cannot be silenced. How extraordinary—how marvelous! Do we still praise God for His faithfulness? Do we think about this, and do we grasp what a comfort this is for us?

Paul comforts himself and his readers through God's faithfulness. In the background of this consolation lies all conflict, trepidation, and fear. From his grief-filled heart is first uttered the urgent cry for help, "Dear brothers, pray for us!" This expression usually implies a certain distress or emergency situation in which the person finds himself. Paul too was searching for help and comfort from his companions.

He knows that they too need help and comfort, and Paul can only give this comfort by pointing them toward God's faithfulness. It is as if Paul wanted to say, "Dear brothers, we all stand in battle and suffer hardship, rowing against the foaming waves of evil; but don't lose heart, because the Lord is faithful. Hope threatens to wane and courage to sink, and we see our inability in the face of our circumstances. We suffer affliction and disappointments, but dear brothers, the Lord is faithful, and will strengthen and protect you from evil." That is what the apostle had personally experienced, and how he was able to cling fast to his faith. Paul writes to his closest fellow worker, Timothy, about his suffering in Antioch, Iconia, and Lystra, and testifies candidly that, "the Lord will deliver me from every evil work and preserve me . . ." And further he writes, "At my first defense no one stood with me, but all forsook me . . . But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me" (2 Timothy 4:16–18).

O, what a faithful God! God's faithfulness was experienced in the lives of His people again and again

as a special comfort. When the congregation of Israel turned their backs on God in the desert, and made an idol for themselves, the Lord was extremely outraged. He spoke to Moses, "Go, get down! For your people . . . have corrupted themselves. . . . let Me alone, that My wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them" (Exodus 32:7-10). The covenant was broken, the tablets lay shattered on the ground, the Lord's anger had flared up, and yet Moses as the priest pleaded with the Lord to offer grace to His people. Then we read that God said, "You have found grace in My sight, and I know you by name" (Exodus 33:17). "Cut two tablets of stone like the first ones . . . which you broke. So be ready . . . and come up . . . and present yourself to Me there on the top of the mountain" (Exodus 34:1-2). There Moses encountered the Lord, "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth" (Exodus 34:6). It was in fact only God's grace and mercy that allowed Him to be moved to reestablish a covenant with the people and to begin anew.

In the last book of the Bible we find recorded the stories describing the struggles of God's New Testament people. John saw how the church would need to stand in battle, to the point of blood, against the forces of darkness. But these bitter conflicts and hardships lead, in the end, to a glorious victory. Voices, like mighty thunder and rushing water have declared this victory (read Revelation 19). "Now I saw heaven opened," said John, "and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war" (Revelation 19:11). Is that not a great comfort? God's faithfulness is a sanctuary for the soul. Your soul and mine also find their comfort here. What bliss to know that in all circumstances and relationships in life, God is faithful! Jesus introduced Himself to the church as the "faithful and true witness," and so He is to this day. He says, "Do not fear, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom" (Luke 12:32). He stands true to His Word and He also stands true to you.

Is your heart burdened? Is your soul anxious and your spirit fearful? Is your life's path heavy and dark? Have your hopes been shattered? Do you see yourself as lonely and abandoned? Are you tortured by disappointments and doubt? Are you in danger of giving up? Do you suffer under ignorant, malicious people, and have even your most

faithful friends turned away from you? In all circumstances you may know one thing: The Lord is faithful, and His faithfulness is our comfort.

Cling to these words and they will carry you through.

Friedrich Krebs

Waterloo, ON

The Comfort of God's Word

The Apostle Paul wrote to the Romans: "For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope" (Romans 15:4).

In these end times, where the world is so full of sin and unrest, and where Satan tries with all his might to destroy God's work on earth and to make life difficult for God's children, we especially need comfort. God did not leave us without comfort. He established that we receive comfort in all situations through the Holy Spirit and through His Word. For this reason we find many, many words of comfort in the holy Scriptures. God does not want us to be so overcome by our problems and disappointments that we are utterly discouraged. For this reason, He desires for us to benefit greatly from the incredible comfort found in His Word.

Dear soul, do you need comfort? In God's Word you will find great comfort that is intended just for you. Do you need God's grace? Does it seem that you have no place of refuge in the storms of life? Do you feel that you are in need of strength and renewal in the trial that you face? Then listen to what the prophet Isaiah says: "For You have been strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm, a shade from the heat; for the blast of the terrible ones is as a storm against the wall" (Isaiah 25:4). Declare what the prophet Isaiah stated: "O Lord, You are my God. I will exalt you" (Isaiah 25,1).—"And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work" (2 Corinthians 9:8).

Do you have the feeling that no one cares about you and that you are unnoticed and alone? Then listen to what the apostle Paul said: "casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you" (1 Peter 5:7). And the Lord said again through the prophet Isaiah: "See, I have inscribed you on the palms of My hands" (Isaiah 49:16a).

Do you perhaps suffer persecution such that you are fearful and afraid? If this is the case, then look beyond all of this and look to the Lord. He is stronger than all of your enemies. The Lord says through the prophets: "I, even I, am He who comforts you. Who are you that you should be afraid of a man who will die, and the son of man who will be made like the grass? And you forget the Lord your Maker, who stretched out the heavens and laid the foundations of the earth" (Isaiah 51:12-13a). God has further words of comfort in His Word: "Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, Yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand" (Isaiah 41:10).—"They will fight against you, but they shall not prevail against you, for I am with you," says the Lord, "to deliver you" (Jeremiah 1:19).—"For the Lord God will help Me; therefore I will not be disgraced; therefore I have set My face like a flint, and I know that I will not be ashamed" (Isaiah 50:7).

You may be going through many different trials. They may seem like a huge wave that threatens to flood over you. But even in these dark hours think of this word from the Lord: "Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by your name; You are Mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned, nor shall the flame scorch you" (Isaiah 43 1b-2). Praise and thank God for these wonderful promises!

Think about these words from the Holy Scriptures and trust in God! He is strong and mighty to help and He loves you. The Bible is full of words of comfort for God's children. Instead of tormenting yourself with worry, pick up your Bible. And the Spirit, Who speaks to you from its pages will drive away all that troubles you. He will give you sweet comfort—a comfort that no one else can give you.

L.H.

Three Kinds of Faith

The bible says that “not all have faith” (2 Thessalonians 3:2). And not all who say they have faith in God have the same degree of faith. But we know that GOD is faithful! All we need is a faith that clings to God’s faithfulness and finds its security in Him.

We read the following story in Mark 4:35-41:

“On the same day, when evening had come, He said to them, ‘Let us cross over to the other side.’ Now when they had left the multitude, they took Him along in the boat as He was. And other little boats were also with Him. And a great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that it was already filling. But He was in the stern, asleep on a pillow. And they awoke Him and said to Him, ‘Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?’ Then He arose and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, ‘Peace, be still!’ And the wind ceased and there was a great calm. But He said to them, ‘Why are you so fearful? How is it that you have no faith?’ And they feared exceedingly, and said to one another, ‘Who can this be, that even the wind and the sea obey Him!’”

Christ asked his disciples, “How is it that you have no faith?” We know that they believed in Him and that their faith was being built upon a firm foundation. During this storm, however, their faith wavered. In Hebrews, we read about the outward marks of faith, which are the work of an invisible God. Not all Christians have the same degree of faith, and even then their faith may waver according to the life situations that they find themselves in. The disciples once said to the Lord, “increase our faith” (Luke 17:5).

In Hebrews 11:1, we find a description of faith: “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.”

In other words, faith means resting in the trustworthiness and authority of our God in the absence of visible proof. As flesh and blood, we crave physical evidence, and we would love to see something tangible here and now. Thomas did not believe that Jesus had risen from the grave and said, “Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe” (John 20:25).

Faith is a firm and heartfelt confidence in the truthfulness of God. We believe what people say in day-to-day life—how much more should we believe God!

Faith is a practical confidence in the promises of God. It is a complete trust in the words of God and the teachings of God. If we believe God, then we must give up our own will completely. We must let God do everything in the way that He wills it.

A well-known preacher has popularly illustrated the three kinds of faith.

First, there is the struggling faith.

This faith is like a man swimming desperately in deep water. He manages to stay afloat, but he fights hard to keep from drowning.

We know that Peter walked on water (Matthew 14:28-30). Peter stepped out of the boat and started walking on the water. What would the sensation of walking on water have felt like on Peter’s feet? Peter stepped out of that boat full of confidence and optimism. Have you had a similar experience? But then, Peter felt the wind pick up, and the waves started. Instead of keeping his eyes on Jesus, Peter focused on these new difficulties. He was afraid. He hesitated. He started to sink and cried out: “Lord, help me!” Peter was fighting the waves, but Jesus was there. He reached out His hands to Peter and said: “O you of little faith, why did you doubt?” It was not the strength of the wind, nor was it the fury of the waves that caused Peter to sink. It was his lack of faith that caused him to stumble. Still, we want to learn from his courage and note that no other disciple even left the safety of the boat.

Faith is often not strong enough to see the glory of God. Mary believed in the resurrection on the last day, but her faith could not conceive of an immediate resurrection for her brother Lazarus. Jesus also spoke to Martha saying, “Did I not say to you that if you would believe you would see the glory of God?” (John 11:40).

Take Israel as another example. The Israelites were filled with despair as they stood before the Red Sea. Before them stood the Red Sea, and behind them approached the Egyptian army. They were stuck in a trap.

There seemed to be no escape, and the people wished that they had stayed in Egypt. Those who have a struggling faith are often overcome with fear. When the disciples were overcome with fear during a great storm at sea, Jesus said to them: “Why are you fearful, O you of little faith?” (Matthew 8:26).

If you have a struggling faith, pray that God would strengthen it.

The second kind of faith is a clinging faith.

This faith is like a man hanging to the side of a boat. The man who has a clinging faith is in a better position than the man who has a struggling faith because he can hold on to something and take a rest from swimming. This man can gather his strength, and should the situation arise, he can jump into the boat.

He clings to God’s promises and does not let them go. When Jacob wrestled with the man, he said, “I will not let You go unless You bless me!” (Genesis 32:26). We must do the same. We must cling to God’s Word and refuse to let go until God blesses us.

The Shunammite woman presents us with another example of this kind of faith. She begged Elisha to come with her, “As the Lord lives, and as your soul lives, I will not leave you.’ So he arose and followed her” (2 Kings 4:30).

The third kind of faith, however, is the best. It is a resting faith.

This faith is like a man safely within the boat, and he is able to reach out with a hand to help someone else get in.

Moses was such a man. He stood firm in his faith and imparted peace to the people. He encouraged the Israelites with these words: “For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall see again no more forever” (Exodus 14:13). With these words, Moses was trying to help the Israelites become quiet and calm in their faith.

Caleb was another man of such faith. He firmly believed that the Israelites could defeat their enemies. He would have gladly helped the other spies get into the boat of security. Here, all of them could have rested, but the other spies did not want help. These ten spies continued in their unbelief, and the consequences of their decision had a terrible impact on the entire Israelite community. Therefore, let us rest in faith like Caleb. It should be our goal that no one suffers harm through our doubts.

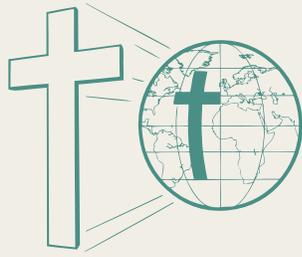
In the New Testament, we read of Paul caught in the middle of a terrible storm at sea. Despite the storm, Paul’s faith did not waver. It was through this unshakable faith that Paul was able to encourage the others on board, to “take heart” (Acts 27:22). And it was his resting faith that encouraged the 275 people on board.

What kind of faith do you have?

Most people have a struggling or clinging faith. They experience many unnecessary struggles and worries, and their struggles and cares are all in vain. Everything must happen just as God wills it. God, however, wants to give us more grace. He wants to give us peace through our faith. If we accept these gifts, we will not speak any hasty words or make any hasty decision. Then our decisions will no longer be contrary to the will of God.

A man of resting faith knows safety and security. Even though he sees the waves and hears the storm roar, he knows that he is safe in God’s arms. This man stretches out his hands to help others and gives them assurance and hope.

In Philemon 1:6, Paul wrote: “[T]hat the sharing of your faith may become effective by the acknowledgment of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus.” It is my wish that you, dear reader, find this strong and resting faith.



Radio Broadcast

The Message of Salvation

Friedrich Krebs
Kitchener, Ontario

In the World You Have Fear

Most, if not all of us, have often experienced fear. Yet so many times in the Bible we read the words: "Fear not!" God knows how to comfort and encourage His own.

Every person has experienced some fear in their lives. As children, many of us experienced fear of the dark. Outside events and changes inevitably influence our lives. Many experience fear when they are alone. Others isolate themselves because they are afraid of meeting up with certain people. Many people fear hard times, poverty, hunger, illness, failures, breakdowns, and the opinions and slander of others. Some have experienced fears from a horrible past in their personal lives. Others fear the threatening developments in our world. Lastly, many fear death! There is a reason for each of these fears. The disciples experienced this as well.

Jesus saw the fear in them and they did not deny it. They sensed that a serious event was coming. Jesus had told them: "I will strike the Shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered" (Matthew 26:31). The time of this event was close and the awareness caused them much fear and anxiety. Jesus did not blame them. Their behavior did not alienate Him. He knew the source of their fear. He had compassion and fully understood their fears. They were not of the world, but lived in the world, and the world hated them. As a small flock they would now remain without a shepherd and be vulnerable and suffer. There would be many serious repercussions for them!

Matthew states how Jesus looked at the multitudes: "He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shep-

herd" (Matthew 9:36). Sheep can not survive without a shepherd. They encounter uncertainty and fear. They stray and lose their way. They lose all orientation and soon cannot find any food or water. This rising upheaval drives them into the greatest dangers where they perish miserably if someone does not come to their rescue. The disciples could also experience this state. Jesus was seriously worried about them. Jesus' High Priestly prayer shows us His concern: "[Father] . . . I pray for them. . . . whom You have given Me, for they are Yours. . . . keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, . . . I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one" (John 17: 9,11,15).

This is Jesus! He had not forgotten His disciples. We read in John 13:1: "having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end." Jesus had to walk the way of the cross by Himself. After He had conquered the suffering and bitterness of this world, He immediately showed Himself to the disciples. With compassion and understanding He could tell them: "In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer. I have overcome the world" (John 16:33). Because He conquered the world, we are able to be conquerors through His strength and help.

Do we not have fears in this world? Who of us can absolutely deny this? Would that not be very odd and unusual? We are in the world—the same world that

Jesus and His disciples lived in. We are humans, as they were, with the same dispositions, emotions, and feelings. The things that happen in the world also influence us as Christians. The threatening developments in the world do not completely leave us unaffected.

Some of us experienced the horrors of World War II. Were there not many fears and anxieties? Were we not sometimes filled with such terror that our whole bodies shook? How can one not be filled with fear when looking into the face of death?

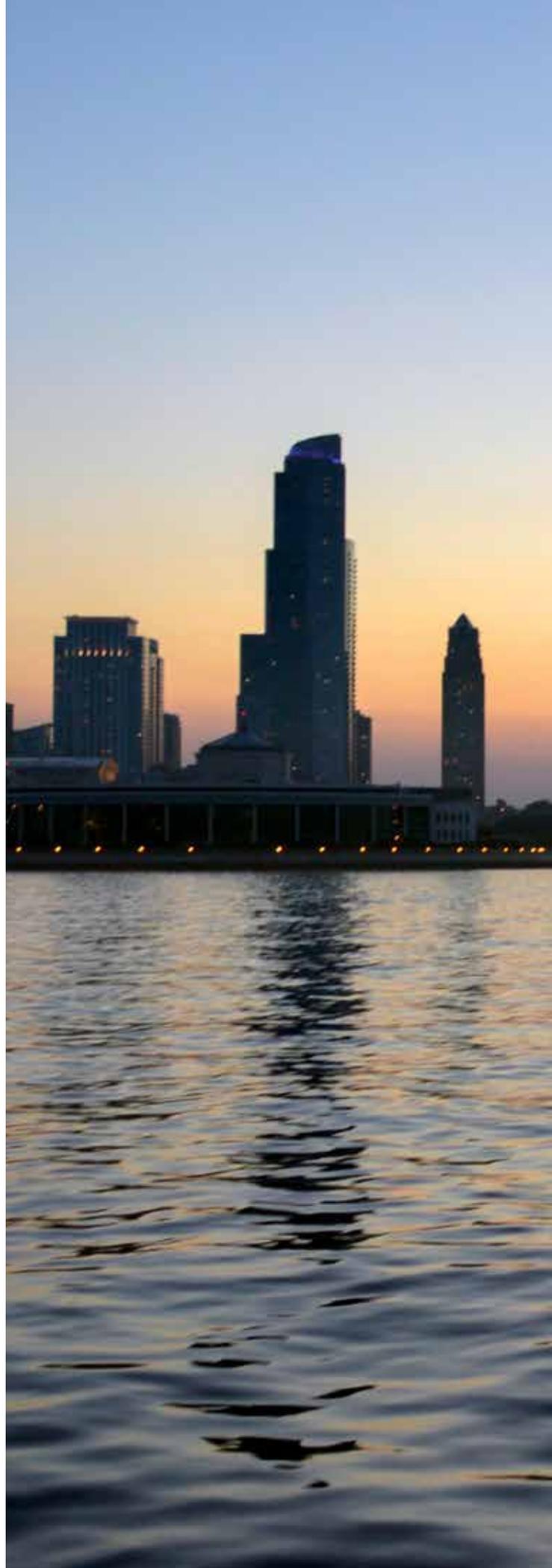
In His humanity, Jesus experienced this deep fear when He prayed in the garden of Gethsemane. The Bible tells us: "Then they came to a place which was named Gethsemane And He took Peter, James, and John with Him and He began to be troubled and deeply distressed. Then He said to them, 'My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death'" (Mark 14:32-34). He stood in the shadow of death and would be delivered to the power of darkness. He already foresaw the bitter agony He would suffer on the cross and faced it with trembling and apprehension. "For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted" (Hebrews 2:18).

It is a great comfort for us to know that the Lord knows the deep fears of our hearts. The fears in this world are not always easy to overcome by our own strength and positive thinking. A poet wrote these words:

*Is there here a soul in trouble,
Whosoever needs a friend?
Jesus' love your heart will gladden,
Bless and keep you to the end.*

There is One who understands us and said: "Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world" (John 16:33). The good shepherd calls to us: "Do not fear, little flock, for it is our Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom" (Luke 12: 32). We are able to get through anything and reach that eternal goal!

A few men stood together in a small group and discussed their worries and struggles. One who had had a lot to carry shared wonderful encouragement. He laid his hand on the arm of one of his friends and said: "George, I do not want to give you a sermon, but what helped me can surely help you: Place your complete trust in the power of the Almighty!" Dear soul, do not hesitate to do this as well.



How to Overcome Fear

Fear is one of the basic human emotions. It is essential for our survival and well-being. Fear encourages us to protect ourselves and our loved ones from danger. Fear gives us a healthy respect for God and His existence. Healthy fear is advantageous to us.

Fear also shows us where we have placed our confidence. When we live in fear that the economy and banking system will collapse, it shows that our trust in the monetary system is exceedingly great.

Fear can cause us to stop acting sober; it can paralyze us if we are supposed to do something for God or our neighbor. It can cause us to freeze in the headlights like a deer that senses danger. It can produce serious damage in our spiritual life.

Fear can keep us from telling others about Jesus. We are afraid of what others will think of us, how they will react and if they will still like us. We are afraid of tomorrow, pull back, and do not rely on the Lord and His plan. We are afraid of doing something wrong and therefore do not act, although the Spirit of God requires it of us. Christians have to deal with all these fears. Fears that keep us from giving witness for God adversely affect our joy in life.

The question remains: How do we overcome our fears?

Fear makes itself noticeable in our lives when we are afflicted with worry, when we feel we are losing control of a situation or life itself. It is exactly in these situations that we should remember that it is God who is in control, regardless of how our lives may appear, regardless of what the economic or religious condition of our country may be. God still remains in control of His world and of our lives. If we can say with certainty that He is our God, this knowledge will calm our deepest fears.

We should also take note that irrational fears do not come from God. In 2 Timothy 1:7 Paul writes: "For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind." It is often the attacks of Satan that

cause fear in us. Satan's desire is to make our service to God ineffective. If we let the Holy Spirit take control of our lives, the spirit of fear will leave us and be replaced by power, love and self-control.

In order for the Holy Spirit to be given control of our fears, we should bring both our fear and our inability to overcome it before God. We should not generalize our fears, but clearly and directly call them by name. If we are afraid to confess Jesus before others, then we should tell our heavenly Father that. When we articulate our fears and lay them at our Father's feet, He will give sufficient grace to overcome them.

In Psalm 55 David encountered fear. We find words such as terror, fearfulness, and trembling. David is looking for a way out and turns to God, in the knowledge that God will save him. And in verse 22 David calls out to all who are in fear: "Cast your burden on the Lord, and He shall sustain you; He shall never permit the righteous to be moved."

We can cast our concerns and fears on the Lord and rely on the fact that His power defeats our fears. It is when we are weak that we are truly strong. When we recognize that we cannot make it on our own and see our dependence on God, God's power is effective in us and through us.

Our fears could also be caused by trauma in our past. Perhaps some sort of abuse took place in our life. To overcome this fear, a conversation with a Christian counselor may be helpful. We can also ask other Christians to support us in prayer, so that they can help carry our concern.

Finally, let's expect victory. We should never give up because we think our case is hopeless. We want to turn to our God in dark and anxious hours. Let us trust Him and His goodness. And let us not forget that we are more than conquerors through Christ, who loves us and never leaves us nor forsakes us. May God give us the victory to overcome every fear that we encounter in life.



Extended Provision

Grizzly bears and black bears are among the most well-known representatives of Canadian wildlife. With a little luck—and provided you are at a safe distance—you might encounter them in their native habitat. A safe distance becomes critical when the mother bear is on the move with her cubs. During this time, she perceives any intruder in her environment as a potential threat and defends her young very aggressively.

This behavior is attributed to particularly long care provided by the mother bear, which begins with the birth of the offspring, and lasts until the young are able to care for themselves. The female attends exclusively to the rearing of the offspring. After about four months, the cubs leave their den for the first time, and then learn from their mother everything they need for their survival in the wild. Together they go in search of food, learn to hunt, learn to recognize dangers, and are taught how to defend themselves should danger arise. Scientists have found that the mother goes so far as to shun attractive feeding grounds in order to protect her offspring from the aggressive males they would encounter there. The little bears experience a mostly carefree and protected childhood, which comes to an abrupt end after about two years. It is namely then that the mother drives away her own offspring with powerful paw swipes, threats, and aggressive behavior.

The interesting thing is that this behavior also serves to protect the young, as at this time the mother bear is ready to mate again, and the cubs are at risk of being killed by the consenting male.

Although this example from nature is remarkable, we know that God's care for us reaches much further. God went to the extreme. For us to be freed from the burden of our sins, He sent Jesus to the earth, leaving Him, His beloved, nailed to the cross. Incomprehensible. Here is the culmination of God's care for us. But it goes on. Through the Bible, His Word, He makes sure that we have all we need in our lives. He shows us how to "find sustenance," recognize danger, how to apply the spiritual armor of which Paul speaks in Ephesians 6, and much, much more. And sometimes we experience that God somehow retreats, our prayers are not answered, or circumstances bring us to our limits and we wonder: What's going on? Why is God so distant? It pains us and we feel hurt. Could it not be that God, through our experience during this time, bestows on us a special blessing? Read Romans 8:28–39 once with this in mind and be assured that God cares for you.

Niko Ernst,
Herford (DE)

Experiences with God

“A Psalm Of David. Bless the LORD, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless His holy name! Bless the LORD, o my soul, and forget not all His benefits:”
Psalms 103:1-2

I am thankful to the Lord for His work of salvation and that I was able to experience Him personally. He gives peace and rest to His children. I also thank God for His help in many different times of illness, and I trust that He will continue to help. I thank God for the privilege of having loving parents that pray for me. It encourages me to know that I have parents and siblings that stand behind me in prayer.

I receive a great blessing from working with the children in the school. The daily devotions are food for my soul and allow me to learn and grow. The daily prayer gathering of all the teachers emphasizes that the staff aim to share the truth of God with these children in addition to the academic studies. Some children come from very sad and broken homes and some have been able to find salvation in God’s Word through the ministry of the school.

I want to encourage you to continue to pray for the school, the students and teachers here in Mexico. Prayer is the biggest support that you can offer us. Pray that God would bless His work and that our efforts and work would produce fruit for eternity.

God has been very near to me in my personal spiritual journey during this past year. God leads us through valleys and over mountain tops. I also received great blessings from our prayer meetings and Sunday services. I learned to bring all my cares to Him like a child and was able to experience how He is at our side to help us. It is awe-inspiring to think that the almighty God pays attention to us humans; He listens to us and keeps His eyes on us. Last year was a year of experiences with God that I would not have wanted to miss out on—I thank God for it!

Even though there are difficult times in our journey they are only there to bring us closer to Him. I want to remain true to Him until the end.

Tina Neufeld
Mexico

When the Fog Comes In

Ten-year old Charles lived on the Atlantic sea coast. His father was a fisherman and owned several good sized fishing boats, and had men to help him with the fishing. When the weather was good Charles often took a row boat and went out alone on the water to fish. There were certain times of the year when it was not safe for him to go out very far even when someone went with him. At these seasons the danger lay in the fogs; but on sunny days it was usually safe.

One sunny morning while one of the larger boats was being loaded for a fishing trip, Charles took a small pail of bait and hopped into a small row-boat and rowed out on the shining water to fish awhile. It was very pleasant out on the calm sparkling water, even if the fish didn't bite very well.

Suddenly a broad shadowed line appeared in the water at some distance ahead of him. A whole school of fish were coming straight toward his boat. Quietly Charles dropped several baited hooks over the side of the boat, and made each line fast to its own little ring. Then he got the long handled dip net ready for use. If those little fellows came close enough he meant to have several dips at them for they made fine fries. Soon he was busy with his short lines, and the shimmering fish came right around his boat; he could almost get them with his bare hands.

Suddenly, a thick gray darkness settled down over him, the air became cold, the sea looked like a sheet of lead, and the fish no longer shimmered. The fog had come in.

Hastily Charles drew in his lines and caught up the oars. Now which way was the shore and the wharf where the boats were tied up? While he fished his back had been toward the shore. Carefully he turned the boat and rowed contentedly and steadily in the

direction he supposed the wharf to be. He could not see a boat length ahead of him because the fog was so thick. Then he noticed that the water about the boat had shreds of white foam on it. That white foam meant the water had dashed over the great rocks, the rocks at the Point. Boats were smashed there. Already he could feel the current tugging at the oars and the boat. He must get away from there at once. As he vainly tried to force the boat in another direction one oar was jerked from his hand and floated away out of his reach. When he tried to use the other oar for steering, it also snapped from his hands and almost tossed him overboard.

Helpless now, and at the mercy of the waves which were rising in great swells, Charles clung to the narrow seat in the middle of the boat and sobbed with fear. There was no way he could be saved now. Suddenly he thought of praying. Surely he needed help now. No one could find him in this thick fog, and no one could save him from the rocks. He had been so busy trying to help himself all the time that he had not thought to pray. But now he earnestly prayed to be saved from death on those terrible rocks.

He felt his boat tilt upward, but the fog was so thick he could hardly see outside the boat. Then there was a long sweeping rush forward and his boat was carried completely over the first shoal of rocks, and grated to a stop on a sandy spot. As the boat became stranded, Charles leaped out and clambered quickly up over the slippery rocks to a place of safety. His prayer was answered. He had been saved from death on the rocks, and he had been delivered from the power of the sea. Charles never forgot that answered prayer.

from *The Beautiful Way*



SOMETHING FOR THE FAMILY

Child Rearing?

Many parents have great concern for their children. It is their goal in life to make their children happy. They should have it better in life and if possible no cloud should overshadow their sunny skies. For this reason, these parents make every effort to fulfill their child's wishes from an early age. If possible, they should have everything that their little heart desires. After all, life as an adult will be bad enough later on.

For this reason these children barely learn the meaning of the word, "No!" If ever the word "No" is spoken, they see it as an invitation for a power struggle to prove who has the greatest will. And in most cases they win both the major and trivial battles. If an outside observer complains about their rude or unruly behavior, these children don't understand what the problem is and proclaim: "I'm not doing anything bad!" I discovered an article written by an author who was unfamiliar to me. She vividly describes this problem. This is what I read:

Recently I asked a young girl: "What does your mother say when you slam the door at home like this?" She looked at me innocently and said, "She says nothing. I'm always allowed to do that." Soon I had the opportunity to make certain that Inge indeed spoke the truth and that her mother tolerated behavior that was much more reckless and defiant.

One afternoon while I sat on a bench in the castle garden, I was greeted enthusiastically. Inge had seen me and insisted that her mother should sit down on the empty spot next to me. The girl hastily threw a handful of uprooted flowers onto the ground and hurried to the

nearby playground to find a friend.

Mrs. W. and I began a conversation. I couldn't keep myself from asking if Inge had picked the flowers in the park. The mother confirmed that she had and quickly added, "I know that is not allowed, but Mousie wanted them so badly. And I find it difficult to deny her anything. I will put the plants into my big handbag so that the security guard doesn't see them."

"But Mrs. W.," I asked, completely alarmed, "what will become of Inge if you allow her to do absolutely everything she feels like doing? Even if it is wrong? How will she learn to discern between what is mine and what is yours? And if later on she decides to commit an even greater crime won't she justify her actions by saying: 'Mother did this too!?' I find that incredibly dangerous."

My good intentions were not well received. The insulted mother responded sharply: "How can you make such a big deal about such a little thing? I'm not so narrow-minded that I deny my child every harmless pleasure. You sound just like my neighbor lady who always gets upset when Inge cheats a little when she's playing in the backyard. The other kids aren't exactly angels either. Besides, they're just kids and can still grow up to be good people.

"Unfortunately I do not share your opinion," I confessed to her. "I'm afraid that if worrisome issues like these are not dealt with and uprooted when they first surface, they bear bitter fruit in the future."

At that moment Inge came back from the playground with a scowl on her face. She had not been able meet



with her friend and vented her anger by uttering several rude words. But it did not even occur to her mother to reprimand her for speaking like this. Instead, she showered her with attention and did her best to console her. Inge showed no gratitude in return. But, suddenly the little girl decided that she wanted to eat something. Immediately, Mrs. W. unpacked the supper that she had brought along even though it was still early in the afternoon.

“What would you like to eat, Mousie, cheese or a bun with meat?” she asked sweetly. “I want liver sausage,” demanded Inge. “Unfortunately, I don’t have that with me,” her mother apologized. “Then I don’t want anything!” the demanding girl countered. It was embarrassing for me to silently watch the scene unfold before me. So that I would not have to belittle the mother in front of her own child, I simply stated, “Inge just isn’t hungry yet.” Then I excused myself and got up to leave.—This short interchange taught me much about how a mother can strengthen the faults and shortcomings of her child by wrongfully giving in to her demands.

When I left the park, I climbed into a crowded streetcar. I had to stand in the aisle. That didn’t bother me much as I had relaxed earlier. When we got to the next stop, an elderly lady boarded the tram carrying a heavy parcel. Since no one stood to give her their seat, I kindly asked a girl sitting nearby who looked to be about 12 years old if she would be willing to offer her seat.

The girl looked up from her book, turned red and hesitated to stand. Her mother who sat next to her

grabbed her arm and commanded. “You stay seated. You have paid for an adult fare and aren’t required to give up your seat. And besides, this is none of their business anyway!”

I must say I felt embarrassed for that mother. If the girl had been sick or had an injured foot, then perhaps a respectful explanation would have been in order. As it was though, I got the impression that the healthy, young girl just didn’t feel like being inconvenienced by having her reading interrupted. Her own mother supported her in her rude show of disrespect.

Thus I will conclude the account and personal perceptions shared by the author. Can we imagine what Inge will be like at age 14? Most certainly she will see the world as unfriendly and evil because her every wish will not be fulfilled. And what will her mother experience along the way as her child enters adolescence? Will she become a servant that dotes on her daughter’s ever-changing moods? Will she reap gratitude or recognition? After all, her child learned from early on that her own happiness was most important, and that her moods and wishes could rule her mother.

It is good to raise our children according to biblical standards, especially in our modern times. How blessed are the children who live according to these words, even before they can read them: “Children obey your parents, in all things, for this is well pleasing to the Lord” (Colossians 3:20).

Hermann Vogt
Germany

If You Would Believe

Part 4



Mommy, Let's Pray

“We can’t get into the house without a key! Siegbert, what are we going to do?” There was an unmistakable panic in mother’s voice, and the significance of their predicament didn’t escape the youngster.

Our father traveled extensively, bringing the gospel to some of the more-than-fifty-thousand German-speaking people in Poland. New churches were established, and as so often seems the case there was a shortage of pastors. Consequently, father was frequently away from home, serving the pastoral needs of newly established congregations. In his absence mother assumed some of his pastoral duties in the local congregation.

Mother, with her firstborn son holding onto her hand, was returning from a visit to a distant church family. Not only was it cold, but darkness had overtaken them, and so they stumbled through the darkness, finally arriving back at their home. Cold and exhausted from the long walk, mother fumbled in vain in her purse for the house key. The key was not there. What now? She carefully searched her handbag a second time - but still the key was missing. A third attempt met with the same outcome.

She knew she had tucked the key into her purse after locking the door. Apparently she had lost the key en route. “Siegbert,” she confided anxiously. “We have lost the key, and without a key we can’t get into the house. When I pulled out the handkerchief to wipe your nose, it must have fallen out. We are going to have to go back to search for it. I don’t see any other way.”

The futility of that plan sinking in, she half muttered, “But where exactly was that, and how do we find a small key in this darkness?”

When they had reached the vicinity of where they surmised the handkerchief to have been pulled from the purse, they got down on their hands and knees and began to search the entire path with their hands. Back and forth, to the left and to the right they searched with half frozen hands far into the night. Overwhelmed by the futility, mother cried out, “Siegbert, what are we going to do? We can’t find the key, and without the key we can’t get into the house!”

“Mommy, let’s pray!” the boy suggested with child-like confidence.

“Yes, my son, you are right! We know that with God nothing is impossible.”

Still on their knees, they earnestly prayed for God to help. Following prayer, mother arose and braced herself with one hand on the ground. Right there, directly beneath her hand she felt the lost key.

“Again, I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven” (Matthew 18:19).

There were an innumerable number of locations along that dark country path where a small house key could have lain hidden. How far to the left or right might it have fallen? And even more uncertain was the location where mother had removed the handkerchief from her handbag. Yet, at the precise spot where the key lay hidden, God compelled them to pray, and pressed the lost key into mother’s hand. A little too far to the

left or slightly to the right, a few centimeters too early or a few centimeters too late, and the key would have remained lost. What a mighty God we have!

“He reveals deep and secret things; He knows what is in the darkness, And light dwells with Him.”
(Daniel 2:22)

I Prayed for You

“Lord, have mercy on my son” (Matthew 17:15)

It had been a long day trip to the city, but now the pitching wagon with Uncle Felix and mother’s firstborn was nearing the parental farm. Exhausted from the long journey, the team of horses, Lise and Lotte, strain against the harness of the heavily laden wagon. Liese had acquired the habit of deferring most of the pulling to Lotte, until a short stimulus to the rump encouraged greater teamwork. Even so, it wasn’t long before Lise’s harness slackened and she graciously surrendered the main burden to Lotte. Lise had mastered the art of running along without pulling her weight.

Shortly before the sun sank below the horizon, their destination came into view. The horses also noticed, neighing towards home as they quickened their step. As they neared the driveway to the farm, the lad, restless from the long journey, pleaded, “Uncle Felix, would you please let me down? I want to walk the rest of the way home.”

He had not anticipated the deep ruts in the road. The six-year-old struggled to keep abreast. He ran to the side of the pitching wagon. With one hand he reached for the sideboard, but missed and tumbled to the ground. The rear wheel of the fully loaded wagon rolled over his right arm between elbow and shoulder.

Shattered by her son’s screams, mother rushed out of the house as the wagon came to a stop in the yard. Carefully, Uncle Felix placed the boy with the crushed arm into her arms. “Mommy, don’t touch me!” he pleaded. Nothing she said and did was able to calm her seriously injured child. Gently she laid him on the bed, and quietly left the room. Hurrying to her prayer spot beneath the cedar trees in the garden, she fell on her knees pleading with God for her son.

“Father in heaven,” she prayed, “it is night. The horses are exhausted from the strenuous journey. And even if they were able to make the trip back to the city to seek medical aid for my son, it would be hours on a pitching wagon. God, You alone are our refuge in this situation. Years ago,

with one foot in the grave, I knelt before you at this exact spot. You healed me instantly from tuberculosis. And now I am pleading with You for my son. Lord, have mercy on my son! For the sake of Your beloved Son, Jesus Christ, Who bore our pain. Have mercy on my son.”

With the screams of the child in her ears, she hurried back to his room. “Siegbert,” she called. “I have prayed for you, and our beloved Savior has made you well!”

The boy fell silent. “Mommy, look,” he beamed, pumping his injured arm into the air several times. “Mommy, I want to get up now.”

“It is late,” she replied. “I’ll change you into your pajamas, and tomorrow morning you can get up.” The boy winced as mother accidentally brushed against the wound, and then he slept calmly through the night.

In the morning, after breakfast, the lad ran at full speed behind a large hoop. With a stick in his right hand, he propelled the hoop forward racing alongside. Grandfather stood in the doorway not trusting his eyes. Tears rolled down his cheeks into his beard, as he sobbed, “My eyes have not beheld anything like this!”

How great is God!

Jesus said ...,

“Did I not say to you that if you would believe you would see the glory of God?”
(John 11:40)

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

*Coincidentally, when we were reminiscing about this incident, my brother pushed up his sleeve, exposing the scar which is still visible some 79 years later. Even the imprint from the nail that fastened the steel band to the rim of the wheel is clearly defined.

Was That What Was Meant?

How often do we sing a meaningful song without even thinking about the words we are singing? We should be asking ourselves if we truly mean what we are singing. In the following story we read of the powerful impact of a song on a listener outside the church.

Robert stood on the street corner with his newspapers. It was a cold, rainy, unfriendly day. The dampness crept slowly through his body. Today was not at all a fun day. He backed up against the church wall where there was a little more shelter from the cold November wind. Then he heard some muted church singing. When a late visitor opened the door to God's house, he snuck in behind him.

Bring them in, bring them in,
Bring them from the streets and alleys;
Bring them in, bring them in,
Bring them to Jesus, the Lord!

The church song greeted him cheerfully. He slowly reached closer to the heater. "Do they truly mean it?" thought the boy as he warmed his cold hands. "I really want to know if they mean what they are singing in the song: 'Bring them in!' I would love to be brought here. Who could this Jesus be? Could they mean people like Father too? Could they help even him out of his misery?"

The church continued to sing all five verses. It was a cheerful song for such a rainy evening. All voices chimed in powerfully in the simple chorus:

Bring them in, bring them in,
All the lost in their sin,
No one too evil, no one too humble,
Healing power is there for all,
Bring the lost to Jesus!

"They wouldn't keep repeating it if they didn't mean it," Robert continued to ponder. "The landlord

put us out on the streets, and there is no place for Father other than the tavern. He could maybe recover if he got a new chance and a place like this for a new beginning. I will try . . ." And the boy hurried out the door into the cold, wet, dark evening.

The blessing was spoken and the people were leaving when the door was suddenly flung wide. A poor, soaked-through boy entered bravely and pulled a nearly helpless man behind him who was clearly completely drunk.

"What is this? What does this mean?" one of the men asked loudly. "You must be in the wrong place, my boy."—Robert looked quickly around the room and decisively shook his head. He tried in his weak strength to keep the man at his side upright. "No, the place is right. It is the same. But say, you are not all leaving, are you? Are you closing up already? I brought him here, just as you sang!"

"What's the matter? You brought whom here?" It was the friendly voice of the preacher who came to the boy.—"Yes, I was here just awhile ago. You all sang 'Bring them in . . . Today, why wait . . . Someone will help him.' Or something like that. And now I brought him to Jesus as it said in the song. Is it not true? Was that not what was meant as you sang?" Tears sprang to the boy's eyes. He looked beseechingly into the preacher's kind face.

"Tell us, my boy," the man said kindly, "is this your father?"—"Yes, it is my father. Somehow he got on the wrong track. Mother tried to help him back. She got tired and died. My sister tried hard too. She got it bad though and had to be brought to the hospital. Father did not even know what he was doing when it happened. And then I tried. But I don't know what I

can do. We don't know where we can stay and start new again. And there is no one who cares. Then I heard the people sing to bring those who were suffering. Jesus was His name, right? He would heal them, help them. Tell me, is He not here?"

The drunken man whom the boy had held until now fell hard to the floor. "There's no point, Robert," he said, "no point. Nobody cares. Let me go again! A drink will help me. Come on!"

But the strong arm of the preacher had helped the man up again and pushed him onto a bench. Then he turned to the quiet group. "Brothers and sisters, what do you say to this boy's question? Is Jesus here, here among us? This is rather personal, isn't it? And if He were here, what would He do right now with this poor fallen father and his loyal son? Men, women, let us help

Robert save his father!"

Robert and his father did not return to the tavern that night, nor ever again to have a drink. One can now hear their voices in the church meetings or on the streets calling out the invitation:

Bring them in, bring them in,
Bring the lost to Jesus!

"All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all" (Isaiah 53:6).

"This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief" (1 Timothy 1:15).

Avoid foolish controversies!

Our time is very valuable and God commands us to "do good to everyone." Stay away from people who want to argue about useless and pointless questions. Don't even allow yourself to get caught up with such issues!

The apostle Paul warned his young brother, Titus: "But avoid foolish disputes, genealogies, contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and useless" (Titus 3:9).

These conversations are pointless and useless! They neither help nor bear fruit for eternity.

There are many important questions that need to be addressed rather than those foolish questions we should avoid. I would like to name a few:

- Do I believe in the Lord Jesus Christ with all my heart?
- Do I love my Savior?
- Does He occupy the first place in my life?
- How is my walk? Is it according to the flesh or according to the Spirit?
- Does my walk honor the teachings of Jesus?
- Am I waiting for the Lord's return?
- Am I faithful in watching and praying?
- What more can I do for my Savior?

These are questions we need to ask and with which we should seriously examine ourselves. Let us be children of peace so that we can be blessed and bless others as well. Avoid those foolish controversies!

H.D. Nimz



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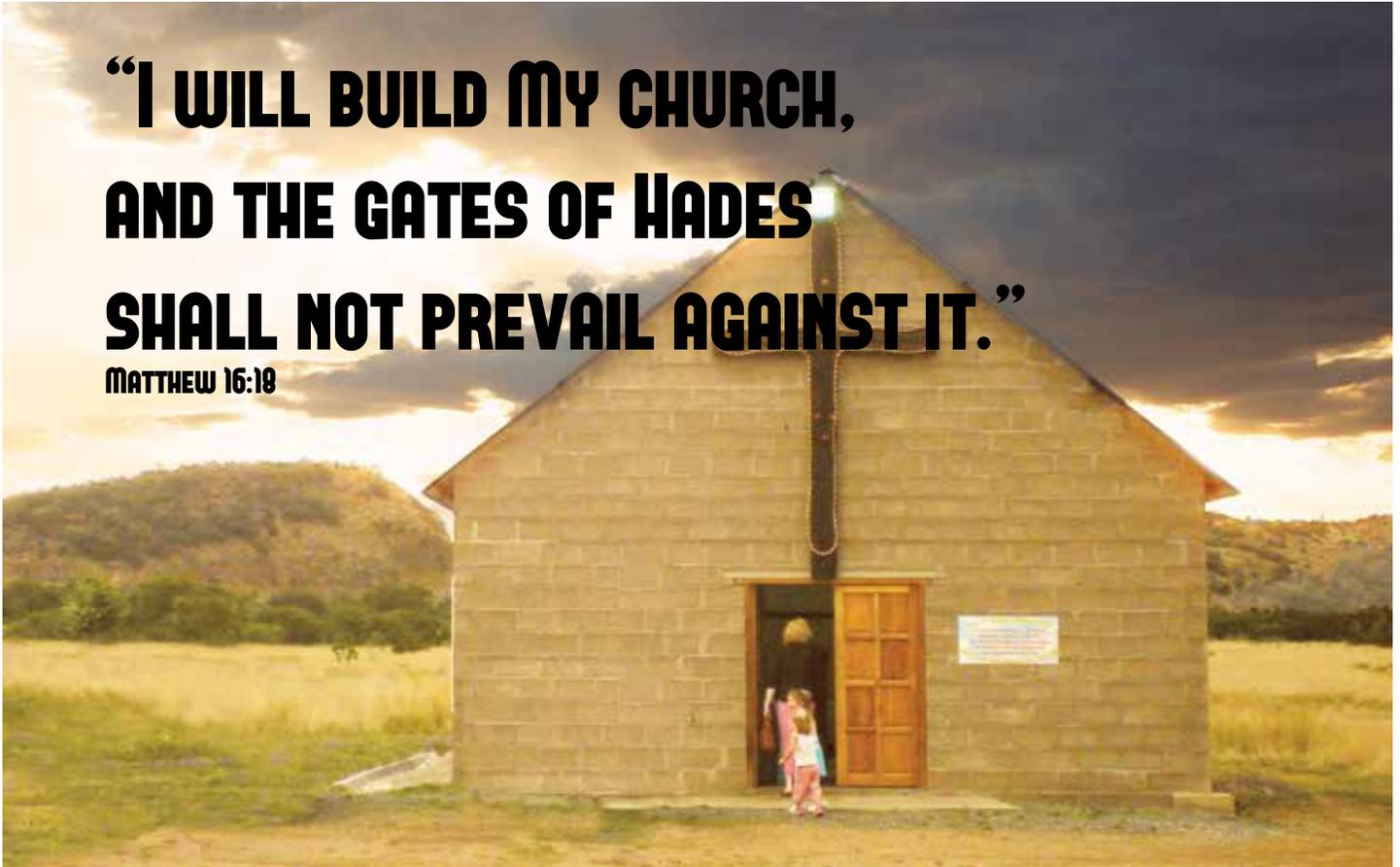
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AND THE GATES OF HADES
SHALL NOT PREVAIL AGAINST IT.”**

MATTHEW 16:18



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