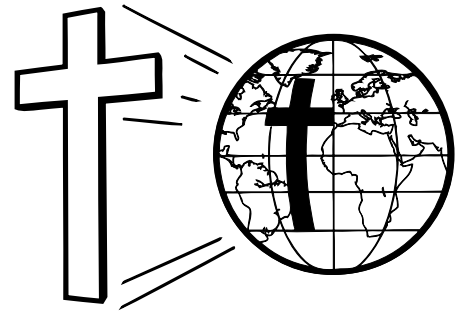


Foundation of Faith



Rest for the Soul

His Grace Is Sufficient
for Even You

"The Old John Is Dead..."

The Great Feast

How Jacob Found The Lord

A Word to Fathers

**THE GREAT
INVITATION**

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Editorial

Dear Reader!

“The kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who arranged a marriage for his son, and sent out his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding” (Matthew 22:2-3).

A huge wedding feast was prepared for the son. The guests were to be invited since the venue was large and many could participate.

When I look back to the time after escaping East Germany, I have to think about a small village in the Lüneburg Heath area in Lower Saxony. I am reminded of the weddings of the farmers and wealthy families that lived there. I was able to give a wedding card to the bridal couple. There was a custom that if you brought something to the bridal couple, you would receive a gift in return: a piece of yeast cake with butter and sugar baked on top! It was very special since we never got that at home. There we only had the bare essentials.

Throwing a quick glance into the decorated wedding hall, I wished I could also attend. But I had not been invited!

Has this ever happened to you, dear reader? Have you had the desire to attend a wedding or a special celebration but you were not invited?

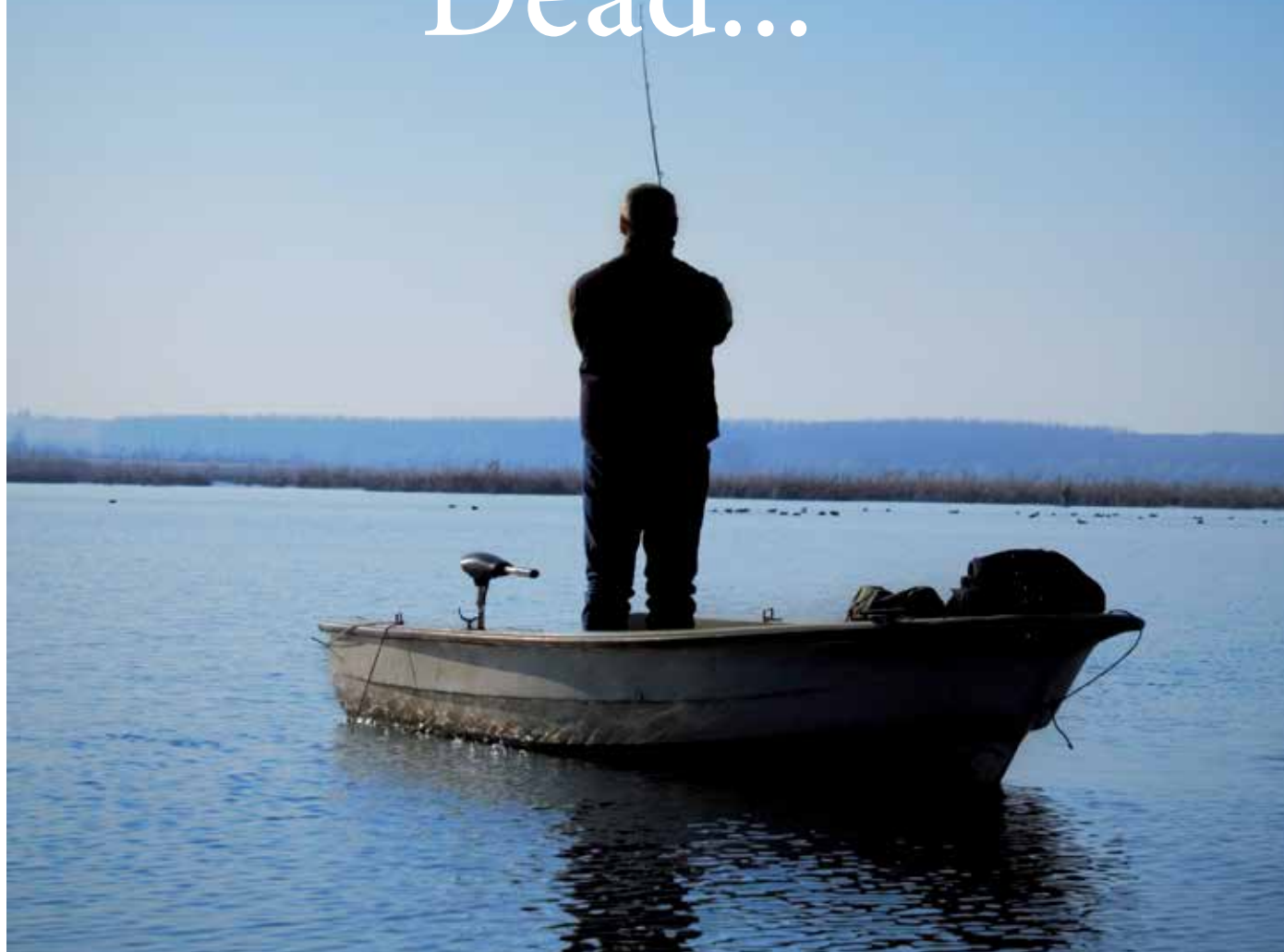
Today I have a wonderful message for you! You are invited to the greatest of feasts—the wedding feast of the Lamb!

The Lord Jesus invites everyone who is burdened by sin and guilt to bring his troubles to Him. If one comes in true repentance, He will in no way cast them out. He wants to forgive and offer us a new life. If we daily walk with Him, we will be able to partake in the wedding feast of the Lamb in eternal glory. I wish this for you, dear reader, as well as myself!

H.D. Nimz

THE GREAT INVITATION

"The Old John Is Dead..."



Old John, a fishmonger, was a famous man. This he owed to his wickedness. It was so bad that neither man nor God could reform him. He needed to become brand new, otherwise he was worthless, nay more, he was lost

forever. In his hometown he was known as "John, the drunken fishmonger." One evening he stumbled into a room where the gospel was being preached. Full of astonishment he sat there, his big hat on his head. Suddenly the preacher came up to him, put his hand on his shoulder

and spoke to him kindly. Startled, John pushed the hand from his shoulder. It was not unpleasant to him, but he thought his rags were too dirty for the clean hand of the preacher. But this man, filled with the love of his master, looked John in the eyes and saw all his

misery, his wretchedness and sin, and his heart was moved with pity.

Again he laid his hand on John's shoulder and said: "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). This glorious truth suddenly enlightened John's blackened heart.

"God loves the world!" he thought. "Then God must also love poor, drunken John. Because although I'm angry and usually drunk, I am still a piece of the world!" His spiritual eyes were opened and he saw the arms of God, ready to embrace a lost world, to embrace him. His heart melted and hot tears ran down his cheeks. He realized that, if he would be judged according to law and justice, he must suffer death. But God had loved him so much that He allowed His only begotten Son to suffer the punishment. And He died willingly in his stead. Oh, he was so incapable of helping himself. He was so wicked. But he looked away from his sin to the Lord Jesus Christ who died on the cross for him at Calvary. And he accepted Him as his own Savior and Redeemer. He was saved, for it is said: "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name" (John 1:12). John went home a new man, because God's Word says: "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new" (2 Corinthians 5:17). He went home joyfully, even though it was just a seedy basement where he lived.

His wife and only son were there. He immediately began to tell them: "Emma," he said, "I am saved!" As they knew nothing about salvation, as he also previously had not, she just said "So, drunk again!" It was time to go to bed, so he said: "Emma, I am now saved. We

must pray before we go to bed." Emma thought this was certainly a completely new idea but she did not protest, rather she knelt down with John by the bed. But what should he pray? He had never tried to pray before. But his heart was so full of joy and delight. Suddenly he shouted: "Hurrah for Jesus!" And again: "Hurrah for Jesus!" And for the third time: "Hurrah for Jesus!"

This was John's first prayer. It came from an overflowing heart. It was all about Jesus. It went straight to the throne of God. John looked at Jesus and rejoiced in him. In God's eyes, John was now a new man, saved through Jesus. People who saw only the outside could perhaps not notice a change in him, but God saw his heart and saw that it was renewed, born again, "accepted in the Beloved" (Ephesians 1:6).

The news that John had been converted spread like wildfire. Many women and children gathered around him on the street. Some wanted to buy fish, others wanted to see what was wrong with him. "He's certainly changed," said one. "He's not drunk" said a second. "He does not curse anymore," said a third. He was now the new John with his beaming face, who sold his fish and said to all: "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son." He could not keep this a secret.

Many thought: "Let's wait and see how long this lasts." But soon there was no doubt for anyone. John had truly become a new person. His steadfast life, his constant testimony of the saving and preserving power of the Lord Jesus served to bring many others to the knowledge of salvation. Many believed in Him who is eternal life.

Had John only made a temperance vow, he may have kept it for a time, maybe even forever. But he would still

have remained the old John. Outwardly he might have become different, but inside he would have remained the old man. But because he received the Lord Jesus, he was renewed internally and externally.

"Father," his son said to him one day, "if you stay saved, maybe we could move into a better home!" John said nothing, but after a short time he heard of a small house on a tidy street that was available to be rented. He went to the owner and asked if he could rent the home. He answered him: "Do you think I would rent my good house to someone like you?"—"You don't even know me!"—"Oh yes, I know you all too well!"—"I think you are mistaken."—"No, no, I am not mistaken. You are John, the drunken fishmonger!"—"Look, I figured right away that you're wrong. The old, drunken John is dead. I am a new John because, 'God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.' I believe in God and have eternal life." He reached into his pocket, pulled out several bills and said, "Perhaps you are worried whether I can pay the rent. I want to pay in advance."

That was convincing for the homeowner, because John's words were consistent with his actions. He got the house and lived in it for a long time. John could say, "He, Jesus, loved me and gave Himself for me."

Can you, dear reader, also say this? If not, remember that you also must be born again. God's Word says: "Unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3). The big question that determines our eternal destiny is whether we receive Jesus Christ as our personal Savior from guilt and sin, or reject Him.

The Great Invitation

“Listen! Everyone who is thirsty, come to the waters. And you who have no money, come, buy and eat. Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.” (Isaiah 55:1, New Life Version)

What a simple yet beautifully powerful verse! Let us take some time to study this verse in more detail, and let the Holy Spirit bless us through it!

We’ll first turn our attention to the little word “listen.” The gravity and importance of the message coming from the mouth of the prophet requires a special call to attention. We are to prepare ourselves to receive valuable information. One reason why so many people receive little or no divine blessings could be that they do not give God their attention; their heart and mind are elsewhere. The prophet presents a message here that is directed at everyone, a message of great importance.

God had chosen Israel to be His people and granted them special blessings and privileges. No other nation on earth had such clear knowledge or such deep insight into His intention as this nation. Other nations did not know the true God and lived in brute paganism.

Now the prophet calls: “Listen! Everyone who is thirsty, come!”—Do you not hear this, you sleeping nations? It is the God of the heavens, who, in His sincere mercy, is sending you a message that will bring freedom not just to the Jews, but to all the nations of the world!

The Lord Jesus tells us in Luke 19:10: “For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.” In Revelation 22:17 we read: “And the Spirit and the bride say, ‘Come!’ And let him who hears say, ‘Come!’ And let him who thirsts come. Whoever de-

sires, let him take the water of life freely.” If you are not saved, then this message applies to you because the Lord Jesus died precisely for you. He did not come to call the righteous, but the sinners to repentance.

“Everyone who thirsts, come!” Thirsty are the people who have become aware of this fact: “My only salvation lies in Jesus Christ!” In a parable, the Lord speaks of the prodigal son: “When he came to himself.” Whoever has not reached the point of realizing their own helplessness cannot be helped.

If a person has not yet come to the point of realizing his lost state and acknowledging Christ as the only hope for salvation, he cannot be helped. This is what the thief on the cross felt. He saw his only hope in Christ alone. He confessed that he was receiving the due reward of his deeds and cried: “Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom” (Luke 23:42). His honest plea received an immediate reply.

“Come!”—“Come” is a wonderful word of invitation. We find it everywhere within the Gospel. It is very personal, and meant specifically for you. However, you must decide. Your choice decides your fate. If you are indifferent, that is also a choice, the choice of eternal damnation. The responsibility is yours. We are still in the time of grace. The invitation still goes out to all people: “Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28).

To what is the Prophet inviting us? “To the water.” Jesus often spoke about water and used it as an image

“And the Spirit and the bride say,
‘Come!’ And let him who hears
say, ‘Come!’ And let him who
thirsts come. Whoever desires, let
him take the water of life freely.”

Revelation 22:17



of spiritual life. Therefore, it is a fitting symbol of the blessings of heaven that similarly flow in boundless abundance from God’s throne to earth. In Jesus there is an abundance of grace, even for the most wicked of sinners.

“Buy without money.” We need money to acquire the necessities of life, but in the acquisition of the salvation of our souls we are poor and have no means. We cannot pay off the debts we have against God. We cannot remove our sinful state ourselves. We need Someone who has paid everything for us. Jesus did that when He gave His life to save us by grace.

The prophet repeats the invitation: “Come,” and adds “buy and eat.” Even though Christ has paid all our debts, we must also do something. We have to accept His salvation and give up the pleasures of this world. Jesus once said: “So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple” (Luke 14:33).

Buying alone is not enough. We are also directed: “eat.” When our body is nourished, it is strengthened. We can also enjoy nourishment in the spiritual sense in God’s kingdom. The prodigal son, when he acknowledged his pitiful state, realized that in his father’s home there was enough food and clothing. We find the same abundance in our heavenly Father.

In Luke 14, we read about a man who sent out his servants to tell those who were invited: “Come for all things are ready.” Isaiah brings us the same message. In Psalm 119:103, David gives us an idea about the food at this feast and how wonderful it tastes: “How sweet are your words to my taste, Sweeter than honey to my mouth!” In our heavenly Father’s home, there is an abundance of food. Come, dear soul, come!

“Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.” Not just water to still the thirst. The wine we enjoy in God’s kingdom is a completely different type than the physical one. It does not stimulate or excite. It does not allow us to forget our sorrows for a mere moment; no, it brings us joys that are eternal. “In Your presence is fullness of joy; at Your right hand are pleasures forevermore” (Psalm 16:11). Jesus said to the woman at Jacob’s well, as well as to us: “Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life” (John 4:13–14).

Dear reader, this great invitation also applies to you: “Come, buy and eat.” Have you accepted this invitation?

J.C.T.

Rest for the Soul

“Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.”
 (Matthew 11:28-29)

Wonderful words of love and hope! Never did a sweeter nor richer invitation than this reach mortal ears. A whole world of humankind groaning under a burden, tossing in unrest, laboring under pain, sighing with sorrow, roaming in discontent, filled with fear, sinking in despair. But One appears upon the scene and says, “Come unto me . . . and I will give you rest” (KJV). Oh, may the humble followers of the lowly Nazarene echo and reecho this invitation of love among the haunts of men as long as time shall last! Amid a world of sin and trouble, a soul at rest; how blessed!

You remember the day you came to Him. Your sins with all the burden of guilt were taken away and you found rest. Later you dedicated yourself fully and forever to the Lord and entered into the fullness of His rest. Canaan’s fair land is the soul’s sweet home of rest. What heaven will be we cannot know now. Doubtless scenes and experiences will arise of such a nature as to greatly enhance the felicity of our hearts, but the revelation of heaven upon a sanctified soul and “The enjoyment of heavenly bliss E’en in a world like this” can never be told. Storms will arise and threaten you; but if the cable of faith remains unbroken and the anchor of hope unshaken, your little boat can sail on sweetly at rest. Doubts are very destructive to soul-rest, therefore they must be dispelled at their first approach. By faith your soul can be kept in the precious realization of heavenly enjoyments. You can have sweet walks with God and tastes of His love all along your journey of life. By living in the vale of humble submission to God, fully and freely yielded to His control, the sweets of heaven’s graces will be distilled upon your soul like the gentle siftings of the evening dew upon the flower, transporting you to wondrous felicity in God all along your pilgrim way.

*Behold the fowls of the air:
 They sow not, neither do they reap;
 Yet kings have not more healthful fare,
 Nor rest in calmer, sweeter sleep.
 They have no barns nor hoarded grain,
 Yet all day long a soft, sweet strain
 They warble forth from forest tree;
 Ever happy and ever free,
 Teaching a lesson dear to me.
 So free from care, O sylvan band;
 Fed by a heavenly Father’s hand.
 Your freedom, O ye fowls of heaven,
 New courage to my soul hath given;
 I no more can doubt or sorrow:
 God will care for me tomorrow.
 Behold the lilies how they grow:
 They toil not neither do they spin;
 Yet kings in all their pomp and show
 Are not arrayed like one of them;
 Smiling and free in breezes sway,
 Yet clothed by heavenly hand are they.
 Meek lilies of the quiet fields,
 Your growth instruction to me yields.
 The One who clothes the lily fair
 And gives it tender, earnest care—
 Will He not hear my fervent prayer?
 The One who notes the sparrow’s fall—
 Does He not love His creatures all?
 If He so clothes each tuft and tree
 And gives the birds such liberty,
 Will He not clothe and care for me?
 I no more can doubt or sorrow:
 God will care for me tomorrow.*

“A merry heart hath a continual feast.”
 It is the will of God that you would always be happy.

A Friendly Invitation

“Come to me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” (Mt. 11:28)

If you are not contented with such things as you have, you would not be contented had you ever so much.

Those who are always contented and happy are a most gracious contribution from God to a discontented world.

This sin-darkened world is dotted here and there by beautiful Christian lives, which are to the world’s weary wastes what the oasis is to the parched desert.

The Christian has the blessed privilege of proving to a covetous, discontented world that by the grace of God one can be contented under the most adverse circumstances.

Oftentimes people conclude that they would be happy if their surrounding circumstances were different. True happiness consists not so much in the environments, as in the dispositions of the heart.

After a day of labor, what a pleasure it is to meet at home the warmth of hearts we love! After a life of toil, what will be the pleasure of meeting all the loved in heaven?

I am told that the language of the Algonquin Indians of North America contained no word from which to translate the word love. When the English missionaries translated the Bible into that language they were obliged to coin a word for love. What must be a language without love? And what must be the heart!

The Christian out upon life’s sea can, by faith, hope, and love, weather the wildest storm that ever the winds of adversity blew. Hope is the anchor fastened to the eternal word of God; faith is the cable attached to the anchor of hope.

Charles E. Orr

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The importance placed on an invitation is largely dependent on the one who gives the invitation. We place more worth on the invitation according to the position of the person giving the invitation. How honored would you be if the son of a king were to invite you?

Jesus Christ gives the invitation found in our Bible text. Who is Jesus Christ? He is not the son of an earthly king or any other earthly dignitary, but rather the Son of the living God, the Ruler of the universe. His throne is up in heaven, but His voice comes down to us with an exceedingly friendly and loving invitation.

To whom is this invitation directed? To all who labor and are heavy laden. The Lord calls to them, “Come to me . . . and I will give you rest.” Oh tired and sin-burdened soul, think about it, you have been invited! You are being offered the rest and peace which you have sought in vain until now. Can you dismiss such an invitation? Can you ignore it?

If you prefer, however, to continue on sin’s rough path, despite the friendly invitation of God’s Son and despite the promise of rest, remember that this path will lead you to eternal ruination, to eternal condemnation. You alone are then to blame for your own fate. Throughout all eternity you will have to say that you are at that place of pain because you did not accept Jesus’ loving invitation.

Why would you want to continue on the path of ruin, when there is a path of salvation for you, a path of peace and rest? The invitation has gone out! It is for you; it applies to you. Today is the day of salvation. When this day comes to an end, the friendly invitation will no longer apply. Therefore come, while the Lord still calls you.

Now or Never!

“To everything there is a season,” says God’s Word. What isn’t accomplished in its allotted time can, in many instances, no longer be accomplished. It is too late, forever too late, and cannot be redeemed.

Included in this scenario is salvation of the soul. In the same way that the path to God’s salvation is specifically determined, so too is the time frame in which we can become saved. If man resists the prompting of the Holy Spirit attempting to lead him to repentance, it may well be forever too late for him to attain the gift of salvation.

Only through Jesus can the path be won that leads to God and to eternal glory. Jesus said, “I am the way . . . No one comes to the Father except through Me” (John 14:6). And, “I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved” (John 10:9).

Truly, there is no other Name under heaven given to man through which we can become saved. In no other name is redemption or salvation to be had, but in the name of Jesus.

Man cannot say, “Later!” when the Spirit of God exerts Himself on his behalf. It is written, “Now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation” (2 Corinthians 6:2). And, “Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts” (Hebrews 4:7). Whoever discounts this warning runs the risk of being eternally lost.

Perhaps you find it repugnant that someone would try to find salvation through a different path than the biblical one, when there just isn’t any other way. Yet tell me, when you yourself aren’t yet saved, is it not just

as horrible when, day after day, you postpone becoming saved? How many “todays” have you experienced, and have still not allowed yourself to be saved from your sins? Just like the Roman governor once said to the apostle Paul, perhaps you too have said to the Holy Spirit, who cares about you, “Go away for now; when I have a convenient time I will call for you” (Acts 24:25). Tell me, isn’t that also horrible? Could you blame God, if He should never again make an effort on your behalf, and should simply give you over to your chosen lot in life and allow you to enter your eternal doom?

You know that after death comes the judgment (Hebrews 9:27). No longer will there be forgiveness or escape. And do you know when you will die? You do not know. Maybe already today. Would you be ready to meet God, should you be called to eternity today? And if you are not yet ready to stand before God, how long will you wait? Consider: Now or never!

Do you think that maybe you will call on the Lord for His grace in your last hours of life? Don’t be mistaken, God will not be mocked. Do you even know if you will be capable of calling out to Him? Or if you do call on Him, whether He will grant you His attention? How quickly can your lifeboat be smashed into pieces!

Dear unsaved friend, you proud or indifferent boatman on the sea of life, hurry, save your soul! Take Jesus on board, while you still have opportunity and time. You know that you need Jesus. Stop procrastinating, and accept Him into your life as your personal Lord and Savior!

EP

Then All Yearning Is Stilled!

During my youth when I still pursued the pleasures of the world and sat in bars, I noticed that those who were drunk often sang religious songs, songs about home and yearning. I myself sang along with these songs while intoxicated. Such times always raised a specific emotion within me. There is much truth in the proverb: “Children and drunks usually tell the truth.” When a person is so intoxicated that he no longer has control of his senses, he is no longer ashamed to express his innermost longing. It is the homesickness that God has placed in our heart, the longing for fellowship with Him. That which slumbers in each heart then breaks through:

*Peace, sweet peace, say, where can I find it?
How can I escape all fear here below?*

For many years I tried to satisfy the thirst of my soul with the pleasures of the world. However, I had to realize that the writer was all too correct when she wrote:

*They search what they cannot find,
in love and glory and fortune,
and they return unsatisfied
and burdened by sin.*

It was only when I acknowledged the futility of a life of sin and broke away that I followed the yearning of my heart and, through the Gospel, found the way to true joy, complete inner satisfaction. I can testify to you, dear reader, from experience:

*There is a peace available
for the poor, weary soul.
Proclaim it loud in every land:
Here is where the pain is ended.*

*There is a peace to be found
by all, both near and far:
In the wounds of the lamb of God
on the cross at Golgotha.*

Do you also sense this sad emptiness within you? This dissatisfaction, this unhappy existence without peace? Do as I did! Come to the Lord Jesus and everything will change! With Him and Him alone, you will find your desire. He is calling and this call is also meant for you: “If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink” (John 7:37). Neither through your good intentions, your own works and efforts, nor through morals, a good upbringing or religious practices will you achieve inner peace, but only through the divine person Jesus Christ! Listen to His words:

“I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved” (John 10:9). So not just *a* door, as if we can choose one, but *the* door, that means the only door through which the individual must go. It is the door to salvation from the darkness and guilt of sin. Have you already walked through it?

How wonderful it is that this door exists, the escape from all our misery which entered the world through sin. Therefore, step through and you will see the way of life!

J.K.

The Great Feast

“Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in here the poor and the maimed and the lame and the blind. . . . and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled.” (Luke 14:21-23)

God has taken the first step toward our salvation. He invites us to come to Him. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit desperately want to save sinners. God uses His church and preachers as His servants to go out and invite people to the wedding feast of the lamb.

To whom are we invited?

We have not been invited to a church building, nor have we been invited to adopt an outward form of worship. On the contrary, we have been invited to come to the living Jesus Christ. Jesus says: “Come to me” (Matthew 11:28). He is bread for the hungering soul: “If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever” (John 6:51). He is living water for the thirsting soul: “If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink” (John 7:37). If people want something from Jesus, they must recognize their need, humble themselves, and draw near to Him in faith. To be sure of this invitation, those who receive it should accept it immediately.

This invitation is extended to everyone, and its basis is found in God’s great love. He is willing and ready to accept everyone who comes to Him: “Come, for all things are now ready” (Luke 14:17). Not only are all things ready, but

there is also room for everyone so that each can take part.

Another reason for this invitation is humanity’s great need. Without Jesus and His salvation, all are lost. He is like Noah’s Ark in the middle of the flood. He is a refuge to which people can flee to find safety from the storms of judgment.

To whom has this invitation been extended?

First, to the Jews, but since Pentecost, it has been offered to all people. Not one person has been excluded. All people, rich and poor, high and low, are invited to come. “Whosoever will, let him come!”

When was this invitation issued?

“Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation” (2 Corinthians 6:2). “Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your heart” (Hebrews 3:7-8). “But now [God] commands all men everywhere to repent” (Acts 17:30). Through the Gospel, all people are invited. The time for people to come to God is when the Holy Spirit works on their hearts. There are times when the Holy Spirit especially speaks to individuals. And it is at this time that they should accept the invitation because God says that the Spir-

it will not always pursue humankind. There will come a time when the Spirit will leave humanity to its self-imposed fate.

Each time people reject this invitation their hearts are hardened. Before people can be saved from their sins, they must realize the importance of salvation. Christ cannot take possession of people as long as they have other priorities and are mainly concerned about earthly matters.

Those who are tired of a sinful life and long for rest will accept the gospel message with joy. God has many different ways of reaching souls. Saul was stopped on his way to Damascus. A mighty earthquake awakened the jailer in Philippi, and a violent thunderstorm showed Luther the need for a personal salvation experience.

This invitation is both universal and personal. God beckons and calls. He urges and pleads, but He requires repentance. He threatens with judgment. His invitation cannot be ignored without penalty.

The rejection of His invitation is the greatest sin that people can commit. It is to them that these words will be spoken: “For I say to you that none of those men who were invited shall taste my supper” (Luke 14:24).
H.M. Riggle

Come to the Cross!

*Unfulfilled, the empty heart
feeling sorrow's heavy load,
Longs for more than earth imparts.
Deep inside it longs for God.
Worldly joys are vanity;
They can never satisfy.
Their steadfastness will always be
Like the wind that passes by.*

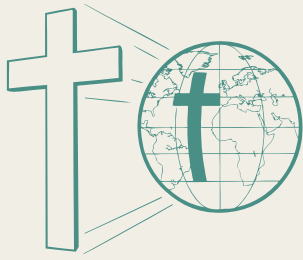
*Seeking the eternal goal,
Humans wander to and fro;
Though they dream of being whole,
Hearts are empty, full of woe.*

*Still amidst the toil and pain
Stands erect the blood-stained cross,
The Love of God is not in vain;
The Lamb of God has gained your loss!*

*Tired pilgrim, come and see;
Come now to the cross of Calvary!
The rest you seek is full and free,
Believe and live eternally.*

*Here is truth, reality,
Love that truly satisfies;
Leading to eternity,
All is yours, since Jesus died.*

Gertrud Tarutis



Radio Broadcast The Message of Salvation

Friedrich Krebs
Kitchener, Ontario

You Who Are Burdened

“Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” (Matthew 11:28)

“All you who labor and are heavy laden”! The NIV translation states it this way: “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.” The invitation from Jesus to a burdened human race could not have been more heartfelt and filled with compassion. Evidently Jesus directed His invitation to those who were burdened. Whenever we hear the words “burdened,” “to load up,” “to unload,” we inevitably think about heavy loads.

Many of us still remember the burdensome war and postwar years. Driven by hardship and fear, people from various nationalities traveled over wide stretches of land. We saw thousands looking for escape routes and food. People carried very heavy visible burdens. Jesus speaks of the invisible, hidden burdens. He sees the burdens most do not see. His compassion caused Him to say: “Come to me, all you who labor!”

There have always been burdened people, even today. Many, through their own fault have burdened their hearts and conscience. Even a child carries a burden after having said his first lie or committing his first theft. Who can imagine what is going on in that child’s heart? Who can describe the burden

and deep unhappiness that places itself on the heart of this poor young child because of the guilt? This is sometimes the start of burdening our hearts and lives with unrighteousness and sin. We can never get rid of our burdened consciences on our own. Can we recognize how important Jesus’ statement was: “Come to me, all you who labor and are heavy laden”?

Jesus might have also been thinking of those who have been burdened by others. For example, to achieve a certain piety, the Pharisees and Scribes burdened the people with their man-made laws and rules. Jesus said: “For they bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on men’s shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers” (Matthew 23:4). These man-made laws do not set us free. They cannot remove the inner burdens and give our souls peace, nor our conscience rest. We cannot atone our sin on our own nor resolve it with good works. That is why Jesus stated: “Come to Me, I will give you rest.”

We can also be burdened by various circumstances in our life. For example, there are the everyday worries, family and marriage issues, the threatening

conditions of our world, work and illness issues, burdens that have occurred through poor decisions and omissions, by annoyances and sorrows, and even the loss of our loved ones.

We can all become burdened. Where do we bring our burdens and pain? Where can we lay down our load? Jesus gives us this place: “Come to Me”!

In a little story I read, a nurse phoned her best friend late at night and asked her to pray for one of her patients who would be having surgery the next day. “Thank you for letting me know,” said her friend, “but is there something else bothering you?” The nurse tried to evade answering but there was a lot on her heart that was burdening her. Her friend noticed

it and said: “Tomorrow we are having devotions. I will expect you. Bring your burdens along to unload. We will pray together. Now go to bed and do not trouble yourself anymore!”

“Bring your burdens along to unload!” This stuck with her and gave comfort. Loved ones, there is a place where we can “unload” so that we can have deliverance and consolation from all sorrows.

Are you burdened with guilt and pain? Is your heart sad, empty, and tired? Take Jesus’ invitation to heart: “Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest!” Jesus is calling you who are burdened. You may come and “unload”!

Friedrich Krebs



His Grace Is Sufficient for Even You

It is a wonderful thing to be freed from the power of sin and Satan. A songwriter expresses the following in a chorus: “Free, free, free, from sin I am free! From the world and its vanity, Christ has freed me!” What joy fills the souls of those who have received the testimony from the Holy Spirit that they are children of God. God has thrown their entire guilt of the past into the sea of forgetfulness and promises never to remember it again. Now they can live in peace with God. Where the all-knowing God once revealed their sins and their conscience condemned them, now these saved souls can joyfully come before the face of God knowing with certainty that because Jesus Christ has made them righteous they are no longer condemned.

You probably lived in sin for many years until this experience. Even though you knew that such a life was not pleasing to God, you had numerous excuses for why you didn't submit to Him. But God continued to pursue you out of the riches of His grace, patience, and long-suffering. He did not give up on you, but by His grace He sought to bring about your salvation. The Holy Spirit convicted your soul by using God's Word and the various circumstances in your life until He revealed your sin and you finally acknowledged it with deep remorse and repentance, and begged God for mercy. When you confessed your sins, He was faithful and just to forgive your sins and to cleanse you from all unrighteousness.

When you look back now on your life in sin, you will be able to attest that God's grace was sufficient for even you. As great and as dark as your sin might have been, Jesus Christ has redeemed you!

You are overwhelmed by God's love and try to serve God with your whole heart. Yes, you are so full of joy and a desire to serve Him until that moment when you realize that you have fallen into sin again. With this new experience comes a realization of overwhelming disappointment that is connected to doubt and self-accusation. The joy of salvation has vanished and your thoughts are occupied with the idea that serving God is

intended for other people. You personally, however, can not possibly measure up to the standards in the Bible. In this stage you are very open to possible excuses for why you fell into sin. You will gladly listen to the following saying that many so-called Christians use: you can't live without sin. That sounds logical on one hand since we are small, weak people who can't possibly attain God's holiness. On the other hand, your personal experience also reveals that you can't live without sin.

Before this idea is anchored in your mind, make sure that you consider what consequences will follow if you step out of grace and fall into sin again:

- Your name will be blotted out of the book of life: “And the Lord said to Moses, ‘Whoever has sinned against Me, I will blot him out of My book’” (Exodus 32:33).
- Sin separates you from God: “[Y]our iniquities have separated you from your God” (Isaiah 59:2a).
- No sinner can commune with God, for God is holy: “[Y]our sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear” (Isaiah 59:2b).
- Spiritual death enters in through sin: “And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins” (Ephesians 2:1).
- The Lord Jesus said: “Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin” (John 8:34).
- A slave does not have the freedom to do or not to do what he wishes. Instead, he is bound to the direction and will of his master, Satan.

From a human perspective there is no way to be freed from sin. All personal attempts end in failure despite well-meaning goals and resolves.

But for this very reason Jesus came to earth! We read about Him: “. . . for He has visited and redeemed His people, . . . that we, being delivered from our enemies might serve Him without fear” (Luke 1:68b, 74b).

Is God's grace only sufficient enough to allow us to become a child of God? Is God's grace not also sufficient to protect your salvation? Are you to continue in sin or to fall into sin repeatedly in order that grace may abound?

In regard to this context some would refer to the scripture in 1 John 2:1: "And if anyone sins we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."

It is definitely true, for God's Word teaches that it is possible to live without sin and yet it is not impossible to sin. God knows human nature and He knows that we cannot have victory over sin by our own strength. For this reason, He wants to encourage us with this scripture passage.

If we should fall into sin because of carelessness and because we failed to heed His warnings to watch and pray, then He wants to encourage us to not lose faith, but to make things right and to continue to live a life of victory by God's strength and grace. For this is the will of God for us: "My little children, I write these things, so that you may not sin" (1 John 2:1a).

Later on the apostle John writes in his letter (1 John 3:4-8):

"Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness. And you know that He was manifested to take away our sins, and in Him there is no sin. Whoever abides in Him does not sin. Whoever sins has neither seen Him nor known Him. Little children, let no one deceive you. He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous. He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil."

Jesus battled against sin. In John 8:11, He forgave the adulterous woman's sins and commanded her to, "go and sin no more"!

The Good News of the Gospel is therefore good news for every sinner because it frees the sinner from the power of sin. Jesus once said: "And you shall know the truth . . . if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed" (John 8:32a, 36b).

How can you be set free from sin?

If the Spirit of God reveals your sinful condition and convinces you that you cannot stand before holy God with your sin and self-righteous works, then come to Jesus in repentance and accept by faith that He died for

your sins. Hold on to the promise in 1 John 1:9: "If we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

Grace is sufficient even for you!

How can you be protected from sin?

- Ask God that you won't be misled during temptation (Luke 11:4). This prayer is a great privilege and guards us against the consequences of a temptation that is not overcome. James 1:14-15 describes the following: "But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death."
- Make a large detour around sin. Let the following adage speak to your heart: "Whoever steps into danger will be destroyed by it!"
- When you enter a situation where you are tempted to sin, then remember the words that the apostle Paul said to the young man Timothy: "Flee also the youthful lusts" (2 Timothy 2:22).
- Please don't make the mistake of thinking that you can serve God in your own strength. On your own, you will not be able to withstand the deceitful attacks of Satan, but by God's grace you can claim victory. Let these words of Jesus be branded on your heart: "Without Me you can do nothing" (John 15:5). Consider that in this context, God only shows mercy to those who are humble. Ask God every morning that He might give you necessary grace for the day ahead, grace for every task, grace for those that you come in contact with, grace in joy or in sorrow, grace for every moment of the day.

Grace is sufficient for even you!

"Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to God our Savior, who alone is wise, be glory and majesty, dominion and power both now and forever. Amen."

(Jude 1:24-25)

Valentin Stieben (DE)

Experiences with God

A Story of Answered Prayer

Toward the end of our vacation, back in February, and the day before we wanted to leave Texas and come home again, our oldest son used the van to go visit a friend. He came back and placed the keys by his Dad, who was sitting at the kitchen table. That evening, we began to pack up. At 10:00 pm we began to get ready for bed.

My husband realized he could not find the van keys, and so began an intense search. Six adults and two teenagers searched diligently for at least an hour or longer. We looked everywhere we could think of. Finally, I went to bed. (We wanted to leave at 6:00 am the next morning.) I talked to God for a while, and at the end of my prayer I asked the Holy Spirit to please reveal where the keys were, since He most definitely knew. Almost right away, the word “garbage” began to repeat itself in my mind.

I got up and walked to the kitchen garbage and began to remove things and put them in the kitchen sink. My sister came to help. At the very bottom of the garbage were a bunch of coffee grinds. There among those coffee grinds my hand found the van key! I was in awe (once again) that God is real and that He answers prayer. Who knows, maybe one of us women threw the key in the trash when we cleaned up after supper.

We were able to leave early in the morning as planned, and I think that all who searched for the keys that evening were praying that they could be found so we could all go to bed! God answered those prayers, and for this I thank him!

Carolyn Friesen, Aylmer (CA)

An Opportunity to Share Your Experience

Daily experiences with God are so precious and encouraging. We experience the blessings of being a child of God and the works of the almighty hand of God. Not only do these experiences encourage us, but those that hear them receive a longing to experience God for themselves in their everyday life. For this reason we encourage you to share your experiences with God to His glory. We invite you to send your experience—it doesn't have to be long—and become a witness of God's great work. You can send your story via email to contact@foundationoffaith.cc.

Editorial Team

God's Word Speaks

Helmut and Bruno were neighbors. From the time they were little, they were as close as two brothers. Now they were in the same class in school. They were always together and helped each other with their homework. Of course they always supported one another if there was an argument, or if an opportunity arose, or whenever necessary.

Helmut had a very handsome dog. His name was Belo. And Bruno had some really nice chickens he was proud of.

One day, Belo began to torture two of these chickens. He bit them until the feathers flew. After that, they died. Belo should not have been allowed to do this, but he was still quite young.

A few days later, Helmut's mother heard the dog howling. She ran out, and what did she see? Poor Belo lay dead on the ground. Around his neck was a note with the following words on it: "This dog will never again be able to bite chickens! Bruno."

Shortly after, Helmut appeared, saw his dead dog, and read the note. He became very angry and shouted, "Bruno killed my dog! I'll get even with him!"

His mother whispered a few words into his ear. Helmut stood stock still, went into the kitchen, and drank some milk. Afterwards, he picked up his texts and notebooks and walked to school.

Bruno was very restless at school. He was sure that during recess there would be a fight with Helmut. But nothing happened. Helmut played with the other students as if nothing were bothering him. Bruno could not understand this.

After school, Bruno went home and found a cage with two nice chickens inside. A note was attached to the cage. It said, "Since Belo killed two chickens, here are two new ones."

This was too much for Bruno. This scorched him like hot, burning coals. He went to Helmut and asked him for forgiveness. Helmut and Bruno once again became best friends. Helmut's mom was so glad that God had helped in this way, because it was His Word that had prevented a huge fallout.

You may be asking, "God's Word did this?" Yes, it was God's Word that Helmut's mom had whispered into his ear. God's Word was a perfect antidote that helped calm Helmut down so much that he was instantly filled with peace.

So which Bible verse caused such a powerful outcome? "If your enemy is hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he is thirsty, give him water to drink; for so you will heap coals of fire on his head, and the Lord will reward you" (Proverbs 25:21-22).



A Word to Fathers

Today, God's design for marriage and family is widely labeled as old fashioned. Regardless of the changes in society, only the biblical design for marriage and family opens doors to a future that is blessed by God.

God wants fathers to provide for their families with food and clothing, with vigilance and protection, and in the training and admonition of the Lord.

Providing Food and Clothing

God tells all believers, “[H]aving food and clothing, with these we shall be content” (1 Timothy 6:8). Children of God should not lust after pretty display windows or new discoveries in shopping malls. They are not to be like the world or live above their means. Even children should learn to go without. God promises His children that He will provide for them. They are not to ask, “What will we eat, what will we drink, with what do we clothe ourselves?” as the unbelievers do. No, God promises in His Word that everything will fall into place if we seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness. He even promises eternal things such as peace and joy, comfort and power, and other heavenly blessings.

Providing Vigilance and Protection

“If the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into” (Matthew 24:43). God’s Word says that Satan goes around like a roaring lion, but also like an angel of light. He wants to destroy the bodies and souls of people, and he already starts with children. That is why God wants believing fathers to be alert and not allow their homes to be broken into. They are to watch over the health and proper nutrition of their children’s bodies and souls. Just like sweets take away a child’s appetite for healthy food, so theaters, television, pulp fiction, bad friends, etc. are damaging for the child’s

soul and take away their appetite for God’s Word, the Bread of Life. A father is responsible for the souls of his children.

Fathers, take the time, even if it jeopardizes your business, to care for your wife and children. Give them clear guidance that will protect them in any outer or inner storm and the increasingly demonic spirit of the age. Do not allow your children to be alone too much! You need to know what they are doing, and you must know who their friends are. Sing and play with your children and give them all the joys that will give you and them a good conscience. Train them to be grateful; for the one who offers thanks praises the Lord.

Do not avoid giving children limitations. God forbade Adam and Eve from eating the fruit, and He severely punished their disobedience so that their conscience was awakened. God even wants the conscience of children to be awakened. Children of believing parents should feel it on their conscience if they read forbidden books, etc. God also wants you to discipline them when they are disobedient. Fathers are God’s representative for their children on earth. Fathers should conform to God’s example and rule their homes in a godly manner. Strictness is love; indulgence is self-love.

Providing Training

“Fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord” (Ephesians 6:4).—Training in the Lord is very important. Satan wants to do away with this training and has already succeeded in schools. Now he is trying to stop fathers from this training at home. But listen to



what God, the true Father of all children, says, “For whom the Lord loves, He chastens” (Hebrews 12:6). In Proverbs 29:15 we read, “A child left to himself brings shame to his mother [and father].”

Do not permit any backtalk or unthankful whining from your children. God immediately punished the children of Israel for their ungrateful complaining. Forgiveness is not the same as pardoning. Insist that your children ask for forgiveness and that they be thankful for it so they will learn to walk with God. Children will later respond to God and His Word the way they respond to their parents and their words.

“[I]n the . . . admonition of the Lord” (Ephesians 6:4)

It is written: “[T]hese words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them” (Deuteronomy 6:6-7). God’s words, commands, and rights are the best and only stable values that parents can give to their children. Not only for this life, for “Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away,” says the Lord (Matthew 24:35).

Fathers, God has made you to be priests of the home. You carry the responsibility of your children’s souls. God wants you to share His Word with them and teach them to pray. Do not leave prayer to your wife and children. Do not allow devotions to be replaced by anything. Let your children learn many of God’s words by heart. Sing and pray with your children, and you will also experience

God’s help in sickness and times of need. Go with your children to places where God’s Word is preached, for they should first be with you under God’s Word, instead of waiting until they are in their youth and in their circle of friends. Answer their questions from the Bible; so they will learn to love God’s Word.

Teach your children early on that a Christian must swim against the stream of the world; that they must, if necessary, be laughed at for the sake of their faith. Out of God’s Word, you will also be able to show your children the right way in their choice of occupation.

Fathers, do not believe that your child’s choice of spouse does not concern you. God does not want believers to marry unbelievers. You can advise and warn them of this.

If your children know this from young on, they will align themselves with it. If later they decide to go their own way, it is their own trouble. But parents, do not stop praying for them. And if they become lost sons and daughters, do as God did and do not stop them from moving far away. Wait until the Lord gives them grace to return and then receive them with joy, even if they have given you much shame. But never change the godly organization of your home for the sake of your children!

Men and fathers, accept your God-given position as head of the home. Rule your home in a godly manner and remain true to God’s Word. Then God will bless you and your family, for He has said, “[I show] mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments” (Exodus 20:6).
EP

If You Would Believe

Part 6



Refugee Flight and War's End

Daily, the Russian Front advanced closer to the Polish city of Graudenz, where we lived. With father drafted into the army, mother and her three children stood ready with packed suitcases awaiting the mayor's evacuation order for the escape to Germany. Late one evening in January 1945, an urgent knock on our door brought the awaited evacuation order. Shortly thereafter at the train station, we were met by an unending crowd of people and towering mountains of luggage. Mother battled her way through to the ticket counter to purchase tickets for the family, and to negotiate transit for our two suitcases.

"My dear woman," the ticket agent shouted angrily! "Can't you see the mountains of luggage behind you? We don't have enough trains to evacuate the people and you expect your suitcases to be shipped? That's insane!"

"Please," she pleaded, sliding the fee toward him. Grudgingly the agent was persuaded, and shortly thereafter our two suitcases rested on the hopeless mountains of luggage, in them our remaining earthly possessions, aside from our meager hand luggage.

As the train came to a stop in front of us, the crowd surged to the open doors. Mother's youngest, just five years old, strained to keep a grip on the filled milk can he was trying to preserve. Almost trampled underfoot he cried, "Mommy, I can't hang onto the milk can any longer!"

"Let it go," she called back from the steps of the

train. Turning to the crowd she pleaded, "Please don't trample the children!" There was a momentary let-up in the surge, and then we were swept onto the train, the little boy still clutching his milk can. Thank God, we all made it safely onto the train!

In Schneidemühl, we needed to transfer trains. Thousands with us, similarly fleeing the advancing Russian Front waited in vain as train upon train rumbles through the station without stopping. After an entire day of waiting fruitlessly and night approaching, we turned to God in our dire situation. If God didn't help us, we would have reached the end of the line. Suddenly a voice rose above the din, "Mrs. Sonnenberg!" Mr. Eschner, a German Railway official of our acquaintance from Graudenz was battling his way through the crowd toward us. Of all days, today he had been assigned duty in Schneidemühl, where he spotted us among the throngs of people. "Mrs. Sonnenberg," he inquired, "what are you doing at the train station in Schneidemühl?"

Following a short verbal exchange, he guided us across a tangle of railway tracks to a distant spur, seating us in one of the empty railway cars. "Passengers for whom this train is intended will be arriving later; don't be alarmed, act as though you belong," he advised.

It wasn't long before the privileged guests arrived. "There are already people in here," someone complained. Soon the cars were comfortably occupied. A locomotive was coupled to the front, and shortly



thereafter we sped past the sea of refugees waiting in vain on the station platform in Schneidemühl. We were safely on the last leg of our 700 km escape from Graudenz to Hagenow – rescued by a messenger sent by God.

Some weeks later, the two suitcases mother had checked in Graudenz arrived in Hagenow – unthinkable in the death-throws of the war in Germany! What a gracious God!

“For with God nothing will be impossible” (Luke 1:37).

With the continuing disintegration of the German resistance on the eastern front, the Russian prisoner of war camp in which father was an interpreter was frequently relocated further west. Unbeknown to us, on one of its last moves the camp had been relocated to the vicinity of Hagenow where mother and her three boys had found lodging.

“My family is here in the vicinity,” explained father to the colonel. “Is there a possibility that I might be given a weekend pass so that I could briefly visit with my family?”

“Mr. Sonnenberg, surely you know that we find ourselves in a critical situation and that all leave has been suspended.”

“Yes, Colonel, I do. But I thought perhaps an exception might be granted in this case, since we are stationed so near my family.”

The Colonel showed compassion: “I will make an exception, but in two days you shall report back to me

here in camp.”

With sincere thankfulness to God in his heart and a weekend pass in his pocket, father hastened to his family. When he knocked on the door, his voice was recognized. The scene that unfolded as the door is opened is almost beyond description. Although the family had been praying daily for father’s safe return, to welcome him in their midst before the end of the war was just too overwhelming. Too soon, father needed to return to his unit, but he sought in vain for the camp. In his absence it had been relocated once more. Finally he stood before the surprised colonel, who informed him that the POW camp was being dissolved. The news reached the Russian prisoners. Cheering, they tossed their hats into the air. Some of the prisoners still came to father to thank him.

Shortly thereafter father was relieved of all duties, and granted permission to return to his family. “Colonel, I thank you for this good news,” he responded. “But if I am found in my service uniform and I am not with my company, I could be shot on the spot. May I impose on you to execute discharge papers, so that I have something in hand?”

How indescribable are the ways of God, who wonderfully led us through the chaos of war. In the end, some 700 km from the origin of our escape, only mere kilometers separated us. God alone can guide the affairs of man to suit His purpose!

“Who can utter the mighty acts of the LORD? Who can declare all His praise?” (Psalms 106:2)

How Jacob Found the Lord

If only people would know and acknowledge how great a life with Christ is every day, then many of them would certainly choose to seek Christ and become His today.

A farmer from the state of Württemberg in Germany did not know this either, or it wouldn't have upset him so much that groups of people traveled for hours every Sunday to Stuttgart to hear the passionate sermons of the faithful minister Ludwig Hofacker. How often he ranted about the "pointless pursuit" of the religious people, who wanted to be better than others. He also ranted, "Why do we have a priest here in this location?"

Oh yes, if someone travels to two or three continents in order to satisfy his thirst for money and the world, the world says this is acceptable. If he returns home as a rich man, he is happily praised, and it is thought: "That was worth the effort." But it is completely different when someone seeks to obtain the imperishable crown of eternal life. The smallest amount of effort is seen as a "pointless pursuit," as if the Lord did not say: "[S]eek first the kingdom of God" (Matthew 6:33), but instead, "seek first worldly possessions, and all these things shall be added to you all on their own."

One Sunday morning, our farmer took his walking stick in his hand to go to Stuttgart with his wife. He was looking for something that he could never have had at home. The cousin of his wife had been staying at a hotel named "The Roman Caesar" for several weeks already. He had come from out-of-country and let his relatives know that everyone who visited him at this hotel would receive one

hundred guilders as a gift. Such a nice gift, thought Jacob, was not easy to get. He would have gone to Stuttgart a long time ago, but his wife did not want to appear so beggar-poor to the rich cousin, who thought himself too noble to search them out in their simple homes. Finally, the man won, and so they made their way at the crack of dawn. They did not walk alone, for from right and left groups of people joined them on the path. They had a different thirst to quench today than the thirst for money, which Spitta sings about:

*Do not ask me what I'm lacking,
Do not ask about my pain.
Thirst for God, my soul is aching,
Thirst for Christ I can't contain.*

*But without Him, poor and empty,
Even with the wide world's mirth,
I'm not filled and still am thirsting,
Drifting aimlessly on this earth.*

The people hoped to draw spiritual nourishment through Hofacker's sermon. This entourage had a different mindset than Jacob, who soon openly expressed his displeasure about their intentions and commented that it wasn't worth the soles of the shoes they were ruining. He had something better to hope for today than them, in that he would obtain one hundred guilders in cash from the cousin of his wife.

When they asked at the hotel about the rich cousin they found out that he had left early the day before. The crestfallen man stood there as if he had

Ludwig Hofacker (born in 1798 in Wildbad in the Black Forest, and died in 1828 in Rielingshausen) was an evangelical pastor with a pious character. His clear, ground-shaking sermons brought many people to Christ even after his early death.



been struck by lightning. The shock of this lost hope quickly turned into anger against his wife, whose haughty indecision had caused this loss. What was left but to leave the hotel with empty hands? Soon they came across a quiet troop that was waiting for the signal that Hofacker's church was open. Their joyful hope stood in stark contrast to Jacobs deceived expectation, and his anger towards these people arose again.

When an acquaintance invited him to come to church with them, Jacob resistantly shook his head. However, he did wonder what edge this young preacher had over others, and finally he snuck in with the crowd of churchgoers and intended to sit hidden in a corner to listen. But that was not the case when he entered the church. All of the benches were already full, and behind him was still a great crowd of people who were also looking for seats. When he walked through the door, he was pushed and shoved until eventually he was wedged right across from the pulpit, so firmly among a thick crowd of people that he could hardly move his arms.

There he stood, this large man, nearly a head taller than the people. He inwardly lamented his misfortune that had followed him from the hotel into the church.

Hofacker stood at the pulpit. He described the sinner bit by bit, in the process looking down with seriousness at the farmer. This man felt himself getting very hot, and the thronging crowd, combined with fear and shame, caused him to sweat copiously. When Hofacker spoke of the pursuit of vain and perishable things and seemed to refer to

the defeated hope of the hundred guilders, he was certain that someone had been at Mr. Hofacker's and had told him that Jacob from M. was in the church and that he was such and such a man. If he could have, he would have sunk into the ground from shame.

Now the faithful servant of the Lord also spoke of the love Jesus has for sinners in such an inviting, enticing, and convincing way that the layer of ice on the heart of this big man began to melt. The drops from his eyes mixed with the drops of sweat and fell freely onto the blue suit and red vest. If only he could hide or at least bend down so he didn't need to admit in front of everyone that his heart had been touched. But alas, he had to bear it and let the tears flow.

As Hofacker spoke ever more warmly and solemnly to invite his listeners to promptly surrender to the Savior, Jacob turned his gaze again to the powerful speaker. Hofacker now spoke a concluding thought, and really, Jacob was not mistaken: He was looking right at him, pointing his hand at him, as he spoke with unsettling earnestness:

*Sinner, turn: why will you die?
God, your Savior, asks you why.
God, who did your soul retrieve,
Died Himself, that you might live.
Will you let Him die in vain?
Crucify your Lord again?
Why, you ransomed sinner, why,
Will you slight His grace and die?*

Distressed, broken, pierced by the arrows of the Almighty, he left the church and silently went home. The hundred guilders had been forgotten, and the question: “What must I do to become saved?” consumed his thoughts. A turbulent week followed; he had never been so unhappy in his life.

When the next Sunday morning arrived, Jacob was on his way to Stuttgart again, not for money but to receive comfort for his distressed heart. This time he had arrived early enough to find a less visible seat, from which he attentively followed the sermon. Although comfort from the Gospel was richly distributed, he received one main impression: “You are a sinner, worthy of hell!” The next week did not bring him any relief. Now there was no other solution than to go directly to the man who had taken the peace from his heart and who had robbed him of his life’s happiness, as he perceived it.

When Sunday had come again and the sermon had still brought no comfort, he considered carrying out his thoughts. Soon he was standing in front of Hofacker’s residence, but lost the courage to enter the house. It was as if enemy forces, which his eye could not see but he clearly felt, were preventing him from entering.

One the fourth Sunday things came to a head. The troubled feeling of Jacob’s soul was no longer bearable. To encourage himself, he had bought some

sugar and coffee for Hofacker, and with this present in his pocket, he made his way to the deacons’ house, this time determined to walk in no matter what the cost. Even now, a dark force wanted to put him off from following through with his intentions. After reflecting for a few moments, he finally made it through the door and was led to Hofacker. He seated himself, a living Gospel, close to the farmer. The coffee and sugar were forgotten about. Jacob’s issues and the effort of the shepherd of souls to bind the hurting wounds filled the time. More and more, the fear of his heart and the troubles of his soul faded. Yes, as he said farewell and went down the steps, this rang through his heart:

The wounds are bound, there’s no more judgment.

Jacob ended his fight and race many years ago. How overjoyed he was that in searching for those perishable hundred guilders, he found the Savior and, in Him, eternal life!

*Poor I was, and sought for riches,
Something that would satisfy,
But the dust I gathered round me
Only mocked my soul’s sad cry.
Hallelujah! I have found Him
Whom my soul so long has craved!
Jesus satisfies my longings;
Through His life I now am saved .*



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A Changed Life

*When I pause, I can remember
How I strove for earthly things,
How I craved for worldly splendor,
Seeking all that pleasure brings;
All was vain, then God above
Saved me by His wond'rous love.*

*On the broad way with the others
I was on the path of sin.
We cared not for one another,
Without hope, no peace within.
Without purpose, without goal,
Sin and sorrow left its toll.*

*But when Jesus spoke so clearly
And bade me to follow then,
Nothing did I want more dearly
But to give my all to Him.
Jesus changed my heart and mind
And in Him my joy I find.*

*I am now a Child of Heaven,
Walking with Him hand in hand.
Let me share what I've been given,
So that all may understand:
Love can set all sinners free,
Who will seek God earnestly.*

G. Berg