



Foundation of Faith

TRUE PATIENCE

THANK GOD FOR TRIALS

CHARACTERISTICS OF TRUE HUMILITY

NEVERTHELESS

EXPERIENCES WITH GOD

Patience

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Editorial

Dear Reader,

May I ask, “Do you have patience?”

Our lives do not always follow a smooth path lined with roses. There will be difficulties, problems, and moments we might despair.

The Holy Scriptures show us God’s great patience, goodness, forbearance, and mercy. In the Old Testament, and even more so in the New Testament, God’s patience is clearly displayed in how the Almighty is “slow to anger” despite all of humanity’s sin, evil, and rebellion, even among His chosen people.

“What if God, wanting to show His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, and that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had prepared beforehand for glory . . .” (Romans 9:22–23).

God’s great patience with sinners will cease when His Son returns. His patience is rooted in His desire for all to be saved. Indeed, God does not want anyone to be lost, but rather desires for every individual to repent and to find forgiveness, salvation, and peace through Jesus’ blood and wounds.

My dear Reader and fellow pilgrim on the road to Glory, as we consider God’s great patience, let me ask you again, “Are you patient?”

Scripture tells us to endure difficulties and to persevere with God’s help. The Apostle Paul urges, “Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering” (Colossians 3:12).

If we are prepared to follow these instructions, the trials we face will bring us patience, and patience will bring insight, and insight will bring hope—the hope of knowing that the Savior will help us on our journey to eternal Glory. As Jesus promised all of us, “he who endures to the end shall be saved” (Mark 13:13).

H. D. Nimz

Nevertheless

I don't remember exactly when it happened, but I'll never forget the day my world was shaken to the core. My husband left the house as usual in the morning to catch the 8 o'clock train. The older children were at school, the baby was lying contentedly in her crib. I normally loved this time of day, but on this particular day, I didn't have my usual energy to start my household chores.

Maybe looking at the startling magazine cover hadn't been such a good idea. Pictured there was a child, dressed poorly in rags, holding out an empty bowl. Hopelessness was written in his large, dark eyes. I had often seen such pictures, and indignation had always arisen in me. "Why does such misery prevail in our prosperous world?" But then it wouldn't take long before those thoughts dissipated again. Today, however, the headline of the publication would not loosen its grip on me. "What if this were your child?" Enough already!

Suddenly, my grandfather's words came to mind: "Do you think people suffer so much because they are terrible sinners?" Thinking about those words, past years came to mind in which I was once again the rebellious orphan who defied everything. During my childhood, I had always resented my grandfather's words. When I learned why I was living with my grandparents, I cried out, "Why did God let Dad and Mom die in a plane crash? Why couldn't it have been someone else?"

When my friend was hit by a vehicle and hurled onto the street after chasing a ball, I asked, "Why did God let Monica get injured? It was the driver's fault, after all, and nothing happened to him."

When my grandmother died of cancer, I pounded on the table and said, "Why did Grandma have to die? Why couldn't it have been old Mrs. B?" Eventually, I got married and felt abandoned by my grandfather, since he no longer looked after me. I felt God had forgotten me, too. But deep inside my heart, I knew it wasn't so. That child I was looking at on the magazine cover did not deserve his fate. The headline simply crushed my heart.

As I was working in the garden one autumn day, my neighbor called out to me, "Why don't you come for coffee tomorrow? An old college friend is coming to visit, and I'd like you to meet her some time." This

neighbor had been living next door with her husband for two months. Somehow she always reminded me of my devout grandfather, because they often talked about God. Because I was uncomfortable with that, I had always turned down her friendly invitations for a cup of coffee. But on this day I couldn't stand being in the house another minute, so I accepted the invitation.

The next afternoon, when I entered Karen's house, her college friend was sitting on the terrace, facing me with a kind expression on her face. I wish I could have overlooked her crutches and the reality of her wheelchair. As I listened to her story over coffee, I again became that child who rebelled against God for letting the innocent suffer.

"Even when we were still in school, Theo and I wanted to be missionaries. But the war came, and he went overseas. Yet, we had so much confidence in our future that we didn't even think he might not come back. Just before the end of the war, he was shot down. My life . . ." she paused for a moment, "I think a part of me died. But my plan for the mission field was so firm that I still went to South America with my three-year-old son."

She glanced at me and realized I was staring dubiously at her wheelchair. She answered my silent question. "We were in the deepest jungle when polio broke out. Fortunately, it hit me and not my little son. So we had to travel back home."

"To be a missionary over here," my neighbor interjected.

"You're still a missionary?" I asked incredulously.

"I live in Florida since it's the most manageable place for me to go out because of the mild climate. I visit hospitals, but especially rehabilitation centers. After all, when a sprightly nurse tells a disabled person they are not worthless and still have a job to fulfill, they usually don't believe it. On the other hand, when they see me, they think, 'Maybe I could at least give it a try.'"

I asked her, "Didn't you hate God when all this was happening?"

"Hate the One Who loves me?" she asked, shaking her head. "Of course, I asked 'why?' countless times. Among other things, I asked why He had led me away from a place where I was so needed. But I suppose I am needed here even more. In hospitals, there are very few



missionaries to tell terminally ill people that God loves and knows them.”

“But isn’t it unfair of God to do this to you after you did so much for Him?”

Indignantly, the woman looked at me and then replied, “Why should I be free from my suffering? I wasn’t the only one who got polio. Besides, I didn’t work on the premise of, ‘God, I’m doing this for You now, so You must do this or that for me. “Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him.””

To that, I answered, “My grandfather also told me these words of Job over and over again.”

“Exactly, but do you know why Job could say that?” I didn’t answer. To my chagrin, she said, “Because he saw how great God is. When you look at the One Who has the world in His hands, everything else fades into the background. Then you don’t need an answer to ‘why.’”

“I can’t understand that,” I replied.

“Because you’ve never experienced it,” she returned. “You can’t say it’s not fair if you haven’t lived it yet.”

I gestured with my hand and said, “If all this had happened to me, I would have cried myself sick and

been absolutely done for.”

She smiled. “Maybe cried, but certainly not ‘done for.’ And would it have helped you in any way and changed anything about the situation?”

“No, I don’t suppose so.”

“I know I’m walking in God’s ways. That’s why this way is good for me.”

Looking into her elated face, I could not argue against it. I did not experience any transformation in my life on that day. But gradually, I began to see God from two sides: His omnipotence and His great love. Then I saw Him as an Absolute, the One Whose ways I did not understand, but Whose love included me. My anxious fear for the well-being of my children and our own lives diminished, and deep peace settled into my heart as I accepted Jesus Christ as my Savior.

The child pictured on the cover of that magazine still haunts me. But I include this child in my prayers, and all who suffer terribly, so they will find the One Who says, “Come to Me, all *you* who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11: 28).

D. Martin

The Human Zero and the Divine One

Jesus said, “Without Me you can do nothing” (John 15: 5). We must recognize the principle of human inability and divine omnipotence if we are to be useful in God’s hands.

As I was pondering personal salvation and the work of saving souls, I remembered what a man of God once said: “I am only a zero. But when God puts His mighty One in front of it, I become a ten.”

This is the truth. If we want to act in our own strength and wisdom, then in matters of the Kingdom of God we have only negative value. What we produce amounts to nothing in the spiritual realm. But through His Son Jesus, God has placed an almighty Something through which He can create something out of our nothing. Jesus Christ became for us “wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption” (1 Corinthians 1:30). It is only through His work in and through us that fruit for eternity can come forth.

The thought that man is a zero—nothing in and of himself—is quite biblical and agrees with the experience of all proven men of God. In Jesus’ discourse about the vine and the branches in John 15, where He emphasizes this truth, He says, “Without Me you can do nothing” (verse 5). Here He teaches His followers that they are powerless unless their work is inspired by Jesus Himself working through

them.

Earlier, Jesus had spoken to Nicodemus, “That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit” (John 3:6). Jesus referred to the natural birth as being born in the flesh. Out of this nature only the carnal such as vanity and corruption can emerge. Only what arises from the work of God’s Spirit remains for eternity.

The testimony of all the apostles agrees. They recognized this through personal experience. In the epistle to the Philippians, Paul enumerates the shining advantages of which he could once boast as an Israelite in his natural state. And then he says of them, “I . . . count them as rubbish, that I might gain Christ” (Philippians 3:8). He totally considered himself and his earthly wisdom to be nothing, a zero in the kingdom of God, which is evident from the biblical passages in which he speaks about his work. To the Romans he writes in the fifteenth chapter, “Therefore I have reason to glory in Christ Jesus, in the things *which pertain* to God. For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ has not accomplished through me, in word and deed, to make the Gentiles obedient” (verses 17–18). And

in 1 Corinthians 2:2–5, he writes, “For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. And I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching *were* not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.”

Paul—a zero—but bound to Him, the Divine One! Therein lies the secret of his wonderful life and work, his deep knowledge, his fiery zeal, his mighty testimony, his almost superhuman endurance, and his triumphant confidence. For just as surely as he recognized himself as nothing, he also grasped in faith the truth that God had given Himself fully to His children through Christ. He could proclaim, “If God *is* for us, who *can be* against us?” (Romans 8:31).

This is the correct standing of man in relation to God in terms of his salvation, as well as his work in the kingdom of God. “To be nothing and become nothing,” as people sometimes say, is not the right attitude. No, man must come to the realization that he is nothing in himself. But through total surrender to Almighty God and being



filled with the Holy Spirit, he can become a useful tool for God. This is God's will.

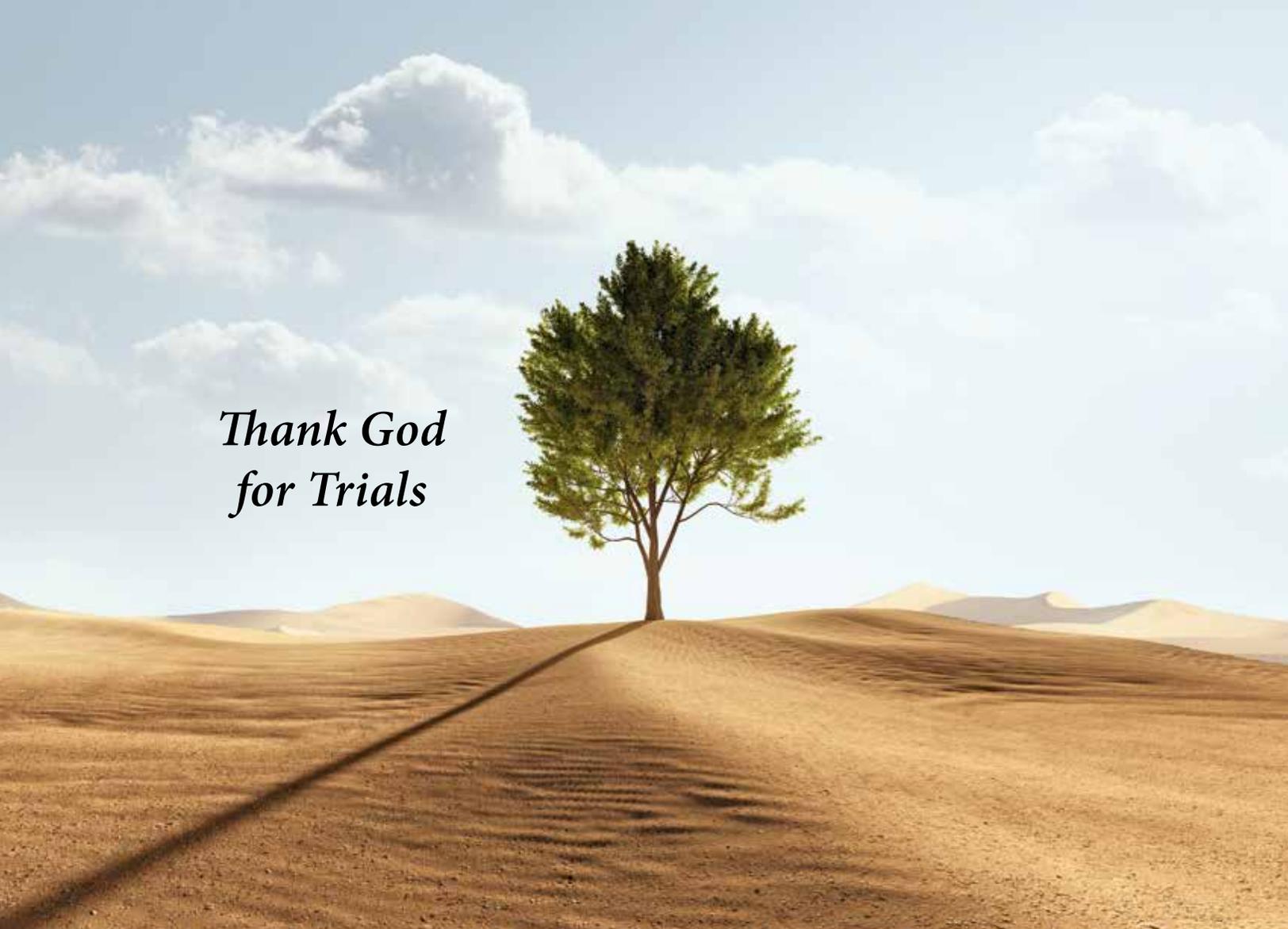
This truth not being fully recognized is one of the main weaknesses of Christianity today. The Lord says to the church at Laodicea, "You say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing'—and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked" (Revelation 3:17). But He also urges, "Therefore be zealous and repent" (verse 19).

God wants each of us to come into the right relationship with

Him. Whoever seriously examines himself in the light of God's Word will soon know how he stands before God. He will not leave him in uncertainty about what he must do. If we are where God wants us to be, He will also use us for His glory and for the furthering of His work, as well as for the salvation and welfare of beloved souls. If we want God to use us in His Kingdom, we must always remember that we are dealing with His work and not man's. I am a zero, but God is the Almighty One! He works how

and when He wants. As God's children, we cannot tell God what to do. Our business is to acknowledge our nothingness and let His great power and grace bring us into the right position before Him. Then we can speak with Elijah, "As the LORD God of Israel lives, before whom I stand" (1 Kings 17:1). When confronted by such a powerful word, not Ahab, not Jezebel and not an array of armies could do anything.

Tell me, dear Reader, have you realized you are a zero before God? ■



Thank God for Trials

As God's children, trials are so valuable to us because they shape us into what God needs us to be. We don't know what we're made of until we've been put to the test.

Suffering and disappointment are necessary to form our character. Faith and courage aren't hard to demonstrate in a time of celebration; yet our true character is revealed when the soul is helpless and has nothing to lean on except Christ and His Word.

This was the reason for Jacob's trials that brought him to the end of his strength. When Peter failed miserably, and his self-confidence was in shambles, he too experienced a similar blessing.

Trials are Opportunities for Overcomers

Someday, our trials will result in thankful hearts because of their eternal rewards. They are opportunities for us to overcome and to look forward to their eternal value that will never pass away. They will shine when

the entire history of the world is forgotten, when all accounts of time will cease to be, and the solar system will no longer exist.

Trials help us to know God as our only Source of help. Only in difficult circumstances do we learn to find our full sufficiency in Him. Israel first had to stand still at the Red Sea to see the salvation God had prepared for them (Exodus 14:10–14). He taught them in dramatic situations, without natural or human strength, by letting them fall into the hands of God. Here they learned in practical terms what Jesus later told the Jews: "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4).

God becomes real to us to the extent that we become aware of our need for Him. He Himself meets us in crises. Thus, every difficult situation is simply an opportunity for Him to make Himself known to us in His infinite wisdom, power, and grace.

Trials Teach Us Faith

Trials are the fertile soil of trust that teaches us faith. They are difficulties permitted by God to challenge us, to develop our confidence in God's faithfulness and love. The eagle supports its young to learn to fly by helping the anxious little eaglets fall from the nest. Fully dependent now on their own wings, they must either fly or fall. Thus, they learn to develop strength and trust in their small wings. By flapping them in desperate effort, they discover the secret of a new life. Little by little, they learn to fly with their new wings and find their way as they soar through the sky. When that first attempt is made, the mother eagle watches carefully over them, ready to catch her eaglets should they fail. Later, however, she expects her young ones to fly through their own strength.

Similarly, God also teaches His children to use their wings of faith. He destroys our deceptive sense of security, taking away our supports and throwing them out into an abyss of helplessness. But here is where we experience God's sustaining and protective wings, like the mother eagle that catches and preserves her young until they slowly grow strong and learn to trust their own ability to fly.

We prefer to learn from things we can see or feel. But as children of the Almighty God, it is essential for us to learn to fully trust in the invisible One. Only then can our soul remain in deep, godly rest even in stormy times, because God is our All in All.

God carefully adjusts the trial to the measure of our strength. He only leads us further on when we are capable of doing so. While we trust God in our difficult times, we will be able to suffer as good soldiers of Jesus Christ.

Trials Teach Us to Pray

Trials force us to often be alone with God. They drove Jacob to his knees at the mouth of the Jabbok River (Genesis 32: 23–30). They taught the Psalmist to dwell “in the secret place of the Most High” (Psalm 91: 1). In Paul's life, trials led to a never-ending trust in the Lord, and they have led many millions of people to trust in God since then.

It is very humbling when we flee to His bosom during suffering and hardship. Unfortunately, He must remove our props to teach us to trust Him. Every mature Christian will confess that it was during times of pain and disappointments that his soul was greatly re-

freshed and blessed by the presence of God. In such times, he could agree with the Psalmist: “I will be glad and rejoice in Your mercy, for You have considered my trouble; You have known my soul in adversities” (Psalm 31:7).

Trials Teach Us Love

The chastisement of unjust treatment can cause our minds and hearts to become softened and purified and our lives filled with patience and love. Although we pray for these very qualities, we long for a simpler method. Often the harshest injustice must force us to go to the Lord so He can show us the love that “bears all things” and “endures all things” (1 Corinthians 13: 7).

When we fail in times of testing, the Holy Spirit leads us to the Source of strength as we gradually learn the humble lesson. God leads us forward day by day in deeper testing and more complete purification until we can thank Him for the fire that has brought us more of the grace of His Spirit and His overcoming love.

Trials Teach Us Patience

Trials are so valuable for us because they teach us to “let patience have *its* perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing” (James 1:4). Often in our walk with the Lord, it is these sufferings that have taught us the most patience.

Trials Teach Us Courage

As we experience God's sustaining and strengthening grace in trials, the fear of suffering and pain begins to fade. God's grace allows us to put on His strength and courage and rise above the grip of fearfulness, until we welcome the battle and stand with the scars of struggle and victory as good soldiers of Jesus Christ.

Trials Enable Us To Help Others

The callous and impure heart is unfit to comfort, counsel, and bless a suffering world. First, God's purifying school is necessary. Our painful trials enable us to encourage, strengthen, and empathize with people God has placed in our sphere of influence. By God's grace, we can share with them that we've been through this ourselves, and can testify from the depth of our own experience that “my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4: 19). ■

If My People Humble Themselves

It cannot be denied that humility and love are an integral part of true religion. John Ruskin (1819-1900) said, “I believe that the first test of a great man is his humility.”

The truly humble one does not think more highly of himself than he ought. His intent is that God receive the honor and be glorified. He is willing to remain unnoticed and work in the background if it is for God’s glory. He sees himself as totally dependent on God. He feels the same as John the Baptist once did: “He must increase, but I must decrease.”

In general, our present society is by no means a humble one; to the contrary, it has such an exaggerated concept of its achievements that there is very little time left to think about God and the order of the divine. Society contemplates its inventions, progress in all fields, knowledge, and the like, as if to say, “I am god. Look what I’ve accomplished!”

Humanity is gripped by a sense of pride. In the last hundred years, great upheavals have taken place; indeed, great progress has been made in many fields. With a speed not thought possible in the past, it is now possible to speed from one place to another, from one country to another, and even to travel around the whole world. Some jobs that used to take a lot of time and effort can now be done by the click of a button.

We live in a time of constant change, and people are always looking to invent something better. What was new a few years ago is already obsolete and must give way for what is newer and better. Thus, the world today feels superior and is proud of its progress.

Yet right now, the world is in grave danger. Proverbs states, “Pride goes before destruction.” No one will deny that the world in general has become arrogant. God tells us in 2 Chronicles 7:14, “If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked

ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.”

Today, the hope for the world lies in this promise. We all owe it to our country, wherever we may live, to do our part for salvation by humbling ourselves before God. Only then can God use us for the salvation and blessing of our fellow man. Everyone must start on himself.

It is true, life is much more pleasant and comfortable today. But in spite of this, human nature has remained unchanged. The consequence of a better life is that we can pride ourselves on many achievements and progress, but fail to notice we have lost sight of spiritual values and stand naked and bare in spiritual terms.

We desperately need a change, and it can only happen when people humble themselves, sincerely repent, and return to God. Salvation through Jesus Christ transforms and renews man’s heart. Christ came to write the law of God in the hearts of men. And therein lies the hope for the world.

Our hope does not lie in further development and exploitation or the potential of our country, but in our people humbling themselves before God and living in a way that is pleasing to Him. True progress comes about when man acts in accordance with the will of God and a true Christian character emerges. Christ Himself is our high and noble example, and because He died and rose for us, we can have Him in us as the hope of glory.

God abhors pride and arrogance, but He always loves true humility. “If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land” (2 Chronicles 7:15). Isn’t that exactly what we need today?

C. V. W.

The Blessings of Suffering

Life would be much more dangerous if there were no suffering. Suffering and pain are among our best friends. Suffering enriches our lives, strengthens, protects, leads, and educates us. It increases our compassion for others. As long as sin remains in the world, it would be a tragedy if suffering and pain did not exist.

For most people, suffering and pain may seem to be a grievous problem. But it was not seen that way by the inspired writers of the Bible. God's book of wisdom is full of references to the necessity and blessings of suffering. God's Word shows us suffering is not coincidental, not a necessary evil, but a necessary and desired treasure.

In the same manner that the sensation of pain is important for the protection of the body, it is also useful for our spiritual and communal life. It is a means of avoiding danger and bringing us into safety, a way to protect us from spiritual malaise and bring us health. Psalm 119:67 declares, "Before I was afflicted, I went astray, but now I keep your word." Everyone who rejects God's Word is on the way to being eternally condemned. If our afflictions, illnesses and suffering cause us to turn back to God, that is grace. Therefore, the psalm writer says, "Blessed is the man you instruct, O LORD, and teach out of Your law" (Psalm 94:12).

From Israel's history, we read of times when God's chosen people turned to sin and went astray. In a manner similar to a doctor taking drastic measures to treat a patient in grave danger of dying, so God needed to take drastic measures to correct His people. Referring to a time when God caused many to die because of their sin, we read, "When He slew them, then they sought Him; and they returned and sought earnestly for God" (Psalm 78:34).

We would overlook the greatest blessings that suffering and pain bring if we regarded them only as a means for God to turn people away from sin and danger. We also have many examples of suffering in the lives of those who are close to God and live in harmony with Him.

Like a gardener who prunes his choice plants more than the others, so Jesus says, "I am the true vine,

and My Father is the vine-dresser. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every *branch* that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit" (John 15:1-2). The Hebrew writer says, "For whom the LORD loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives" (Hebrew 12:6). And "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).

We enter the Most Holy Place when we read about the sinless Son of God, Who always did the will of the Father, and we are told that "it was fitting for Him, for whom *are* all things and by whom *are* all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings" (Hebrews 2:10). If it was so important for the Son of God to experience suffering Himself, then we should consider it a privilege to follow in His footsteps.

Speaking to all who love the Lord, the Apostle Peter says, "Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy" (1 Peter 4:12-13). ■

“ Before I was
afflicted I went
astray,
but now I keep
Your word. ”
(Psalm 119:67)

Why the Little Ones Are the Greatest

Jesus was on the way to Capernaum, in Galilee, with His disciples. It appears the disciples fell a bit behind and began to dispute among themselves who would be the greatest. Jesus perceived their conversation and asked what they had been talking about. They felt embarrassed and answered nothing (see Mark 9: 33–37). Jesus, the wise teacher, placed a child in their midst and said, “If anyone desires to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all. . . . Whoever receives one of these little children in My name receives Me; and whoever receives Me, receives not Me but Him who sent Me” (Mark 9: 35b, 37). This also encompasses having a servant’s heart toward the most innocent. This humility opens the way to the Kingdom of Heaven, to the Kingdom of God.

The secret of true greatness, as Jesus taught, seems to have been grasped by few people. Instead, we find people who not only want to be great, they want to be the greatest. This aspiration usually comes with selfish competition, ill-will, resentment, and even enmity. This is opposite of what Jesus taught and expected from His followers. With clarity, He demonstrated that there is no place for self-seeking greatness in the kingdom of God. “Earthly greatness fades away like a dream.” Not infrequently, the great ones of this world were the destroyers of their time. We know how miserably many of their lives ended, for he who rises higher and higher should know that he can also fall the furthest. Subsequently, Jesus sought to distract His disciples from such thinking. In His eyes, the pure, noble soul resting in God shows true greatness.

Such purity and innocence is found in children. Therefore, Jesus placed a child in the midst of His disciples and said, “Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 18: 3). Praise God, there are still such people today who are

humble, patient, think little of themselves, and yet are great in God’s eyes. A poet says, “Make me purer, keep me humble, make my heart more content.”

Someone shared with me that in a small village in Russia, services were being held, where they were expecting a preacher from abroad. In order to keep the travel expenses down, he traveled by ship in third class. When they picked him up from the port and brought him to the meeting place, he asked to rest a while. Small in stature, he then stepped among those gathered, plainly dressed, and very simple in manner. Some wondered what this small, humble man would have to say to them. “But when he began to speak from God’s Word,” the man said, “we grew smaller, and he grew larger!” He was simply a man in whom there was a hidden greatness!

Eva von Thiele-Winckler reports about another messenger of God: “At a conference I was attending, I saw among a crowd of strangers a very small-statured man who attracted my attention. He radiated something special, accompanied by calm, peace, and joy. This seemed to me a living answer to the longing and searching of my heart. I saw in him the indwelling of Jesus through the Holy Spirit, of Whom I had just recently heard.

“At meals, he sat among the poor in the second row at the table, who could not pay much. As the smallest, and perhaps the poorest, he humbly led the conversation. He did not usually make speeches, but when he prayed, it was as if heaven opened up. He may have been small in stature, but there was a hidden spiritual greatness in him.

“One afternoon, he told the story of his life and how he was healed. Orphaned and poor at an early age, he had been educated by a pastor, but then at the age of seventeen became seriously ill with softening of the bones (osteomalacia), nerve issues, and stomach

ailments. His condition seemed hopeless. After suffering for seventeen years, this man read in James 5 about getting healed, and grasped this promise in faith. He asked brothers to anoint him and pray for him. They responded to his request. When they had left the house, the sick young man dared to stand up in the name of Jesus. He heard a crack go through his bones, his legs and arms bent, and his head sank between his shoulders. But a current of divine power flooded through him, and he was healed! Slowly he regained his strength, and soon he was able to visit children of God in a large area, who were greatly refreshed and

strengthened in their faith by his testimony. After that, this little man served in North Africa, in Switzerland, and in Russia. Only those who are lowly and humble can God make great. It is simply amazing what God can do through people whose hearts and lives are completely surrendered to Him.”

Don't you want to do the same? This life with God begins at the foot of Jesus' cross. From here, you too can become a useful instrument of God.

*Friedrich Krebs
Edmonton, Alberta*

Old-fashioned or Modernized Faith?

Pastor Harms, from the town of Hermannsburg, was once traveling by train when he met a wealthy factory owner, a manufacturer of wooden matches. The man boasted of his millions.

“Look at me,” he said, “I have made something of myself, and I have accomplished it all on my own! Do you know anything about the process of match-making?” he asked of his traveling companion.

“Not really,” Harms replied. “I'm a pastor.”

“Oh, I see, a pastor! Well, that's very fitting. I have been meaning to talk to a pastor for a long time, to ask him an important question. Allow me. There is much talk these days of an old-fashioned faith and a 'modernized faith.' I ask you, what do you understand of the old-time faith and what about the new and modernized faith?”

Pastor Harms appeared willing and inclined to respond to this question.

“You see,” he began, “when God prospers a man in his profession and the man remains unpretentious and humble about it, he thinks, ‘I did not actually deserve that.’ And when God continues to bless that virtuous man and eventually makes him a great and affluent man, while remaining humble, caring and sharing, and not forgetting others, and in everything says, ‘I am undeserving of all the mercy and faithfulness God has shown me,’ that is the old-fashioned faith.”

“On the other hand, one is blessed by God with many possessions, but does not recognize that his humility and gratitude are being tested, and instead of becoming smaller and humbling himself, he grows bigger in his own eyes and forgets that all of it came from the Heavenly Father. And then, on every train journey, when he says to his fellow passengers, ‘Look at me! This is purely my own doing,’ that is what we would call a new and modernized faith.” ■

True Patience

“Patience is not only the ability to wait, but the ability to maintain a good inner attitude while waiting.”

TTrue patience is the ability to endure inner and outer pain without losing your composure, having mastery over your emotions. In education, it is the ability to endure the weaknesses and imperfections of others without becoming embittered, without losing courage and forgetting the goal.

It is an unswerving perseverance in the fulfillment of one’s duty despite unpleasant experiences, pressure and suffering, all kinds of obstacles and discouragements.

From the New Testament, we know that patience is a fruit of the Spirit, like kindness, goodness, meekness. It is a daughter of faith and love, a sister of gentleness, longsuffering, kindness. It is the opposite of impatience, the hasty, urgent being that cannot wait. Patience is when we overcome our naturally impatient internal self. Patience means being able to wait, to persevere. Someone said, “A Christian is one who can wait.” ■



Characteristics of True Humility

One of the most beautiful character traits of a Christian is humility. “God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble” (James 4:6).

It can only benefit us to consider the fruits of true humility in the lives of godly people. The life and character of David provides us with a fine example of this.

Though he was promoted to a higher position, David was not corrupted as a result. While he was still an ordinary young shepherd, Samuel sent for him to come from the field and anointed him as the future king of Israel. God had chosen him over all his brothers. However, he was still willing to return to his father’s flock and await further guidance from God.

David preferred to present himself as he was, rather than attempt to imitate others. When the Spirit of God aroused in him a righteous indignation at hearing Goliath’s blasphemies, Saul gave him his own armor to confront the Philistine. David, however, laid aside this armor, preferring to take his sling, which he had so successfully used in slaying the lion and the bear.

God has equipped each of His children with an individual personality. He can use each of us best when we are filled with the Holy Spirit. He wants us to place ourselves at His disposal just as we are and not try to imitate others.

David did not become arrogant because of his victory over the giant. Although he was highly honored after slaying the boastful giant, he remained humble. He did not boast about his victory. He did not plot to seize the throne, as some might have done in his place. He regarded Saul as the “Lord’s anointed,” even though the disobedient king was no longer worthy of that position. David was willing to suffer bitter persecution

from the wrathful and envious King Saul, who repeatedly tried to take his life. Although he was hounded like a wild animal, he refused to kill Saul when the opportunity arose.

When David heard of his rival’s death, he lamented rather than rejoiced. When Saul’s army had been defeated, King Saul threw himself on his own sword to avoid falling into the hands of the enemy. The way to the throne, for which David had been anointed long before, was now open to him. However, David lamented for Saul and Jonathan.

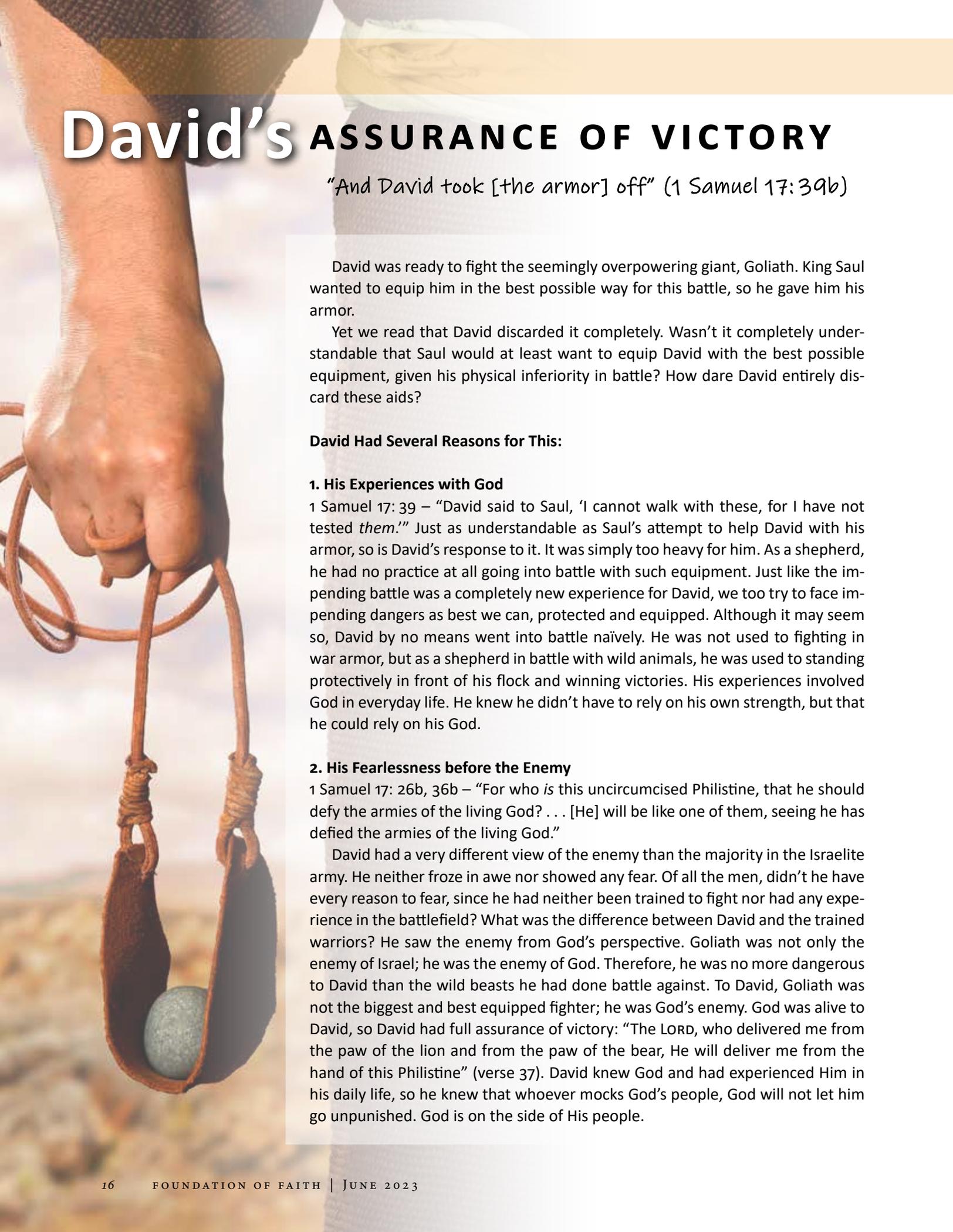
David humbled himself when he was rebuked by God’s messenger. Like many others, David experienced that carnal comfort is often ruinous to the spiritual life. At the height of his earthly power, he fell prey to temptation and sinned grievously against God and man.

After David had sinned greatly against Uriah, the prophet Nathan sought out David. Many other kings would have had the fearless prophet executed, but not David. He humbled himself before God and obtained forgiveness, although he had to bear the consequences of his sin.

In later years, when his own son rose up against him, David was once again a fugitive who was unsure of his life. But when one of his men asked permission to kill the rebel, David would not allow it. He thought of his own case and accepted this affliction as a punishment sent to him by God.

Truly, it is worth remembering the words of Scripture in all circumstances: “Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time” (1 Peter 5:6).

H. A. Sherwood

A close-up photograph of a hand holding a stone in a leather sling. The background is a blurred image of a person wearing armor, likely representing David. The overall tone is warm and focused.

David's ASSURANCE OF VICTORY

"And David took [the armor] off" (1 Samuel 17:39b)

David was ready to fight the seemingly overpowering giant, Goliath. King Saul wanted to equip him in the best possible way for this battle, so he gave him his armor.

Yet we read that David discarded it completely. Wasn't it completely understandable that Saul would at least want to equip David with the best possible equipment, given his physical inferiority in battle? How dare David entirely discard these aids?

David Had Several Reasons for This:

1. His Experiences with God

1 Samuel 17: 39 – "David said to Saul, 'I cannot walk with these, for I have not tested *them*.'" Just as understandable as Saul's attempt to help David with his armor, so is David's response to it. It was simply too heavy for him. As a shepherd, he had no practice at all going into battle with such equipment. Just like the impending battle was a completely new experience for David, we too try to face impending dangers as best we can, protected and equipped. Although it may seem so, David by no means went into battle naïvely. He was not used to fighting in war armor, but as a shepherd in battle with wild animals, he was used to standing protectively in front of his flock and winning victories. His experiences involved God in everyday life. He knew he didn't have to rely on his own strength, but that he could rely on his God.

2. His Fearlessness before the Enemy

1 Samuel 17: 26b, 36b – "For who *is* this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God? . . . [He] will be like one of them, seeing he has defied the armies of the living God."

David had a very different view of the enemy than the majority in the Israelite army. He neither froze in awe nor showed any fear. Of all the men, didn't he have every reason to fear, since he had neither been trained to fight nor had any experience in the battlefield? What was the difference between David and the trained warriors? He saw the enemy from God's perspective. Goliath was not only the enemy of Israel; he was the enemy of God. Therefore, he was no more dangerous to David than the wild beasts he had done battle against. To David, Goliath was not the biggest and best equipped fighter; he was God's enemy. God was alive to David, so David had full assurance of victory: "The LORD, who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, He will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine" (verse 37). David knew God and had experienced Him in his daily life, so he knew that whoever mocks God's people, God will not let him go unpunished. God is on the side of His people.

YOUR CROWN IS WAITING FOR YOU!

Most of us know that Queen Elizabeth II of England passed away in September of 2022. You've probably seen her somewhere in a picture or video adorned with one of her magnificent crowns.

As average citizens, it is hard to imagine what it would be like one day to inherit a royal crown. As believers, we do not aspire to receive an earthly crown because we know everything here on earth is transient.

But have you ever realized that an imperishable crown awaits you in heaven? (1 Peter 5: 4). We do not know the exact details, but one thing we do know: it will be glorious. The Bible says that no ear has heard and no eye has seen what God has prepared for us. The most expensive gems and materials on this earth can only begin to describe

the glory that awaits us.

In Revelation 2, John speaks of the crown of life—an eternal victory prize as a reward for those who overcome. The queen had to leave the crown behind with her death. But as believers, through death we receive the crown that endures forever.

If you have become a child of God and belong to Jesus Christ, you are an heir of heaven (Romans 8: 17; Galatians 3: 29). However, it is not those who have begun the race who will be crowned but those who are faithful to the end.

What rejoicing and what a grand ceremony will take place at the coronation! It is worth waiting, persevering and fighting for the crown!

*Dina Grötzing
Eppingen, Germany*

3. His Trust in God

1 Samuel 17: 47 – “Then all this assembly shall know that the LORD does not save with sword and spear; for the battle is the LORD’S.”

Before the battle comes, David makes it clear that his purpose is not to show off his skill by gaining victory, but rather for God to glorify Himself. Everyone should see that God alone gives victory to those who trust in Him. David knew Goliath was God’s enemy, the Israelites were God’s people, and the battle was therefore the Lord’s. He was willing to put himself into God’s service and be used by Him. Therefore, He did not need the best human weapons for victory. He fought with what seemed like hopelessly inferior equipment, but in reality he was

well equipped, because he had complete trust in the living God.

We, too, may have daily experiences with our God that teach us to trust Him more and more as we head fearlessly into battle in the strength of our Lord. For “in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us” (Romans 8: 37). Victory is ready for us as well. We may have the assurance of victory in various temptations and attacks of the enemy, like David, if we go into battle with faith and trust in God. “For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith” (1 John 5: 4). In this, we need not trust in our own strength. Rather, we need to be aware of our human weak-

ness so as not to enter the battle in self-assurance and be defeated. Like Paul, we may experience God’s grace: “And He said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.’ Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me” (2 Corinthians 12: 9). We will not be spared struggles in our lives, but Jesus promised us, “In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world” (John 16: 33b). If we live by the power of Christ, like David, we may go into battle confident of victory so God may come to glory in our lives.

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The Yellow Note

It was 1:00 pm. At that moment, the school bell rang, indicating the end of the school day. The students packed up their schoolbags and prepared to go home. Suddenly, the teacher stopped me with the words, “John, please, stay a moment; I need to talk to you!”

The boys looked over at me a little curiously, as if to say, “Why would John need to stay behind? What is there to talk about? Of all the kids, he’s the best in the whole class—I wonder if he has done something wrong?”

I could already guess why I needed to stay after class. The day before, I had lied to my teacher. It had not been the first time that I had not stuck to the truth, but this time I had lied very deliberately. I couldn’t believe it had come to this:

I knew I was at the top of my class, and I wanted to stay there. Only in mathematics did I occasionally have some difficulties. Now, once again, a class test was scheduled, and I was a little afraid of it. The day before we were to take the test, we thoroughly repeated the individual groups of tasks and practiced various challenging arithmetic operations. In the process, I noticed the teacher had apparently not selected the exam questions from a special exam book as usual but had put together his own questions and written them down, along with the results, on a small yellow piece of paper.

“You need that piece of paper!” went through my head. And so I kept looking at the little yellow piece of paper. At the end of the arithmetic lesson, the teacher put it in his arithmetic book and locked it in his desk. He left the key in the desk.

During the following recess, I sneaked into the classroom, briefly convinced myself that I was not being observed, unlocked the drawer of the writing desk, looked for the yellow piece of paper with the exam questions, and began to copy them down. As a precaution, I had immediately locked the book back in the drawer. I had almost finished writing when the break ended and the classroom door was pulled open. My classmates came in. They took no notice of me, how-

ever, because I often had to do small jobs for our teacher during recess. But now I didn’t dare go back to the writing desk. I closed my arithmetic book and secretly let the yellow slip of paper disappear in my pocket. Then the lessons began again.

Towards the end of the morning, I became very restless. What if I didn’t find an opportunity to put the yellow note back in its place?! At the end of the last lesson, however, I got rid of the note. I was all alone in the classroom again. The other boys had already left, and the teacher was called into the staff room for a few moments. But even now I didn’t dare go to the teacher’s desk, so I simply threw the little yellow piece of paper into the wastebasket. Then I went home.

The next morning, right during the first period, we wrote our arithmetic exam. I took my time doing it. I knew the correct answers, but I didn’t want to be the first to finish, otherwise I would surely have given myself away. Everything went well.

But now I had to stay after class. The disappearance of the answer sheet must have been noticed! Did the teacher already have a certain suspicion?

“John,” he asked me, “can you tell me how my sheet of paper with the exam questions, this yellow piece of paper here, got into the wastepaper basket? I believe I put it in my arithmetic book yesterday morning. But yesterday afternoon at home, it was missing. I looked through my whole file folder, but I couldn’t find it. Then I even went back here to school and looked through my desk. And finally—imagine this—I found the note there in the wastebasket!”

The man looked at me questioningly. I clearly felt that he did not have the slightest suspicion against me. He apparently did not at all believe I had anything to do with the matter. Therefore, it was not difficult for me to assure him that I had nothing to say about it and had no reason to suspect anyone. The teacher gave me a friendly nod, and I said goodbye.

The day after next, we got our papers back. Only a few boys had received an “A.” I was among them. We received special praise in front of the whole class.

But, I will not easily forget the days following this incident. What was wrong with me? Hadn't everything gone well? Wasn't I still at the top of my class?

Yes, what was wrong with me? Whatever I touched, whatever I did, at school and at home, nothing gave me pleasure. My mother remarked a few times that I had changed so much. Was I sick, was there something bothering me? Did Mother suspect what was bothering me? I couldn't pray anymore either.

I often thought of the arithmetic work and the little yellow slip of paper. Again and again I tried to forget the matter. After all, everything had gone well, so why start in on it again?

Everything had gone well. But, was everything really all right now? For several weeks, I kept silent. But

suddenly I couldn't do it anymore. I spoke to my parents. My father turned pale, and my mother began to cry. I described the whole incident as it was. My father read some verses from Psalms 51 and 32. I realized I would not find peace until I had also spoken to my teacher. My father did not say much more, but he prayed with me.

The next day, I spoke with my teacher. He looked at me for a long time. His disappointment in me was great. He could not utter a word at first. The pause was agonizing! And yet he forgave me.

In the evening after this conversation with my teacher, I could pray again and also confess my guilt to God, my deceit and my lies, and He also forgave me. From then on, I could rejoice again. ■



Aging Gracefully

PART 1



That's quick to read and even sounds good. But what does it mean? How do you envision aging gracefully? It not only describes the natural process of growing older but also defines a time of wisdom, experience, and spiritual maturity. Sounds great, doesn't it? Yes, that's the kind of growing old I want to strive for.

In a somewhat broader sense, I aim to age with dignity so as not to make life difficult for those around me. Instead, others should have a desire to spend time with us. Everyone should sense that in spite of everything we have encountered, we continue to honor our God.

When does the process of growing old actually begin?

When is one "officially" old? Or how old do you have to be to start thinking about it? My children mentioned an "old man." When I asked his age, I heard, "around your age." Still others claim that age is merely a number. One can be chronologically "old" but young inside. Others, however, are still relatively young when it comes to the number but are already quite archaic in their thinking. I'm sure you understand what I mean. You can't assign a number and say it's the age you become old. Be that as it may, it is beneficial if one prepares mentally for aging and adjusts to upcoming changes. Dealing with aging not only makes life easier for us but also for those who will be helping us. That is the theme of this article. We want to approach old age prepared so it will be a blessed and dignified sea-

son, above all, through which we glorify our Lord and Savior.

My wife Doreen and I are always concerned about how best to deal with the course of aging. We want to prepare ourselves for it. Better said, we think about practical ways to best achieve that goal. We talk about what we want to do, or not do, as the case may be. Especially when we observe older people and don't condone their actions, these thoughts cross our minds. We should actually make a list and capture these thoughts in bullet points so we don't forget our resolutions in the future. But where would we file the sheet of paper? And will we remember where it is when we most need it?

Making a list is not such a far-fetched thought, is it? Since we are forgetful people, it is beneficial to write it down. Will you join us? Your list may certainly look different than ours, but that's okay. How do you want to live the last years? Do you want to just let them happen or approach them with planning? Actually, you can't start soon enough. The way we are now is how we will be in our old age, only much more pronounced. For example, if you don't find a reason to be thankful today, you won't suddenly become grateful in old age. It will be difficult to get along with such a person. Whoever is extremely frugal today and constantly looks at his bank statement, will have a more pronounced tendency to be thrifty with aging. Sometimes this "scrimping" is also expressed differently. Those who talk a lot fall into the category of "gossipmonger" in old age. Grumblers develop into unpalatable people. But the principle also applies to positive qualities. Wouldn't we prefer to grow in this direction? After all, those who love will usually love more, those who give thanks will become more grateful, and those who are generous will become more generous. Of course, there are exceptions.

That's why we want to think about this and let the Lord shape us so we can calmly progress through the aging process and still be "fruitful, fresh, and flourishing" (Psalm 92:14). Over the years, I have repeatedly met such people. I observed their positive manner, their grateful attitude, and their childlike trust in God. Through their inspiring conversations, and their prayers, they have actually become a great blessing to me. This blessing not only impacts their peers but also future generations. I admire them, and would love to belong to their group. That is when the refrain of the song, "Brighten the Corner Where You Are," becomes reality.

Over the past few months, I have sent an email to a number of my friends (age group 50+) asking for their thoughts on this topic. In doing so, I hoped to gain a somewhat more complete and balanced picture. The responses were not long in coming. I was amazed at the joyfulness of the brothers and sisters to participate in this project, and not just for the sake of the seniors' article but for personal enrichment as well. One response was, "I might actually be tempted to write a book about it." Someone else noted, "I thought about it for a long time and decided not to get old. To what extent we have control over 'looking old' is up for debate, but we do have control over our attitude."

Of course, addressing such a topic requires openness, honesty, and, above all, the willingness to change. The fact is, if you already know everything and can do it all, you won't learn anything more.

No one can say today how we will fare in the future or where we will spend our twilight years. All these things are hidden from us. But it's best to address these issues intentionally, right now. Whoever wants to grow old gracefully must choose this blessed path today. It's probably too late to wait until we're old. Making resolutions, consciously making decisions, and learning to implement them right now is the first step in the right direction.

As the sun slowly sets on the horizon, I endeavour, through my close connection with God, to shape my life in such a way that it blesses others. As he looked back on life, the Apostle Paul penned his wish with these fitting words: "[A]ccording to my earnest expectation and hope that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me, to live *is* Christ, and to die *is* gain" (Philippians 1:20–21). Where Christ is highly magnified (exalted), no matter what, one can speak of grace in growing old.

This column is just the introduction to other articles with practical insight. I invite you to look into this subject and journal your thoughts. This exercise could result in personal and spiritual benefit.

How do you wish to spend your twilight years? What legacy do you want to leave for your loved ones? Will we be remembered as "curmudgeons" or, when we come to mind, will it be said we lived blessed, golden years? The decision is ours.

Harry Semenjuk



Part 6

Wayward Children Finally Free

M. Schmelzle

Last month, we explored how the prodigal son's father might have felt as his youngest son turned his back and left him behind to drown in a sea of pain, grief, and disappointment. Of course, the son's feelings would have been very different. For the son, this was when real life could finally begin. He was finally free! Nobody would tell him what to do. He was now his own master, making his own decisions.

The son walked to the next village, then farther, and farther yet. To get as far as possible from the strictures of home, he traveled to a far country. At the time, the term "far country" was most often used to refer to places overseas. Very likely, the son took a ship over the Mediterranean, wanting to travel far enough to drown all thoughts of home in the sea, to have the wind blow them away, to have the dust bury them as they fell by the wayside. He was done with "home." He did not spare a thought to how his father or brother might be faring.

After receiving his "portion of goods," he did not manage it wisely. Often, things we have not earned through our own hard work can seem less valuable. At home, having always been well-provided for without responsibilities of his own, he had never had occasion to learn how to budget. Now far from home, he frittered his wealth away. That could not have happened overnight; it might even have taken several years for all the money to be used up. He was living the high life, denying himself nothing and throwing parties that bought him recognition and appreciation, until one day his purse had no more coins to give, no matter how much he shook it, no matter how often he checked. People knew him as the young man with a lot of money, so they did not remark when he racked up a bigger

bill or missed a payment for the first time. Eventually, though, their patience ran out. They refused to extend further credit, instead issuing warnings and threats. To have just one more hour of pleasure, he even sold his shoes, and to drink just one more round with his friends, he parted with the last of his possessions.

In the end, he became a young man without money, and from that instant, his "friends" mocked him and abandoned him. Nobody wanted anything more to do with him. They had lost interest. Nobody gave him anything. Nobody returned his previous generosity; nobody supported him in return when he was in need. So often the world promises fame and riches if we kneel down and worship it, but instead of delivering, it bleeds us dry before dumping us into its quagmires.

The prodigal son was in big trouble, and the worst thing was, he had no one to blame but himself. Nobody wanted to hire him. Everyone turned him away, repulsed by this stinking, scruffy, unkempt degenerate, until he broke down and accepted the one job he was offered: keeping pigs. According to religious law, pigs were unclean animals, so it was horribly degrading for a Jew to work with pigs. He had hit rock bottom.

So many young people who turn away from God and from their parents foolishly think they have finally achieved their rightful independence. They tear free of what they see as God's restraints—only to replace them with the iron shackles of their own sinful desires. They think they are free—until the moment comes when they are forced to recognize they were tricked, even by themselves. This echoes the very beginning of human history. People did not want to be bound by God's rules and authority, instead desiring to "be

“And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, journeyed to a far country, and there wasted his possessions with prodigal living. But when he had spent all, there arose a severe famine in that land, and he began to be in want.”
Luke 15:13-14.

like God” and only do what they wanted. However, sin means distance and alienation from God. A life without God is a life without control, including control over ourselves. Rather than bringing freedom, it leads to waste, dissipation, and growing dissatisfaction as we descend into a state of suffering, degradation, and slavery to sin.

In verse 17, we read that he came to himself. This shows he had not previously realized he was in a downward spiral that would end in his eternal death. Sometimes, we have to wonder when people will come to their senses. I knew a young person who also went his own way.

In vain, well-meaning people strongly advised him against his chosen path of self-destruction, appealed to his reason, and enumerated a variety of arguments to change his mind. Even the Word of God failed to convince him. It felt like talking to a stone. The words slid off like drops of water, finding no soil to take root in. The young person closed his mind, entrenched behind the door to his heart. He could not understand the words and comprehend the evidence. It seemed as if he wasn't capable of any rational thought.

As a result, he went his own way, which led downwards, getting increasingly darker and colder. It was a hard and steep path, full of pain and sorrow. Finally, having arrived at the very bottom, he came to himself. “What have I done?” In His love, God showed mercy and helped him back onto the right path. Praise be to God! The Enemy deceives people, blinding them to all godly reason.

In this extreme situation, one thing is incredibly difficult for parents: to let go in faith. God entrusted you with your children for a certain period of time.

The more you pray for your children and trust in God's working in their lives, the less you will want to hold on to them with your own strength. You will learn to place them into God's hands. It can be difficult to admit to ourselves that we do not have the power or control to hold onto them ourselves. Putting our children in God's hands and giving entire control over to Him is rarely the work of a moment. Instead, we need to pray our way through, asking God to help us truly let go of our beloved son or daughter. We need to let go of the idea that our children “belong” to us and “are ours,” of the wish to continue shouldering all responsibility for them, of the attempt to protect them from making mistakes, of the effort to keep the peace at any price through our own strength, of the yearning to win our children's love and recognition at any cost, and of the guilty thoughts that we must have failed as parents. We need to let all these things go—but continue to display the character of Christ in our own lives. Jesus forgave Peter even though he betrayed Him three times. He forgave His disciples although they all abandoned Him. He forgave even though He was left all alone. In the end, it was His love that brought “His children” back to Him. He overcame everything that was done to Him.

Continue giving your children all of your love, even if they are on the wrong path and have turned their backs on you and even if they are causing you shame and dishonor and great suffering. Jesus is suffering alongside you. He knows your pain, having experienced it Himself. He showed you another approach: to love even when your love is not returned.

- *To be continued* -

Help Will Surely Come

The train arrives at the station, but Mom is not on the platform as promised. “Mom will be downstairs for sure,” the nine-year-old reasons and drags the suitcase down the stairs all by herself. But her mother is not at the gate either. Well, she must be outside then. She makes her way through the large hall with the suitcase.

The child is a little surprised; everything is turning out differently than she had imagined during her trip, but she remains calm. “Mom must have just left on the streetcar.”

The girl sits down on the heavy suitcase, which contains all of the clothing she possesses, and looks in the direction from which her mother must come.

Ten minutes have passed since the train arrived. Pitying eyes brush past the lonely child. She sits there, alert, calm, and serene as in the first minute. Her head does not swing from right to left. No tears stand in her eyes, no annoyance disfigures her face. Her eyes look towards the one direction from which her mother must come.

Suddenly she is standing there! “Mom!”

“My child!” Mother had come from another direction. Someone had unexpectedly needed her help on the way, so her own child had to wait. Now both fall overjoyed into each other’s arms.

“Were you very scared when I was neither upstairs nor downstairs in the station?”

“Scared? Mom, I knew you were coming!”

“It’s good you knew that so well, Sweetheart! But if it had taken any longer?”

“Then I would have known you couldn’t come, and I would have gone home alone. Only it wouldn’t have been easy with the heavy suitcase.” The woman can’t help it; she takes her child in her arms once again in the middle of the street.

The child knew nothing of her little bravery. She only knew her mother was coming. But how wonderful it is now that Mom is there and takes the suitcase and they can go home together.

The mother lies awake for a long time that night, thinking over and over again of her child, sitting calmly and surely on her suitcase at the train station, waiting. All of a sudden, she feels ashamed. She thinks of how adults, herself included, usually behave differently when their Heavenly Father makes them wait. Resentment and rebellion can

quickly arise because God “abandons you like this.” After all, we’ve done nothing wrong! We have even made an effort to be a true Christian. More and more we fall into bitterness, becoming increasingly restless, distracted, unhappy, and desperate. Not only do we lose our trust in God, but our attitude tends to have a contagious and poison-

ous effect on those around us who witness it. They can more easily throw away their trust in God.

The child patiently waiting did not reproach her mother. In her heart and thoughts, she did not set a condition for her mother to be there at a certain time to prove she loved her child. The child carried the heavy suitcase, she waited and then said, “I knew you would come . . .,” and at last she rejoiced.

The tired woman silently dwelled on what had taken place. We should be an example for our children. Today my child was a role model for me. From now on, I will carry my load as naturally as my child carried her suitcase. I will quietly wait and see how the Heavenly Father will give us His help. It will come, but perhaps from a completely different direction than expected. To believe in God, the Father, means to know that He helps us, in His timing, and cares for us in His Fatherly way.

Heinz Schäfer

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Patient in Tribulation

Once, when someone excessively complained to pastor Emil Frommel about trials and difficulties of life, he answered in his serious, sensible way: “If the Lord shakes your tree of life so the leaves fly down, what does He want but that you see the light sky all the better through the bare branches and twigs? And if He has laid upon you a heavy cross, the weight of which seeks to press you down, think of it as nothing more than the weight on the feet of a diver, drawing him down to the bottom of the sea, that he may find there in the depths many precious pearls, and then carry them up to the light.”

This is an excellent answer to the question, “Why does God send suffering?” To this question, Charles Spurgeon adds, “I read in an old Puritan author the other day a very pretty figure. He says, ‘A full wind is not so favorable to a ship when it is fully fair as a side wind. It is strange,’ says he, ‘that when the wind blows in an exact direction to blow a ship into port, she will not go near so well as if she had a cross wind sideways upon her.’ And he explains it thus: ‘The mariners say that when the wind blows exactly fair it only fills a part of the sails, and it can not reach the sails that are ahead, because the sail, bellying out with the wind, prevents the wind from reaching that which is further ahead. But when the wind sweeps sideways, then every sail

is full, and she is driven on swiftly in her course with the full force of the wind. Ah!’ says the old Puritan, ‘there is nothing like a side wind to drive God’s people to heaven.’”

Yes, to lead us more safely into the harbor, God sends us tribulation. When we have realized this, we will more easily heed the apostle’s admonition to be “patient in tribulation” (Romans 12:12), and we will keep still and persevere.

Imagine there is a man who is busy carrying sacks of grain day after day. He carries a load of two hundredweight each time. That becomes a very heavy load over the course of the whole year. Suppose this man saw the whole year’s load in front of him on January 1. He would ask, “I should load this tremendous mountain on my shoulders and carry it away? Impossible!” But you remind him that, after all, it is not to be done all at once but in so and so many days. He is satisfied.

Similarly, we all like to look at our tribulations and exclaim, “How will I bear all this?” Now, only one tribulation comes at a time, and with each tribulation will come the strength to bear it. A person who may have walked 200 km did not cover the whole distance in one step or in one day. No, he took time and patience to do it. So we also must use our time, and with patient perseverance we too will complete our work. ■

Announcements

Camp Meeting in Blaubeuren, Germany

August 12-17, 2023

Church Conference in Edmonton, Alberta

September 2-3, 2023

Further information:
www.edmontonchurchofgod.com

Experiences with God

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

God has answered my prayer of many years, so I would like to write a testimony about it, to bring Him glory.

My heart is full of joy and gratitude to my Savior for His love, care, and grace. I feel enveloped and secure in His goodness, in past times of loneliness as well as now, in the time of joy. Solomon writes, “To everything *there* is a season, a time for every purpose under heaven” (Ecclesiastes 3:1).

Looking Back:

I grew up in a Christian home and knew much about God. However, I did not want to serve Him in my youth and went my own way, opening many wrong doors in my life that I can no longer close. In 2005, I went to Australia, met my husband there, and stayed there.

Through the prayers of my parents, God found me, even on the other side of the globe. When I found Jesus as my personal Savior through a sermon on a CD by Brother Semenjuk in 2011, I had no church and no born-again Christians around me. I suffered much from this spiritual loneliness, that there were no people nearby who were of one mind with me and had the same roots as well as the same influence. In particular, I missed my family and my cousins with whom I had grown up. I realized

too late how much I missed them all.

Spiritual communication was limited to the livestream from Canada and the many CDs with sermons that were sent to me, e-mails with brothers and sisters, and the *Evangeliums Posaune* [German version of this publication] which I received regularly. Online communication was not yet at the level we have today.

My first love for God was burning, and I can still remember how eagerly I awaited the livestream from the Church of God in Edmonton each time. Because of the time difference, I planned my son's kindergarten hours as well as my daily duties so I could be at home in front of the laptop for the online livestream. It was always such a blessing for me. When there was a special celebration in Edmonton on a Sunday morning, like baptism, Christmas, Easter, etc., it was the middle of the night in Australia, and I would sneak out of the room to watch the livestream. I loved Jesus with all my heart, and nothing ever seemed too hard for me to be in His presence.

My joy was all the greater when, after a few years, an online livestream was introduced in the Church of God in Herford, Germany, and then later in the church in Eppingen. It was rare that I was not watching the online services on Sundays.

In the meantime, I got to know a Russian church in Melbourne, where I found a spiritual home. I was warmly welcomed there and was able to cultivate the fellowship of believers that I was missing so much at the time.

Australia is a beautiful country. In His goodness, God had given me a beautiful house, a family of my own, a well-loved job, Christian friends, and a general well-being. Many people would probably like to trade places with me. But in all these years, I carried a fervent desire and prayer in my heart: to go back to Germany, to experience everyday life with my family, to familiarize the children with the German language and culture, to visit the Church of God, and simply to be allowed to live there again.

All these years, I blamed myself for not having managed to go back or at least for not having seriously tried to initiate everything for it. It was simply a senseless suffering. I could not change anything, because it was not for me to decide alone, and it was never “the right time” for our family.

In the bedroom on the wall, I had a picture with a Bible verse: “With God all things are possible” (Matthew 19:26). Every day I looked at this picture and trusted Jesus that He could make the impossible possible if it was His will.



I can vividly remember one incident. I was not doing well spiritually because I was very homesick. I asked God very specifically to take away this strong homesickness if it was His will and He could use me in Australia. My constant prayer was, “Not my will but your will, Lord, shall be done.” But surely He should take away this deep melancholy from my heart. As a result, the next day I was overcome with such peace and serenity that I had to examine myself to see if the pain truly was gone. But it was.

A short time after that, my husband made the suggestion on his own that we move to Germany for a while. I could hardly believe that my wish and prayer would now come true. Half a year later, we landed in Germany where God wonderfully arranged everything: an empty apartment from my parents in my brother’s house, a job for the same company I had worked for before I went to Australia, and a school for the children. Hardly a day goes by that I don’t consciously thank God for this wonderful gift of being in the circle of my family.

How long we will be in Germany I leave to Jesus. He already knows what is best for me and my family. He always led me by His hand, and I only want to trust Him. Only He deserves the glory for everything!

*Elina Gleske
Neubulach, Germany*

Lord, You Understand

*Oh Lord Jesus, gentle and lowly in heart,
Hear my prayer!*

*Let me not seek and desire
To be loved,
To be admired,
To be honored,
To be praised,
To be favored,
To be consulted,
To be recognized!*

*Lord Jesus, help me not to fear
Being humiliated,
Being looked down upon,
Being corrected,
Being overlooked,
Being laughed at,
Being suspected,
Being misunderstood!*

*And Lord, grant me the grace to desire
That others be loved more than I,
That others be honored more than I,
That they may increase and I may decrease,
That others be chosen rather than I,
That others be praised while I am overlooked,
That others be favored,
That others be thought of as more holy than I,
As long as I am holy in Your sight!*

Only Wait!

*Say, are you mournful, suffering in pain?
Does your path still seem dark and drear?
Is your wounded heart trembling once again?
Do your tears seem so very near?
Trust and wait, oh, wait upon the Lord!
Persevere, you will have no regrets.
He'll lead you home, oh, cling to His Word,
And you will see God's leading yet.*

*For now, your path may seem endless and drear,
And trembling, your soul craves for love;
You long for heaven, to be without fear,
And sing with the saints up above.
Trust and wait, oh, wait upon the Lord;
Persevere 'til your faith brings sight.
He'll lead you home, oh, cling to His Word;
Your tears are obscuring the light.*

*It will not be long until the angels
Will carry you home to glory,
For with the Lord, you are not a stranger.
Persevere, you won't be sorry.
What joy, what delight, when you are at home,
T'will be like a dream come true.
No pain, no suffering, never alone,
When heaven at last comes in view!*

*When you look back despite trouble and strife,
You will see the leading of God.
You were protected all through your life
And led by His staff and His rod.
Oh, praise to the Savior, praise His dear name!
Be true to the Lord in the light!
Yes, in persevering there is great gain;
God is faithful throughout all of life.*

Erna Krebs
Edmonton, Alberta