

# THE Apostolic Faith

EARNESTLY CONTEND FOR THE FAITH

JANUARY – MARCH 2018

## A Goodly HERITAGE

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HOLY  
BIBLE

### WITNESS

A THRILL SEEKER  
COUNTS THE COST

### WORLD REPORT

ROMANIA: TWENTY  
YEARS OF REACHING  
HUNGRY SOULS

### OUR CLASSICS

STRAIGHTENED OUT

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## VIEWPOINT

BY DARREL LEE

*Superintendent General*



WHILE WE MAY NEVER SERVE IN THE MILITARY OR BE CALLED TO PARTICIPATE IN PHYSICAL WARFARE, EACH OF US IS ENGAGED IN A VERY REAL SPIRITUAL BATTLE.

**T**he article *A Goodly Heritage*, found on page 8 of this magazine, refers to the grandfather of my wife, Debbie. As a teenager, Chester Brown prayed through to salvation. Not long after he was saved, Grandpa Brown began to serve in the U.S. military. After boot camp, he was deployed to Europe where he fought during World War I.

In an interview with his pastor in 1976, he described how he and a group of other soldiers were taken from their training camp to New York, “in the light of the Statue of Liberty,” where they were loaded onto a flotilla of fourteen ships. Departing early one morning to cross the Atlantic Ocean, planes and huge zeppelins went with them a little ways before returning to port. Their flotilla continued to travel together until they were close to Europe, where the vessels separated and sailed to different destinations. The men on Grandpa Brown’s ship disembarked in Scotland for further training before traveling down through England and across the English Channel to Le Havre, France. Soon, he was at the front of the battle.



He related that by the time they got to the Front, it was late in the year. “We began to feel the cold pretty strong. We had to dig in, and I just about like to froze. We would dig a hole wide enough for two. We had oversize caps inside our helmets, and to sleep, we would pull them down over our heads and put our heads right up in the helmet, then butt the helmet up against the bank. That would act as a pillow. I never had my shoes off for two weeks and my socks just about grewed to my feet.”

He described the night before they were to move to the front lines in the Argonne Forest, saying, “The boys were waiting for daylight to come. There was cursing and carrying on, but I felt like I wanted to pray. I would look away to the star-lit sky; it seemed so peaceful up there. Down below was such turmoil.” He told the Lord that if it was His will, he knew God could see him through safely. Right there the Lord dropped a promise into his heart, “A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee” (Psalm 91:7). He related, “I felt the mighty arm of God bared in my behalf.”

After fighting in France, their unit relocated to Ypres, a town in the province of West Flanders in Belgium. Ypres occupied a strategic position because it stood in the path of Germany’s planned sweep across the rest of Belgium and into France from the north. The First Battle of Ypres had already occurred, and



*Chester Brown in his World War I military uniform.*

Grandpa Brown recalled, “That was a shot up place. All the limbs were shot off the trees and what were left of the buildings were just wrecks. We hiked all day to get out of no man’s land, one shell hole after another.”

During that time, he faced heavy combat with many casualties occurring all around him. Once a machine gunner tried to get him. He was lying in a shallow depression in the ground, and the machine gun bullets were chewing up the dirt around him. However, God was true to His promise. Though comrades fell around him, Grandpa Brown returned safely after the war ended.



*Grandpa Brown in his later years.*

While we may never serve in the military or be called to participate in physical warfare, each of us is engaged in a very real spiritual battle. From the time of Lucifer’s rebellion until now, evil has been in

combat against good. After Adam and Eve succumbed to temptation in the Garden, their fallen nature was transmitted to the entire human race. Thankfully, Jesus paid the price for our redemption by shedding His innocent blood on Calvary, and those who confess and forsake their sins can be saved. However, the enemy of our soul does not surrender when we become Christians! He continues to fight to destroy us spiritually, employing tactics designed to cause us to surrender to him. By the grace of God, though, we can overcome.

Grandpa Brown not only was part of the victorious army of World War I, but he also withstood our spiritual enemy. He lived to become a family patriarch—four generations later, many of his descendants are now saved and serving the Lord. I am so glad Grandpa Brown refused to abandon his troop or his faith! He served God in the Apostolic Faith until he passed away in January of 1980, and was an example of commitment and perseverance. I married his granddaughter a short time before he died, and we now have our own children and grandchildren holding fast to the same Gospel he held dear.

You will read other accounts of victory in this magazine, as well as instruction in how to withstand the attempts of our spiritual enemy. We hope it all will encourage you to persevere. Both those around us and the generations following depend upon us to be faithful. Our determination to continue in this “good fight of faith” will be rewarded, both in this life and the life to come.

“

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# from the WORD

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# THE NATURE OF SIN

AN EXCERPT FROM THE APOSTOLIC FAITH  
MINISTERS MANUAL EXPLAINS  
HOW SIN SEPARATES MAN FROM GOD.

**THE WORD SIN IS A** religious term that indicates both willful, defiant acts that transgress divine law, and the underlying condition of opposition to divine law from which those sinful acts originate. Sin separates man from God, and is the root of all resistance to and conflict with Him.

Sin is universal. The Bible is clear that every person born into this world is a sinner by birth (Psalm 51:5) and by choice (Romans 3:23).

The first usage in Scripture of the word *sin* is found in Genesis 4:7. In the original Hebrew, the word translated in that verse as *sin* meant “an offence.” A number of other words also are translated sin in the Scriptures. For example, the Greek word *hamartia* means “to miss the mark,” and implies an inward condition of sin out of which acts of sin originate. The Apostle Paul frequently used this word. *Asebeia*, also translated as *ungodliness*, denotes a refusal to worship God as God. *Parabasis* has the meaning of “going aside,” and refers to a definite breach or transgression of God’s law. Other words translated *sin* express the condition of being unpersuadable, a refusal to hear, lawlessness, and unbelief.

The topic of sin is mentioned hundreds of times in the Bible, starting with the original sin when Adam and Eve ate of the tree of knowledge of good and evil in the Garden of Eden. In that first act of rebellion against God, Adam and Eve deliberately chose to do wrong. As a result, the pure nature with which they had been created was corrupted, and their sinful nature was transmitted to all of their descendants. Thus, sin can be described as either a state of being or an act of transgressing. Because

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of the sinful nature inherited from Adam, the entire human race is instinctively inclined toward evil from the moment of birth. As individuals grow and begin making conscious choices regarding their behavior, each one eventually chooses to do wrong and commits acts of sin.

The Word of God describes sin as the “transgression” of God’s law (1 John 3:4), and in 1 John 5:17, we read, “All unrighteousness is sin.” Many specific evils are identified in the New Testament as sinful. Some of these include: adultery, fornication, murder (Mark 7:21); thievery, greed, deceit, lust, envy, blasphemy, pride (Mark 7:22); homosexuality (Romans 1:26-27); malice, malignity (Romans 1:29); backbiting, spite, lying, disobedience (Romans 1:30); lack of mercy (Romans 1:31); vengeance (Romans 12:17); immorality, impurity, indecency, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, hostility, heresy (Galatians 5:19-20); unbelief (Hebrews 3:12); hypocrisy (1 Peter 2:1); and rebellion (2 Peter 2:10). Other deeds also are identified in Scripture as sin, but even this relatively short list establishes the types of behavior that cannot exist in a Christian life.

It is important to recognize that there is a difference between acts of sin, and actions that are the result of human behavior or infirmity rather than moral failure. To commit an act of sin, there must be both knowledge of the law of God and a willful and defiant breaking of that law; such actions spring from the carnal nature. However, there may be other actions that spring from human frailties or limitations that are not themselves sinful. The physical, emotional, and mental capacities of man were affected by the fall, and at times strain,

exhaustion, disease, or mistakes in judgment can result in offenses or other manifestations of human weakness. Age-related infirmity or dementia also can distort judgment and result in actions for which the individual is not morally responsible. This highlights the vital necessity of being honest with oneself and with God, who alone knows the heart. If a person has committed an act of willful defiance toward God, he must not rationalize or excuse that behavior, but acknowledge and repent of it before God.

The Bible also makes a clear distinction between sin and temptation. While the word *temptation* is also used at times in Scripture to mean the trial or testing of our faith, it also refers to an allurement to sin. Temptation as an allurement is not sin; *yielding* to an allurement is sin. God does not forsake His own because they are tempted. Rather, He gives the grace and strength to stand fast in times of temptation.

Scripture teaches that it is possible for individuals to live lives free from sin, stating unequivocally that “whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin” (1 John 3:9; see also verses 4-10). Zacharias, speaking under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, spoke of God’s promise “that we . . . might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life” (Luke 1:74-75). Jesus told the woman taken in adultery, “Go, and sin no more” (John 8:11). Christ came to break the power of sin, for we read, “He shall save his people from their sins (Matthew 1:21; see also 1 John 3:8). Paul asked the question in Romans 6:11-18, “What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace?” His emphatic answer, “God forbid,” is clear evidence that it is God’s will for every Christian to live victoriously without sin.

While a victorious life without sin is possible, the Bible is clear in affirming that the relationship with God can be severed. Individuals who have been born again can choose to go back into sin, the same as Adam and Eve in their righteous state chose to commit sin. The prophet Ezekiel addressed this issue when he said, “When a righteous man turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and dieth in them; for his iniquity that he hath done shall he die” (Ezekiel 18:26). However, it is possible for one who has turned away from God to be restored again to salvation and a right relationship with God. We read, “If he [the wicked] turn from his sin, and do that which is lawful and right; if the wicked restore the pledge, give again that he had robbed, walk in the statutes of life, without committing iniquity; he shall surely live, he shall not die” (Ezekiel 33:14-15).

Scriptures warn that “the wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23). Sin that is not repented of will lead to eternal separation from God and eternal punishment.



# CALVINISM vs ARMINIANISM

Within the broad scope of Christian theology, Arminianism and Calvinism share both history and many Biblical doctrines. However, they offer radically different interpretations of Scriptures related to salvation through Jesus Christ. In addition, there are a variety of approaches under the general headings of Calvinism and Arminianism; proponents on both sides are not in universal agreement regarding how they apply these doctrines.

Calvinism, which is built upon the religious teachings of John Calvin (1509-1564), emphasizes the sovereignty of God and the salvation of the elect (those He has predetermined will be saved) by God's grace alone.

Arminianism is based upon the original beliefs of the theologian Jacobus Arminius (1560-1609), but

can also include teachings of John Wesley and others. The Apostolic Faith subscribes most closely to the Wesleyan view of Arminianism.

In his written works, Arminius quotes from Christian theologians dating back to the first century who taught that grace is extended to all, but that man, by his own free will, may turn toward or away from the faith. He also demonstrated that there were Christian leaders in every age since the time of Christ who taught that man can and should live holy in this life.

Following is a chart that briefly states the five main points of difference between Calvinistic teaching and Arminian teaching.

CALVINISM	ARMINIANISM
<b>Total Depravity:</b> Man is born with a depraved nature and lacks a free will. God draws to repentance only those He has predetermined for salvation.	<b>Free Will:</b> Man is born with a depraved nature but has a free will. God draws all to repentance, but man can choose to repent and be regenerated, or resist and perish.
<b>Unconditional Election:</b> God has chosen only certain individuals for salvation. The elect are those God has predetermined will be saved.	<b>Conditional Election:</b> God has chosen all humanity for salvation. The elect are those who respond to His offer of salvation with repentance and faith.
<b>Limited Atonement:</b> When Christ gave His life upon the Cross, atonement was made available but only for the elect.	<b>Unlimited Atonement:</b> When Christ gave His life upon the Cross, atonement was made available for everyone. However, atonement avails only for those who choose to accept Christ's provision.
<b>Irresistible Grace:</b> Grace is extended only to the elect. God's call cannot be resisted and always results in conversion.	<b>Resistible Grace:</b> Grace is extended to all. Man is free to accept or reject God's call. Conversion results when man believes and receives God's offered grace.
<b>Perseverance of the Saints:</b> Saved individuals retain their salvation to the end because they are preserved by God. No saved person will ever be lost; once an individual is saved, he is always saved.	<b>Assurance and Security:</b> Saved individuals can retain their salvation to the end through continued obedience and faithfulness to God. However, saved individuals can forfeit their salvation by turning away from God.



ISAIAH 51:20

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HOLY  
BIBLE

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VERSION





# At Goodly HERITAGE

FROM THE SERMON GIVEN BY DARREL LEE  
AT THE OPENING SERVICE OF PORTLAND  
CAMP MEETING 2017.

WE WANT THE  
TRUTH OF  
VICTORIOUS  
CHRISTIAN LIVING  
TO BE HANDED  
DOWN FROM  
GENERATION TO  
GENERATION.

## THE WORD **HERITAGE** REFERS TO

something that comes or belongs to an individual by reason of birth or that is received as an inheritance. In some cases, a grandparent may give away a treasured possession, saying, “I want you to have this before I’m gone.” At other times, the donor designates in a legal document how he wants his possessions to be distributed after his death. When the donor passes on, ownership is transferred to the beneficiaries based on the content of that will or last testament.

While a heritage may be a physical possession, it also can be more than a tangible object. For example, it may be a family tradition or particular skill. Years ago, my wife’s Grandma Friesen taught Debbie how to make the Dutch rolls known as zwieback. She showed her how to mix the ingredients and knead the dough until it was smooth and elastic. After allowing the dough to rise until it was double in size, she would punch it down and then shape it into rolls with a larger ball of dough on the bottom and a smaller piece on top. After the rolls rose a second time, she would bake them until golden brown. Although the ingredients are simple, those rolls are very good—especially with a cappuccino or a cup of tea! Making zwieback is a part of Debbie’s heritage that I have particularly enjoyed over the years.

Of greater value than any inherited possession or tradition, however, is a spiritual heritage. Before Debbie and I were married, I learned that her family had a custom of

singing grace when they sat down to a meal together. As our two children grew up, and now with our seven grandchildren, we have continued that practice. So that tradition passed from my wife's grandparents and parents down to Debbie, and now to our children and grandchildren. Giving thanks for one's food in that manner is a part of my wife's spiritual heritage.

In Psalm 16, the Psalmist expressed appreciation for his heritage. We read in verse 6, "The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage." The reference to "lines" or boundaries alluded to the way Canaan had been divided many years earlier. God had promised Abraham and his descendants that He would bring them into the Promised Land and give that territory to them for a heritage. So when Israel came into Canaan, the land was divided by lots with each tribe except the Levites receiving a portion as their own.

While the Jewish people of that day may have rejoiced over the fertile territory that was their inheritance, the Psalmist, thought to be David, rejoiced in a heritage of far greater value. He declared that his heritage was the Lord Himself! The presence of God at his right hand was the Psalmist's assurance of guidance on the "path of life," of "fullness of joy," and of "pleasures for evermore" (verse 11). He was deeply appreciative of the privilege of having the Lord as his heritage.

I did not have the advantage of a spiritual heritage. While both sets of Debbie's grandparents were Christian people, neither of my grandfathers were godly men, and both of my grandmothers died before I was born. When Debbie's Grandma Friesen would visit our home, I recall being impressed by her concern that a heritage of *faith* be passed along to our children—her great-grandchildren. Though she taught Debbie how to make zwieback, there was something of more importance to her than family traditions. She wanted faith to be transmitted to the next generation.

Grandma Friesen's steadfast faith developed through hard circumstances. When she was young, her mother and two sisters had tuberculosis. The sanitariums were full, so the porch of the family dwelling was fixed so the sick could be quarantined right there at home. Grandma Friesen would step through a window to care for her mother and sisters, but her efforts were to no avail: her mother passed away while still in her forties, one sister died at the age of eighteen, and another at age five. After they were gone, Grandma Friesen married, and then she came down with tuberculosis while she was carrying her first child. However, she prayed and God healed her! She wanted her children and grandchildren to know of that healing. The power of God had reached into her heart and saved her and Grandpa Friesen as well, and they held on to their trust in God through many years until they passed on.

On the other side of Debbie's family, her Grandpa Brown had been taught as he was growing up about Heaven and Hell. When he was in his late teens, Gospel workers came over the mountain to the community where he was living and held meetings. His parents had told him he would be eternally lost if he did not experience the new birth, and God put conviction on his heart. One day he yielded. He testified, "I promised the Lord as I knelt in the barn that if He would save me I would serve Him the rest of my life. The glory of the Lord came down. It seemed like a beam of light pierced through

the old shake roof of that barn and went down into the depths of my soul." He said the condemnation, worry, and care were gone, and the joy of another world filled his heart.

The choices Debbie's grandparents made established a spiritual heritage for her family that has continued on now for four generations of descendants. Debbie did not work for that heritage. She did not earn it, she did not plan for it, and she paid no price for it. It came by virtue of the fact that she was born into a God-fearing family.



*We have a goodly heritage. We did not earn it or deserve it, but we value it. We embrace it. We love it! **We do not want to treat what we have received in a careless or casual manner.***

So it is with you and me as we consider the blessings we have in our Apostolic Faith heritage. When I step onto this campground or into one of our churches, I think of those whose names I will never know who dropped money into the tithes box, who arranged for this campground property to be purchased, for this tabernacle to be erected, and for the church sanctuary to be constructed. I did not pay for these structures. I did not plan for them. I enjoy them simply because I show up.

No doubt that is how David felt when he said, "The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places." David looked over what had been bequeathed to him, undeserving though he knew himself to be, and he acknowledged that what he had received was "pleasant." Then he went on to say, "I have a goodly heritage." While he appreciated the tangible possession



that was his, his gratitude went beyond that to encompass his spiritual heritage.

Our heritage in the Apostolic Faith is more than a piece of property in southeast Portland. It is more than a church building. It is something that will endure longer than any physical possession—it is a set of teachings and practices. It is the sound Bible doctrine of this Latter Rain Holiness Gospel, which veterans of the faith preached here for generations and handed down to us.



CASARSAGURU / ISTOCKPHOTO.COM

Our heritage is understanding what a prayer meeting is—to know about a prayer room where workers gather before each service, prayer requests are read, and prayers are prayed that God will undertake for the needs described.

Our heritage is the fact that we can come into a church service and hear testimonies of deliverance from sin. It is understanding the meaning of true salvation—that the power of God can take sin out of a person's heart and make him or her a new creature in Christ Jesus. Victorious living is a part of our heritage. It is understanding that we do not have to live a life of sinning and repenting and obtaining forgiveness, and then sinning, repenting, and obtaining forgiveness again, and going through that cycle of utter failure time after time. We have proved that the Lord is able to save to the uttermost! He is able to forgive past sins and eradicate the sinful nature with

which we were born through the experience of entire sanctification. That is part of our heritage. While we know that the Apostolic Faith organization does not have a corner on this doctrinal belief, we are aware that most religious circles of our day present the Gospel of Jesus Christ in a manner that accommodates sin. They allow for sin and failure, but our heritage in this faith—the faith of the Apostles—upholds the Biblical teaching of deliverance from sin. We have seen it proved true through the years in the lives of people around us. We have heard testimonies of God's transforming and keeping power, and have experienced it ourselves.

Our choir sometimes sings a song that includes the words, "How I love this place!" We *do* love this place, but even more we love what this place stands for! It stands for victorious living. It stands for what the grandparents of some here experienced, and what their descendants can experience yet today.

We have a goodly heritage. We did not earn it or deserve it, but we value it. We embrace it. We love it! We do not want to treat what we have received in a careless or casual manner. The Apostle Paul challenged the believers at Thessalonica to "stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught" (2 Thessalonians 2:15). That is what we want to do. If the Lord tarries, we want the great-great-great-great-grandchildren of Debbie's Grandma Friesen and Grandpa Brown to enjoy the same Gospel their forebearers preached, taught, and experienced.

No matter what your background, you can be included in the benefits that are part of this spiritual heritage. We encourage you to yield your life to God. Pray a prayer that reaches Heaven, and God will answer. You can experience the power of God this very day, and become a beneficiary of this goodly heritage.

***Rev. Darrel Lee is Superintendent General of the Apostolic Faith organization and pastor of the headquarters church in Portland, Oregon.***

*From a sermon*

BY CHARLES SCHLEICHER



# The OVERCO LIG

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**IN THE FIRST CHAPTER**

of John's Gospel, the opening verses are a beautiful depiction of Jesus and how His life is the Light of men. In John 1:5 we read about Jesus as the Light: "And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not." This statement is something we should all be grateful for. Notice that is in the present tense—"the light shineth." It was present tense when it was written, and it is present tense today, because Jesus still shines in the darkness. In the phrase "the darkness comprehended it not," other meanings of the Greek *katalambano*, translated here as "comprehended," convey that the darkness could not "seize" or "overcome" the Light. On the contrary, it is the Light that overcomes darkness. Darkness cannot prevent the Light from shining at least to some degree, even if those in darkness refused to see it.



## AN ARMY OF LIGHT

The Bible gives many examples of how the Light overcomes darkness. In 2 Kings 6:8-23 we read that the King of Syria tried to attack the nation of Israel. In opposition to the will of God, he tried various times to make war with Israel, but his plans were always thwarted. God was telling the prophet Elisha the Syrians' strategies, so the Israelites were always one step ahead of their enemy. Eventually the Syrian king asked his officers, "Which one of you is a traitor?" He could not comprehend how his plans were being ruined.

Finally, once the king learned that Elisha was the one betraying his plans, he sent his army to surround the prophet's home. The circumstances looked so dark that Elisha's servant thought they had no chance of survival. However, Elisha was not worried because he knew the

Determining that we will not actively pursue evil objectives is not enough: **we must determine to seek the Lord.**

darkness could not overcome the Light. He asked God to open his servant's eyes, and suddenly the man could see why there was no need to fear. God had been protecting Israel all along, but in that instant Elisha's servant literally saw light in the form of chariots of fire ready to defend them—an army of angels from Heaven that was bigger and better than that which any kingdom on earth could put together!

Sometimes we may find ourselves in the midst of a problem and feel that we are on our own. We may not see God working in the situation and it might seem that a good outcome is not possible. However, when we have the Light of the world with us, we are not alone. We cannot be outnumbered because no amount of darkness can overcome the Light. The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness cannot overcome it.

Elisha prayed and God struck the entire Syrian army with blindness. That blindness was a symbolic portrayal of the darkness they were already in. The soldiers may have just been following the crowd and doing what they were told, yet they were fighting against the will of God and that is the definition of spiritual darkness. There is a lesson in that: when people thoughtlessly follow a leader who is going the wrong way, they end up in spiritual darkness. Determining that we will not actively pursue evil objectives is not enough; we must determine to

seek the Lord. Then we have the promise of victory in our lives.

The prophet of God led the blinded Syrians all the way to Samaria, where they received their sight again and found out that they were in the capital city of their enemy. They had to slink back to Syria, defeated by the Light. The account ends by saying, "So the bands of Syria came no more into the land of Israel" (2 Kings 6:23). The Syrians finally gave up trying to attack God's people! This shows us that God's solution to a problem will settle the matter completely. The Light does not overcome darkness some of the time and fail other times; the Light avails until the problem is gone. When God's Light overcomes sin in one's life, it is gone. Any other means that people may use to combat darkness can only be temporary, but God's solution takes care of the problem entirely as long as the individual continues to walk in the Light.

## LIGHT IN A PRISON

Centuries later, there was another king named Herod who lived in spiritual darkness. Chapter 12 of Acts tells how King Herod killed James, the first Apostle to die for Christ. The unbelievers in Jerusalem were happy and rejoiced over his death, and the king was pleased that the people were happy. He decided he would kill more Apostles so he could gain even more favor with the people. He did not necessarily hate or dislike the Apostles, yet he was planning to take their innocent, holy lives simply because he wanted to be liked. His desire for popularity led him to be an agent of evil. The next Apostle to be targeted by King Herod was Peter. The king had Peter arrested and thrown in prison. He was soon to go on trial and possibly face execution, but something stopped it—Acts 12:7 says, "A light shined in the prison . . . and his chains fell off from his hands." The light shined, and Peter was set free!

We are commanded by God to take a stand against wickedness when we encounter it, **and to choose instead to do nothing is evil in its own right.**

Soon after that, King Herod was in Caesarea and gave a speech to visitors from Tyre and Sidon. His listeners loved what he had to say, and by the time he finished speaking, they were shouting that his was the voice of a god. Herod did not disagree, though he knew he was not a

god. He allowed the people to continue to say so because he liked what he heard. God found him guilty for saying nothing, because in doing that Herod took some of God's glory for himself. This is a good example of the fact that sometimes, to do nothing is to do evil. We are commanded by God to take a stand against wickedness when we encounter it, and to choose instead to do nothing is evil in its own right.

Immediately following Herod's inaction, an angel of God struck him dead. It was also an angel who set Peter free from his prison cell, and while we do not know if it was the same angel, we know it was the same God who orchestrated the events. The powerful king who wanted Peter killed, died. And Peter lived. We read that after Herod's death "the word of God grew and multiplied" (Acts 12:24). Thus, Herod died but the Word lived. Herod died but the Word grew. Herod died but the Word was multiplied. The "Word" is another name for Jesus, the Light, and once again He overcame the darkness.

## THE LIGHT SHINES ON SAUL

There was somebody else who wanted to get rid of the Apostles, as well as every other Christian believer. Unlike Herod, this person was not motivated by a desire for popularity, but he actually hated Christians enough that he wanted them all gone. That was Saul of Tarsus, who was later called Paul. The Bible says that he wrought havoc in the church. He personally supported the murder of the first Christian martyr, and he began imprisoning as many Christians as he could. He went house to house, determined not to stop until all the believers had either been jailed, were in hiding, or had left Jerusalem. Even that was not good enough for him—next he obtained legal permission to seek out Christians in places outside of Judea. He wanted to remove Christians from the entire face of the earth.

That is darkness. However, the story does not end there. On his way to persecuting the Christians in Damascus, light shone from Heaven and knocked Saul down! He could not comprehend it; he asked, "Who art thou, Lord?" Then Jesus answered that He was the One whom Saul had been persecuting (Acts 9:5). Saul's encounter with the Light changed everything. Soon he was in Damascus preaching the Gospel! Eventually people would try to kill Saul because of his faith in Jesus, but they could not do it. Light shone then, and the Light still shines.

## CHOOSE THE LIGHT

Today there are people in Syria who are trying to do the same thing that Saul once did—they want to wipe out Christian believers from existence. These enemies of the Church want to eradicate Christianity through killings,

forced conversions, and driving believers out of their homelands, and they claim they are doing God's work.

Not only in Syria, but all over the world Christians are challenged, to varying degrees, for their faith. The enemy of our souls is continually pursuing the demise of the saints, and he leads anyone he can to participate in that darkness. However, whether we speak of persecution in Syria, Iraq, North Korea, China, India, Saudi Arabia, Western Europe, or right here—Light shines in darkness! We do not have to fear or flee from the darkness because the darkness is not going to overcome the Light. Light overcomes the darkness!

Which side do we want to be on? Do we want to be on the side of darkness, which can perhaps benefit us for a little while but ends in failure, disappointment, defeat, and death? Or do we want to be with the Light? We want to be with the Light! The Light overcomes the darkness of sin, regenerating souls that were once dead and making them alive in Christ. The Light overcomes the darkness of carnality, purifying our hearts and making us holy. Beyond that, God can fill us with His Spirit and empower us to carry His Light into darkness. What an exciting realization that Light is overcoming darkness still today and we can be a part of it!

If you are not with the Light today, you can change that by turning away from darkness and toward Jesus, the Light. God will help you as you determine to follow the Light.



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# FOCUS ON FORGIVENESS

FROM A SERMON BY DAVID LAMBERT

**FORGIVENESS IS A TOPIC THAT** is probably thought about and discussed much more often than it is applied. This is because forgiving others can be a challenge. Like dieting and exercising, people know the benefits of forgiving, so they talk about it, but when there comes an opportunity to put the principle into practice, they find it is easier not to.

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As Christians, however, we cannot take the subject of forgiveness lightly, because it is central to the Gospel message. The plan of redemption for the human race is dependent upon it, as well as maintaining our own personal salvation. It is important that we understand why we need forgiveness, how it is obtained, and why we must extend it to others.

## **WHO NEEDS FORGIVENESS AND WHY?**

One definition of the word *forgive* is “to grant relief or pardon from a debt, to set free, or to release.” This aspect of forgiveness—pardoning—is something every person born into this world needs. Romans 3:10 says, “As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one,” and verse 23 of that same chapter explains, “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.”

Sin is a universal problem; the first man, Adam, disobeyed God, and brought sin into the world. Every person born since then, with the exception of Christ, has been born a sinner. Mankind is in need of a solution, because the Bible tells us no sin or unrighteousness or unclean thing will be allowed to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. In 1 Corinthians 6:9 we read, “Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God?” The solution is that our sins must be removed, and when God forgives us, that is what He does. Psalm 103:12 says, “As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.”



Some people do not realize that forgiveness is needed for their souls to enter Heaven. Several years ago, I worked with a man who believed that as long as he did not mistreat his wife or neglect his duties, like paying taxes, he was ready for Heaven. In contrast, the Bible says in Isaiah 64:6 that “our righteousnesses are as filthy rags.” Being a law-abiding citizen may give an outward appearance of being ready, but it does not equip a person for Heaven. Only when our sins are forgiven and removed will we qualify to enter in.

The need for receiving forgiveness does not end after our sins have been pardoned. This is because moral perfection—having a heart that is right toward God—does not equal human infallibility. There will be times when we speak without thinking first and say something regrettable, use bad judgement, or behave immaturely. We will need to receive forgiveness in these situations.

There will also be times when we will need to extend forgiveness, because there will be times when others commit wrongs against us. A second definition of the word *forgive* is “to cease to allow feelings of resentment; to let go of the right to hurt back, and relinquish thoughts of vengeance.” The Bible teaches that this aspect of forgiveness is necessary in the Christian life. We must forgive others for their trespasses against us, as well as being ready to apologize and make amends for our offenses toward them. Christ stressed the importance of this when He taught His disciples how to pray and included, “. . . and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors” and again, when He said, “For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses” (Matthew 6:12, 14-15).

Forgiveness is ongoing, and receiving forgiveness for ourselves is directly connected to our ability and willingness to forgive others.

### WHO GRANTS FORGIVENESS?

A popular idea in the world today is that we can forgive ourselves. Some have counseled that “in order for any healing to take place, you must first forgive yourself.” There have been many books and articles written on this subject, including those tailored to certain offenses such as “Forgiving Yourself for Cheating and Lying,” and how-to books like “The Healthy Way to Forgive Yourself.”

It is true that we must not let wrongs that God has forgiven oppress and weigh us down, nor should we allow the enemy of our souls to discourage us over shortcomings and unintentional mistakes. However, nothing in Scripture supports the idea that we can pardon our own sins. The Word of God says just the opposite. In Ephesians 2:8-9 we find, “For by grace are

ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast.” Forgiveness for sin is a gift from God. He sent His Son, Jesus, to die for those sins, and only through Christ can we be forgiven and set free.

Scripture also teaches that when we have committed an offense against another, we cannot move on without making amends. Matthew 5:23-24 says, “Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.” If we know that we have hurt or offended someone by our words or actions, we need to go to that person and reconcile with them. When there is something between ourselves and another, there is something between ourselves and God, and our prayers will be hindered.

This also applies when we are the one who has been hurt or offended. Matthew 18:15 instructs, “If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his

If we will recognize  
our need of a Savior and  
genuinely repent, God will  
**forgive our sins.**

fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.” In a situation where someone has wronged us, a natural response would be to say, “They are at fault, so they can come and apologize to me.” However, the Lord asks us to forgive in the way He does. It is not natural; it is supernatural. We are to be pro-active and take the first step in reconciling and restoring that relationship. God made the first move when Christ forgave us. When we weren’t looking for Him, He pursued us. Some of us were running in the opposite direction, yet the Lord took the initiative to seek and find us, so that He could forgive us.

Whether we are the offender or the offended, the instruction is the same. As Christians, we are to take the initiative in making a situation right.

### HOW IS FORGIVENESS OBTAINED?

Before we can receive forgiveness in the form of pardon for our sins, we must first acknowledge our need by recognizing and taking responsibility for the sinful acts we have committed. The next step is to confess those sins to God. We read 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.”

Repentance is another crucial aspect of obtaining forgiveness. In Acts 3:19, Peter admonished, “Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out.” Without repentance, there can be no forgiveness. It is possible to take the steps of acknowledging your need and confessing your sins, as many people do on a weekly basis, without receiving forgiveness. The further step of repenting, which includes turning away from sin and being willing to forsake it with God’s help, is vital.

My grandpa, Marvin Lambert, had a testimony that made clear the power of repentance. As a boy, I remember hearing him tell about when he was a young man growing up on a farm in Mississippi. He would say, “I pretty much felt like I could paddle my own canoe.” He had a descriptive way of speaking, but he meant that he was independent and didn’t need anyone’s help. His life went along well for a while as he did his own thing, but that all changed the day a bomb was dropped on Pearl Harbor and America entered World War II. He would say, “That got me shaking in my boots, because I knew that if I got killed on the battlefield, I would go straight to Hell.” He began talking to the Lord out on the farm, and one day, the question came to him, “What are you going to do about those old sins?” He told the Lord, “I’ll quit them, I’ll forsake them, and I won’t do them anymore.” In that moment, the peace of Heaven came down and flooded his soul. He testified that his fear of death was gone. He had the assurance that God had met him, his sins were forgiven, and if he died the next day, he would go to Heaven.

If we will recognize our need of a Savior and genuinely repent, God will forgive our sins.

### **EXTENDING FORGIVENESS TO OTHERS**

Extending forgiveness to others is not always easy, and can be especially difficult under certain circumstances such as when a person continues to offend.

Peter wondered how many times forgiveness should be extended to one person. He asked the question of Jesus while already having an answer in mind that he must have thought was generous or at least reasonable. He asked, “Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Till seven times?” Jesus answered, “I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven” (Matthew 18:21-22). His meaning was not that we are to forgive 490 times, but that forgiveness is limitless. We are to continually let go of the offenses toward us and not carry them in our hearts. Forgiveness is as much about releasing ourselves from a burden as it is about releasing the other person. There is a popular quote by Lewis B. Smede that says, “To forgive is to set a prisoner free and discover that the prisoner was you.” Jesus asks us to forgive, because He wants us to be free.

One common misconception is that forgiveness

equates to trust being restored. In actuality, forgiveness is a gift that is freely given, while trust is a privilege that is earned over time. When a person has a history of being a repeat offender, we are to forgive each time, but this does not mean we put our trust in that individual. If someone



**forgiveness is a gift that is freely given, while trust is a privilege that is earned over time.**

stomps on your foot every time you see him, you should avoid him or set some parameters. Forgiveness allows for the repeat offender to work toward restoring trust, but it does not mean trust is automatically given.

Another circumstance which makes it difficult to forgive is when a person refuses to acknowledge wrongdoing and does not show any sign of remorse. In such situations, we can ask God for a spirit of forgiveness while looking to the example of Christ. As He hung on the Cross, He said, “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do” (Luke 23:34). He was praying for those who had beat Him, mocked Him, spit in His face, and driven spikes through His hands. He knew the people He prayed for were not remorseful, yet He was able to extend forgiveness because He saw beyond their sins to their souls. If we will also look beyond the offense to see the soul in need of a Savior, and pray for that one, we will find it easier to forgive.

### **WE CANNOT FORGIVE IN OUR OWN STRENGTH**

Often, our ability to forgive is tied to the seriousness of the offense. There are times when it is humanly impossible to forgive. In those situations, if we will supply the

willingness to be obedient to God's Word, He will supply the ability, the grace, and the strength to do it.

An example of this is found in the life of Corrie ten Boom. During World War II, her family was arrested by the Nazis for hiding Jews in their home and helping them escape the Holocaust. Eventually, Corrie and her older sister, Betsie, were taken to the Ravensbruck concentration camp where Betsie died. After the war, Corrie traveled and spoke to thousands of people telling of her experiences and teaching on God's gift of forgiveness and salvation. One evening after concluding her message, a man approached and introduced himself as a former guard of the Ravensbruck camp. Extending his hand to her, he said he had become a Christian and knew God had forgiven him for the cruel things he had done, but wanted to know that she had forgiven him also.

In her own words, published in the November 1972 edition of Guideposts' magazine, Corrie revealed her thoughts and reaction:

*Betsie had died in that place—could he erase her slow terrible death simply for the asking?*

*It could not have been many seconds that he stood there, hand held out, but to me it seemed hours as I wrestled with the most difficult thing I had ever had to do.*

*I stood there with the coldness clutching my heart. But forgiveness is not an emotion. Forgiveness is an act of the will, and the will can function regardless of the temperature of the heart. "Jesus, help me!" I prayed silently. "I can lift my hand, I can do that much. You supply the feeling."*

*And so woodenly, mechanically, I thrust my hand into the one stretched out to me. And as I did, an incredible thing took place. The current started in my shoulder, raced down my arm, sprang into our joined hands. And then this healing warmth seemed to flood my whole being, bringing tears to my eyes. "I forgive you, brother!" I cried. "With all my heart!"*

*For a long moment we grasped each other's hands, the former guard and the former prisoner. I had never known God's love so intensely as I did then.<sup>1</sup>*

Corrie could not have forgiven in her own strength, but when she looked to God, He gave her the ability. As a result, she experienced more of His love. If we will look to God, He will help us as He did Corrie.

## WHEN WE CHOOSE NOT TO FORGIVE

When we choose not to forgive, we foster pain and

resentment in our hearts. Over time, that resentment can become bitterness, which destroys lives. Hebrews 12:15 says, "Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled." The end result of this state is brought out in the parable of the two debtors found in Matthew 18:23-35. Jesus gave the parable, saying there was a king who called his servants to him to give an account. One servant owed ten thousand talents, which was an immense amount—in today's terms, it would be the equivalent of about six billion dollars. In this parable, the king is representative of God, and the servant, of us. The amount owed likely was exaggerated to show that our debt of sin is something we could never repay. The king ruled that the servant, his family, and everything he owned would be sold to pay the debt, but when the man begged for mercy, the king had compassion on him and forgave the debt.

That servant then went out and found a man who owed him one hundred pence, which was about one hundred days' worth of wages or four months' work. He took him by the throat, demanded payment, and disregarding his pleas for mercy, cast him into prison. This is a picture of what an unforgiving heart looks like. When the one hundred pence is compared to the ten thousand talents, it is nothing. Likewise, whatever we need to forgive, no matter how grievous, when we look at it in the context of what the Lord has done for us, it is small in comparison.

When the king heard what the forgiven debtor had done, he referred to him as a "wicked servant," threw him into prison, and delivered him to the tormentors. It is clear from this parable that an unforgiving heart eventually leads to eternal punishment in Hell.

The Lord takes the subject of forgiveness very seriously and so should we. If we receive His pardon for our sins, we can look forward to the blessing of eternal life in Heaven. And if we forgive others as we have been forgiven, God's blessings can flow unhindered in our lives.

<sup>1</sup>Corrie ten Boom, "Guideposts Classics: Corrie ten Boom on Forgiveness," Guideposts, July 24, 2017  
[www.guideposts.org/better-living/positive-living/guideposts-classics-corrie-ten-boom-on-forgiveness](http://www.guideposts.org/better-living/positive-living/guideposts-classics-corrie-ten-boom-on-forgiveness).

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# WITNESS

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# TURNING TRIALS *into testimonies* ALS

**Berthena knew the goodness of God  
in times of rejoicing, but she also learned about  
His goodness in a time of loss.**

BY BERTHENA (SEGRES) CONYERS

**M**y upbringing was in the way of holiness. Both of my parents were saved and they raised their children very strictly. It seems like I knew about the Gospel my whole life. At the age of twelve I prayed and asked the Lord to save me, and He did, but through my teenage years my commitment to the Lord was weak. I was in church regularly and always wanted to be saved, but I also wanted to do some of the things that my peers at school did—things which I knew I shouldn't do. Although I never went deep into sin, it was a constant struggle for me, and for several years it seemed I was continually asking God to forgive me for one thing or another.

At age twenty-one, I realized that I needed more from God. One night I prayed and did my first works over, repenting and making a serious commitment to the Lord. That night He saved my soul and put me on the Rock that would hold me steady for the rest of my life. I continued to seek God and He sanctified me and then baptized me with the Holy Ghost, all within one year. That was in 1974, and these experiences from God have stood the test of time.

The year I turned twenty-one was also the year I married my husband, McKeever. We lived in a mobile home trailer in a town called Greenleyville just outside of Kingstree, South Carolina. Only a few years after we were married, we had a severe fire at our home. At the time I was working at a daycare, and our oldest son, who was two years old, would come with me to

work. The morning of the fire, I had packed one change of clothes for my son to have at daycare. My husband was working nights for Georgia Pacific, so he was in bed asleep. He said something jarred him in his sleep, but he ignored it at first. He felt something jar him again, harder that time, but again he dismissed it. A third time something really shook him, and he said it felt as though someone pushed him. That got him up because he knew no one else should be in the room, and then he realized the trailer was full of smoke. He ran outside to see if he could get something to put out the flames, but once outside he saw that the trailer was engulfed. Then he tried to move our truck away, but he couldn't get it to start. The truck and the trailer burned together.

I asked her how long she had been studying cancer and she said, **"Thirty-eight years and I've never seen this before!"**

Around 9:00 a.m. I got a call about what had happened. When I arrived at the scene, the trailer was in ashes, and my husband was standing there with neither shirt nor shoes. It was a miracle that he made it out safely, but we lost everything we owned.

That seemed to be an impossible situation, but the Lord was able to fix it all. Many of the brothers at church were contractors at that time, and they told us that if we would buy the materials, they would help build us a home. Two weeks later was Thanksgiving weekend, and by that time we had all the material on our property. On Friday, the day after Thanksgiving, the sisters from church came out and cooked and the brothers put up our house in one day. It had four rooms and a bathroom. By the following week it was finished enough for us to move in. In fact, that was in 1977 and we are still living in that home today, although we have added on more rooms since then. The Lord turned that disaster into a testimony of the goodness of the family of God.

My husband and I had two more children; another son and then a daughter. While we were raising our family, the Lord proved Himself faithful to us many times. Over the years I grew to love praying at the altars and praying for others when they were facing trials. When I hear that someone is having a financial problem or health trouble, I love to pray for them and see God answer.

Once, about five years ago, my older sister Daisy was in a really bad car accident. She was seventy-one years

old and in the accident she broke her neck, tore her aortic valve, and had other injuries as well. The doctors didn't think she would make it through the night, but I told them, "You do what you can do, and I'll do what I can do." The best thing I could do was to pray, and many others prayed as well. My sister underwent an operation and stayed on a respirator for months, but the Lord brought her out of it and she is doing well today.

Four years ago I had my own health scare. Breast cancer plagues my family; I have four first-cousins who were diagnosed with breast cancer and died of the disease within months. When I found a lump on my body that seemed to be cancerous, I made an appointment with a specialist. Upon seeing my condition, she wanted to admit me immediately, but she let me go home that night. She scheduled an appointment to come back for a biopsy the next morning.

At home, I prayed and asked God to heal me. I could hardly sleep at all, and at two o'clock that morning, I sensed something was changing in me physically. By the time I got to the hospital later that day, the lump had changed to the point that the doctors could not even do the biopsy. They checked me and then said, "You don't have cancer." The specialist from before still wanted to see me to do an MRI; I had looked so bad before that she thought the cancer had probably already spread in my body. When I next saw her, only three days had passed and she could not believe what she saw: the cancer was not there. I asked her how long she had been studying cancer and she said, "Thirty-eight years, and I've never seen this before!" God gave me a new lease on life, and I haven't had any signs of cancer since.

The Lord also raised up two of my nephews when we prayed for them. The first one was having breathing problems and was not expected to survive until the next day. I traveled to Birmingham, Alabama, to see him, and I remember getting into the hospital bed with him and praying. God gave me a confirmation in my heart that he was going to live, and he did. He is doing fine today. Then last year, another nephew was desperately ill and I flew to Baltimore to be with him. His weight had dropped from about 250 to 180 pounds and he was on a respirator. He could not walk or carry on a conversation; his condition looked terrible. Prayer was made for him night and day, and over the space of a week, the Lord restored his health to where he could communicate and walk. One day the doctors told us he would have permanent liver damage, but the following day they changed that diagnosis and said he would not have permanent liver damage after all. He continued to improve and today he is working again.

So many times the Lord has proved that He is able to heal, but last spring we had a family emergency and the Lord chose to do something different. One day as I was leaving the noonday prayer hour at church,



my son called and told me that my eight-year-old granddaughter, McKaylan, had a seizure. When I got to the hospital to see her, she was not responding to anyone. Her skin was clammy, and to me it looked like she was near death. Her mother and I were both by her bedside and we prayed fervently, asking the Lord not to take her. Then, for no apparent reason, she just woke up. The doctors ran tests and said she was perfectly fine. Her mind was clear and her heart was strong, and after two days she was discharged.

McKaylan went back to school and her teacher said she seemed just as sharp as before that incident.

All I could say was,  
*“Your grace is sufficient,”*  
 and it is.

However, the following Friday, nine days after her seizure, McKaylan told her school teacher she didn't feel well. They called an ambulance and when I found out, I drove to the hospital to see her. During my fifteen-minute drive, as I prayed I found myself repeating over and over, “Your grace is sufficient.” I didn't understand why, but when I opened my mouth, those were the only words I could say.

At the hospital, McKaylan was alert and talking, but she was also suffering with stomach pain. You could hear her crying from outside the room. Her mother was already there, and there was a lot of commotion with the nurses struggling to take a blood sample and McKaylan hollering from the pain. My brother, Eugene Segres, Jr., is the pastor of our church in Kingstree, and he also came with his wife, Gertie, to anoint and pray for McKaylan. In the midst of everything, she stopped for a moment and told me, “Grandmama, I love you.” I told her, “McKaylan, I love you more than anything I can think of.” I did not realize she was telling me goodbye; I did not know she was about to die. The last time she had been in the hospital, I thought I saw death and I prayed for the Lord not to take her. But this time, the Lord did not allow me to understand what was happening, and so I did not even pray for Him to heal her. I cannot really explain it, but the only prayer I could say was, “Your grace is sufficient.”

About thirty minutes later, McKaylan took a hard gasp, and she left us. The doctors came in and tried to revive her, but she was gone. Later they told us that the cause of death was complications from the flu virus she'd had the month before, which resulted in her having a heart attack.

Losing a granddaughter was something that I had never had to deal with before, but God has been keeping me day by day. Right after it happened, the devil tried

to discourage my soul. The thought came to my mind, “You prayed for your sister and your nephews, and they survived. But your own granddaughter? God didn't save her.” But as I considered it more, I realized that God did save her. When we prayed for her the first time, He gave us a week and two days. The Lord really encouraged my heart when He showed me that He gave us that extra time with her. And the second time around, He simply didn't let me know to pray for healing. All I could say was, “Your grace is sufficient,” and it is.

The Lord continued to help our family in that difficult time. My son did not have life insurance for his daughter, but the Lord took care of the funeral expenses so we did not have to worry about it. They had made arrangements to pay half of the funeral costs on the day of McKaylan's service and then do monthly installments for the rest. However, when we collected all of the cards people had sent, their donations covered all of the expenses. Two or three days later, someone called and said she wanted to pay for the entire funeral. When I told her it had already been paid for through donation, she said she wanted to give that money to my children anyway, and they were able to have some work done that they needed on their house. So even though we were mourning our loss, the Lord still showed His goodness and blessed us. In the months following McKaylan's passing, we have seen several members of our family give their hearts to the Lord, and that is encouraging to my soul as well.

Through everything that has happened in my life, I can say that God has been good to me. I thank Him for salvation, sanctification, the baptism of the Holy Ghost and fire, and that I do have joy down in my heart. I am a happy Christian and I want to let my light shine. If I can help somebody some way, then I know my living won't be in vain. One day I want to see Jesus and to hear Him say, “Well done.”



**Berthena (Segres) Conyers** is a member of the Apostolic Faith Church in Kingstree, South Carolina.



# A THRILL SEEKER COUNTS THE COST

BY JOHN JORDAN

*John came to a  
crossroads with a  
crooked trail behind  
him, and a choice  
before him . . .*

**A**s a child, I had a good home and was raised carefully by my parents. Prayer and the reading of God's holy Word were a regular occurrence, as was attending our local church. If any of those things could make one ready for Heaven, I would have been well on the way. Instead, I found myself on a slippery path to a lost eternity.

After graduating from high school, I became engaged to my high school sweetheart. Paula was a godly young lady who had given her heart to the Lord out on a dirt road, kneeling beside her ten-speed bike. My wife-to-be desired to marry a Christian man, but I had no hunger for God. Instead of telling her that and breaking up with her, I lied and told her I was a Christian, and we soon were married.

Our first child was born a little over a year after we married, and after a time, we had two beautiful children. I was successful in my career and we were able to purchase our own home. Life should have been wonderful. Unfortunately, the root of sin deep in my heart often marred the tranquility of our little family. Many times I caused unhappiness and tears as my young wife tried to figure out what was wrong.

From the time I was young, I had always craved some sort of thrill. Morally, that meant doing things I knew were wrong, just for the momentary rush of "getting away with it." Physically, that

craving translated into all kinds of hazardous activities. I felt that the closer I came to the edge of danger, the better. Once, while rock climbing, a chunk of the rock face broke free and I went down with it. As the rock was coming loose, the voice of God spoke to my heart saying, "I've prepared this for you." In terror I saw a lost eternity approaching. Upon impact, the bones of my right hand were crushed by the rock, but God miraculously spared my life. One would think that would have been enough to bring me to my senses, but it wasn't.

While I was living in sin, the Lord would often speak to my soul and tell me, **"You're going to have to make that right someday."**

While I was living in sin, the Lord would often speak to my soul and tell me, "You're going to have to make that right someday." Usually that would happen just as I was contemplating whether or not to do something which I knew was contrary to the teachings of God's Word. Often I would tell the Lord, "I know," and then go right ahead and do what was wrong. I was making a mess of my own life.

How merciful God is! Finally one year at the Portland camp meeting, He cornered me up. The sinful things I once loved, I now despised, but despite my efforts to forsake them, I could not shake loose of them. I desperately needed God to help me, and I began to seek Him. However, before I could be saved I had to count the cost. I knew there would be a great price to straighten out the crooked trail behind me. I felt it could cost me everything I had and more, possibly even my freedom.

As I prayed that camp meeting, the devil was on the job, doing his best to throw every road block before me. Yet, the desire for God that was stirring in my heart was greater than my concerns about the past. Every time the devil brought up something else I would have to face, God seemed to pour a little more desire for Him into my heart. I knew nothing would satisfy my soul but real salvation; no halfway measure would do. Whenever a question of restitution came up, God gave me grace to say, "Yes, Lord; I'll take care of it if You will help me!"

Eventually the long list of past wrongs came to an end, and I thank God that on July 13, 1982, the devil was defeated. He fired his last round of artillery and God gave me the grace to say, "I'll take care of it with Your help!" As I knelt at the altar of prayer that day, I remember a little chuckle deep down inside when it dawned on me there was nothing more Satan could do.

I further realized that when it felt I was fighting the Lord, He and I had actually been fighting on the same side—God had been fighting *for* me, not against me! Then faith began to grow. I did not "feel" saved, but I recall saying, "Lord, if I never feel anything, I'll still serve You," and at that moment His Spirit bore witness with my spirit and I knew that God, for Christ's sake, had forgiven my sins. It was wonderful! Peace flowed from Calvary down through my heart and I knew what victory was! That was thirty-five years ago and salvation is as real now as it was then.

No one told me to go back over my past life and make things right; God had already showed me what must be done, and I didn't want to leave anything undone that might disturb the communion between my heart and the Lord. After the victory won at camp meeting, I was looking forward to doing what I had promised. As the weeks began to unfold, the Lord would point out one thing and then another. There was some apprehension on my part from time to time, but with every act of obedience came the sweet assurance of God's favor on my life. Eventually, I actually came to the place where I was searching my life for those things that needed to be made right, recognizing how the Lord blessed and strengthened every time I followed through.

My wife and I spent the next six years or so straightening out a very crooked path. Our budget was tight because we felt that any money we had wasn't really ours; it belonged to those I had wronged. Until we could pay back what was owed, our family ate simple meals like spaghetti and beans, and we didn't dine out. My wife faithfully stayed by my side, supporting and praying for me, and the Lord saw us through.

There is no way I can ever repay the debt I owe to Jesus, who loved me and gave His own life for a miserable sinner like me. If ever there was one unworthy of the Blood of Jesus, I would be that one. Regrets about my past still come around from time to time, but then a cry comes out of my heart, "Lord Jesus, You're my only defense!" and He helps me. How thankful I am for the Cross!

The day the Lord saved me, I was a young family man. Now I'm a grandfather and soon will be a great-grandfather. When I was seeking the Lord, the devil once told me, "Even if you get saved, you will never keep it." After thirty-five years, I have proven that God can keep anyone who wants to be kept. The Lord once assured me in a very personal way, "I will never leave you, nor forsake you," and now all I can say is, "Thank You, Jesus! Your Word is always true!"

**Rev. John Jordan is pastor of the Apostolic Faith Church in Grants Pass, Oregon.**



FOUR WAYS TO  
PROTECT OUR SPIRITUAL  
MEMORIES.

TAKE  
TIME  
TO

*Remember*



Losing something important can create major problems! Last summer, my youngest daughter and I had plans to fly home from California with her two toddlers after a family vacation while her husband and the rest of the family drove home. Unfortunately, the night before our early morning flight, she realized she had left her purse behind at a restaurant where we had eaten that evening. It contained all of her identification.



Knowing she would not be able to board the plane without proper ID, our first attempt at rectifying this situation was to call the restaurant. Although it had been closed for more than an hour, a cleaning person on the premises checked the area where we had been seated. No purse was found. Our next step was to call the airline to ask if we could cancel the ticket and get a refund. The answer was no. Would travel insurance cover the cost? The answer was no. Could the ticket be transferred to my son-in-law, whose identification was safe in his wallet? The answer was no.

The eventual solution to our dilemma was complicated. We called our oldest daughter in Portland, waking her from sleep, and asked her to drive to her sister's house. She would need to use a code to open her garage door, use another code to turn off the home security alarm, go to the study and search through some file drawers, locate her sister's passport, take a photo of it on her cellphone, and send that to her sister. She graciously complied.

An hour or so later, with the photo duly received, our family finally got a couple of hours sleep. Then we headed to the airport, where the lack of "normal" identification at the security checkpoint meant that my daughter and I and the two toddlers were asked to step to one side and wait for an officer to come and talk to us. We waited. And waited. And waited some more.

Finally the security person who had directed us to the side noticed us standing there. She apologized for the delay, went away, and presently returned with a different officer who asked a series of questions and then left to confirm the answers. Once more we waited. Finally, a third security person came to lead us to another area where they patted my daughter down and ultimately cleared the four of us to board the plane. Misplacing one small purse had created a fair amount of hassle! (The rest of the story is that when we landed at the Portland airport and turned on our cellphones, my daughter received a photo from her husband who was still in California—a picture of her purse, all contents intact, which had been found at the restaurant that morning!)

## RECOGNIZING A SPIRITUAL LESSON

While the loss of a physical item can cause significant problems, a spiritual loss can have eternal impact. We want to take good care of the lessons God has taught us so we do not let them slip away. They are of tremendous value! Bible scholars note that the word "remember" in its various Hebrew and Greek forms occurs over 250 times in Scripture. Clearly, retaining the experiences, blessings, and the spiritual understanding God has given us is a vital part of a stable walk with Him, of making Heaven our home, of inspiring others to follow God, and many other spiritual benefits.

We humans have short memories. In Deuteronomy 6:12, Moses warned Israel just before they entered the Promised Land, "Beware lest thou forget the LORD, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt." Psalm 103 begins with the Psalmist stirring himself up to bless the Lord and reminding himself to "forget not all his benefits." In the New Testament, the writer of Hebrews cautions us, "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip" (Hebrews 2:1).

Most of us have many tangible items to remind us of special moments in our lives: diplomas, awards, photographs, scrapbooks, souvenirs, and the like. But how do we retain spiritual lessons? In our busy and fast-paced culture, what steps can we take to keep what God has done for us fresh in our minds? As I pondered these questions, four one-word strategies came to mind.

## RECALL

Memories and insights become dim when we fail to recall them—pathways to the information stored in our brains deteriorate with disuse. For example, while we can remember our current employer's name, what was the name of our third grade teacher? That bit of information may have slipped away. To best preserve and retrieve information, we need to access it frequently.

We may find it helpful to make a written note of significant blessings, spiritual milestones, and insights as they occur. For instance, did God answer prayer about a concerning health issue? Did He provide guidance concerning an important decision through the words in a sermon? Did study of a particular Scripture yield nuggets of spiritual treasure? We can make it a practice to record such occurrences so we do not forget! Putting it into words causes us to think deeply about it, and thereby solidifies it.

Experts tell us that short-term memory rarely lasts longer than a few hours, but that a quick review within an hour or two can move an item from short-term memory into long-term memory. To make that work to our advantage in retaining the blessings and insights God has given us, we could make it a practice to ask ourselves at the close of each day, "Have I seen the hand of God reaching out to me or my family today?" As we take time to review, we may see evidence of what God has done that we did not recognize in the busy moments of the day. And doing so will make it much more likely that we will recollect the blessing or insight later!

The ultimate key to remembering is having the Holy Ghost abiding in us. Jesus promised, "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you" (John 14:26). The Holy Ghost helps



us recognize what God has done for us and taught us, and He will help us to recall “all things.”

## REFLECT

Sometimes after reading a verse in Scripture that suddenly seems new, or highlighting an inspiring passage in an old Christian classic, the verse or insight that caught my attention so vividly at the moment fades away in the distractions of life. We read in 1 Samuel 12:24 that we should “consider how great things he hath done.” When we “consider” or meditate on spiritual truths, we anchor them more firmly in our hearts. In Psalm 77, Asaph used three verbs that highlight his determination to steady his soul by looking to God and reflecting on what God had revealed to him. He stated, “I will remember the works of the Lord: surely I will remember thy wonders of old. I will meditate also of all thy work, and talk of thy doings” (Psalm 77:11-12). The discipline of carving out time to “remember,” “meditate,” and “talk of” God’s Word takes purpose and intention, but it will pay great dividends.

## REHEARSE

Scripture teaches us that the people of God are to “shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light” (1 Peter 2:9). When we “shew forth . . . praises” by verbalizing what God has done for us, we establish those things in our memories through use of two different senses: the physical sensation of voicing the thought, and the auditory sensation of hearing it.

During the 2017 Portland camp meeting, a young mother who lives some distance from her family had the opportunity to spend time with several cousins. As they updated each other about what was going on in their lives, she spontaneously acknowledged, “I’m homesick.” She told me later that the moment she said those words aloud she realized just how true they were, and a wave of emotion quickly surfaced. Voicing her feelings made them more “real” to her—and memorable enough that she recounted this incident to me later.

One way we can rehearse what God has done or taught us is to testify. Revelation 12:11 lets us know

“ “ We overcome the enemy through the blood of the Lamb and the word of our testimony.

Modern technology has made God’s Word easily accessible. Most of us have the Bible on our phones and tablets, where we can click into it in seconds—along with a wealth of sermons, commentaries, devotionals, and other Christian materials. However, the same technology that makes spiritual food so readily available can distract us. It takes effort to make sure we capitalize on the benefits of technology, while not being sidetracked by less important pursuits that could deflect our focus.

Focused concentration can also help with memory retention. One of the great privileges we have as Christians is that of worship. Most of us are accustomed to attending church regularly, and appreciate that Gospel meetings offer us an opportunity to pause in our busy schedules and focus on God. When we attend a worship service, we want to “check our baggage at the door,” setting aside anything unrelated and concentrating on worship alone. We may or may not be fantastic multi-taskers when it comes to ordering our daily lives, but mindful and deliberate reflection on God during worship is certain to help us retain the spiritual lessons imparted to us there.

that we overcome the enemy through the blood of the Lamb and the word of our testimony. Perhaps one reason testifying helps us overcome is that we “anchor” the blessings God has given us by sharing them with others. Testifying can happen in a church service, but it can also occur in one-on-one verbal exchanges about what God is doing in our lives. What sweet fellowship results when our conversations go deeper than surface topics and delve into what God is teaching us, how a particular sermon impacted us, or ways we have seen God’s hand moving!

Memory coaches tell us that storytelling is an effective memory-retention technique. And repeating and rehearsing what God has done not only establishes it in our own hearts, but also it is an effective method of passing on what God has done for us to next generation. In Deuteronomy 4:9, Moses admonished Israel to take heed to themselves and keep their souls diligently, “lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart.” They were also to “teach them [to] thy sons, and thy sons’ sons.” God reminds us to remember, both for our own benefit and for the

benefit of our children and grandchildren. Both we and they will be blessed as we rehearse what the Lord has done!

### REAFFIRM

One beautiful way God has given us to reaffirm what He has done for us is to observe the Lord's Supper with fellow believers. Communion is an act of remembrance. The emblems used in the observance—the bread and the juice, or “fruit of the vine” (Matthew 26:29)—are symbolic representations of the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. When we partake of these emblems, we are remembering and reaffirming the ultimate sacrifice that Jesus made by dying on the Cross for our sins. The Apostle Paul elaborated on this in his letter to the Corinthians: “For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come” (1 Corinthians 11:26).

Establishing personal or family traditions or memorials also can be helpful ways to reaffirm what God has done for us. From the very beginning of Israel's history, God established monuments and symbols that would help His people remember. Instituting memorials is still a good practice. For example, if we know the date that God saved us, we can celebrate it as our spiritual birthday, viewing each anniversary as an opportunity to express our gratitude for what He has done in our lives since that day.

Some families have compiled heritage books documenting not only ancestral data, but preserving the stories of how those ancestors came to know the Lord. Another option is to keep symbols or pieces of memorabilia that remind us of spiritual truths. I have an old, well-worn Bible on a bookshelf in my office that was given to my aunt, Ruth Ashwell, by her cousin, George Hughes, in 1942. On the flyleaf are inscribed the words, “The Rock on which I will stand will also be your foundation in the days to come.” Each time I look at that Bible, I remember the calling and faithfulness of those two people of God, and the many lives they impacted spiritually through the years.

One of my cousins has a painting of an eagle in flight hanging above the fireplace in her home. It is a picturesque portrayal of the assurance that “they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint” (Isaiah 40:31). Some people wear an angel pin as a reminder that they are not alone and that God has given His angels charge over them (see Psalm 91:11).

Perhaps the most important step that we can take to preserve spiritual blessings and insights from God is to maintain our relationship with Him. And He reciprocates! As we do our part by nourishing our souls through Scripture and communing with God in prayer, He renews our spiritual strength. The Apostle Paul explained this to the believers at Corinth, noting that “though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day” (2 Corinthians 4:16).

When our relationship with God thrives, we have sweet and repeated experiences of His love, and we grow in grace and the knowledge of Him. The resultant spiritual vigor will no doubt include an ever increasing ability to recall, reflect, rehearse, and reaffirm the lessons and blessings God has bestowed on us in the past!



**Karen Barrett is Senior Editor at the Apostolic Faith World Headquarters in Portland, Oregon.**

REHEARSE

**WHEN I WAS A CHILD**, the Bible was a closed Book in our home. I was a sinner, but deep inside had a yearning towards God and His service.

Before long, God opened a way for me to attend a religious school where it was mandatory for the students to sing in a choir on Sundays. I became very active in the chapel services, but zealous as I was, I had no satisfaction because sin was in my heart.

A new chapter was opened in my life in 1963, the day I accompanied a cousin to the Apostolic Faith Church in Ebute Meta, Lagos. My first impression of the orderliness of the service and of the choir and orchestra led me to decide to serve God in that church. Soon I realized my sinful state and pleaded with God for mercy. He saved my soul and filled me with heavenly joy. He later sanctified me and baptized me with the Holy Ghost. My thirsty soul was satisfied.

I wanted to be useful in the vineyard of the Lord, and in 1965, God gave me the opportunity to be a member of the choir and orchestra. Over the years, I have been able to use my voice and violin in the service of God. That same year, on June 8, God spoke to me about the need to devote my entire life to His service. It was a struggle for me to leave my secular job because I wanted to help my parents financially, but I finally surrendered. What satisfaction filled my heart when I decided to follow Jesus all the way!

Since then, I have been privileged to teach Sunday school, serve as the secretary to the first Africa overseer, and work at the Africa headquarters office. I thank God for the opportunities to help spread the Gospel throughout Africa.

God has been faithful to me. In the office, He helps me accomplish things I feel unqualified to do. He has also been my Healer. At times I have fallen sick to the point of death and God has revived me, renewing my strength. His faithfulness encourages me, and I glorify Him.

– Esther Ogunfowomu / Lagos, Nigeria

**THIS IS MY WEDDING ANNIVERSARY.** I thank God that thirty-seven years ago, He gave me a wonderful wife. I also thank God for taking care of me and my family. In 1989, I had a stroke, and the doctor told me I would never be able to speak again. Since then, God has given me a beautiful voice to praise Him with, and that is what I want to do.

In 2013, we lost our son, and it was very tragic. However, God has been with us to comfort, guide, and keep us. He knows what is best for our lives, so we leave it in His hands. I want to continue to serve this wonderful God for the rest of my life.

– Francis Adefemi Aparo / Hempstead, NY

**MY PARENTS RAISED ME IN** the Apostolic Faith Church, and when I was fourteen, God got ahold of my life. He asked me, “Which way are you going to go? Are you going to serve Me, or are you going to do what your friends are doing?” This convicted me enough that I went to the altar and prayed. God saved me, but didn’t stop there. In a short time, He sanctified me, and at youth camp that year, He gave me the baptism of the Holy Ghost. Times have changed, and now I am the mother of two young men; my youngest son will graduate from high school this year. The Lord has blessed my life.

I have been homesick for Heaven, because my dad has gone to Heaven. He took me to church when I was a child, and he set my feet on the right path by teaching me what I should do and where I should go. I am very thankful that I had a father and mother who taught me the right way. I have taught the same things to my children.

I thank the Lord for everything He has given me.

– Janet Downs / Wilsonville, OR

**I WANT TO PRAISE THE** Lord because I have a testimony. I tell everyone that I found the Lord when I first started Sunday school. My Sunday school teacher was Roxie, and when I was in her class, I had my name written in Heaven. I also had my name written into the Book of Life. My mom and dad raised me in this Gospel, and I really love the Lord so much. I am going to make it in the Rapture someday.

– Joshua Lambert  
Los Angeles, CA





**ALTHOUGH I WAS BORN INTO** the Gospel, I didn't get saved automatically; I had to pray for salvation. I thank God for saving me about twenty-one years ago when I was fourteen. He also sanctified me and baptized me with the Holy Ghost and fire. God is good, and He has been faithful to me. All these years of serving Jesus have been wonderful. He has always answered all the problems I have had.

Last week I had a little challenge. I was to attend a conference and then my manager told me, "Young man, there is an exam you need to take while at that conference. I know you are not prepared, but please take the exam." I said, "I'm sorry, I need two weeks to study." This was about six days before the exam. She said, "It is free, so if you fail, you can go back and take it again." I said, "Okay." When I went to the conference, I met a colleague who also had to take the exam. That Tuesday morning I received an email from her saying, "I passed the exam!" She had sent the email to others also, including the manager, and everyone congratulated her. I prayed, "God, have mercy. If I take this exam and fail, I will look bad in front of my manager. This is Your Name on the test." Instead of spending two weeks preparing for the exam, I prayed about it for a day and a half. I went into the exam room scared, but God helped me pass the test. It was not by my doing, it was not by my power; God did it. He has been faithful to me, and I want to serve Him all the days of my life.

– Tosin Shobukola / Brampton, ON, Canada

**MY PARENTS BROUGHT ME UP** in the right way, in a Christian home, but I didn't want to have a thing to do with it. I went my own way until I was about twenty years old. Then my mother took very sick; she had a fever for days on end. Her hair fell out and her face became swollen and deformed. I told God that if He would help her get well, I would give Him my life.

Mother did begin to get well, but I continued on my way. Then the Lord put awful conviction on me, so one Sunday morning I went to the little basement church in Minneapolis, Minnesota. I knelt there at an altar of prayer, and that morning God saved and sanctified me. Later, he baptized me with the Holy Ghost. My two sisters also received that experience during the same prayer meeting.

I thank the Lord for all He has given me, all He has done for me. I can't praise Him enough.

– Rosemary Buss / Portland, OR

▼ Sofia Retamal (fourth from the left) singing at Portland camp meeting in a Chilean ensemble.



**FROM MY EARLIEST MEMORIES**, my father read me the Bible stories and always encouraged me to go to church. Around the age of ten, I had to move far away from my parents for schooling, and at boarding school I strayed from the truth that my parents had taught me. I began doing bad things that the other girls at school did. However, on weekends I would go home and sometimes there would be youth services. I would go to those services and the Lord would call after my heart, but I resisted. Naively, I didn't want to follow the Lord because I thought that would limit my life.

When I was around the age of fourteen, the Lord really started troubling my heart and calling me to give myself completely to Him. At that time, I was going through a difficult personal situation, but He helped me give it all to Him. He saved me and came into my life in a powerful way. Later He sanctified me, and after that there was a total change in me. Before, I had been predisposed to anger, selfishness, and being argumentative, but in an instant the Lord changed me and took all of that away. I felt as though He took a blindfold off my eyes, and suddenly I could see the greatness of what He had done.

For the past year I had been seeking the baptism of the Holy Ghost, and during Portland camp meeting this year the Lord gave that experience to me. I never expected that He would do it for me in another country, but He knew the right moment for it to happen.

I have had to go through some hard experiences in life, and I used to wonder why God allowed them to happen. But one day last year the Lord showed me that He has had a plan for my life from long ago—since before I was even born. Those difficult situations that seemed so negative, the Lord has turned into something positive that I can use for His work. I am grateful to the Lord for directing my life.

– Sofia Retamal Concha / Hualañé, Chile

**WHEN I WAS A CHILD**, I was not taken to Sunday school. However, my mother had a Bible story book, and my father used to read those stories to my brother and me. We were raised in a church that taught us to go to confession, but it did not do any good. There was nothing in me that would keep me from doing the same things over again. But God saw my need and helped me.

After I met my husband, we went to an Apostolic Faith church in Minnesota. There I heard the story of salvation for the first time. It was so peaceful and wonderful in that church, and finally I knelt and asked God to come into my heart. He changed my life and made me a different person.

God has been so good to me down through the years. I do not deserve all that He has given me, but I am so thankful for His mercy, His love, and His goodness.

– Donna Baker / Portland, OR

**I PRAISE GOD THAT I** am saved. Forty years ago the Lord saw the honest repentant heart of a child and came down and made a change. When I went back to school, some of the fear that I'd had as a little kid was gone.

This past summer, God gave my family the opportunity to trust Him concerning some vehicles. Car buying is not a fun thing, but we found ourselves in a situation where we had to buy three vehicles in two weeks. One was because we totaled our van, and two were for our kids who were going off to college. We didn't want to buy just anything, and the Lord answered specific prayers in each situation, providing just what was needed. I am thankful He looks after us.

– Scott Preston / Medford, OR

**MY WALK WITH THE LORD** started when I was a little girl. My mom was the spiritual leader in our household, and she saw to it that we went to Sunday school and to youth camp. When I was ten years old and at a youth camp, some of my friends were saved, and God convicted me. My heart felt heavy, and I knew that if something were to happen to me, I would go to Hell. It was a terrible feeling, but God knew how to take care of that. I went to the altar and prayed, asking the Lord to forgive me. He took away the sin and put so much joy in my heart. I was smiling and had a wonderful light feeling. I thought, How does it get any better than this? Yet it did.

Our youth camp was in June, so I went to camp meeting just a couple of weeks later, and the Lord sanctified me there. Since I was just ten years old, I did not understand sanctification, but the Lord drew consecrations from me. I would not have known to call them consecrations, but His Spirit spoke to my heart asking, "Would you give these to me?" When I said, "Yes, Lord," He purified my heart.

A year later, when I was eleven years old, the Lord filled me with His Holy Spirit. Those experiences helped ground me in the Lord. Middle school can be kind of a hard time, but the Lord helped me through that. Going on into high school, I was really successful. My grades were good, and I liked singing in the choir. In my mind was a desire for a perfect résumé when it was time to apply for college, so I was in several clubs and activities. I identified myself as somebody who was successful at school.

However, the Lord changed that identity. When I was about fifteen years old, I realized I did not want to be known as Ashley who goes to North Medford High school. Instead I wanted to be known as Ashley who is a Christian and goes to the Apostolic Faith Church, and also goes to high school. That was a major shift in the way I viewed my life. First and foremost, I wanted to be somebody who was in church and who was involved in church activities. I started playing in the church orchestra and then later singing in the choir, and I taught Sunday school, and became very involved. The Lord blessed and gave me some wonderful support systems—family and friends in the church, in many different locations.

In time God allowed a young man to enter my life, and we were able to pray together and for each other. When I was twenty years old, we were married, and the Lord continued to be with us. As a couple, we chose to serve the Lord. There were some things that we decided to give up so that we could be involved in church and have that support system—those people who love us and want to see us at every meeting.

Now that we have our own children, we are so blessed because they have that support system as well. They have Sunday school teachers who look for them at church. They have grandparents who they see at church, and they have friends there. The Lord really does bless when you put Him first, and I'm thankful for that day when I was saved.

– Ashley Lee / Medford, OR



# World REPORT

Romania:  
Twenty Years  
of Reaching  
Hungry Souls, 35  
Short Takes, 39

- |                    |                    |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Teremia Mica    | 13. Osica de Jos   |
| 2. Comlosu Mic     | 14. Margaritesti   |
| 3. Gottlob         | 15. Bucharest      |
| 4. Bulgarus        | 16. Ramnicu Sarat  |
| 5. Lovrin          | 17. Coroteni       |
| 6. Sampetru-German | 18. Vanatori Neamt |
| 7. Zadareni        | 19. Humulesti      |
| 8. Valea Lui Liman | 20. Baia           |
| 9. Capu Dealului   | 21. Pascani        |
| 10. Motatei Sat    | 22. Bosteni        |
| 11. Craiova        | 23. Sodomeni       |
| 12. Ghindeni       |                    |





# ROMANIA: TWENTY YEARS OF REACHING HUNGRY SOULS

## AN UPDATE AND REVIEW OF THREE REGIONS OF OUTREACH

In recent years, our churches in the western and southern regions of Romania have experienced significant growth. In addition, the Romania work has expanded into new areas, including the city of Coroteni in the southeast region of the country, and the towns neighboring the city of Pascani in the northeast.

To help guide the growing work, several mission trips were made in 2017. In each, the teams focused on visiting our church locations, encouraging the saints, and reiterating sound doctrine. During

the most recent trip, which began on October 2, John Musgrave, Director of Romania Work, and his wife, Rodica, along with their mothers,

Edna Musgrave and Viorica Marincus, visited a dozen churches in two weeks.

The first week was spent among our southeastern church locations, starting at Bucharest, which is the headquarters church for the eastern region, and is pastored by Gheorghei Macovei, the Eastern Romania District Superintendent. There, the team toured a nearly completed church building and participated in

an evening service. Afterward, the ladies gathered for a time of Bible study and fellowship, using our *Daybreak* lesson on Philippians 4:8 as the main subject. They enjoyed a discussion that lasted nearly two hours, making this first Ladies' Fellowship session in Bucharest a great success.

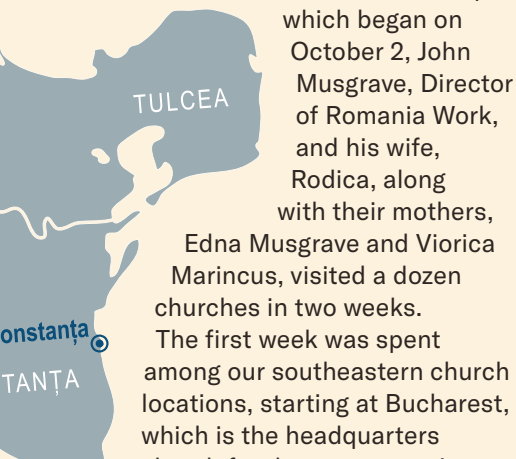
On Friday, October 6, the group traveled to Margaritesti accompanied by Reverend Macovei and Ted Bora, the Western Romania District Superintendent. They toured the new church there before driving to Osica de Jos, where they were greeted by eighteen people. This was the largest group Reverend Musgrave had seen at this location. The front area of the church had been remodeled recently to create a nice sanctuary. There was a sweet Spirit on the service, with many tears and expressions of joy. From there, they went to a service in Ghindeni. About thirty were in attendance at this location, which had started with a single convert just eight years ago.

The next day, the team went to Motatei Sat for a service in the new church building there. The sanctuary was nearly full as some of the neighbors had accepted invitations to attend. In the evening, a second Ladies'

Fellowship was held, this time at the Craiova church, which is the headquarters for the southern region. The church is pastored by Pavel Balanoiu who leads the work in that area. Forty-eight ladies attended, and again the lesson was well received. At the same time, a ministers' meeting was held with about twelve men in attendance. On Sunday, the team attended a service at our church in Capu Dealului.

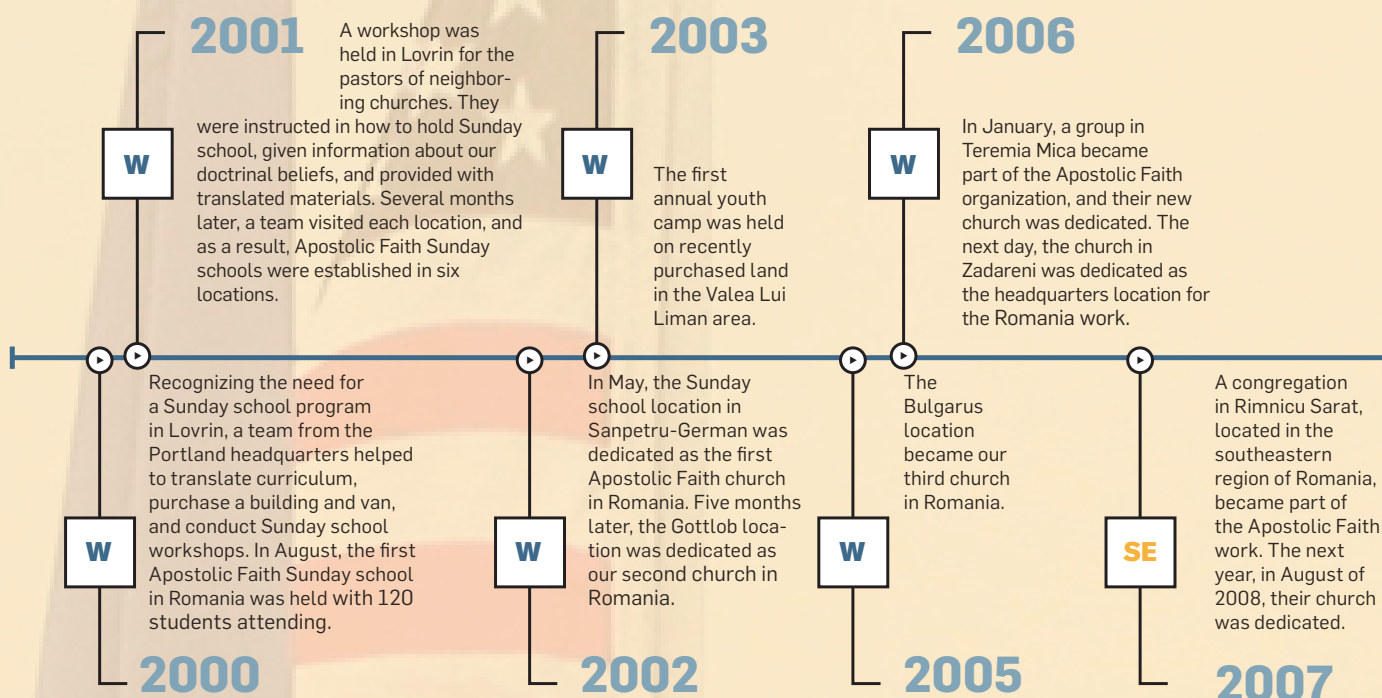
During the second week, the team visited our locations in western Romania. On Wednesday, October 11, they attended a service in Sanpetru-German, and during the announcements, heard a good report of the 2017 youth camp. The next evening, they went to a service in Zadareni, the western Romania headquarters location, and reported a good time of prayer and fellowship. That Saturday, a ministers' meeting was held at the church, while a few miles away, sixty ladies met for the third Ladies' Fellowship, which was another success.

Sunday morning was spent worshiping with the saints in Comlosu Mic. The congregation had grown since the year before and several improvements had been made to the building. After the meeting, a meal was served



# TIMELINE OF APOSTOLIC FAITH WORK IN ROMANIA

**THE WORK IN ROMANIA BEGAN** in 1998 when two couples (John and Rodica Musgrave, and Ben and Rhonda Marincus) visited the Marincus childhood home in Lovrin and found that a church had been built on the site. The pastor and his wife had been praying for assistance in spreading the Gospel, so after returning home, the couples enlisted the help of a few others in translating the Biblical doctrines that make up the core beliefs of the Apostolic Faith work. When the men returned to Romania in March 2000, they saw that the Lovrin congregation had fully embraced the doctrines. The following timeline shows how the work progressed from that point.



in the new activity area. In the afternoon, a visit was made to the Gottlob church, and here, too, some major remodeling had taken place, including murals painted on the Sunday school walls. The final service of the trip was on Sunday evening in Teremia Mica. This church building was completed in 2011 and the congregation now has youth and adult choirs, which sang during the service. They also have a small orchestra which provided a few specials.

Looking back on this trip, Viorica said she especially enjoyed the services on the west side of the country where she grew up. She said it was a tremendous blessing to see the children in Teremia Mica playing their instruments. After coming to the Apostolic Faith

Church in Portland thirty-five years ago and experiencing this Gospel, she had a burden for the churches back in Romania. During this trip, she was so thankful to see firsthand that God truly has a plan for a work in Romania.

After returning home, Edna testified that although she had heard many accounts of the work in Romania over the years, what touched her heart the most was witnessing the familiar sweet Spirit of God in the Romania locations. She said it was such a blessing to be so far away, yet still feel right at home because she was among the people of God.

During an earlier mission trip in June, a team of ministers and pastors made several home visits in southeast Romania in the city

of Coroteni. This is a new outreach area about ten miles north of our church in Ramnicu Sarat, which sends ministers twice a week to hold services in Coroteni. A church is under construction there, and a service was held in it. Reverend Musgrave said the sanctuary has a capacity of about thirty, but he counted forty-seven inside and several more standing outside. Many in attendance were in need of salvation, so he was happy to see that everyone stayed to pray.

The next evening, the team attended a service at the Ramnicu Sarat church. Around one hundred attended, and there was a good response to the altar call afterward.

Another newer outreach area is Pascani. Five years ago, our workers began regular visits to



Western Region



Southern/Eastern Region



Northern Region

2009

SE

After attending the 2008 Apostolic Faith national conference in Zadareni, visitors from the Rimnicu Sarat area expressed interest in our organization. In response, a team from Portland was sent in January 2009 to hold services in twenty locations. This led to Apostolic Faith churches being established in Bucharest, Capu Dealului, Craiova, Ghindeni, Margaritesti, Coroteni, Motatei-Sat, and Osica de Jos.

2014

SE

As the work expanded to include sixteen locations in three different regions, it became necessary to divide the oversight responsibilities. Ted Bora and Gheorghei Macovei were appointed as Western and Eastern District Superintendents of Romania, respectively.

W

The church in Comlosu Mic was dedicated in November.

SE

The Craiova church became the headquarters for the southern Romania work with the pastor, Pavel Balanoi, leading the effort in that area.

N

Home visits were made among thirty-five towns neighboring the city of Pascani in northeastern Romania.

N

The Apostolic Faith Church in Bosteni became the headquarters for the northern region. It is pastored by Vasile Budeanu who has been a missionary to the region for years and facilitated the first visits from Portland. Reverend Macovei has oversight of the northern work, which now includes Apostolic Faith churches in Baia, Coroteni, Humulesti, Ramnicu Sarat, Sodomeni, and Vanatori Neamt.

2012

2013

2017

the families who live in the thirty-five villages surrounding this city in northeastern Romania. They were invited into many homes to share the Gospel, and a few took the way. Since then, the work has grown from dozens to hundreds. During the mission trip in June, our team visited several locations in this area.

In the town of Baia, a church building has recently been donated, and on Saturday, June 4, the team attended the first Apostolic Faith service held in it. There were about forty in attendance. The next day, a water baptismal service was held in Bosteni, which is within walking distance of Pascani and serves as the headquarters of the work in that area. The three candidates

were the most recent of ten who had received salvation in Bosteni during the previous eighteen months. Now, they help make up a congregation of seventy. On Sunday evening, a church service was held in Humulesti, and again, the congregation size was about forty, including children. The final service of the June trip was held in Vanitori Neamt. More than one hundred gathered in the yard of a church member's home for the meeting, and afterward several responded to the invitation to pray.

Earlier in the year, Harlan Lee of Roseburg, Oregon, made his fifth trip to this region, and spent two weeks making numerous home and church visits. One of the towns he went to was Sodomeni where a former bar has been acquired and

remodeled for use as a church. The newly configured church has a congregation of about ninety. A few years ago, this town was subject to frequent problems and police visits, but now our workers report that there is great joy among the citizens. Harlan joined the saints there for a service and said they had a wonderful time of fellowship lasting three hours. During that time, two gave their hearts to the Lord.

We marvel at how God has blessed the work in Romania, which started less than two decades ago with a single Sunday school, and pray that many more souls will answer His call.





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1. Romania Headquarters church in Zadareni; 2. Darrel and Debbie Lee and John and Rodica Musgrave at the dedication of the Teremia Mica church in January 2006; 3. Young people praying after a service in Gottlob; 4. Sunday school children at the Apostolic Faith Sunday school building in Lovrin; 5. "Jesus, the Light of the World" sign on the Teremia Mica church; 6. Annual youth camp meeting at Value Lui Liman.



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# SHORT TAKES

## HURRICANE IMPACT IN THE SOUTHERN US AND CARIBBEAN

Deadly hurricanes passed through the Caribbean Sea and the Gulf of Mexico in August and September 2017, threatening many of our churches in these areas. The first was Hurricane Harvey, which caused record rainfall and severe flooding in Houston, Texas, USA. Two of our church families there were displaced and others suffered property damage, but none of their lives were lost.

Hurricane Irma passed through the Caribbean region in early September. Its course came near the Dominican Republic and Haiti but did not severely damage our churches or injure any of our saints there. The island of St.



*The destroyed church building on St. Maarten.*

Maarten, where Reverend Rolland Deler (District Superintendent of Haiti) is pastor, was hit worse; some of our saints there lost homes, and the church building they were renting was destroyed. However, for the past few years they have been in the process of building a new church, and that

structure withstood the storm. Reverend Deler was finally able to return to St. Maarten at the end of October, and he is working as fast as possible to finish the new building. In the meantime, the congregation is meeting for worship in a portion of the incomplete structure. A church dedication is scheduled there in February 2018.

The Eastern Caribbean was hit the hardest, sustaining major damage on September 4. For several days, all communication systems and electrical power were unavailable, but Eastern Caribbean District Superintendent Michael Anthony was eventually able to send a message that the brethren on the island of Tortola were safe. The Road Town church lost its roof and suffered heavy interior and structural damage; our saints there plan to combine meetings with our East End congregation (whose building was unharmed) until normalcy returns to the island and they can rebuild. In the US Virgin Islands, our Smith Bay church on St. Thomas experienced major destruction, and flooding on the island was extensive. Many of our other churches throughout the Caribbean also suffered severe damage.

After passing through the Caribbean, Hurricane Irma appeared to be heading toward some of our churches in Florida. However, its path changed, and none of our churches suffered damage. Another dangerous storm, Hurricane Jose, threatened to pass through the Caribbean, but it diverted. Then, in mid-September, Hurricane Maria did hit the Caribbean region again. Though it caused severe damage in some areas, it had less of an impact on our churches than was expected based on hurricane projections.



*Left to right: Reverends Edwin Gilfillary, Darrel Lee, Gledwin Mills, and Tim Debusk.*

## A NEW DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT FOR THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

An announcement was made on October 8, 2017, that Reverend Gledwin Mills would succeed Reverend Alberto Smith as District Superintendent of the Dominican Republic. Reverend Smith held the position for fifteen years, and at age eighty, chose to retire for health reasons. A letter from Superintendent General Darrel Lee stated that Reverend Smith's evangelistic zeal has been greatly appreciated, and we give God the glory for the growth of the work during his service.

Reverend Mills is the longest serving pastor in the Dominican Republic work. The statement from Reverend Lee said, "We are confident that the stability and growth of this great work will continue with him at the helm. Please assure him of your prayerful support." A formal installation service will be held as soon as the Director of Caribbean Work and Superintendent General are able to travel to the Dominican Republic for the occasion. Our prayers are with both the new and retired District Superintendents, their loved ones, and the work in the Dominican Republic.



The new church buildings in Asaba (left) and Akinfenwa (right), Delta State, Nigeria.

#### FOUR CHURCHES AND A HEADQUARTERS DEDICATED IN NIGERIA

On November 3, 2017, dedication services were held for churches in Asaba and Issele-Uku, Delta State, Nigeria. The work in Asaba began in 1991 when several Apostolic Faith families were transferred from Benin City to Asaba for work. They formed a Bible study and prayer group, which officially became a church in 1992. Five years later, the congregation acquired a parcel of land, and in 2002 the foundation was laid for the current church building. In the intervening years, the original structure was expanded and improved upon. In November 2016, Reverend Ezekiel Osakwe became the pastor, and he oversaw the many final details necessary to prepare the building for this dedication.

Later in the day, the church in Issele-Uku was dedicated. This church began in 2002 with open-air meetings, which eventually led to weekly Bible studies being held in a rented store. In 2005, Reverend Roseline Uwandi was appointed as pastor and a Sunday school program was added. Two years

later land was purchased, and in 2008 a foundation was laid. Reverend Augustine Ologbo is now the pastor, with Reverend Uwandi assisting.

The following Tuesday, November 7, a mission house was dedicated in Enugu City, Enugu. The facility includes two buildings which will provide housing for regional leaders and their families, as well as for full-time church workers. The congregation there had been praying about such a facility since 2011, and it will be a great asset to the work there. Four churches have been dedicated in that area in recent years and another five will be ready in the near future, most of them seating between five hundred and one thousand people. Church members are preparing to dedicate a tabernacle with a capacity of three thousand, and they are building another with a capacity of four thousand. In all, they presently have twenty church projects under construction as the work continues to thrive in the Enugu region.

Two more churches were dedicated in Akinfenwa and Olorunsogo, Ibadan State, on

November 13. Over one thousand people attended the Akinfenwa dedication, exceeding the capacity of the building. This work began in 1995 with a small group meeting for Bible studies. In 2000, a piece of land was donated and an adjacent lot purchased, and in the same year the foundation of the church was laid. A third piece of land was purchased in 2011, and in 2016 the foundation was laid there for a children's hall. Reverend Isaac Ojo Faniyi has been pastor there since 2013, and today both buildings are complete.

Following that service, the church in Olorunsogo was dedicated, where Reverend Emmanuel Akande is pastor. The history of this congregation goes back to 1986, when a group began holding Bible study sessions in the home of Marian Adedeji. In 1990, outreach efforts by the youth led to an increase in Sunday school attendance, and a weekly evangelistic service was added. Later, land was donated for a church, and in September 1996, the foundation was laid. Once again, the crowd at the dedication was too large to be contained, with about six hundred present.



# OUR CLASSICS

Straightened Out, 42

Second Wind, 45



*John Friesen doing one of his favorite activities: fishing.*





BY JOHN FRIESEN

**B**oth my mother and father had grown up with religious backgrounds, but God led them to the light of true salvation through the Apostolic Faith Church. He convicted them of their sins and saved them, so I grew up in a godly home.

My mother was a real prayer warrior. There were ten children in our family, and before each birth, she prayed and asked God to call that child to Himself. Before I came into this world on April 3, 1924, my mother had dedicated me to the Lord.

Mother testified that her determination to trust God for divine healing was tested when I was born with a severe clubfoot. Immediately she began to pray for me, because she knew that God had power to remedy that condition. While I was still just a tiny baby, she received a promise from God. She read in John 9 that when Jesus' disciples asked, "Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?" that Jesus answered and said, "Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him." She took that as a promise, and she wanted God to get all the glory for healing me.

At that time, a doctor lived in the back of our house in Dallas, Oregon, and he told my parents that I probably would never walk if my foot was not operated on. He was so concerned that he offered to do everything he could to see to it that I had surgery while I was still a baby. However, my parents were acquainted with a family that had a child with a clubfoot. Surgery had left his foot virtually immobile, and he had to swing it out to the side when he walked. My parents wanted a better outcome for me, so they continued to pray and ask God to take care of the problem.

The ministers also prayed for me many times throughout my early years. I did begin to walk when



*A photo from the early 1940s of John, then in his late teen years.*

I was nine months old, which was an indicator to my mother that the Lord was going to answer prayer. However, I walked on the side of my foot on my anklebone, with my foot turned in. I can remember many times coming into the house with my foot

hurting from trying to keep up with the other children. My mother would say, "We will pray about it." We would kneel in prayer together and the foot would quit hurting, and I would run outside again.

In time, the doctors put a brace on my foot in an attempt to straighten it. Though I wore the brace for nearly a year, it didn't seem to change anything. Whenever it was off, I would instantly revert to walking on the side of my foot. When I started school, some of the children made fun of me, nicknaming me "Cripp" because of my condition, and I suffered from their taunting. However, while I was still in my first year of school, God began to undertake. Gradually that foot began to shift back into a normal position. By my second year in school, there were no visible signs of the

abnormality I had been born with and no impairment to my running ability or anything else. The Lord had healed my foot!

When I was twelve years old, my father and I were doing a job for the same doctor who had lived in the back of our house when I was born. He asked my dad, "Where is John, the young man who had the bad foot?" My dad replied, "That is him, sitting right there." He came over to me and took my shoe off. After examining my foot, he shook his head and said, "No, this can't be the same boy." He just couldn't believe it, but the Lord had performed a miracle.



*A family portrait of John, Dorothy, Larry, and Joyce in the mid-1950s.*

Other miracles took place as I grew up in that home. It was during the Great Depression, and with ten children in the family, financial problems were a reality. God sustained us, though, and took us through that difficult time. I also saw miracles of salvation—my brothers and sisters were saved and their lives were changed.

In spite of my Christian family's influence, I began to move toward the world as I grew into my teen years. My friends at school began drawing me into their worldly activities, and before I realized what was happening, I was doing things they wanted me to do. The powers of Satan were strong and my inward propensity to do wrong was there, and I could not seem to help myself. How I thank God that He is able to reach a young man like that!

Many times when I was in trouble, I would pray and the Lord would get me out of the problem, but then I would go back to my old ways. However, at camp meeting the year I was sixteen, the Lord really began to deal with me, showing me that I needed to give my life completely to Him. Conviction gripped my heart like I had never felt before.

One night at the close of a service, I went to pray. I could not get to the altar because there were too many

people going forward, so I knelt at one of the chairs near the front and began to cry out to God. At first nothing seemed to happen in my soul. There was not the same response I had experienced when I had prayed as a young boy, so I began to really confess and forsake my sins and do everything I knew. Finally I just cried from the depths of my heart, "Oh, God, I'll give You my life!" and I meant every bit of it. I wrapped up everything I had in those few words, and completely surrendered to what God wanted me to do. At that moment, I felt the touch of God. The peace of Heaven filled my soul, and joy came into my heart. The Lord took my crooked heart and made it straight. He took away my sins and gave me peace and victory.

Salvation was so real to me, I felt as if I were walking on air when I left the tabernacle that day. I wanted to tell people what Jesus had done for me, and God helped me make right the wrong things that I had done when I was unsaved. I took back items I had stolen and paid for them, and straightened out my past as best I could.

As the camp meeting went on, I continued to seek the Lord, and He began to draw consecrations out of me, showing me what it really meant to dedicate my life to Him. During one prayer meeting, the Lord sanctified me. When I was saved, peace and joy and the love of God came in, and the witness of the Spirit was there to let me know I had been forgiven. But when God sanctified me, it just seemed like He bathed me in a flood of His divine love and glory.

At the camp meeting a year later, I was hungry for God, and one of my brothers who had been unsaved for many years came to the altar to pray. That day as I knelt and prayed and wept for him, the Lord showed me that I needed the baptism. I began to cry out to God, "Lord, what shall I do? What do You want me to do?" And He showed me souls—the value of souls, including my own brother who was kneeling just a little ways away. During that prayer meeting, the Lord not only saved my brother, but He wonderfully poured out His Spirit and baptized me with the Holy Ghost.

In the years since then, God has given me a life of blessing and victory. As a young man, I worked at several places of employment. Then the pastor of our Medford, Oregon, church asked me to move there to take care of the church vehicles. During that time in Medford, I became acquainted with Dorothy Young, who later became my wife.

During World War II, I was drafted into the army. After basic training in Utah, I was stationed in Newark, New Jersey, where I became the manager of the medical detachment at the Newark Army Air Force Base. I found an abandoned barrack near the runway where I went to have prayer. It was so noisy there that no one could hear me pray. What a blessing that was!





*After Dorothy's passing, John and Phyllis were married in 1991.*

After my discharge, Dorothy and I were married. We lived in Medford, where I had the privilege of directing the young people's choir, playing trumpet in the orchestra, singing in the choir, teaching Sunday school, and participating in outreach meetings. In November of 1946, our first child was born, and in 1948, I felt the call to preach. One Saturday night our son Larry became very ill. The next morning I went to church and prayed for his healing. I told the Lord that if He would heal our child, I would talk to my pastor, Clarence Frost, about preaching. After the service, I called home to check on Larry—and he answered the phone! I asked Dorothy about him and she said he was completely well. As I turned from the phone, Brother Frost was coming down the stairs. I said, "I would like to talk to you," and he said, "I want to talk to you too." We had the same subject on our minds. I admitted that

I felt a call to preach and the next Sunday afternoon, at a young people's church service, I preached my first sermon.

In 1954, the leader of the Apostolic Faith work asked us to move to Chehalis, Washington, where I was privileged to serve as the youth minister and choir director, while working as a painter and sometimes as a building contractor to make a living. In 1955, our daughter Joyce was born, and in 1962, our family moved to Honolulu, Hawaii, after I was asked to be the pastor of our church there. In following years, the Lord gave Dorothy and me the privilege to work together in many Apostolic Faith churches.

In 1991, while I was pastoring in Medford, Oregon, Dorothy passed away suddenly after a brief illness that we thought was simply the flu. There was a period of sorrow in my life, though I was grateful Dorothy had made the goal. In time, I married Phyllis Bolte, who was a widow. We had known each other for many years, and in fact, I had sung at her wedding to Fred Bolte! Our first home together was in Dallas, Oregon, where I assumed the pastorate. We enjoyed our stay in Dallas and have many, many wonderful memories of getting together with the saints there. Phyllis and I also served together in the work of the Lord in several other locations before I retired and we settled in Chehalis, Washington.

I feel greatly privileged to have been a part of the Apostolic Faith work for these many years. How I thank God for His hand over my life! I am looking forward to eternity with Him and my heart's desire is to be faithful to the end.



*Rev. John Friesen was a pastor of Apostolic Faith churches for many years and also served on the Board of Trustees. After decades of faithful service, he went Home to be with the Lord on Easter Sunday, April 16, 2017.*

## What Must I Do to Be Saved?

**Acknowledge** —“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). “God be merciful to me a sinner” (Luke 18:13).

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

**Repent** —“I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish” (Luke 13:3). “Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out” (Acts 3:19).

**Forsake** —“Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him . . . for he will abundantly pardon” (Isaiah 55:7).

**Believe** —“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16).

If you are a new Christian, write us and request the tract entitled, “Starting Out.”





# Second Wind

From a sermon  
by Forrest Damron

*This article was originally published in the September-October 1981 edition of our magazine.*

It is a good feeling to get your second wind, to feel that your strength is renewed as that of the eagles, so you can continue in the fight of faith. The Prophet Isaiah had that thought in mind when he said: “They that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles” (Isaiah 40:31).

We find many examples of strength from God in the Scriptures. King David often spoke of the strength God had given him. In Psalm 84, he wrote: “Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee; in whose heart are the ways of them . . . They go from strength to strength, every one of them in Zion appeareth before God.”

Caleb, of whom it is said three times in Scripture that he wholly followed the Lord, could say at the age of eighty-five: “As yet I am as strong this day as I was in the day that Moses sent me: as my strength was then, even so is my strength now, for war, both to go out, and to come in. Now therefore give me this mountain” (Joshua 14:11-12).

The strength God can give to mortal man is wonderful. The name “Samson” immediately projects a mental image of strength. When Samson trusted and relied upon God, nothing could bind him or hold him back. Even when a thousand came against him, he slew them all with the jawbone of an ass. After the battle, he felt weak and thirsty, and he cried unto the Lord. The Bible tells us: “God clave an hollow place that was in the jaw, and there came water thereout; and when he had drunk, his spirit came again, and he revived” (Judges 15:19). Remember, they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength.

David was just a shepherd lad, tending his father’s sheep, when he was asked to take provisions to his brothers who were in the army of Saul. As he went on his way, he came to where the battle was being set in array, and he gave a shout for the battle. He could already feel victory coming, though there was still much to do.

The giant Goliath came to challenge Israel’s armies. There was something wrong in the camp of Israel. Not one man would accept the challenge! But David had the courage which came from the Lord. He explained to Saul that he had killed both a lion and a bear when they had come to take lambs out of his father’s flock. And he said Goliath would be but another like them.

Though he did not have the superhuman strength of Samson, he said: “The LORD that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine” (1 Samuel 17:37). He was going from strength to strength in the name of the Lord: first the lion, then the bear, and now Goliath. Later he would say, “By thee I have run through a troop; and by my God have I leaped over a wall” (Psalm 18:29).

It is hard for us to realize the full potential of the Gospel. God has many more blessings for us than we claim. We content ourselves with the smaller things when we should be running through troops and jumping over walls. We can conquer difficult challenges by the help of the Lord. We may never literally have to face a lion or be surrounded by troops, but we are living in days when the forces of evil are growing stronger. We need the strength of God in order to be overcomers, to get victory over the problems that come to us along life’s pathway.

Think of the boldness of Peter and John when they stood before the council which had much power over them—to the extent of putting them into jail. In spite of that, Peter and John could say, “We ought to obey God rather than men.” They couldn’t keep quiet about what Jesus had done for them. Why, He had saved them



from their sins! He had given them power to go and sin no more!

That is the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. That is what we receive when we confess our sins and are willing to forsake them. In an instant of time God delivers people from the cigarette habit, from their bondage to alcohol, and every other sinful habit. Then they can go on from strength to strength.

More strength comes through sanctification, the next step. Then think of the power that comes with the baptism of the Holy Ghost! Jesus said: "Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you" (Acts 1:8). These experiences are real and they are a part of the inheritance of the Christian.

The power of God does not dwindle away as we follow on with the Lord. Jesus said it would be like rivers of living water flowing from our inmost being. It will flow if we keep the channels clear. Peter and John knew this. It is wonderful what those men of God accomplished through faith, and we can do the same.

Consider what happened when Peter was in prison, chained between two guards. He was asleep, unperturbed by his circumstances. A light shown about him when an angel appeared, but the light did not wake him. The angel had to strike him to awaken him. The chains fell off and the angel told him to put on his sandals and garments and follow him. As he followed the angel, the gate opened of its own accord to let them out.

Not until he was out in the street and the angel had left him did Peter realize he was awake. Peter's friends were praying for him, but when he went to them they could hardly believe their prayers had been answered.

Jesus said that we too might have to face councils, but He said: "When they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak" (Matthew 10:19). Let the Lord give you the words. We have not yet had to face that situation, but if it comes, the Lord will be with us.

Think of the times the Apostle Paul was brought before kings and governors. When he stood before Felix, Felix trembled even though he had the authority of Rome behind him, and Paul was one lone prisoner. But Paul could give his testimony of the mighty power of God without a tremor. The Spirit of God was with him.

The Spirit of God that gives power to the believer also reasons with the sinner of "righteousness, and of judgment" to come. He is asking, "Where will you spend eternity?"

If the Spirit is convicting you, does it seem too big a price to make restitution? You may have heard people testify of having made their past wrongs right. If you think that is more than you can do, know that God will go with you. He will give the strength and grace to do it.

We remember the testimony of one man who would say, "God made me face what I had run from for years." He had accidentally shot and killed a man in a holdup,

and after he was saved, he wrote the Governor of Texas and confessed. He said, "God went before, and I never had to spend one moment in prison."

You may have heard people testify of having made their past wrongs right. If you think that is more than you can do, **know that God will go with you.**

Another man had spent most of his young life behind bars until someone gave him an Apostolic Faith paper in the Spokane County Jail in Washington. He read it, and right before his cellmates he knelt on a cigarette-strewn floor and prayed his way through to victory. When brought before the judge, he gave his right name (he had gone by an alias for years) and pleaded guilty. God softened the heart of the judge, and he never had to serve another day.

These are outstanding victories we have witnessed. All of us who are Christians can testify of the strength God has given us to do His commandments, and God has promised to go with us even unto old age.

The Apostle Paul, in one of his final battles, wrote to Timothy: "At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me . . . Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion" (2 Timothy 4:16-17). By that time he was Paul the aged, but the Lord had renewed his strength.

Do you know the strength of the Lord? Have you proved His power? Or has sin weakened you until you feel you cannot resist the enemy? Remember, through the power in the Blood of Jesus you can overcome: "As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God" (John 1:12).

That power can be yours now. In an instant of time you can know the joys of salvation. You can feel that strength. You will be able to face any situation that comes to you. The Lord will raise up a standard against any enemy. You can know the thrill of victory over every test and trial.

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*Rev. Forrest Damron was a pastor of Apostolic Faith churches in Oregon and California from 1949-1958, and then served as a missionary to the West Indies and Africa until his death in 1983.*



# A Statement of Bible Doctrine

WE BELIEVE IN THE DIVINE INSPIRATION OF THE BIBLE, AND ENDORSE ALL THE TEACHINGS CONTAINED IN IT.

**The Divine Trinity** consists of three Persons: God the Father, Jesus Christ the Son, and the Holy Ghost, perfectly united as one. Matthew 3:16,17; 1 John 5:7.

**Repentance** is a godly sorrow for and a renouncing of all sin. Isaiah 55:7; Matthew 4:17.

**Justification** (or salvation) is the act of God's grace through which we receive forgiveness for sins and stand before God as though we had never sinned. Romans 5:1; 2 Corinthians 5:17.

**Entire Sanctification**, the act of God's grace whereby we are made holy, is the second definite work and is subsequent to justification. John 17:15-21; Hebrews 13:12.

**The Baptism of the Holy Ghost** is the endowment of power upon the sanctified life, and is evidenced by speaking in tongues as the Spirit gives utterance. John 14:16-17,26; Acts 1:5-8; 2:1-4.

**Divine Healing** of sickness is provided through the atonement. James 5:14-16; 1 Peter 2:24.

**The Second Coming of Jesus** will be as literal and visible as His going away (Acts 1:9-11) and will consist of two appearances. First, He comes to catch away His waiting Bride. Matthew 24:40-44; 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17. Second, He comes to execute judgment upon the ungodly. 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10; Jude 14,15.

**The Tribulation** will occur between Christ's coming for His Bride and His return in judgment. Isaiah 26:20-21; Revelation 9 and 16.

**Christ's Millennial Reign** is the 1000 years of peaceful reign by Jesus on earth. Isaiah 11 and 35; Revelation 20:1-6.

**The Great White Throne Judgment** is the final judgment when all the wicked dead will stand before God. Revelation 20:11-15.

**The New Heaven and The New Earth** will replace the present heaven and earth, which will

be destroyed after the Great White Throne Judgment. 2 Peter 3:12-13; Revelation 21:1-3.

**Eternal Heaven and Eternal Hell** are literal places of final and eternal destiny. Matthew 25:41-46; Luke 16:22-28.

**Marriage** is a covenant between one man and one woman that is binding before God for life. Neither person has a right to marry again while the first companion lives. Mark 10:6-12; Romans 7:1-3.

**Restitution** is necessary, wherein wrongs against others are righted. Ezekiel 33:15; Matthew 5:23-24.

**Water Baptism** is by one immersion "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Matthew 3:16; 28:19.

**The Lord's Supper** is an institution ordained by Jesus so that we might remember His death until He returns. Matthew 26:26-29; 1 Corinthians 11:23,26.

**Foot Washing** is practiced according to the example and commandment Jesus gave. John 13:14-15.

You may obtain additional information about these doctrines and learn about our other publications in both English and foreign languages by writing to the Apostolic Faith Church at 5414 SE Duke Street, Portland, Oregon 97206, U.S.A. or visiting our website at [www.apostolicfaith.org](http://www.apostolicfaith.org).

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