



THE Apostolic Faith

EARNESTLY CONTENTEND FOR THE FAITH—JUDE 3

APRIL — JUNE 2023

Transformed

FROM THE
Inside Out

By JODIE HINKLE

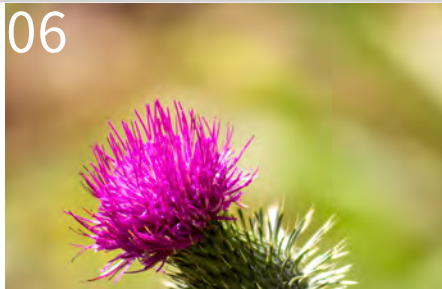
DEPARTMENTS

- 4 VIEWPOINT
- 5 FROM THE WORD
- 17 WITNESS
- 30 WORLD REPORT
- 35 OUR CLASSICS

INSIDE

FROM THE WORD

06



THE CURE FOR CARNALITY

With a stronger root system than the Canadian Thistle, mankind's underlying tendency toward sin must be eradicated by God.

10



FEED THE FIRE!

Just as a fire in a wood stove must be maintained to keep it from dying out, we must be committed to keeping our spiritual flame alive.

13



GAINING ENTRY TO GOD'S KINGDOM

Psalm 24 describes how we can meet the conditions for entering into God's presence.

WITNESS

18



TRANSFORMED FROM THE INSIDE OUT

Jodie learned that trying to be a good person does not make a person good. She needed a change that only God could make!

23



FINDING STABILITY IN UNSETTLED CIRCUMSTANCES

If life events have left you destabilized, here's help!

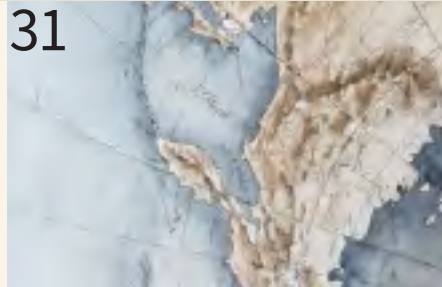
26



GOD NEVER FAILED US!

Through times of illness, opposition, and grief, at age ninety-five this Nigerian pastor is still rejoicing in the God who never fails.

WORLD REPORT



GOOD NEWS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

Reports of God working in local congregations.



A HISTORIC VISIT TO ANGOLA

Two churches were dedicated during the first visit to Angola by an Apostolic Faith superintendent general.



SHORT TAKES

- ✦ Installation of Philippines District Superintendent
- ✦ Nigeria Flood Relief Continues
- ✦ Country Director Appointed for Pakistan

OUR CLASSICS



IN SEARCH OF THE GREATEST TREASURE

If we put forth a little effort, we can have something of incomparable value!

WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED?

29

To receive salvation from God, we must acknowledge, confess, repent, forsake, and believe.

A STATEMENT OF BIBLE DOCTRINE

39

We believe in the divine inspiration of the Bible, and endorse all the teachings contained in it.



VIEWPOINT

By Darrel Lee, SUPERINTENDENT GENERAL



There's more here
than meets the eye!

WE OFTEN HEAR, “There’s more here than meets the eye.” In nearly every situation, that is the case. When it comes to Jodie Hinkle’s testimony (see page 18), there is much, much more.

When she surrendered her life to God after hearing the Gospel message on her car radio, she was only hoping to obtain an assurance of Heaven. Now she testifies that Jesus not only became her Redeemer that day, but also her Healer, Provider, Counselor, and Friend.

As an example, she tells of living for six years with chronic pain, weakness, and limited range of movement due to a back injury. Then she attended a Good Friday service and heard the preacher quote from Isaiah 53:5, “With his stripes we are healed.” Realizing that Jesus paid for her healing as well as salvation, she was prayed for and came to know Him as the Great Physician. From that point forward, she took her children to the Lord when they were sick, and He always proved faithful.

She also testifies of struggling to make ends meet after quitting her job to spend more time with her family. Then she read in Philippians 4:19, “My God shall supply all your needs” and knelt with her children to pray for grocery money. When a knock at the door interrupted them, her family learned about *Jehovah-Jireh* (“the LORD will provide”). A stranger offered her a job working from home, and the next day, an acquaintance repaid a year-old debt that provided grocery money until her first payday.

Jodie also tells of the debilitating grief she experienced at the age of thirty-three after the death of her mother-in-law. Sister Audrey had been like a second mother to her, and a spiritual mentor and confidant. Jodie battled depression for five months and then prayed, “Lord, I don’t suppose You can remove grief from one’s heart, but if You could, I pray You would do it for me.” In the next moment, she learned that God’s transforming powers are not limited to cleansing from sin. The One called “Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God” (Isaiah 9:6) prevailed and instantly, memories that had previously caused pain now brought comfort.

One lesson Sister Audrey had imparted was that Jesus is the best Friend a person could have. Jodie recounts witnessing this friendship during a week-long visit with her mother-in-law and afterward asking God how to obtain that type of relationship with Him herself. The reply was, “Seek Me first,” as in Matthew 6:33: “Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.” As Jodie learned to lean on God, Jesus became her best Friend and many blessings were added to her life, including the salvation of her husband, children, and grandchildren.

Like the “much, much more” in Jodie’s life, the same can be said of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Until we experience God’s saving grace, we cannot possibly see the blessings the Gospel affords. While we do our best in this magazine to present the value of the Gospel, the only way to truly understand is to experience it yourself!

Darrel D Lee

FROM THE WORD

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By Darrel Lee

THE CURE FOR CARNALITY

With a stronger root system than the Canadian Thistle, mankind's underlying tendency toward sin must be eradicated by God.

When I was growing up, our family lived on a farm in Roseburg, Oregon, and on our property, we had what my dad called Canadian Thistles. These thistles were of a different variety than the weeds my brothers and I could easily hoe out by the root and get rid of before they went to seed. The Canadian Thistle is an aggressive perennial with a vigorous, underground root system that can extend unseen for several feet. It spreads relentlessly! Even if my brothers and I dug out the plants below the surface, before long the shoots of a new crop of thistles would emerge, sometimes several feet away from the area where we first spotted them. What a picture of how the carnal nature yields a "crop" of sins even

when a determined effort is made to control it!

When the prophet Jeremiah declared, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked," (Jeremiah 17:9), he was speaking of that internal bias toward sin. While we were sinners, the carnal nature manifested itself in the form of rebellion, disobedience, lust, and other thoughts or actions that were displeasing to God. We would have been held accountable for those committed sins on the Day of Judgment had we not repented of them and obtained pardon. When we turned from our sins and sought God's mercy, His Spirit witnessed to our hearts that we were forgiven. What joy filled our hearts when we became children of God! With that born again experience, a Christian life began.

However, the underlying bias toward sin—the carnal nature—still existed after we were saved.

What is the carnal nature?

We learn in the first chapters of Genesis that though Adam and Eve were created with a pure bias

or inclination, they also had a free will. They chose to do wrong, and that choice plunged all humanity into a depraved condition. After the fall of man, every person has been born with a tendency toward sin, referred to as the "carnal nature," the "Adamic nature,"

It is impossible to conquer the carnal nature in our own strength. Fighting against that internal bias toward sin is like a man struggling to extricate himself from quicksand.

or the "sin nature." Protestant religions acknowledge the fall of Adam and refer to our foreparents' disobedience as the "original sin." They recognize the presence and power of carnality. One cannot deny that the nature of sin exists, because evidence of it is everywhere in the world around us.

The Bible also makes it clear that as well as being born with a sinful nature, every individual eventually chooses



to sin. Selfishness is part of a child's disposition long before he develops an ability to reason or differentiate between right and wrong. Then, when reason is developed, he ultimately makes the same choice that Adam and Eve made—deliberate disobedience.

It is impossible to conquer the carnal nature in our own strength. Fighting against that internal bias toward sin is like a man struggling to extricate himself from quicksand. He had no intention or desire to become mired in it, but he is trapped, and the more he struggles to free himself, the deeper he sinks. The power of the quicksand is stronger than he is, so his only means of escape must come from outside himself.

The human family is trapped by the nature of sin with which we were born. It takes God to extricate us—He provides the only remedy for carnality. He alone has the power not only to forgive our past wrongdoings at salvation, but also to free us from the very nature of sin residing within. That experience takes place when a justified individual is sanctified.

The remedy for carnality: sanctification

The farmer down the road from our family farm in Roseburg introduced us to a remedy for the Canadian Thistle problem: an herbicide referred to as 2, 4-D. When sprayed on the thistles, that solution permeates the root system and permanently eradicates the weed. However, no herbicide will remove the carnal nature. No amount of human effort will suffice. The remedy is the Blood of Jesus, and it is applied to our hearts when we experience sanctification.

Sanctification completes what justification began. When we pray through to salvation, we receive the assurance that our committed sins have been forgiven and will not be held against us any longer. Justification changes outward behavior; we read in 2 Corinthians 5:17 that old things pass away and all things become new.

When we experience sanctification, the carnal nature no longer dominates us because it has been eradicated.

Sanctification is a second, instantaneous, and definite work of grace which brings about a change deep within—a change that deals with the nature of sin from which the acts of sin spring. When we experience sanctification, the carnal nature no longer dominates us because it has been eradicated.

It is not our fault we were born in sin and possess a sin nature; we are not responsible for that. However, we *are* responsible for taking advantage of the remedy God offers through sanctification.

Biblical admonition

The Bible is full of admonition exhorting Christians to sanctification. An example is found in John 17:17, where we read Jesus' prayer for His disciples to be sanctified. After establishing that His followers were not of the world, "even as I am not of the world," Jesus prayed, "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth."

Often in Scripture the words *sanctified* and *holy* are synonymous; they can be exchanged. In the Book

The word *sanctify*, along with the words translated *saint*, *holy*, and *hallowed*, is derived from the Greek word *hagios*, which means "holy." For this reason, the experience of sanctification is also sometimes referred to as "holiness." The verb *sanctify* has three basic meanings: "to make holy or purify," "to consecrate or to separate from ungodliness and dedicate to God," and finally, "to hallow." A study of these words reveals that the experience of sanctification is the purification of the heart of a person—a dedication to God and an eradication of the sin nature. A holy and sanctified person, then, is one who has been consecrated or set apart to serve God and is cleansed from his old sin nature.

of 1 Peter, we find the command: "But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy" (1 Peter 1:15-16). It is God's will for His followers to be sanctified.

In 1 Thessalonians 4:3, the Apostle Paul told the believers at Thessalonica, "For this is the will of God, even your sanctification...." In verse 7, he went on to say, "For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness." At the close of his epistle, he prayed the Thessalonians would receive that experience, saying, "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it."

The meaning of the word *wholly* in that verse is "entirely," and that is why the experience of sanctification



HOW TO RECEIVE SANCTIFICATION

The way in which a person approaches God for sanctification is quite different from the approach for salvation. When a person comes to God for salvation, he comes knowing that he is a sinner. There are sinful deeds in his life that separate him from God, and he feels deep remorse about them. He comes to God in repentance and asks for mercy and forgiveness. His purpose is to turn away entirely from anything displeasing to God. In response, the Lord forgives his sins, floods his heart with peace, and gives him a completely new life.

When that individual comes to God to be sanctified, he does not come with repentance for committed sins. Instead, he comes with a recognition of needing something more—a deliverance from the inbred sin nature. He hungers for the ability to fully conform to the image and nature of Christ, so he comes consecrating, presenting his life in total submission as a living sacrifice to God. That is his part—to yield or separate himself to God. As he looks to God in simple faith, believing Him for this experience, God will do His part by purifying his heart and making it holy.

A person knows when he has received the experience of sanctification, just as surely as he knew when he was saved, even if he does not know what to call it at the time. The divine love of God floods his heart. The bias or inclination to sin is gone, and a deeper peace, rest, and joy comes into his soul. The Spirit of God witnesses with his spirit that his heart has been cleansed.

is sometimes referred to as “entire sanctification.” There is no implication that God would sanctify the Thessalonian believers part way and then more as they went along. The experience of sanctification is entire; it is complete. We do not grow into the experience of entire sanctification. We must experience that purifying flame for the carnal nature to be eradicated.

However, there is still a necessity for spiritual growth after we have been sanctified.

The purpose of sanctification

To understand how and when spiritual growth occurs, it is helpful to know what the experience of

Sanctification withstands temptation, though it does not eliminate the possibility of being tempted. Adam was created in a pure moral state, but he still was subject to temptation.

sanctification does and does not do in our lives. Sanctification cleanses within and provides us with perfect hearts—we no longer struggle against uprisings of the carnal nature because carnality has been eliminated. As sanctified individuals, we have dedicated ourselves entirely to God, so we have a deep longing for purity in spirit, soul, and body, and gladly turn away from anything that would contaminate. Holiness within also motivates a desire to always do what is right.

However, we are still human. While the nature of sin has been removed, the experience of sanctification does not result in absolute perfection in the same sense that God is absolutely perfect. Neither does sanctification restore us to the state of created innocence that Adam had prior to the Fall even when we have been saved and sanctified. The experience of sanctification does not remove the limitations and frailties that accompany humanity; we are made *morally* perfect, not mentally, physically, or emotionally perfect.

A lack of proper information or poor judgment may cause sanctified believers to make less than perfect decisions at times. We may occasionally exhibit a degree of impatience, perhaps resulting from a lack of proper rest, accumulated stress, or illness. If sanctification made people perfect in the absolute sense, we would never change our minds, combat secular thoughts during Sunday morning worship services, or need to apologize. We would never feel frustrated when a slow driver makes us late for an appointment. We would never overreact to our teenagers’ illogical excuses or their consistently cluttered rooms.

Sanctification will temper our personalities; however, if we were introverts before we were sanctified, we likely will still be introverts after we experience sanctification. If we were extroverts before, we will still be extroverts afterward. Our old carnal nature is eradicated but our personality is not.

Sanctification withstands temptation, though it does not eliminate the possibility of being tempted. Adam was created in a

pure moral state, but he still was subject to temptation. He had the power to turn from what he knew was right; tragically, he did so and chose to do evil. Similarly, as sanctified people, we can still choose to reject what we know is right and go back into sin. Sanctification does not negate the possibility of backsliding, but eradication of the carnal nature eliminates the inward inclination to sin.

Growing spiritually after sanctification

The challenges of daily living will offer many opportunities for Christian growth to occur after we are sanctified. Trials of life come, and we will want to receive

Our primary desire in life should be for every thought, word, and action to be pleasing to God.

instruction from God regarding how to handle them. We will listen and obey when that instruction comes, and as we do, we will continue to develop in spiritual maturity.

Jesus told His hearers, “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect” (Matthew 5:48). Our primary desire in life should be for every thought, word, and action to be pleasing to God. That deeply rooted purpose to honor God in every part of our lives describes a perfect heart.

Proof that this state of perfection exists is found in how we respond when we have fallen short of the behavior God desires in our lives: we go to our knees asking Him to help us deal with future similar

situations in a manner more acceptable to Him.

This is not to suggest that God allows us to excuse, rationalize, or ignore *sinful* behavior. Sins are deliberate transgressions of what we know to be God’s will for our lives, and sin requires repentance. However, mistakes of judgment, errors made through ignorance, or lapses through human frailty are not sin, provided they spring from a heart motivated by love. God knows the difference between what is motivated by love and what is motivated by compromise or defiance, and He will make that clear to us as we seek His help.

Justification and sanctification establish a condition where we desire to correct shortcomings. Paul exhorted the believers at Corinth, “Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God” (2 Corinthians 7:1). A victorious life is not proved by an absence of human flaws or weaknesses, but the fact that we have the power and grace to take steps to correct any behavior that falls short of what God desires from us. We have a sensitivity that motivates us, for example, to offer an apology when one is due—or even when there is a remote chance that one is due! The victory is in our willingness to admit fault. In our desire to please God, we will freely confess our deficiencies to Him and to our fellowman as needed. That spirit of sensitivity is Christian perfection at work.

A challenge

Take this opportunity to examine your relationship with God. Have you experienced salvation from



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your sins? Have you sought and received the experience of entire sanctification that deals with the carnal nature? Do you have a deep desire to honor God in every aspect of your life? Are you willing to seek His help in any area where you have not fully measured up?

This Gospel way is a way of holiness. We want others to be able to look at our lives and see that where we go, what we say, and how we conduct ourselves is above reproach. By the help and grace of God, that can be our testimony! ❖

Reverend Darrel Lee is the Apostolic Faith Superintendent General.



By Wayne Butler

FEED THE FIRE!

Just as a fire in a wood stove must be maintained to keep it from dying out, we must be committed to keeping our spiritual flame alive.

In Neah Bay, Washington, where my wife and I live, there is an abundance of firewood and residents are allowed to cut it for free. Since we heat our house almost exclusively with a wood stove, I go out quite often to keep our supply stocked up. I enjoy doing that. There's just something about a wood stove fire that is really nice. After being out in the cold for a while, walking inside to a warm and cozy home feels so good! However, one fact about a fire is that it needs to be maintained, or else it will go out.

We had a late winter this year in Neah Bay. Just a few months ago, on a night when the temperature was near freezing, I woke up around four in the morning and it was very cold inside the house. *Very cold!* Usually I get up in the middle of the night and throw a few pieces of wood in the stove, but on this particular

night, I had neglected to do that. As one would expect, the fire had died

The topic of fire comes up many times throughout the Bible, and often it is used to represent spiritual life. A fire burning brightly represents vitality, and an extinguished flame indicates death. This teaches us a critical lesson: like a fire, spiritual life requires maintenance.

down. By the time I woke up, there were just a few coals left, which were not enough to heat the house at all. So, in that freezing cold living room,

I pulled out some paper and more kindling, and started to blow on the small embers that remained. It took some nurturing, but eventually I got that fire back up to where it needed to be.

The topic of fire comes up many times throughout the Bible, and often it is used to represent spiritual life. A fire burning brightly represents vitality, and an extinguished flame indicates death. This teaches us a critical lesson: like a fire, spiritual life requires maintenance. It is easy to keep it going, but also easy to let it go out. The determining factor to keeping it going is diligence. Let's look at a few examples of this in Scripture.

Fire from Heaven

The Book of Leviticus speaks of a very important fire—that of the burnt offering. The burnt offering



was the sacrifice for sins, and it was made at the Temple on the brazen altar. Leviticus 9 records what happened when the first burnt offering was made there: “And Moses and Aaron went into the tabernacle of the congregation, and came out, and blessed the people: and the glory of the LORD appeared unto all the people. And there came a fire out from before the LORD, and consumed upon the altar the burnt offering and the fat: which when all the people saw, they shouted, and fell on their faces” (Leviticus 9:23-24). The fire of the burnt offering was not started by a man; God ignited it from Heaven above. How powerful that must have been! When the people saw it, they fell on their faces.

Today we understand that the burnt offering foreshadowed Jesus. His life was sacrificed to atone for our sins, and the Old Testament offering was a prophetic illustration of what happens at salvation. When a sinner brings his heavy load of sin to God in repentance, he lays it out, as it were, on God’s altar. Both the sin and the perfect sacrifice of Jesus’ Blood are consumed, igniting a spiritual fire in the heart of the offerer. This is every bit as beautiful and powerful as the Leviticus account of God lighting the fire on the brazen altar.

In the Temple, the fire of the burnt offering was of utmost importance, and the Book of Leviticus records God’s instructions for how the Levites were to take care of it. We read, “And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Command Aaron and his sons,

saying, This is the law of the burnt offering: It is the burnt offering, because of the burning upon the altar all night unto the morning, and the fire of the altar shall be burning in it . . . And the fire upon the altar shall be burning in it; it shall not be put out: and the priest shall burn wood on it every morning, and lay the burnt offering in order upon it; and he shall burn thereon the fat of the peace offerings. The fire shall ever be burning upon the altar; it shall never go out” (Leviticus 6:8-9, 12-13).

Our duty is to faithfully follow the teachings of God’s Word. Like maintaining a fire, ours is not a difficult assignment. It will certainly take an effort and commitment, but it is something all of us are capable of doing.

In these few verses, the command to keep the fire burning was given three times. God said that “it shall not be put out,” that the priests “shall burn wood on it every morning,” and then in verse 13 He stated very plainly, “The fire shall ever be burning upon the altar; it shall never go out.” God wanted it to stay burning! And while God had started it, the duty of keeping it going belonged to the priests. This was not a complicated assignment; it just required someone to be

“After God saves us and lights a fire within our hearts, it is our duty to keep it burning.”

diligent in adding fuel to the flames. Special skills were not needed, but it would take commitment and ongoing effort.

This is also an illustration of our spiritual lives. After God saves us and lights a fire within our hearts, it is our duty to keep it burning. The priests’ responsibility represents our responsibility. However, our fire is not maintained with wood. Ours is fed through simple obedience to God. Disobedience will extinguish it but obedience will add fuel to the flame. Our duty is to faithfully follow the teachings of God’s Word. Like maintaining a fire, ours is not a difficult assignment. It will certainly take an effort and commitment, but it is something all of us are capable of doing.

Can you imagine if you were the priest who let the fire on the brazen altar go out? After God had performed such a miracle to ignite it, where everyone fell on their faces in awe, how disappointing would it be to let it die? Now imagine how much worse it would be to let the fire God ignited in your heart go out—the very thing that Christ gave His life for. The priests had to be committed, and we have to be just as committed to our



relationship with God. He did something powerful in our lives, and we must be diligent to guard what He started.

! A warning from Eden

The first man and woman, Adam and Eve, were the only people in the history of mankind who were created in a state of unity with God. In the beginning, they had no need for a sin offering because they had no sin. In the sense that a spiritual fire represents spiritual life, they started with a flame already burning

It will be much harder for Satan to succeed in his goal if our fire is burning brightly.

in their souls. They had every advantage in life and everything seemed perfect for them. God gave them just one commandment to obey. Yet, they made a conscious decision to willfully transgress that one commandment, extinguishing their spiritual fire.

Adam and Eve came to their decision after being deceived by Satan with a lie in the form of a question. The devil did not come out openly and tell them to disobey God. He came subtly asking, "Hath God said?" He tried to put just a little doubt in their minds, and they chose to believe Satan rather than God. The result was spiritual death and separation from God—their spiritual fire was gone. They knew immediately that it was gone because in an instant, their lives were fundamentally changed. Before, they had walked and talked freely with God in the Garden of Eden. What wonderful times they

must have had there! In contrast, after they sinned, they were afraid of God and hid from Him.

Today, the enemy of our souls would like to put questions in *our* minds. He would like to deceive us into disobedience, extinguishing what God told us to maintain. This makes it all the more critical to be diligent about our relationship with God. It will be much harder for Satan to succeed in his goal if our fire is burning brightly. We are daily bombarded with temptations and distractions, but when we have been tending to the fire faithfully through prayer and reading God's Word, Satan's attempts will have little impact. Most often, his lies will sound utterly ridiculous, and we won't be interested in entertaining them for even a moment.

Satan himself, the great deceiver, experienced his own downfall. Ezekiel 28:12-19 is believed to describe his fall from grace. It speaks of an anointed angelic being who was full of wisdom and perfect in beauty from the day he was created. The prophet Isaiah also spoke of this, saying, "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning!" (Isaiah 14:12). Satan was created as an angel and lived in the presence of God, and *he* fell. Adam and Eve were created in God's own image, and *they* fell. This tells us that we must carefully guard our hearts. Satan wants to kill and steal what God has given us, just as he did with Adam and Eve. But Jesus came to destroy the works of the devil. His Blood is powerful. He can save and He can keep, but we must do our part. We must be committed and take every measure available to build up our fire.

🕯️ Maintain the flame

Matthew 25 records the parable of the ten virgins. These ten were waiting for a groom to come for them. They did not know when he would arrive, but they needed to be ready to go at a moment's notice. All ten had lamps and all the lamps were lit initially. However, five of the lamps went out because they ran out of oil.

The five virgins who kept their lamps burning were counted as wise, not because they did some extraordinary feat, but because they made sure their lamps remained full of fuel. Anyone could have done that, but it was the wise who cared enough to actually do it. The foolish virgins are called foolish because of their carelessness. They wanted to go to the wedding and they could have gone, but they missed it because they did not stay prepared.

Here again, the flame in the lamps represents spiritual life, and the lesson is that salvation must be maintained. It requires an ongoing effort. Hebrews 2:3 asks, "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?" God offers us the precious gift of eternal life, and we must not neglect it. We must never let our fires go out!

How is your spiritual fire today? The cares of life tend to creep in and smother flames a little at a time, but with proper care, even embers can be nurtured back into a blaze. There is no need for anyone's fire to go out. When we diligently tend to our relationship with God, He will keep us on fire for Him. ❖

Reverend Wayne Butler is pastor of the Apostolic Faith Church in Port Angeles, Washington.



By Seun Ogunleye

GAINING ENTRY TO GOD'S KINGDOM

Psalm 24 describes how we can meet the conditions for entering into God's presence.

In the past few years, there has been a lot of emphasis placed on entry criteria, especially for those traveling to a foreign country. When my wife and I made plans to attend the 2022 Portland camp meeting, I had just been in the United States five months earlier. Yet we still checked and rechecked the requirements for entering the country. I told the airline clerk, "We just want to make sure nothing will prevent us from getting in."

Earlier that year, the whole world had witnessed an example of what could happen when a country's stipulations were not met. A well-known tennis player had traveled to participate in a major tournament and was not allowed to enter the host country. Though he was the world's top-ranked male player, he was turned away because he did not meet the requirements!

The consequences can be great for not meeting a country's entry criteria—the tennis player suffered a considerable setback to his career. However, it is much more important to meet the conditions for entering God's Kingdom, because failing to do so has eternal consequences.

In Psalm 24:3, we find two questions put forth by the Psalmist David: "Who shall ascend into

the hill of the LORD? or who shall stand in his holy place?" These are rhetorical questions; David was not asking for a list of names. Instead, he was provoking thought about what conditions must be met or what criteria are necessary for a person to enter God's presence.

David followed his questions with what could be considered God's entry criteria. He named character traits belonging to those who abide in God's presence, both here and in eternity. In Psalm 24:4, he described one who "hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully." By examining these traits and a few others, we can learn what God requires of us, so we can meet His conditions and be admitted into His Kingdom.

"Hath clean hands, and a pure heart"

The first criterion David named for standing in God's holy place was having "clean hands." To stand in the holy place of God means to be in His presence. We can enter God's presence and have a relationship with Him while we are still here on earth. The foundation for this relationship is having clean hands, or being



“God is merciful; He wants to forgive our sins and give us new lives with clean hands.”



Living with clean hands and a pure heart is a beautiful life. In addition to victory over sin and fellowship with God, His Spirit brings us such blessings as peace during trials, daily guidance, and fulfillment.

blameless, and this can only be obtained through salvation. The moment we repent of our sins, God forgives us, wipes away our sins, and establishes His Kingdom in our hearts.

The Apostle Paul was speaking of this when he said, “Some men’s sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment; and some men they follow after” (1 Timothy 5:24). Those who confess their sins to God in this life will find them paid for by Christ’s sacrifice and blotted out, leaving clean hands. Alternatively, those who conceal their sins will carry them into the Judgment and pay for them there.

We are told in Proverbs 28:13, “He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.” God is merciful; He wants to forgive our sins and give us new lives with clean hands. He will do this for

all who turn from their sins and submit their lives to Him.

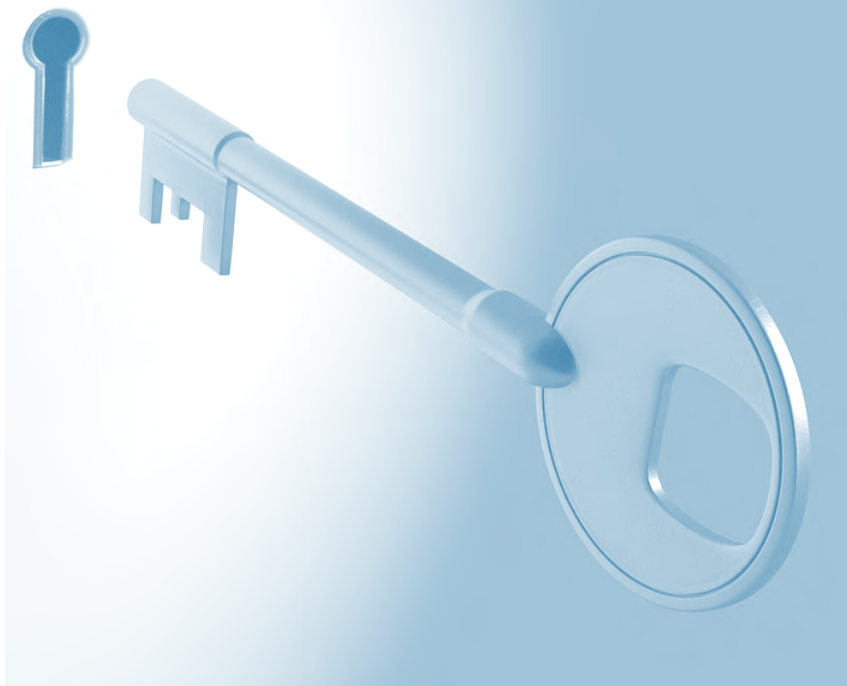
The Lord also wants to purify us, making our hearts perfect toward Him, and this is what sanctification does through the Blood of Jesus. Christ not only died to free us from our committed sins, but also to cleanse us of the underlying sinful disposition we inherited from Adam. We read in Hebrews 13:12, “Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate.” After salvation, when we fully consecrate ourselves for God’s purpose, He purges us of the sinful nature, bringing our hearts into harmony with Him.

Jesus desired this fellowship for His disciples and us as well. Before

He went to the Cross, He prayed, “I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth. Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us” (John 17:19-21).

Living with clean hands and a pure heart is a beautiful life. In addition to victory over sin and fellowship with God, His Spirit brings us such blessings as peace during trials, daily guidance, and fulfillment. Those who are saved young will also be able to look back later with the testimony that God spared them from much heartache.

While it is wonderful to experience God’s presence in this world, there is something better. We must be diligent in continuing our walk with Him here, so we can spend eternity with Him in Heaven. The Bible warns us in Ezekiel 18:26 that those who die in a sinful state, even if they once served God for a time, will spend eternity apart from Him. It says, “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



“We cannot expect to enjoy eternity in God’s presence at the end of our journey here if our focus has been on the things of this world.”

die.” Likewise, a lifelong sinner who turns from his sins before death will be accepted into the Kingdom of Heaven. The next verse tells us, “Again, when the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive.”

It is not sufficient to start on the pathway toward Heaven; we must continue until the journey is complete. God will give us clean hands at salvation and a pure heart at sanctification, but then we must determine that with His help, we will not return to a life of sin.

“Hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully”

One way to keep our actions and motives pure is to pay attention to where our focus is. As David continued his description, he said the one who will stand in God’s holy place is he that “hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully.”

We cannot expect to enjoy eternity in God’s presence at the end of our journey here if our focus has been on the things of this world. During his reign, King Solomon was the wisest and wealthiest man who had ever lived, and he pursued everything this world had to offer. Toward the end of his life, though, he looked back on all he had accomplished and accumulated and declared that it was only “vanity and vexation of spirit” (Ecclesiastes 1:14).

Synonyms for the word *vanity* include “emptiness” and “worthlessness.” Without spiritual purpose, worldly pursuits cannot satisfy the soul. In addition, earthly gains are fleeting and will ultimately be of no use or value, even when left for posterity. The Apostle Peter spoke of their conclusion saying, “The heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up” (2 Peter 3:10). College degrees, prominent careers,

expensive cars, mansions, travel to beautiful places, and all the status symbols of this life are reserved for fire. One day, they will all go up in a puff of smoke, never to be used again. Peter followed this revelation with the admonition: “Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness.” Our focus needs to be on things of eternal value.

This does not mean that working toward an education or career is wrong. However, we do not want to let earthly pursuits take preeminence. We must make what is primary, primary! The salvation of our souls and the preparation to meet God in eternity is what matters most in this life. Jesus said, “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you” (Matthew 6:33). We can keep our focus on eternal matters, because God has promised to provide for our temporal needs.

“Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.” — Psalm 139:23-24

As well as avoiding vanity, it will take integrity to enter God's presence. We cannot be among those who have “sworn deceitfully.” When we make a statement, it needs to be an honest one that others can trust. There should be no need to add anything to our words to make them stronger. Jesus taught, “Let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil” (Matthew 5:37). Take a stand for the Gospel truths today and let someone come back in five years' time and check where you stand then. Let your “yes” still be “yes.” Say “no” to the corrupt moral values of today's society and let someone come back in five years' time and find that your “no” is still “no.” It is about having integrity.

Additional attributes

Psalm 15:1-5 offers more detail about the type of person who dwells in God's presence. In the first verse, David asked, “Who shall abide in thy tabernacle?” and “Who shall dwell in thy holy hill?” Then he listed several attributes that describe one who has met God's entry criteria, including the following.

“He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart” (verse 2). When we become Christians, we begin to walk with God. An upright path may require closing off certain associations or avenues. As we spend time in prayer, submitting to His will, His Spirit gives us guidance to walk uprightly in our actions and strength to take a stand for the Truth.

Before I was saved, I was a troublemaker aspiring to be a

career politician. I had a bad reputation, but when the Lord saved me, He helped me to walk uprightly.

“He that backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbour, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour” (verse 3). Jesus commanded us, “Love thy neighbour as thyself” (Mark 12:31), and He explained that our neighbor is our fellowman. We

When a person has a reputation for putting God first, then we can say, “I want to pattern my life after him.”

must take care that our words and actions do not intentionally harm another. When our priority is to see the salvation of souls, we will put others first.

“In whose eyes a vile person is contemned; but he honoureth them that fear the LORD. . . .” (verse 4). We do not want to revere the ungodly or look to politicians, athletes, or celebrities for our role models. They will fail us because their first concern is for themselves. Instead, we should honor men of virtue and look for mentors among those who are devoted to God. When a person has a reputation for putting God first, then we can say, “I want to pattern my life after him.”

“ . . . He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not” (verse 4). The person who abides with God is one who keeps his word even when circumstances change. This could include honoring business deals,

marriage vows, financial contracts, or employment obligations. When the outcome no longer favors us, the wisdom of this world is to say, “I've changed my mind. I'm not going to do it.” However, others are watching how we conduct ourselves and are taking note. Our lives are epistles “known and read of all men” (2 Corinthians 3:2). When we promise something, we need to stand by it.

“He that putteth not out his money to usury, nor taketh reward against the innocent” (verse 5). Are we trying to enrich ourselves at any cost or at the cost of others? Jesus taught that it is not possible to pursue both God and wealth. He said, “No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon” (Matthew 6:24).

As we review David's questions in Psalm 15 and 24 regarding who can expect to dwell in God's presence, we must ask ourselves, “Do I meet the entry criteria?” If we are uncertain, we can pray, “Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting” (Psalm 139:23-24). God's requirements are not complicated, and He has given us the Holy Spirit to be our Guide. If we are prepared to listen and obey, the Blood of Jesus will cleanse our hands and purify our hearts of sin. We can be assured of abiding with God now and forever.

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WITNESS

18

TRANSFORMED FROM THE INSIDE OUT

Jodie learned that trying to be a good person does not make a person good. She needed a change that only God could make!

23

FINDING STABILITY IN UNSETTLED CIRCUMSTANCES

If life events have left you destabilized, here's help!

26

GOD NEVER FAILED US!

Through times of illness, opposition, and grief, at age ninety-five this Nigerian pastor is still rejoicing in the God who never fails.



TRANSFORMED FROM THE INSIDE OUT

By Jodie Hinkle

Jodie learned that trying to be a good person does not make a person good. She needed a change that only God could make!



A_t

age eight, I began attending Sunday school off and on for two years and learned about God and Heaven. In one of the first classes, the teacher described Heaven as a beautiful place without sorrow or pain, and it sounded so wonderful that from that time forward, I wanted to go. However, she didn't tell us how to get there. Instead, she said it was normal for little boys and girls to be naughty, but if we loved God, we would try our best to be good. Right then, I decided that being good was the way to get to Heaven.

While growing up, I held firmly to this belief and did my best to live right. I got good grades in school and obeyed my parents. In

my teenage years, it became more difficult to stay out of trouble. My friends started doing drugs, getting drunk at weekend parties, and lying to their parents about where they were. They offered me drugs, and there was a lot of peer pressure to go to the parties, but being determined to get to Heaven someday, I resisted.

Yet, there was never any assurance that this was the right path to Heaven. Instead, my hope was solely based on assumptions. I would compare myself to others and think, *I behave better than most. If Heaven is real, and if being good is the way to get there, I am probably good enough to go.*

Who is in control?

While still in high school, I began dating my future husband who was not a Christian, and one day told

him I was one. He replied, "No, you are not. You sin all the time." I did have a temper and was a compulsive liar, but said, "No one is perfect, but I try to be good." He told me his mom had become a Christian before

He said, "With God, nothing is impossible. He can take away a person's sins." I felt he was just seeing what he wanted to see.

he was born and he had never seen her sin. I said, "That is impossible. No one can control all their actions all the time." He said, "With God, nothing is impossible. He can take away a person's sins." I felt he was just seeing what he wanted to see, so we ended the discussion.

Two years later, my boyfriend and I married, and from the start there

Jodie's family with her mother-in-law, Audrey.



were problems. We were young and self-centered, and we had two children right away, making finances tight. In addition, I was carrying an enormous amount of anger inside that spilled over into all my relationships. I tried to control my temper, especially with the children, but often failed.

As our marriage struggled, I watched my mother-in-law's life for an opportunity to tell my husband, "I told you so." However, I could not find fault with anything she said or did. Puzzled by this, I would test her on occasion. She lived in a different city, but during her visits, I would ask questions like, "Can you believe . . . that so and so . . . did such and such?" Her most common response was, "I don't know much about that, but I know God loves them."

A challenge for God

My mother-in-law's life remained a mystery for several years. Then, on September 28, 1987, when I was twenty-three years old, a series of events led me to have a change of heart. That morning, within minutes of arriving at work, I got into an argument with a coworker over a personal loan. The discussion became heated and eventually, I was so frustrated that I stormed out of the building, got into my car, and drove off. While driving, I continued my side of

the argument by yelling at my coworker and pounding my fists on the steering wheel.

After a time, my angry rant turned toward others, including my husband and his family. Then, because I had been planning to get a divorce, I shouted, "Good riddance!" Immediately, it occurred to me that God might not approve of divorce, and this could disqualify me for Heaven.

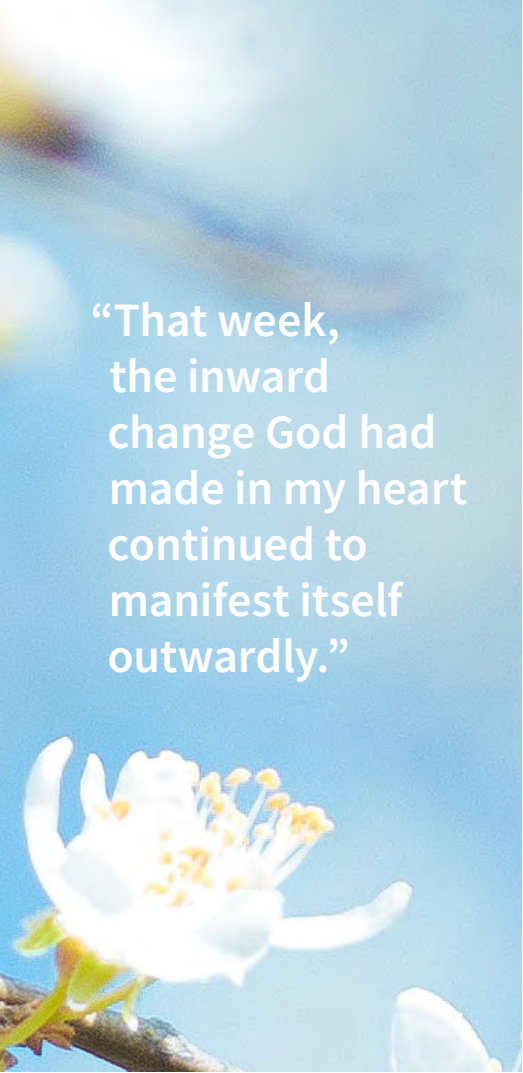
Now I was angry at God and challenged, "Who are You to sit up there so far away from us, never having anything to do with us until after we're dead, and yet making rules for us to live by? I should be the rule maker because I live here and know what people need! If a couple can't get along, they need to divorce for the good of the whole family." Then I asked, "Are You against divorce or not? What is wrong with it anyway?"

Several more life choices that I was uncertain about came to mind. For example, I had overheard someone say that a couple who was living together without being married was living in sin. I asked God, "Are You against that too? What is wrong with it anyway?"

By this time, I had driven across town and was very worked up. I had one more question: "Why do we have to wait until it is too late to get answers and find out if we chose the right path to Heaven?"



(Above) Jodie with her husband (CJ), son (Cameron), and daughter (Catey) in 1989. (Below) Jodie and her children on Easter Sunday of 1992.



“That week,
the inward
change God had
made in my heart
continued to
manifest itself
outwardly.”

A series of events

Needing to calm down, I turned on the radio, which was always set to a certain music station, but nothing came in. I pressed the preset button and there was only static. Angry and assuming that the last person who borrowed my car had reprogrammed the settings, I started punching all the buttons. Again, there was just static. I tried tuning manually, but my station wouldn't come in. Wondering if the radio was broken, I began

running the dial back and forth trying to pick up anything.

Right then, the driver in front of me slammed on the brakes. The red brake lights caught my eye, and beneath the right one was a bumper sticker that read, “KPDQ 93.7 FM.” To find out if my radio was broken, I turned the dial to that station, and it tuned right in. The program was a talk show in a question-and-answer format on the topic of humanism versus Christianity. I would not have listened, except that the

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was “Is God against divorce,
and if so, why?” A man
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A man answered saying, “God doesn’t want us to divorce. He doesn’t want us to experience the heartache that it brings.” Then he gave statistics detailing the lasting damage caused by divorce, especially to children. The second question was, “Is God against a couple living together before marriage, and if so, why?” Statistics were used again and showed that this arrangement has harmful consequences also.

As the discussion continued, I learned that doing things God’s way

will keep us from hurting ourselves and others. Humbled, I thought, *I wanted to be the rule maker but didn’t even know the statistics or consider the purpose for the rules.*

By the end of the program, all my questions had been asked and answered. I was stunned that God had been listening, cared enough about me to answer, and was capable of orchestrating events to do so. I wondered, *How did God know I would be in my car and ask those questions? Did He break my radio? When was that program taped?*

A new perspective

Upon arriving back at work, I pulled into the parking lot, turned off the engine, and sat thinking. In addition to answering my questions, at the close of the program, the host had talked about the need for a Savior. He said, “No matter how well you behave outwardly, if your heart is filled with hate, you are a sinner going to Hell.” My heart was overflowing with hate and anger, but I said to myself, “It’s justified, so it is okay.” My thoughts went to someone who had harmed me, and I sneered in contempt. Then suddenly, it was as if a mirror was turned on me; I saw the ugliness of the hate in my heart for this person. I also saw my own hurtful actions—gossiping and spreading lies about others—and that my misdeeds came from the same source as this other person’s. This changed my whole perspective. I realized that after spending my life trying to be good, I was no better than this person. I was just as much a sinner.

Ashamed, I prayed, “God, I’m so sorry for tarnishing Your name by calling myself a Christian while hurting others. I’m sorry for the

KPDQ 93.7 FM

*Jodie's family with her parents,
Randy and Esther, in 1989.*

hate in my heart and the wrong things I have done because of it. I don't want to be this person anymore or do these things. From now on, I will follow You and do what You want me to do."

I was so surprised that God could convey forgiveness, give an assurance of Heaven, and exchange joy for hate.

Then I paused and said, "I don't know what makes a person a real Christian." In that moment, the conversation from years before about my mother-in-law came to mind. I had never seen her sin and now wondered, *Could it be true that God takes away a person's sin?* Then I continued, "Whatever the truth is, I know You will do it for me."

I didn't know the Bible teaches, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins" (1 John 1:9). Nor had I read, "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God" (Romans 8:16). Yet, the moment my prayer was finished, I felt God's forgiveness, as well as His love and acceptance. In addition, something took place in my heart, and I knew beyond any doubt that I was ready for Heaven. Then, all the hate in my heart began to lift like a fog and as it went, joy flooded in. I was so surprised that God could convey forgiveness, give an assurance of Heaven, and exchange joy for hate. I had thought all religions were based solely on faith without proof.

A transformation

As I stepped from the car and returned to work, everything



seemed new inside and out. The nearby trees were vivid with color, my thoughts were clean and clear, and I felt so light, as if walking on air. A transformation had taken place, and this became more apparent as the day went on. One example happened shortly after I returned to my desk among the rest of the office staff. A coworker came in from the warehouse with her arm wrapped in a sweatshirt, which was dripping with blood. Everyone rushed to help, but I froze, because there was a sudden pang in my heart that I didn't recognize. I wondered, *What is that strange feeling?* I would learn months later that it was empathy. To my knowledge, I hadn't experienced

it before, not even for my two young children.

That week, the inward change God had made in my heart continued to manifest itself outwardly. On Sunday afternoon, I sat down to read a magazine, but the gossip in it made me feel so dirty that I literally shook myself off before throwing the magazine away. I turned on the television but found something offensive on every channel—there was even a Ouija board on the children's show *Lassie*. Rereading a favorite book wasn't an option either—after only one chapter, I was disgusted by the foul language and violence. Putting down the book, I thought, *Why didn't I notice this garbage before?*





I did not yet understand the work God had done in my heart. I had not heard, “If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold all things are become new” (2 Corinthians 5:17).



(Above) Jodie testifies at Portland camp meeting 1993.

(Below) CJ and Jodie with their grandchildren in 2021.

The nearby trees were vivid with color, my thoughts were clean and clear, and I felt so light, as if walking on air.

Finally, it occurred to me to read a little from the Bible that had been given to my children, though I had no idea what its purpose was. One person had told me it was a history of the Jews. Another had said it was a book of morals. Yet another had said that only the second half applied to our day. I decided to start at the beginning and find out for myself.

In the first chapters of Genesis, I read about the origins of the human race and how we became separated from God. I thought, *This is a history book*. Then I came to the story of Jacob and noticed a parallel with my own life. Jacob was a liar who had an unexpected encounter with God. He prayed, committing his life to following God, and was changed. I felt God speaking directly to me through Jacob’s experiences. Suddenly, I thought, *This is personal*. Then I knew, *The Bible is a letter from our Creator!* Right then, I wanted to know *everything* God had to say to us and began reading the Bible for hours every evening.

As I read, a marvelous thing happened: God’s Spirit made me able to understand and apply His Word in my life. Within months, God restored my relationship with my husband, helped me reconcile with my coworker, and taught me to tithe, discipline my children, dress modestly, and more.

God’s Spirit also provided guidance throughout each day. Once while driving, I was about to revert to my old ways of ranting, but something inside urged, “No!” Another time, I met some friends

for dinner, and they ordered alcoholic beverages for everyone. As I picked up my glass, again something inside urged, “No!” In both situations, I wasn’t sure what was happening, but obeyed. Then I read in 1 John 2:27, “The anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you.” I realized that God doesn’t expect us to serve Him in our own power but provides the supernatural direction and strength to obey. Finally, I was able to stop comparing myself to others and just follow God’s leading.

After a few months, God told me to go to church. I had not planned on doing this, thinking churches were merely community service organizations. However, my mother-in-law attended a branch of the Apostolic Faith, and its headquarters church was near my home, so I went one Sunday morning in January. I sat in the back row with my coat on, ready to leave if the preacher said anything contrary to what I had been reading in the Bible. Instead, he said, “When God forgives you, His Spirit comes into your heart and changes you.” I took off my coat and have attended ever since.

Soon, I heard about the deeper experiences of sanctification and the baptism of the Holy Ghost, and in time, I received them.

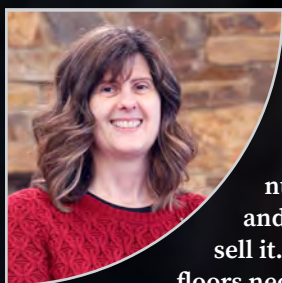
God continues to lead my life and I could tell of countless answers to prayer, including that he saved my husband. However, I am most grateful for the day He orchestrated events to reveal Himself to me. Today I know God is real and cares enough about us to want a daily relationship with us. In addition, I no longer carry the burden of relying on myself to get to Heaven because I have an assurance of salvation in my heart. I look forward to seeing my mother-in-law and other loved ones in Heaven one day.

Jodie Hinkle is a member of the editorial staff at the Apostolic Faith World Headquarters office in Portland, Oregon.

FINDING STABILITY IN UNSETTLED CIRCUMSTANCES

If life events have left you destabilized, here's help!

By Bobbi Downey



The tasks were endless. After living in the same house for quite a number of years, my husband and I decided to renovate and sell it. Walls needed fresh paint, floors needed replacing, and the list went on. Over the next year, life seemed very unsettled. Projects took longer than anticipated, and our house was a mess as we worked. Tools and supplies were everywhere. Decorations and some of the furniture were stored away, as were a few other things that should not have been. Since we were trying to be “weekend warriors” because we both had jobs, progress was slow and sometimes discouraging. Planning for the future was difficult, as we didn’t know how long the renovations would take or when we would move on to our next home. It felt like we were living in limbo.

There are many situations in life that can cause us to feel unsettled. Changes in society around us, prolonged sickness, job loss, or the death of a loved one can make it hard to plan or even hope for the

future. It may be difficult to get through a day. However, when we put our trust in Jesus, He can give us strength for each moment as well as hope for the future. Psalm 31:24 encourages us: “Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the LORD.” While we go through these types of challenges, there are a few things we can do to keep our hearts and minds focused in the right direction.

Remember who is in control

When life is uncertain, anxiety can creep in. I grew up singing a song that says, “He’s got the whole world in His hands.” That simple message is important for us to remember! The “whole world” includes every detail of our lives. God has a plan for us, and that plan does not include fear or anxiety. Philippians 4:6 encourages us to “be careful [full of care] for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.” God doesn’t want us to be anxious. He wants us to look to Him for our needs and trust Him. If we are faithfully following Him, we can ask for His guidance and be confident that He will take us through whatever situations we face, all the way to Heaven.

By the time my husband and I completed the projects on our house and sold it, the housing market became extremely competitive for buyers. We moved into a temporary space while we looked for another home, which took several months. During that time, it was easy to feel anxious, but God was in control of the whole situation. He had a plan, and in His time, things worked out in a wonderful way.

It may be difficult to get through a day.
However, when we put our trust in Jesus,
He can give us strength for each moment
as well as hope for the future.

Bless, don't blame

The Bible tells of Job, who went through unimaginable pain, difficulty, and heartache. He lost his wealth and all his children in quick succession, and then shortly after, he developed one of the most agonizing of physical ailments: boils from head to toe. Life as he knew it came to an abrupt halt, and even his wife urged him to curse God and die. Yet, his response was that he “arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped” (Job 1:20). In his affliction Job said, “Blessed be the name of the LORD.” He did not blame God; he worshipped and blessed Him. He trusted God and His purposes. What a challenge to us!

When we face difficulties, whether we literally go to our knees as Job did, or humbly bow our heads, we can acknowledge God's sovereignty and lift our hearts in worship to Him. We don't want to be so focused on our circumstances that we become bogged down with self-pity or bitterness. Rather, we want to trust His plan and His love for us. Whatever happens, in the good and difficult times, He deserves our praise, thanks, and worship.

It might take a real effort to have a thankful attitude during a trial, but in Philippians 4:8 Paul gave helpful instructions for keeping our thoughts in check: “Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are honest, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on

these things.” When we choose to think on good things, we will find it easier to have a thankful heart that wants to bless God.

Maintain a connection

When a person is overwhelmed with uncertainty, it can be difficult to function, impossible to focus, and challenging to pray. However, it is vital in those times to maintain close communication with the One who is our Comfort and Help. That relationship is our most important asset in life and we don't want to neglect it. God knows our limitations and He will always meet us more than half-way if we will just make the effort to reach out to Him. It's important to continue to seek Him, not only for His help and direction, but in worship for who He is and thanksgiving for what He has done.

My uncle Al Friesen, a faithful minister and pastor, had various health challenges over the years, which were sometimes debilitating. I remember him being so sick he couldn't sleep, so he would sit up listening to Gospel music. Though his body



was weak, he sought comfort where He knew it could be found, and kept a close connection with the One who has all power to heal. Sometimes healing did not come right away, but the closeness continued always. Today my sweet uncle is in Heaven enjoying a perfect healing. Psalm 145:18 says, “The LORD is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth,” and my uncle certainly found this to be true.

Find balance

It can be easy in stressful times to get off balance in our daily habits. Some may seek comfort in diversions such as a favorite hobby or pastime, baking up a storm (and eating), and perhaps staying up too late doing those things. Even activities that are not sinful can be a problem if done to excess. Long-term, they could be harmful to us physically, make us feel out of balance, affect our general outlook on life, and hinder our ability to concentrate on God’s Word or our prayers. Ultimately, this will weaken our spiritual condition.

It is natural to seek comfort in times of distress. However, temporal sources can only give a moment of distraction or relief, not lasting comfort. It’s important to remember where our true peace and comfort come from and pursue Him. The Bible tells us that God is the “Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; Who comforteth us in all our tribulation” (2 Corinthians 1:3-4). When we need comfort, we can find it in God, and there is no overdoing the pursuit of Him.

Keep busy

Occupying ourselves in positive ways can help keep us encouraged when facing difficult times. Whether just doing our daily tasks of work, home projects, and family needs, or helping others in big and small ways, there is often plenty to do. Praying for others, praying with others, and giving an encouraging word are also important tasks that can take our minds off our own problems and help us see the bigger picture of a world in need. Rather than sit around worrying, we can keep busy! Work gives us a sense of purpose. We feel satisfaction when we complete a project, even if it is small.

In my job working at the headquarters office, I sometimes answer the phone at the reception desk. One day as I spoke with an older lady who was very sickly and lonely, she told how another older lady would read the Bible to her over the phone and this meant so much to her! Even doing something very small for another person can have a positive impact on his or her life, and raise our own spirits as well.

Seek help

Feeling unsettled because of our circumstances can bring us to a point where we need support, whether

wise advice from the ministry, suggestions from a professional counselor, or the help of a friend. Don’t be afraid to reach out. The devil loves to make people feel like they are alone and no one would understand their situation. Jesus does understand, and He cares! We can first reach out to Him, but also to other Christians who, even if they don’t fully understand, will certainly care and can offer their prayers and a listening ear. Hebrews 10:25 advises: “Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.”

Romans 12:12 encourages us to
rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation,
and be continually in prayer.

A number of years ago I went through a difficult time of distress and anxiety. Various saints and ministers gave me wonderful support during that time, through their prayers and encouraging words. Church services were also a great comfort; just getting together with God’s people lifted my spirits. Ultimately God brought me through that trial, and I am thankful for the help and support I had.

Look forward with patience

Romans 12:12 encourages us to rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, and be continually in prayer. Depending on the challenges we are facing, it can seem like there is no end in sight. Yet, we know that God is with us and He will give victory—either here or in Heaven. Meanwhile, we are encouraged to be patient. While we wait on the Lord, we can endeavor to count our blessings, keeping our focus on Him. He is a good God! We can follow David’s example, as 1 Samuel 30:6 tells us, “David encouraged himself in the LORD his God.”

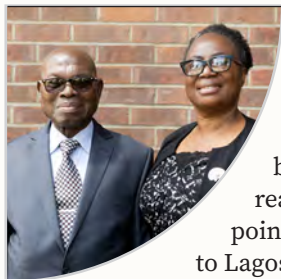
Whether our time of “limbo” is short, or long-term, or unknown, we have hope! Jesus is with us and He will take us through. He encourages us, “In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world” (John 16:33). He can give us peace through every trial. And in Heaven there will be no more pain, no more trials. Our difficulties here on earth will be long forgotten as we enjoy our beautiful new home, forever in the presence of Jesus.

Bobbi Downey is a member of the editorial staff at the Apostolic Faith World Headquarters office in Portland, Oregon.

GOD NEVER FAILED US!

Through times of illness, opposition, and grief, at age ninety-five this Nigerian pastor is still rejoicing in the God who never fails.

By Isaiah Ademuyiwa



My life began in 1928 in a village in Nigeria. Sadly, I lost both of my parents before I reached my teenage years. At that point, my only option was to move to Lagos to live with one of my uncles.

He was a Muslim, and even though my parents had not raised me in any religion, I knew that I did not want my uncle's religion. I can remember being about twelve years old, and seeing the Christians carrying their Bibles as they walked past our house on their way to church on Sundays. Somehow, I knew in my heart that I wanted to be a Christian. Tears would come to my eyes when I saw them, and I would pray, "God, help me. I want to become a Christian." But then I would wipe my eyes so my uncle would not know that I had any interest in Christianity.

God saw my earnest desire, and when I was twenty-five years old, He made it possible for me to move out of my uncle's house and live on my own. Finally, I had the opportunity to be my own man and live how I wanted to live. I joined a local church, but they did not teach how to be born again and live with victory over sin. For several years I attended that church, but my heart was not satisfied.

One day in 1959, I was walking along a road in Lagos when I saw a team of Gospel workers from the Apostolic Faith Church holding a street meeting. I waited there and listened to the music and the messages they shared, and was so excited by what I heard. Then they gave me a *Light of Hope* magazine.

That evening, I went to the address of the church on the magazine: 49 Moloney Street, Lagos, Nigeria. A service was being held, and the moment I entered the building, the Spirit of God told me, "This is what you have been looking for." I was very, very glad! That night, Jesus saved my soul, and joy like I had never experienced before flooded my heart! Before salvation, I used to harbor malice against others. Sometimes I

There were times when we did not have food to eat, but we would pray and someone would bring us food.

would stop speaking to someone for months. When God saved me, He took care of that problem completely. There was now love in my heart, and forgiveness. The church people told me about sanctification, and the Lord sanctified me. The sin nature was uprooted from my heart, and I began living a new, holy life. In time, I pressed forward and God also baptized me with the Holy Ghost and fire.

The same year that I was saved, God gave me a godly and prayerful wife, and He blessed us with five children. We had many needs, but God always provided. There were times when we did not have food to eat, but we would pray and someone would bring us food. God never failed us!

We lived in a rental at first, but eventually purchased property where we could build a home for our family. Our children were young at the time, and before the new home was complete, our landlord began to cause problems. Rather than argue with him, we moved into the new house early. The water there had not yet been tested, but we did not have money to treat it anyway. After drinking the water at the new house, all of the children fell ill at the same time. It was terrible, but my wife and I prayed, and God healed them all.

In the new home, we soon had challenges with our neighbor. He was a man who called on evil spirits, and he wanted us to leave so he could have our land. He told us he was going to use curses to cause our children to die, saying, "By the time two or three have died, you will pack your bags and leave." My wife answered him, "You can only kill us if you can kill Jesus. If you cannot kill Jesus, you will not even be able to kill my chicken." When he tried to bring evil on our house, it was returned on his own house. His children began to die. He came to us, prostrated himself, apologized,

and confessed, "The God you serve is a mighty God." Then he sold his house and left! In the end, instead of chasing us out, he was the one who had to move.

In 1987, I became very sick because of a problem with one of my legs. The leg swelled to the point that I was laid up in a sickbed for three months. During that time, I had a vision that a man in white garments operated on my leg. I believed that Jesus would heal me, so I did not go to the doctor or take any medication. At one point, I lost consciousness, and my family later told me that my wife began to cry out to God earnestly in prayer. When I regained consciousness, I saw one of my daughters crying and I told her, "Do not cry anymore." God had healed me completely.

There was a small compound on our property, which I thought to develop into a private school. I completed all the legal tasks for this. Then one day my church overseer, Brother Josiah Soyinka, called me and said that he understood that I was building a church. He asked, "When do you want us to come and dedicate this building?" I realized that God had different plans for that property, and I needed to surrender to His ways. Immediately after that conversation, I went to speak to my wife. I was fearful of how she might react, but she told me not to worry because God had already told her about the

church! That made me so excited to see God's will for this congregation. The Ketu branch of the Apostolic Faith Church was established in our courtyard, and I was ordained as the first pastor. Thank God, it became a very mighty church.

In 2009, it pleased God to take my wife to her Heavenly home. That was a painful time. At eighty years old, I was not sure how I could get by on my own. I was at a

I have been on the mountain,
in the valley, on level ground,
and on rough roads, and I
can say that Jesus has seen
me through it all.

crossroads and did not know what to do. As I prayed about the matter, in a wonderful way God led me to a sister in the church that I had not met before. God confirmed to both of us that He was bringing us together, and we married in 2011. I thank God for the way she has been a support in my life. My children have also been a tremendous blessing to me.

After retiring as a pastor, my wife and I relocated to London, England, where we have family, and that is where we worship today. Recently, I was able to visit my daughter

and her family in St. Louis, Missouri, in the United States, and attended our church there as well. In addition, it had always been my desire to attend camp meeting in Portland, Oregon, before seeing Jesus, and last year God made that possible. I was thrilled to see that the Gospel is the same in Africa, in the United Kingdom, in St. Louis, and in Portland. It is the same everywhere! The love of the saints of God has been wonderful.

My ninety-fifth birthday is on January 28 of this year. The road of life has been far; I have been on the mountain, in the valley, on level ground, and on rough roads, and I can say that Jesus has seen me through it all. I thank God that since He saved me, He put in my heart a desire to never look back, but to keep moving forward. I have been knocked down sometimes, but I lifted up my hands to Jesus and He raised me up. I cannot express the goodness of God in my life. Today, my goal is paradise.

Isaiah Ademuyiwa is a retired Apostolic Faith pastor. He currently worships at the Peckham Apostolic Faith church in London, England, with his wife, Victoria.





EVIDENCE

MELISSA DOWNEY

Van Buren, Arkansas



JIM OTT

Portland, Oregon



IMELDA NEDELCU

Eagle, Idaho

Though I was not raised in a Christian home, the Lord knew me and was watching out for me even before I knew He was there. At age thirteen, I found myself at a Midwest camp meeting. Following a service, while seeing the prayer meeting go forth, I felt a tug at my heart that I needed to be praying too. I went to the altar, and a lady there helped me pray. I had no special words to say, but the Lord saw my heart and knew what I needed; He came down and saved me. As I walked out of the meeting, I felt lighter, as if I could float up to Heaven right then. A year later, God sanctified me at youth camp, and a year after that, He filled me with the Holy Ghost.

My story did not end there. God has continued to be with me and guide me. Thinking back, He saved me at an important time in life. At age thirteen, kids are starting to make a lot of decisions for themselves. I could have chosen several bad paths, but the Lord was with me. Eventually, He led me to my husband and He has helped us raise a family.

When we had twins, I stopped working outside the home and was a stay-at-home mom for fourteen years. I am so thankful I had the privilege to spend that time with my kids. Once they were older, I decided to look for a paying job. I felt that working for their school would be best so we could have the same schedule. I went for an interview but it did not go well. I told my husband, "The Lord is in control. If the job is for me, He will work it out." I did get it! I am so thankful for all God does. My family does not need to worry about anything, because God's got it.

The Lord saved me over fifty years ago, and I will be forever grateful. Not long after that, I married, and we had a couple of kids. Things were going along fine, but then all of a sudden, within less than a year's time, I went blind in one eye. The diagnosis was cataracts, so I had surgery and that took care of the problem. Then the next year, I went blind in the other eye and had to have another surgery.

Many people get cataracts, and it is not a big deal. However, in me it triggered glaucoma which is a big deal. Glaucoma is an incurable disease that can lead to blindness, and I had it in both eyes. I became discouraged, because here I was a young married man with little kids, and I was facing the possibility of going blind. I went to church and was prayed for by the ministers as the Bible instructs us to do, and God gave me a real peace. He let me know that no matter what happened, He would be in control.

For over forty years, the Lord has taken good care of me. The doctors were able to keep the glaucoma in check with eye drops, and I have never missed out on anything that required sight.

In the last year, the eye drops quit working and I have had multiple surgeries on both eyes. Now, though the condition is not completely gone, it has stopped progressing. God has taken care of this situation for over forty years, and I know He will continue to do so. I praise Him for all He has done and continues to do.

The Lord saved me when I was just a young girl, and He has kept me for all of these years. Not only has He kept me, but He has blessed me beyond what I could ever imagine. He has blessed me with a wonderful Christian husband to walk this road of life with and five beautiful children. It is such a joy to share my love of music with them. I so enjoy singing with my children.

I especially want to thank God for His protection over my family when we went through the scariest situation of our lives. A couple of years ago, we were in a bad house fire. We woke up in the middle of the night surrounded by smoke, and our house was in flames. We lost everything we had in a few minutes, but the Lord was so faithful to protect us. I could feel His hand of protection leading us to safety that night. The outcome could have been different, but God was with us.

Sometimes we do not know why we go through certain things in life, but that experience really increased my faith. It taught me not to fear, but to trust the Lord more than ever, and I am thankful for that lesson. I can trust God with anything that life brings, because I know He will literally walk through fire with us. I am so thankful for all God has done for our family, and I want to praise Him for the rest of my life.



JUSTIN MAKOMVA
Harare, Zimbabwe

In 1960, when I was just a young man, I became sick with stomach trouble. By 1963, I had joined up in the service and was working. Then I got married and had three children, and all that time I suffered from my illness. I spent all my money on physicians. I counted them and there were about forty-one doctors who saw me, but none of them could heal me. Seeing how much suffering I was causing my wife, my brother, and other family members, I decided to commit suicide. I planned to grind bottles and drink them to end my life, so people would think my stomach illness had killed me.

Before I could carry out my plan, in 1970, I was directed to the Gospel. When I went to a church service, I was prayed for and God healed me! Jesus did the healing that forty-one doctors could not do. That very same year, on December 29 of 1970, God saved me, and He also sanctified me and baptized me with the Holy Ghost. That has been quite a number of years ago, and from then until this day, I have been happy. I pray God will continue to help me and lead me until I meet Him in Heaven one day.



TINA OJO
Oceanside, New York

When I was six years old, I was sent to live with my oldest sister who had just married. Three years after that, I was passed to the next oldest sister, and a few years later, to the next. It was in this household in Akure, Nigeria, when I was eleven years old, that I first met God. A Christian man invited my sister and me to an Apostolic Faith church service and the camp meeting in Lagos, Nigeria. We decided to go, and at the camp meeting God showed me that I was a sinner. Though just a girl, I prayed and He wonderfully saved me.

I continued attending church with my sister throughout my school years, and witnessed the power of God many times, including miraculous healings. However, at age eighteen I immigrated to the United States and for a time neglected my relationship with the Lord. Thankfully, God in His infinite mercy drew me back to Himself. He reminded me of the many miracles I had seen, and I thought, *Who am I that God allowed me to witness these things?* I knew it was only because of His love for me. God also brought to mind the testimony of the man who first invited me to church, and a sermon I had heard at my first camp meeting. He saved me again, and He has kept me since then—about forty years now! I was a young woman in a foreign land, without support from a Christian family, and He kept me. Today I have peace and joy, and I am so grateful to God for all He has done in my life.

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, contact us and request the tract entitled “Starting Out.”

WORLD REPORT

31

GOOD NEWS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

Reports of God working in local congregations.

32

A HISTORIC VISIT TO ANGOLA

Two churches were dedicated during the first visit to Angola by an Apostolic faith superintendent general.

34

SHORT TAKES

Brief reports from our churches worldwide.

GOOD NEWS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

Pastors from our worldwide churches regularly send reports to the Portland headquarters about how God is working in their locations. These are a few that came in recently.

Roddickton, Newfoundland, Canada

On October 23, Pastor Michael Ivany had come early for the Sunday evening service. However, by the time the congregation began arriving, he had gone home again due to the weakness of his body. The service went ahead, led by our District Superintendent, Brother Chris Hewlett. During the testimonies, Brother Michael was mentioned multiple times as he was upon many hearts. Brother Chris then gave an invitation to come forward and pray on behalf of Brother Michael, and also encouraged all who had a need to step out. Nearly all of the congregation stood in front of the altar, a “wall” of believers, and quite a few were anointed with oil and prayed over. What a prayer meeting followed! There was no preaching, as a spirit of prayer was felt among the church family. A sister had been sharing the service virtually with Brother Michael and his wife, and soon they both walked into the church, Brother Michael claiming a touch of the Master’s hand. It was indescribable! We praised God and the bountiful blessings continued. The night ended with the song “I’ll Praise My Lord Forevermore.” It was an amazing time of victory.
— *Canada Churches Winter 2023 Newsletter*

Ntema and Napesha, Malawi

From November 10-13, we held an open-air program in Chief Ntema Kraal’s grounds, and people from the surrounding villages came through for services. Many enjoyed the altar services, including Chief Ntema herself, who attended all services. Many came forward and were prayed for, for various ailments. The response in Ntema village encouraged us to have another open-air service in Napesha village. We had Chief Napesha attending this whole program as well. All services were well attended, with three saved, one healed, and many blessed. They all gave wonderful testimonies, including Chief Napesha. We thank God for prayers and blessings received.
— *Chris Nketah, District Superintendent of Malawi*

Sanpetru-German, Romania

We are happy to inform you that recently six souls surrendered to the Lord Jesus in our Sanpetru-German church. Four women and two men. The four women were saved on Sunday, February 5, the day after Brother Harlan and Brother Jeff visited the church. One of them, Rodica Mosu, has several health problems. She is sixty-seven years old and wheelchair bound. Brother Harlan and Brother Jeff were able to return on Monday, February 6, and hold a water baptismal service for her at her house in Munar, a small community next to Sanpetru-German.

On February 16, following our Thursday evening service, two more came forward and were saved. We rejoice that we now have five more candidates for another water baptismal service should the Lord tarry. — *Benjamin Paschal, Sanpetru-German Group Leader*

Key West, Florida, United States

This past Sunday was amazing, and I wanted to give the good report. I have been praying about our altar call. We do it every Sunday and all the kids come down to the altar, but it seems to have become a habit. I felt led to do something a little different yesterday and petitioned the church to pray with me the week before. On February 5, I finished the message and then asked all the kids to stay at their seats, and I asked for just one soul who wanted to begin a new life as a Christian. Then one young boy (he is nine years old) came forward. We pulled the altars together and we got down and began to pray with him. I don’t know exactly what happened as I was in prayer, but more and more began to come and by the end of service we had six children in total give their lives to God. After prayer ended we had another testimony service where our new Christians all came forward and gave their testimonies. There were tears and hugs everywhere. It was only God that could do something like this! We are overjoyed!
— *Rebekka Ashe, Key West Group Leader*

A HISTORIC VISIT TO ANGOLA

Two churches were dedicated during the first visit to Angola by an Apostolic Faith superintendent general.



image: Flaticon.com

A dedication service was held for our church in Kuito, Angola, on December 1, 2022. We have over 350 churches in Angola, and Kuito is our headquarters in the Bié Province, where Apostolic Faith members number about 77,000. In addition to a new church building, an office was also completed, which was desperately needed to accommodate the administrative functions necessary for the tremendous work in this region.

In attendance for the occasion was Superintendent General Darrel Lee, who traveled from the Portland headquarters with Reverend John Musgrave. This was a historic trip as it was the first visit to Angola by a superintendent general, in part due to the civil war that occupied that country for twenty-seven years. In addition, Southern Africa District Superintendent Oniyas Gumbo traveled from Zimbabwe with Reverend Newton Jaravani, as well as South Africa District Superintendent Confidence Nemaungani.

Upon arrival, the guests received a warm welcome from Angola District Superintendent Antonio Castilho, Provincial Overseer and Kuito pastor Oscar Cassoma Ucuemane, and a large group of Kuito saints—thousands of them lined the road leading to the church and were singing and waving as the guests approached. At the church, a ribbon cutting ceremony was held

and then the service followed. The sanctuary was filled to capacity with many standing outside. After a choir prelude, congregational singing, and prayer, Reverend Castilho introduced the visitors and government officials who were also in attendance. The Scripture reading and sermon were interpreted in Portuguese and Umbundu, the primary native language, and Reverend Lee gave the message from 2 Chronicles 7:15-16, focusing on “A Dedicated Building and Life.” The service concluded with a congregational song and prayer.

The following day, a dedication was held for the Cazenga church, which is pastored by Alexandre Tchimbiambiulu. This church is the headquarters of the Luanda Province, where we have seventeen churches. The property is in a beautiful location with a view of the Atlantic Ocean, and the new building includes a large sanctuary with offices on a second floor.

Again, congregants lined the street by the main gate to the church and the visiting leaders were lovingly welcomed. At the church door, a ribbon cutting ceremony was held, which concluded with a turn of the key in the lock to open the door and allow the congregation to enter. Following the congregational singing and opening prayer, Provincial Overseer Emilia Piedosa Constantino introduced the guests. Choir selections were presented in English, French, and Portuguese,

followed by the Scripture reading. The sermon was taken from 2 Chronicles 7:1 and focused on the statement, “What you should find in a dedicated church.” The prayer of dedication followed and then the people responded to the altar call with zeal.

Before departing Angola, the visiting team expressed deep appreciation for the dedication of the Angola brethren, as well as their enthusiasm for the Gospel and infectious joy. They said it is easy to understand why the work in Angola continues to grow rapidly.





Photos from the church dedications in Kuito and Cazenga.



SHORT TAKES

Brief reports from our churches worldwide.

Installation of Philippines District Superintendent

On Sunday, January 8, Fernan "Roque" Fiegalan was installed as the Philippines District Superintendent at the Bagong Sikat headquarters church. During the service, East Asia Director Bill McKibben spoke of the Biblical process for choosing a leader and the qualifications that person must meet, including being called. He then presented Brother Roque, describing him as a man of integrity who is faithful and loyal to God, the Apostolic Faith, and leadership. The congregation voiced their support with hearty amens, and then the platform ministers and Board of Trustees laid hands on the new district superintendent and prayed for God's blessing on his leadership and family.

Reverend Fiegalan has served the Lord in a variety of ways, including as pastor at several branch locations. Most recently, he was an associate pastor at the headquarters church, assisting the late District Superintendent Joey Ruiz. We pray God will help him in the days ahead and continue to bless the work in the Philippines.

Nigeria Flood Relief Continues

Severe flooding caused catastrophic damage across Nigeria in October and November of 2022. Over 1.5 million people were displaced and some 50,000 homes and buildings were totally destroyed,



including many of our saints and churches in the southern region of the nation. In addition, tens of thousands of hectares of farmland were also lost, drastically affecting local food supplies and livelihoods.

Relief for flood victims came from our churches worldwide and was organized and distributed by the Apostolic Faith regional headquarters in Port Harcourt. Food packages were sent out in October, November, and December of last year. Teams were also sent to assess damages incurred on church properties, and now plans are underway for replacing and rebuilding. In addition, aid will be provided to help families restart their lives. The saints in southern Nigeria thank God for providing shelter in the time of storm.

Country Director Appointed for Pakistan



An Apostolic Faith work in Pakistan began in September 2021 with a young Christian named Shabeeb Nadeem joining one of our Canada churches for online services, and then translating Apostolic Faith sermons into Urdu and distributing them. With God's help, he obtained a visa to travel to Zimbabwe and attended the Southern Africa Camp Meeting in December 2022. At that time it was determined that the work in Pakistan would be overseen by our Southern Africa headquarters, and in January of 2023, Felix Panganayi of Zimbabwe was appointed country director for Pakistan.

On January 12, five from Pakistan gathered in Toba Tek Singh for an online introductory meeting with Reverend Panganayi. The group established a plan of action, which included visiting different communities to hold

Sunday services and preaching repentance, surrender, and salvation. They were also given instruction on how to conduct Sunday school using the *Search* curriculum.

Following the plan of action, on January 26 two Pakistani brothers traveled to Warispura, Faisalabad, to hold a service. They reported, "By the grace of God, we have seen the amazing power of the Holy Spirit working in this city. Many people have come to Jesus Christ and received salvation. We hope to see many more saved." The next day, a group from a nearby village requested to hear the Gospel message. A team of six went and held a worship service with them, encouraging the people to repent and enjoy the blessings of salvation. The team distributed Bibles and one in attendance remarked, "Now Jesus, the Light of the world, will come into our homes and lives, and we will be saved." The people were happy to receive the Bibles and requested that the team return regularly to teach them more.

(Top left) Rev. Fiegalan with his wife and their children. (Above) Evangelism in Pakistan. (Left) Food relief for flood victims in Nigeria.

OUR CLASSICS

36

IN SEARCH OF THE GREATEST TREASURE

If we put forth a little effort, we can have something of incomparable value!



By Dick Taylor

This article was originally published in the July 1996 edition of our magazine.

IN SEARCH OF THE GREATEST TREASURE

If we put forth a little effort, we can have something of incomparable value!

What comes to your mind when you hear the word “treasure”? Perhaps you think of a treasure hunt you went on when you were a child. Maybe you recall tales about pirates who supposedly buried chests full of treasure somewhere on an island. Most of us have probably never found a buried treasure chest, but perhaps you have imagined what it would be like and have speculated a little about what you would do with a treasure if you did find one.

When I was a boy being raised in Missouri, some of us neighborhood kids decided to dig a cave in a field across from where I lived in St. Louis County. It was a large field that ran for many blocks, and on this particular day, we got some shovels and headed for a little stream that ran through the field. It came from an underground spring. There was a cluster of trees around the spring, and we picked a spot close to those trees, where we could get away from the roots, and started to dig our cave. A cave on flat ground is

really just a hole, and as we were digging that hole, I remember that all of a sudden a shout went up. Someone had found some

The Gospel of Jesus Christ is of incomparable value, but I do not think it is all that hard to find. The question is, do we have an eye to see it? Do we recognize it when we come across it? Do we have a heart that desires it?

money! I do not know the history of the coins we pulled out of the dirt. Perhaps, many years before, someone had camped by that little spring, because when we looked at the coins, one of the fellows said, “Why, some of these coins are almost a hundred years old!” He was right, and I can tell you, there were some excited boys in the field that day. That experience was the closest I ever came to digging up a treasure.

The Bible records a parable about a treasure in a field. “The kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls: who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it” (Matthew 13:44-46). The Lord often used parables to get points across to the people who were listening to Him, and the stories usually had a straightforward, simple message. These two parables certainly have a clear point to them.

First, the kingdom of Heaven is likened to a treasure. When the man found this treasure, he made sure that it was carefully hidden away, and then he sold all that he had in order to purchase that piece of ground. He valued that treasure more than anything he had in his possession. The Gospel of Jesus Christ is of incomparable value, but I do not think it is all that hard

to find. The question is, do we have an eye to see it? Do we recognize it when we come across it? Do we have a heart that desires it? If you are searching for something that will satisfy your heart, I believe the Lord will help you come across what you are searching for. If you will be honest with yourself, God will help you to find the Gospel, the Kingdom of Heaven.

There came a day in my life, a number of years after that

I am glad I “sold out” and obtained the treasure that was offered to me. I still value the Gospel today. It is worth more than anything else in my life.

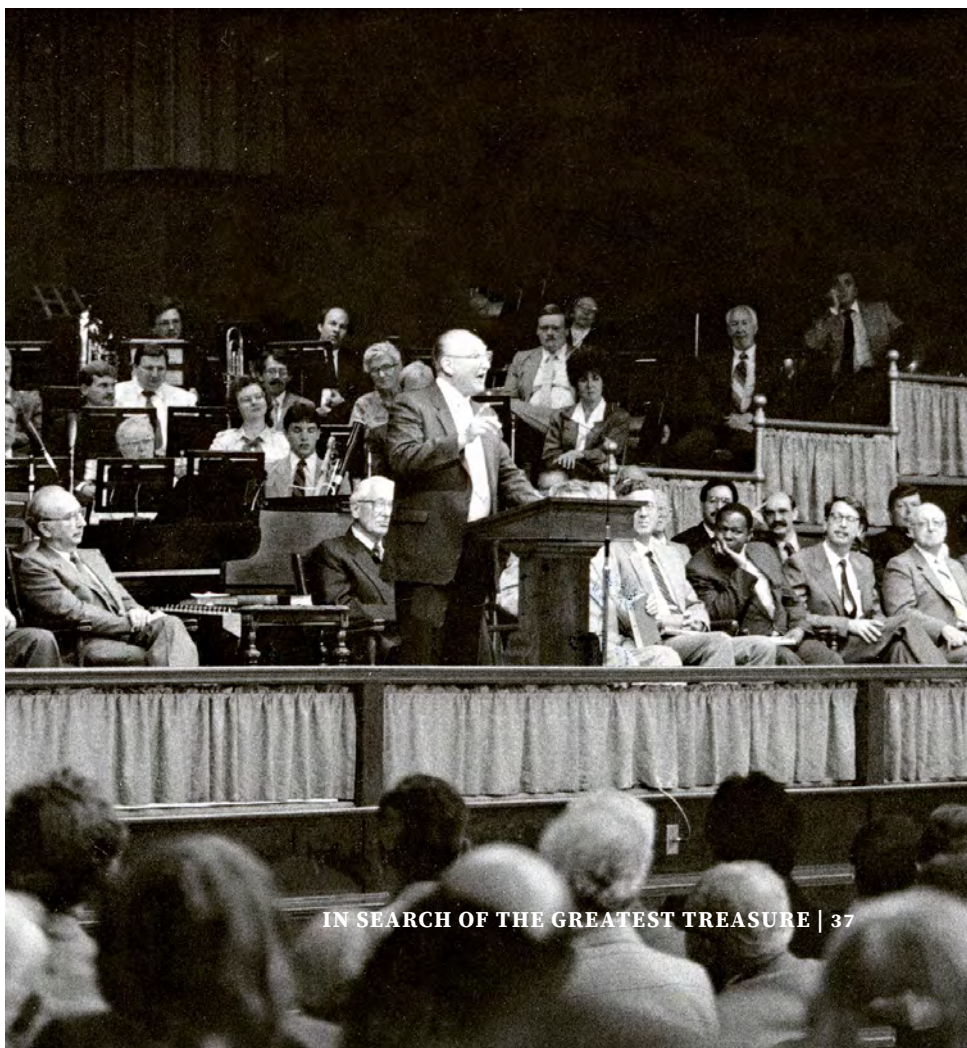
childhood experience in St. Louis County, when I found another kind of treasure—the treasure of the Gospel. When I was in the Navy, I met some men on board ship who had become Christians. Thank the Lord for those who tell the Gospel story! As I looked at those young men in that Bible class, they had smiles on their faces. They had something good to say. They had real joy, and I was impressed with that. I realized that I had come across a treasure, and I was happy, just as the man in the parable was happy when he found the treasure in the field. He saw the value of what he had found, and I saw the value of the Gospel. I am glad I “sold out” and obtained the treasure that was offered to me. I still value the Gospel today. It is worth more than anything else in my life.

The man who found the treasure in the field was careful with it once he had found it, hiding it so he could be sure it was safe while he went and purchased the field. That was true in my case also. Once I had acquired the Gospel, I wanted with all my heart to hang on to it. The fellows I used to drink and fight with before I got saved, laughed and made fun of me when I became a Christian. They told me, “You’ve got dive-bomber religion. Just wait until we get back to port again. You’ll be the same old fellow you used to be.” They were wrong, because I wanted to hang on to that treasure in my heart. I have never wanted to be the “same old fellow” I used to be. After my conversion, there were times when I was awakened out of my sleep at my battle station and heard the guns going off, knowing there were dive bombers attacking


I just did what he said! I got down and did a little praying, and the Lord lifted me right back up.

that old ship, but I felt the peace of God flooding my soul. There was joy in my heart. I want to tell you, there is something to rejoice about in the old-time religion. There is something worth hanging on to.

At our place in Grants Pass, Oregon, we have eighteen or nineteen good-sized walnut trees around our yard. We also have lots of squirrels, and as a result, we do not get any nuts. I told my wife, “Let’s just forget about the nuts and enjoy the squirrels.” That is what we have done. The squirrels go around and eat the nuts, and what they don’t eat, they bury. They don’t bury



*Rev. Taylor preaching at a
Portland camp meeting.*

A close-up photograph of a squirrel with brown and white fur, looking directly at the camera. The squirrel is positioned on the left side of the page, with its head and shoulders visible. The background is a soft, out-of-focus green, suggesting foliage.

The Gospel is not buried so deeply that you cannot find it, but you do need to “dig around” a bit.

them very deep, because they don't want to have to go to much effort to get them out of the ground, I guess.

The Gospel is not buried so deeply that you cannot find it, but you do need to “dig around” a bit. I remember going through my first trial after receiving salvation. Until then, it seemed that the Lord blessed me from day to day. I expected it to be like that all the time, but all of a sudden, it wasn't that way anymore. I felt like a weight was on my shoulders, and I did not understand what was happening. I looked up one of those young men from the Bible class on board ship and said, “Pray for me!” He said, “Go and pray for yourself. You are young and healthy!” I didn't crawl into a corner and say, “Well, Lord, I guess You don't love me and he doesn't either.” I just did what he said! I got down and did a little praying, and the Lord lifted me right back up. You see, the Gospel is not far from any of us. We just have to put forth a little effort, and we can have it.


In the second parable, the kingdom of Heaven was likened to a merchant man seeking goodly pearls. You know, some pearls are unevenly shaped. Some are of poor quality. Some are small or badly colored. This merchant man was not looking for that kind of pearl. He wanted the very best! He was engaged

in searching for it, and at last he came across the pearl he wanted. In fact, he wanted it so badly that he was willing to go and sell all that he had in order to possess that pearl. He was willing to pay the full price to get the goods.

When it comes to the Gospel, I want the “goods.” I want it to be just as the Lord spelled out in His Word. I will not settle for anything less. Down through the years, I have heard preaching that laid the Gospel right on the line, and I could say in my heart, “Amen, Brother.” I want the best, and I will pay the price to get it.

Do you want something that is a challenge? Do you want something that will measure up? Do you want something that will require consecration and dedication but is worth any price you pay to get it? The Gospel of Jesus Christ is worth everything! When it is in your possession, you will rejoice every day of your life, and the value of it is never ending. If you do not have this great treasure, sell out and obtain it today!

Reverend Dick Taylor was pastor of Apostolic Faith Churches in Tacoma, Washington; Los Angeles and Eureka, California; and Grants Pass, Oregon, as well as a missionary in the Caribbean Islands. He went to be with the Lord on December 18, 2005.

A close-up photograph of a single, lustrous pearl resting on a dried, intricate leaf. The leaf's veins are clearly visible, creating a complex, web-like pattern. The background is dark, making the pearl and the leaf stand out.

“The kingdom of Heaven was likened to a merchant man seeking goodly pearls.”

A STATEMENT OF BIBLE DOCTRINE

We believe in the divine inspiration of the Bible, and endorse all the teachings contained in it. Following is a summary of our basic doctrines.

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 enduement 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. Before these magazines are sent out, they are always prayed over for the healing of the sick and the salvation of souls.

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Jesus
THE LIGHT *of* THE WORLD