

THE Apostolic Faith

EARNESTLY CONTEND FOR THE FAITH—JUDE 3

OCTOBER — DECEMBER 2023



Affliction
THAT PRODUCES
GLORY

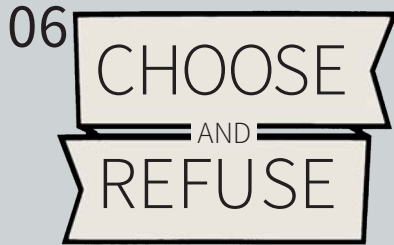


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Anytime we make a choice, we must also reject all other options.



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Encouragement for those who suffer.



BE TRANSFORMED!

God wants us to come out of the mold of this world.

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By Darrel Lee, SUPERINTENDENT GENERAL

 Lessons from a marriage that honors God.

October 7, 1950, was the date that Earl and Sylvia Phillips (see page 36) married. The math is easy—it was seventy-three years ago. Is marriage as easy? I asked them.

On their wedding day, the Phillips understood that the vows they exchanged were the beginning of a lifelong commitment. However, they could not envision what the subsequent seven-plus decades would hold! Easy? Brother Earl told me that marriage “has its bumps.” Those are not easy, but it is also not hard to endure them. Separately, Sister Sylvia also told me that marriage “has its bumps.” Notice a trend? The same language, but they agreed that a bump is not the end of a marriage! When one of those bumps surfaced, Sister Sylvia would ask herself, “Why did I marry him in the first place?” The answer: “I married him because I loved him.” That is how she kept her love for him fresh. Their advice is to weather the storms. Together. Remember, storms pass.

What has been the secret of their success? Sister Sylvia said that they do not go to sleep at night without telling each other, “I love you.” She also said that one should not be afraid to say, “I am sorry,” and added, “We have to do that quite often.” They advised that couples should enjoy spending time together. Brother Earl says they have done so, “Just the two of us.” That has been true, whether running errands, eating lunch out, going to the beach, or shopping. They have appreciated being “heirs together of the grace of life” (1 Peter 3:7).

Brother Earl cautioned that it is important for young couples to be careful with their finances. Do not use credit cards to go into debt. They both emphasized the importance of devotions. While separate work and home schedules will present challenges, look for opportunities to read the Bible and pray together, even if for a short time.

The Phillips’ marriage yielded four children. What did they do for family time? They did enjoy recreational activities as a family, but a priority was to attend church and church activities together. To them, that constituted family time. Their children never doubted where they would be when the church lights were on. Family life provided a good foundation for church life, and vice versa. They all valued both.



My wife, Debbie, witnessed their marriage for three and a half years after her high school graduation. She was living with them up until we married in 1976. I asked her, “What lessons did you learn from observing their marriage?” She appreciated observing firsthand what she deemed to be a real-life, properly functioning marriage. Debbie noticed that they did more than talk about praying for their needs—they actually prayed. When she had anxiety about her future, they encouraged her to “seek ye first the kingdom of God” (Matthew 6:33), and “delight thyself also in the LORD” (Psalm 37:4). When she expressed worry, they asked, “Are you delighting thyself in the Lord?”

Brother Earl and Sister Sylvia now claim to be elderly. It is true that he will turn ninety-four years old just three days after their upcoming wedding anniversary, and she recently turned ninety-one. To this day, they continue to love each other, enjoy life as husband and wife, endure challenges, attend church as a couple, and end each day saying, “I love you.”

Jesus used marriage to illustrate the bond between Himself and the Church, and the Phillips’ marriage is a good example of that illustration. Whether our current season in life seems easy or hard, we can all appreciate that we have a loving Savior who will stand beside us and help us overcome every “bump” on our journey. The articles in this magazine provide encouragement to that end. May God bless you as you look His way throughout life.

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Anytime we make a choice, we must also reject all other options.

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By Darrel Lee

CHOOSE AND REFUSE

Anytime we make a choice, we must also reject all other options.

A cost-benefit analysis is a tool most of us employ when choosing what actions are worth pursuing, even if we do not identify it in those terms. When buying a car, we evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of maintaining our current vehicle versus the cost of buying a newer one. Those who ride an exercise bike or go to a fitness center regularly calculate the benefits of physical exercise compared to other ways they could spend their time.

Before Debbie and I were married, I had a motorcycle. As we began setting up the apartment where we would live after the wedding, there was a decision to make: would we rather have the motorcycle or a washer and dryer? She was not excited

about the motorcycle, and I was not excited about spending a lot of time at the laundromat. We weighed the plusses and minuses together. The result? The motorcycle was sold and we purchased a washer and dryer.

While many decisions we make using a cost-benefit analysis are not life-altering, in the Book of Hebrews we read of one that was.

Every individual in this world will face a decision like the one Moses faced: whether to choose God or “enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.”

It was made by the man Moses, who later became the leader of the Children of Israel, and it changed the direction of his life. Hebrews 11:24-27 tells us, “By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches

than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward. By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible.” Moses weighed the options, evaluated the potential risks and benefits, and made a decision.

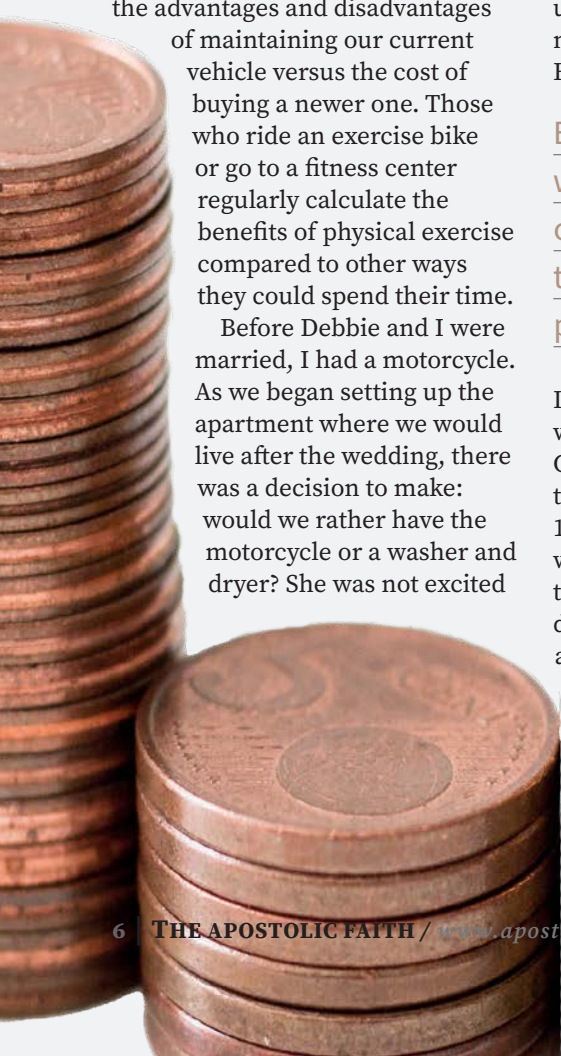
Every individual in this world will face a decision like the one Moses faced: whether to choose God or “enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.” It is important for us to consider this vital choice very carefully. Sin promises an alluring “reward” but any enjoyment it brings is only in the short term; there is also a lifetime of adverse consequences. The greatest risk—the possibility of ending up in a lost eternity—is hidden at the outset but will be the outcome unless sin is forsaken.

One man’s decision

I am reminded of the testimony of Bill Cripps, whose descendants are still part of our church congregation. An Apostolic Faith paper came his mother’s way when he was a boy in the Midwest. She read the paper and was saved. From then on, she taught him that there was a Heaven to gain and a Hell to shun. And Bill began to count the cost.

Bill described his decision-making process this way: “I said to myself, ‘If I should gain the whole world, live to be a ripe one hundred years of age without an ache or a pain, and then spend all eternity in that lake of fire and brimstone where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched, I would still be the loser.’

“I looked at the other side of the picture and thought how much



better it would be to have salvation even if I had barely enough worldly possessions to get by. Then when it came my turn to cross over, I could enter in through the gates into that

We want to walk those streets of gold in Heaven above someday, but we too must make the right decisions in this world for that to happen.

beautiful city, whose Builder and Maker is God, of which the Bible says: 'Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.' I decided Heaven was cheap at any price."

When Bill did his analysis, he looked at the outcome of both choices and made the right decision. Like him, we want to walk those streets of gold in Heaven above someday, but we too must make the right decisions in this world for that to happen.

The choice of Moses' parents

Looking again at the Book of Hebrews, we find that Moses had an advantage when it came to making the right decisions: his parents were people of faith. We read of their trust in God in Hebrews 11:23, which states, "By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw he was a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment." The account in Exodus chapters 1 and 2 indicates that the Hebrew people, who were enslaved in Egypt, were multiplying

in number and the Pharaoh became concerned that they would become numerous enough to conquer his nation. We read in Exodus 1:15-16 that he commanded all the newborn sons of the Hebrews be killed.

However, Moses' parents had faith in God. They hid their infant son for three months, and when they could no longer do so, they placed him into the river in a basket—the same river where newborns were being cast at the edict of Pharaoh.

Moses' parents understood there was a risk involved in taking that step, but they also assessed the benefits. They chose to trust God, having faith that He would preserve their child. That was a courageous decision. The basket that held the infant Moses was placed where Pharaoh's daughter came to bathe, and when she saw the baby, she took him to be her own child. Moses' older sister Miriam was watching close by, and she quickly went to the daughter of Pharaoh and offered to find a woman of the Hebrews to nurse the child. Of course, the woman was Moses' own mother.

As a result of their courageous decision, Moses' parents had the opportunity to raise their son for a time in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. He grew up understanding the possibilities and the blessings of serving the God of Heaven. What they taught Moses is what he later taught the Children of Israel: "And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up" (Deuteronomy 6:6-7).

Faith in God is transmitted, not inherited. If you want those under your influence to serve God, show by example that He is the center of your everyday life. The impact is not so much in what we *say* but in how we *live*. When we choose to serve God in our homes and among our associates, that makes an impression.

My wife, Debbie, testifies that as a young child she observed the lives of her aunts, uncles, and grandparents who were faithfully serving God. When things were in an upheaval during some of her growing up years, she noted a difference between the lives of the few who did not serve God and the many who did. That observation influenced her decision to serve

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God. We want home environments where the Lord is the center of every choice we make! Then the little ones in the household will observe the benefits of this decision, and they will not forget it.

Moses' cost-benefit analysis

Since Moses' parents were people of faith, it is no surprise that when Moses "came to years," his heart was stirred to contrast his mother's simple, God-fearing faith to the idol worship of Egypt. He employed a cost-benefit analysis. No doubt he



contrasted life in a humble desert home to living in the midst of the pomp and pleasure of Pharaoh's palace. Moses was already being taught all the wisdom of Egypt; he excelled academically and was highly regarded in the court. He had a bright future! Then he looked at the Hebrew people, in poverty and enslaved. According to Exodus 1:13-14, they were forced to "serve with rigour," and their lives were made "bitter with hard bondage." Compelled by their taskmasters to make bricks, they were whipped and beaten when they did not produce enough. Moses weighed the hardships he would endure if he identified with them, considering what choosing his parents' God would mean.

on the afflictions he would suffer, but on the reward afterward. In the short term, there was not much to see in the way of benefits, but there was something to gain in the long term. Moses realized that, and he made a premeditated, thoughtful, and deliberate decision to "suffer affliction with the people of God; . . . esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward." He forsook what passes away on this earth to gain what will endure eternally.

To refuse to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter would require a **decisive break.**

There is no straddling the fence when it comes to serving God. We cannot remain noncommittal; we must choose and declare our allegiance.



Choosing God means refusing the world

For Moses and for us, choosing does not come independent of refusing. When we choose to serve God, we must also refuse to follow the world. Are we willing to walk away from friends who are pursuing what this world offers? Perhaps some of our relatives will oppose our decision to serve God. Jesus said that He did not come to bring peace on the earth, but division. He warned, "The father shall be divided against the son, and the son against the father; the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother; the mother in law against her daughter in law, and the daughter in law against her mother in law" (Luke 12:53). While we experience

To refuse to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter would require a decisive break. He would have to walk away from all the material advantages he had enjoyed in order to be a part of the people of God. However, his focus was not

unity with our fellow believers as we serve God together, we will have to separate ourselves from ungodly influences.

Matthew 6:24 makes it plain. “No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the

If you are not serving God yet, it is time to consider.

What will it cost you to continue going your own way without God?

one, and despise the other.” There is no straddling the fence when it comes to serving God. We cannot remain noncommittal; we must choose and declare our allegiance.

Choosing God may bring peril

For almost a year, I have been corresponding with a man in Pakistan who has embraced the doctrines of the Bible and decided to be a part of the Apostolic Faith work. This past spring, one of our ministers went to meet him in Pakistan for the first time, and at one of the services held during that trip, over two hundred were present. More converts are frequently being added to this group, and new groups are also forming in other Pakistani towns and villages.

If you were to research Christianity in Pakistan, you would find that it hardly exists. Perhaps one-half of one percent of all the people in that country consider themselves to be followers of Christ. Yet, that field is ripe for a spiritual harvest, and people are turning to



the Lord. “Choosing and refusing” is relatively easy here in the United States, especially when compared to India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and other countries where few Christians exist. To choose to serve Christ in such places comes at great personal peril.

While our physical safety may not be endangered by choosing God here in the United States, there is a certain stigma that comes with being a Christian in our society today. We will not be regarded favorably in many circles. This is particularly true for our children and young adults in the educational system, but antagonism exists in the occupational world as well. We are expected to toe the line, go along with non-Biblical policies, align ourselves with non-Biblical positions, and not resist. Frequently it seems that all viewpoints are embraced except true Christianity.

Choosing God includes a declaration

Some may suggest that it would be prudent to modify our beliefs a little, adapting them to the world so that we do not attract attention. However, serving God is more than a choice. It is also a declaration! We cannot slip into walking with God and think no one will notice. We cannot hide our choice for God; there are no “closet Christians.” If we have been saved, it will show in our lives, our words, and in the choices we make. God demands loyalty and our manner of living will reveal where our loyalty lies.

At some point in life, God calls every person on this earth to do a cost-benefit analysis and make a choice. If you are not serving God yet, it is time to consider. What will it cost you to continue going your own way without God? Then consider, what are the benefits of yielding to God and purposing to follow Him from this day forward? An honest cost-benefit analysis will reveal the truth: Heaven is cheap at any cost. What could possibly be better than spending eternity with the Lord, free from sin, suffering, and death, and enjoying uninterrupted peace and joy?

Mark 8:36-37 asks, “For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?” There is no better decision—no more vital decision—than choosing to serve God.

Rev. Darrel Lee is the Apostolic Faith Superintendent General.



By Ola Balogun

AFFLICTION THAT PRODUCES GLORY

Encouragement for those who suffer.

Two years ago, I experienced a loss that gave me an understanding of affliction that I had never had before. In 2021, my son passed away from a severe illness at only eighteen years of age. In the months following, I found that the verses in 2 Corinthians 4:17-18 illuminate God's perspective of affliction in a beautiful way. These verses say, "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal."

I love these verses because they do not dismiss the pain we experience in this life, which is very

The trials of this life can be overwhelming, but having the right understanding of what affliction is and how to overcome it will make bearing it easier.

real. Yet, rather than dwell on the difficulties, they point to something greater—the hope we have in eternity. The trials of this life can be overwhelming, but having the right understanding of what affliction is and how to overcome it will make bearing it easier.

The word *affliction* appears in Scripture fifty-three times, and there are many more uses of its synonyms. We also find words that refer to a specific type of affliction,

such as *trouble, persecution, tribulation, chastisement*, and so on. Clearly, Scripture has much to say on this topic. We cannot review all these references, but we will take a close look at what 2 Corinthians 4:17 teaches us about affliction, and then consider Biblical examples of how to overcome it.

Key words from 2 Corinthians 4:17

Affliction. To begin with, we need to understand what we are talking about when we say we have an affliction. An affliction is something that causes persistent pain, suffering, distress, grief, or misery. A few verses prior to 2 Corinthians 4:17, Paul noted several examples, including being troubled,

perplexed, persecuted, and cast down. We could add many more: physical illness, personal loss or calamity, broken relationships, violence, to name a few.

Affliction can also vary in its scope and type. The pain we feel may be emotional, physical, mental, or even spiritual. Some afflictions are common to the saved and unsaved, such as poverty, war, oppression, and natural disasters. Some will only affect the unsaved, such as the guilt and shame of sin, and having no hope in eternity. On the other hand, only a person who is saved can share in Christ's suffering, endure righteous persecution, or carry a burden for lost souls. In general, we get the sense that *affliction* is a broad term which encompasses many of life's trying circumstances.

Our. The word *our* in this verse indicates that affliction pertains to us all. We live in a world that is broken by sin, and we see its consequences all around us. By considering all the prayer requests that are read every week in our churches around the world, we can see clearly how all are impacted. Even those who have been saved, sanctified, and filled with the Holy Spirit cannot avoid adversity. No one is exempt.

Beyond the fact that we each have our own problems, as members of God's family we also should share in each other's hardships. Hebrews 13:3 says, "Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body." Thus, we may not be experiencing



The Balogun family in 2015.

persecution ourselves right now, but Scripture tells us that we should remember those who are, as if we were there with them.

From a human perspective, this sharing of each other's troubles would seem to increase our individual load. However, we find that the opposite is true—our own burdens are lifted when our brothers and sisters in Christ are supporting us. This is one reason I am so thankful for the family of God; in trying times, the strength we gain from other believers is phenomenal. When someone says, "I'm praying for you," it goes a long way! It strengthens us.

Many of us experienced this during

the pandemic. Some of us were in congregations where there was little or no impact of the virus, which was wonderful. But when we heard about another congregation that did suffer loss, we were touched by that grief. We have love one for another, so if one part of the body suffers, we all suffer. That's the Church! We enjoy a beautiful fellowship in Christ and we support each other.

Light. The word "light" in this verse is a bit of a paradox because affliction is by nature something heavy. Putting the two words together is like saying there

FOCUS ON GOD



RECOGNIZE OUR HUMANITY



MAINTAIN SPIRITUAL INTEGRITY



EXPECT TRIALS



was a “small catastrophe” or a “minor disaster.” Initially, it does not make sense. To understand why Paul would describe something heavy as being light, we must take into account the “weight of glory” mentioned later in the verse. We might imagine a balance with “affliction” on one side and “glory” on the other. Paul was saying that when the two are weighed against each other, the affliction does not come close to the weight of the glory! By comparison, the affliction that we normally consider to be heavy can only be described as light.

Perhaps one of the best illustrations of this concept is childbirth. A mother’s labor is usually terribly painful, but it is also followed by one of the greatest joys in life—the mother holding her baby in her arms! In a sense, the joy the new baby brings overshadows the agony of birth. That is the type of comparison Paul was making. Yes, we experience real pain at times, but it cannot compare to the rejoicing that is to come. Thank God, any affliction in this life is light when we look at it from His perspective.

Glory. When my son was sick, one day he called me and said, “Dad, I need you to come to the hospital and pray with me.” He wanted to be saved. It was a privilege to pray with my son and see him wonderfully experience salvation. He only served the Lord for a few months, but in that short time, he fully embraced the Gospel. After he was saved, he did not fear death anymore. When the doctors let us know that he had a limited amount of time left, he told me he was worried about his mom. He was not worried about himself because he had made his peace with God and was ready to go to glory land! As a parent, this was

a great consolation. His parting words were, “Mom, I love you. We will meet in Heaven.” Indeed, we will see him again in Heaven, where there will be no more parting. What glory! We do endure sadness and grief in this life, but they cannot compare with our hope of Heaven and the eternal weight of glory that awaits us there.

Worketh. The link between affliction and glory is the word *worketh*, which means “produces, prepares, brings about.” This tells us that if we allow affliction to have its God-intended purpose in our lives, it actually accomplishes something for us—it produces glory. This means that nothing we suffer in this life is pointless; it is all meaningful. When we are surrendered to God and we go through hardships, we will be rewarded for our patient endurance in Heaven.

Jesus touched on this lesson during the Sermon on the Mount

He gives us grace to endure, and by faith we can see something more glorious in our trials—we can see what God is doing, which gives us hope.

when He said, “Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake” (Matthew 5:11). The word *blessed* refers to deep spiritual joy and happiness. Here again, from a natural perspective we would not expect joy or happiness to result from an affliction like persecution. However, Jesus continued, “Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven.” There’s the reason for the happiness—the

glory that awaits us in Heaven. We are not happy to be mistreated, but we can be happy for what we know God is accomplishing through our suffering, which we will see in Heaven.

The example of Job

With a better understanding of what affliction is, let us now consider an example of one who was victorious in spite of tremendous trials. Job is perhaps the paramount Biblical example of affliction, and there is much we can learn from him. Here are just a few lessons from the life of Job.

Focus on God. From the outset of his account, we know that Job's character was above reproach. Job 1:8 says, "And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?" He was perfect in his own generation. Considering that, we might expect that life should have gone smoothly for him. However, God allowed Satan to afflict Job. This tells us that there is no need to focus on what Satan is trying to do in our lives; he can only do what God allows. Even though Satan has intentions for our trials, they are permitted by God for His purposes, and that is where our focus should be.

Recognize our humanity. We can hardly imagine what Job went through. In just one day, he lost nearly all his material possessions—thousands of sheep, camels, oxen, and more. Subsequently, he lost his position in his community. Yet those losses were far surpassed when he lost *all* his children. Shortly thereafter, God allowed Satan to touch Job's health. His friends did not provide any encouragement,

and even his wife—the person who should have been his greatest source of comfort—told Job to curse God and die.

It may be tempting to think that we would never do what Job's wife did, but we must remember that she was also experiencing profound affliction. When God allows affliction in our lives, even when He gives the grace to go through it, our humanity will still be there. God does not usually give supernatural power that takes away all our grief and pain. We can read how Job wrestled with his humanity all the way through his trial, and yet he did not sin. God helped him, and Job came through with victory.

Our humanity may cause us to wonder things like, *Why did this happen to me? If different choices had been made, could this have been prevented? Is there any point to what I'm suffering?* These types

God has a purpose in all the afflictions He allows in our lives, and often times winning lost souls is a primary objective.

of questions are a natural human response. Some people might expect that a strong Christian will coast through trials and never struggle with doubts, but Christians are still human. When the Bible says we should weep with those who weep, it is because we are human and we hurt when we go through problems. Yes we are spiritual, but we are also human, and the outward man may not accept the trials of life easily. Thank God, He knows we are merely "dust" and He is merciful. He gives us grace to endure, and by faith we can see something more glorious in

our trials—we can see what God is doing, which gives us hope.

Maintain spiritual integrity. Job was also merely dust, yet in all he suffered, he did not sin. The Bible says he shaved his head, fell upon his knees, and worshipped. Rather than curse God, he surrendered to Him. Job said, "Naked came I into the world, naked will I go . . . The LORD giveth and the LORD taketh away; blessed by the name of the LORD." That is integrity!

Whatever experiences we go through in life, our goal is spiritual integrity—to remain faithful to God. Our testimony is not that God never allowed a trial, but that we stayed true to Him no matter what we suffered. Our God is worthy of that loyalty; He is that good. No affliction can touch the work He has done in our hearts and nothing can separate us from His love. If we lose everything else in this life but still have the Lord, we have everything we need.

Expect trials. According to human reasoning, what happened to Job was strange. His trial was extreme, even though he was a man of the highest integrity. Our natural expectation would be that rejecting God should lead to heartache and troubles, but endeavoring to live in a way that pleases Him should result in success and prosperity. When we serve God faithfully and still are met with loss or disappointment, it may not make logical sense, but God understands all things.

It is very important that we expect to be tried and tested in this life. Many verses in Scripture let us know that Christians will have trials. In Acts 14:22, Paul said, ". . . we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God." Paul also said in 2 Timothy 3:12, "Yea, and all that will live

godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.” In 1 Peter 4:12 we read, “Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you.” Peter was referring to the persecution that the Early Church was facing. After receiving salvation, which of course was wonderful, they may have expected their Christian lives would always feel glorious. However, Peter let them know

It is humbling to consider all God does for us, from watching over us before we were saved, to drawing us to salvation, and then helping us daily to grow in our faith.

that it is normal for Christians to face insult, slander, and attacks. Affliction was not a sign that they had done something wrong; it was to be expected.

Today as well, Christians are slandered around the world. We are frequently blamed for problems in society, especially those of us who teach holiness. We may be accused of intolerance if we do not participate in what is contrary to God’s Word. If we are not prepared to suffer for the Gospel, we might be surprised when difficulty comes. We may even feel betrayed. In 1 Peter 4:1 we read, “Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin.” God has a purpose in all the afflictions He allows in our lives, and often times winning lost souls is a primary objective. We need to arm ourselves with a

Christlike attitude so that we do not try to run away from His plans but rather embrace them and so accomplish His purposes.

It is humbling to consider all God does for us, from watching over us before we were saved, to drawing us to salvation, and then helping us daily to grow in our faith. He takes us from strength to strength. Then at some point along the way, He will allow us to be tested. What will we do when the test comes? We cannot turn our backs on the One who has done so much for us, but must trust Him and surrender to His ways. When we do that, the God who gave Job the grace to live a life of integrity will give us the grace we need also.

Suffering with Christ

Christ is our perfect example for how to live pleasing to God. If we really want to be like Christ, we must realize that He suffered. He was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. He was oppressed and afflicted, and led as a lamb before the slaughter (see Isaiah 53). That was Christ—though He lived a perfect life, He endured affliction all along the way.

Yet, consider how the balance between affliction and glory would look in Christ’s life. On one side we would have what He suffered—the scourging, the beating, the mocking, and betrayal. Eventually, He was crucified. He who knew no sin was made to be sin. We cannot comprehend the magnitude of His agony. But on the other side—the glory side—would be the redemptive work! There we find victory over sin and death. It’s the reason we can sing, “Hallelujah, my sins are gone!” Captives are set free, beauty is traded for ashes, and joy comes in place of mourning. This is God’s perspective of affliction.

To truly follow Christ’s example in affliction, we must follow Him to Gethsemane—the place where we say, “Not my will, but thine be done.” Surrender does not come naturally, but with His help we can do it. We have to allow God to shape us as a potter shapes a vessel. Whichever tools He chooses to use, though they sometimes bring tears, we must yield to Him. That idea is not something flesh and blood can receive easily. However, when we believe that “it is God that worketh in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure” (Philippians 2:13), then we know that the more we submit our wills to God, the more He can use us. When our wills are surrendered, we are with Christ on the victory side!

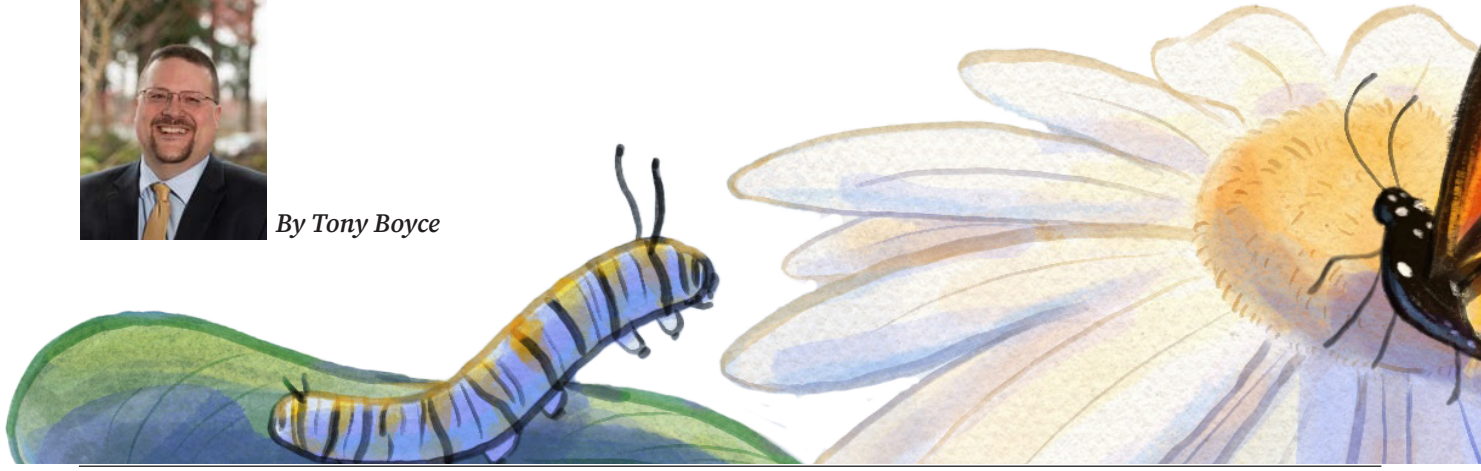
Through Scripture we come to understand that affliction brings glory and surrender brings victory. In the natural, these concepts do not make sense, but “we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal” (2 Corinthians 4:18). When we look with spiritual eyes, we can thank God for our trials and afflictions because we know He has a good purpose in allowing them. He will be near to us when we are hurting and refresh our souls, He will give us the needed grace and strength to endure, and in the end He will take us to glory.

Rev. Ola Balogun is the pastor of the Peckham Apostolic Faith Church in London, England.





By Tony Boyce



GOD WANTS US TO COME OUT OF THE MOLD OF THIS WORLD AND BE TRANSFORMED!

Conformity and nonconformity are issues we deal with continually in today's society. My employment is in the field of quality assurance, and one of the things I must determine regularly is whether a part is conforming or nonconforming. A conforming part is one that meets a preset list of specifications. In manufacturing, these parts are always best, because every company wants its customers to be satisfied with the products they receive. If a person buys a toaster and its levers don't spring up, it will likely be returned.

Conforming to the ways of this world will lead to a lost eternity. To avoid that outcome, we must come into compliance with God's specifications.

Spiritually speaking, whether it is better to be conforming or nonconforming depends on the source of the specifications. While there is great benefit in conforming to the specifications given in God's Word, there is detriment in aligning

ourselves to the ideals endorsed by this world. We are advised in Romans 12:2, "Be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."

Conforming to the ways of this world will lead to a lost eternity. To avoid that outcome, we must come into compliance with God's specifications. This requires a transformation that can only come from God. As we look into His Word, we will gain an understanding of the dangers of conformity to this world's mold and how God's transforming power can free us from that mold.

Nonconformity

When the Apostle Paul said, "Be not conformed to this world," he was not advocating anarchy. Nor was he referring to the type of nonconformity experienced in the 1960s in the United States when people rebelled against cultural norms and authority. We are instructed in Scripture, "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; or unto governors, as unto them that are

sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well. For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men" (1 Peter 2:13-15). Paul was warning against conforming to the sinful values, beliefs, and temporal focus of this world.

An overview of what the world represents is given in 1 John 2:16: "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world." We are all acquainted with the lust of the flesh and the eyes, and the pride of life; these are universal to the human experience. Scripture tells us, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). It is not until we repent of our sins and receive forgiveness that these things are removed from our lives.

To conform to the world is to go along with the sinful ideas of mankind. Many call themselves nonconformists while advocating for sinful practices that have been around since the time of Sodom and Gomorrah, and even before then. They may not realize it, but they are conforming to the world. These people often try to pressure us into thinking, talking, and

behaving in the same way they do. God does not want us to fit into that mold—not even partially. We are to have nothing at all to do with it. Jesus 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). This truth has been the subject of proverbs, idioms, and fables throughout history. An ancient Bengali parable states it this way: “Never sail with feet in two boats.” This is a warning against being

How do we become delivered from sin and reconciled to God? A transformation must take place.

double-minded. Clearly, one who tries to stand in two boats at the same time will end up in the water! Similarly, we can't expect to stand in the Gospel if we have one foot in the world.

We do have to live in this world, but it must be merely our temporal dwelling place, not where our focus is. We belong to a spiritual Kingdom and anticipate an eternal home in Heaven. Jesus said, “My kingdom is not of this world” (John 18:36). What matters most is not what happens here in this life, but rather in the next—we need to be ready for Heaven.

In society today, we regularly hear debate over environmental, racial, political, and moral issues. Frequently, there is a lack of decorum or respect; people yell at each other and condemn each other—sometimes for what they themselves are doing. That is the world, and we want no part of it. Rather than get caught up in worldly perspectives, we want to focus on the Lord.

Transformed

We were born in conformance with the world because we each inherited a sinful disposition from our forefather, Adam. Then we further conformed to this world by making personal choices to commit sinful acts. So how do we become delivered from sin and reconciled to God? A transformation must take place.

The idea of transformation is exciting. When I was a kid in the 1980s, I liked to play with Legos. They were among my favorite toys because I could make them become anything I wanted them to be. Whenever I received a new kit, I would build according to the plan first. After that, though, I would take apart the bricks and use the pieces to build all sorts of different structures. As the designer, I could take the same parts and transform them into something else.

Transformations take place in nature as well. A caterpillar becomes a butterfly through metamorphosis. The caterpillar spins a cocoon and then after some time, it breaks out of that cocoon and is an entirely different creature! It even has a completely different way of life. That is what Jesus wants to do for us—change us entirely, including our way of living.

Jesus died on the Cross as the sacrifice for our sins that we might be transformed—forgiven for our sins and reconciled to God. This happens when we come humbly before God, confessing our sins with contrite hearts and turning from them. When we do so, the Blood of Jesus is applied to our hearts, and a mighty transformation takes place! We are told in 2 Corinthians 5:17, “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.” It is so wonderful and

remarkable that God transforms us into new creatures. Some find it hard to believe it is possible, but that is what He does. At salvation, our sins are washed away, and our thoughts and actions become new. We are no longer focused on our own selfish desires, but in pleasing God.

Another aspect of the transformation that takes place at salvation is that our spirits are quickened, which means “to be made alive.” Paul wrote of this transformation, “And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world” (Ephesians 2:1-2).

When God has quickened our spirits and transformed us, we are ready to meet Jesus in the air at the Rapture of the Church. I look

The transformation that begins with salvation changes our perspective. Our minds are brought into alignment with God's thoughts and ways.

forward to that day. I am excited about eternity! All that the world has to offer fades away when we think about what God has waiting for us in Heaven.

Renewed

The transformation that begins with salvation changes our perspective. Our minds are brought into alignment with God's thoughts and ways. This is a wonderful start, but our relationship with God needs to be maintained through what Paul describes as being “transformed by the renewing of your mind.” This comes through reading, studying,

and meditating on God's Word, responding obediently to the checks of the Spirit, and whenever possible, having fellowship with God's people. Perhaps most important, though, is our prayer life. We must be in constant communication with God to know His will and receive His strength, guidance, and encouragement.

The world is full of turmoil, but this is nothing new. That has been true since the

strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him." The word *perfect* in this context means "completely." Our hearts are perfect when they are entirely given to God. When we surrender our hearts to Him, we will experience His transformational power and the blessings that go with it—forgiveness, freedom from sin, and new life in Christ. Then as we continue to seek the Lord, we will discover that the

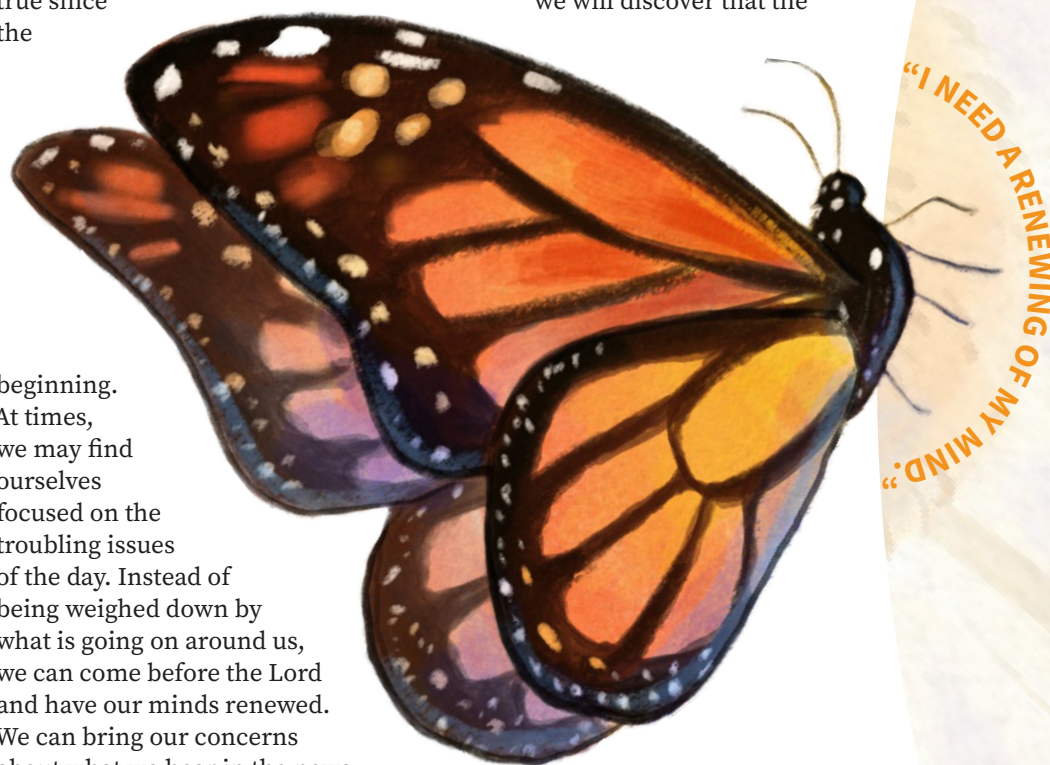
beginning. At times, we may find ourselves focused on the troubling issues of the day. Instead of being weighed down by what is going on around us, we can come before the Lord and have our minds renewed. We can bring our concerns about what we hear in the news and see in society around us, and lay them at the Lord's feet. We can tell Him, "I need You to refresh my thoughts. I need a renewing of my mind."

In His perfect will

The Lord is looking for those who have purposed not to conform to this world. We read in 2 Chronicles 16:9, "For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself

transformation which took place when we became Christians was only the beginning. He will help us stay within "that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." As we continue to resist the world and look to Him for daily guidance, provision, and protection, our lives will be richly blessed.

Rev. Tony Boyce is the pastor of the Apostolic Faith Church in Dallas, Oregon.



"I NEED A RENEWING OF MY MIND."

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AN *Ambassador* FOR CHRIST



By James Olaleye

When diplomatic service took James to countries in West Africa, the United Kingdom, the United States, and Japan, he found opportunities to work for the Lord.

My childhood home was nominally Christian. Though we went to church, all I really recall from being there was dancing and clapping to upbeat songs. We did not learn about repentance, forgiveness, or victory over sin.

During my college years, I began living a very selfish and sinful life. At nineteen years of age, I was a liar and a thief. On weekends, the students would get together to socialize with dancing, and I was always at the party. Then, in 1969, I was invited to a Christian retreat. The accommodations, food, and

During a short sermon, the Lord broke me completely. I prayed, confessing my sins and all that I was to Jesus, and He forgave me!

transportation were provided free of charge, so I decided to go. It was there that the Lord convicted me of the way I had been living. During a short sermon, the Lord broke me completely. I prayed, confessing my sins and all that I was to Jesus, and He forgave me! In an instant, the Spirit of God bore witness to my spirit that I was a child of God. I was so happy.

When I got back to campus, the other students watched my life. They thought I would go back to partying, but they were surprised. I no longer did the sinful and worldly things I had done before. I also did not tell lies or steal anymore; all the sin in my life was gone! That is what God can do.

In Nigerian culture, there are traditional medicines that are believed to bring success, knowledge, protection, health, and other good things. My mother had sent me to college with some of those fetish medicines, but after I was saved, I packed them all up and threw them away. Since 1969, I have never used them again. I have not missed them because whenever I have a problem, I go to the Lord who saved my soul, and He takes care of it.

I left college about three years after I was saved. Soon, I met two ladies who invited me to an Apostolic Faith Church, where I heard about sanctification. As I sought that experience, God showed me that I needed to make some restitutions. I had stolen books from the library at college and needed to return them. Though fearful to admit what I had done, I promised God that I would do it, and He sanctified my soul.

I remember praying, "God, sanctify me through the truth. I want to be holy within and without." That is

I knew the work was done; God had baptized me with His Spirit.

exactly what God did. When I got up from praying, I felt like a different person. My heart was purified and cleansed, and it was beautiful. God also helped me to follow through and make my restitutions. Then my conscience was clear and my mind was free.

At church, I also heard about the baptism of the Holy Ghost, and I pressed forward to receive that experience. One day, as I was praying early in the morning, I began speaking in a language I did not know. I knew the work was done; God had baptized me with His Spirit. More evidence in my life followed because I became bold for the Lord and had courage to tell others about Christ. I wanted to tell everyone that Jesus saves! Before, I had been shy, but the baptism gave me power to serve God.

When it was time to choose a career, I applied at a company called Lever Brothers and received a great offer. In addition to my



1978-1980 Republic of Congo



1980-1983 United States



1986-1989 Guinea



1989-1991 Gabon



1998-2003 United Kingdom



2007-2010 Japan

salary, they would provide me with a company car and other benefits. I was so excited about that opportunity. However, when I told my pastor about it, he told me, “James, you already signed a bond with the government of Nigeria.” It was true; I had committed to serve the government for a period of years, and intended to break that contract in order to work for Lever Brothers. My pastor helped me understand that breaking a contract was like breaking my word. He said I would have to choose between the job and serving the Lord.

As I sought the Lord earnestly in prayer over that decision, God showed me that I needed to heed the counsel of my pastor. I turned down the Lever Brothers job and followed through on my commitment with the government. Though I did not know it at the time, that was one of the best decisions of my life. Within a year, I was offered a position as a diplomat in the Department of Foreign Ministry. Over the course of the next three decades, I received much more than money or cars—I had the opportunity to participate in the furtherance of God’s work around the world.

My first assignment for the Department of Foreign Ministry was in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. By that time I had married, and while I fulfilled my responsibilities as a diplomat, God helped my wife and I to start an Apostolic Faith group in our home. Thank God, today we still have some groups of believers in that country.

In a miraculous way, some years later the Lord made it possible for me to work in the United States. Normally, a person would have

to lobby and network in order to be sent to the United States. I did not know any important officials, but I knew Jesus! He worked it out for me and I was in Washington D.C. from 1980 to 1983. I was encouraged to worship with the saints at our church in that city, and also to attend camp meeting at the Portland headquarters for the first time. Once, Brother Loyce Carver and his wife came to Washington D.C. to apply for a special visa, and they stayed with my family during

I never could have imagined all the ways God would work through my career, but that is what He did.

their trip. He was a wonderful man of God, and I count it a blessing to have gotten to know him.

After Washington D.C., I was posted to Guinea Conakry in West Africa. Though there was no church there at that time, we invited people to meetings in our home and God blessed those meetings. Today, I am encouraged to see God still working in Guinea Conakry. Next we were sent to Gabon, and without a church there, we again invited people to

meetings in our home. By the time we needed to leave that country, God had brought someone who could lead the work there. That has been some thirty years ago, and the work continues in Gabon to the glory of God.

From 1998 to 2003, I was posted to the United Kingdom and was blessed to worship with our saints in London during those years. Then I was sent to the country that I enjoyed most of all—Japan. At the time, Brother Hidehiro Ouchi was

in charge of making those assignments, so I was in the capacity to send some of our church workers to places where we had growing churches, such as the Gambia, Gabon, and Zambia. They were wonderful representatives of our nation and also benefitted the Gospel work in those areas.

I never could have imagined all the ways God would work through my career, but that is what He did. When I look back, I just thank God that He helped me to obey His

away. She was only forty-five years old. That was a sorrowful time, but still God was good and kind to me.

A while later I married again, but my second wife was soon diagnosed with cancer, which took her life in a matter of months. Again, God was there for me. Then in 2006, I married Martell, a woman who was also widowed, and God has been helping us to this day. It has not been an easy road, but through everything I have seen the goodness of God in a marvelous way.

During one of the periods when I was living in Nigeria, one evening I was in a car accident on my way to a church service. It was a terrible accident, but God spared my life. Subsequently, I made a promise to God that after I retired from being a diplomat, I would work for Him. My retirement from the Department of Foreign Ministry was in June of 2010, and a few weeks later, I received a call from my district superintendent. Though I had not mentioned my promise to work for God, he asked me to serve in a directorship role. It seemed like a great responsibility to take on, but I knew God would help me. I surrendered to Jesus, and it was my privilege to fill that role for over a decade.

I have no regrets in choosing to follow the Lord. He took me out of the miry clay and made my life into something wonderful, and I give Him glory and honor for all He has done.

Rev. James Sunday Olaleye retired from his role as Director of Administration for the Apostolic Faith West and Central Africa headquarters and continues to serve as a minister at the church in Lagos, Nigeria.



the pastor of our church in Tokyo. We became good friends during the three years I worked in Japan and it was a privilege to help with the work of God there.

Another aspect of my government position involved dispatching Nigerian representatives to other countries. The Department of Foreign Ministry has a volunteer program that sends Nigerians on two-year assignments abroad, similar to the American Peace Corps. My department

leading at the beginning, for truly there is blessing in obedience!

Over the years, there were times when I was on the mountaintop and times when I was in the valley, but God brought me through it all. I married in 1978, and God gave my wife and me five children. We had a loving, united family, and were happy serving God together around the world as we traveled for my work. But in 1998, just before our twentieth wedding anniversary, my wife contracted malaria and passed



By Catey Hinkle

WILDERNESS ESSENTIALS

Learning to prepare for a backpacking trip taught spiritual lessons.

A few years ago, I decided to go on a backpacking trip with some friends.

I love hiking, and a backpacking trip is basically an extended hike where you carry camping gear with you and camp along the trail. On this type of trip, it is critical to be well prepared—you don't want to end up stranded without necessary equipment. At the same time, there's no room for unnecessary items since you must carry everything on your back. Having no prior backpacking experience myself, I signed up for a class called "Wilderness Essentials: Top 10." It seemed like a good place to start.

The class went over the most important items for backpacking and how to take into account variables such as climate, terrain, and duration of the trip. It covered basic necessities like food, water, shelter, bedding, and clothing, and gave insight on common mishaps that can occur. We were given advice on first aid supplies, repair kits, maps, and other tools. I felt much more comfortable with the idea of backpacking after hearing from people who had experienced it before.

Even with that class and careful planning, my first trip was challenging. Our group intended to camp at three sites in a national park, but due to heavy rains, the second site was flooded out. Due

to those same heavy rains, we got soaked to the bone on our first day of hiking! We spent twelve hours on a trail that should have taken half that time, and were freezing cold for most of those hours. That first day gave us a glimpse of how difficult the wilderness can be.

About a year later, I was reminded of that trip while reading Psalm 106, which describes another difficult wilderness experience. This was about the Children of Israel. Verses 8-11 recount how prior to entering the wilderness, God had miraculously delivered them from bondage in Egypt, parted the Red Sea before them, and then drowned their enemies in the same place. Verse 12 says, "Then believed they his words; they sang his praise." Verses 13-15 were not what I was expecting to come next: "They soon forgot his works; they waited not for his counsel: but lusted exceedingly in the wilderness, and tempted God in the desert. And he gave them their request; but sent leanness into their soul." How disappointing. After such a great victory at the Red Sea, the Israelites encountered the difficulty of the wilderness and did not survive it. Joshua 5:4 tells us that entire generation perished in the wilderness.

The Israelites' failure was not that they were lacking the right gear. The greatest challenge for them was spiritual in nature. God had promised to give them the land





The Israelites' failure was not that they were lacking the right gear. The greatest challenge for them was spiritual in nature.



of Canaan as an inheritance, but they were not in Canaan yet. They needed to remain faithful until they received that promise, and the wilderness was what they had to pass through to get there. It was a physical depiction of their spiritual journey.

Sometimes we need to hold on in faith for a period until we receive, and that time of waiting can be considered a “spiritual wilderness.”

As God promised the land of Canaan to the Israelites, He has made many other promises to us. These include our Christian experiences, provision for daily needs, guidance, healing, an eternal home in Heaven, and more. However, those promises are not always fulfilled immediately. Sometimes we need to hold on in faith for a period until we receive, and that time of waiting can be considered a “spiritual wilderness.” It is a time when our faith is tested, and it can be very challenging.

To help us make it through a trial of faith, we can learn a lot from the Israelites' experience. We might consider Psalm 106:13-14 to be our “Wilderness Essentials: Top 4.” These verses highlight four key lessons for wilderness survival.

(Top) The amateur backpackers on their first hike in Torres del Paine National Park. (Center) The group's final campsite.

#1: Remember God's works

About one month after the Israelites sang God's praises for defeating their enemies at the Red Sea, they ran out of food. They said to Moses, "Ye have brought us forth into this wilderness, to kill this whole assembly with hunger" (Exodus 16:3). They had seen God perform so many wonders in Egypt and at the Red Sea in order to set them free, yet they "soon forgot his works" and did not believe He would feed them.

We do not want God to have to teach us the same lessons over and over again; we want to go on to deeper truths.

This makes me wonder, how many times does God have to demonstrate His power before we stop doubting whether He will deliver in our current situation? How many times must He prove that He loves us before we stop questioning His care? We do not want God to have to teach us the same lessons over and over again; we want to go on to deeper truths. So if we find ourselves doubting God, perhaps what we need is a reminder of His works. This could mean simply rehearsing our own experience of salvation, reading the Bible and testimonies of others, or listening to inspiring music. God has done wonderful things in the past, and He is not done! Whatever it takes, we must not forget His works in the wilderness.

#2: Wait for His counsel

About two months into the Israelites' journey, God called Moses

up to Mount Sinai to give him the instructions for how to have a right relationship with God. The people did not realize that Moses would be gone forty days, and at some point during that time, they decided to stop waiting and forged their own way. They fashioned a calf out of gold and began worshiping it (see Exodus 32:1-6). It is tragic to realize that while God was imparting precious oracles of divinely revealed truth, they "waited not for his counsel" and chose to settle for a worthless, man-made idol instead.

In the midst of a trial, at times we may feel anxious and want to take matters into our own hands. However, without clear direction, the best course of action is not to move ahead of God in our planning and decisions, but to wait. If we need guidance from God and He is being silent, there is a reason for His silence. The Bible has plenty of instruction about what to do while we wait on Him: we can go to church, serve others, seek Him in prayer, study His Word, etc. Where we must be careful is making decisions that cannot be taken back. During trials, we are particularly susceptible to strong emotions that could cloud our judgment and lead us in a wrong direction. That is why it is critical, especially in the wilderness, to wait for God's counsel.

#3: Be content

Despite their unbelief, when the Israelites lacked food, God graciously provided them with a substance called "manna." It met all their nutritional needs, and an ample supply appeared fresh on the ground every morning. What a blessing!

The people appreciated the manna initially, but they soon began to

take it for granted. Numbers 11:4-6 records, "And the mixt multitude that was among them fell a lusting; and the children of Israel also wept again, and said, Who shall give us flesh to eat? We remember the fish, which we did eat in Egypt freely; the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlick: but now our soul is dried away: there is nothing at all, beside this manna, before our eyes . . . and the anger of the LORD was kindled greatly." The Hebrew word translated *lusting* means "to wish for, covet, greatly desire; a longing." The definition does not say that the thing desired is sinful, and indeed there is nothing sinful about fish, melons, or garlic. The problem is that an uncontrolled longing can lead to sin. In the case of the Israelites, their craving resulted in ingratitude and complaining. Psalm 106:15 tells us the result: "[God] gave them their request; but sent leanness into their soul."

God has promised to supply our needs, and He will. However, we must be prepared to go without some comforts. It wouldn't be a wilderness if we were enjoying all the luxuries of life. For that reason, it will be essential to proactively practice contentment. We want to count every blessing and thank God for each one of them. Even in a wilderness, we will not run out of blessings to count, and doing so will help us guard against longing for something that is not God's will for us.

#4: Do not tempt God

At the start of their journey, the Israelites went days without finding drinking water. Water is not a luxury item like cucumbers and melons; water is essential. Humans

*They soon forgot his works;
They waited not for his counsel;
But lusted exceedingly in the wilderness,
and tempted God in the desert.
—Psalm 106:13-14*



can only survive about three days without it, so we can imagine how the Israelites' distress would have intensified with each passing day, especially those who had children to care for. On the third day, people began to murmur and complain. Then Moses cried out to God and He miraculously provided water for everyone.

About a month later, they were again without water. This time should have been less stressful since they knew God could

There will be challenges along the way, but each can be overcome because God is faithful.

undertake for them. Sadly, the people did nothing differently the second time around. They again murmured and complained, and Exodus 17:7 records, “. . . they tempted the LORD, saying, Is the LORD among us, or not?” The

Hebrew word translated *tempted* means “to test; to attempt to prove or try.” The Israelites had seen God work mightily on their behalf, yet they still did not trust His character and questioned if He was even with them.

It is not a small thing to go days without water, and some trials we face in life are also not small. But, we have God with us! He has a solution for every problem. When we face a serious challenge, the enemy of our souls would like us to believe that God has abandoned us, forgotten us, or is allowing us to suffer excessively. Those are lies—we know from God's Word that it is not possible for Him to do any of those things. How hurtful it must be to God when people turn against Him—the One who loves them most, has already done so much for them, and is ready to help them again. We want to seek God's face, ask for His help, and cling to Him, but never tempt Him in the desert.

God will see us through

The Israelites' failure was not inevitable. They could have entered Canaan if they would have trusted and obeyed God, and the next generation of Israelites did just that. We can also receive God's promises because His Word is sure. There will be challenges along the way, but each can be overcome because God is faithful. As we await the fulfillment of His good promises, we can remember these lessons from the Israelites and determine to keep trusting and obeying the Lord. He knows the wilderness better than anyone, and He will take us through.

Catey Hinkle is the managing editor at the Apostolic Faith world headquarters in Portland, Oregon.



By Betty Lee

Raised in a Buddhist family, in Sunday school Betty learned about the God of Heaven.



SUNDAY SCHOOL WAS THE DOOR

My parents immigrated from China to America in the early 1960s. When my twin brother and I were born, there were already two older siblings and our family was living in the projects of San Francisco, California. Our dad worked as a busboy, which did not bring in a lot of income, so we did not have much materially. Our parents had been raised Buddhist and that was how they raised us. I was taught to pray to idols, and even if I did not understand what we were doing, I was expected to obey my parents as a dutiful daughter.

When I was about five years old, someone knocked on our door and invited my siblings and me to Sunday school at their church. It sounded fun to me. Since our family was poor, we did not have bicycles to ride or many toys to play with, and I spent most Sunday mornings at home watching cartoons by myself. My

I could never put a price tag on the time and energy the church people invested to share the love of God with us.

parents were very protective of us, but surprisingly, they agreed to let my twin brother and me go.

We went to Sunday school the very next week, and I loved it right away. There were kind people who paid attention to me, crafts to work on, contests, stories, and other kids to play with. It was much more fun than watching cartoons! So from then on, every Sunday I

would get myself ready and go with my brother on the van to Sunday school. As the years passed, we went from the Beginner Department to the Primary Department, and then the Junior Department. At one point our family moved and the van could not come to our new neighborhood, so people from church picked us up instead. We never missed—we were among the students who got perfect attendance awards.

During my high school years, one of my teachers had our class over to her house for a sleepover, and my parents let me go. That was a big deal for me because I had never been allowed to go to sleepovers or birthday parties at my friends' houses. In fact, in our family we didn't celebrate birthdays or holidays, so anything special that my Sunday school teachers did made a big impression on me. I could never put a price tag on the time and energy the church people invested to share the love of God with us.

In 1987, I was nineteen years old and had been in Sunday school for all of my growing up years and knew most of the Bible stories. That year, we were studying about the end times again. The lessons were about the Rapture, the Tribulation, the plagues—all the terrible things that will happen on earth after Jesus' second coming. We also studied prophecies about the end times that were already being fulfilled, and we watched a movie called "A Thief in the Night" that brought the Scriptures to life. During that time, I began to feel an urgency that I needed to get saved. I had always been a pretty good kid and had never done anything majorly



(Left) Betty as an infant with her father and twin brother. (Above) Betty teaching Sunday school.

wrong. Yet, I knew I was not ready for the Rapture because I had never asked Jesus to come into my heart.

At a Sunday morning service on March 15, I realized Jesus could return at any time and I was not ready. I knelt in prayer and told the Lord, "I don't want to be here for the end times." For so many years I had heard

That morning I prayed, "I know You died on the Cross for me. I want You to come into my heart." What joy filled my soul!

about how Jesus died on the Cross and how He suffered being beaten, wearing a crown of thorns, and having nails in His hands. Until that day, though, it had never really sunk in that He went through that terrible pain so that I could go to Heaven, and that He did it because He loved me. That morning I prayed, "I know You died on the Cross for me. I want You to come into my heart." What joy filled my soul! When Jesus saved me, it was as though a huge burden lifted, which I hadn't realized I was carrying. It was wonderful. I felt so happy inside knowing that I was going to be with Jesus in Heaven.

After I gave my life to the Lord, I was the only Christian in my Buddhist family. In Buddhism there are gods for health, prosperity, relationships, and anything else a person might want. My father had bought idols for a few of those gods and set them up at an altar in our garage. On certain dates, we gathered there to pray, burn incense, and offer sacrifices of food and

fake money. The belief was that our ancestors could use that food and money in the afterlife and the gods would help us with whatever we needed. Of course, the Bible says, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me," which means we cannot have or pray to idols. But the Bible also says, "Honor thy father and thy mother," and I knew it would be considered disrespectful if I did not pray with the family. As a new believer, I wanted to do the right thing but wasn't sure how I could honor God without disrespecting my parents.

Soon, the day came when it was time to pray to our idols again. As my dad was getting everything prepared, I remember feeling anxious and thinking, *What do I do?* I knew in my heart that I couldn't go along with it, but I didn't know how to tell my dad.

We all went to the altar, and after my dad prayed, my oldest sister said a prayer next. Then my older brother prayed, followed by my twin brother. Then my dad said to me, "It's your turn." In that moment, God gave me the grace to simply say, "I'm not going to do that." Then my dad said, "Okay." Thank God, He did not get upset or ask me why I wouldn't pray, and he has never asked me to do it again. Looking back, I can see how the Lord really helped me. He was in control of that situation and He went before me.

Once I stepped away from my family's religion, I began to see how evil it was and how the devil used those false beliefs to bring darkness into people's lives. However, I also came to know that God is more powerful than the devil. Now, I just marvel at how the Lord helped me during those early years when I was first saved.



Eventually I started a career as a corporate travel agent, and that went well until September 11, 2001, when suddenly no one wanted to travel anymore. There was a period of time when I didn't know what to do for a job and I applied at a number of places. Some positions looked good to me but I did not get them, which was discouraging. However, I talked to my pastor about it and he encouraged me by saying, "When it is the right job for you, the Lord will work it out."

His advice was true. I was finally hired as a guest service representative at a residential apartment community. The first blessing with that job was finding out that they needed someone who could work Tuesday through Saturday, which meant I would have Sundays off. At the time, I was still living at home, and having to miss church on Sundays was an unpleasant thought. But once again, the Lord had gone before me and taken care of my concern.

I tried to tell them how important the Bible was to me, that it is more than just a hobby but a Book that gives me strength.

I had never been allowed to go to youth camp as a student because my parents did not feel comfortable with me being too far away from home. However, a few months after I was saved, there was a need for more youth camp counselors, and my parents agreed that I could go. I had a great cabin of girls that year, and one night as I was praying with them for their salvation, I felt the weight of the situation—their souls were at stake. I wanted to do as much for them as I could, and as I prayed for them, the Lord sanctified me. He gave me a greater love for others and also a deep assurance that He would be with me and see me through anything that might come my way in the future. That experience really established me spiritually.

My family did not understand my new faith because it was totally different than the type of religion they had experienced. When I started teaching Sunday school, they wondered why I was doing so much work for the church if I wasn't getting paid. It was difficult to explain to them that sharing about Jesus with children brought me more than money—it filled me with joy. They also wondered what was so special about the Bible that I would spend time studying it every day. I tried to tell them how important the Bible was to me, that it is more than just a hobby but a Book that gives me strength. God has been faithful to my family, and I thank Him for all those opportunities to share the Gospel with them. I know it has had an impact because even recently family members have asked me for prayer. They know that the God I serve is powerful and that He hears and answers prayer.

In time, the Lord helped me to work my way up to being an assistant property manager, then a property manager, and then a trainer for property managers. That led to obtaining my real estate license, which opened the door for me to purchase a home and rent an apartment at my work, which was near the church. It was wonderful to be so close to church, and the timing worked out so that I was able to share the apartment with a sweet saint from church who needed to relocate. She became a very dear friend of mine, and I cherish the time I spent with her. Everything came together so perfectly that we knew it was from the Lord. Every step along the way was ordered by Him.

God has been so very faithful to me. Even without other Christians in my family, I am grateful that I always had abundant love and support from the family of God. I love my dad, mom, and siblings, and God has given me a wonderful church family that I love too. I have had wonderful pastors who have not only prayed with me, but guided me when times were tough. He has put so many women in my life who are like a mom to me, and dear friends who are like siblings. Some of their kids even call me "Aunty Betty," and I consider them as my nieces and nephews. It has been amazing to see how the Lord fills in any holes where something might have been missing. My life has been blessing after blessing with the Lord, and I am so very thankful for His goodness to me.

Betty Lee is a Sunday school teacher at the Apostolic Faith Church in Richmond, California.

EVIDENCE

CHOOOLWE SYANYUMA

KAFUE, ZAMBIA

I was born and raised in southern Zambia, and our home was not a Christian one even though we went to church. We believed in idolatry, divination and traditional beliefs. Whenever any one of us was sick, we went to the traditional healers for healing. We trusted in the dead, believing that they could provide our needs and protect us in times of trouble.

By the time I was in secondary education, anger and fighting were deeply rooted in my heart. At that time, in 2012, my aunty invited me to an Apostolic Faith Church. When I attended, I was touched by the unity and the orderliness exhibited among the people. This made me believe that God was among them. The following year, I was invited to a camp meeting in Chikani Village. There was power in the Bible teachings and sermons I heard, and it touched and melted my heart. I realized I was a sinner and needed nothing but God.

During the services, one preacher quoted from Scripture, "... if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." At the altar call, I prayed to God to forgive me of all my sins and the Lord was faithful to save me. I felt the transformational power of God and my heart was changed! All sinful pleasures from my past were gone, as well as the trust in witchdoctors, traditional beliefs, divinations, and other sinful activities. Instead, God replaced all that with a hunger for more of Him.

I had such unspeakable joy in my heart and wanted to share what I found in the Gospel with my parents and siblings. God gave me a burden to pray for them and I prayed for more than a year, not knowing how God would do it but believing He would answer. In 2019, the Lord made it possible for the family to relocate to Kafue, and since then some of my family members have been saved. I believe He will continue to work in a miraculous way to bring more of my family to the Gospel.

The Lord has taught me a lot of things to prove that He is God who doesn't fail. He answers my prayers and heals me whenever I am sick. My trust now is completely in Him. My prayer is that God will keep me in holiness by His grace till the end of my pilgrimage here on earth, that I may be a partaker in the first resurrection.



PATIENCE OLULANA

LANGLEY, BC, CANADA

The Lord is good. I thank Him for calling after my heart and for giving me a Christian mother. She put the fear of God in my heart, and one night I prayed, and the Lord wonderfully saved me.

God gave me a wonderful husband and promised us a child. However, after twelve years and several miscarriages, it seemed that would never happen. Then, miraculously, I became pregnant and did not miscarry. God is a covenant-keeping God. He is faithful.

Though the whole church could see that this was a miracle, the enemy still came as usual. Three months before the baby was due, my membrane ruptured. I didn't know what was happening, and my husband was in Nigeria at that time. I called my pastor and his wife, and they took me to the hospital. There, the doctor said, "You are not going to have this baby. It is not possible." I turned my face to the wall and prayed, "Lord, if You are God in Heaven, prove Yourself to this doctor." God came down and undertook. I had that baby at twenty-six weeks and today, Emmanuel is alive and healthy. I praise God.



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.”

EDWARD DIXON

COLUMBUS,
GEORGIA

At eighteen years old, I decided to join the military for wrong reasons, but I'm thankful God took that bad choice and made something good out of it. He brought me into Germany, and there He spoke to my heart and asked me, “Whose side are you on?” God let me see that I wasn't on His side, but I wanted to be, and that night the Lord saved me. What a beautiful journey that began.

Sixteen years ago, I learned that two of the three main arteries that supply the blood to my heart were one hundred percent blocked. The other one was ninety percent blocked. I give God praise because the doctors did not do surgery on me. God did my bypass surgery. He blessed my heart to grow new arteries. I am a modern-day miracle!

This year I celebrate my seventieth birthday, and God has kept me down through the years. I give Him all the glory.



DEBBIE LEE

ROSEBURG, OREGON

On June fifth, 1977, the Lord changed my life. That was my high school graduation day, and it was the day I made the best decision ever—to give my life to the Lord.

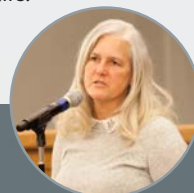
Before I was saved, I was trapped and bound by the ways of the world. I had tried several times to make my life better and to do the right things, but sin had a grip on me. One time I quit smoking pot for six months and thought that was really good, but the peer pressure became too much, and I failed once again.

I started dating Harlan and we decided to get married. When we told his parents of our plans, they said, “If you expect this marriage to work, you will need to start going to church.” I mostly ignored that advice, but one night as Harlan and I were driving, he said, “If the Lord could change my life like He did for my dad, that would really be something.”

Shortly after that, we were invited to the Apostolic Faith in Roseburg to hear Harlan's dad sing. I was somewhat familiar with the church, and had attended Sunday school there until about the sixth grade when my family moved downtown. I had also gone to an evening service by myself once, but left right after hearing the testimonies, because it seemed they were all directed at me. I thought people had been talking about me before the service.

We went to the service to hear Harlan's dad, and it turned out to be the Lee family singing. We didn't pray that night, but returned a week later, and that day the Lord won my soul. After I prayed through, I wondered how I would be able to keep salvation, because I had never been able to be good for any length of time. However, the Lord kept me day by day, and soon that was no longer a worry. Later God sanctified me, completely taking the desire for the things of the world out of my life, and He baptized me with the Holy Ghost.

I am so thankful for all God has done for me. He has kept me all these years, and I never want to turn back; I want to serve the Lord the rest of my life.

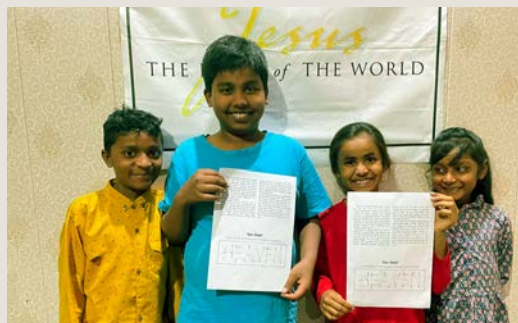


WORLD REPORT

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PRAY FOR PAKISTAN

Hundreds respond to the Gospel message in a new area of Apostolic Faith work.



PRAY FOR PAKISTAN

Hundreds respond to the Gospel message in a new area of Apostolic Faith work.

An emerging Apostolic Faith work in Pakistan was featured in a presentation given on July 3 at the Portland camp meeting. The program started with a welcome and prayer given by Superintendent General Darrel Lee. Then a series of speakers shared information about current conditions in Pakistan, the miraculous way in which our work there began, the status of the work, and plans for the future. Following is a summary of the presentation.

The first speaker gave a brief introduction of the country, highlighting its history and current conditions. The Islamic Republic of Pakistan was founded in 1947 with borders drawn to include almost exclusively people of the Muslim religion. Consequently, today the Pakistani population is 96.6% Muslim and less than 2% Christian, with most of the Christians being Catholic and few having a true understanding of repentance and

salvation. The nation is known to have extreme persecution against those who convert from Islam to Christianity, and evangelism is strictly prohibited. However, the less than 2% who are from generationally Christian homes can practice their faith freely. At the same time, Christians in Pakistan face other major challenges because they are treated as second-class citizens, are excluded from much of society, and often live in perpetual poverty.

The next speaker related how the work in Pakistan began. In September of 2021, a Pakistani youth named Shabeeb Nadeem noticed an encouraging social media post from an Apostolic Faith Church. After a prompt from the Lord, he began joining the online services that were being held by our church in Fort McMurray, Alberta, Canada. Then he started corresponding with the Fort McMurray pastor, Reverend Marjorie Reid. Though Shabeeb had been taught Bible lessons

from his childhood, he had never learned how to receive forgiveness for his sins, and he was longing for something more from God. He had questions about Bible doctrines, and Reverend Reid took time to expound the teachings to him, as well as point him to resources on the Portland headquarters website. With prayerful encouragement from the saints in Fort McMurray, Shabeeb prayed in his home and was wonderfully saved. He said, "That day was incredibly joyful for me. I felt a weight lifted from my heart and a burden that I had been carrying on my heart. . . . I was in darkness, and Someone brought me to the light."

Shabeeb started attending more online church services and studying the doctrines of the Apostolic Faith Church. He tells what he found: "The doctrines and teachings of this church were right according to the Bible. No other church near us introduced me to

the actual meaning of salvation, sanctification, and the baptism of the Holy Ghost, which are very important in a Christian's life." Soon, he invited his immediate and extended family members to join the online services, and many of them also received salvation.

Over the course of the next year, the believers in Fort McMurray and Pakistan developed a love for each other that can only be found in the family of God. Shabeeb translated sermons from the Fort McMurray church and the Portland headquarters website into the Urdu language, and then shared them with people in nearby villages. Hundreds of people responded and received salvation, and members of the congregation in Fort McMurray helped by providing Bibles for the new converts. The Apostolic Faith family in Pakistan quickly grew, and Reverend Reid reported their hunger and appreciation for the truth was beautiful to see. The saints in Canada also sent food aid when flooding devastated large parts of the country, and helped provide housing to a family in desperate need. In addition, the

Sunday school children provided warm clothing for children in Pakistan who struggled with cold in the winter months.

In the fall of 2022, Shabeeb contacted Reverend Lee for the first time by email. Reverend Lee said he was initially very cautious about this new and unknown group, but he has been encouraged to see a genuine love of the Gospel in Pakistan. He invited Shabeeb to meet in person at the Southern Africa camp meeting in Zimbabwe in December of 2022. There, Shabeeb received sanctification and the baptism of the Holy Spirit. He said the camp meeting was the most beautiful time of his life and added, "When I came back, there was no fear inside of me. I was fully equipped to preach the Gospel and preach the Apostolic Faith in Pakistan."

During the Zimbabwe camp meeting, 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 as Pakistan Country Director. He first met with the Pakistani saints online to give



RECENT UPDATE

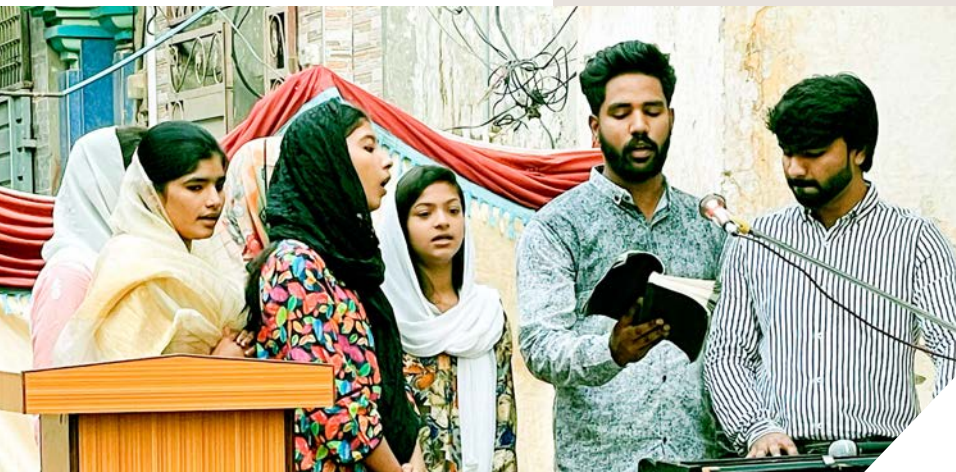
ON AUGUST 16, A VIOLENT Muslim mob attacked Christian churches and homes in the city of Jaranwala, located about twenty-five miles southeast of the city of Faisalabad. Up to five thousand people arrived from other districts to carry out the assault after radical Muslim clerics made calls to punish individuals in Jaranwala accused of violating Pakistan's strict blasphemy laws. Reports indicate that twenty-six churches were destroyed and over two hundred families in Christian settlements were displaced after their homes had been burned. Other homes were ransacked and looted.

On August 27, a team of Apostolic Faith workers visited Jaranwala to

provide relief and support to the victims. They distributed cots and kitchen items to twenty-five families and gave away more than one hundred Bibles. They also encouraged the families with Scripture and prayer. These were received with gratitude and relief, and requests were made for the teams to return monthly to teach more Bible doctrines.

Brother Shabeeb shared encouraging reports about the faith of believers in Jaranwala. He related their comments, "We are not worried; the Lord will build our homes," and, "If they burn the churches, the Lord will build more churches all over Pakistan."





Page 32: Children from a village where workers share the Gospel; A child praying; Sunday school children hold up their completed lessons.

Page 33: A man prays during a service held in a village; A building destroyed by mob violence; Church workers distribute cots; Workers distribute Bibles and supplies.

Page 34: Shabeeb Nadeem is water baptized at the 2022 Zimbabwe camp meeting; Pakistan Country Director Felix Panganayi and another minister pray for the healing of a child; A team holds a street meeting in Faisalabad.

instruction about outreach efforts and the use of Sunday school curriculum. Then in March he traveled to Pakistan in person, accompanied by Onias Chitanda, a Member of the Southern and Eastern Africa Board of Trustees. He related that he expected to encounter hostility toward Christians in the Islamic nation, but he was relieved to discover that it was safe to preach at church services. He said the services usually had over one hundred in attendance and the people received the Gospel message eagerly, with many receiving salvation and physical healing from the Lord.

During the March trip, Reverend Panganayi was also taken to a brick kiln, where Christians are used essentially as slave labor and live in impoverished and unsanitary conditions. The workers are in debt to the kiln owners and their minimal salary is divided between wages and debt payment. The payments are structured in such

a way that the debt will never be paid off, but instead will be inherited by the workers' children. At the same time, with no means to pay for schooling, the children will likely have no other option than to enter the same line of work.

The Nadeem family has been trying to help these workers for some time by offering elementary school classes for the children. This has been a great opportunity

to teach about the Lord while also providing a valuable education and hope for the future. In the summer of 2023, a second strategy to aid the brick kiln workers was implemented: raising goats has been introduced as a new source of income. We pray the livestock will be highly profitable and a blessing to these families. In the meantime, church teams will continue visiting numerous brick kilns to share about salvation and encourage the laborers' faith.

Another major focus of the work in Pakistan is sending teams to new villages to preach repentance and salvation through Christ. Our work is located in the northeastern part of the country, and so far, our teams have held services in at least 35 of the 530 villages in that district. Distributing Bibles continues to be a crucial aspect of the work; in May of this year, more than 200 Bibles were given to adults who were newly saved, as well as 50 to children. In June and July, about 100 more Bible were given away. We hope to soon have audio Bibles as well for those who are unable to read.

Looking toward the future, the saints plan to establish regular prayer meetings in more locations, begin holding youth services, and hold a camp meeting. They also continue to meet regularly for services with Reverend Panganayi through an online platform.

In addition, with over 700 Pakistanis attending services regularly in four different locations, Reverend Panganayi has taken steps to purchase property in Pakistan for our first church building. This is a prerequisite for registering our church with the government.

The July 3 presentation closed with the testimonies of several who received salvation through this new work. We thank God for what He is doing in Pakistan and the many lives that have already been transformed. As we serve the Lord in our own locations, may we all remember to pray for Pakistan!

OUR CLASSICS

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75 YEARS OF VICTORY

God saved them both on the same day and decades later, they are still serving God together.

75 YEARS OF VICTORY

By Earl and Sylvia Phillips

God saved them both on the same day and decades later, they are still serving God together.

Throughout my youth, my mother continued to pray for me. When I would come home at night, I would hear her praying. Finally I moved my bed into the basement so I could not hear her prayers. God talked to me down there, though, and I would toss and turn on my bed as I tried to sleep.

One day I was driving on the highway with a friend in my Model A car. We had some beer in the back seat and were planning to enjoy the weekend. Suddenly my car was caught between three semi-trucks, and there was no way out. To this day, I do not know how we got out of that, but we were alive, and my car was not wrecked when it was over.

As I lay on my sickbed, I prayed a prayer that God heard. I had a pack of cigarettes in bed, but I told the Lord I would quit smoking and would go to church if He would let me live.

I heard the same Voice that day as when I was a little boy. My friend saw my anxiety, and he said, "What's the matter with you?" I told him, "Oh, nothing," but I knew what was wrong. God was talking to my heart.

Not long after that, at seventeen years of age, I became very sick.

The doctor told me I was dying and had no chance to live. As I lay on my sickbed, I prayed a prayer that God heard. I had a pack of cigarettes in bed, but I told the Lord I would quit smoking and would go to church if He would let me live. I got well but did not keep my promise to God. I didn't smoke for a while, but soon the desire got so strong I couldn't resist. The next cigarette I smoked, I asked a friend to light it for me, and I shook like a leaf—afraid the Lord would strike me dead for not keeping my vow. I kept thinking, *I will go to church and I will pray.*

God talked to me until I could not stand it, and I decided to quit smoking. One Saturday night, I went to a theater and purposely left my cigarettes in the car. Halfway through the movie, though, I went out and hunted through an ashtray, looking for a cigarette. I was bound by the habit.

When you make a promise to God, it will follow you wherever you go. I am thankful God held me to the promise I had made. The next morning, my best friend and I attended church. At the end of the service, I turned to him and said, "I don't know what you are going to do, but I am going to pray." I stepped into the aisle, and he followed. We did not get saved that morning, but we made a good start. My misery increased throughout the rest of the day. I knew I had to do something.



EARL TESTIFIES

When I was growing up, my mother was a Christian but my dad was not. Our home was happy, though, because my mom prayed.

My mom always took us to church, but I never wanted to pray. My dad went to church about twice a year. He seemed to get along all right, so I wanted to live like him. He smoked, and I followed in his footsteps and began smoking when I was about eleven years old. He also gambled occasionally, so I later gambled too. Although I was never saved as a child, I knew the Voice of God. He talked to me before I smoked my first cigarette. Whenever I did something against His will, He let me know that I should not do it.



KODAK PORTRA
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That evening, we went back to church and prayed. I believe I was able to pray because my mom had prayed for me. Those prayers made a way for God to talk to me when no one else could. I repented that night, and the Lord saved me. What a change! I did not need to put the cigarettes away and merely hope I could quit. To my surprise, God took out the desire for smoking and for all other sins. I should have expected that; Mom had always told me of the power of salvation, and I had heard victorious testimonies in church. For some reason, though, it had gone over my head until I experienced it myself. The Lord gave me new desires, and from the moment I began to serve Him, I wanted to stick with it.

The Voice of God was still with me, but it spoke in a different way. God guided and led me. Once someone near me lit up a cigarette. As that smoke went by, the devil said, "Ah, wouldn't that taste good?" Then the Voice of God reminded me, "But that craving is gone." He showed me the difference between temptation and sin.

Later the Lord sanctified me, and the devil said, "You are not really sanctified," even though I had a wonderful feeling in my soul. The next day, I went to work and was building a scaffold. A big

double-hung window was on the scaffold, and I had one hand on it while I hammered with the other. Suddenly, the window came down and smashed my finger. I did not get mad; I did not throw things. The Lord said, "See? You are sanctified." He continued to lead me to a closer walk with Him as He helped me seek and receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit. That Voice still directs me today.

When I was in high school, warts developed on my hands and started to go up my arms. They were so big that I would hide my hands. After I was saved, one of the church brothers noticed and said to me, "You know Earl, in the Bible it says if two agree touching anything, it shall be done. You want to get rid of those warts?" I said, "Sure." We agreed to pray about them. In a few weeks, I drew a basin of water, took a washcloth, and started to wash my hands and arms. Every wart was gone! That was seventy-five years ago, and they are still gone.

A beautiful young woman was saved the same day as I was. I didn't know her, and she didn't know me, but we became acquainted. About two years after we were saved, on Valentine's Day I bought a dozen roses and asked her to marry me. We established our home on God, and He was the center of our family. God has taken care of us and been with us in the hard times as well as the good times. For example, when I broke my back and we had no money, the people of God came by. They brought us milk, potatoes, meat, many items. We never missed a meal.

One of the miracles when God saved me was that He put a desire in my heart to be in church. That desire has never worn out. After seventy-five years, I still love to be in God's house. If I had known the thrill and satisfaction of the Gospel as a young boy, I am sure I would have chosen to turn to God sooner. It is good to serve the Lord.

SYLVIA TESTIFIES

What a joy it is to know that Jesus loves me! Throughout my life, I've had opportunities to prove His love over and over again.

I grew up in a large family of seven girls and four boys. Before my birth, my parents had come to Dallas, Oregon, from Canada. There they learned about the Gospel and were saved. Our family did not have a lot of earthly goods, but we had God in our home. We lived on a farm and there were many chores to tend to, but my parents were not too busy to teach us children the Word of God. We all knew what was right and what was wrong. We knew that if the Lord came, we would have to be ready if we wanted to spend eternity with Him.

It was a beautiful feeling to know that my parents could get in touch with God; I felt safe. I can remember walking into the house and finding my mother there on her knees. I knew she was praying for her family; with eleven children, there was a lot to pray about!

As a child I loved God, but when I was twelve years old, we moved from the farm to Portland, Oregon, and the world began to seem bright and attractive to me. There was rebellion and stubbornness in my heart and it was difficult for me to tell the truth. I figured that the Christian life was fine for my folks, but I thought it would be the end of all my fun if I yielded my life to God. While I certainly didn't want to go to Hell, I felt like I was missing something out there in the world.

After a while, I found myself not liking church at all. I began to think, *When I am eighteen, I'm going to leave. Mom and Dad are just too strict.* My plan was to enjoy myself while I was young, and when I was old and ready to die, I would pray and get saved. God had other plans

for me though, and I am so grateful for His mercy. He talked to my heart constantly, though I rejected Him many times. My heart was full of condemnation, and deep inside I was troubled about the sins that were in my life.

On the night of March 21, 1948, when I was fifteen years old, I was sitting in church with my older sister and her husband. They were newlyweds but they were already having trouble in their marriage and were talking about divorce. Their sadness broke my heart. As the minister preached that night, I could feel the Spirit of God calling. I did not really understand what was happening, but He was softening my resistance.

I was brand new; my very nature was transformed. In a moment of time, the rebellion and lying tongue were gone. God gave me joy and a deep inward peace settled over my heart.

When the church service was over, a minister came and spoke to the three of us, asking if we would like to pray. My sister and brother-in-law said yes, and I was glad to go down to the altar of prayer too. There I knelt and poured out my heart, telling the Lord how sorry I was for the wrong things I had done, for my rebellion and disobedience, and for the lies I had told. I said, “If You will put something real in my life—something that I know about—I will serve You the rest of my life.” When I meant those words with everything in me, the most wonderful thing happened: Jesus came into my heart! What a change He made! I felt like I was brand new. In fact, I *was* brand new; my very nature was transformed. In a

moment of time, the rebellion and lying tongue were gone. God gave me joy and a deep inward peace settled over my heart. I literally felt like I could float out of the church that night, I was so happy.

At school the next day, I went to the vice principal’s office and told her I needed to talk to her. One time while selling candy bars for our club at school, I decided I deserved a candy bar for my efforts and took one without paying for it. No one knew, but God saw it. That morning I confessed to the vice-principal what I had done and paid for the candy bar. When I left the room, I broke down and cried, and waves of glory flooded my heart. I felt so good! No one could have made me do that, but God put it in my heart to make the restitution.

Of course, when you are just fifteen, you have no idea what the rest of your life will bring. That was just the beginning of a wonderful, fulfilling walk with God. Through the years I have proved that God is always the same and always there. He has kept me with peace in my heart in the good times and the hard times. I am so thankful for His blessings.

The same night I prayed, a young man prayed through to salvation as well. While we were not well acquainted, I knew of him and figured he needed to be saved for sure. The Lord had a plan! I had no interest in that young man at the time, but the Lord brought him to me a couple years later, and he has been a wonderful husband. We have been married for over seventy years now, and we have enjoyed a beautiful life together.

While there have been many mountain-top experiences, of course there have been some hard places along the way as well. I remember when our children were young that I went through a time of feeling lonely. I was home a lot with four small children and began

to feel sorry for myself. One day as I was weeping and praying, the Lord spoke to my heart and said, “I can be your Friend.” I realized I had not taken advantage of the fellowship that Jesus offered. Through that, I was able to draw closer to Him, and I learned that Jesus truly is my very best Friend.

During a church service at camp meeting one year, I was singing the song “If Jesus Goes with Me, I’ll Go Anywhere.” As I sang those words, tears suddenly came to my eyes. I thought, *Lord, what is going on? Why am I crying?* I did not realize it, but the Lord was calling me into a closer walk with Him. As I prayed, He put something in my soul that just wanted to line up to everything He required. He put a desire in my heart to be more than just “in the Gospel.” There was a longing to really serve Him.

Though I did not understand what was happening, God knew what He was doing: He was getting me ready for a future assignment. Shortly after that, the Lord called my husband to be a minister, and later he became a pastor. It seems almost unbelievable, but the Lord took the kind of person I was and made me into a pastor’s wife. It is nothing in myself but only what God has done.

My husband and I were able to raise our four children in the Gospel, and what a wonderful privilege it has been to pray with them and for them through the years. Now we pray for our grandchildren and great-grandchildren as well.

How good God has been to me! He has been a perfect Friend. It is wonderful to have an anchor in Jesus, and truly I love Him with all my heart.

Rev. Earl and Sylvia Phillips live in Portland, Oregon, where they continue to enthusiastically participate in the work of the Lord after his retirement from pastoring.

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 other 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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