

*The Heartbeat of*   
**The Remnant**

Volume 30, Issue 1  
Spring 2023

A ministry of  
*The Berean Voice* 





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~ *The Berean Voice Board*

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 Greetings to one and all in our dear Saviour's name, Jesus Christ. Another year has passed from the present into the annals of history. Nothing that we have said or done can be recalled and re-lived. Another year is before us. Many are waiting with bated breath, anticipating what this new year will bring forth.

I read somewhere in the news that those on the frontier of technology believe that this year will be a big year for artificial intelligence. One example given was: they are anticipating that this technology will be able to be a part of events such as board meetings with the ability to hear and understand all that is shared by each one present. Then at the end of the meeting, with the push of a button, the artificial intelligence will produce detailed minutes of that meeting with a fair degree of accuracy. Over the last number of years, many of the things that used to be considered science fiction have recently become reality, so, likely, this will become a new reality as well.

What is this world coming to? To the Bible-literate Christian, the end of time certainly seems to be fast approaching. According to the United Nations, the world's population surpassed 8 billion on November 15, 2022. Many in the world are desperately trying to figure out how to sustain that many people for the long term. Just like the Bible has prophesied, there is an uptick in the number of famines, drought, floods, earthquakes, wars, and rumors of wars, etc. One thing that I find interesting is that even though the world does not want to retain God in their knowledge, insurance companies still refer to certain specific events as "acts of God".

As Bible-believing Christians how shall we then live? *And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet* —Matthew 24:6. Let us remember that we should not be troubled. Rather, we should remember that *...he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved* —Matthew 24:13. If we, like Peter, take our eyes off of our Lord and start focusing on the stormy conditions around us we will start to sink as well. Remember, it is *...the fearful, and unbelieving ... [who] shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone...* —Revelation 21:8. But, *He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son* —Revelation 21:7.

In this issue of the magazine, we again have an interesting group of articles for your consideration. Join us as we learn of a somewhat obscure, yet influential leader of the

early Anabaptist movement in Switzerland. Let's honestly evaluate our own hearts as we follow the expository teaching from Habakkuk regarding what it means to have a real faith that is first personal, then corporate. Together we can consider what it really means to enter into the rest of God that is detailed in Hebrews chapter four. The youth can take a look into their emotions as they consider those times when they feel like giving up. The author for our sisters' article has tackled a very difficult subject—when and how to be submissive as a godly wife. We have another thought-provoking article in the discipleship series. And the doctor has chosen to venture into some uncharted territory with the first of a two-part series on cancer.

A final thought I wish to share, a story in fact... Recently, I heard a first-hand account of a man who was lost before God, how he came to spiritual awakening, and how this started affecting his life. This story caused me to stop and consider where I am as a Christian. Is my relationship with my Lord vibrant? How strong is my commitment towards God and His Word? Is my love for my Lord and Saviour still as real and as strong as it was when I first had my awakening and was converted? I'm sure there are more questions that we could ask ourselves in light of this real-life story. I'll let you as a reader start compiling your own list. Now for the story...

This man is living somewhere within the United States of America. He is a married man with a young family. He is part of a certain religious group within the plain people—those of Anabaptist heritage. Throughout his lifetime he had endeavored to live his life according to the mandates set forth by the leaders of his local church. Yet, for some reason, he had not been finding answers to his personal need, whatever that was—perhaps even he didn't know.

This man and some of his family were traveling and ended up lodging overnight in a motel. There, in the nightstand drawer he discovered a book titled "The Holy Bible". Sure, in his church the Bible was read or quoted each week during their normal worship services. Although this man understood English quite well, his church had a policy that they did not want to be too worldly or too modern by reading from an English Bible so they continued their efforts of teaching God's Word using the original language of their people.

The problem was that this man, somehow, never developed an understanding of that language, thus he never heard the truth of God's Word. All that he heard was what 1 Corinthians chapter 14 refers to as *tongues* (languages) and since he didn't understand the language and since there

*...continued on page 35*

# Hans Landis

From Zurich farmer to Anabaptist martyr

by Joshua Yoder  
Big Prairie, OH

Humanity is defined by its search for truth. Some people search for this truth through personal power, as they attempt to hold sway over their fellow man. Some search for truth in pleasure, seeing self-gratification as the greatest achievement in life. Others seek enlightenment through their own thoughts and reasonings, *ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth* –2 Timothy 3:7. Yet others believe a life of service will be a reward unto itself, so they try to make a name for themselves through the publicity of their acts of service and charity.

Time and time again, throughout history, the collective thought of man has turned to something greater than themselves. Religions rise, and religions fall, empires are founded and crumble, philosophies develop and fall apart.

Against this background of intellectual undulation, a movement which most of my readers will recognize, took root in a small, mountainous region of the globe. Zurich, Switzerland, in the year 1525 AD, was to be its given birthplace and birthdate, but its roots had been established a full 1500 years earlier, in Galilee, where One taught and lived the final answers to all of man's questions.

The beginnings of this more recent movement are well documented. In short, it was founded by a small group of assorted students, clergy, and commoners who sought after truth in its purest form. The stories of Conrad Grebel, Felix Manz, and George Blaurock are well known to many of us. They endeavored to separate from the spiritual corruption that surrounded them, as they established the beginnings of what would become known as the Anabaptist movement.

These three soon faced the scrutiny of the civil and spiritual authorities of their time, enduring hardship and suffering for their faith. Two of them eventually gave their lives for the truth they so esteemed. Felix Manz was the first Anabaptist to be martyred. On January 5th, 1527, not two years after his courageous re-baptism, he was drowned in the River Limmat which flowed through Zurich. His last words were: "Into thy hands, O God, I commend my spirit."

The Anabaptist movement lived beyond these three men.

It spread and grew throughout Moravia, the Netherlands, Switzerland, and the Palatinate region of Germany. Almost one hundred years later there was another prominent leader in the Zurich hills; this one was an elderly farmer. He was well-seasoned in leading his flock through the ebb and flow of the challenges facing the believers of that time. His name is Hans Landis.

The year was 1613, January 26 to be exact. Converging on the small castle, Wadenswil, on the shore of Lake Zurich, was an elderly Hans Landis, along with fourteen of his church members. Most notably among these was Galli Fuchs, a schoolteacher and recent convert, as well as Bachman, a smith and well-known troublemaker, who had also been recently converted. There to meet with them were nine church and state officials, including the mayor of Zurich, Rudolf Rhan; his chief of police, Conrad Grebel (apparently a namesake of the original re-baptizer of nearly a century prior); and numerous local ministers from Zurich's Protestant church. The reason for this meeting was that Hans' spiritual work had been blessed, and his small congregation was rapidly growing, causing ripples in the attendance of rural parishes belonging to the Protestant church. Dropping attendance presented several difficulties to this combined church and state government.

First, the Protestant Church drew vast funds from its parishioners. Thus, another church drawing away and converting its members was seen not only as a spiritual threat, but also a financial one. The cantons of the area were often engaged in religion-fueled hostilities, ranging from angry debates to full-blown military campaigns. Second, *deviant* spiritual doctrines that disagreed with the government's official religions were often introduced in times of civil unrest, and the peasant uprisings of nearby cantons were still fresh in the minds of local nobility and clergy. Events such as the Muensterites and their violent interpretations of Scripture remained a clear warning of religious zeal gone awry. These uprisings had taken place as the Catholic church collapsed in the area, which presented opportunities for new and sometimes extreme beliefs to take

root. Now, the activities of Hans and his church seemed to these officials a matter bordering on rebellion and treachery.

This meeting was not the first encounter Hans Landis and his flock had had with the local authorities. An earlier investigation had been conducted, nearly four years prior. This report gave their meeting places as the forests, barns, and even Hans Landis' home. However, no list of members was included, as even the Protestant neighbors of the church refused to name any of the Anabaptists. Not only did the local populace refuse to cooperate in naming any of those in Hans' congregation, but it was also rumored that the Taufer held a general fund, in charge of Deacon Jacob Isler, from which they provided for needs within their community. To the officials, this appeared to be nothing more than another trick to persuade the poor of the community to forsake their church and join Hans and his group.

Mayor Rhan opened the meeting, addressing those of his company as "Reverend, high and well-learned, pious, noble, intelligent, wise, (and) dear lords." Next, he spoke to Hans and the brethren with him, giving them a cordial greeting of "Honorable, dear and good friends" before reminding them of their positions by referring to them as "subjects". Following these none-too-subtle maneuverings, he questioned them, asking for an explanation on "the reasons [why] you separated from our church and ... started a separate sect." Following this question, he assured them that the council wished to be tolerant but that the separatists should "not misuse the patience and graciousness of the lords."

Meeting this introduction, Hans asked permission for him and his brethren to rise and address their "Gracious Lords". Given it, he rose, thanking the mayor for his kind words of greeting before questioning their interest in the Anabaptists' beliefs, as he maintained they had oft heard them before. He adjoined this by stating that all their doctrine was "nothing else than what Christ taught and what the apostles wrote." As before, the Anabaptists asked simply to be allowed to hold onto this, supporting their government in matters not relating to conscience. They would also continue to pray for the government and their leaders.

Mayor Rhan did not take kindly to this answer, taking it as being implied that he and the Protestant church did not obey the commands of Christ. Hans, upon hearing this rebuttal, asked leave to take his group outside of the room for a short while. Upon returning, Galli Fuchs was presented and gave a testimony to the lords, outlining his spiritual journey through both the Protestant and Catholic churches, observing that while both preached well across the pulpit, both also denied this teaching by their godless living. Upon studying the Anabaptist faith and application, Galli was converted.

The officials were skeptical, arguing that Galli's points had "still shown no reason for your separation." Upon this rejoinder, another convert was brought forward, this one was the blacksmith Bachman. Bachman was immediately recognized by Conrad Grebel (not the Anabaptist founder), the Zurich chief of police, as having been known as one of the local rowdies—"It's true, you were godless [and] there is no one in the entire area with whom I had more trouble than you."

Bachman's testimony echoed many of Galli's points, especially on the purity and separateness of the true church, ending with this quote from Sirach: "Whoever stirs in pitch will be smudged."

The debates continued, with contention flaring around communion, the examples of church leaders, and knowledge of salvation. As the meeting ended, Galli Fuchs could not resist a final remark: "If you would give us the church at Hirzel, ... you would see ... who would have the larger crowd!" This brought a round of laughter from the room, and Hans seized a final opportunity to speak, pleading: "Oh, dear sirs, let us remain by what we believe."

Following this plea, the mayor deliberated, finally deciding that the brothers were to be given leave to go without arrest, who, upon exiting, were heard to speak in agreement: "We would also give life, body, property, and blood." They were soon to have the opportunity to live this commitment.

Fifteen months passed. Hans was locked up in the Wellenberg tower in Zurich, along with Galli Fuchs, Deacon Jacob Isler, Hans Meili, Stephen Zehnder, and Paul Degia (a native of Milan, Italy). There they were held for fourteen weeks, and repeatedly cajoled, interrogated, and threatened. An order was finally handed down that they should leave the canton of Zurich, but Hans refused, to which the council responded with a threat often considered worse than death. The council maintained that because of these men's civil disobedience, not their beliefs, they were to be sentenced as galley slaves to row aboard the ships of France in the Mediterranean.

Jacob Isler pleaded with the lords, asking them how they could do such a thing, knowing that the Taufer (Anabaptists) could not bear to leave their families. Stephen Zhender added: "We would not fear to go over sea and water since they [are] also the creation of God." Despite these entreaties, the council made good on its threats, sentencing all six to the galleys.

The sentencing sent shock rippling through the community. The life expectancy for a young, healthy galley slave was no more than three years, and those three years would be filled with starvation, exposure, beatings, and exhaustion. Even in the harsher Catholic cantons,



this sentence was severe. In the more lenient Protestant community, it brought public outrage.

The prisoners were all given one last chance to leave the canton, whereupon three of them relented. But Galli Fuchs, Stephen Zehnder, and Hans Landis steadfastly refused to change their mind. They were subsequently led under guard westward to a French ambassador in Solothurn, a town in the canton of Bern. Bern reacted in much the same way as Zurich had, with a ransom being offered for the prisoners' release. When that failed, a file was secretly slipped into their cell in Solothurn. The prisoners' chains were swiftly cut through, and they escaped the city, fleeing back to their homes. Once there, the populace, still outraged by their treatment, refused to report them to the authorities.

News of the escape spread and grew, and Hans was soon at work, baptizing the new converts, and even overseeing several marriages. The Anabaptists prospered, helping the poor of the community through food and no-interest loans from their alms fund. This renewed activity angered and frightened the authorities, who finally decided that the efforts of its elderly leader would need to be neutralized.

Hans was promptly arrested upon this decision and once again locked up in the Wellenberg. Here the threats and admonishments from the authorities were scaled up. If he would not recant or at least leave the canton, they would need to kill him.

Threats such as these did not sway Hans. He, instead, admonished the rulers not to commit sin in their treatment of him, affirming his resolve that he had "given himself to God" and "was ready to await what God would let come upon him."

This brave stand by Hans brought a similar realization to the authorities: they would need to make good on their threats. Regarding Hans as a rebel, they maintained that he "wanted to be his own lord and master regardless of the honorable authorities," and that he displayed the "stubborn, seditious resistance of wicked people." Despite these allegations in conjunction with their threats, the magistrates realized that an execution would be an unpopular undertaking. Hans was well respected by the local populace, and even had connections in Amsterdam, where his daughter lived, being married to a Dutch Mennonite.

Officer Grebel, the Protestant clergy, and various others spent much time in discussion with Hans in his prison cell, but to no avail. By Thursday, September 29, 1614, they realized that he was completely immovable in his faith, unwilling either to recant or to leave the canton. This report, presented to the lords, sent them into deep deliberation. Some argued for publicly cutting off Hans' ear and exiling him, while others deemed life imprisonment a more appropriate sentence. The matter was put to a vote at noon, and a majority decision was quickly reached. Hans Landis would be publicly beheaded at once.

Hans, upon hearing the decision, thought it only another ploy to persuade him to recant. However, upon approaching the well-known public execution site in Zurich, his face turned ashen, and his hands flew to his head. However, he swiftly composed himself, smiling and admonishing the crowd not to weep, as he trusted in his good hope. Noticing his wife and children present, he asked them to leave so that his resolve would not be weakened.

The sentence was read; Hans stood silent. Not a word of criticism had been raised against his personal morals. Instead, the issue was his refusal to disband his church. He remained steadfast, and so the executioner, Paul Vollmar, led Hans to the execution site. Some observers claimed that Vollmar let go of Hans, seemingly giving him a way of escape. When Hans did not, Vollmar raised his hands to God, asking forgiveness for what the law required him to perform. Hans, smiling, forgave the man, while various church ministers admonished him to recant, but Hans answered that he had seen no repentance in them.

Vollmar, having reached the site of the execution, gave Hans an opportunity to speak unimpeded, and Hans spoke but briefly: "I do not know what more I should say than that I wish everyone would come to a knowledge of their sins and repent, that they might be saved; this I would wish for everyone."

Then, within sight of the place where Feliz Manz had given his life nearly a century prior, he knelt and bowed his head.

The sword flashed downward, then Paul Vollmar asked the ritual question: "Have I executed this man rightly?"

"Yes," came the reply, "you have executed this poor man."

The immediate impact of the elderly Hans' sacrifice was a ripple of support and outrage throughout the non-Anabaptist community. Rhudlof Rhan and Conrad Grebel continued to pressure the remaining Anabaptists, committing Margaretha Landis, Hans's widow, to solitary confinement in the city hospital after her refusal to comply with their demands. Hans's children would likewise remain strong, refusing to recant, but several of his grandchildren began attending the city church shortly after their grandfather's execution.

The local Anabaptist congregation remained strong as well. Its spiritual descendants would carry the word of Christ with them when, a century later, a great emigration landed them on the wild shores of the New World. Here, in the religious freedom of Pennsylvania, they would establish new communities where the faith that had cost Hans Landis his life was to flourish through future generations. Today, there are believers throughout America who are endeavoring to live out their faith according to their conscience, who are where they are as a result of the life lived by Hans some 400 years ago. Some are his descendants, and some are friends of his descendants. May we be inspired to walk as Jesus walked, just like Hans.





# Ye Must Be Born Again

by Barry Grant  
Hicksville, OH

Over the last number of years, we have spent much of our time in Haiti serving on the mission field. From time to time, we would return to America for visits of varying lengths and reasons. Each trip back to the U.S. has been challenging as we have observed the changes—changes in culture, in technology, in values, etc. Sometimes, as our family looks at our country, it seems as if there is little hope. Clearly evil is taking control. However, to me the change that seems to be the most concerning is that of the church. Most, if not all, God-fearing Christians clearly see the moral decline of our land, but what about our churches? Is the church holding firm to biblical teaching or is it following the world in gradual change and compromise?

Overall, the American church seems to be thriving financially. Our businesses are improving, along with our standard of living, while spiritually, many Christians seem to be losing their zeal for godliness. What will the church look like in 40, 50, or 80 years?

When we read the book of Acts, we see something over and over. God's power is revealed, and souls are added to the kingdom—daily.

Usually, when people see something that they need, they go after it. When they see something that they are sure that they must have, they can even become desperate or radical as they pursue a way to get that thing.

Jesus tells the parable of a field containing a lost or hidden treasure—*Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field*—Matthew 13:44.

Here you have a man that may be satisfied with his life. He has possessions and good health. As he is walking home, he sees something that he has never seen before, something of great value, something that he must have. No one needed to force him to take action. Also, it didn't take days or weeks before he acted—he saw it and decided that he must have it immediately. So, he went and sold all that he had. (Selling

'most' would not buy the field. No, he must sell **all**.) After he buys the field, he now possesses the most important thing in the world. He will keep it forever, he will never part with it, no matter the cost. He also realizes that this treasure is not only good for him, but for all mankind. In fact, he soon understands that if he does not find this treasure, then sell all that he has, and purchase the treasure, he will perish—forever. People around him may not understand him—his actions, his decisions, his moves—they may be confused at first, as to why he did what he did. However, they will not be confused about one thing—this treasure was worth all the world to this man. His love for it cannot be denied.

This man now possesses something within himself out of which flows *love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance...*—Galatians 5:22-23, which is the fruit of the Spirit. He seems to have a special power about him. He overcomes suffering and difficulties with ease—at least that's how it appears to those looking on. He holds no grudges and loves even his enemies. Truly this man has found something for which it is worth selling all. Then, lo and behold, others begin to sell what they have, to possess this treasure for themselves also.

According to the Bible, God's people are expected to be the light of the world and the salt of the earth. Let's seriously and honestly ask ourselves this question: "Do those around us experience us as biblical light and salt?!"

During the time of the Acts of the Apostles, there were clear lines, and the church grew. Yes, it suffered; however, it still grew, at times daily.

As I travel to different communities, I see something that is hard to understand. There are certain groups of people that seem to look different from the world around them, but still, they seem to act the same as mainstream America. Their interests are the same; their desires are the same. I have wondered why they continue to look different from the world while they seem to have the same values.

I was in a grocery store when a woman that I had never seen before approached me. She was very cheerful and

asked me some random questions, then before she left, she said, "I love you Mennonites; you are so cute!" It was heart-breaking—we did not cause conviction in her heart. We did not even set an example for her. Instead, we were simply entertaining her.

In Haiti, my family would walk into a church or a spiritual gathering, and the ladies would pull at their miniskirts, trying desperately to cover their nakedness. I've even seen some remove their jewelry, without us speaking a word! Light exposes darkness: it brings conviction. That is why Christians *used* to be hated by those around them.

So why are we a cultural display to the world? What has changed? Could it be that we are simply reproducing the cultural norms that the world holds dear? Are we leaving God out, while we continue to do the things this world has come to accept?

When Nicodemus came to Jesus, he instantly began to lift up the Lord saying *...we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him*—John 3:2.

However, Jesus seems to ignore these words and He cuts right to the chase, when He says: *... Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God*—John 3:3. It's almost as if He was saying, ["Although you come seeking, you seem to possess some truth, and you are a ruler of the Jews, but the first thing that you must know is this: You must be born again."] Powerful words. He then goes on to state the obvious—*That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit*—John 3:6.

Today we try to hide behind our flesh (our unregenerated human nature). We are good at blaming our shortcomings on the fact that we are in the flesh; some go as far as to say we are all sinners and therefore, we can do nothing but fail. However, here Jesus says that that which is flesh is flesh, and that which is spirit is spirit! Oh, that we could grasp the simplicity in these profound words! Flesh is flesh, not spirit. And spirit is spirit, not flesh. We are born with an adamic nature (a bent towards doing evil) from our mother's womb. The prophet Jeremiah tells us that *The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?*—Jeremiah 17:9. He goes on to explain: *I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins...*—Jeremiah 17:10.

We may try, like the masses, to tame our human nature with all of its desires and passions. We may practice and prepare; we can groom the flesh in a certain way that seems good unto us. However, there is no hope, for in the flesh we cannot please God. So, according to Jesus we must be born again. Nicodemus asks: *...How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?*—John 3:4.

Jesus then profoundly preaches a sermon to him, stating

how there must be death *...as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up*—John 3:14.

Jesus goes on to say *...every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved*—John 3:20. If we must first die, to be born again, how do we die? *And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts*—Galatians 5:24. So how does a sincerely seeking person practically become "born again"?

- *That 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...*—Romans 10:9-10.
- *Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost*—Acts 2:38.
- *...the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it*—Hebrews 4:2.
- *But without faith it is impossible to please him...*—Hebrews 11:6.
- *And he came ... preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins*—Luke 3:3.
- *I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved...*—John 10:9.
- *...Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me...*—Mark 8:34-35.
- *Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me*—Revelation 3:20.
- *...And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee. And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him*—John 9:35-38.
- *For by grace are ye saved through faith ... it is the gift of God: Not of works...*—Ephesians 2:8-9.

Here we see that there are various aspects of becoming, of being, and of remaining *born again*. We have faith that is full and unwavering. We need to have faith in the God of the Bible—The great I AM, THAT I AM. Our faith must be open to those around us—we must not keep it hidden. We must not allow the fear of man to keep our faith in God quiet. We need to start walking in repentance. We need to seek baptism unto repentance for the remission of sins. We need to see Jesus as the door—the only way to God through which we must enter and then walk in righteousness. We need to see Jesus' death on the cross as the gift of God to us



for salvation. And as we see God for who He is and Jesus, His Son, for who He is, then we must worship. All of these (and others) are a part of becoming born again, or it is the outworking thereof, which continues to perpetuate the process of staying born again.

Are true conversions still happening in our day—are people being born again the way that Jesus was explaining to Nicodemus? We mock the prayer of the cheap-grace gospel, we look down on the powerless altar calls, but what are we doing about our need? We need to crucify the flesh. We need to live no longer unto self. And we need to be born again by the spirit of God. After spending time at the feet of Jesus, learning of Him and His Father and Their ways, we then need to go forth with Holy Spirit power to share with lost and struggling souls what God has done for us. As people see our life that has been changed by God, He will draw the souls that are seeking into the kingdom of His dear Son.

If we are truly born again, we will have the same testimony and passion as the disciples. We will grow in grace and understanding. We will allow God to be God and His Word to be the Truth—final and complete! We will stop trying to reform the goats among us. Rather we will share the Gospel message with them so they can become converted—they will then be sheep with hearts of flesh instead of hearts of stone. *A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them*—Ezekiel 36:26-27.

So why is there a lack of truly born-again believers among us? I believe this world has captivated us. We look for compromise wherever we can. Sure, we will dress a little differently if we must, but don't take away all our pleasure and fun. We fill our lives with everything this sin-sick world has to offer—money, entertainment, luxury, vacations, food, and drink, then when we walk by the field with the treasure hidden in it, we do not even notice it. It's there, simply forgotten.

When we sing the songs of Zion and pray the prayers of petition and praise, is God at work? Is there an everlasting joy in our hearts or are we tossed about by the storms of life? Are we out trying to help the blind to see or are we trying to conceal the fact that we're Christians?!

Let's put an end to this defeated Christian life that knows little of victory. Let's put an end to the lukewarm living that's accepted by the masses around us! Let's put an end to loving this present evil world! Let's put an end to individualism and self! Let's put on the Lord Jesus Christ and together march out to battle against the enemy of our souls. Enough of just

sitting at home singing the songs; let's go out and fight for that which so many before us have fought. We read about it in our church history books. We glean encouragement and insight from our Bibles and our copies of the Martyrs Mirror. But what will future generations say about us? Will there be any godly testimonies written about us?

**The Bible is full of promises:**

- *Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you... – Matthew 7:7-8.*
- *...God ... will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it –1 Corinthians 10:13.*
- *...If ye have faith, and doubt not ... ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; it shall be done –Matthew 21:21.*
- *This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh –Galatians 5:16.*

And the list goes on! Are these a part of our lives? Are we living in victory, or are we hiding behind a failed culture with no power?

Dear ones, God wants a people to call His own today just as much as He did in the beginning. He wants us! It is a sobering thought. God wants to raise us up by His Spirit, He wants to breathe into us His breath—the Breath of Life. He wants to bless us with spiritual blessings that cannot be fathomed!

However, the old man must die—his pride, his name, his attitude, his fame. The old man must give way for the new; they cannot live together in the same body. According to scripture, it's one or the other. One will die, and one will live—forever!

Let's not allow the serpent (or the devil) to deceive us any longer. The pleasures of this life are only for a moment. We reap what we sow; we will not escape the Judgment. God wants to give us the Kingdom; He wants to give us the inheritance. He wants to be a father to us, to call us His dear children. He wants to walk with us through this narrow way. He wants to encourage us when we are down, and He wants to fight for us when we are weak. He wants to give us an identity, a part of the family of God—His children. He wants to give us power to overcome all sin (not just some), today and tomorrow and for the rest of our life. When we fail, He wants to give us a desire to repent. Then when we accept that desire and move back towards Him, He wants to forgive us.

The darker this world gets, the easier the light should shine. Are we, through the Spirit, that lighthouse standing

tall in the face of the storm? The wind and the waves beat against it, but it cannot be moved. Its light shines through the darkest times, giving hope to the weary souls stranded in life. Its foundation does not move; its purpose does not change.

We can fill our heads with knowledge and know all the right things to say and do. However, if we are not quickened by the Spirit of God, we are simply a culture that will change

with each generation. This change will continue until the last generation has been fully submerged in the seas of this world. All the while, the destroyer of our souls gains more for himself.

This battle is real—some will win, many will lose. The loss is great, greater than I can describe; and so is the win.

Twenty first century Christian, what will you do?





# The Just Shall Live By His Faith

## A Study of the Book of Habakkuk

by Paul Shirk

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The Book of Habakkuk is a dialogue between the prophet and God. We know very little about the prophet Habakkuk from the Bible or history, except what we can glean from his own prophecy. In Scripture, there is often a correlation between a prophet's name and his calling. Habakkuk's name means "to embrace." As we study the Book of Habakkuk, we begin to get a picture of what God is calling the prophet to accept, and then to embrace, as the will of God for His people.

The Book of Habakkuk describes Habakkuk's struggle to understand God's methods of dealing with sin. He begins by crying out to God in frustration at God's seeming silence and tolerance of the injustice in the land of Judah where God's chosen people lived. The righteous were overwhelmed by the wickedness around them. It seemed to Habakkuk that God was oblivious to their plight. *Therefore the law is slacked, and judgment doth never go forth: for the wicked doth compass about the righteous; therefore wrong judgment proceedeth* –Habakkuk 1:4. That is, the law was without power, and no justice was given in the courts of the land.

This prophecy came shortly before Judah was taken into captivity in Babylon. Habakkuk told the people that God was going to bring about the invasion of the Chaldeans "in your days," during the lifetime of his audience (Habakkuk 1:5). The people of Judah found this impossible to believe for several reasons. It seemed absurd that the Chaldean army would take them into captivity and deport them to Babylon, the Chaldean's capital city. At that time Egypt and Assyria were the world powers, not Babylon. The Chaldeans could not enter the land of Judah directly because the great Syrian Desert lay between Judah and Babylon. It was nearly impossible for an army to cross the Syrian Desert and survive, let alone be prepared for battle on the other side. To attack Judah, the Chaldeans would need to march

north, through the land of Assyria, and follow the Fertile Crescent. They would then approach the land of Judah from the north, taking the path of a large inverted "U." The people of Judah would not believe Habakkuk's prophecy, because at that time Assyria stood in Babylon's way. Assyria was more powerful than Babylon, and had Egypt as an ally.

Jeremiah also prophesied (most likely after Habakkuk), identifying Carchemish as the city where Egypt and Assyria would be defeated by the advancing Babylonian armies (Jeremiah 46). This came to pass a few years later. As the Egyptians marched north against the Chaldeans, they passed through Judah. King Josiah (of Judah) went out to battle against Pharaoh Necho and was killed on the battlefield in the valley of Megiddo. Judah lost its last righteous king. The Egyptians marched on with the Assyrians to suffer defeat at the hands of Nebuchadnezzar, captain of the Babylonian army.

Many might have wondered why God had seemingly deserted His people and allowed Egypt to defeat Judah. God's plan was that the Egyptian Pharaoh, Necho, would move north and be defeated by the Babylonians. In this way, Habakkuk's incredible prophecy would be fulfilled. This would pave the way for the Babylonians to attack Judah. In the lifetime of Habakkuk's audience, God completely shifted world powers in order to fulfill His Word. We can learn from the death of Josiah that God is still in control and fulfilling His Word even when His people experience tragedies.

Habakkuk most likely prophesied during the reign of King Manasseh, because the prophecy took place when the wicked were in power, before the reign of Josiah. This was before it was even reasonable to expect Babylon to become a world power. Yet it was near enough to the time of captivity that some of those in the audience would live to see the fulfillment of Habakkuk's prophecy. Second Chronicles

33:10 and 2 Kings 21:10-12 indicate that during Manasseh's reign God spoke through the prophets against the sins of the times, prophesying things so incredible that **both** ears of anyone listening would tingle. One of these prophets was most likely Habakkuk.

Why was God about to bring judgment upon Judah by the relatively obscure Chaldeans? Some of the sins of King Manasseh are recorded in 2 Kings 21. He promoted idol worship, even in the Temple, and polluted the true worship of the Lord. He worshipped different gods and observed their religious practices, as well as he delved into the occult and astrology. King Manasseh introduced abominations even worse than those of the Canaanites whom Israel had driven out of the land. He shed innocent blood, even killing children. He protected and promoted the homosexual lifestyle, both by civil rights and by inclusion in worship in the Temple. Later, Josiah's reforms involved destroying the houses of the Sodomites (homosexuals) near the Temple where the lesbians wove hangings for the wooden image of a Phoenician goddess that was placed in the Temple (2 Kings 23:7). We learn more details of Manasseh's pollutions from the account of Josiah's reforms than we do from the sins listed during the reign of Manasseh (2 Kings 22, 23).

Habakkuk lived in a time of pluralistic pagan worship, suppression of the one true faith, violence in society, the shedding of innocent blood of babies, apostasy among God's people, immorality, homosexuality, occult worship, astrology, and unbelief that the Word of God was relevant and credible.

The question for the reader to ponder is this: Can we identify with Habakkuk when we look around and see the sins of our time? Are we frustrated like Habakkuk, when it appears that God is not doing anything to restrain evil? If so, then Habakkuk's message may contain special relevance for us today.

When God revealed to Habakkuk the extent of His coming judgment upon sin, the severity of the judgment overwhelmed the prophet. The statement, *...the just shall live by his faith* –Habakkuk 2:4, summarizes God's response to Habakkuk's concerns. This phrase is quoted three times in the New Testament as a foundational principle of the Christian life (Romans 1:17, Galatians 3:11, and Hebrews 10:38). By this, we know that Habakkuk's message is always relevant to the Christian! We will look at this key phrase in a three-part outline, emphasizing first "the just," then "shall live," and finally, "by his faith."

### 1. The just shall live by his faith

"The just" in both the Old and New Testaments refers to those who stand in a right relationship with God. *The just*

have accepted God's view of righteousness and sin, and have embraced His way of redemption. They believe in the natural depravity of the human heart, moral absolutes of right and wrong, and salvation through faith in Christ alone. The Old Testament saints looked forward to Christ as their Redeemer, while the New Testament saints look back to Christ's work of redemption. Therefore, Christ is always the object of true faith. Being justified by faith, the saints find peace with God.

*The just* have an awakened conscience that sees righteousness and sin in a new light. Their hearts begin to grieve over the things that grieve the heart of God. Though they have godly hearts, they do not always know or understand the will or purposes of God when He does not visibly restrain or punish sin. They ask, "Why does God allow evil to seemingly triumph over the righteous?" This was also the dilemma of Asaph as recorded in Psalm 73. God's response to Habakkuk was that He would judge the evil both swiftly and unexpectedly. This has been God's pattern throughout Scripture.

- *How are they brought into desolation, as in a moment!... –Psalm 73:19.*
- *He, that being often reprov'd [and] hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy –Proverbs 29:1.*
- *For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them... –1 Thessalonians 5:3.*

God gives sinning people the warning of His Word. When they do not believe it or repent, then in accordance with His own will and timing, He sends swift and unexpected judgment. When judgment did come upon Judah, it came as quickly as the Chaldeans' thundering horsemen.

As Habakkuk saw this vision of impending destruction, he asked God why He would punish the land using a people even more wicked than Judah (Habakkuk 1:13). The Chaldeans, he said, would not recognize this as God's judgment, but rather ascribe it to the greater power of their own gods over Jehovah (Habakkuk 1:11).

Habakkuk had some further questions. Would the Chaldeans destroy all the righteous along with the wicked? Why does God not destroy the wicked before they bring down God's judgment upon the whole land? Why does God seemingly do nothing to stop sin, and then pour out His wrath in severe judgment upon it?

Only those who are justified by faith can be at peace with God during times of calamity when these questions come to mind.

## 2. *The just shall live by his faith*

Habakkuk could have feared that the righteous seed would be destroyed along with the wicked. Instead, he proclaims in faith: *...we shall not die... –Habakkuk 1:12.*

God also affirms to Habakkuk that the just *shall live*. The righteous may suffer calamity when God's judgment falls upon the surrounding wicked. Some of *the just* may exchange their time for eternity. But the righteous seed will never be destroyed from the earth. God's promise to His people is that they *shall live*—and live by faith. The same hand that judges the wicked will purify, sustain, and strengthen the righteous that live through these times. God's covenant is with His people eternally. *...I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it –Matthew 16:18.*

God controls the nations of this world in order that He might accomplish His divine purposes for His people. God used the Chaldeans to accomplish His eternal purposes for Israel. After God's purposes were completed, the Chaldeans were also brought into judgment for their own sin.

Sometimes it is difficult to see the purposes of God within the space of our short lives. We need to understand that God's purposes operate from the context of eternity. They will be fulfilled according to His timing (Habakkuk 2:3). God asks us to live in patient faith through the hard times. Rest assured that His eternal purposes are being fulfilled in our lives and the lives of His people.

God uses the hard times to separate those who are self-confident in their human ability from those who live by faith in divine sovereignty (Habakkuk 2:4). Instead of being self-confident, the just are broken before God and keep their confidence in Him.

When God pronounces judgment upon the wicked, He also promises life to the faithful. We can see the judgment of God coming upon us for the sin of our times, as those sins are similar to what Habakkuk saw in his day. God's message to Habakkuk is being repeated to us in the Church Age, so that each day we would learn to live by faith. God takes us through hard times, for in those times we learn that we have no other way of living, except by faith.

## 3. *The Just shall live by his faith*

Those who live by faith are those who have experienced a personal work of justification in their hearts. They were brought into a right and saving relationship with God by their personal faith. They personally know what it means to pass from death to life by faith.

The just can only live by *his faith*, not by another's faith. Habakkuk could not face the future with confidence in God based on Abraham's faith. Rather, he needed a personal

faith by which to live. We can only be justified by personal faith—... *Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace –Luke 7:50.* The **only** way that we can “live” is by *a personal faith*; the just **shall** live by *his faith*.

Faith is the vital breath of the Christian's life on earth. It is through faith that God pours His grace and love into our lives. Faith is the human choice to believe in God's unconditional love for us even while He judges sin around us and in us. It is reaching out our hands to God for Him to lead us through the hard times, believing that even in our greatest trials, His love for us is strong and unwavering. Faith believes that God desires relationship with us and is willing to show Himself strong on our behalf when we are weak.

We briefly note a number of things Habakkuk mentioned in chapter 2 that characterize faithless people in troubled times (directed to both Babylon and Judah—and could we say: to us in our day):

- strong drink
- hoarding possessions
- cheating for gain
- personal protection strongholds
- nakedness
- violence
- false religions

In contrast, a marked characteristic of the saint is maintaining a close relationship with God:

- through the prayers of faith
- a daily relationship with the Lord
- humble obedience to God's Word

Habakkuk saw this vision while in dialogue (prayer) with God. Upon seeing the future calamity of his people, he specifically prayed in faith with relation to the prophetic vision.

## 4. *The Transition to Triumphant Faith*

Habakkuk 3 is the prophet's prayer of faith. This prayer concludes the Book of Habakkuk. Let us notice some elements of this prayer as Habakkuk prepared his heart for the hard times he saw coming to his nation.

Habakkuk opened his prayer by confessing his human fear of the coming events (Habakkuk 3:2). Yet he did not charge God with injustice even though he struggled to understand the purposes of God.

He prayed that God would send a revival to the people “in the midst of the years” (or, as the years approach), before judgment would fall (Habakkuk 3:2). It is always God's will to work through a faithful remnant that is standing for truth in the midst of the apostasy around them. The prophet

knew that judgment could not be held back for the national sins, so he prayed for revival—that God would perform His work among his people before the land went into captivity. This prayer was answered in a powerful way. Not only was there a revival among the faithful, but a national revival took place during the reign of King Josiah such as was not seen before in Israel (2 Kings 23:21-25).

The prophet asked that God would mingle His wrath upon sin with mercy for His people (Habakkuk 3:2). This was a plea that God would preserve His faithful people while judging sin.

He recounted the history of the redemption of Israel, and thus strengthened his own faith for the future (Habakkuk 3:3-15). In this account, he acknowledged the sovereignty of God in all the events, and that His divine purposes are fulfilled in each one.

Habakkuk acknowledged that the entire history of Israel revolved around God's plan of salvation for His people (Habakkuk 3:13). Because of this, he could believe that future calamity would also bring the fulfillment of the plan of salvation, specifically through the coming Anointed One. Here Habakkuk linked the coming captivity of Israel to the coming of Christ and the Church Age where the plan of salvation would go into the entire world. The Jewish captivity in the East fulfilled this prayer by spreading the Jewish prophecies of the coming world Redeemer throughout the pagan eastern world. As a result, wise men came from the East to bring their gifts and to worship the Messiah.

Habakkuk confessed his fears about being strong enough to rest in God in the day of trouble (Habakkuk 3:16). This correlates to the New Testament principle of examining ourselves to see whether we are in the faith (2 Corinthians 13:5).

In Habakkuk 3:17-19, the prophet saw economic hardship coming, but by faith he made a commitment to rejoice in poverty and praise God for salvation. By faith, Habakkuk determined to rise above the surrounding circumstances like a deer that escapes its predators by climbing on high crags of rock. He saw God's people not only escaping

destruction, but also coming through victoriously.

He expected this prayer to be sung as a hymn, not only privately, but also by the chief singer or chorister in public corporate worship (Habakkuk 3:19). The assembly of the saints was to speak to one another and strengthen one another by singing this hymn of faith. When the prayer of faith becomes a triumphant song of faith, it speaks faith into the hearts of other worshippers.

The central theme of the Book of Habakkuk is *living by faith*. It points forward to the Church Age and the New Covenant. As we look back at the life of Habakkuk, we can identify with his life by seeing similarities with our times and find strength for the future.

Let us briefly review again the elements of this book, and make it both our prayer and song in the times that are ahead of us. Habakkuk is a picture of a man of God who was struggling with human emotions of frustration at God for allowing evil to dominate a formerly righteous nation. Then he expressed fear of the future judgment against the national sins. However, he determined to accept God's will and live by faith through the circumstances God would send in punishment for national apostasy. He asked God to revive His work among the people. He extolled God's spiritual bounty in the face of poverty. He recognized that God's purposes in world events center on the plan of salvation through the Anointed One, Jesus Christ.

In the closing verses, we see the transformation of an earnest prayer of faith into the soaring triumph of a song of faith. The transition from the private prayer to the corporate song also speaks of **the need for the just to live together by faith**. Ultimately, Habakkuk sees God's people coming through the future hard times, together, and victoriously by faith—corporate, yet personal faith!

*A Bible Helps Booklet No. 422*

*Print copies of this booklet may be obtained from:*

*BIBLE HELPS*

*Robert Lehigh, Editor*

*PO Box 391*

*Hanover, PA 17331*

*United States of America*



# A Life Changing Influence

by Iva Mast  
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As a child, you might think you can't make a difference in the lives of people around you, but that is not true! Your little acts of kindness will not soon be forgotten. Being a true friend to someone who is hurting can change that person's life forever.

This is the true story of "Hadassah" (not her real name) a young girl who was very much looking forward to starting school. Once she started first grade, what a disappointment it was to find that the second-grade girls were ready for someone to be mean to, or so it seemed. Maybe it would have been better if Hadassah had stood up to them, but she didn't. Instead, she chose to act as if it didn't hurt and tried to ignore them. Some days were better than others, but sadly this went on for three or four years.

Sure, there were good times too, but many evenings she walked home from school, crying most of the way and wishing that she wouldn't need to go back to school the next day!

One day, one of the girls lost her pen. She was sure that Hadassah had stolen it. This was very disturbing to a very conscientious Hadassah. At the next recess she was blamed for cheating on her flash cards. Many other made-up stories were also passed around among the girls.

However, there was one little girl in that second-grade group of girls whose name we'll say was "Esther". She was Hadassah's best friend and supported her all through those difficult years.

Esther was a very gentle, sweet girl, which is mostly what Hadassah remembered her for. Esther had cystic fibrosis and in the 1970s they didn't have as many treatment options available for that disease as they do now, so those patients usually died very young. As Esther's sickness became worse, the days that she felt well enough to be in school were rare. Since Esther was well-liked, the days when she was in school were special to everyone. Perhaps Esther realized she would be in heaven before the other girls—we don't know for sure. But she taught the girls a song, "How Far Is Heaven", which Hadassah still likes to sing today!

Hadassah still remembers seeing the emergency squad go past her house when they took Esther to the hospital for the last time. It was a very sad group of schoolgirls when Esther died at the age of 13. Esther had touched the hearts of many people in her short life, including the nurses who had cared for her during her stay in the hospital. Hadassah still remembers seeing some of the nurses crying at Esther's funeral. Do you think Hadassah will ever forget Esther? Never!

Besides being her best friend, another bright spot for Hadassah was that when Esther was in school the other girls weren't as mean to her (Hadassah). It so happened that in about the fourth grade, Esther was in school more often. One day she went home and told her parents what she was witnessing in school—how the other girls were against Hadassah and were being so mean to her. Esther's father brought this problem up in

the next parent/teacher meeting. What a night and day change started the very next day! One of the girls even came to Hadassah and apologized. Finally, they could all be friends and today those girls are Hadassah's "old school friends".

It's worth it to stand beside someone who is being treated unkindly. Your support may be what God uses to help your friend to go through their hard times in a good way! And share it with your parents, they can help find a way to change the problem.





# When You Feel Like Giving Up

by Joseph Wengerd  
Hersey, MI

Glancing up at the sun, Beto (a made-up name) quickened his already hurried pace as he approached the forest. He knew that he would need to hurry if he wanted to make it through the forest before dark. Large wildcats were known to roam in the surrounding mountains, and many were the terrifying stories of these cats attacking people in this very forest!

Entering the cool shade of the forest, Beto paused just long enough for a refreshing drink of water from the creek that meandered across the footpath.

Several hours later, as he pushed wearily onward, Beto rounded a bend in the trail and, thinking he saw a movement in the bushes ahead, stopped abruptly. In the gathering darkness Beto watched as, not thirty paces before him, the dreaded beast he so tremendously feared crept out of the bushes and turned to face him! Turning, Beto fled for his life! Hearing the padding of the wildcat's enormous paws on the forest floor behind him, Beto tried to pump his tired legs even faster. Suddenly, not being able to see the path clearly in the darkness of the forest, Beto tripped on a vine and sprawled helplessly onto the ground. Weeping bitterly, Beto concluded that it was useless to continue trying, so he lay on the ground, waiting for the inevitable. As he waited, he imagined that he could hear the sound of the wildcat moving in closer, closer, closer...

\* \* \* \* \*

Are you feeling a bit like Beto? Is there a big "something" inflicting pain in your life and you're trying to get away from it? Maybe your friends have forsaken you or a brother or sister has slandered you. Maybe someone you highly respected has trampled over you or you are experiencing difficult situations in your family. Maybe you are experiencing something painful that no one else knows about and all that others see is your "smiling" exterior, never realizing the pain you're feeling inside. Whatever it is that you're dealing with, have you, like Beto, concluded that it's useless to keep trying?

At times we experience painful situations that cause us to feel like giving up. We naturally hate pain and do our best to avoid it. Still, we meet up with some of those hard things of life. We don't want to nurse an attitude of self-pity, going through life with an "I am a victim" mentality. It would be foolish, however, to assume that there is no such thing as a victim. Sometimes people commit sins against each other. There are times when we find ourselves victims of circumstances over which we have no control.

Situations like this are painful and confusing, sometimes causing us to feel like just throwing up our hands in despair. How do we go from feeling like poor victims to being *...more than conquerors through him that loved us -Romans 8:37?*

Let's take a look at a few things that we must understand if we are to overcome these battles and continue to thrive spiritually...

### ...Unreserved surrender

We must understand the importance of unreserved surrender to the Lord Jesus Christ. This means that we are willing to serve Him for the rest of our life, no matter what the cost. We need to be aware that we will face difficulties in life (1 Peter 4:12,13). Being Christians does not give us a trial-free life. Living the life of a Christian does in fact, often bring hardships of its own. Why, then, does Jesus teach that His yoke is easy and His burden light?—*...For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light -Matthew 11:28-30.* The answer... Because He is willing to help us bear our burdens, we don't need to do it alone! If we are willing to serve the Lord only in good times, then we will soon feel like giving up when we meet hardship.

### ...Forgiveness

Usually, when we experience a difficult situation, other people are involved in some way. Sometimes hot words are exchanged, or evil action is taken, and people end up hurting each other. When we've been wronged, we know that we should forgive the person who wronged us, yet we hesitate, because we'd really like to see justice carried out. We fear that if we forgive the other person, then we will set him or her free before they realize how wrong they were,

so we choose unforgiveness!

Unforgiveness always leads to bitterness; bitterness always shackles us. Always! Bitterness often brings with it a host of other sins and causes much trouble for us and for others. (Hebrews 12:14-17) However, when we choose to forgive others, God will also forgive us (Mark 11:25,26), setting us free from the awful mess that bitterness creates in our lives. We no longer need to worry about holding the offender captive. After all, he or she is not in bondage to us. We cannot choose whether or not they will be set free. Only the Lord has the power to set someone free.

We must understand what forgiveness is or else we will find ourselves wondering whether or not we have forgiven. Following are three points that will help us understand what it really means to forgive:

### 1. Accept it

Sometimes we face difficulties as the result of our own choices and sometimes as the result of other people's choices. When other people make choices that cause pain in our life we have a hard time accepting it. We may try to fight this pain in an effort to remove it from our life, or we may try to run away from it in an effort to escape its dreadful reality. We may put up a "tough" facade to try to make others believe it's really not so bad when in reality it just plain hurts! While these reactions come naturally, we won't find relief until we've come to a place of acceptance. To accept it doesn't mean to do nothing about it but, rather, to realize that sometimes God allows painful situations in life to help us grow. (James 1:2-4) It means to trust the Lord instead of trying to figure things out on our own. (Proverbs 3:4,5) It also means to admit that we've been hurt and that we need God to help us heal.

### 2. Let it go

What's the quickest way to get rid of something you no longer want? Give it away! That's exactly what we must do with those painful burdens we sometimes find ourselves carrying. Give them to God. (1 Peter 5:6,7) It is very important, when we give our burdens to God, that we leave them there. We would feel very foolish taking a load of garbage to the local landfill, and then turning around and taking it all back home without dumping it! None of us would even consider doing such a thing. Yet, when we bring a burden to the Lord, we sometimes go through a formal ritual of telling God about it but never letting it go.

How do you let go of something that has become so much a part of you and is so painful that you can think of little else? A good place to start is to find a stable believer with whom you can comfortably converse and talk with about it. Even more importantly, talk with God about it. (Hebrews

4:14-16) It doesn't matter if you find a place to be alone with God or if you find someone to pray with you. What really matters is to find a place where you can get on your knees and tell the Lord exactly how you are feeling. You can tell Him that you feel you were treated unjustly. You can tell Him all about the pain, the confusion and the feelings of hatred and revenge that you are feeling. Make a point of telling God that you choose to forgive the offender. Be specific, mentioning the name of the offender and specific situations. This can be very painful because it brings fresh memories of difficult situations. It is a time of soul searching, forgiving, and letting go. Stay on your knees until you are at peace about the situation. It doesn't matter how long it takes as long as you get rid of that awful burden—try to not be mindful of the time. Be assured that God never ignores a plea for help! (1 Peter 3:12)

### 3. Love your enemies

Jesus commands us to love our enemies. (Matthew 5:43-48) When we have forgiven, we will genuinely love the offender the way that God loves them. According to human reasoning, this isn't possible. It's the miracle of a changed heart that causes us to love someone we once hated.

### ...Worship the Lord

Often, we don't feel like worshiping the Lord in the middle of a trial but why should we quit worshiping Him when we need Him the most? (Philippians 4:4-7) We ought to at least think of some things for which to be thankful, then thank God for them. In Acts 16, we read an account of Paul and Silas preaching in Philippi. After they had healed a demon-possessed girl they were severely beaten by the local authorities, secured in stocks, and locked in prison. Their situation must surely have felt hopeless. They were in pain, they couldn't move, and it was night. It probably felt like a dark time in their lives. In spite of all this, they prayed and sang praises to God! They were living lives of unreserved surrender to a God Whom they loved and trusted. In the end, God chose to miraculously deliver them.

Praising God in the middle of trials is only possible when Christ is reigning in our lives.

### ...Move forward

When we experience difficulties there are always things we can learn. We learn the importance of complete dependence on and unconditional surrender to the Lord. We experience, at a personal level, the comfort of God and we are called to reach out to other troubled souls with this comfort. (2 Corinthians 1:1-7)

Dear friends, remember, the next time the cares of life make you feel like giving up, bring your burden to the Lord, put it all in His hands, and let it go!



# Men of Faith

## The Fourth Article in the Discipleship Series

by Donald Brechbill  
Chambersburg, PA

**A**nd Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water. And he said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus –Matthew 14:28-29.

Men who follow Jesus are men of faith. Discipleship is not for cowards or the faint of heart, nor is it for those who demand a rationale for acts of obedience. The disciples had spent the day with Jesus. After the feeding of the five thousand Matthew writes that ...straightway Jesus constrained his disciples to get into a ship, and to go before him unto the other side, while he sent the multitudes away –Matthew 14:22.

If there was anything that the disciples were familiar with and skilled in, it was sailing the waters of Galilee. This was their territory. Peter and John had fished these waters with their father from their earliest remembrance. But tonight, they were making little headway... the wind was contrary.

And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea. And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is a spirit; and they cried out for fear. But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid –Matthew 14:25-27.

Peter then made this bold appeal ...Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water –Matthew 14:28. What was Peter thinking? He had never walked on water. Jesus was not asking him to walk on water. It was not logical. It defied the laws of nature... yet when Jesus said “come”. Peter stepped out of the boat and walked on the water to go to Jesus. That’s right! He was treading on water.

Peter was responding to a clear call from Jesus. Jesus said “come”. It is important that we understand that faith is our response to the clear call of God on our lives. Too often in our ambition to be useful we choose our path and call our ambition “faith” when God may not be in it at all.

If you want to be a man of faith, open your Bible and

pray. Ask God to reveal His plan for your life. The Bible contains many commandments that can provide practical direction for our lives. Take God at His Word. Step out in faith and obedience then you will experience the miracle of God’s power in your life.

Peter’s boat was his security. He and his boat had a long relationship. It had served him well for many years. Peter felt right at home in his old bark, although tonight she did not seem to respond well to his masterful seamanship. He had drawn many a draught of fish over her gunwales. Now as he stands on her deck watching Jesus approach, “walking on the water”, he was overcome with a desire to go to Jesus. In reckless abandonment he stepped off her deck ...and a miracle happened.

A walk of faith often calls us away from that which is familiar and secure. If we make safety and security our priority—if we limit our actions to carefully calculated risks (limited to that which we can manage and control)—we limit the power of God working in and through us.

Our forefathers in Europe knew that if they embraced the journey of unreserved discipleship, it could be costly. They risked the seizure of their property; many of them lost all that they owned. Since they willingly faced imprisonment and death, we refer to them as heroes of the faith. These were men who were willing to abandon all for the sake of the gospel. Because of their faith we receive the benefits of a godly heritage.

I commend our younger generation of Anabaptist youth for their willingness to make following Jesus a priority. In the past our priority has been to build our security base, be it our farm or business, and then consider mission work as a possibility. That was never Jesus’ model for service. When Jesus sent out his disciples he said. *And he said unto them, Take nothing for your journey, neither staves, nor scrip, neither bread, neither money; neither have two coats apiece* –Luke 9:3.

Later, after they had returned, Jesus asked them, *And he said unto them, When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye any thing? And they said, Nothing* –Luke 22:35.

You do not need to go into foreign missions to experience the power of God released in your life. Every act of radical obedience is an act of faith. There are men in our Anabaptist communities who are experiencing moral defeat. If we are going to succumb to a victim mentality (“I can’t help it”), and define moral failure as an addiction, we set ourselves up for ongoing defeat. Men of faith are men of action who take measurable steps of obedience which will lead them to ultimate victory. Moral failure begins with small compromises that end in crushing defeat.

Peter’s actions were not logical. If Peter would have processed his decision using the scientific method, he would not have taken such a risk. Many of the simple commands of Christ have no apparent scientific reasoning. From baptism, to communion, to foot washing, to anointing with oil, these are all acts of faith. The significance and the power of each lies in the doing of it with a heart of obedient faith, not in the thing itself.

So it is with many aspects of the Christian experience. We can analyze a thing endlessly, ultimately resulting in its demise. This happens in many churches. We reason away the woman’s head covering. We reason away the nonconformed lifestyle. We reason away the permanence of marriage. We reason away brotherhood accountability. What we have left has no resemblance to the simple teachings of Jesus. Discipleship calls us to faithful obedience. Jesus and the apostles taught it, so we do it. The blessing and the power lie in the doing of it.

That is what Peter discovered. He walked on water! He did not dip a toe to test the water first. I like to think he leaped from the boat and hit the water with both feet. That would be faith and Peter had faith.

*But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me. And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt? And when they were come into the ship, the wind ceased* –Matthew 14:30-32.

Peter had faith to walk on water until he began to look around and began to process his situation using the scientific method. This is not to invalidate the scientific method. The scientific method proves the order of creation and the evidence of a creator.

In Hebrews 11 we read that ...*faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen* –Hebrews 11:1.

It is our faith that is the substance and our faith that is the

evidence of spiritual realities. Just as the scientific method proves the realities of the created world, so our faith proves spiritual realities.

Boisterous wind and crashing waves produced a fearful, sinking Peter. We sometimes criticize Peter for taking his eyes off of Jesus and sinking into the waves; however, Peter walked on water, I know of no one else who walked on water. When we transition from obedient faith to carnal rationalization, we lose power with God.

Are we suggesting that faith is irrational? No, not at all. As a matter of fact, the first act of faith is to believe that Jesus is the logos. John wrote, *In the beginning was the Word [Logos], and the Word [Logos], was with God, and the Word [Logos], was God* –John 1:1. It is from the Greek word Logos that we get our English word logic.

Just as there are laws in nature that make the scientific method durable and replicable, so there are spiritual laws that give order and cohesion to our inner man. Jesus is the embodiment of these truths. His teachings are the revelation of these truths and through his death and resurrection these truths have become accessible to all. Jesus promised, *Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth...* –John 16:13.

Men of faith are men who have eyes to see these spiritual realities. Their vision is not limited to the natural world. They understand that there are spiritual realities that have “cause and effect” in our lives that are every bit as powerful as the “cause and effect” that we see about us in the natural world every day.

These realities are only visible to men of faith. Paul wrote, *But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned* –1 Corinthians 2:14. Men of faith, are men whose lives are governed by spiritual realities that are incomprehensible to the natural man. If you will be a man of faith, expect to be misunderstood. You are embarking on a journey that will run counter to the world view of many.

As Peter began to sink into the waves he cried out, “Lord, save me”. His plaintive cry revealed an absolute trust in his Lord. Jesus reached out His hand and rescued him. Jesus next words continue to challenge us. He said to Peter, ...*O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt? Matthew 14:31*. Peter had just walked on water—a feat no man had accomplished before or since, yet Jesus called it “little faith” and asked, “why did you doubt?”

Jesus said at another time, ...*If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you* –Matthew 17:20.



If Peter's "little faith" empowered him to walk on water, and if faith as tiny as a grain of mustard seed can remove mountains what does that say of your and my faith?

Perhaps it is evidence that our faith is *littler* than Peter's "little faith" and *tinier* than the tiny grain of mustard seed?! It is also evidence that God honors little faith. What he does not honor is no faith. According to your faith be it unto you. Little faith...walk on water! No faith...sink beneath the waves!

Since Jesus is the "Logos", He is the master of the natural world and the spirit world. He proved himself to be the Master of the wind and the waves—*and when they were come into the ship, the wind ceased*—*Matthew 14:32*. And He proved Himself to be the Master of the spirit world—*then they that were in the ship came and worshipped him, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God*—*Matthew 14:33*.

We, in our western world, have become so satiated with materialism that we can easily be led to believe that natural realities are the most powerful realities. This materialism assaults us, not just with the abundance of material things, but also with a bombardment of humanistic philosophy. Humanistic philosophy is thinking that is devoid of spiritual

reality... that is devoid of faith.

If you, as a man, find yourself sinking in waves of despair... be it financial struggles... be it relational difficulties... moral failure or maybe you find yourself being your own worst critic...may I challenge you to lift your eyes to the one who is Logos. Jesus is the one who is master of your circumstances and the one who would be Lord of your soul. To allow Jesus to be Lord of your soul is to live in faith obedience to the radical teachings of Jesus.

To live in harmony with the natural world we honor the laws of nature. When we are replacing a roof, we respect the law of gravity. When driving a vehicle, we slow down for turns out of respect for the law of inertia. Defy the natural laws and someone gets hurt.

To live in harmony with the spiritual world, we honor the law of Christ. We love our neighbor. We forgive our brother. We keep our marriage vows. We bear *...one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ*—*Galatians 6:2*.

Men of faith are men who are attune to these spiritual realities and order their lives accordingly.

# Abide With Me, Fast Falls The Eventide

by Joel A Hostetler  
Coshocton, OH

This hymn is generally considered to be one of the greatest hymns ever written and is found in nearly every hymnal or book of hymns published today. It was written by a man who was frail in body, but strong in spirit. It was he who coined the phrase, "It is better to wear out than to rust out." Let us now take a glimpse into the life of this servant of God.

Henry Francis Lyte, the author of this great and noteworthy hymn, was born June 1, 1793, in Ednam, near Kelso, Scotland. At a young age, he was left an orphan and was in comparative poverty. He was educated at Trinity College in Dublin, Ireland. It was there that his gift of poetry began to appear, winning him three prizes. His primary goal with his studies was to become a physician, instead, by the providence of God, he became a minister of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

One day in Cornwall, a fellow clergyman who was on his deathbed, requested that Lyte would come and give him some spiritual comfort. "To their mutual grief, they found themselves [both] groping for the light, veritable blind guides". As they searched for truth and assurance of salvation, they fixed their faith on Christ, and Lyte came away from that sickroom a changed man, never to be the same again. It is said that it was his encounter with God at the bedside of that dying man that prompted Lyte's noble hymn, "Jesus, I My Cross Have Taken." In the year 1823, Henry F. Lyte took charge of a seashore parish, Lower Brixham, in Devonshire, England. It was at that place where he spent the last 23 years of his life toiling as a pastor for the spiritual good of the poor fishing people and the rough seafaring men of that region until his death in the fall of 1847. For all of Henry's dedication and labor, he received a reward: having a Sunday school of several hundred scholars, as well as "a splendid company of seventy or eighty teachers,

personally trained by him."

Throughout his lifetime, his health was continually threatened by asthma and tuberculosis. Notwithstanding his physical frailties, he worked tirelessly with an established reputation as a poet, musician, and minister. Wherever he went, he was greatly loved and admired by his people. Toward the end of these later years, his health became gradually worse. So it was that during the winter months, he felt compelled to seek a warmer climate in Italy, which is a part of southern Europe.

Though he was greatly weakened by his sickness, on September 4, 1847, as Lyte was about to leave to head southward, he was arrested by an "irresistible desire" to preach once more to his congregation. He dearly loved these people and he had labored among them for so many years. "Against the protest of his amazed friends, he accomplished this purpose, and it is recorded that Lyte nearly had to crawl to the pulpit and his message came as from a dying man." "O brethren," he said, as he entered the familiar pulpit for the last time, "I stand here among you today, as alive from the dead, if I may hope to impress it upon you, and induce you to prepare for that solemn hour which must come to all, by a timely appreciation and dependance on the death of Christ." These final words made a deep impact upon his congregation, after which he closed the service by administering the Lord's Supper to his weeping people. Later that evening, after the service, he was inspired to "poetical composition" and wrote the eight stanzas of his last and greatest hymn:

Abide with me: fast falls the eventide;  
The darkness deepens; Lord, with me abide:  
when other helpers fail, and comforts flee,  
Help of the helpless, O abide with me.



Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day;  
 Earth's joys grow dim, its glories pass away;  
 Change and decay in all around I see;  
 O Thou who changest not, abide with me.

Not a brief glance I beg, a passing word;  
 But, as Thou dwell'st with Thy disciples, Lord,  
 Familiar, condescending, patient, free,  
 Come, not to sojourn, but abide, with me.

Come not in terrors, as the King of kings;  
 But kind and good, with healing in Thy wings;  
 Tears for all woes, a heart for every plea;  
 Come, Friend of sinners, and thus 'bide with me.

Thou on my head in early youth didst smile;  
 And, though rebellious and perverse meanwhile,  
 thou hast not left me, oft as I left thee:  
 On to the close, O Lord, abide with me.

I need Thy presence every passing hour;  
 What but Thy grace can foil the tempter's power?  
 Who like Thyself my guide and stay can be?  
 Through cloud and sunshine, O abide with me.

I fear no foe, with Thee at hand to bless:  
 Ills have no weight, and tears no bitterness.  
 Where is death's sting? Where, grave, thy victory?  
 I triumph still, if Thou abide with me.

Hold Thou Thy cross before my closing eyes;  
 Shine through the gloom, and point me to the skies;  
 Heaven's morning breaks, and earth's vain shadows flee:  
 In life, in death, O Lord, abide with me.

This hymn he gave to one of the family members that very night. Leaving the following day, he began his trek to Rome, Italy, hoping to gain some relief from his sickness. Lyte make it as far as Nice, France where his sickness prevented

his further travel. He passed away soon after the age of 55, on November 20, 1847. His last words were "Joy! Peace!"

The scene behind this hymn is that of the resurrected Christ Jesus walking on the road to Emmaus with two of His somewhat sad and discouraged disciples. As they neared the end of their seven-mile walk and approached the village where they were going, Jesus ...*made as though he would have gone further. But they constrained him, saying, Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. And he went in to tarry with them* - Luke 24:28-29.

We can draw a parallel between that scene and Henry F. Lyte's own experience of drawing toward the close of his earthly journey. Thus, as the disciples besought the risen Lord to abide with them in the close of that ancient day, so was the meaning of this song written in the "shadows of death" to the hymn writer.

Lyte himself composed a tune for this hymn on the same evening that he wrote it, but it never became widely used. However, the tune universally used was written fourteen years later by William Henry Monk, a noted London musician, and editor of the well-known Anglican hymnal, *Hymns Ancient and Modern*. He included this song in his first edition, which was published in 1861.

In all, William H. Monk composed 50 tunes for the hymnal. It is said that Monk, being "inspired by the beauty of a glorious sunset while yet experiencing a deep personal sorrow," composed (in only 10 minutes) the tune, *Eventide*, for the song, "Abide With Me, Fast Falls The Eventide". William Monk also wrote the music for other familiar hymns such as "Look, Ye Saints! The Sight Is Glorious", and "The Strife Is O'er".

To summarize, Henry Lyte experienced many sorrows during his lifetime. Both of his parents died at an early age leaving him an orphan. And his own sickness and frailty caused him to be in ongoing danger of asthma and tuberculosis. Yet, in spite of all his trials, we find in him a resilient spirit to reach out to others; to touch and minister the Gospel to those poor people among whom he lived. "In no other writer," says Dr. Breed (in the *Treasury of Hymn Stories*), "are poetry and religion more exquisitely united."

**References:**

- 101 Hymn Stories,*
- Treasury of Hymn Stories*
- Author- Henry Francis Lyte, 1793-1847
- Composer- William Henry Monk, 1823-1889
- Tune Name - "Eventide"

**FELLOWSHIP WITH CHRIST**

*Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. - Lk. 24:29*

**644 ABIDE WITH ME, FAST FALLS THE EVENTIDE**  
EVENTIDE 10. 10. 10. 10.

Henry F. Lyte, 1847 William H. Monk, 1861

## Financial Summary for 2022

1. In the year 2022, we printed 24,000 copies of *The Heartbeat of the Remnant* (*The Remnant*) magazine.
  2. It cost us \$27,685 to produce the four issues of *The Remnant* in 2022, and \$50,571 to print and ship them. These costs are covered by the freewill offerings of God's people.
  3. We freely provide *The Remnant* even if a recipient has no means to provide a contribution.
  4. We provide bulk mailings of *The Remnant* to churches and to individuals who hand them out as a ministry tool.
  5. This year, 54 churches and 3,840 individuals received the magazine by mail.
  6. The actual cost of each magazine issue is \$3.21.
- If you desire a detailed financial report, please write or email (see contact information inside the front cover of each magazine issue).
  - We want to thank and bless our contributors who have made the work possible through their prayers and financial contributions. We are grateful to you.



# Understanding Submission

by Leora Schmucker  
Harlan, IN

In the last couple of years, something that God has been working on in my heart is the area of submission. I don't want to look back in a wrong way, but I see where I have failed my husband in the role that God has given for me to function as his helper, one that is meet for him. As I have been thinking about my own life, I have come to realize how important our role is as Christian women, in our homes and in the lives of our children.

I realize that our children are going to need to make their own decision when it comes to being a disciple of Christ, but my desire is that I am not the reason that our children rebel against the Word of God. When we honor our husbands the way that God has taught in His Word, the example of our lives will draw the unbelieving to Christ. In the flesh, we will not be able to honor our husbands in a way that will bring glory to God, but with Christ we can do all things according to His will.

I have a burden about this because in the last couple of months I have noticed how much our homes are under constant attack from the enemy of our souls, as he tries to use our flesh and the world. As I write on this, I don't feel that I will do justice to it, so I will just write some of my thoughts and pray that all who read this article will be encouraged in their marriages to honor, respect, and love their husbands.

- *Nevertheless let ... the wife see that she reverence her husband* –Ephesians 5:33.
- *Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands...* –1 Peter 3:1.
- *Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are...* –1 Peter 3:6.
- *Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord* –Ephesians 5:22.
- *But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God* –1 Corinthians 11:3.
- *Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority*

*over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression* –1 Timothy 2:11-14.

- *Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be [subject] to their own husbands in every thing* –Ephesians 5:24.
- *Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law* –1 Corinthians 14:34.

These Scriptures are not my own, but God's. He gives us His Word to read and to live by because that is the only way we will be able to have peace and harmony in our homes. Even more importantly, the ONLY way that we can have a clear conscience before God is when we are in the center of His will.

When we think of submission, what comes to mind? Do we think that if we submit, we will be taken advantage of? Do we think that we are wiser than our husbands? I know to the flesh this sounds kind of hard, but if we could only realize that if we don't allow our husbands to lead out and make decisions, we are only crippling them. The reality is that if our husbands make mistakes, it is okay because we ourselves make mistakes as well. Also, if we are born again, and we are walking with God, but our husbands are not, God will still take care of us. The Scriptures teach that if our husband is not in his place, then through the wife walking according to the clear teaching that God has given her in His Word, the husband can be won through her conversation (or by the way she conducts her life).

We need to trust God with our whole lives, even in the area of our marriage. God is a God of order. Think of how God desires the children to honor the parents and the parents to not provoke their children to anger; it's no different in the husband-and-wife relationship. The husband is to love his wife as Christ loves the church, and the wife is to reverence her husband.

In the beginning, God created male and female. He created

Adam and said that it was not good for man to be alone; then He created woman from the rib of Adam's side. God's heart in the beginning was that man and woman would be one, and together they would walk with God and glorify Him. Then through Adam and Eve yielding to temptation, sin was brought into the world. Whenever we are struggling in our marriage, I am reminded how it was Eve that first yielded to the serpent's temptation. Let us as wives be quick to examine our own hearts to be sure that we are in our place. When situations arise, how often are we as women tempted to think that we know better and could handle the situation better than our husbands.

God has designed our husbands to be our protector if we stay under them. I realize that we are imperfect, and that makes it more challenging to submit to our husbands. However, I believe that when we are born again by the Spirit of God, His love in us enables us to submit to our husbands. I also realize that there are a lot of broken homes. My encouragement to anyone who is in a less than ideal situation is to sincerely pray... first for yourself that you can walk in a blameless way and also for your husband that he would be what God has designed him to be—not what you think he should be. Many times, we get confused about this and it causes us to have bad thoughts about our husbands.

Titus gives us sisters clear direction from God. *The aged women likewise, that they be ... teachers of good things; That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed* –Titus 2:3-5.

Another temptation that we women face is to compare our husbands with other men. Perhaps we tell our husbands that this other man wouldn't do such and such the way you do, or the way he does something is better than the way you do. Maybe we don't even say these words, but our actions can tell our husbands a lot. God's Word teaches us to be obedient to our own husbands, and not another. Each husband is gifted in a different way, and that is why each wife is especially suited for their husband. *And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help [helper, aid, supporter] meet [suitable, appropriate, complementary] for him* –Genesis 2:18.

*That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children* –Titus 2:4. The word "love," in *to love their husbands* means "to be affectionately fond of their man" as compared to the word "love" in *to love their children* which means "to have a maternal fondness for one's children". What kind of love are we showing our husbands? Can our husbands trust us that we only have their good in mind, or do we pretend to love in order to get something in return? True love will forgive in spite of failures, even when we think the pain is too great to bear. True love will cause us to pray for ourselves and our husbands when we feel differently about something than they do. True love will not cause us to despair, rather it will cause us to seek God even more.

When we are tempted to speak about our husbands' faults to others, let us not yield to that temptation but let's pray for them. Would we appreciate our husbands talking about our faults to other people? Also, pray for discernment to know if, and when, to speak to someone about a sin that your husband may be involved in. Let us not rail on or nag our husbands when difficulties arise. Instead, let us ask God to work in our lives and give the problem to Him and let it there. Our husbands are only too human, just as we are. If we fail at times, then we must not be surprised that they too might fail at times as well. I think what makes our marriages perfect is that we learn to forgive one another and press on to be one together.

*Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation [conduct] of the wives; While they behold your chaste [modest, innocent, perfect, pure] conversation coupled with fear. Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement [terror]. Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered* –1 Peter 3:1-2 & 3:6-7.

One of the first times that this verse became real to us was when our first child was around five months old. We were quite a ways from home and he started crying with a lot of pain. We prayed for him, but he still cried. We could not figure out what was wrong, so we took him into the ER. They told us that he had an ear infection and gave us medication. However, he still cried. We had a ten-hour journey home, and he cried the whole way. After we had gotten home, my husband and I discovered that there were some unresolved things between us. After we confessed our wrongs to each other and to God, we prayed again for our son. Immediately after we prayed, our son quit crying. I know not every situation turns out like this one did, but God taught us that we need to be open with each other with no hidden sin, that our prayers be not hindered.

Some questions that could be asked are: What are our children seeing in our homes? Do they see Mom reverencing their dad with joy or with fear? Do they see Mom being appropriately affectionate with her husband, such as through kind words, seeking to love the things that he loves, holding hands, etc. (I have come to realize that it is difficult to hold hands with my husband if there is something between us.) Does Mom question, challenge, or criticize what Dad does?

As our own children are growing older and into their youth years, I see how important it is that these principles are lived out in our homes. If we openly question our husband's authority, I believe we are sowing a seed in our children that they too will question their dad's authority. Ultimately, in the time that we live, we are seeing a generation that is questioning everything about God's created order—there is gender confusion, evolution, and rebellion against authority in general. I have often wondered if perhaps



the reason that we see so much rebellion in our plain churches is because of God's order not being lived out in our homes.

There was a friend of ours who told us that if there would be one Christian principle that he thought would have the most impact on the home, it would be the principle of the headship order. We have a dear friend who had become a Christian before her husband. She went through a lot of difficult times, but she continued to love and reverence her husband. She fasted and prayed for many years for her husband. Today her husband will testify that it was because of his wife's godly conduct that drew him to repentance and faith in Christ.

Another example with a different outcome... I know of a couple that didn't have a solid marriage. The husband was not in his place and the wife became bitter, so bitter in fact, that she said that when she is buried in the grave, she doesn't want to be buried beside her husband. This much bitterness has had a terrible effect on their children. I wondered if she had not become bitter, if she could have at least spared her children from the many heartaches that they have suffered.

I also know of another couple where both of them were badly mistreated by close family, but they chose not to become bitter. They drew closer to God and to each other through those valleys and they are reaping the benefits of the fruit of their choices to this day.

Even closer to home... I grew up in a home that was not a Christian home. Neither of my parents were born again. When they began to allow God to work in their hearts, I could see it. I would come home from gatherings and see my dad weeping as he was reading his Bible. Also, on one particular evening I came home and saw my parents sitting at the table and they were singing together. I will testify that this had a tremendous effect on my life. I could also see my own mother desiring to be in her place as God had designed her to be. When we pass from this life, what will our family say about us? Will they testify that the love of God reigned in our mortal bodies?

On a practical note, I thought I would write a few ways that we can show that we love our husbands in deed and not just in word.

- Asking them for advice (not just going on what we think)
- Fixing their favorite foods
- Keeping the house orderly and neat
- Being ready and willing to drop our plans to help our husbands with whatever they need
- Meeting them at the door with a smile (no matter how bad of day we may have had)
- Keeping the house quiet, even with little children, when he's trying to rest or study
- Teaching our children proper manners in relating to each other in the home

- Teaching our children to love and respect their father, even if he isn't always perfect

Another challenge I wish to give to each married sister is to think of something that you can tell your husband that you are blessed about with him, Try doing this every day for two weeks. It's amazing what effect kindness can have on a marriage. Maybe to some this would seem like drudgery, but it's not. I am amazed that as we get older, how much we think alike, even sometimes finishing each other's sentences. I realize there is so much more that could have been written. I trust that God will continue to open His Word to us as we seek Him.

Editor's Note:

I was one who struggled majorly and for years with not knowing how to submit and yet wanting to. Following is my attempt to share what God has been teaching me.

One of the main reasons that many people struggle with "submission" is that they don't really understand what God means with the subject—they don't understand the reality of biblical submission. Usually, a person knows what they believe on a certain subject, so in their mind when they are being asked to "submit" on that point, they think they are being asked to compromise their personal belief—or sin against their conscience.

The answer is two-fold.

First, if two people agree on an issue, then there is no need for anyone to submit. Thus, to submit does not mean that the person submitting is necessarily changing their mind, rather they are choosing to support the other person's decision based on the fact that God says that that person is the one He is holding responsible for the decisions of that party—whether it be a couple, the home, a school, a church, etc.

Second, God knew that whenever there would be more than one person discussing a decision that needs to be made, that it would always mean that the one would end up submitting to the other. Therefore, to provide clarity in responsibility, He gives clear direction regarding whom He considers the responsible person (the spiritual authority) in each type of situation—the husband in a marriage, the father in the family, the man (the head) in the home, the ordained leaders in the church, the schoolteachers/principal in the school setting, etc. That way everyone can know who God sees as responsible for any mistakes that are made.

Consider that even though Eve took the fruit and ate it first, and then gave it to her husband to eat, God provides us with clarity regarding who He holds responsible for that failure (sin). *Wherefore, as by one man [not one woman] sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned ... Nevertheless death reigned from Adam [not from Eve] to Moses, even over them [Adam's descendants—all of the human race] that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression... -Romans 5:12-14.*

So, we see that God provides protection and security to all those who are under authority if they stay under that authority. The one who God clearly states as being the authority figure in each relationship will always be the one that God holds responsible for decisions made by that group of people. Just like in the fall in the Garden of Eden, sins of omission and of commission within each family will be primarily held to dad's account. Whether dad was giving wrong direction to the family or if he was not giving direction at all, it doesn't matter, he will still be held to account since God sees the man as being the head of his home. (see 1 Corinthians 11:3 and Romans 13:12)

# Cancer... What Is It?

by Vincent "John" Waldron MD  
Gladys, VA

Part 1 of 2

"Why don't we have a cure for cancer yet?" My patient asked me.

I shrugged. "There are lots of different kinds of cancer," I said. "For some, there are cures, while for others we are still learning how best to treat them."

"I think," my patient said with the confidence that he was supposedly sharing a top-secret theory. "I think there actually is a cure for cancer, but the drug companies just don't want us to know about it."

I shook my head. "I think we are doing the best we can," I told him. "We've come a long way when it comes to treatment of cancer, but we still have a long way to go."

Cancer is a scary illness. One Christian man told me that he wasn't afraid of dying, but if he had a choice, he would choose almost any other way to go than to die of cancer.

More than that, it is something that seems mysterious. More people seem to be getting it, yet no one really knows why.

In this article, I would like to take some time to explore what cancer is, and to discuss cancer screening tests. In the second part (in the next issue) Lord willing, I will discuss some of the treatments available for cancers.

I will mention here that I am a family doctor. I have cared for many patients with cancer, but I am certainly not an oncologist, nor do I know everything about cancer. What I understand, I am willing to share.

## What is Cancer?

As with many things, we can trace the beginnings of cancer back to the fall of man in the Garden of Eden. We know that God created humans perfectly. As originally created, not only did they not have cancer, but they also would not have gotten it either.

In order to understand what cancer is, we need to understand how normal tissue and cells behave.

Normal cells live for a period of time and then die. This process is called apoptosis. It makes certain that there is a

constant turnover of cells. It also prevents one type of cell from getting "out of line" and beginning to grow in a place where it doesn't belong.

Every time our cells divide, they copy their DNA into the daughter cells. Usually this happens without error, but occasionally there is an error in the copy process. We call these errors *mutations*.

Cancer cells are cells that have lost the normal brakes on their behavior. Because of mutations in their DNA, they no longer have a limited life span, nor do they observe the limits of where they belong within the body. Instead, they begin to encroach on surrounding tissues, pulling in additional blood supply and nutrients in the process.

Cancer cells can enlarge locally, or they can spread through the lymphatic system or circulatory system to distant parts of the body. When cancer cells end up in other locations than where they originated, we call it metastases.

The type of cancer is determined by the type of cell that is multiplying out of control. Doctors don't generally talk about "skin cancer," even though there are cancers that originate in skin cells. Instead, they classify these cancers into basal cell carcinoma, squamous cell carcinoma, and melanoma—each one referring to a different kind of skin cell. Each one of these skin cancers acts differently. Basal cell carcinoma and squamous cell carcinoma get bigger in a local area and seldom spread elsewhere, while melanoma is very prone to spreading to other parts of the body.

Additionally, how a cancer responds to treatment is going to be based on the type of cell that it comes from, not simply the organ where it originates.

## Causes of Mutations...

We do not know how common cancer was in the days before the flood. I would speculate that it was fairly rare.

We know that before the flood, men lived to be very old—often into their 900s. Mutations must have been rare. Their DNA was closer to the original genetic specimen of mankind (and thus, to perfection) than ours is in the 21<sup>st</sup>



century (AD) Therefore, the chance of genes mutating and abnormal genes popping up was much less than it is now.

### ...Environmental Factors

Beyond that, something must have happened around the time of the flood that increased the rate of mutations. Perhaps there was an increase in radiation levels. Maybe there were genetic changes that gradually caused cancer to show up.

Cancer is not mentioned in the Bible, although it is possible that Hezekiah's "boil" could have been some kind of cancerous growth. It is also possible that some of the diseases that affected the Philistines when the ark of the covenant was in their land were cancerous tumors.

People began dying at younger ages after the flood and by soon after the time of Abraham, they were seldom living much past their one hundredth year.

Today, we know that things which damage a cell's copying mechanism and its DNA increase the risk of cancer. The most well-known of these is radiation.

After the atomic bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, survivors were noted to have significant increases in certain kinds of cancer. Leukemia (cancer of the blood) was the most common type of cancer, followed by cancer of stomach, lung, liver, and breast.

Radiation isn't something that most people deal with on a regular basis. However, if you work in an x-ray department or if you needed to have radiation to treat some type of cancer, it is possible that you have been exposed to much higher levels of radiation than the general public.

There are plenty of other things that are associated with increases in cancers. Exposure to ultraviolet light increases the risk of skin cancer and is a big reason why doctors recommend sunscreen and protective clothing while enjoying the sunshine to limit ultraviolet exposure.

Finally, there are plenty of chemicals that are present in different types of work that can increase the risk of cancer.

### ...Unhealthy Foods

Foods that are high in nitrites increase the risk of intestinal cancers. Nitrites are typically present in smoked and cured meats. So, to be healthy, people should limit their intake of these foods to none or at the very least, a very limited percentage of the overall diet.

### ...Certain Prior Diseases

Another thing to mention is that certain types of infections can increase the risk of cancer. Epstein Barr virus, which causes infectious mononucleosis, has been associated with certain kinds of lymphoma. Hepatitis B and C increase the risk of hepatocellular carcinoma (liver cancer). And *Helicobacter pylori* infections in the stomach are associated

with stomach cancers.

It is important to remember that just because someone has had one of these viruses it will not necessarily cause them to get cancer from that infection. Rather, it simply increases the risk that the person infected will get cancer at some point in the future.

### ...Unhealthy Habits

One last thing to mention is that certain toxins dramatically increase the risk of cancer. An obvious one is tobacco use, which strongly increases the risk of lung cancer, throat cancer, and even bladder cancer. Alcohol is another risk factor. Alcohol increases the risk of mouth and throat cancers, gastrointestinal cancers, and liver cancer. There really isn't a safe amount of exposure to either of these toxic agents, but certainly the higher the level of exposure, the worse it is.

### Screening for Cancer

There are many tests available that claim to be able to screen for a variety of cancers. Most of them are at least a little effective at identifying cancers at an early stage. However, there are a few problems with some of them which indicate that a certain test is ineffective at truly helping with the screening process.

A good place to start is to simply think about what a perfect screening test would look like. This will help us to see where tests might be beneficial or not.

A perfect screening test is going to have a number of features. First, it will have no false positive or false negative results. In other words, everyone who tests positive with the test will have cancer and those who test negative will not have cancer. Next, the test will identify the cancer at a point early enough in its development that it is easy to treat. The test will be cheap and minimally invasive, and it will require minimal exposure to radiation.

Unfortunately, no test that we currently do for screening totally meets these criteria.

For one thing, many tests produce both false positive and negative tests. These are both problems. The issue with a false negative test is obvious—it leads to someone thinking they don't have cancer when they really do. A false positive test on the other hand leads to higher anxiety levels along with the cost and dangers from whatever ongoing testing is necessary to let a patient know that they don't really have cancer.

An example of a bad test, in this respect, is the CEA-125. CEA-125 is a chemical that is made by some types of cancer. Oncologists use this level to track a patient's response to chemotherapy.

It would make sense that you could use this as a screening

test for these cancers, but it simply doesn't work. Many people have elevated CEA levels, even though they don't have cancer and on the other side, plenty of GI (gastro-intestinal) cancers don't make this chemical at all. Testing lots of people with CEA-125 testing will lead to more scans and biopsies, but it is doubtful if it would have a significant impact on death rates from cancer.

Another issue has to do with a particular cancer itself. In order for a test to be helpful, the cancer needs to have a long progression through precancerous stages until finally it develops into full-blown cancer.

An example is colon cancer. Most people who develop colon cancer have precancerous polyps several years before they get the cancer. This is why colonoscopies can be effective at preventing the progression to colon cancer.

If a patient has a colonoscopy, the doctor can detect the presence of polyps. More than that, he can remove the polyps through the scope, hopefully stopping the progression to cancer.

One last, related point is that there needs to be some benefit to early detection of cancer. If a new test can detect cancer six months earlier than existing tests, people will live an average of six months longer with the cancer than before, even if nothing else changes.

The question is whether diagnosing the cancer earlier leads to more effective treatment. Can you take it out before it spreads to the lymph glands and thereby completely avoid the need for chemotherapy?

If treatment and response rates are the same regardless of the stage at which you diagnose a cancer, then screening doesn't really make sense.

The United States Preventive Services Task Force is a volunteer panel of experts that have reviewed the literature on a variety of tests. Based on the studies that have been conducted regarding the available tests, they make recommendations about the various tests and how often to use them.

This panel tends to be more conservative in their recommendations than many cancer societies. For instance, they recommend **every other year** for the use of mammograms for women between the ages of 50 and 75, as compared to the **yearly** screening recommended by other groups.

With each recommendation they give a grade of how good the studies are which support that specific recommendation, along with links for those studies. Their recommendations

are well researched. This is helpful for low-risk people trying to decide what testing to do. If someone has a high risk because of family history or exposures, their recommendations are less helpful.

### Cancer Challenges

People often discuss cancer as though it was a single entity. As before mentioned, cancer is not just one thing. Skin cancer behaves differently from lymphoma, which in turn behaves differently from sarcomas. The chance that there will ever be a single treatment for all cancer—the "Cure for Cancer" which people talk about, is unlikely.

An even bigger challenge when dealing with cancer cells is that they are very similar to our normal cells. Basically, we are trying to poison the cancer just a little more than the rest of our normal tissues. There are a number of different treatments that are currently available. In Part 2, we will address some of the different options available today and some others that may become available in the future.

### Final Thoughts

There are a few things that come to mind when contemplating the subject of cancer.

We do not need to live in fear or make choices out of fear. *Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness –Isaiah 41:10.*

I don't think that we should fatalistically allow anything to happen that might, simply because it is "God's will." We need to make wise choices, then having done so, we should not live in a state of anxiety.

*Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek;) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof –Matthew 6:31-34.*

Finally, if we can, through wise decisions, prevent a certain cancer from forming or spreading, that seems like a reasonable goal. None of us will live forever in this body, but if we can die of something other than cancer, that seems like a good goal too. May God give us wisdom to care for the body which He has given us.



# The Haven of Rest

by Lee Rufener  
Athens, WI

And there arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship, so that it was now full. And he was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow: and they awake him, and say unto him, Master, carest thou not that we perish? And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. And he said unto them, Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no faith? And they feared exceedingly, and said one to another, What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him? Mark 4:37-41

Many times, I have read this passage and wondered what we are to derive from it. It seems to be a story that generates more questions than it solves. We often like to think of Jesus as the relational form of the Godhead; a sort of go-between, between us and the Almighty God. But here, in our scriptural passage, His behavior is almost unthinkable in human terms. How could Christ sleep in such a storm, much less in a boat filling with water? We can believe that He is Master of the wind and seas, and they must bow at His command, but does He expect us to do the same? Would our compassionate Christ expect us to be calm and fearless in such dire straits? Is all exhibition of fear the fruit of our lack of faith? These probing questions are disturbing, for we all would hope that our faith in Him is strong enough to secure our salvation, yet experience has taught us that our own walk through the troublesome pastures of life has produced nothing more noble than the harrowing bleating of the disciples.

Why are ye so fearful? How is it that ye have no faith? The questions seem almost out of place coming from our Saviour, almost as though He is not as patient and longsuffering as we had hoped. But Christ has placed a definitive expectation upon His disciples that is not beyond their attainment. Was He calling on them to rebuke the storm themselves? Should they have awakened Him sooner? Did he expect them to quietly row on in confident assurance? The Scripture here supplies us with few answers, but we do know that there is an abiding lesson here concerning fear and faith.

Storms are a common part of life, and no major dilemma is pleasant. While Paul sailed toward Rome, they experienced a time ... *when neither sun nor stars in many days appeared, and no small tempest lay on us, all hope that we should be saved was then taken away* –Acts 27:20. In the midst of a cloudy and hopeless situation there is one bell that continues to toll clear and bright: There is a peace that can be apprehended even in the most dreadful circumstances. Paul had spent a precarious ... *night and a day I have been in the deep* –2 Corinthians 11:25, yet he did not demand the wind and sea to submit to his authority. Rather, he states that in the midst of the storm ... *there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve, Saying, Fear not, Paul...* –Acts 27:23-24. This is a scene similar to the peril being endured by the disciples (in our text for today) yet we see a different outcome. Paul was comforted and commended while the disciples received rebuke.

While bobbing about in the clutches of a potential watery grave, the disciples cried out: ... *Master, carest thou not that we perish?* –Mark 4:38. How natural it is for us all to thrust our frustration and blame upon another. To think that some apathetic person is shirking their responsibility is very disheartening. In like fashion ... *the shipmaster came to him [Jonah], and said unto him, What meanest thou, O sleeper? arise, call upon thy God, if so be that God will think upon us, that we perish not* –Jonah 1:6.

There seems to be an edge to the shipmaster's rebuke very similar to the disciple's response to the sleeping Jesus. Christ finds no pleasure in allowing trouble to visit us, but there seems to be no other veritable vehicle of grace wherewith His peace can flood our souls. If there first be no valley, how shall we value the mountaintop? If there be no thorns, how shall we enjoy the rose? If there first be no storm, how shall we appreciate the calm? Paul suffered the same despair being ... *pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life* –2 Corinthians 1:8. Yet he carried within his breast a visionary anchor for his soul.

*For he commandeth, and raiseth the stormy wind, which lifteth up the waves thereof. They mount up to the heaven,*

*they go down again to the depths: their soul is melted because of trouble. They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wits' end. Then they cry unto the LORD in their trouble, and he bringeth them out of their distresses. He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still. Then are they glad because they be quiet; so he bringeth them unto their **desired haven*** –Psalm 107:25-30.

## The Desired Haven...

Somehow, we have embraced the thought that the desired haven of rest is an earthly euphoric utopia void of any storms. The shipmaster in charge of guiding the vessel en route to Rome thought that ... *the haven was not commodious to winter in ... supposing that they had obtained their purpose...* –Acts 27:12-13, so he set sail at the first hint of approval from the soft south wind. But the haven Christ promotes is a harbor that is free from fretful fear and fledgling faith. This is a *peace ... not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid* –John 14:27. This rest is ours to be had just by sailing with Christ and trusting Him to guide us through each storm.

The tenacious storms of adversity can arise without warning as quickly as ... *a tempestuous wind, called Euroclydon* –Acts 27:14. These tempestuous winds carry an amazing audacity to jolt any relationship. To feel tense and alert in the midst of stressful situations is but human nature. Our central medulla gland unleashes a powerful hormone called adrenaline into our system, our muscles become tense, our mind focuses, so that we are aroused and prepared for fight or flight. This is not necessarily anxiety but a natural response. As humans, we have a divine capacity to reason in the midst of extreme passion and pressure. The disciples did not know what Jesus would do. They only knew that this situation was out of control. Here is where they made their major mistake. Christ knew Who was in control. Paul knew Who was in control. Even Jonah knew why the tempest had arisen. Our faith is bound to fail when anxiety escalates, and we think we must control the raging trials about us. We may have a noble agenda and a sincere heart and still find our faltering faith frazzled. We mistakenly marvel that God sits in heaven and does nothing. We faithfully launch our prayers upward, but the heavens seem brazenly silent. We would expect that from worshippers of Baal, Buddha, and from backsliders. But it is not supposed to happen to people with strong convictions—people who are born again, attend church regularly, read their Bible, and pray on a daily basis. We must reconsider that God is not so concerned about our environmental peace, but rather that our inner soul arrives safe and sound at His haven of rest.

When we are happy, we jubilantly claim that rest, even though we have no sense of truly needing Him. His insertions into our lives often seem like interruptions. But

when times get desperate and we have exhausted all our resources, we lean hard upon Him. In that excruciating hour, He often tests our sincerity and offers us nothing ... nothing but silence. Christ, sleeping in our boat. Sleeping... right when we need him the most. And then the question, Why are ye so fearful? How is it that ye have no faith? Frankly, this seems hard to me—even harsh—and entirely out of character with what I would normally expect from Jesus. But the question must be answered, for it is necessary if we wish to enter His haven of rest. The winds obey Him, but they don't obey us ... or do they? We obviously cannot control the weather, our environment, our situations, or the people around us. Yet these externals are not the root cause of our anxiety. It is our own faulty premonitions that pound our soul and prevent us from entering the portal of peace. The winds that whip our vessel into a fearful frenzy are not driven from without but unleashed from within. This anxiety rides on the waves of unbelief, while Christ continues in His divine slumber, waiting until we recognize the source of our anxiety and call out in faith. These four strong winds are roused at the slightest provocation when we are...

## ...Preserving our Person

If we are healthy, and if things are going well in our family and finances, we may be prone to misinterpret our circumstances. It is a mistake to believe that easy sailing is a mark of God's favor, and that trouble is a sign of His displeasure. All good and perfect gifts come from God, but a debilitating storm can fall under that category as well. Our personal surroundings are temporal while our soul is eternal. God will frequently expend our personal comforts in order to expand our faith. But great fear arises when our person is demoted. Many of our phobias arise in the absence of actual danger.

1. The acrophobic person has a fear of heights and is afraid he will fall from the heights of any platform though it is secure and guarded well. Even if countless others have successfully stood there, he is miserably trapped in this fear, not because he is in danger, but because he has grossly overestimated his likelihood of falling and refuses to believe the truth.
2. The zoophobic lives in fear of animals, creating images in his mind of being clawed to death or disemboweled.
3. The claustrophobic is afraid of small, tight places, while the agoraphobic fears open places.
4. Arachibutyphobia is the fear of getting peanut butter stuck to the roof of your mouth.

In the face of his fear, the phobic may experience a racing heart, heavy breathing, dry mouth, perspiration, dizziness, or light-headedness. Thus, their phobias become real to them. While most will excuse their personal glitch, the truth



remains that this anxiety is unfounded. When we excuse and cater to the preservation of our person, fear is inevitable. The disciples feared that they were perishing, and Christ asked them why. Is it not better ...*to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better* –Philippians 1:23. If we can trust Christ with our life, can we not trust him with our death?

*For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it* –Mark 8:35.

### ...Protecting our Property

Outwardly, the life of Christ was one of the most troubled lives that was ever lived. Foxes had their dens and the birds had their nests while He lay His pillow in the back of a rocking boat groaning under tempest and tumult of the incessant waves breaking over it. But His inner haven was a sea of glass. This was partially due to the fact that He had no property to protect. Even the boat was borrowed. “Much coin, much care” states the ancient proverb, and anxiety rises when wealth falls. *And one of the company said unto him, Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me* –Luke 12:13. Jesus refused to side with him. Instead, He spoke to the covetous heart that was causing the anxiety. If Christ gives us wealth, we do not need to feel guilty. If He takes it, we do not need to feel anxiety. In the midst of the storm, we are exhorted ...*to be of good cheer: for there shall be no loss of any man's life among you, but of the ship* –Acts 27:22. This was ministered as healing balm to the bedraggled sailors, but to those who feel inclined to protect their property it is a sordid saga. When the rich young ruler was offered salvation in exchange for his earthly collection of trinkets, ...*he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions* –Matthew 19:22. Those of us who become anxious at the loss of our wealth are no less foolish.

### ...Perfecting our Plan

We set out on a course. Maybe we change jobs, enter into a relationship, or embark upon some new avenue of ministry. We have launched out in faith and before we know it, we are struggling. The winds and waves of ordinary life seem to be working against us. We have expectations that are not

being met and it seems that Christ is not doing His part. It is not Christ, but rather it is our expectation that is the cause of our anxiety. We expect much from our investments and it is discouraging to see our efforts go for naught. Martha's pulse quickened at the lack of help she was receiving in the kitchen. Her frustration rose while her well-planned meal remained unfinished. Her complaint is no less accusing than the disciples' while rowing in the sea. ...*Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me* –Luke 10:40. Her anxiety was not caused by Mary's neglect nor Christ's indifference. Her sister was docked at the haven of rest while Martha battled the tumultuous emotions within her heart. So does the perfectionist create his own storm when his unfulfilled vision falls short of his expectations. But Christ is more concerned about faith-filled bosoms than water-filled boats.

### ...Pleasing all People

The Scriptures have taught us well to love our neighbor as ourselves, but that does not insinuate that we must strive and aim for their approval. It feels wonderful to be liked. It is painful to be rejected. Thus, many souls spend their waking hours seeking the approval of others. They must dress like, act like, talk like, and live like their peers. These live a life laden with stressful waves of anxiety. A flurry of “what ifs” arrive with each new acquaintance. There is no ship more fragile than a relationship. No matter how great a sacrifice we make to be loved, we will eventually encounter a disappointing squall sucking us down to the depths of despair. When our best efforts fail us and our best friends derail us, we must bring our battered vessel to the haven of rest. Inconvenient, unfortunate, unpleasant, and annoying relationships will always exist. We shall do much better to make excuses for others' poor behavior than for our own. When we can rebuke the winds that arise within our own minds, we will immediately find ourselves at the desired haven.

*There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his. Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest...* –Hebrews 4:9-11.

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was no *interpretation* given, he was not able to be edified. The purpose of this story is not to find fault or to place blame, but rather to bring light to an obvious problem among some of the plain people. A problem for which God would surely desire to see changes made for the betterment of those seeking Him in such settings.

With this in mind, we now come back to this man—a man zealous in his religious life—yet having NEVER heard the message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. As he hesitantly picked up this English Bible he cautiously started to read the message contained within those book covers. As he read, he became more and more excited. Here were things that he had never heard before—teachings that brought sense to his many questions and the emptiness that he felt within his soul. He was so engrossed that he almost couldn't pull himself away to allow time for sleep. After a short night, they went on with their travels.

Completing their business they returned home, but life would never be the same for that man. Something had been awakened deep within his soul. Questions had been answered. Longings had been met. Peace had begun to settle over his troubled heart. At long last, he had found the answer, but his time of reading had been so short. Surely there was more to learn, much more. So, before too much time had elapsed, he once more scheduled a trip to get away from his local area and to once more provide a reason to spend another night in a motel with a Bible in the nightstand drawer. He eagerly anticipated another night alone with God and His Word. After a second sleepless night spent devouring the teachings of the Scriptures, he started seeking others who understood and practiced what the Bible said. He was desiring to fellowship and learn all that he could from those who understood God's Word and who practiced what they preached.

As this man has endeavored to find his way through this confusing maze of religious idiosyncrasies he finally purchased a German/English Bible. He felt driven in his continued pursuit of the Truth, yet he was afraid to be found out by his local church leaders. He wanted to stay within his local church, yet his conscience demanded that he must continue his search. For some reason he believed that his local church leaders would not be understanding in his quest for truth and that maybe he would be placed under church discipline for his actions.

His local church is a part of the descendants of the Anabaptists who were persecuted for their faith, including their desire to understand, and read the Scriptures in their native tongue—Swiss or German, instead of Latin as was required by the church leaders of their day. Yet here he is, some 500 years later, in America, possibly facing persecution

from his own church which claims to be a part of the “right” church of God. Herein, his church leaders are finding themselves on the opposite side of the issue of freedom of religious worship that their forefathers suffered for, since they are insisting that the only way to learn of God's will is through the official language of Scripture—German. This is NO different than the struggle of the original Anabaptists who were persecuted for not studying the Scriptures in the official language of their day—Latin.

Let's remember, IF church members do not understand the teachings of God's Word due to their church leaders' stubborn insistence that the church members are NOT allowed to read or hear the Scriptures in the language that they understand, then the ignorance of the common man WILL be laid at the feet of those leaders come judgment day. *Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account...* –Hebrews 13:17. Obey here is only in the context of God's Word, not just according to church leaders' personal ideas or whims. *For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad* –2 Corinthians 5:10. Every person will receive personal judgment based on what the Bible teaches NOT according to a church's detailed dogma.

When I think of the zealous efforts of this man I think of the verse of Scripture... *When Jesus heard it, he marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel* –Matthew 8:10. I also observe the current trends of some of our plain publishing houses—they have borrowed from the world's idea (in a spiritual way, of course) that to sell books and reading material they need to print exhilarating stories, ones that keep people on the edge of their seats—all this because today's Christian has become bored with that which seems old-fashioned.

What a difference between this story and many of today's Anabaptist descendants. Many of today's conservative Anabaptist people have a difficult time getting excited about the Bible. They are too over-stimulated by the lack of rest and quiet in their normal daily lives.

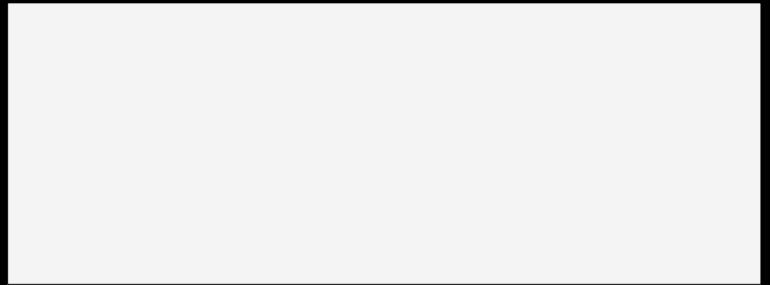
Usually, we hear of stories like this from the jungles of Central America, the deserts of Africa, or the slums of India. What I am amazed about is that this story takes place right in the midst of one of our plain groups of conservative Anabaptists. Let's seek God for opportunities to share the truth of the Gospel message with those within the sphere of our influence. We might be surprised how many people we rub shoulders with during our daily lives who would be just as hungry for the Truth as the man in our story.



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And He said unto me,  
**“MY GRACE IS SUFFICIENT  
FOR THEE, FOR MY STRENGTH  
IS MADE PERFECT IN  
WEAKNESS.”**

Most gladly therefore will I glory  
rather in my infirmities, that the  
**POWER OF CHRIST**  
may rest upon me.

2 Corinthians 12:9