

PARDON Decline

SHORT STORIES FOR LIFE CHANGES, FOR THE BETTER

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Introduction

I'm honored and blessed to translate this inspiring and motivational book for brother Anwar Dawod and Saving Grace Ministry.

I'm humbled by the confidence put on me and thankful for the freedom given me by the author to improvise with discretion and due to time constraints . I took the liberty and did just that, making efforts to maintain the the author's bulk of work and efforts intact hoping to transmit his heart and message by God's Grace and by the Holy Spirit to the readers as we share one goal which is to reach out pointing people to Jesus Christ as "the Way, the Truth and the Life" extending His kingdom, till He returns.

"Amen. Come, Lord Jesus. The grace of the Lord Jesus be with God's people. Amen." Revelation 22:20-21

Samy Gergis, MD

(1)

Pardon Decline

The young man fell spiraling down into a gambling pit. One night of continuous loss he also lost his temper and became very angry, grabbing his gun he shot and killed his opponent instantly!

The young man was captured, tried, found guilty and sentenced to death.

Other than for gambling and this incident, the life of the young man was quite and decent, so his family and friends worked hard to get him pardoned by the governor. With their efforts, a visitor once came to see the young prisoner in his death row! The visitor was in religious clothing. The young prisoner immediately screamed out in the religious looking man, “get out of here, I don’t want to see you or hear anything about religion! Seven other people came before you and I refused to meet them..get out of here now”.

“Wait young man, I have brought you good news. It’s the best news you can have here, let me tell you about it”, said the visitor .

But the young prisoner refused to listen yelling and screaming at the visitor in religious clothes, thinking that he will hear another religious message and screamed at the visitor to leave immediately. The visitor left in sadness!

Few minutes later, came the prison guard and asked the young man, “why were you so harsh with the governor and treated him this way? He was here minutes away to visit you!”. “What? Are you telling me that the man in religious clothes that was here few minutes ago is the governor? Are you serious?” Asked the the young prisoner in shock and despair. “Yes”, the guard answered, “he is, and he had in his pocket the pardon declaration for you, but you refused to listen to him”.

The guilty young man was horrified, sat down and with shaky hands immediately wrote an apology to the governor who read the message and put it aside and did it pay attention to it any more, it was too late!

At the time of his execution, the young man was asked if he want to give his final words, he said: **“yes, I want to tell all the young people out there that I’m dying now not for the crime I have committed and being a murderer for I could have been saved and live, but because I have refused the pardon was once available to me by the governor”**

Pardon Decline

Dear friend, please know that if you perish eternally, it's not because of your sins no matter how many and horrible they may be for you can be saved and live. But it will be because the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God has suffered on the cross for your sins so He may offer you an assured pardon and you now decline!

If you end up in hell, that will be because you have refused the divine pardon offered to you based on the death and resurrection of His Righteous Son, Jesus Christ.

“For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God.” 1Peter 3:18

“Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God’s one and only Son.” John 3:18

You have a choice, you can accept the divine pardon offered to you now and be saved, or you may ignore it, put it to waste and end up in eternal damnation in hell.. please choose life



(2)

Refused to Receive Mercy

It was around 1830 A.D. when Andrew Jackson was president of the United States that a man named George Wilson was sentenced to death by hanging. Wilson was convicted of murdering a government employee whom Wilson caught rubbing the mail of the post office where Wilson was working.

Due to the circumstances during which the murder occurred, Wilson was offered a pardon by the president. What happened next was very unusual and surprising, Wilson refused to be pardoned!

This was a legal dilemma, a pardon was offered but it was refused! Would the condemned person be forced to accept the pardon? This situation was referred to the Supreme Court of the United States which made its decision as given by the then Chief Justice John Marshall who wrote **“A pardon is a slip of paper, the value of which is determined by the acceptance of the person to be pardoned. If it is refused, it is no pardon. George Wilson must be hanged.”** And he was!

Our world's situation in relationship with God is similar to this case of George Wilson. **For God so loved the world and gave His only Son Jesus Christ as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.** In His patience, God is offering reconciliation through Christ's sacrifice and work of redemption on the cross so whoever believes in Him would reap the fruits of Christ's death on the cross, forgiveness and salvation.

Christ's atoning death on the cross is God's pardon offerer to all and only valid for those who accept. It is God's only solution for the problem of sin and judgment, but those who refuse this offer will bear the consequences of sin which is eternal death in spite of the pardon being available now and being offered.

God is offering pardon through Christ's redemption if accepted, the outcome of damnation will be upon those who refuse, they will only be the ones to blame for their own perish.

That is why the Bible says, "God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them." 2 Corinthians 5:19

"how shall we escape if we ignore so great a salvation? This salvation, which was first announced by the Lord, was confirmed to us by those who heard him." Hebrews 2:3

(3)

Back to The Heights, I Fly

Many years ago, a talented musical worship leader and preacher who was used mightily by the Lord received a page taken off of a youth magazine. It was sent by a friend who asked him to read the poem enclosed about a **“Bird With Broken Wings”** The friend was saddened for this bird’s misery and inability to fly again and hoped that the preacher may be able to put music for the poem and use it as a preaching material helping people who may feel like birds with broken wings!

The words basically were saying that the bird was put down by his wounds and questioned if it would be able to -without wings- go back to the heights!

The preacher made good efforts putting the music for the poem and used it for a song. And weeks later, he was asked to preach in a prison’s event. At the end of the worship service, when the preacher stood up to sing, he chose the very same poem, sat on the piano and sang the **“Bird With Broken Wings”**.

As the song was coming to an end, one of the young prisoner stood up and shouted “sir, sir, is this true? Wouldn’t this bird be able to go back again to the top mounts? If this is so, there is no hope then for a stumbling person like me and those fellow prisoners!”. Then he sat down and cried loudly!

The preacher realized immediately his mistake and the sad finish of such poetic song and he felt sorry for what it caused that young man of discouragement.

When he went back home, the preacher thought about what happened and added to the song another finishing not of **consolation and hope**

The preacher asked the prison administration for another chance, and he returned to preach hope and finished his songs with such encouraging added finish,

**Wounds brought him down from heights,
and without his wings will he ever go back?
He has no power, but a Redeemer
bring him to life and newly created track
How many were tired of sins when believed,
out of living in dark tombs they came back
Out of darkness and death
to righteous glorious new heights, they came back**

This was not the end of the story.

Years later, this preacher was in a revival meeting when he was approached by a man in an official police officer's uniform who warmly greeted the preacher extending his hands and said: "you may not remember me but I remember you clearly. I met you few years ago when you sang the Bird With Broken Wings song".

The preacher answered, "of course I remember you, and I was so sorry that the song's ending disturbed you". The officer responded, "well, in the second time when you came back and sang the last added verses, I gave my life to the Lord Jesus Christ Who healed me and I could stand up on my feet again. And now I'm successful in life and **back to the heights I fly**".

Dear friend , if you are sorry for what has passed and share what did the young prisoner felt before healing, remember what the Bible says, **"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come."** 2 Corinthians 5:17
ESV

So, wherever we may be, sinners as we are the unending springs of God's grace and mercy are flowing. Amen

(4)

What is Your Worth?

“The well known violinist is coming to town” declared the morning newspapers, “and he will play great music with his very invaluable violin!” they read.

At the appointed time and place, multitudes went from all surrounding towns to see and listen to the famous musician and to have a glimpse of his very precious and expensive violin.

At the appointed time and place the musician came and played the violin wonderfully. With such great music, joyous atmosphere and the loud clapping, the audience couldn't be more enchanted.

Suddenly, the musician slammed the violin on the floor so hard destroying it! The audience were terrified and screamed in horror, “What happened?”

The precious violin is now destroyed! Did the violinist suddenly go crazy?”

This chaotic scenario didn't last, fortunately as the moderator went up to the theater calming the crowds, motioning and asking for a chance to explain, "Do not be troubled, the damaged violin is really cheap and is not worth that much! Now here is your favorite violinist playing on his preferred and precious violin".

The violinist played amazingly again and as good as it was on the cheap violin and no one noticed the difference between the two violins when the talented violinist played!

Did you get the message the violinist wanted to give his audiences? "It is I not the violin that matter but I the violinist not the violin who brings you the beautiful music".

Friend, do you see yourself of little value? Just like the cheap violin? Do you feel inferior specially when compared to others and what they have and can do? Do you feel unable to do anything, almost paralyzed by such feelings?

Please, do not be discouraged! Put yourself be in the hands of the Greatest Musician ever, He will bring out of you the most beautiful music.

He will have you, will lead you and He will use you by His grace

Your lacking, your weaknesses and your insufficiency will make more prominent how skilled the Great Potter is and how sufficient is His grace. **“My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” 2 Corinthians 12:9 ESV**

If you have many skills and see yourself useful and work hard in the field of ministry, if you seem like a precious violin, remember what Paul the apostle said, **“by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain., I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me.” 1 Corinthians 15:10 ESV**



(5)

Homeless Under the Bridge

Many years ago, there was a poor homeless man who used to stay under a bridge in the city begging for his daily needs while sheltered under the bridge.

With his sad face and obvious poverty and loneliness the man will be seen holding his old, beat up violin and often played in attempt to catch the attention of the people passing by hoping to get some money but sadly he was hardly noticed or paid attention to.

One day, a stranger came up to the homeless under the bridge and stood near him for a little while then, came closer, looked at him and his empty hat with no money thrown in by anyone yet! The beggar looked back at the stranger hoping that he will get some money or food from him, he continued to stand staring at the beggar but not giving him anything! Suddenly and unexpectedly, the stranger asked the beggar to hand him the violin, so he did!

The stranger stood next to the homeless and started to play the violin so beautifully that the people were compelled to stop and listen. One after the other, people gathered to listen and the beggar's hat was filled with money, even police officers came to check what the crowds about, they stopped and enjoyed the music and put money in the beggar's hat.

While the stranger continued to play and the number of people gathered increased, the music was beautiful and the hat was overflowing with money a soft voice was wondering became louder amongst the crowd,

“Who is this musician?” “He is Paganini!, the famous violinist Paganini!”

This story may resemble the life story of many of us. We were beggars under the bridge of life, homeless and miserable and burdened with cares and concerns. We may have tried to bring out of sadness and heavy hearts joyful music but in vain.

Suddenly, a stranger **greater than Paganini just passed by, Jesus Christ** who is not from our town or world, yet He came and listened to our sad music reflecting our miserable life! We thought he will give us a little something, may be solving a problem or fill certain

needs! But He did abundantly more, He has set us free from bondage of sin and gave us eternal life, hallelujah.

We gave him our hearts and He brought out of them most beautiful music with His pierced hands radiant with glory.

Lives have changed, homeless people now have in Him eternal home and hope of glory, "He is the Lord" John 21:7

Have you met this wonderful Musician and given Him your heart?

"Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me." Revelation 3:20



(6)

Don't Believe God?

If you hear the fast coming car warning with a loud horn, you will pay attention and move away and if you hear the loud horn of the fire truck blowing, you will run to safety. Yet you hear God's warning "**flee from the upcoming wrath**" yet you pay no attention!

Is God's warning to you less important than people's?

If you hear the cook warning of poisonous food, you will avoid it and if certain danger in a bottle of medicine was to avoid advised by a chemist you will leave it out but when you hear God saying "**For the wages of sin is death..**" **Romans 6:23 ESV** you continue sinning carelessly!

And if you read warning of "painting" on the walls you avoid it and when you see "do not enter" in a road you do not enter to avoid accidents, yet when God says "**the soul who sins shall die.**" **Ezekiel 18:4 ESV**, it falls on deaf ears!

If the doctor warns you of a contagious disease, you will take precautions to avoid without hesitation and if warned of an electric exposed wire, you will run away from the risk of electric execution. If you were invited to a party and entering is strictly for invitees with tickets, you will make sure you have and hold your ticket before you approach the door, but when Jesus says **“Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.” John 3:3**, you just don’t listen and keep going your own way!

When you hear or see the sign “on sale” or “buy one get one free” or “free samples” you will rush to take advantage of the offer, but when God declares **“the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Romans 6:23**, you just turn the offer down though it’s free and you desperately need it, or you postpone it saying “not right now” which is how you sadly will not enter heaven but fall into hell.

“If we receive the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater..And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.” 1John 5: 9,11

Dear friend, believe God before it’s too late, accept Jesus Christ and be saved.

(7)

Just As You Are

You don't need to improve yourself or need rehabilitation before you come to Christ, you can't do it anyway. Have you ever heard the story Jesus told us in Bible? The story of the Lost Son in Luke, chapter 15? How did the father received his son back upon his return with worn out clothes and the smell of pigs on him?

This reminds me with another story, an artist artist who saw a poor beggar in worn out clothes and miserable look. The artist wanted to paint what he saw to reflect an idea in his mind, so he offered the beggar a lump some of money if he allows him to paint him. The artist then gave the card with time and place to the beggar to come in where the artist will do his work.

At the appointed time, the man came to the artist as agreed but the artist did not recognize him! The beggar was shaved clean, was in clean clothes and seemed in his best possible shape, that the artist asked him what did he do and why!

“I tried to be my best so you may be happy with me”, said the beggar!

“You looked better in your former state so I may show the greatness and beauty of my painting skills”, responded the artist.

What we try to do of self improvement is not needed to reflect the awesomeness of God’s grace and mercy, beside we can not do anything on our own anyway!

The Bible says that **“we are dead in our sins and transgressions”**, can the dead do anything of life activities? The dead needs to come to life first “by faith”, then he or she may work on oneself. I hope that this story has shed light on the principle of works before God and how futile it is before you come to Him first and believe.

“We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment.”
Isaiah 64:6

So, come to him just as you are for Jesus said, “It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick.”
Matthew 9:12

(8)

They Were Looking For Me

During the orld War II, a pilot's craft fell in the northern sea. It was a harsh winter and quite windy, but he held on to his inflatable raft for his life.

In spite of the freezing water and horrible weather conditions, he was rescued!

After the pilot was taken care of medically and during an interview he was asked how was he able to hold on so amazingly in spite of the extreme and terrible weather conditions. He replied: "If didn't know that they were out there looking for me, I would have never been able to hold on and persevere".

The great message of our Christian Faith is this that God has been and continues to search for you. He has set a connecting spiritual ladder between heaven and the doors of our hearts, yours and mine.

God is standing by the door and knocking wanting to come in. Jesus is calling you by name, would you open your heart for him now?

Short stories for life changes, for the better

Jesus Christ is God incarnate, the Good Shepherd who came from heaven searching for you and left the ninety nine to find you, the lost sheep.

He endured the pain and suffering and scornful shame of the cross so He may find you and bring you back home.

Would you open your heart for the Jesus now, He is calling you.

“Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me.” Revelation 3:20



(9)

Who Will Do the Clean Up?

There was a woman who was looking for a cleaning lady to help her out in the house chores since she became ill.

The night before the cleaning lady came to do the job, the ailing woman left her bed and in spite of her difficulties, she tried to clean up and get her house tidy!

The husband asked her wondering, “what are you doing all this work for? Isn’t the cleaning lady coming tomorrow to do that?” The wife answered, “oh my dear, I feel awful that she will come and see how dirty my house is!”.

This sounds funny, but we often try to do just that, we try to clean up before we come to the Lord Jesus even though we can’t.

We need Him to come to our life and save us from our sins and spiritual death, and we know that only Him can do that, yet we want to clean up and get tidy before He comes in! We think that we need to be good enough for

Jesus to come into our life, but no dear friends, we can't be right enough with God based on our own merits.

Only Jesus Christ is the perfect sinless man who ever lived on this earth, and only Him cleans us from all of our sins so we may be accepted by the Holy God.

We shouldn't worry about the uncleanness of our hearts in Jesus's sight, He knows and He is the one who will clean our lives inside out.

Don't be scared or disturbed for what Jesus will find in your life but hear Him say **"...for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world."** John 12:47

Jesus came to the Samaritan woman and changed her life, and the Prodigal Son didn't clean or dress himself but came to his father as he was **"'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.'** But the father said to his servants, **'Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet. And bring the fattened calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate. For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.'** Luke 15:21-24

Come to Jesus now, come as you are!

(10)

Used to Loud Noise

A new factory was opened in a residential area manufacturing large sheets of metal causing a deafening loud noise! The residents were so disturbed and became very uncomfortable with the loud noise, unable to sleep or enjoy daily life activities and conversations.

After a while they became less uncomfortable and able to sleep and converse and lived their life almost normally!

One night, they surprisingly woke up in a deafening quietness that they haven't experienced for a while, when the electric power went temporarily out in the metal sheets factory and the heavy equipments stopped working.

The residents could hardly fall back asleep since they were so used to the loud noise!

Sounds like a bizarre story but it illustrates a point, those who are so used to hearing the gospel message repeatedly and not responding by repentance and return to the Lord are like those residents and the People

of Israel of whom the Bible said, **“..as people come, and they sit before you as my people, and they hear what you say but they will not do it; for with lustful talk in their mouths they act; their heart is set on their gain. And behold, you are to them like one who sings lustful songs with a beautiful voice and plays well on an instrument, for they hear what you say, but they will not do it.”** Ezekiel 33:31-32

Don't get used to hearing the message, singing the songs and be emotionally moved but not repent.

Don't let the repeated loud message of the gospel by preachers and reading the Bible or tracts or books fall on deaf ears without taking action lest you get used to it and your heart be hardened.

The loud noise of the gospel will go silent one day for sure, once and for all, and that can be sooner than you think!

You will open your eyes one day and it will be late. Repent now!

“Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says, “Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts..” Hebrews 3:7-8

“I tell you, now is the time of God's favor, now is the day of salvation.” 2 Corinthians 6:2

(11)

The End of Everything!

Marie Curie (7 November 1867 – 4 July 1934) was quite an accomplished scientist who won Noble Prize two different times and in two different science fields. Her husband Pierre Curie was also a Noble Prize winner physicist. Pierre Curie died in a street accident in Paris on 19 April 1906. Crossing the busy road, Rue Dauphine in the rain, he slipped and fell under a heavy horse-drawn cart. One of the wheels ran over his head, fracturing his skull and killing him instantly at the age of fourth six.

In her personal diaries, Marie wrote about her husband's burial, "I saw Pierre's body being lowered and laid down in a deep pit...the tomb was filled with flowers, and even covered by flowers...but there, Pierre slept, it was his final and eternal sleep.. **it is the end of everyone, the end of everything**".

We can understand Marie's grief and the loss of her husband whom she loved and shared life, work, research and even the Noble Prize with.

She had just lost him and didn't have any hope to see him again! So when he was taken away, she kept saying, **"it's the end of everything, everything.."**

Do you, my dear friend think that death is the end of everything? No, it is the begging of never ending life. See what Jesus said here, **"Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice and come out—those who have done what is good will rise to live, and those who have done what is evil will rise to be condemned."** John 5:28-29

Jesus's resurrection is the evidence of this truth. We don't vanish by death, it's not the end of everything, but we will rise again and give an account before God. **"..people are destined to die once, and after that to face judgment,.."** Hebrews 9:27

God is now calling all people to come and accept full pardon and forgiveness of all of their sins on the account of Christ's sacrificial death on the cross. So, whoever believes in and accept Christ's Redemption will be totally forgiven.

"In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace" Ephesians 1:7

“and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement, through the shedding of his blood—to be received by faith..”

Romans 3:24-25

Now my dear friend, what about you? What would you do with God’s offer today?

Would you come to Jesus, finding refuge in Him and His death on the cross for you?

If your life on earth ends today, it will be the end of everything here in this world! But where will you spend eternity?

Will you be away from God where eternal hopelessness, regret and agony? Or will you be accepted in paradise being forgiven? Wise up, please think rationally now and come to God. Accept His loving offer of forgiveness and redemption.

Come to Jesus Christ the Lord, for He has said, **“whoever comes to me I will never drive away.”**

John 6:37

(12)

My Father, You Love Me?

An author named Peter has mentioned his childhood and how harsh his father was on his children. The father has often punished Peter and his siblings for their mistakes, so they feared him and felt they are missing his fatherhood's kindness and closeness.

One day, Peter accidentally broke something precious at his home, like a vase playing and he was terrified of his dad's anger and punishment so he went to hide away from his father's. Peter found a large old wooden closet that belonged to his grandfather, so he got in it and hid himself away.

Peter then looked through the keyhole and listened to his father's reaction and anger yelling and looking for him. Peter's dad was promising strong punishment calling his house maid to look for Peter everywhere.

They couldn't find Peter, no one thought of the old rugged wooden closet!

A long time, most of the day passed and the dad started to get worried about his son Peter wondering where he is? Is he ok? Did something wrong happen to him?

The father sat down and seemed alone, very sad and so worried while Peter is watching from his secret place! Peter then saw something that took him by surprise and shocked him! Looking in disbelief, he saw his dad covering his face and breaking in tear, then crying hard in fear of losing his son!

With such a picture and the gush of his father's love and emotions, Peter totally forgot his own fear of his dad and pushed the wooden door of the closet open, ran to his father and threw himself in his arms, in tears.

Peter said later on this account, **“the idea that my father loves me has taken away all my fears of punishment. I will never forget that day, all of my life”.**

Dear friend, I would like to bring to your attention the Heavenly Father who was never once harsh on us, but **“He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.”**
Matthew 5:45

“The Lord is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love.” Psalms 145:8 **“he does not**

treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities” Psalms103:10

“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.” John 3:16

He loves you, come to Him and don't be afraid.

“There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear,..” 1 John 4:18

He is like the father in the Prodigal Son story, waiting for his son's return **“while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him.” Luke 15:20**

He is waiting for your return,
will you come to Him now?



(13)

He Still Loves You

The loving mother being of limited resources, spent all her life working hard raising her daughter who grew up healthy, vibrant, full of energy and graduated from college. During those years, the poor woman endured many hardships working hard and deprived herself of many pleasures in life expecting that all will be better and it will be worth it when her daughter graduate and get a nice job. Then she may be able to get some rest!

Unfortunately, the daughter didn't return the favor to her mom, but went on in a life of disobedience, leaving her morals behind and her mother too! The daughter just disappeared. The poor mother didn't hold back any efforts or costs looking for her daughter, just like when she was raising her. She put all the money she could save at the hands of a photographer asking him to take a photo of her while she is begging her daughter to return! She asked for 12 large posters of that picture with underneath writing **"I still love you my daughter, please come back to me, just as you are"**.

The mother hung her pictures up in places she hoped her daughter would see, and the owners of night clubs had pity on the mother and allowed her pictures up in their visible spaces hoping the daughter one day come across to see one of them.

The daughter was tired and empty due to her life of sins, just like the Bible said, **“Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again”**. Her heart was longing to come back to her kind mother but she didn’t know how! **“How can I look at my mother’s face again after all the disappointment and hurts she caused her?”**, she thought!

One night, the daughter came to a night club where her mother’s picture begging her daughter to return was up and visible. She noticed a group of people looking up to that picture mounted up on the wall, she was also curious so she did go closer to see what was it about. She was shocked to see her mother’s face on the picture, an old woman’s features, still kind and reaching out, then she read the words **“I still love you my daughter, please come back to me, just as you are”**!

The daughter then took her first train back to her hometown and ran to her mother and threw herself into the extended arms of her kind waiting mother who flooded her with love and forgiveness.

Do you remember dear friend the similar story in the Bible, the Prodigal Son told by Jesus? A story of a younger son who took his inheritance while his dad is still alive and went to a far away town and squandered all his money on a wild life? This was a wild, unheard of action and arguably unforgivable to the hearers! Shortly after, there was a severe famine and the son started to be in need. When no one was there to help, the son came back to his senses and remembered his father's love and warmth and decided to go back asking his father not to accept him as a son or even a slave at home because he is not worthy but as a hired man! **“So he got up and went to his father. “But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him.”** (Luke 15:20) and that wonderful father called his servant shouting with joy, **“Let’s have a feast and celebrate. For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’ So they began to celebrate.”** (Luke 15:23-24)

Dear friend, our Heavenly Father is waiting for your return from your sinful and wicked ways. You may have done things so embarrassing to mention, but He knows and is waiting for your return, you have a place through Christ, He will forgive you and accept you for He loves you and is calling **“please come back to me, just as you are”**.

(14)

God's Unconditional Love

As the **legend story** goes, this young man was so loved by his mother who raised him with high moral standards but he deviated from that he when grew up. The young man, contrary to his mother's instruction lived in debauchery, adultery and life of sin with a crowd of very bad friends. The mother tried to sway her son away from this group of friends and the way of mockery and sin but in vain. The friends were worried that one day this young man will listen to his mother and they would loose him so they pressured him to get rid of his mother somehow!

It was a **terrible crime** they wanted him to commit, for "**how horrible it is to kill your own loving mother**", he first thought and strongly refused such thoughts!

With peer pressure and under the influence of alcohol and drugs, the son **committed** the horrific crime killing his mother. To this point dear readers, this doesn't sound like a legend as we hear and read often in the

newspapers of sons killing their parents under such influences. **But it's a legend, so the son killed his mother, and cut her chest open, pulled her heart out and ran into his friends presenting his mother's heart to them as a token of his loyalty to them and his evil betrayal of his own loving mother! While the young man is running carrying the mother's heart, he stumbled and fell and he heard his mother's heart in a concerning voice calling him, "son, are you ok? Did you get hurt?"**

Yes, it's just a legend, but let me tell you what is more wonderful, noble and glorious than any real or legendary story or human's imagination. There is no more evil or horrible than what we humans did to the Son of God crucifying Him while we hear Him utters grace and mercy seeking our forgiveness when **"Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." Luke 23:34**

He even showed love and forgiveness with a promise of hope to the repentant man crucified with Him when "Jesus answered him, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise." Luke 23:43

There is no greater love shown than that on the cross of Golgotha!

Short stories for life changes, for the better

Would you accept God's love revealed in Christ's death on the cross?

Would you turn from your sins and evil ways and repent?

Please, come back to your senses and come now no matter how far you've went in your sins because **"God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us."** Romans 5:8



(15)

Amazing Love

When her father died, the thirteen years old daughter was treated tenderly by all other family members to compensate for her loss, to the point she was really spoiled.

Gradually, the little girl became disobedient to her mother and avoiding her advice.

The daughter's actions and behavior grieved her mother and peaked when the phone rang one night and the mother was asked to come pick her daughter up from a police station nearby. The daughter was arrested as she has caused much damage of a store as she's gotten involved in a fight and acts of violence.

The mother went and brought her daughter home after a fine was taken care of.

In the car, the mother was silent and was clearly burdened by the situation that even when they came home she couldn't say anything but let her daughter go to her room and rest.

In the next day, the mother broke the silence by approaching her daughter and presenting her with a gift beautifully wrapped and placed in a very nice box. The daughter took the gift with some emotionless motion, unwrapped it and opened the box to find a piece of rock being the gift! Looking at her mother and wondering what is it about, the the daughter softly asked, “what do I do with this rock?”. The mother replied, “read the card and you will know”.

The daughter opened the card and read it then broke in tears and ran to her mother and fell on her shoulder crying!

In the card, the mother had written, **“this gift is a piece of rock that geologists believe it’s about ten thousand years old, and I want you to know that I will never give up on you getting back to where you were even if I would wait up for as long as the age of this rock, because I love you.”**

Our God is so patient and He will never give up on us. He is the God of second, third, or even tenth chance and more! **“Instead He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.” 2 Peter 3:9**

Amen

(16)

Died Of Thirst

One of Australia's discovering team members never returned from his exploration endeavor but was found dead of thirst in the very hot and harsh desert.

Next to his body, a note was found with his hand writing apparently he wrote right before he died and it says, **"..my tongue is so dry and tuck to my mouth of thirst, I'm dying for lack of water.** I felt bad for my poor horse so I have left him go free (so he may survive). Death is approaching slowly,..I don't see clearly, my tongue is burning, I do not have even a drop of water.. I have to stop now..help me God!"

What a terrible end that is?

Dear friend, I want to bring to your attention through this sad story a different kind of thirst. The Bible (Luke 16:19-31) tells us of "a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and lived in luxury every day." "At his gate was laid a beggar named Lazarus, covered with sores and longing to eat what fell from the rich man's table."

The rich man didn't look ahead beyond this life on earth, but that moment that he never thought will come actually came, **"The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried."**

The rich man found himself "In Hades (hell), where he was in torment"

What do you think the rich man asked for in hell? Rich food? A glass of water? No,

"he called, 'Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire.'"

What a tragedy, the man didn't even get that!

So, dear reader how are you doing these days?

Are you too busy to think of your eternity?

This rich man's state of thirst is eternal as he is separated from God.

No one can say "help me God" in eternity because he is separated from Him!

Now is the time, now is the chance to drink from the living water freely so you may be quenched forever! All the richness of this world will not quench your thirst.

Jesus said, “Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life.” John 4:13-14

He is still calling,

“Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.” John 6:35

“On the last and greatest day of the festival, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, “Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink.” John 7:37

“Come!” Let the one who is thirsty come; and let the one who wishes take the free gift of the water of life.” Revelation 22:17

For God to give you such free gift of living water, Christ the Son of God has **“suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.” Hebrews 2:9** On the cross, as He tasted the true spiritual thirst and the physical thirst for us, Jesus said, “I

am thirsty.” John19:28, though “He makes springs pour water into the ravines; it flows between the mountains. They give water to all the beasts of the field; ..(they) quench their thirst.” Psalms 104:10-11

Would you come now to Jesus for the free gift of living water?

Come quench your thirst before it's too late! Before eternal regret with those who the **Bible warns, “the smoke of their torment will rise for ever and ever. There will be no rest day or night for those.” Revelation 14:11**



(17)

Best Player, But...!

George Best (22 May, 1946 - 25 November, 2005) was one of the best football (soccer) players in the sixties. He played for Manchester United, he was genius and so talented, and he become sensational scoring acrobatic goals and helping United to achieve a league title and championship.

George Best was named European Footballer of the Year in 1968. He was talented and handsome, he was a star who was loved and adored by many.

Unfortunately, his career was cut short due to alcohol addiction (Alcohol Use Disorder). He became seriously ill with liver damage, needed a liver transplant and went on medication that lowered his immunity and exposed him to infections.

He summarized his own life as spent on alcohol, women, cars and squandered living.

Dear reader, listen to this and what the Bible says about sin and adulterous life,

“Can a man scoop fire into his lap without his clothes being burned? Can a man walk on hot coals without his feet being scorched?” Proverbs 6:27-28

“..he followed her like an ox going to the slaughter, like a deer stepping into a noose” Proverbs 7:22

About alcohol drinking, the Bible says,

“Wine is a mocker and beer a brawler; whoever is led astray by them is not wise.”

Proverbs 20:1 . In a different translation, “Drinking too much makes you loud and foolish. It’s stupid to get drunk.” Proverbs 20:1 GNT

It also says, “Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit,” Ephesians 5:18

George Best lived temporary, lustrous, deceitful and fleeting pleasures. He scored many goals in his life, but not the more noble and sublime ones!

So, at the end of his life, George’s advice to the youth through the press was to tell the young not to live and die as George did, but to do better!

Have you my friend experienced that better life? The Abundant Life?

**“For what will it profit a man
if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul?
Or what shall a man give in return for his soul?”**

Matthew 16:26 ESV

The Bible tells us about another man who had many portions in life to brag about, fame, strength, family, religious and prestigious positions yet when he received Jesus Christ into his life, he declared,

“whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ.

Indeed, I count everything as loss

because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord.

For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things

and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ” Philippians 3:7-8

Amen

(18)

Swabbing Deal

Darst oil field in the state of Texas is one of the richest oil fields and it was named after Bill Darst the original owner of the land on which the oil field was found. This field brings its current owners millions of dollars annually.

But do you know how the current owner acquired this land? Here's how the amazing swabbing deal occurred; Bill Darst wanted to get rid of this land because it was not fertile or good for anything to fulfill his financial dreams, or so he thought he wanted to sell it or swab it for something different.

Do you know how much he sold this land to the current owners for? Less than a hundred dollars! He gave the land for 2 horses and a cart to the new owner and his name is Joe. Bill smiled while completing the transaction thinking that he was a winner, he left that land to the new owner searching for a new source of financial success.

Less than six months later, it was found that the land sold for two horses and a cart which is now site of the richest oil field in the region, now discovered and owned by Joe the new owner not Bill!

Bill Darst discovered then that he swabbed millions of dollars a year worth of land for two horses and a cart!

Darst Oil Field was the name given to it and was a reminder of the precious opportunity that Bill wasted by lack of knowledge and he died regretting that swabbing deal!

How many precious things we swab for trivial ones in foolishness?

Isn't it what many of us do that, swabbing eternal life for earthly fleeting pleasures?

Life is not to be swabbed for the most expensive things in the world, not even for the whole world. God sees your eternal life as more precious than the whole world, how about you? How do you see it that way? What would you swab your eternal life for?

**“For what will it profit a man
if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul?
Or what shall a man give in return for his soul?”
Matthew 16:26 ESV**

(19)

My Signature, Not Your Condition

The well dressed rich looking business man stopped where the poor beggar was seeking something given him. Their eyes intersected, and for a moments they didn't seem to know each other. The poor beggar with torn dirty clothes suddenly called the wealthy looking, cleaned up man by name!

The rich man suddenly remembered him! Wow, what happened, the rich man was wondering! They were schoolmates, but what a difference in status, appearance and how each of them looked.

The business man greeted the beggar warmly and he was moved by his classmate's condition and so quickly pulled out his check book and wrote him a check with a considerable amount of money saying, "take this, cash it out and start a project and put your life back together, stand on your feet and beg no more". Not only that, but he also handed him his business card with personal phone number asking him to call if he should need anything and without hesitation.

Reluctantly, the beggar took the check and the card with tears in his eyes overwhelmed with gratitude. The beggar then went to the bank, stood by the door, thought for a little, **“would it be really that easy that the bank is going to allow me to cash such a big check?”** He said to himself that it’s impossible for a poor, beggar with such appearance to get such money, and he tore the check into pieces, trashed and went back to begging!

Few days later, the rich classmate went to see him at the same corner, found his classmate still begging so he asked him, “what happened? Did you get the money? Did you get some help? Did you need more? Why didn’t you call?”

The beggar told his classmate what he happened, so the rich friend was saddened and upset and said, **“what would let the bank see value in the the check is not who you are** or how you look, but my signature. It’s my signature not your condition.”

Dear friend, how deceiving it is when Satan, the liar tells people that God wouldn’t accept them if they come to Him as they are, with their sins. The liar tells you that you need to clean up and put your life together and change your deeds and improve your behavior before you come to God in repentance. When you hear that

and fail to change, you're falling into a pit of despair and surrendering to more sinful life!

Yes God hates sin, but He loves sinners.

Dear friend, Christ came for us, as sinners as we are,- for **“It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.” Mark 2:17, Jesus said.**

Please know that you need to be saved from your life of sins and that Jesus came from heaven and died on the cross for you. Your salvation and cashing the huge check of forgiveness does not depend on you and your moral or spiritual condition but on the signature of Christ Jesus by His precious blood shed for me and you and cleanses us from all our sins.

“For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect. He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake.” 1 Peter 1:18-20

(20)

Act of Kindness for Son's Sake

It was around the World War I, there was a western judge who cared a lot for the wounded soldiers and their affairs. His son was amongst the drafts.

This judge was very busy, and while on his disc studying a very important legal case, focused and drowning in papers, a soldier entered his office and the judge didn't notice being so occupied. The soldier's clothes were dirty and torn and he seemed in pain. The soldier waited for the judge not wanting to interrupt him, but finally said in a soft voice, **"sir, I have a message for you!"**. **With a shaky hand, the soldier put the message in a piece of paper on the judge's desk.** The judge looked at him and was about to get angry asking the soldier if he could notice how busy he is and not wanting to be interrupted, but he saw the writing on the piece of paper and noticed **that it is his son's hand writing!**

The judge took the piece of paper and in a moment he read it and the message was on behalf of the message's carrier,

"dear father, the soldier carrying this message is a courageous man, returning from the battle field for his

ailments. Please dad, help him in any way you can for my sake, your son Charlie.”

The judge looked at the soldier and immediately changed his demeanor and said to him, **“you must come with me, we will take care of you in our home”**.

There, the judge served the soldier and helped him receive medicine and all needed care till he totally recovered, **all was for his son’s sake!**

This story, dear friend reminds us with the biblical story of king David who once **“asked, “Is there anyone still left of the house of Saul to whom I can show kindness for Jonathan’s sake?” 2 Samuel 9:1**

He was brought a lame son of Jonathan, the lame boy’s name was Mephibosheth and king David showed him great kindness for the sake of his beloved friend Jonathan.

This also remind us with even greater love and kindness, God’s Grace and kindness of the Heavenly Father **“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.” John 3:16**

And the question God the Father is asking remains,

Is there anyone still left of man kind to whom I can show God’s Kindness for Jesus’s sake? Will that person be you?

(21)

I Wish to Repent Before I Die!

This was what the newspaper wrote quoting the young famous singer expressing his wishes to live unrepentant till right before he dies! This is when the journalist asked,

“do we people know when we die? Isn’t it only in God’s hand?”

In fact, many people indeed do live unrepentant life hoping to have the chance just an hour before before they die! They postpone such serious matter, repentance thinking that they will live a long time being young and healthy and that “death wouldn’t come anytime soon, so why the rush? They say”! Satan makes people think that way.

Our Lord Jesus told us this parable: “The ground of a certain rich man yielded an abundant harvest. He thought to himself, ‘What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.’ “Then he said, ‘This is what I’ll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I

will store my surplus grain. **And I'll say to myself, "You have plenty of grain laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry." "But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?'" Luke 12:16-20**

This foolish rich man, like many people wanted to enjoy his material things **postponing repentance and living for spiritual things.**

Postponing is a dangerous weapon used by Satan, so please do not wait but come to Jesus and denounce your life of sins.

"In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent." Acts 17:30

Don't delay, this very night your life may be demanded from you.

Repent, call upon the Lord...come to Jesus.

(22)

Who Is Foolish?

A secular physician and a Christian scientist met in a public park and got to know each other. They started casually talking about different things then religion came up in the conversation.

The physician said, "I'm kind of surprised and wondering how a great scientist and accomplished person like yourself believe in old tales like in the Bible!"

"Well", said the Christian "suppose that a patient with a serious illness has failed to be cured by many doctors and conventional medicine, but he finally was given one special medicine that cured him. Suppose that the cured patient found a friend with the same illness and offered him the same medicine that cured him, but the sick patient adamantly refused to take it, what would you say about the sick dying patient who refused to take the medicine worked for his friend?"

"He is definitely foolish!", responded the Doctor.

“So” the Christian said, “twenty five years ago, I have experienced the saving grace and power of Jesus Christ as proclaimed in the Holy Bible and my life has changed entirely. I was set free from many habits and sins that nothing in this world would have helped me or set me free. For all these years, I have been prescribing the same cure to all who realized their need and sought the cure and it worked for all who have taken that medicine.

What would you say if you refuse that medicine yourself?”

Who is the foolish, then?



(23)

Why Delay when You Don't Know?

John Wilson was a teenager high school student who did hear the message of the gospel of Jesus Christ from his friend and classmate, James Milton.

John heard the message from James four days a week, Monday to Thursday.

Milton: "tomorrow is not guaranteed coming dear friend, no one knows if we will live till tomorrow. Accept Jesus Christ now while you can, John"

Wilson: "come on James, we're still young and the future is ahead of us and I have a lot to do and accomplish yet. Beside" said John with a smile, "don't you see the girls? Live a little brother James"

James went silent for a little while then said, "if it's up to me, I would have given you all the time you need to make that decision at your leisure and also to fulfill all our dreams, John. But I don't know how much time the Lord will give you.. your time can be up tonight, tomorrow, or next year! But life is short my friend"

Then James shared a verse from the Bible,

“you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes.” James 4:14

Wilson never took his friend seriously or responded positively to the gospel message. Milton joined the army after high school, the following year.

One Saturday morning, Milton called his home from his military camp and his sister Barbara answered the phone. After greeting, Barbara asked her brother if he remembered his classmate Wilson and he said: “yes definitely, he was my classmate and friends and often times I told him about Jesus but he never really accepted Him that I know of, so what happened?” he asked.

Barbara told her brother that Wilson went out just last night to a club to drink with some of his friends then went to his grandmother’s house that was caught in a big fire and that Wilson was in!

“What?” Exclaimed Milton

Barbara cried loudly and with quivering sound said that Wilson’s body was totally burned with a little remains of him was gathered!

Many like Wilson were lost putting their hopes on the future, refusing to take advantage of the opportunity at hand! Many serious events like this happened to our classmates or relatives or friends and we still respond the same way, temporary emotional response and no commitment or repentance! And life goes on and vanishes away!

Dear friend, Since you don't know what the future hold, why don't you accept Jesus Christ into your life now before it's too late.

Now, don't delay. He loves you, just as you are.



(24)

Don't Kill Me

Archimedes of Syracuse (BC 287- BC 212) was a Greek mathematician and physicist well known for Archimedes' principle which is a law of physics fundamental to fluid mechanics.

Archimedes was killed and this is what is believed happened: A Roman soldier approached him in Syracuse of Italy when it was taken by the Romans and Archimedes was so occupied in his mathematical studies and experiments. When the soldier approached him to take him captive per his leader's command, the shadows fell on his drawing and Archimedes yelled at the soldier to not disturb his circles, drawings and his thoughts! The soldier contrary to the instructions given him stabbed Archimedes and killed him.

Archimedes was falling in his blood yelling, **"Don't Kill Me , I have a very important mission to accomplish"** but he never did and took his last breath.

Many people die unexpectedly, not finishing a task or making a decision they wanted to make!

Even if the decision was to repent, if the time is up before it happened, it will be over and the opportunity will be gone forever!

Pardon Decline

“In the time of my favor I heard you, and in the day of salvation I helped you.

I tell you, now is the time of God’s favor, now is the day of salvation.” 2 Corinthians 6:2

“Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts.” Hebrews 3:15

Why delay and you don’t know if you will have more time at hand?

Why wait for possible unwanted surprises? You never know when will you die!

“While people are saying, “Peace and safety,” destruction will come on them suddenly,

as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape.” 1 Thessalonians 5:3

“Therefore,..prepare to meet your God.” Amos 4:12

And while you’re serving the Lord in ministry, do not delay today’s work for tomorrow since there may not be a tomorrow!

Listen to what the wise Solomon said, “Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might, for in the realm of the dead, where you are going, there is neither working nor planning nor knowledge nor wisdom.” Ecclesiastes 9:10

(25)

She didn't Repent, Would You?

During one of the revival meetings and the sermon was about judgement day and eternity a woman was convicted by the Spirit and started to think about repentance and what needs be changed.

She realized that God is Holy and Just and that she is a sinner. She also realized that she needs to confess her sins and leave them, but she loves some of her sins that she would struggle to leave behind if she repent sincerely! There are also some habits that she enjoys and she is not willing to leave behind. Yes they seem minor, but they are sins nevertheless!

The woman wrestled with herself and struggled over the issue of repentance.

She came to the conclusion that she needs to repent and must leave her sins behind,...”but not now”, she thought!

Then she decided that she will repent after four years! Then she thought, what if I don't live four years? Well, she said to herself may be three years will be ok, and she felt somewhat better.

Again, she started to get worrying again, what if I don't live three years, she asked herself. What if I die before three years? A year seemed reasonable to her as the shortest for delaying repentance and felt better then, but not for too long!

A year is too long, she thought! What if I die much sooner? She asked herself.

“Well, a week, just one week” she decided “I will repent on Saturday without for sure”. “Days go by quickly and before I know it, Saturday will be here and I will repent and come clean with God..this is a simple plan, no need to worry or be disturbed”, she assured herself.

She calmed herself down, comforted her own heart.. she will cut all sinful ties and relationships in a week. She will repent on Saturday, that is it, she decided. Poor young lady, will anyone guarantee a day, an hour or even a second to be added to her life?

“Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts.” Hebrews 3:15

Here is the sad surprise, it was on Friday, just a day before Saturday she had set to repent. She was walking in the street when accidentally, a window fell from the fifth floor all the way down, hitting her head!

She died instantly, it was Friday, the day before she was set to repent!

She did not repent, would you? Please don't delay.



(26)

Locked Out

A preacher told a story that he one night was locked out! This is how he described what happened that night, “when my wife and daughter left, I went out to close the garage door leaving our house main door open till I return. The wind shut the house door closed and I didn’t have the key to get in!

All windows were shot and I was locked out in my pajamas in the cold! It was dark and depressive and I was like a cast out for few hours till my family came back”.

I thought of those who refuse Jesus’s calling and His salvation. They will be locked out of heaven forever and how terrible that will be. They will be cast out where **“there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth” “and the smoke of their torment will rise for ever and ever.”**“Oh, if we wise up and think of such horrible future!

Another story told, that a preacher once was visiting in Palestine and met a shepherd with his sheep in front

of the sheep pen. He noticed that the sheep pen has no door but only a small opening enough for a person and sheep to go through. The preacher asked the shepherd about that and he responded, "I'm that door for the sheep. After they all are in for safety, I lie down blocking that opening and protect them from thieves, enemies and wolves.

Not one sheep can leave this pen but over my body, so I'm that door".

This reminds me with a different shepherd, Jesus Christ, the Great Shepherd who said,

"I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved.

They will come in and go out, and find pasture."
John 10:9

The hearers then didn't think of a wooden door on hinges but they understood that He was truly talking about the only way to be saved and free, to enjoy peace and eternal life, to feed and be satisfied and enjoy eternal glory in heavenly realms.

For this to be fulfilled, dear friend Jesus Christ had to lie down on his own accord just like that shepherd not on that pin opening but on a dark tomb after He died for us.

“I am the good shepherd.

The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.”

John 10:11

Yes, Christ died on the cross, the Good Shepherd for the sheep, buried and laid in a tomb for three days and He is risen, death had no authority over Him.

To enter through Jesus, is to believe in Him, His death and resurrection, for you!

Have you entered yet, have you accepted Jesus Christ as your personal Savior and Redeemer yet? Please do, before you're locked out!



(27)

Elvis Presley, American Singer

He was a truck driver, quickly became a star singer, around 1956 and was called “**king of rock and roll**”. More than half a billion records were sold during his life and surpassed two billion after his death!

When Presley died, Jimmy Carter, the 39th US president issued a statement saying, “Elvis Presley’s death deprives our country of a part of itself.”!

Presley’s fans were crazy about him, they will throw themselves in front of his passing car just to have a glimpse of their king of rock and roll!

When it comes to his **wealth**, you can’t overemphasize how rich he was! He owned palaces with handles made of gold, a fleet of Rolls-Royce cars and four private planes for his own transportation. He was so rich that it is said he once stopped by a car dealer with his friends and bought fourteen cars at once!

Yet his **fame and tremendous wealth never gave him happiness**. All who were around him affirmed how miserable and lonely he felt!

He has been fleeing or masking his unhappy reality by drugs and tranquilizers!

Unfortunately, Elvis took his own life in 16 August 1977 without finding true joy in his possessions. Dear friend, are you surprised by this end of Elvis's life?

“Yet when I surveyed all that my hands had done and what I had toiled to achieve,

everything was meaningless, a chasing after the wind; ”

Ecclesiastes 2:11

Let me tell you dear friend that this is often the condition many famous people are in! Do you know how many of them has taken his own life not finding happiness in money, fame or temporary glamour ending up in despair and depression?

You have probably heard of English comic actor and film **maker Charlie Chaplin**. He was so funny that his audience wouldn't stop laughing watching him. A therapist once advised his depressed patient to go watch one of

Charlie Chaplin's shows for fun and to get him out of his state of depression. The therapist was shocked hearing his patient answering, "**I am Charlie Chaplin, sir**"! He who brings laughter and happiness to his audience was lacking it, by his own admission!

May be you're hoping one day to be rich and famous to be happier! Think again!

The Bible tells us about the **richest and wisest** man who had it all, quoted "I tried cheering myself with wine, and embracing folly..I undertook great projects: I built houses for myself and planted vineyards.. I made gardens and parks and planted all kinds of fruit trees in them..I bought male and female slaves.. I also owned more herds and flocks than anyone in Jerusalem before me. I amassed silver and gold for myself, and the treasure of kings and provinces. I acquired male and female singers, and a harem as well—the delights of a man's heart. I became greater by far than anyone in Jerusalem before me. In all this my wisdom stayed with me. **I denied myself nothing my eyes desired; I refused my heart no pleasure...**Yet when I surveyed all that my hands had done and what I had toiled to achieve, **everything was meaningless, a chasing after the wind**; nothing was gained under the sun." Ecclesiastes 2:3-11

At the end of his book, the wise rich king Solomon concludes

**“Remember your Creator in the days of your youth,
before the days of trouble come and the years approach when you will say, “I find no pleasure in them””
Ecclesiastes 12:1**

You may then wonder, “where can I find happiness then?”

Please let me answer that by pointing you to the One and Only, the Way that whoever has taken did find true happiness. It is the Lord Jesus Christ who said,

**“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened,
and I will give you rest.**

Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for

I am gentle and humble in heart, and

you will find rest for your souls.” Matthew 11:28-29



(28)

Meaningless Life

A rich and successful literature Noble Prize winner who lived to his ninety years of age once said that he has gotten tired of living, and being depressed as he faced death repeatedly. Every Tim was about to die, he felt death is shaking his hand and that it was warmer than his own hand due to his “meaningless life.

When we think of such accomplished person, lived to his ninety, successful in his field, winner of prestigious award of honor and monetary value and then he describes his life as “meaningless life”! But why this sense of meaninglessness? Why was he unhappy?

A rich man approached Jesus with a question of meaningful life, Jesus looked at him and loved him. **“One thing you lack,”** he said. **“Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.”**At this the man’s face fell. He went away sad, because he had great wealth.”

Mark 10:21-22 .He left sad and empty though with much money, he didn't have Christ!

Let's ponder dear friend of how people of faith finished well!

“**Abraham** breathed his last and died at a good old age, an old man and full of years; and he was gathered to his people.”Genesis 25:8.

“**Moses** was a hundred and twenty years old when he died, yet his eyes were not weak nor his strength gone.” Deuteronomy 34:7

How did the godly people of faith see life?

“By faith **Moses**, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward.” Hebrews 11:24-26

Paul, the great apostle of Christ said, “For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is bet-

ter by far; but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body.” Philippians 1:21, 23-24 and also said, “But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ.” Philippians 3:7

A person without Christ here and now is without Christ there and then. So come now to Jesus, accept him to your life so it would be no longer meaningless but meaningful.

“For he says, “In the time of my favor I heard you, and in the day of salvation I helped you.”

I tell you, now is the time of God’s favor, now is the day of salvation.” 2 Corinthians 6:2



(29)

A Prison Visit

I was in a prison visitation and met him. An inmate sitting in loneliness and bending under a heavy burden, he seemed. I asked what he was thinking about and if I can help. He answered, “I spend all my time thinking of the moment I will be released”.

He has started to count how many months, days, hours, minutes and seconds left to that moment when he will be released. He then would think how much time have passed and how much is left! He was drowning in his mathematics!

I thought for a moment and said, “you think of this day and night for a limited time sentence that will sooner be over and you will be released safely Lord willing,

What about the eternal prison sentence? That doesn't end! It's eternal prison for those who are not washed and protected by the blood of Christ! **“And the smoke of**

their torment will rise for ever and ever. There will be no rest day or night for those” Revelation 14:11

So, please dear friend come to Jesus now. Through yourself into His arms, confessing your sins trusting the sufficiency of His precious blood and receive His forgiveness for **“Who of us can dwell with the consuming fire? Who of us can dwell with everlasting burning?”**
Isaiah 33:14



(30)

Would You Admit Guilt?

The Governor visited the prison for a national occasion on which he wanted to pardon and release one prisoner. So, whom would he choose and on which bases? He was wondering! So the governor walked around checking on the prisoners and talking with them. He asked the prisoners for the reasons they were there.

The prisoners were complaining that they were there unfairly judged and they don't deserve to be in that prison!

Finally, the governor was able to see in a far away corner one prisoner sitting alone hiding his face as if he doesn't want to be seen. The governor approach him and asked, "friend, why are you here? Why are you in this present?"

The prisoner answered in a soft shaky voice as if he wants no one hear him "sir, I am here because I deserve it. In fact I should've been executed but I am here be-

cause of mercy and commuted sentence. I have caused so much harm and so much pain to many people because of my crimes that I regret! I am not worthy of mercy that brought me here to this prison”

When the governor heard such deep remorseful confession of guilt from the prisoner, he pardoned him and released him from the prison saying, **“This is the one that I want to release, remorseful, repentant and appreciative of mercy, he will be a good citizen useful to Society”**. Let’s pay attention to what the Bible said,

“Therefore you have no excuse, O man, every one of you..” Romans 2:1

And also said, **“Whoever conceals his sins does not prosper, but the one who confesses and renounces them finds mercy.” Proverbs 28:13**



(31)

Interesting News

After he finished the sermon and the service was ended, two young men approached the preacher and mocking him asked if he heard the interesting news!

“if this news is true, you are losing your job, and you will be useless!” the one said. “What happened” said the preacher. “The devil has died” answered the other, and both laughed at the preacher.

The preacher then put his hands on the two young men’s heads and in a sorrowful manner said, “how poor are you two? for you are now two miserable orphans! What would you do now after your father the devil has died?”

Interesting enough, the preacher’s response has contributed to their later on experience with the Lord of repentance and being saved.

The Lord said to the non-believers, **“You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out**

your father's desires.. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies." John 8:44

The Lord is able and willing to save everyone who is now under the authority of Satan. He can set him free and make him a child of God, dear reader. So, come to Jesus. Put aside the devil's lies and come to Him and invite Him to be your Lord and Savior!



(32)

Heaven Or Hell?

“I heard that you became a believer as they say and that you will go to heaven after you die!” Set the atheist to one of the youth.

“This is correct, God has lead me to be saved through faith in Christ Who died for my sins and has risen for my righteousness according to the Bible and I believe this“, answered the believer who was quite and confident. The atheist appeared slightly disturbed by that and hesitated for a second then said, “friend, did you know that there is no heaven or hell and all what is being said about that is nothing but old tales?” The believer said, “you have no evidence to prove what you’re saying, so let’s consider the two possibilities, one: there is no heaven or hell as you said, and if that is the case I would have lost nothing. In fact I have gained a lot by living and love for others and more. The second possibility is that the Bible is correct and there is heaven and hell, and in that case I’m going to heaven but you will be

going to hell! I would win heaven and you will lose your eternity forever!”.

For this reason I beg you, think again and take this matter seriously, please. You have the chance now to take this matter seriously. Please seize the opportunity, come to Christ so you will have eternal life, hide in Him and be saved.

Jesus said “whoever comes to me I will never drive away.” John 6:37



(33)

True Change

The famous star challenged Christians asking them to show him something practical to prove that the Christianity is true!

An old Christian man stood up and asked the challenger in the multitude to give him a chance to respond in the following day, and it was.

In the following day, the hall was filled with people from different backgrounds. They took their places, were seated while the old Christian man entered into the meeting hall with ten other people accompanying him.

“Here I bring you the evidence, the practical proof of genuine faith of Christ and what he does in the life of his followers”, the old Christian said. “Please allow me to introduce these ten people and I am confident that thousands more can come in to tell you what Christ has done in their lives in a practical way!”, he continued.

One after the other, the ten people were able to tell their stories and how Christ has changed their lives. Murderers, addicts, thieves, liars and more! Their lives have changed even with some of them were just religious, with appearance godliness but denying its power, and their lives have changed too through faith in Christ.

All these people have repented, left their lives of sin and became new creation.

Yes my dear reader, Christ is the Savior and he can change your life too if you believe in him and open your heart for the work of the Holy Spirit by faith.

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes.” Romans 1:16



(34)

False Promise

In Hong Kong, It was reported in “South China Morning” newspaper that the former richest woman in Asia, Nina Wang may have left more than \$12 billion estate to her former instructor, feng shui enthusiast and businessman Tony Chan for his promise to her that she may live forever! A living will that was challenged by her family in court Stating that he promised her to live a very long life and may be eternally if she would do some things and rituals and if would include him in her living will for her fortune!

This was really strange and interesting in the meantime, false promises for your money!

Thanks be to God who is offering us eternal life for coming to him just as we are; sinners, poor and empty-handed. Eternal life is a free gift by faith in Jesus Christ,

“for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and all are justified freely by his grace through

the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.” Romans 3:23-24

So, ““Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat!...without money and without cost.” Isaiah 55:1

For “Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life..” John 3:36



(35)

What Is the Solution?

He has gotten himself into trouble several times ending up in prison and I visited him after he was released and came home.

He told me about his many problems, endless series of implications in relationships and otherwise. After listening in and counseling him, I finally said, “you have only one solution to all your troubles, call upon the Lord, ask Him to intervene and only then your too complicated implications will unentangle and your problems and cares will start to resolve and your life will change”.

He thought for a moment then he said, “ but God is so patient, you can pray for something and then He takes forever to give you an answer!”

I tried to tell him that yes God is so patient and that is how He waits for our return and repentance “**The Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love.**” **Psalms 103:8.** I also told him that God’s timing

is perfect and that it was time for him to repent and surrender his life and affairs to His wisdom and leading of the Holy Spirit, reminding him with the scripture, **“And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.” Romans 8:28**

I have tried to convince him but he refused to surrender to God and seek His wisdom. He tried to solve his own problems with the results that he was back to prison because of his hardness of heart and in an attempt to solve his own problems taking his issues into his own hands making it even worse! What is the solution of your problem then?

“Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household.” Acts 16:31



(36)

He Will Not Leave Me

It was reported that a European diplomat worked at Hong Kong has caused anger and discontent of the South Korean people. The reason for the public displeasure is that the diplomat when he worked in South Korea, he and his wife were unable to have children on their own they adopted a four month old South Korean baby girl.

The family moved to Hong Kong with their adopted daughter and by her age of seven, the diplomat and his wife were able to conceive and have two biological children.

The Sunday Morning Post newspaper reported that the diplomat took the adopted girl at the age of seven to the social services in Hong Kong stating simply that “the adoption process was unsuccessful”. The newspaper did not mention the name of the diplomat but stated that he and his wife have given up on the child and left her behind because they’re basically having two biological children on their own and no longer need the adopted child!

This is unfortunate because no matter how high position a person may reach when away from the Lord she/he only thinks of what is for himself not of what for others!

But an opposite story occurred in recent years, the heroes of the story were two godly parents who went through a similar situation and circumstances, unable to conceive so they adopted a child. They loved their adopted daughter and cared for her giving her a warm loving home but with God's will and contrary to the predictions of doctors they were blessed with two biological daughters and a son!

So what did the godly parents do to their adopted daughter? They never gave her up or back to social services, but continued to have her as an integral part of the family, they raised her and gave her in marriage and their relationship continued as it is with her two sisters and the brother.

This reminds me with the greatest adoption event ever happened, **“Yet to all who did receive him (Jesus), to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—” John 1:12**

“The Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, “Abba, Fa-

ther.” The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ,.”
Romans 8:15-17

Thanks be to God, Who is our loving Father and **“His love endures forever”**. He **“will never leave you or forsake you”** for we are his children and he is our loving Father.



(37)

If You Knew the Gift of God!

The poor Indian widow took her children for a long trip to the “holy river” where they went to worship the river Ganges for “the blessings it bring them”!

In India, the river Ganges is depicted as a goddess and many shrines are situated on its banks of which Varanasi is one of the most prominent. People there worship and meditate as the river is considered most sacred and they believe that by taking a bath in the Ganges, lifetime sins will be washed away!

Isn't it amazing what the devil does with people and their futile minds, for **“the god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ.”** **2 Corinthians 4:4** Isn't easier to conceive that behind the river is its maker? The psalmist writes, **“You make springs flow in the valleys, and rivers run between the hills.”** **Psalms 104:10**

But stranger yet, the woman did something unbelievably strange. She took her first born beloved healthy son and squeezed him hard to her chest kissing him in motherly emotional passion then suddenly pushed him over the deep water to be swallowed by the river as a sacrifice to the “holy river”!

How horrible this’s? Satan who blindfolded people’s minds and hearts by lies. **“He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.” John 8:44**

Dear friend, let me tell you about the true loving God, He loves you, and wants what is good for you and your family. He wants your heart and mind, He is calling you, **“My son, give me your heart and let your eyes delight in my ways,” Proverbs 23:26.**

He is a good God, His pleasure is to give not to take. **“He has shown kindness by giving you rain from heaven and crops in their seasons; he provides you with plenty of food and fills your hearts with joy.” Acts 14:17**

The Samaritan woman thought that Jesus needed her water jar to drink not knowing that she is the one who needs Him and the living water, **“If you knew the**

gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.” John 4:10, Jesus declared.

If you have not accepted the gift of God in Jesus Christ yet, now is the time. And if you have accepted Him as your personal Savior, consider our acts of generous giving in gratitude. If this deceived poor woman has given her older healthier child as a sacrifice to a false god, what and how are you giving to the Lord expressing your love to Him?

“Honor the Lord with your wealth, with the first-fruits of all your crops;” Proverbs 3:9



(38)

The Ant and Grasshopper Story

The mother of 9 years old third grader, Mark received a phone call from his teacher telling her that Mark has done something interesting and surprising that she would like to share with her! Mom was eager to hear what happened, couldn't wait so she asked the teacher. The teacher said that she was telling the kids the ant and grasshopper usual story. And this how it went, "The ant worked hard and tirelessly collecting food in the summer for the winter while the grasshopper was eating and playing, hopping and enjoying the summer field not saving any food for winter." "Winter came", said the teacher, "and it was harshly cold and food was scarce for all", so the grasshopper went to the ant asking for food to survive the winter!". Here the teacher stopped and asked the students to write a finish for the story of the grasshopper asking food from the ant at such time of hunger and life or death.

Mark asked his teacher if he can draw a picture after the story and she said yes, but to finish the story first not replace it.

Most of the answers, found the teacher, were consistent with prior years in that the ant shared her food with the grasshopper and both survived.

A few students ended the story having the ant refused to give the grasshopper any food stating that she was wise and active while he was unwise and lazy and that she has no enough food for both, and that the grasshopper died of hunger!

The mother was so anxiously waiting how did Mark end the story, did he side with the majority or the minority and both endings seemed somewhat reasonable and common responses, but the teacher said that Mark has ended the story differently! **Mark wrote that the ant gave all her food to the grasshopper so he may live and she died. Then, he drew a picture of three crosses and the words underneath “ Jesus died so that we may live”**

Dear friend, did you know that Jesus died for you so that you may live? The Righteous for the ungodly so we may be accepted by the holy God?

Pardon Decline

Yes, a nine years old understood that, it's the truth revealed to all, old and young, far and near as revealed in the scriptures, **“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”** John 3:16

“just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”
Matthew 20:28



(39)

Pursued By Heaven

Larry Craig Morton (born February 5, 1943) is a well known American football quarterback who played for Dallas Cowboys and Denver Broncos in the National Football League (NFL). Mr. Morton was “Player of the Year” in two categories in 1977.

He wrote that he was so immersed in material pleasures; a luxury apartment in New York, going out with “beautiful girls”, flying around all over the states. **“But deep down, I felt so empty and hungry until I met with the Lord Jesus”** said Craig.

“I started to realize at certain point that I was pursued not just by the strong opposite team defense players, but also by someone else I could not stand against or pass him” and he continued, **“I knew deep down that the Lord was knocking the door of my heart and I wanted Him to come in for good”**.

Finally, Craig opened his heart for the Lord and invited Him in to change his life and fill the void and hunger in his heart. His colleagues and friends were surprised and mocked him calling him fanatic, but he responded, **“the Lord Jesus did not call me to be religious, but He made me really a happy new creature”**.

Craig was pursued by heaven, by God for years till he finally surrendered his life and became a new creation in Christ, how about you my dear friend?

“Submit to God and be at peace with him; in this way (true) prosperity will come to you.” Job 22:21



(40)

Saved

We have learned a lot more in recent years through media about the titanic ship tragedy and the death toll and the horror that the survivors went through!

One of the rescued passengers was a Christian merchant from Boston, whose family were in great sadness as they initially thought that he died in the accident! They waited too long, checking different lists of names, in vain!

After a hard, dark and long time and much struggle, the merchant made it to the shore safely. As soon as he was able, immediately sent his grieving family a telegraph with one word “**saved**”! To his family, this one word was more precious than the whole world’s treasures.

When he came home, the merchant framed that telegraph with the one word “**saved**” so he may see it

and give thanks every day to the Lord who **saved** him not just from drowning here on earth but **saved** him giving him eternal life too.

Jesus died on the cross to save us, so we may spend eternity with him, in heaven.

How precious this word, **saved**? Have you been saved, eternally?

“Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them.” Hebrews 7:25



(41)

No, It's Not Over

A Christian minister was once asked to speak in a group meeting of senior citizens.

He chose to speak from the gospel of John chapter three and the encounter of Jesus with Nicodemus.

The message was entitled **“you must be born again”**
John 3:7

After the service was over and during the fellowship time, the minister noticed and approached an elderly woman who seemed to be heavy hearted and saddened.

“Have you been born again? Did Christ come into your heart and life and forgive your sins?” asked the minister. The woman answered “no, it did not happen”.

The minister in a begging voice asked her “would you like to accept Jesus now?”

She said, “I’m afraid it is probably late” and the minister answered, “it’s better late than never”. The woman

smiled, repeating “it is better late than never, indeed”.

The woman’s heart was opened for the Lord and she prayed accepting Christ and she smiled happily. Her features have changed and her heart was filled with joy. Even though her years on earth may be a few, her eternal life with Christ is endless!

The decision in the 11th hour of someone’s life (Matthew 20:6) not only gives us hope but also gives us warning not to wait till the last hour cause it may never comes.

“Do not wait till the 11th hour, you may die at 10:30”!

No matter how old you are, please seek the Lord now and call upon him if you have not accepted Christ yet before it’s too late.

“Seek the Lord while he may be found; call on him while he is near.”Isaiah 55:6

“For he says, “In the time of my favor I heard you, and in the day of salvation I helped you.” I tell you, now is the time of God’s favor, now is the day of salvation.”2 Corinthians 6:2

Amen

(42)

Robert Enke

Robert Enke (24 August 1977- 10 November 2009)

The talented German national football (soccer) player has committed suicide while he was on the top of his career! Carried over the shoulders of his team mate players while 40,000 people being gathered in the stadium to pay respect and say goodbye. All were shocked and in disbelief!

The death of Robert Enke, this very talented and well liked national football player caused great sadness for the German people in a way that was not experienced since 1967 after the death of chancellor Konrad Adenauer.

Robert's team coach wondered and reflected voice of many, **“what did Robert lack that he committed suicide throwing himself in front of the train that passes by his house in Hanover?”**

The German football league president then said **“we all need to learn from Robert’s death that football cannot be everything”**.

Unfortunately, many like Robert Enke have committed suicide as they did not find in life meaningfulness or hope. Whoever lives without Christ, perish without him.

Now, how about you dear friend, what is your life’s goal and hope? Is it money or fame, or a fleeting pleasure? Please come and find true meaningful life in Jesus Christ.

“I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live and that you may love the Lord your God, listen to his voice, and hold fast to him. For the Lord is your life.”Deuteronomy 30:19-20



(43)

A Great Discovery

Sir James Simpson (7 June 1811 – 6 May 1870) was a Scottish obstetrician and a significant figure in the history of medicine. It is said that he agonized over the amount of unbearable pain that patients endured undergoing surgical procedures so that he worked hard and was able to discover the Anesthetic affect of the chloroform! Sir James Simon was able to alleviate pain during surgery and help many patients.

It was as painful to James or even more to see death creeping into his beloved family and friends! He felt paralyzed and incapable before the might of aging, sickness and death. He was wondering, “if the hard work and discoveries can alleviate some of patients’ physical pain and ailments, who would and how to handle the pain inside someone’s soul and spirit?” James struggled with the soul searching questions and he reached a dead end road when it comes to human futile efforts! He then went directly to God in prayers searching for answers.

Pardon Decline

He was asked once by a journalist about his greatest discovery, and he said, **“it is when I discovered that our Lord Jesus has died for me on the cross to pay my debts and forgive my sins”**

So dear friend, have you found out about such great discovery yourself? Come now to Jesus, for **“God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”** Romans 5:8



(44)

I am Pascal

The young man sat next to the window in a train reading his book for the philosopher Pascal across from an elderly man holding the Bible reading and meditating.

The young man looked to the older man and asked, “how come you’re reading such an ancient, almost two thousand years old book that is not good for now?” And continued with an advice that was not asked telling him to better read a book that can feed the mind similar to what he’s currently reading for Pascal the philosopher so he may enjoy depth of thinking. But the old man just smiled and continued to read his Bible calmly and did not respond otherwise.

When he reached the station to leave the train, the old man turned to the young man calmly and said **“I am Pascal”!**

Pascal himself has said that no matter how old we get and no matter how much we achieve in this life we

need to return to God because without Him we do not grow mature.

God is the center of our life and the food of our soul, whatever we do or achieve will be futile without having God in our lives.

Yes everything without Him is rubbish and chasing after the wind.

It's sad that many people are wasting their life in **“all the things that are under the sun; all of them are meaningless, a chasing after the wind” Ecclesiastes 1:14**

So dear friend, I'm inviting you to **“Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.” Colossians 3:2.**



(45)

Leading Pigs to Slaughterhouse!

Someone was wondering how could that be watching a man leading a big herd of pigs to the slaughterhouse very easily? No resistance nor deviation, she was surprised! Then she asked the Herdsman how is this happening seamlessly and simply. **“I have a bag filled with their favorite pods”**, said the Herdsman, then he added **“I threw them to the pigs as we go and I’m confident that they will continue to follow me but even run towards me as I lead them to the slaughterhouse”!**

This is exactly what Satan does to his followers, he throws to them the bait and they are in foolishness and enthusiastically take the bait and continue to follow him to their “pod” desire then they end up in the slaughterhouse. So it is with the nonbelievers, the doors of Hades opened widely for the deceived where they fall into it forever following their heart’s desires!

Judas’s bait was the love of money, so he betrayed Jesus for thirty pieces of silver.

Pardon Decline

Demas deserted Paul the apostle, “because he loved this world” 2Timothy 4:10

Samson lost his power and ministry for Delilah and sexual desire

The devil continues to deceive throwing in the “desired bait” leading you to the slaughterhouse, hell! So, what is your bait?

No matter what it is and where you are, if you’re reading this I want to tell you, there is hope! Come to the Lord now and leave the bait, be free in Jesus’s name!

“So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.”
John 8:36

Amen



(46)

World's Glory

Nero Claudius Caesar Augustus ; (15 December AD 37 – 9 June AD 68), was the fifth Roman emperor and last emperor of the Julio-Claudia dynasty, reigning from AD 54 until his death in AD 68. It is believed that he was directly or indirectly involved in the fire set in Rome and blamed the Christians for it for distraction from his corruption and for his hatred and desire for persecution of the Christians. Nero's life ended by the sword after the rapid rise in authority to the throne and temporary glory!

Nero died and with him died all his dreams of building a greater Roman Empire.

What is the glory of this world? It is nothing but an air bubble, the bigger it gets the closer to its end by bursting! "I have seen all the things that are done under the sun; all of them are meaningless, a chasing after the wind." Ecclesiastes 1:14

Pardon Decline

Go visit museums where the remains of great and powerful people who are no more! Kings, leaders, presidents, rich and famous, war spoils, treasures,...etc all are meaningless and chasing after the wind!

Dear friend, enough running after earthly and worthless things and start seeking things above, which is eternal.

“Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you.” John 6:27



(47)

No Greater Love

During the Second World War, a group of English soldiers were taken captives to the Japanese army and were sent to work in building a bridge under strict and harsh conditions. It was a long time in captivity and miserable conditions, and in their worst conditions the soldiers started to act badly even steal food from each other!

One day, the Japanese officer brought the captives and told them that there is a missing shovel and the one who stole it needs to come forward, but no one did.

The officer threatened to shoot them all if no one comes forth and accept responsibility, and that threat fell on deaf ears! The officer came back with more threats and in violence he declared that he will now shoot them all at the same time unless “the guilty” comes forth and he seemed serious in his threat.

At that time, a soldier came forward to take the penalty and let the rest free. He was shot to death, and they were let go!

Days later, it became known that no shovels were lost but it was no more than just a simple miscalculation! The captive soldiers realized that their fellow soldier has taken punishment upon himself so that they maybe let go! He surrendered himself to death so that they may live and since, things changed dramatically in their lives in captivity even though their conditions were not changed. The soldiers showed loving care for one another and many sought the Lord, became Christians and reading the Word.

Some of them decided to become missionaries if released! All that happened because one person put his life for others, just like Jesus did for us all,

“Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.” John 15:13

Dear friend, this soldier followed what Jesus has done for us, He died for us, the righteous for the guilty, the Holy One for the sinners,..would you accept what Jesus has done for you? Would you repent denouncing your sins and willfully give your heart and life to Christ now?

(48)

He Made Us, We are His

An artist once painted a beautiful painting of nature around, he worked on it so hard and so long that it came out so beautiful and he cherished it very much.

One day, a thief broke into the artist's house and stole many things including that wonderful piece of art which led to his deep sadness.

Years went by and the painting were still missing and the artist lost hope to have it back again. But one day while he was abroad and visiting some art museum, the artist was shocked to see his lost painting hung up there and priced really high, it wad quite expensive. He was moved, and decided to pay the price and take it back thinking, **“how precious you painting to me, you are mine again. You were mine when I made you and now mine as I pay such price for you”**.

Pardon Decline

Dear friends, we are just like that to the Lord, we are loved and precious to Him. First because He created us into His image, and then as He bought us with His precious blood. So, I can hear Him saying **“you are precious and honored in my sight, and because I love you, I will give people in exchange for you, nations in exchange for your life.”** Isaiah 43:4

Do you realize how much He loves you? Would you live for Him?



(49)

More Precious Than Gold

The gold mines in Black Hills, South Dakota are some of the largest gold producer in the USA. Workers may go more than a mile deep in the mine for raw gold extract before it is treated to get the pure gold out.

This material is treated very carefully because of how precious the gold metal is. Workers put on certain clothes and work environment is treated with special measures of aeration and washing protocols so that none of the precious gold is missed!

More than forty thousand dollars worth of gold powder is retrieved annually by such careful process and measures treating workers' clothes alone.

None of the gold, not even a minute particle will be lost for the owners!

To God, nothing more precious than people, man is more precious than the whole world. The Bible assures us that God the Holy Spirit is at work so none of God's children will be lost in this world.

We are so precious that God has sent his only Son to save us.

“For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.” Luke 19:10



(50)

There is One Way Out

There was eight firefighter crewmen in the field, a jungle where fire was spreading and they were unaware that it was circling and closing in. A small plane was nearby and the pilot realized what is happening and saw their dilemma!

The brave pilot decided to risk his life by flying low and send them a message that they are being surrounded by fire and that they have only one narrow way out. After few attempts, they got the message that they need to rush to safety and that he can see the way so they need to follow him!

The men believed the pilot and dropped all their heavy burden of equipments and followed his lead, watching their “heavenly savior” navigating slowly and carefully through a narrow path, they followed him to safety!

Interesting enough that the firefighters did not waste time discussing if the pilot make sense or not, and did

not try to find another way to safety! They believed him since he was the only one who could see the whole picture because he was higher than them all, and **they were rescued, they were saved!**

God alone sees the whole picture of this world that is spiraling downhill and will soon be closed in with fire. He sent His Son to save us, **“For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.” John 3:17**

Only through Jesus Christ the Son that we can find our way out and be saved! It will be foolish to argue, to waste time or try to find another way!

“Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” John 14:6

“Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved.” Acts 4:12

Amen

(51)

How God Sees Us

Halford Edward Luccock (1885–1960) was a prominent American Methodist Minister and professor of homiletics at Yale University School. He once said that a woman went up the top of the Empire State Building in New York which is a 102-story skyscraper. When she looked down and saw how too small people seemed from above, “just like ants”, she was said out loud!

Then I said, “now I know what people think of how God sees them from above, just like ants!”. May be this is the reason why people’s life is void of meaningfulness! They really think of how God sees them from high above like ants! **They feel like ants in God’s eyes; neglected, trivial, forgotten, unlikable, unneeded and unnoticeable!** But if we really want to realize how people see us humans, then we don’t need to go up the Empire State Building but up on the mount of **Golgotha!**

Up on that mountain, **Golgotha** where we see Christ hung up on the cross, then at the light of that cross we

can understand how **God sees people**. “**For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.**” John 3:16.

**This is where and how we may realize how God really sees people, so precious, loved and redeemed!
Amen**



(52)

Watch Out, It Burns

A big fire was set up for it was a cold night The young man was warming up near the high red flames. Suddenly, and after starring for a little while at the flames the man jumped into the fire! Passers by rushed to him and pulled him out and called the ambulance but he unfortunately was burnt quite badly!

When asked, the young man answered, “I was warming up looking intently at the flames, I liked it and felt a strong desire to get nearer, almost a power pulling me towards the flames wanting to embrace them and here I jumped!

You may be wondering dear friends how such a bizarre behavior really happens! It is insane what this man did, isn't it? But isn't that what most people are doing now in regards to sin? The glamour of sin is like fire with it's flames dancing in her red dress right before us and

the lust in our hearts catches like fire and we find ourselves pulled towards sin. When we throw ourselves in her arms, we get nothing but pain, burns, disfigures and damage.

Sin is like fire, like drunkenness in its effects so, **“Do not gaze at wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup, when it goes down smoothly! In the end it bites like a snake and poisons like a viper.” Proverbs 23:31-32.** So, sin starts in the mind, like seeing the fire followed by the **desire** and emotion feeling drawn towards it, then finally the **will** power that lead us to throwing ourselves into the flames!

So, this is a wise advice regarding sin, **“Do not let your heart turn to her ways or stray into her paths. Many are the victims she has brought down; her slain are a mighty throng. Her house is a highway to the grave, leading down to the chambers of death.” Proverbs 7:25-27**



(53)

They Have Found God

Leo Tolstoy, was a Russian writer who is regarded as one of the greatest authors of all time. He however at some point in his life was not happy so he resorted to all kinds of sinful desires to alleviate his sense of despair and was still depressed that he thought of committing suicide!

While in his state of depression, Tolstoy walked in the jungles meeting some villagers who didn't have much of life's possessions yet reflected deep inner peace stemming from their faith in and relationship with God. Tolstoy later wrote, "I continued walking down the jungle that day, and there and then I prayed and gave my life to the Lord and at that moment I felt as if everything in life had the pulse of life returned and everything became like new in my eyes. Only then I realized **that God, Life and Truth are the same. To live is to know God, there is no life apart from Him.**"

Tolstoy has found the life he was looking for to satisfy his Soulja Jesus. Only in Him you will find life, **“In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind.”**
John 1:4

Life in its fullness and meaningfulness can only be found in the God, through Jesus Christ the Lord. Christ was not jut a mere man pointing towards life but He himself is the Life and the Giver of life to its fullness.

Jesus said: **“I am the way and the truth and the life..”** John 14:6 and **“I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.”** John 10:10



**The next two stories were added by
the English translator with permission
of the author**

(54)

Saeed is Now Saeed

It was the evening of December 6, 1989. I was a physician at the Harper Memorial Hospital in Menouf, Egypt's and was on call that night . The outpatient busy clinics are now closed and the inpatient is quite and the hustle and bustle is now replaced with quietness. Patients received their meds and were comfortable on their beds. Overnight group of nurses and workers gathered around to read the Bible, share stories and play the lute with some songs.

Saeed was the youngest of the group, sixteenth years old who worked at the hospital attending to landscape among other things. Saeed was known for his big smile, love of life and loud voice that made me smile as I remember him writing this now.

He was also known for being a nice, kind and hard working kid but of course like many of us with known sinful life and relationships.

That night of December 6, 1989, we spoke about how to be born again, be a new creation and leave behind the life of sins and Saeed paid special attention that night expressing that he has tried to give up sins and he couldn't!

“What can I do Doctor Samy? I have tried to stop sinning but I kept falling back! I go to the chapel in the morning, get emotionally moved and promise to stop sinning and then I keep going back, what can I do?” Saeed sincerely asked.

“Listen Saeed,” I said, “imagine that the hospital director brought to your attention a very bad smell coming out of the beautiful garden and he asked you to check it out! And you did! So, you found out that in the garden's far corner there was a dead dog laid out there, rotten and foul”. “That would be very disgusting” said Saeed.

“Of course” I agreed, “then you, Saeed decided to get your bottle of after shave cologne and you poured it out on that dead dog, what will happen then, Saeed?” I asked. He said, “the bad smell will go away but comes back”. “Sure” I said, “now if you work harder cleaning and pour more cologne but the dead dog is still there, what will now happen?” I asked. “The smell will go away again but will come back, Doctor it will come back” said

Saeed enthusiastically “I have to take this dead dog away, threw it far away then clean up afterwards” he continued. “Yes Saeed, you need to take that dead dog and threw it away, and with way less efforts the freshness will come back and the bad smell will go away”, I said. “Do you understand Saeed now what the Bible means by new creation?” I asked.

Saeed understood then that God needs to take this old sinful nature, the dead dog out of his heart in repentance and give him a new nature, sins as the bad odor of the old will go away and the freshness of new creation will take over his life and actions.

How can I have that, Doctor?” He asked.

We read together, **“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.” 2 Corinthians 5:17**

Saeed prayed that night and asked Jesus to come to his life and “to take that dead dog out of my heart” he sincerely prayed. I congratulated Saeed for his decision he made and the sincere prayer and left the building towards home, but he ran after me to the parking lot and screamed, “Doctor Samy, please pray with me again! I want to make sure that Jesus took that dead dog out of my life and will never come back” and he

put his face between his hands and leaned over the car and cried out again with tears asking the Lord to change his heart in repentance! **“And God granted his request.”**

1 Chronicles 4:10

How do I know? Saeed’s life has changed and became a testament to many. He has denounced the life of sin, attended worship services, loved the Word of God, and prayed often. Not just that, but people of every walk of life said that Saeed’s behavior and relationship have changed and that he is a true believer.

In April 1993, I left Egypt to live in America with my family and we stayed in touch, not as often as I wished but I wouldn’t go to Egypt without seeing Saeed and other believers we had fellowship with back in Harper Memorial Hospital.

He remained in the faith as witnessed by the brothers and sisters in his community.

Fast forward, October 21, 2022 I went to Egypt for a short visit and I saw Saeed, 49 years old man, a son, a husband, a father and “even a grandfather too” he told me with a big smile, laughter and a hug. Full of life, Saeed waited for my arrival and received me with a big smile, lots of hugs and kisses with kindness and generosity. As a son to his father he embraced me, we spent time togeth-

er with some other believers as usual. We prayed and reminded each other that the time is near and the Lord's return is soon for us as a church or at least for us individually, **"So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be awake and sober."**¹ Thessalonians 5:6

Seeing Saeed was one of the highlights of my recent visit to Egypt.

After I returned to the USA, and about one week or so later I knew that Saeed went to be with the Lord! It was sudden, unexpected and shocking.

It was not an accidental, but Jesus's promise of return now fulfilled for him.

I miss **Saeed**, but I know that he **is now very "saeed"** which is an Arabic for happy.

Are you trying to stop sinning on your own?

"You must be born again" "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation".

Only Jesus can take the "dead dog" out and give you a new heart, just like Saeed.

I am Dr. Samy and this is my **eyewitness testimony of Saeed's life and conversion.**

(55)

I Was Blind, Now Can See!

This is my life and faith testimony:

I was born and raised in Cairo, Egypt, the youngest of 5 brothers and 2 sisters. The father was up in age and died when I was 13 and the mother was with chronic lung disease, struggled to breath at times having rough nights, was in and out of the hospital and ending living with my older sister in the USA which seemed better for her health, till she passed away there while I was serving my native country military service, which is a 30 months draft service.

The community where I grew up was fairly poor. Achieving high education was a struggle for many, but I was fortunate to have the opportunity to continue through high school and into Medical School. I was encouraged by my family and neighbors reinforcing my educational aspirations and behavior. I was known as being polite, good student and religious kid!

Only I knew how sinful I was. I knew that I am a sinner and if I die, I will end up in hell! I also knew that Jesus died for me on the cross and that made me emotional at times wishing to repent expressed in verbal or nonverbal promises that I was never able to keep!

I have went to the church, took communion and made a confession through the priest -not confessing everything of course cause it's embarrassing- but I tried anyway.

My spiritual and religious experience growing up was like between the rock and the hard place, between a traditional church where the religious "rich and clean looking" people trying to disciple me and the Protestant place of worship "Khalas El Nephous" that makes me want to be like them "know the Bible and trust in being saved " and give up sins and I couldn't!

Another factor was my older married sister, Etedal who has accepted Jesus Christ and miraculously has learned to read the Bible, only the Bible not letters or newspapers since she never went to school but was basically illiterate!

This older married sister's life and the way she worshipped in her church in Zagazig, and the way she raised

her kids and how she treated us her parents and siblings when visiting was a great testimony of Christian living.

Back to my school years and the spiritual struggle to be a better person and the mismatch between the inside sinful me and the outside seen by people. I was living

“Although I want to do good, evil is right there with me. For in my inner being I delight in God’s law; but I see another law at work in me, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin... What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body..subject to death?” Romans 7:21-24

Educationally, I was not much better. I studied hard against odd circumstances through prep and high school and the score of high school final exam is determining if I would be accepted in medical school and which university!

My dream was Med School of Cairo University since it is the most prestigious and since I lived in Cairo anyway. My final score was disappointing and for a known reason to me. I did poorly in English, my favorite subject due to stress during the final exam over an incident that was totally out of my control but made me upset. I lost 14 precious points in the English final exam alone! My

total final grade was 1.5 points short of getting into Cairo University Medical School! Only 1.5 points, that was 0.375% of the total final score short! I was livid.

“What if I was calm and did well in the English test?” I was so angry, I hit my head into the segment wall at home damaging it that was a reminder for a while!

I had to either give up medicine or join a medical school in different town like Alexandria or Zagazig where my older married sister lived. I chose Zagazig University Medical School, a decision that changed my life all together.

A couple of months before I moved to Zagazig for Medical School, I went to watch a football (soccer) game for my favorite team, Al Ahly in Cairo stadium with my older brother, Mike. I noticed that he could see clearly from afar all the players and their shirts' number on their back and I didn't! That lead me to ask, why? I thought we all see blurry from a distance! There was no vision screening or well child check up growing up in Egypt at that time.

Well, at the eye doctor's office, I was checked having different lenses in front of my eyes to check the proper power lenses I need for my vision. I was shocked! Wow,

I can see! I thought I was seeing ok, but “I was blind and now I can see”, almost blind without realizing! The colors and clarity with glasses were amazing clear and beautiful. The reason I mention that experience at the eye doctor is that a couple of months later I will have a similar experience but spiritually! I settled in Zagazig for starting Medical School in the fall. During that time I was adjusting to life in rural Zagazig compared to life in the city of Cairo. I was bored, my sister and her children went to church several times a week, so I started going with them too. A small apostolic church where people stand up and clap and sing loud and seemed happy. I wished to be like them, but how? I tried to change myself stop sinning, love the church, read the Bible and be certain of my eternity but that was not achievable!

I argued that Christians just deceive themselves, I thought it was just a mind game!

I continued to go to that “church of Christ” in Zagazig wishing to be like them anyway! November 1979, after a conversation with the youth leader then, now pastor Samir Zakher, he shared the gospel with me, **“If you declare with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.” Romans 10:9-10**

That night I woke up around 3 a.m. and couldn't go back to sleep! The words of the Bible verse were not leaving me, "if you confess with your lips...believe in your heart,..you will be saved" on and on and on!

I sensed the presence of God in my room, I sat up in respect and reverence and talked out loud, "Lord, you know everything, you know all of my sins" I argued with God that I don't need to tell him, I was actually embarrassed but God insisted that I confess and declare out loud. "But Lord, I have confessed before through the priest and it is quite embarrassing you know!" I continued to argue. But the pressure was on and the burden on my shoulder getting heavier so I cried out, "Lord, I will confess of all my sins" I surrendered and told Him all of my sins that I could remember, i acknowledged that He knew everything but I told Him what I could..I asked Jesus to forgive me and save me , He answered my prayers and forgave me my sins and the burden fell off of my shoulder.

I felt relieved and joyous, I couldn't sleep with my heart dancing of joy in my chest. I opened the Bible and started reading the book of Genesis, just from the beginning...I read the whole book by the morning, and it was so sweet!

I walked to my sister's house early in the morning on my way to my Med School and told her what happened, she was happy and congratulated and assured me that now I am born again.

Remember that experience at the eye doctor that I thought I was blind and now I can see? That was exactly how I felt spiritually!

Everything and everyone seemed new as if I am seeing for the first time.

The roads are clean in spite of mud and transportation were new in spite of the crowded seatless ride! I was definitely a new creation, I was indeed born again, hallelujah!

Well, it was the beginning of a new life, eternal life, a journey that has started that night and continuing, Jesus is my shepherd, Savior and Redeemer.

More than 40 years ago when it happened and He is still faithful keeping His promises "**I will never leave you or forsake you**", praise His name.

Would you come to Jesus, confess with your lips and believe in your heart?

You will be saved!