



THE GOOD NEWS MESSENGER

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The Sinner's Prayer

Taken from *The Secret of Prayer*—By: E. E. Byrum

The beautiful words recorded in John 3:16 should be a consolation to every sinner: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved." It is through Jesus Christ that the sinner obtains pardon and is relieved of his burden of guilt and sin and fitted for the kingdom of heaven. There comes a time in the life of all persons when the Spirit of the Lord speaks to them, convicting of sin, and endeavoring to draw them away from the ways of wickedness. Furthermore, he has given encouraging promises which will reach the case of every one.

Jesus came to seek and to save the lost—those who are lost in sin. When one is awakened to his condition, and comes to the Lord with a humble heart, a long prayer is not necessarily required in order to be saved. The publican, who felt the weight of his sins, in much humility of heart, prayed:

"God, be merciful to me a sinner."

Jesus said, "I tell you this man went down to his house justified."

It sometimes happens that people put off salvation until the last hour of their lives. It is better late than never, but too many are unable to seek the Lord at that hour. Many are hurled into eternity without a moment's warning; others find that at that time their hearts are hardened and the Spirit of the Lord has taken his departure, but even in the hour of death, the Lord has shown his great mercy to those who called upon him. It is recorded that the thieves upon the cross railed out upon him, but when one of them realized that Jesus was really the Son of God, even though he had spent his life in wickedness and sin, he yielded to the wooings of the Spirit, and reproved the other thief for mocking Jesus. He acknowledged that both of them justly merited punishment. Then he said to Jesus, "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom."

The answer from Jesus was "Verily I say unto thee, today thou shalt be with me in paradise."

A few years ago, some ministers were holding a series of meetings, the Spirit of the Lord was convicting people of their sins, and many were yielding and turning from their sinful ways. The minister plead with the people to turn to the Lord, and one man, who had enjoyed the blessings of salvation, but who had again turned into sin, said that he would love to be a Christian but had sinned away his day of grace. He said that he had gone into sin until his heart was hardened. He was urged to come forward and let the ministers pray for him, and finally kneeled at the altar of prayer, but still insisted that his heart was so hard that he could have no confidence that God would deliver him. The brethren felt that he had not sinned away his day of grace, and told him that if he could not place himself in the hands of God to place himself in

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the hands of the ministry, as best he could, and let them pray for him, trusting them to take his case to the throne of grace. After some solicitation on the part of the ministry, he decided to do so. The earnest prayers of the ministers ascended to the throne of grace in his behalf, and soon he began to feel the influence and melting power of the Spirit of God; and it was not long, as he thus yielded himself, until he realized that there was hope for him. As he began to call upon God, and acknowledge his sins, and decided, by the grace of God, to forever forsake them, he was soon made to realize the pardoning power and grace of the Almighty in his soul. He arose shouting the praises of God.

There are today many people whom the enemy has made to feel that their day of grace is past, and that there is no more hope—that they have sinned against the Holy Spirit, when it is only a trick of the enemy to keep them out of the kingdom.

I was once visiting prisoners in a State Penitentiary. We had arranged on Sunday morning for a special meeting of those who were seeking special help from the Lord. About a dozen, who had been hardened criminals, some even murderers, were present and desired to seek help from God. I read, for part of a Scripture lesson, Matthew 6:14, 15. "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your heavenly Father forgive your trespasses." After commenting upon this text for some little time, one, who had been a murderer, arose and said that he had been seeking God for a long time, and even claimed to be saved; but never had been satisfied, and it was not until that morning that he knew what stood in his way. Through the reading of the Word, the Lord made known to him that it was because of hardness he held in his heart against others whom he felt had wronged him and whom he felt he could not forgive. Then and there he decided to meet the conditions of the Word of God, forgive his enemies, and accept Jesus as his complete Saviour from all sin.

While traveling with a minister in the South, a few years ago, we came to a place in Mississippi, where a series of meetings were being held. This was considered a very wicked community. We earnestly prayed for the salvation of souls, and conviction rested upon the people. It seemed that the more power of God was manifest in conviction, the more the enemy of souls tried to work in opposition to it. One night, just as services were about to begin, someone informed us that a mob of ruffians were on their

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A Great Adventure

Excerpt from "The Secret of a Singing Heart—By: C. W. Naylor

Life has wonderful possibilities for good or for evil. It may be a great adventure upon which we go, with ever-changing scenes, through which we may march with our heads up and a song of victory in our hearts. To many life *is* this. On the other hand, life may mean a servitude in which the weary, discouraged, and almost hopeless prisoner of fate marches on toward an eternal dungeon. One may be a slave to worry, fear, foreboding. Life may be a series of defeats. But this is not the normal life. No one need live such a life.

Life was intended to be triumphant, joyous, prosperous. It was meant to be filled with gladness, with light hearts and with singing. Facing life as we are capable of facing it we can make it an ever-ascending pathway with our vision expanding to an ever remoter horizon. Life may be a series of discoveries. A great American said, "I shall pass this way but once." Each day there is new territory to be explored, new experiences to be had.

The terrain of our life is largely of our own choosing. We may go on the upland way or down through the swamps. We may have the fragrance of flowers and of fruit, of pines and cedars, or we may have the miasma of decaying vegetations. Life is full of boundless possibilities. It is a great continent lying before us awaiting exploration. Shall we go through it with bowed heads and burdened shoulders or shall we cast off our burden, lift up our heads, and be men and women in the midst of a great adventure?

Explorers do not always have an easy time. Frequently they have great difficulties to overcome. But exploration gives zest to life. The constantly changing scenes always bring freshness of interest. The difficulties and privations of the past are quickly forgotten in the inspiring prospect that lies before us. We need to cultivate in life the spirit of the explorer. We need to develop our possibilities, our capabilities, and have the inspiration of a great purpose.

It is so easy to say, "Oh, I do not amount to anything, I never can be anything. I never can do anything worth while," then to settle down in the prison-house of this idea and attitude and never be free, not because we might not be free, but because we do not choose to be free. So often people say, "My life is not worth living." Every life is worth living, but every life is *worth living right*. So many lives are like an airplane is so heavily loaded it can never gain altitude.

There are some things of which we must rid ourselves in order to live a normal life. A bird entangled in the grass cannot fly. It must first be freed from its entanglement. In like manner we must be loosed from our entanglement to have freedom of life. Our entanglements are often of our own making. We build our own prisons; we shut ourselves up in our own cells. Circumstances can never long imprison us if our spirits are free. Has not someone written, "Stone walls do not a prison make, nor iron bars a cage?" The free spirit cannot be imprisoned. Let us not be content with servitude. Let us cry out with Patrick Henry, "Give me liberty," and then strike with the sword of a determined will to cut our way through whatever may imprison or hamper us. Do you say, "This is easier said than done"? True, but it can be done by everyone. It is well within the possibilities of each of us.

What are we getting out of life? In the first place, we can get out of it no more than we put into it. So, if we are getting too little out of our lives, if they are unsatisfying, or impoverished, or

hemmed in, it is because we are putting too little into them. Our lives are what we make them. It is not how *long* we live but how *intensively* we live, how full of worthwhile things we fill our lives that make them worth while and satisfying.

Life in reality is what we are within. Circumstances are the casket in which lies the jewel of personality. The value is not in the casket but in the jewel. Therefore, life is not made up of favorable or unfavorable circumstances, nor of possessions either many or few, nor of recognition or the lack of it, nor of honors given by others. It is what we are that give quality to all these things when they come into life. We can take musical sounds and blend them to produce either harmony or discord. Things can be made either helpful or harmful.

Chemical elements can be combined to create wholesome things or poisonous things. It depends upon the elements we put into our lives and how we combine them as to whether we have happiness or unhappiness. If we put into our lives selfishness, disregard of others, unkindness, discourteousness, ill-temper, complaints, murmuring, distrust, doubts, fear, hate, malice, envy, covetousness, and the like, we shall inevitably have bitterness, dissatisfaction, sorrow, and similar things in our lives as the natural result. Let us not say that God makes our life as it is, or that it is our lot or that people wrong us.

No, we are making the quality, if not the form and outline of our lives. Circumstances alone neither make us nor mar us. It is our reaction to the circumstances that produces results in us. What ruins one makes another. The things that are obstacles in life to some become stumbling-stones, but to others stepping-stones, according to the use made of them.

So after all, what we shall have in life is our own choice. We are the architects of our own lives. If we build with noble materials, carved with patient care, we shall have beauty and grace in our lives. If we put into them love, loyalty, gentleness, meekness, kindness, faith, forbearance, patience, hope, we shall not fail to draw good dividends from all these things, dividends which shall rejoice our hearts, cause our eyes to sparkle, and the song of gladness to well up.

The purpose of life is not merely to have a good time, to gratify the senses, to eat, drink, and be merry. Its high and holy purpose is the building of character. Good character is the basis of real happiness. The poet has said,

*"Only the holy and innocent sing
Out of a bosom where pleasures abide."*

The process of character building is not always easy, but it is always profitable. Each of us has capacity to develop a great character, a noble and beautiful life which cannot be unhappy. In such a soul there is a depth into which trouble can never reach. No matter how trials and troubles may press in upon the life there is a calm and undisturbed peace at the very center of life. There is a joy that springs up on the darkest days. There is a light that shines in the deepest night. Life must have its discipline and its difficulties to make it of value, to give it character. Iron ore is of little value until it passes through the fire and is purified, tempered, and shaped. The chisel must bite deeply into the marble again and again before the angel in it looks out. Paint of little value, when carefully spread upon the canvas by a great artist

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Little John

Taken from *It's Story Time*—By: Geneva Garmen

“Oh, Mother, let’s go to children’s meeting,” urged Little John.

At his urging, Little John’s mother stopped her busy schedule and took her children to church. Little John, his brother and sister joined the other children and soon the church was buzzing with the chatter of happy children.

At church, the teachers, helpers and boys and girls exchanged friendly greetings. When it was time for the meeting to begin, they opened with a song and prayer. Then, to the delight of the children, it was story time. When story time was over the children were given an invitation to come to the altar if they felt they had a need and wanted to pray about it.

It was obvious that many of the children were thinking seriously about the lesson they had just heard. There was conviction in their young hearts and many made their way to the altar. Little John knelt for prayer along with the others.

Little John didn’t get his name from being so tiny. ‘Little’ John was placed before his name because his Dad’s name was John also.

Little John was almost nine years old. He was a bright, brown-eyed, handsome child. He was always polite, kind and smiling. Everyone loved Little John. The teachers couldn’t remember ever having to correct him for misbehavior and he always listened attentively to the lessons.

“I want to be saved,” Little John said to one of the teachers who knelt at the altar to assist him. Bowing his head, he tearfully prayed and asked God to save him. Then, knowing he was forgiven for his childish wrongs, he arose from the altar, hugged his teacher and said, “I’m ready for heaven now.”

His happy, smiling face told the story of a new creature in Christ Jesus.

Following the meeting the children gathered in a room to play games and enjoy some refreshments. Little John set a good example of playing fairly and preferring other children before himself. The teachers couldn’t help but notice Little John’s delightful manners and regarded him as an unusual child.

When Little John returned home that evening he bounded happily into the house and told his family about getting saved.

Three days later, while riding with his Father and little brother in a small car, they were involved in an accident. Little John was killed instantly. His younger brother miraculously escaped injury. His father was severely injured but has returned to fair health.

Little John was saved and ready to meet God. He is now enjoying the wonderful place, called heaven, where he’ll live with Jesus forever.

How glad the teachers and Little John’s friends were for that special children’s service. They cherish the memory of seeing Little John get saved and knowing such a pleasant little child.

Little John has obtained what all Christians look forward to, and that is the full right to enter heaven’s gate.

I Have Left All the World to Follow Jesus

By: D. O. Teasley

In this world I found no rest, Sorrow filled my aching breast,
Till I turned to One who loved me best of all;
Oh, what sacred peace I find, Since my all I have resigned!
I have left all the world to follow Jesus.

Oh, what wondrous joy he gives, While his Spirit in me lives,
For it is my meat and drink to do his will;
He, the treasure I adore, Brightens all my way before,
I have left all the world to follow Jesus.

I am wholly sanctified, Walking closely by his side,
I will ever cling to him my all in all;
Sweetly doth his presence fill While I sink into his will,
I have left all the world to follow Jesus.

Earthly treasures fade away, As I travel day by day
Up the shining way that leads to glory bright;
Soon I’ll gain eternal rest With the ransomed and the blest,
For I’ve left all the world to follow Jesus.

I have left all the world to follow Jesus,
Never backward to its follies will I turn;
Oh, I’m on my upward way, and it’s brighter ev’ry day,
For I’ve left all the world to follow Jesus.

What Would Jesus Do?

By: D. O. Teasley & B. E. Warren

If the sinful ways of life
You are tempted to pursue,
Just stop and think before you yield,
What would Jesus do?

Let your heart from sin be clean,
And your strength in him renew;
Let meekness in your works be seen—
Thus would Jesus do.

If your brother is in need,
And to him you would be true,
Then show your love by word and deed—
Thus would Jesus do.

Let your light forever shine,
Keep the will of God in view;
To sinners prove his love divine—
Thus would Jesus do.

When you’re to the judgment brought,
Will you always have been true?
Then don’t forget the solemn thought—
What would Jesus do?

What, oh what would Jesus do?
What, oh what would Jesus do?
When you’re tempted always stop and think,
What, oh what would Jesus do?

A Great Adventure

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becomes of rare beauty and worth. Likewise the little things seemingly valueless in our lives become richer than a king's ransom when their possibilities are developed.

The Christian life of many people is unsatisfying. Instead of being joyous with the elements of heaven, it is burdensome. There are two causes for this. If when we come to God we still cling to the things of the past and try to graft Christianity upon our old lives, we shall not have the fruits of righteousness. There must be a break with the past. There must be a newness of life. We must be new creatures. Gone with the old life that is forsaken will be many of the causes of heartaches and sorrows and burdens of the past. However, if when we come to God we give up many things that have gone far to make up life for us in the past and we do not replace these things with something just as good or better we impoverish ourselves and our lives become barren and unsatisfying.

We should fill our lives with the better things, the pleasant things of righteousness, of truth, nobility, and service, that make life rich for ourselves and profitable to others. We need the freshness and beauty of true spirituality. We need activities – interesting and profitable things.

God said to us, "Rejoice and be glad." The Christian life is full of wonderful possibilities. I do not mean merely the formal and empty shell of Christian profession. I mean the inner divine life begotten by the Holy Spirit. A life spent in exploring the kingdom of God on earth is always an interesting and attractive and a happy life.

Let us make our lives a great adventure. It is our privilege now and then with the heart and mind to make an excursion to heaven, there to sit and meditate beside the river of God. We can go back through history and become acquainted with the saints of old. We can have fellowship with their joys. We can drink of the "rivers of pleasure" and eat of the "honey out of the rock." We can live love's way; bask in the sunlight of heaven. We can "run and not be weary, and walk and never faint."



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Spanish interpretation is available in the services.

Service Times:

Wednesday Prayer Meeting	7:00 p.m.
Sunday School	9:30 a.m.
Sunday Morning Worship	10:30 a.m.
Young People's Service (Sunday)	4:45 p.m.
Children's Service (Sunday)	5:00 p.m.
Sunday Evening Service	6:00 p.m.

We have literature available for those who would like to study the Word of God in the confines of their home. Let us know if you are interested by contacting us at the above telephone number, address, or website.

The Sinner's Prayer

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way to break up the meeting. It then being time for prayer, we informed the congregation of the condition of affairs, asking the brethren to pray for protection and deliverance from the power of the enemy. We had a glorious meeting. The next day we learned that a number of those wicked young men, after spending some time drinking liquor had started for the place of meeting, and when within a few rods of the place, came to a small creek or stream, which was frozen over, it being midwinter. The ice was smooth and slick. They tried for a long while to cross, but could not do so, as on account of their intoxicated condition, they would fall on the ice. At times they would almost reach the other side, but seemingly could not quite make it, so finally they abandoned their purpose of breaking up the meeting.

The next night the house was crowded, and the members of the mob were present. The Spirit of the Lord accompanied the preaching of the Word, and great conviction rested upon the people. When opportunity was given for those who desired to seek the Lord to come forward, more than thirty persons speedily made their way to the front and began mightily calling upon the Lord. Soon the leader of the mob was there upon his knees, pleading for mercy, and one after another of his companions followed his example. After a short time, the leader rose, weeping, and confessed publicly concerning his sins and their former intentions of breaking up the meeting, also, stating that he realized it to be the power of God which kept them from crossing the creek the night before. He cried out, "I am the worst man in this whole country," then fell upon his knees, calling earnestly upon God for mercy. In a few minutes, he arose, praising God for deliverance and was happy in the Saviour's love. He then besought his companions to seek peace to their souls. Nearly two years later, this man was taken sick and died, and his father informed me that he passed away rejoicing in the Lord.



There is hope for anyone who will seek the Lord while he may be found.

All sinners should show reverence, not only to God, but to his people. If for no other reason than a manifestation of gentlemanly principles, and real manliness, they should show their respect where occasion and necessity demands. When a sinner shows respect to God and to his people in every possible way, it helps him to have a tender heart, and when he begins to seek God, the Lord will honor him and enable him to pray and exercise faith for deliverance from his sins. He will then realize the trueness of the Word, which says, "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon."

Upon the day of Pentecost, when Peter was preaching to those wicked men who crucified the son of God, and told them of their sins and of the way of deliverance, they said to Peter and the rest of the apostles: "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Peter said unto them, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." There was mercy for every one of them notwithstanding their former wickedness.