



THE GOOD NEWS MESSENGER

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The Chief Sinner

By: A. K. Chancellor

“This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief” (1 Timothy 1:15). None, in Paul’s sight, had sinned any greater sins than he, but he was not now committing them! At one time Paul was dead in trespasses and sins, but Jesus came to save men from their sins, and being saved men are no longer in their sins—to save from them is to get a person out of them. So long as the sinning continues one is not saved from sin. (*See Matthew 1:21*).

Sin is bondage to evil habits of life, or of wrong attitudes, of rebellion against God’s laws. Salvation is deliverance from such a condition. The word Jesus means Savior, he is able to deliver, to set free, to cleanse from all sin (*see 1 John 1:7*). When a soul quits rebelling against God, it has quit sinning. And if a soul loves God they will not rebel, they will submit and obey. To save one from their sins is to save them from rebelling. Now tell me, with the power of sin broken, who is compelled to go right on sinning?

Paul’s attitude is the attitude of every one who gets truly delivered, we see ourselves as the worst of sinners. I have very little hope for the soul who says, “I’m not too bad!” I can tell you of a truth that I have not as yet met a man who was a worse sinner than myself—I have met some whom I thought might be in the same pit I once was in, and may be indulging in some of the same sins, but it is hard for me to conceive of any darker sins or more binding than the ones I was once bound in. I think of people, as bad as they might be, not doing some of the things I once used to do. At least I can hope not!

When I get to realizing how blessed I am to be free from sin, if there is any tendency to be egotistical, proud, just a short remembrance of how it used to be quickly brings me down to reality—I am what I am by the grace of God! Those dark sins of heathenism which once filled my heart and mind, doing about any thing that would come to mind, any desire, have been taken away. I have reason to rejoice greatly in God.

As Paul stood and approved the stoning of Stephen, he was as guilty as the men who threw the stones, he thought he was really doing God a service—that is the same sad condition too many have fallen into time and time again. There are men to-

day who are vile, wicked men, religious as was Paul, who, if they had the liberty and chance, would again put people to death. They too would be just as wrong as Paul, chief of sinners.

I think it is a safe-guard for men who feel a tendency to be lifted up in themselves, to go back into their past and see, not only the dark sins they did commit, but the potential of doing even grosser ones had Jesus not come to their rescue. The sober mind, the conscience, if it be working right, will always remember the pit from whence one came. Those who once plunged into the depths of sin, but are now saved, if they would keep their bearings there would be no room made for pride.

Paul, in the statement being considered, said in effect, “I am the chief of sinners whom Christ came to save.” Why? To show forth the longsuffering and goodness of God, to show how that, as vile as Paul was, yet God suffered him to persecute the church for a while, then still saved him. This shows the greatness of God’s mercy, the power of his grace, the love for man’s soul, that even after he has done the kingdom of God much damage, yet he can be delivered and become useful in the saving of others.

But, all men do not experience the same thing as Paul, for all men do not have a zeal for God. Even though in the wrong, yet Paul was zealous for what he thought to be right, and that was in his favor. He did wrong ignorantly through unbelief, thus could be forgiven. It is those presumptuous sins which remain, and few seem to get the help they need. When, and if you take the position that you feel you too were the chief sinner, if you do not take it in a repentant attitude, if on the other hand you say it in a boastful way, it will work against you.

Where true humility reigns there is no room made for vain pride. Paul’s attitude was, I am the greatest sinner Christ came to save. He says in another place, “For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God... But by the grace of God I am what I am” (1 Corinthians 15:9-10a). Then he asks in another account, “What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid!” (Romans 6:1-2a).

We are not saved from our sins until we quit sinning. A sinner is a sinner because he sins; a saint is a saint because they do not sin. Christ Jesus did not sin; therefore Christians do not sin, for they but imitate their example. Sinners do not imitate Christ; they do the works of their father the devil. Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity—iniquity is sin. My friend, if you are saved you do not sin, if you sin you are not saved.

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The Results

An excerpt from *The Secret of Prayer* by E. E. Byrum

At one time the Lord made himself manifest in a peculiar manner to Solomon, and said, "Ask what I shall give thee." This caused Solomon to feel his insignificance, and to humble himself. Although he was king, he said, "I am but a little child: I know not how to go out or come in." Seeing now open before him the great storehouse of good things, where he was privileged to make a requisition according to his desires, there was nothing to prevent his asking for riches and having an abundance of this world's goods, but he felt humble in the sight of God, and realized his responsibilities as a servant of the Almighty. In such an attitude of submission before God, what could he ask other than that which would best fit him for the service he was to render unto the Lord? He did not call for the riches and pleasures of this world, but asked for wisdom and understanding, saying, "Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad."

His petition pleased the Lord, insomuch that as a result he



not only gave Solomon those things he desired, but said to him, "I have given thee that which thou hast not asked, both riches and honor."

A humble heart, with a spirit of perfect submission to the will of God, and with a desire above all things to please him and to do that which would enable one to render the most efficient service for him, is sure to result in great good and bring satisfaction to the soul.

The Lord said, "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land." (2 Chronicles 7:14). Therefore, "Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith," (Hebrews 10:22) and the Lord will honor our faith and efforts to serve him, and will also enable us to enjoy the blessings which he has promised to the faithful.

Whatever the issue may be, take it to the Lord in prayer, and "no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly." (Psalm 84:11).

Receiving the Reward

An excerpt from *The Secret of Prayer* by E. E. Byrum

There is something beautiful about the life of the Christian, which is unknown to the world. His communion with the Lord is a source of pleasure, and brings to the soul happiness beyond expression. In times of sorrow and grief, trouble or danger, he finds a place of security—a refuge; and realizes the truthfulness of the words of the Psalmist, when he said: "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty." Psalms 91:1. There is not only comfort, joy and blessings along the pathway in this life, as a result of the prayers offered, and a reward for the devotional life here on earth, but there is that consolation of a hope of the life beyond, where there shall be never-ending bliss.

The life here is just what we make it. It lies within our power, by the help of the Lord, to enjoy the sweetness of heaven in our souls amidst the turmoils and sorrows round about us, no matter which way the winds of oppression may blow. Though at times dark clouds may hover near, yet the devoted Christian learns to patiently wait on him who is mighty to deliver, knowing that the sun is still shining behind the cloud, and will soon break forth in all its splendor.

Are you desiring rich blessings from the Lord? Then step into the pathway where such are to be had in abundance. This is done by measuring your life by the Word of God, or, in other words, by a life of obedience to his will. It comes about through prayer—believing prayer. Jesus said, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." Luke 11:9. The Apostle gives these words of consolation: "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" Romans 8:32.

Do not hesitate to ask for your share of that which rightfully

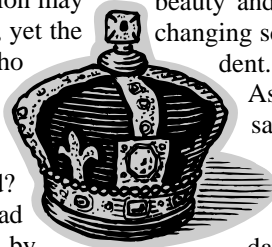
belongs to you. The doubter generally fails to praise the Lord for blessings of the past, and for the many good things of the present, therefore has but little hope of the future, and is thus robbed of the glory while he lives a life of fearfulness. Give no place to doubts, but casting "all your care upon him; for he careth for you." 1 Peter 5:7.

"What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them." Mark 11:24. It is the prayer of faith that counts. Press forward, cast aside all restraints, and be free in the Lord. Decide that you will now have the benefits and blessings that belong to the Christian in this life, and, with such a decision and determination, the hindrances to prevailing prayer will vanish; and by faith the eternal reward will be in sight.

As this life draws to a close, the heavenly prize, in all its beauty and splendor, will be presented to our view, and the changing scenes of earth will give place to those more resplendent.

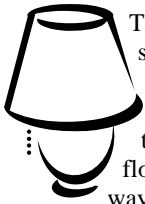
As the time of departure draws near, the faithful can say: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." 2 Timothy 4:7-8.

"Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." Revelation 2:10



Turning on the Light

Excerpt from *The Secret of Being Strong* by C. W. Naylor



The dense black clouds rolled up from the west, obscuring the sky, shutting out the light and making it so dark I could no longer see to work. My wife walked over to the center of the room and turned the switch on the lamp and instantly the room was flooded with light. We know in our home there is a way to produce light any time we wish to do so. We know just what to do to produce that light. When we do that thing we expect the light, but one noticeable thing is that the light does not shine until it is turned on. It requires something on our part in order to bring about its shining. If we did not do that thing we could not have the light no matter how much current there was in the wire nor how good a lamp might be in the socket.

Now, spiritual life and experience are very much like temporal life and experience. The same principles hold good in both. But will a Christian ever get in darkness? Will not his pathway always be illuminated by the light of heaven? For some time past a man has been trying to convince me that a Christian should never go into darkness, that we should always be in the light. Well, that would be fine were it true, but when we read the Bible we find that people did not always have such an experience. We know that Job was a righteous man, but he passed through a time of terrible darkness. He suffered many things he could not understand; he had many experiences he thought he ought not to have had. The Psalmist cries out of darkness, and sometimes almost out of despair. The New Testament speaks of being in heaviness through manifold temptations, and of being tried by strange things.

But why should a Christian have seasons of darkness? For the same reason that my light was shut off by the clouds so that I could not work; that is, circumstances combine in such a way as to produce the darkness. It was no fault of mine that I could not see. I had not sinned against the Lord that he sent the clouds. Sometimes I do pull down the shade and shut out the light, so Christians sometimes do things that shut out the light, but many times the light is shut out by circumstances that arise through no fault of the one experiencing the darkness. But does not the Bible say that "he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life"? To be sure it says that, and it speaks truly. We are not in darkness in the sense of being without God's light upon our souls. We know his truth, and his Spirit illuminates our souls. The sun shines upon this planet all the time; it is never obscured only in an eclipse and then only a small portion of the surface of the world is affected. But it happens that we are not always on the side of the earth on which it is shining. We are in darkness almost half of the time, and yet the sun is shining continually. The trouble is the earth gets between us and the sun by turning around with its other side to the sun. Circumstances have a way of turning us around sometimes so that the light of God, be it ever so bright, cannot for the time fall upon us. WE are left in the shadow of those circumstances that come in our lives and we cannot help it.

But how can one be in God's light and in darkness at the same time? Just the same way that a man can be in the darkness and in the light when he takes a lantern and goes forth on a dark night. When we get on the shadow of a circumstance, instead of despairing we should light our lantern or turn on our electric light. Before we notice how to do this let us look a little further at the way people who are good Christians sometimes get into darkness. In

What Happened to a Blind Man

From *The Picture Story Life of Christ* (John 9) by Elsie Egermeier

As Jesus went away from the Temple, where the angry Jews were getting ready to stone him, he saw a blind man sitting by the roadside begging. This man had always been blind, for he had been born without sight. His parents lived in Jerusalem.

The twelve disciples were with Jesus when he passed the place where the poor man sat. They knew he had been blind from his birth, and they asked Jesus whether this blindness had come upon him as a punishment for his own sin or whether it had come because of the sins of his parents. Jesus answered, "Neither this man's sins nor the sin of his parents has caused him to be without sight, but he was born blind that the works of God might be shown through him."

Then Jesus stopped. Having made a little clay he rubbed it on the blind man's eyes. Then he said to the poor man, "Go to the pool called Siloam and wash."

The blind man did not ask, "Why must I do this?" He rose at once and groped his way to the pool. Here he washed the mud off his sightless eyes, and immediately he began to see.

Instead of returning to the roadside to beg, the happy man went home to his people, telling the good news. His neighbors and friends and even his parents were greatly surprised, because they had never expected such a miracle to happen to him. Many who saw him could hardly believe he was the same man as the blind beggar whom they had known before. They said, "He is like the beggar." But the man answered, "I am the same person."

The excitement in that neighborhood increased when the people heard that Jesus had opened the blind man's eyes. They gathered round to ask, "What did Jesus do to you? How did he open your eyes?"

The man told them that Jesus first made clay, then rubbed it on his eyes, and afterward sent him to wash in the pool of Siloam. "And I went and washed, and I received my sight," he said, joyfully, for he was a very happy man.

"Where is this Jesus now?" they asked. The man did not know where Jesus and his disciples had gone.

The neighbors brought the man who had been blind to the Pharisees, and they also questioned him. Because it was the Sabbath Day they thought Jesus had done wrong by anointing the man's eyes and sending him to wash in the pool. They said, "Give God the glory, for we know this man Jesus is a sinner." Others standing by said, "How can a man who is a sinner do such miracles?" And the people were divided, some thinking Jesus was a great man and others thinking he was only deceiving those who believed in him.

The Pharisees then asked the man what he thought of Jesus, and the man replied, "I believe he is a prophet."

The enemies of Jesus were greatly stirred by this miracle. They thought perhaps the man was only pretending, after all, that he had been born blind. So they called his parents and questioned them concerning their son.

The parents were afraid of these Jews. They knew of the hatred these men felt toward Jesus, and they knew the chief priests had threatened to cast them out of the synagogue if they believed in him. So they said, "This man is our son, and we know

Turning on the Light

Excerpt from *The Secret of Being Strong* by C. W. Naylor (cont'd)



the first place, darkness comes from unexpected circumstances or from circumstances over which we have no control. Sorrow comes to us unbidden. Death invades the family circle; losses come in business; misunderstandings arise; we may be blamed for things for which we are not guilty; trials may come that we do not understand; our joy may take wings, and heaviness may settle down upon us. We may come to a place where prayer is difficult or impossible and when we try to pray our words mock us. Do I hear someone exclaim, "A Christian never gets into such a situation!" Well, maybe you never have, but I have. I have had the experience more than once. I have known many others to have such experiences.

Under such circumstances many people become discouraged. That is not the proper thing to do. When darkness comes, turn on the light. Job had seen dark places before, but none of them had ever been so dark as the one in which he found himself in his special time of trial. He said, "Oh that I were as in the months past, as in the days when God preserved me; when his candle shined upon my head, and when by his light I walked through darkness" (Job 29:2-3). Now he was in darkness in which God's light did not seem to shine, still he was a righteous man. God himself said so. Here is a promise to those who are walking in darkness, "Unto the upright there raiseth light in darkness" (Ps. 112:4). This shows that even the upright get into places where they need light, and here is a promise in which to trust when we are in such a place. Sometimes we are like Job said of himself, "When I looked for good, then evil came unto me: and when I waited for light, there came darkness" (Job 30:26).

We do not always get out of darkness at once. Sometimes we pray and no answer seems to come. God wants us to continue to endure. He desires us to hold fast our faith in him and in ourselves. No matter even if our darkness has been caused by some fault of our own, hold fast to our confidence in God; hold fast to what good things there are in you and turn on the light. You may have to grope in the darkness for a while before you find where to turn on the light and how to do it. Nevertheless, if you persevere you will find the way, and the light will come. You have already within you the light of life that God gives to all that are saved. God will keep that shining no matter how dark external circumstances may be.

In the darkest hour we may turn to God's lamp, for the Psalmist has said, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." So, in your trouble turn to the Word of God. Read its promises. Behold in it the mercies of God: his faithfulness, his loyalty to his own. Take his Word for your light and for the basis of your hope. No matter how dark things may look, God's Word is true to you just as it was to Job, to Abraham, to David, and to millions of others. We turn on light from heaven by believing in God, trusting in his loving-kindness with confidence. The Psalmist said, "They looked unto him and were radiant" (Ps. 34:5, ARV). They were radiant; that is, the light shone round about them and it shone from within themselves. When the light of joy comes into the soul how quickly the things about us, no matter what their nature, are illuminated!



What Happened to a Blind Man (cont'd)

From *The Picture Story Life of Christ* (John 9) by Elsie Egermeier

he was born blind. But we do not know how his eyes received sight; he is a grown man and he can tell you for himself."

Again the excited enemies of Jesus called the man who had been blind, and asked, "What did Jesus do to you? How did he open your eyes?"

The man answered, "I have told you once and you would not listen. If I tell you again will you also be his disciples?"

At this they scorned him, and said, "We are Moses' disciples, for we know that God spoke to Moses, but as for this fellow we do not know where he came from."

Now the man whom Jesus had healed grew very bold, and he said, "It is strange that you do not know where Jesus came from since he opened y eyes, which were always blind! We all know that God does not hear sinners, but if any man worships him and does his will, God hears that man. Since the world began it was never heard that any man opened the eyes of one who was born blind. If Jesus was not of God, he could do nothing."

These words stirred up more anger in the hearts of Jesus' enemies, and they said to the man, "You were born a sinner, and do you try to teach us?"

They cast him out of the synagogue, and he could no longer worship there with his people.

Jesus soon heard what the angry priests had done, and he looked about to find the man whom they had cast out of the synagogue. When he found him he asked, "Do you believe on the Son of God?"

The man answered, "Who is he, Lord, that I may believe?"

And Jesus said, "You have seen him with your eyes, and even now he is speaking to you."

Then the man rejoiced and said, "Lord, I believe!" And he worshiped Jesus there.

Questions and Answers

1. How long had the blind beggar been without his sight? (All his life.)
2. Why did Jesus send him to the pool of Siloam? (To test his faith.)
3. Who brought the man to the Pharisees? (The neighbors.)
4. Why did the Pharisees call the parents of the man who had been blind? (They thought the man might only be pretending to have been born blind.)
5. What did they do with the man when he spoken in defense of Jesus? (They cast him out of the synagogue.)

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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.