

MAKE SURE OF YOUR
SALVATION

MATTHEW G. NEEDHAM

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For more information contact: findsalvation@hotmail.com

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The Moment Of Death (Luke 16:19-31)

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FOREWORD BY BILL SUBRITZKY

This book sets out in a very clear manner the foundational doctrines for those who really want to know the Lord Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour.

It is clear, concise and accurate, and will be an excellent way to encourage both those who want to know the Lord and those who are already walking with Him.

I believe it will also be a mighty evangelistic tool and will lead to many conversions and true discipleship for untold numbers of converts.

Matthew Needham has not avoided the issue of true repentance and conviction of sin.

My own experience was that when I made a decision to follow Jesus Christ I turned 180 degrees from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to the power of God. This decision has stood me in excellent stead for the past 35 years and as a result I've been able to resist sin and temptation with the help of the Holy Spirit in a way I never thought was possible.

Christians need to realize that unless they do this, no amount of prayer for deliverance or other methodology will set them free.

For this reason, and my own experience, I commend this book and pray that God will encourage many to enter His Kingdom as they read it and are drawn by the Holy Spirit into the love of God.

Evangelist Bill Subritzky
(www.doveministries.com)

INTRODUCTION

I had an experience which changed my life. I saw a shining light and then an electric shock of power and warmth went through my whole body like a wave. For the next half an hour I was in uncontrollable tears, crying out to God. Having had my spiritual eyes opened so powerfully, my life took a new direction and I wanted to tell everyone that God is real. I thought that I would change the whole world, but I soon found out that most people didn't care about their own salvation. They were too busy, having their life of fun, living for the day, with no thought of eternity.

Multitudes of people are ignoring the most serious issue of life. If only they would regard the words of Christ and contemplate the true meaning of our earthly existence. As Jesus said, "What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Matthew 16:26) People are selling their souls for temporary things, but there are reasonable arguments that can persuade people to take another look, and ask, "What am I doing with my life? Is there a God? Is there life after death? Where am I going?"

My father told me this story about how he was challenged to open his heart to find the truth: *"When I was about 18 years old I had a friend who came from a Christian family whereas I didn't. We spent a lot of time talking over issues together. One day in all our talks about life he said to me, 'Ask God to show you if He's real.' So later on that night, before I went to sleep, I just said out loud, 'Well, if you're real God, show yourself to me.' I soon forgot about that prayer and two years went by before things happened in my life that caused me to see that God is real.*

After I gave my life to God and accepted Jesus to come into my heart, I remembered how I had asked God those two years previous to show Himself to me. Because God knows what is going on in your life, when you make a request like that to

Him, He works it all out to bring the answer at the best time. He works in your life to make you even more hungry for God, so that you get into a position where you cry out to Him again."

**GOD WANTS EVERYONE TO FIND HIM,
AND YOU WILL,
IF YOU ARE WILLING TO SEARCH FOR THE TRUTH**

I'm so thankful that I was brought up in a family that allowed God's presence and love to be among us. This laid a good foundation in my life, so that when God's power touched me I was ready to fully devote myself to becoming an evangelist. Early in the morning I used to go to my friend's office to pray. I would call upon God to fill me with boldness, earnestness and zeal for His kingdom. Many nights I would go to the park towards the centre of town and call upon God for revival. I would constantly think about the people who were dying, to arouse within me a great desire to save them. I was sad that I could do so little, but there came a time when God then gave me the grace to be a missionary to Africa and then to Asia.

I had the opportunity of preaching to large crowds of people and the theme of my message was simply this: "Make sure of your salvation!" I shouted those words with all my heart and many responded to the call to humble themselves before the majesty of Christ. My desire is for people to have a true friendship with Almighty God, to meet with the Lord, so that when they pray they know that their prayers are reaching into Heaven and they are touching the Living God. To find God we have to be honest with ourselves and acknowledge the truth.

On one occasion I saw a solidly built man walking just in front of me, so I sped up to walk alongside him. When I talked about his need of salvation, he responded by saying, "I have never sinned." I made every attempt to show him that we have all sinned, and therefore we all need Jesus as our Saviour. He was adamant that he had never done anything wrong. I asked him where he had come from and he said that he had just been released from prison. His sentence had been for manslaughter, but he told me that it wasn't his fault. He saw

himself as innocent, even though he had played a part in the death of another person. He was totally unwilling to admit that he was a sinner.

No matter what you have done, the following messages will show you that we have all sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23). We only have one life to make peace with the righteous Judge who examines all that takes place upon the earth. Man is separated from God due to following his own sinful nature, so whatever is blocking your heart from experiencing God's presence needs to be dealt with. Sin totally destroys people unless they find grace to stop sinning. Consider the consequences of your everyday actions and embrace godly wisdom.

There are reasons why people get bogged down in unbelief, but there are also reasons why many people arise in faith. If you are honest and confess your sins, you will be able to find God. But if you harden your heart and go your own way, you will not be able to understand the amazing mysteries of God's heavenly kingdom. Many people ruin their lives and dig their own graves by what they pursue in life. Think about where you are heading.

I feel the passion and zeal of Christ to proclaim the words of eternal life and to reach out for the salvation of those I meet. Whether many or few turn and follow, I will persevere in spreading this message around the world. No rejection, no persecution, no refusal or stubbornness of man can be allowed to stop us from obeying the will of God. We must obey God rather than fall into the pits of compromise. We must urge people to think about what is right or wrong, good or evil, righteous or wicked, so they understand the spiritual battle that we are in. We must reveal Jesus to the whole world, so that the nations can see His glorious light and then realize their own darkness and spiritual depravity.

This message has reached your hands, and you are now one of many thousands who are being challenged as to what you believe. With a spiritual fire burning in my heart and with tears in my eyes, I plead with you to, **“Make Sure Of Your Salvation!”**

1

THE WORLD HAS NO EXCUSE

“You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart” (Jeremiah 29:13).

The Bible says that God has not left Himself without testimony (Acts 14:17). God has placed signs throughout the world that point to Him. We will look at some of the witnesses that testify to the reality of God. These witnesses clearly reveal how every person can know who He is. There are good reasons why God expects everyone to believe in Him, just as there are obvious pitfalls as to why people don't want to know God and choose to rebel against Him. God commands everyone to know Him, and those who reject the knowledge of Jesus Christ are taking an extremely dangerous path.

We are warned that when the Lord Jesus is revealed from Heaven in blazing fire with His powerful angels, He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel (2 Thessalonians 1:7-8). The sin of not believing in God is very great. Those who have walked away from God and ignored the gospel cannot avoid an appointment on the Day of Judgment with the Supreme Being they have rejected and despised. We will now look at the testimony for God. These obvious signs and witnesses leave the whole world without excuse for not following the Lord.

WITNESSES FOR GOD

1) Our Existence – The very existence of this world proclaims the sovereign power of our Creator. Since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities – His eternal power and divine nature – have been clearly seen, being

understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse (Romans 1:20). The invisible qualities of God have been revealed through the creation of this world. We receive knowledge and understanding of God's eternal power as we open our eyes and look at the magnificent purpose and design of creation around us.

The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of His hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge. There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard. Their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world (Psalm 19:1-4). No matter which country you were born in, no matter what culture or language you descend from, you have enough evidence to compel you to acknowledge your Creator and to call out to Him. The existence of God can be seen through the beauty of nature; therefore every person who wants to know God can believe that He exists and be encouraged that He rewards those who earnestly seek after Him (Hebrews 11:6).

I have an auntie who as a young woman became very confused about what to believe. There were some boys who were very strong about evolution and the evidence of fossils. She didn't understand the arguments for and against evolution or creation, so she didn't know what to say. As time went on she thought that perhaps the world is just full of people who hope there is a God but actually they don't really know. But even during her moments of doubt she would still talk to God like this, "If You are there, show Yourself to me. I would like to try and believe but I just can't."

As she was standing at the kitchen sink, having an argument in her own mind while doing the dishes, she decided to phone up her Christian parents and tell them to get off her back. She knew they were praying for her, but she couldn't stand it anymore and she wanted to be left alone. Suddenly at that moment, as clear as an audible voice, she heard the Lord calling her. He simply said, "Just know that I Am." She was so certain of this revelation that she thought, "If I don't believe this now, I may never get another opportunity." In tears of joy

and repentance, she went and spoke to her husband, "God's just told me that He's real." That experience took place more than 30 years ago and since that time my auntie has never doubted the existence of God.

When the apostle John saw the Lord upon His heavenly throne, he heard the worshippers say, "You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honour and power for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being" (Revelation 4:11). There are no songs or proclamations of evolution in Heaven. Everyone in Heaven worships God as their Creator.

Before the end of the world, God will send an angel to proclaim this message to every nation, tribe, language and people: "Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come. Worship him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water" (Revelation 14:6). Angels are sent to bring to our attention the fact that God is worthy of worship because He is our Creator.

Contemplating the creation of the universe gives us a glimpse of eternity. God has put eternity into our hearts so that the temporary things of the world can never fully satisfy us (Ecclesiastes 3:11). A longing for greater reality causes people to reach out for God. Therefore, it is only right that God expects every person who lives on this earth to acknowledge that He is their Creator. The ignorance and hardhearted nature of atheism is exposed and cast down by the witnesses for God.

2) Our Conscience – God has written His law on our hearts, so that even those who have never heard the Ten Commandments, as given through the prophet Moses, have a conscience that convicts them of sin (Romans 2:14-15). Every person in this world has an inward knowledge of what is right or wrong, what is good or evil. Therefore, when we sin we are guilty. Each person is warned by their own heart that it is evil to lie, steal, murder and commit adultery, etc. We cannot escape the moral law which God has placed within us. People fall deeper and deeper into sin because they ignore their

conscience, and as they continue on that path, their hearts become hardened.

God has made it possible for every person in this world to know Him, but as people sin against their own conscience they become spiritually blind. The Bible says, 'They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts' (Ephesians 4:18). The main reason for doubts, ignorance, confusion, and a lack of understanding about the ways and purposes of God, is due to what is in a person's heart. Jesus said, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God" (Matthew 5:8). Purity allows people to see God, whereas a person is hindered from understanding God because of some sin they are holding onto and refusing to let go.

The law of God within our conscience confirms that on the final Day of Judgment every mouth will be silenced and the whole world will be held accountable to God (Romans 3:19-20). Every person who has ever lived has been conscious of sin. The problem is that many people are unwilling to acknowledge and repent of their sins. But when they stand before the great white throne in Heaven, they will have nothing to say in their own defence and God will pronounce the correct judgment according to what that person has done.

The law of God can be summed up in two commands: Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength; and, love your neighbour as yourself (Mark 12:29-31). Every person has the ability to fulfil these two commands. It is their own hardness of heart that has caused the wicked to rebel and fight against God's righteousness. Every person has the ability to walk the path of true love according to the testimony of God.

I was brought up with a strong conviction of knowing right from wrong. We all need this kind of moral training, for even a child is known by his actions and whether his conduct is pure and right (Proverbs 20:11). If I said some bad words as a child, I was in danger of getting my mouth washed out with soap. The soap tasted awful and it made me cry; but I learnt the lesson

that I needed to learn, and that was to keep my mouth clean. One time I was playing outside and in frustration a bad word slipped out of my mouth. The window to the kitchen opened and I felt so convicted as my father gave me a little growling. I knew that I was guilty and I was disappointed that I had spoken such a horrible word. That was my conscience convicting me.

Whenever I did something wrong it made me feel as if there was darkness in my heart, but when I prayed and asked Jesus to forgive me, He made me feel clean and pure on the inside. As a child I experienced the reality of God's word and the power of forgiveness. Jesus said, "I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 18:3). Having childlike faith and listening to the inner convictions of your conscience helps you to find the true path to God. My conscience condemned me as a sinner, but when I saw Jesus Christ dying on the cross for my sins I said, "Yes Lord, I take You as my Saviour," and that is how I made peace with God.

3) Our Time And Place In History – The Bible talks about how God made the world and that from one man He made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and He determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live. God did this so that men would seek Him and perhaps reach out for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us. For in Him we live and move and have our being (Acts 17:24-28).

God has determined by His infinite knowledge where you should live and the amount of time you should stay in that place. He has done this to arouse a desire within the hearts of men to seek after Him. He has set limitations in this world so that people realize that they need Him. Your whole life is in the hands of God. You were born for a purpose and God has a special reason that you are alive today. He established the world in the hope that people would reach out for Him and then they would find that He is not far from each one of us.

Another witness that gives us an ability to find God comes through the rise and fall of nations. God is in control over the kings and rulers of the earth, and He has permitted them to govern in order to fulfil His ultimate purpose. God will lift nations up and pull nations down so that people will humble themselves and seek after Him. Problems and difficulties that come into your life can help you to find the Saviour. Open your spiritual eyes so that you can recognize the dealings of God in your life.

God is omnipresent, which means that He is present in all places. We are to acknowledge and take to heart that the Lord is God in Heaven above and on the earth below (Deuteronomy 4:39). There is nowhere that we can go to escape or hide from God's presence (Psalm 139:7-12). We also need to understand that there are different levels of God's presence and manifestations of His glory. We will not see God's face until we stand before His throne in Heaven, but as we live on this earth we can experience companionship and intimate friendship with the Lord. The glory of God fills the whole earth (Isaiah 6:3). Those who reach out to Him are enlightened so that they can see and understand spiritual things.

Heaven is God's throne and this earth is His footstool (Isaiah 66:1), so there is a sense in which we all live within His presence. Those who deliberately harden their hearts towards God are driving themselves away from His perfect love, yet those who hunger and thirst to know the truth reach out to God and find Him, for He has promised: "You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart" (Jeremiah 29:13). Right now God is watching you and drawing you unto Himself. You can run away from God, but you cannot hide.

4) Our Mortality – We cannot escape from the fact that we are soon going to die. The Bible warns those who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money." Why, 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 4:13-14). Life is very short. A wise person realizes that they

need to find God before they grow old and weak and have no strength.

‘Remember your Creator in the days of your youth, before the days of trouble come and the years approach when you say, “I find no pleasure in them” – before the sun and the light and the moon and the stars grow dark, and the clouds return after the rain; when men are afraid of heights and of dangers in the streets; when the almond tree blossoms and the grasshopper drags himself along and desire no longer is stirred. Then man goes to his eternal home and mourners go about the streets’ (Ecclesiastes 12:1-2,5). The fact that we could die at any moment necessitates a search for the true meaning of life. An awareness of eternity and a longing for eternal value leads people to find God.

The Bible says that ‘a man may be chastened on a bed of pain with constant distress in his bones, so that his very being finds food repulsive and his soul loathes the choicest meal. His flesh wastes away to nothing, and his bones, once hidden, now stick out. His soul draws near to the pit, and his life to the messengers of death. Yet if there is an angel on his side as a mediator, one out a thousand, to tell a man what is right for him, to be gracious to him and say, “Spare him from going down to the pit; I have found a ransom for him” – then his flesh is renewed like a child’s; it is restored as in the days of his youth. He prays to God and finds favour with him, he sees God’s face and shouts for joy; he is restored by God to his righteous state. Then he comes to men and says, “I have sinned, and perverted what was right, but I did not get what I deserved. He redeemed my soul from going down to the pit, and I shall live to enjoy the light” (Job 33:19-28).

Drawing near to the gates of death allows those who cry out for help to be forgiven of their sins. Those who knew God but turned away from Him, can then be restored to once again walk in righteousness. Sickness and suffering should be taken as a warning to prepare your soul for the greater reality of your eternal destiny. Any pain you experience on this earth can help prepare you to be saved from eternal misery. After you die, your spirit will leave your body and go to the place where

you belong. Those who believe belong with God. Remember that you are soon going to die, so live for God while you have the chance.

I was taken to pray for an old lady who had lived a hard life. She had mistreated others and been opposed to the message of Christ, but as she lay dying she had a change of heart and she cried out to God for forgiveness. Today is the day of salvation, the day of grace to reach out to the One who sustains every breath of life. He alone knows the moment of your last breath.

5) Miracles Of Supernatural Intervention – The world is compelled to have faith in God because of incredible miracles and sovereign acts of God's majesty and power. The Bible is a book of miracles. There have been acts of judgment, such as Noah's flood, the separation of people and languages at the tower of Babel, and the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah by an outpouring of burning sulphur due to their sexual perversions. The raising up of the nation Israel was a sign from God and He moved supernaturally on their behalf when they repented of their sins and cried out for help. There were the ten plagues upon Egypt through the prophet Moses, as well as the destruction of the Egyptian army after the ocean parted and the Israelites walked through on dry ground. The prophet Elijah called down fire from Heaven and at his word there was no rain.

God also did other miracles to awaken the world, as in the case of Solomon, who received a supernatural impartation of wisdom and discernment. As the kings of nations heard of Solomon's wisdom, they had an opportunity to send emissaries to Israel to learn of this wisdom. Sampson received supernatural strength from God. The miracles recorded during the Babylonian Empire in the book of Daniel were for the purpose of giving the whole world an opportunity to turn away from their man-made idols and to acknowledge the one true God. Many other signs and wonders have occurred throughout history to confirm the Lord's undeniable testimony.

Miracles have happened all around us by the power of the Holy Spirit.

There was a time when I had a strange lump growing in my ear. I'm the kind of person who doesn't go to the doctor in a hurry, so I just let it grow there for a few months. It kept growing until finally I thought that I had better go to the doctor to see what it was. The doctor told me that he would have to cut it out. It didn't look too urgent, but I was told that sometime in the near future he'd have to remove it. At that time I was about to start working with another church in a different area, so I left my hometown and headed north. A few days later I woke up with big red spots all over my stomach. So here I was with this lump in my ear that had to be cut out and then these large red things were spreading over my body. I also had a bit of a temperature and was feeling quite horrible.

That morning I asked another young evangelist to pray for me. He prayed in the name of Jesus and then he asked me how I felt. I felt just the same, nothing appeared to have happened, so I just thanked him for the prayer and went on my way. But the interesting thing was that when I woke up the next morning I felt my ear and immediately realized that the lump had vanished, so I checked my stomach, and to my delight I saw that all the red spots had gone. When I next met that young man who prayed for me, I told him that I was healed. There is power in the name of Jesus, and the message of God's miracles and supernatural answers to prayer have been told throughout the world. The Bible is not a myth. It is a record of real events and facts that reveal the truth of God.

6) Visions And Dreams – 'For God does speak – now one way, now another – though man may not perceive it. In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falls on men as they slumber in their beds, he may speak in their ears and terrify them with warnings, to turn man from wrongdoing and keep him from pride, to preserve his soul from the pit, his life from perishing by the sword' (Job 33:14-18). There are dreams that have no significance and are possibly the result of what

we did during the day or what we ate before going to bed. There are nightmares which are not from God, but are the work of evil spirits. However, there are also dreams of great significance for our lives and these are the dreams that come from the Lord.

God sends messages to people and one way He delivers them is through dreams. There are dreams that terrify people as warnings to save those who are about to perish. There are dreams that call people to turn away from their sins and to keep them from becoming proud. One man who had dreams like this was the most powerful ruler in the world of his time, and his name was Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel 2,4). His dreams were not just for himself; they contained warnings for the whole world. Nebuchadnezzar suffered harsh consequences because he did not fully heed the warnings of what he saw in his own dreams, but his final words are very powerful: "Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and exalt and glorify the King of heaven, because everything he does is right and all his ways are just. And those who walk in pride he is able to humble" (Daniel 4:37).

When a friend and I were having a time of prayer, I went into a vision. Suddenly I could see a scene before my eyes where I could freely move around and look down a road with two paths that went in opposite directions. I travelled down the path on my right and saw many tall buildings. As I came to the end of the path there was a very high wall that had caved in upon itself. I knew that I had to get across to the other side of that wall, yet it was impossible. I tried but there was no way through, so I headed back in the direction that I had come. On my way back I went up to one of the buildings and there was a ladder which took me up to the very top of the building. As I was climbing the ladder I knew that it was "a way of escape."

While I was still held within this vision, I then chose to go down the path that went to my left. As I walked down this path there was nothing to see. It was just a plain path with no buildings, so I continued walking until I came to the wall. This was the same wall which on the other side had caved in, but on this side I stood at the entrance of a dark tunnel. I travelled

down the tunnel and the darkness seemed to last for a long time, but as I kept moving forward I could see a small light up ahead. I kept walking towards the light and suddenly I passed the wall, which on the other path was impossible to get through. Having come through the wall I found myself standing before a large ocean and that was when I knew I would be able to preach the gospel to all nations.

The prophetic word over my life was, “Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation” (Mark 16:15). God does speak to us in this way. The Holy Spirit will come with dreams, visions and prophecy, so that those who call upon the name of the Lord will be saved (Acts 2:17-21).

7) God’s Messengers – God raised up prophets to warn the nations. Men like Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel prophesied over nations, and their words were heard by kings and rulers. God sent the prophet Jonah as a missionary to warn a foreign city and God often called true prophets from among idolatrous pagans. Thousands of years ago, the word of God was available to the heathen nations if they were willing to seek after it. Sad to say, many of them went their own way and fell into spiritual darkness. Yet the words of the true prophets were recorded as the Scriptures to reveal the written word of God.

As you read and study the Bible, you receive the testimony of God. That is why it is so important to search the Scriptures and ask God to give you revelation from it. Jesus said that he who receives a prophet because he is a prophet will receive a prophet’s reward (Matthew 10:41). The book of Revelation is a prophetic message from the very throne of Heaven for the last days. It says, ‘Blessed is the one who reads the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it, because the time is near’ (Revelation 1:3). The blessing through the prophets is available to everyone who is willing to study or listen to their words.

God sends His messengers to call the world to repent. God will have sent messengers to personally speak to you many times, but did you perceive it? You may have missed a

message from God because you were too proud to accept the one through whom God wanted to speak to you. We have to look beyond the natural to the spiritual. Jesus sends His people out to witness and to proclaim the words of eternal life. We have to open our spiritual ears to hear the small soft voice of the Lord, for He continually knocks upon each of our hearts.

8) God's Incarnation – 'In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe. The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven' (Hebrews 1:1-3).

Jesus came from above and walked this earth to reveal the truth of God. Jesus is the light of the world and He shines His heavenly light upon every person. The life of Christ is an incredible revelation, testimony and witness to let everyone know the reality of the Supreme Being. The fullness of God dwells in Christ (Colossians 2:9). He became a human being and walked this earth so that the whole world could know the true God (John 1:1,14). To become a child of God you have to receive Jesus as your Lord, Saviour, King and Master, and believe in the power of His name (John 1:9,12).

All the witnesses of God are to lead you to have faith in the Lord Jesus. He is our Creator. He fulfilled God's law because He is perfect, righteous and holy. He is the greatest worker of miracles and miracles are performed in His name. Jesus drives out demons, breaks curses off people's lives, heals the sick and opens the eyes of the blind and the ears of the deaf. Jesus is the one who sent the prophets and continues to send forth His messengers today. He walked this earth so that we can know Him and He will live in the heart of the person who accepts Him.

The gospel is the good news of salvation, put into effect through the death and resurrection of Christ. He conquered

the power of sin and death, and He is alive forever and ever. The Holy Spirit has come to glorify Christ and to lead us to Him. He imparts visions and dreams to turn people away from evil and pride. There is no salvation for those who refuse to believe in the eternal Son of God. He is the Lord, Judge, King and Saviour of the world. Jesus died upon the cross for your sins and after He rose from the dead He ascended back to Heaven with the promise that He will return to judge this world.

When the Lord Jesus is revealed from Heaven in blazing fire with His powerful angels, please remember that He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel (2 Thessalonians 1:7-8). Unbelief causes people to live in sin, so God has to punish those who love evil and reject the gospel. Humble yourself before Christ before it's too late. Confess your sins and realize the eternal importance of having faith in Almighty God.

THE WHOLE WORLD IS HELD ACCOUNTABLE

The Day of Judgment is coming! Every mouth will be silenced on that day and the whole world held accountable to God and His Word. From the witnesses we can see that no matter what time in history or country of the world you were born into, you should have found God as you looked at the creation around you. Everyone is convicted by their inner conscience and you should have reached out to the Lord, knowing that when you draw near to Him, He has promised to draw near to you (James 4:8). Your life on this earth is extremely short compared to eternity, so this should have already put the fear of God into your heart. Throughout human history there have been continuous opportunities for people to draw near to God and get closer to Him, both as individuals and as nations. But what happened?

'For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. Since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, he gave them over to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be

done. They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity' (Romans 1:21,28-29). When people refuse to acknowledge the divine testimony and witnesses for God, when they refuse to glorify Him or give Him thanks, they become filled with wickedness. Atheism and agnosticism allows people to feel very good about their sin, whereas true faith produces righteousness.

As we look at the witnesses and testimony that God has given for Himself, we find that God has gradually given this world a greater and greater manifestation and revelation of who He is. Each generation and each individual person will be judged according to the light that they have received or rejected. There will be different levels of judgment. Those who have hardened their hearts against more and more of God's revelation will receive a stricter punishment. As God manifests more light, those who reject the knowledge of God come under a harsher judgment. The ultimate revelation of God is found in Jesus Christ. That is why those who accept the Lord Jesus are saved, whereas those who reject Him are eternally lost.

Jesus came to shake people out of their comfort zones and change people's lives. We who live today will be judged more severely than many of the previous generations. We have no excuse for sinning against God and disobeying the gospel. It's so sad that millions of people have paid little attention to this tremendous testimony and witness for God because they wanted to go their own way. They had a fair chance of being saved, but they deliberately chose to ignore the great need of their own souls. We will not escape if we ignore our salvation (Hebrews 2:3).

When God first called me to start preaching the gospel, I soon met a young person around the same age as me called Rhys. We teamed up and went out most Friday evenings to share the message of Christ with whoever we met walking along the streets. Beside the shopping mall we shared our faith with a young man who was not willing to fully accept the gospel. He was coming out with all kinds of strange beliefs, yet he was open enough for us to pray for him. As soon as we

started to pray he fell backwards to the ground and started manifesting a demon, so we leant over saying, "In the name of Jesus I command you to come out." By "manifesting a demon," I mean that his face was contorting in a weird way and by the sound of his voice it was obviously satanic in nature.

His friend was getting all worried and then cried out, "What about the police? The police are going to come!" So we picked this guy up from the ground and got him to stand up properly. When he stood up he said something very interesting and I have never forgotten his words. He said, "I never believed in God before, but now I believe." This really showed me that a lot of people who don't believe in God are being blinded by the devil. They might scoff at that idea, but it's true. Satan is blinding the minds of unbelievers so they will die in their sins and be lost forever. Every person who does not believe in God has been deceived.

I believe in God because I have heard His voice, experienced His presence, and known His mighty hand upon my life. But a friend of mine chose not to believe even though he had seen miracles in his own life. He wanted to go his own way and indulge in immoral sins, but God has not left Himself without testimony. He has given you reasons to believe so that you can have faith, trust and confidence in Him. The stubborn sinfulness of man is very deceptive. People don't want to believe in God because they don't want to obey God. I had another friend who was sovereignly knocked to the ground by the Lord, but even then he turned his back on the things of God and went his own way.

To develop a friendship with the Creator of the universe and to enter His kingdom you must choose to believe and you must choose to develop godly character. Otherwise you are living in opposition to God and going against His will. By examining the witnesses for God we can see why the whole world must repent of all sin and publicly acknowledge the lordship of Christ. Knowing God is the greatest necessity of life.

Our very existence, our conscience that tugs us from within, our time and place in history, our mortality and such shortness of life, miracles that defy nature and reveal supernatural intervention, warnings through visions and dreams, God's messengers who speak words of rebuke or encouragement, and God's amazing incarnation, all stand before us as pillars for strengthening our faith. The first step in finding God is to simply acknowledge that He exists. Then you can cry out to Him and He will hear your prayer.

**CALL UPON THE NAME OF THE LORD
AND BE SAVED!**

2

PLAYING WITH DEATH

'For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord' (Romans 6:23).

I want to speak to you about different people I have shared the gospel with before they died. I am confident that some of them have made it to Heaven, but sadly others seemed to have set themselves on the path to destruction. Yet for most of them I cannot be a hundred percent sure which way they have gone. God alone is the final Judge and only He knows what is deep in a person's heart. My hope is that they turned to Christ. My fear is that they followed the bad advice of their worldly friends and put off their salvation to the point that it is forever too late. Many died suddenly without any notice. They got up in the morning expecting a normal day. Little did they know that their number was up and their death was only hours... minutes... seconds away.

No one really believes in his own death, but you're not prepared to live until you're prepared to die. Death is no respecter of time or place. There isn't anywhere to hide on this earth where Death is not able to strike. He comes to the young and old, rich and poor, good and bad alike. I have had friends struck by lingering yet fatal diseases. They knew the end was near and they had a moment to prepare, yet even that chance soon passed. We are warned that no one has power over the day of his death (Ecclesiastes 8:8).

THE JOY OF SEEING PEOPLE SAVED

I was still a teenager when I started witnessing on the streets and handing out tracts. I first met a man, whose face was covered in Maori tattoos, standing outside the night clubs.

By his outward appearance he looked like a rough mean gang member, but I soon found that he had a soft heart. I got to know him and was able to share the word of God. One time we had just been talking together and then he got into trouble with the police. He got into a bit of a fight as four policemen were trying to arrest him and get him onto the ground. He did not want to be arrested and he was not cooperating with these policemen at all. As that was happening, I just stood there watching and praying, "Oh God, make sure that this man enters your kingdom."

When I saw him a week or so later, he came up to me and said, "I love you." I thought, 'That's a bit of a strange thing for a mean looking gang member to say.' But he said it in such a godly way that I realized that since I had been sharing with him about Christ, he was saying from his heart that he loved God. After that I didn't see him for quite a few years until surprisingly I saw him in church. He was praying so beautifully. Strong prayers were coming from his lips. It's such a blessing and a joy to see people saved and their lives turned around for the better. When I heard that he had passed away I was sad that his life was cut short by cancer, but I was happy that he is now in the glory of God with Jesus in Heaven. The place that he has with God is fantastic.

I was talking to a young man about following the Lord, but he said that he had plenty of time and that he was too young. I was talking to an elderly man about following the Lord, but he said that it was too late for him and he was too old. The excuses people hold onto are crazy. No matter what your age, it is a foolish mistake to live another day without preparing for what lies beyond the grave.

I had the privilege of visiting an old people's home and I was asked to give a five minute message. Before a small room of elderly people I spoke about knowing Jesus as your friend. After this little service was over, I went and asked different ones if they knew the Lord. Most of them said that they did, but one man said that he did not, so I asked him if he would like to ask Jesus to be his friend. He said, "Yes," and I

was able to pray with him before I had to leave. Saying “yes” to Jesus is the greatest thing you can do. A few weeks later that old man was nowhere to be found. He had accepted Christ just in time. These elderly people are at the end of their time on earth, but even then the Lord Jesus reaches out to save them.

WHEN THE DEVIL STRIKES

Two people that I shared with died on the same night. One committed suicide and the other choked to death on his tongue and died in his sleep. Many of the young people used to play video games until the parlour closed, sometimes late into the night. I tried to share the gospel with all of these people. One night after everything was closed, I went and talked to a group of teenage boys. I found that one was particularly interested in what I was saying, so I asked him if he would like to ask Jesus into his life and receive forgiveness of sins. He was open and I led him in a prayer to the Lord for salvation, right there and then on the street. A couple of days later I gave him a Bible and invited him to come with me to church, but he was still strongly influenced by his other friends who were drinking too much alcohol.

I began to display some Christian posters in the centre of town. As I was doing this the teenager I had led to the Lord came and gave me a milkshake. I showed him my poster on how Christ’s death can lead us to Heaven. Later on I went with the pastor and we took the Jesus film to his house but he wasn’t there. The pastor asked me whether we should call in later that afternoon, but I made the mistake of saying that we could come back another day. It turned out that this young man owed money that he couldn’t pay to some gang members and that night he committed suicide. I cried when I heard that he had died because I had failed to see him that day.

When I prayed about it I clearly felt the Holy Spirit quicken to me this Scripture, ‘I tell you the truth, anyone who gives you a cup of water in my name because you belong to Christ will certainly not lose his reward’ (Mark 9:41). This meant a lot to me

because that boy had given me a milkshake as I was sharing the message of Christ. He threw away his life when he committed suicide, but I felt that Jesus was saying that his soul was saved. Although he had sinned, he had believed in Jesus and was covered by the precious blood that washes away all sin.

The other man who died the same day was a Mormon. I was very strong in speaking against the Mormon gospel and the false teachings that bind their church. I gave him a tract which clearly explained how they had gone astray from the clear teachings of the Bible. It also showed why the founder of their church, Joseph Smith, was a false prophet. He read the pamphlet, but he didn't want to take any action. He didn't seem to understand that the true path of salvation is found in Jesus Christ alone and not through the words of Joseph Smith. I sat with him and tried to persuade him to look straight to Jesus. A few days later he was gone. Only God knows if his heart was right. When these two friends died on the same night, I felt like the devil was trying to strike out my evangelism work. I did some prayer and fasting, and then set out again to warn people to turn to God and be saved.

A LAST CONVERSATION

I had a unique friend called Roger. He often came to church and he would ask me to pray with him when we met on the streets or in the middle of town. He wanted to enter God's kingdom, but he found life to be a constant struggle. As a teenager he dabbled with the occult and smoked marijuana. Taking drugs was a major attack on his brain that he couldn't handle. He could never keep still or relax. A leg or an arm would constantly twitch up and down, and from a young age he used to hear voices in his mind.

Roger never expected that he would live past 21 years of age, so his 21st birthday was very special. Sad to say, he never went on. When he died it wasn't so much a shock but more of a relief that his struggle was finally over and at last

he's gone to a better place. But has he gone to a better place? By the mercy of God, I believe he has.

As Roger kept himself for God he seemed to become somewhat normal and he had greater control of his mind, but when he drifted away from God it became difficult for him to break free from his bad habits. He struggled to come back to God as the drugs were getting the better of him. He became very strange in the way he dressed and acted. He stood out with his stylish goatee beard and cool shades, but then he got into some weird clothes. As an adult it was like he had never grown up.

At times Roger was seen to be wearing beads, curtains and skirts. He's the only person I know to have worn an old flowery curtain to church and feel no shame to be seen wearing it. He'd walk around eating from a jar of peanut butter and he'd ride his skate board down the middle of the road. One time when things didn't go his way, he got out of the car and began punching the power poles. He was looking for some kind of attention but never found it. But even at his worst stage, Roger always acknowledged the Lord and his desire to be saved.

I went down to the night clubs late at night to share the gospel, and I saw Roger wandering around the streets by himself. Seeing him from a distance I felt in my heart the importance of talking with him. We caught up with each other and had a good conversation about keeping our faith in the Lord. A young woman then came out of the night club and was telling Roger to party hard. She was telling him not to listen to what I was saying but to have fun getting drunk. I tried to ask her to change and come to God, but she wouldn't listen and went back into the night club. I told Roger not to follow the example of that kind of girl, and Roger said to me that he still had faith in Jesus. That was my last conversation with him.

A day or two later he was seen by the bridge at the waterfalls and midway through the week they found his body washed down the river. Even though he was a strange person and couldn't rise above his mental problems, he trusted in the Lord and he worshipped God from his heart. Roger's funeral

was very beautiful and Jesus Christ was greatly glorified. Many unbelievers heard the gospel that day.

THE MURDEROUS NATURE OF DRUNKENNESS

Outside one of the night clubs there was a wooden bench on the opposite side of the road. I would often sit there and wait to speak to whoever wandered by. There was a girl who was rather short, and often the bouncers wouldn't let her into the night clubs because they thought that she was under age. This meant that on a few occasions she ended up speaking to me. Every weekend she got drunk. It seemed like she was always wasted and staggered around hardly able to walk. I think she may have had Christian parents, but she didn't want to follow in their footsteps. I tried to talk to her about changing her path and I tried to tell her about Jesus. When she died suddenly, her friends were very shocked and never looked the same again. She tried so hard to get into the night clubs so that she could party and drink more alcohol, but she never tried to get into the kingdom of God. She never tried to make sure of her salvation and now it's too late.

While sitting on the same wooden bench I tried to call a popular, handsome young man back to God. He would speak to me whenever he saw me and acknowledge that he needed to follow Christ, but he kept putting his salvation off. One day he was at a party and collapsed. I cut his photo and the article out of the newspaper which had this heading, "Top surfer dies at dance party." He had a wonderful Christian mother and sister who were praying for him. Maybe in God's grace he called out for salvation in the moments before his death, but how much safer it would have been if he had come to Christ early on and had lived for God.

Six months earlier his sister had a vivid dream of him dying as a drug addict on the street at night and she had a deep conversation with him. It was a really sad dream, and it also prompted their mother to talk to him about his life and where he was going. She gave a reminder that whatever happens,

even if he is dying in a gutter, he knows to call upon the name of the Lord. One person had a dream of him dressed in white without knowing that he had just died, so we trust and hope that he did call out to God as he lay dying.

I had a group of friends who used to drink together and blast their loud music. I could speak to most of them about God, but there was one who didn't want to listen to me because he seemed to have anger in his heart. Whenever I tried to share with him about the Lord he wouldn't listen. He closed his heart towards God. The last time I ever saw this young man I didn't know that he would soon be dead.

I saw him at the opposite side of the room and he smiled at me. I was wearing a t-shirt with a picture of Jesus on it, but I didn't take the opportunity to go and speak to him. Etched into my memory is that last smile. He went to a party with his friends and he was getting drunk. He got into his car, but was in no condition to be able to drive. He crashed just a short distance before arriving at his house. Through drunk driving they had to pull out his dead body from among the ruins. The devil comes to steal, kill and destroy, and the most precious thing that the devil wants to steal is your soul.

When I was in Ghana, West Africa, I was taken to preach to a lady who was selling alcohol, so I spoke to her about the sin of drunkenness. From that day she abandoned her job and found new work. There were other women listening who were all heavy drinkers, plus an 18 year old boy. I hadn't noticed him among the people, but later I was told that he was there. He had been a thief and a drinker. Then he went through a short period of sickness and died. Maybe he called out to God during his time of pain; I don't know.

When we share the gospel, we don't know who might be listening and we don't know how much time they have left. Death appeared to be very frequent in Africa as there was a continuous stream of funerals. It always makes me think that I have to redouble my efforts. It must add urgency and passion to my preaching to call people to come to Christ.

When I arrived at another African town to conduct outdoor evangelistic meetings, I found that the local pastor had tried to inform us not to come. A young man had passed away at the beginning of the week, so this town was full of youth who had gathered from the surrounding areas for the funeral. The young men were wearing red dresses and getting drunk. It was like the whole town was having a huge drunken party. Some were driving up and down in old cars, shouting and making a lot of noise. The streets were full of people acting as if they were half crazy. Another young person got so drunk that he fell into a coma and by the time he was taken to the hospital he was also dead.

The first night we weren't able to hold our meeting in the main area of town because of these rampaging youth, so we went down the nearby hill and immediately people began to confess their sins and come to the Lord. Over the next couple of nights we were able to move into the main part of town and I felt a deep burden come through me as I preached against drunkenness and explained the crucifixion of Christ. It was like the words rolled from inside my spirit as I openly rebuked the town for their wickedness. We have to show people the error of their ways, compared to the righteous requirements of God, which are reasonable, just and filled with wisdom.

SAVE YOURSELF FROM THE ETERNAL FIRE

When sharing the gospel late one Friday night, I came across an old friend. He was extremely drunk and he had no place to go, so he spent the night in the caravan at my house. He was wobbling all over the road and unless I held onto him he would fall into the ditch. The next day he was still intoxicated. I tried to help him to change, but he wouldn't listen. Another time he was so drunk that he fell to sleep in a flower garden. As he was in this state of drunken slumber, an evil person came along and set his clothes on fire. Thankfully a security guard was walking past, saw the fire and rushed over to that place. When he got closer he was shocked to see that it was a person in flames. He quickly put out the fire and

rushed him to the hospital. The man was kept alive, but his whole back was burned and he was left with life-long scars.

A couple of times I went to visit him in the hospital and we saw how fortunate he was to have survived. Other Christians also shared the gospel with him and after that fiery incident he gave up drinking and became a Christian. But his faith in God didn't last for very long and he soon went back to his drinking. One Christian made him angry, so he no longer wanted to follow Christ. Even after the strong warning of being on fire, he still went back to his old sinful habits. Why? Because he didn't change his heart. To enter into Heaven you have to change your life and abandon the sinful desires of your heart, otherwise you will go to the eternal fire (Matthew 18:8).

I had another friend who also loved to drink alcohol, and for a time he was living in our caravan. I used to wake him up early in the morning so that we could pray together. I was hoping to somehow teach him the habit of prayer. It seemed that with half of his heart he wanted to follow God, but with the other half he wanted to follow this sinful world. He would pray, study the Bible and come to church, but those who are halfhearted soon fall away from Jesus.

One night we listened to some cassette tapes about the reality of Hell. I was so stirred listening to that Hell message with my friend that for the next two hours I kept asking him to give his life to Jesus. I said to him, "Listen to what will happen to you if you go the sinful way. Don't you want to get your heart right with God and give your life to Jesus?" He said, "No." I didn't want to give up, so I kept trying to persuade him to give his life to Christ. I told him, "We don't have long to live. We are all going to die and then what will happen to you? Your spirit will leave your body, but God will not let you into Heaven if you continue in your own way. If you cannot go to Heaven, then you will be lost forever."

I pointed him to the great sacrifice that Jesus had made by dying on the cross for our sins and again I asked him, "Are you ready to give you life to God?" He repeatedly said, "No!" For two whole hours I kept pleading with him to be saved. Any

argument I could think of as to why he should believe in God I gave to him. He kept listening, but he kept saying, "No!" Finally, at about one o'clock in the morning, I gave up and we went to sleep.

Sometimes that man chose to go to church and I would see him at the front of the church crying and weeping. He knew that he had lived a sinful life and he would weep in repentance. But at other times I would see him getting drunk and openly mocking God, even to the point where he was blatantly worshipping Satan. His heart was divided; therefore he was never fully committed to God and he kept falling back into drunkenness.

I personally believe that he will eventually be saved, due to the power of God through prevailing in prayer. I was interceding for him with strong prayers through the night when I felt a powerful release of God's presence. He used to tell me that he could see Jesus in me. Whether he comes to the Lord and actually lives for God without continually falling back, or whether he only gets saved on his deathbed, I don't know. But I do know that God heard and established the answer for those intercessory prayers on his behalf. You can't serve God and Satan at the same time, but the ultimate victory for the salvation of souls is in the hands of Jesus.

Another two men often came to church. It seemed as if they were coming on and off for a few years, but they never became serious for God. I shared with them so many times and many other Christians also tried to help them. They were called upon to repent time and time again. They claimed to have given themselves to Christ, but they were also halfhearted. Then I saw them in the middle of town. They had just bought their supply of alcohol and were sitting down to begin drinking when I came along. I said to them, "You have been coming to church for a long time, so do you want to follow Jesus or not?" They said, "No, we are hypocrites."

They clearly told me that they didn't want to follow the Lord. They wanted drunkenness more than they wanted Jesus. There was nothing I could say to change their mind. They

were unwilling to listen to good advice and feeling greatly disappointed I left them to indulge in their sinful activities. They wanted to be hypocrites. Yet those who have a drinking problem should study what the Bible has to say about drunkenness. It might awaken them to their danger of being lost forever.

The following Sunday morning I was standing on the top of the steps at the front of our church. Looking up the road I saw these same two men coming to the church. As they were walking up the steps I said to them, "You are both going to Hell." They became enraged. One started swearing and cursing and saying all kinds of bad words. The other one started pushing me. He was pushing me backwards and I thought he was going to punch me, but he just walked off and left the church. The one who was swearing stayed for the church service and at the end of the meeting he came up to me. He was still very angry and he said, "You ruined the whole church meeting for me," and then he walked off still furious.

There is a time to show mercy and patience with those who keep falling into sin. But there also comes a time when the Bible gives the command that if a person pretends to be a Christian brother but continues down the path of drunkenness, greed, idolatry or sexual immorality, they must be expelled from the church (1 Corinthians 5:11-13). If they can accept this discipline and learn from it, they can be restored.

When Jesus confronted people with the reality of how close they were to being condemned to Hell, He always had a tender heart and a desire that they would repent and be saved (Matthew 23:33,37). That kind of extreme warning has to be given when a person persists in knocking on Hell's door. Jesus specifically gave a terrifying illustration for those who turn away from Him to drink with the drunkards. They will be cut to pieces and assigned a place with the hypocrites, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth (Matthew 24:48-51). Let's plead for God's mercy, realizing that people have to be faithful and live for God before it is forever too late.

YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT'S AROUND THE CORNER

While in Africa, I returned to a nearby town for the second night of an evangelistic crusade. Then I heard the sad news of what took place that morning. A mother and her daughter were walking along the side of the road, when a car came around the corner and hit them. Both the mother and daughter were instantly killed. The night before that mother and daughter heard their last sermon. That morning they stepped into eternity. What a great responsibility it is to minister the gospel and to prepare people for the Day of Judgment. We have to urge one another not to receive the grace of God in vain (2 Corinthians 6:1), so that believers go on with Christ and don't fall away towards the end of their lives. It is a great blessing to know that a person who has recently died has made it safely into Heaven.

I first shared the gospel with a young man called David before I went to Africa, but it didn't seem to have any effect upon his life. He was quite a simple minded person and often he had nothing to do, so he would spend a lot of time downtown. He was trying to find a girlfriend, but none of the girls would pay any attention to him. I always encouraged him to pray. Whenever I saw him we would talk and then I would ask him if he had prayed yet. He kept saying "No," until one day his attitude completely changed.

David suddenly came with me to church and he went forward for prayer to ask God to forgive his sins. I went to his house for a Bible study and he accepted the word of God with great gladness in his heart. Then I returned overseas for another missionary trip. When I came back I found that he wasn't around and I was no longer bumping into him downtown. Then I heard the sad the news that he had died quite suddenly due to bowl cancer. He was only in his early twenties. How important it is that we accept Christ when we have the chance.

When I came back from Africa I also found that my neighbour had died while I was away. I had talked to him a number of times over the fence about my faith in God, but he never seemed to express any faith himself. Before I left I had given him a booklet about my missionary work. He was an older man, but it was still a shock and a great disappointment to find that he was no longer alive. All I can say again and again is that we have to get closer to God while we still have the chance. Man is destined to die once and after that to face judgment (Hebrews 9:27). He was a nice man, but being a nice person isn't enough to get you to Heaven. I gave his wife a video of my missionary trip, as well as the conversion story of a powerful healing evangelist called Bill Subritzky. By the time I came back from a mission to India, she was also dead. People are dying all around us. Life is so short, so very, very short.

Some years back, in-between evangelizing, I had a good paying job installing insulation. During the many hours it takes to complete the job we get to know some of the guys quite well. You get to discuss many things and hear the different opinions each person has. Somehow you connect with certain people through your conversations and a friendship is built. One such man was Joe, who was fitting brackets. Joe was brought up as a Roman Catholic but did not have a strong personal faith. At that time I had written a booklet on the basics of Christianity, so I gave him a copy.

On one occasion I got a ride with Joe into town and he took me to where he was living. We stopped at the wharf and paddled out to his boat, which he had made himself. His goal was to make some quick money and sail off to the tropical islands of the Pacific. I saw my booklet lying among his stuff. The insulators were then laid off work until we would be needed again. Some weeks later I saw Joe while I was downtown. I said to him that I would soon be back at work to try and convert him. He laughed. Little did I know that I would never see him again. Just before I went back he was killed in

a car crash. I had love in my heart towards that man, but I never had another opportunity to speak with him.

On another missions trip I found myself along the seaside of Manila, in the Philippines. I had only been doing one to one witnessing and some small Bible studies, until one evening I felt an urgency to give out tracts to the homeless people along the whole Boulevard. About two days later the police made it illegal for people to sleep there and everyone was scattered. There had been a young man in that area who had often received tracts from me. His girlfriend woke him up saying that the police were looking for him. Being half asleep and in a daze, he got up and started running. He ran out onto the road in such a hurry that an oncoming car had no time to stop. He died before reaching the hospital. I don't know whether he knew Christ or not, but I do know that he was reading the message only a few days before his fatal accident.

When a person dies suddenly it always reinforces to me the importance of what we do with our time and how we must sacrifice our lives for Christ. We must seek and save the lost before it is forever too late. We must urge people to think about their eternal destiny.

DO YOU BELONG IN HEAVEN?

The children were so beautiful at the orphanage in Myanmar (Burma). From among the group of children I had two that were my favourites. They had such big smiles. Whenever I looked down they would be smiling at me and I couldn't help smiling back at them. They were so beautiful as they worshipped God and listened to my long preaching even better than most adults. Here these little children were with tears in their eyes as they lifted up their arms and worshipped the Lord. But suddenly one of those little girls died from a small disease. To me this little girl looked like an angel who belonged in Heaven. She had no parents, she was in this orphanage, but the way that she would listen to the word of God touched my heart.

In my preaching I would use a lot of stories and some of them were very sad. I could see this little girl feeling the message by the affect upon her face. She used to really take it in. To hear that she had suddenly died left some unanswered questions, but we can rejoice that she is in the kingdom of God. These are the kinds of people that I'm going to enjoy when I get to Heaven. We will hug with the love of Jesus and say, "Hallelujah, you are saved for eternity. You will never be poor ever again. You will never have to worry where your next food will come from. You will never get sick here. You will be in Paradise forever and ever."

The apostle John heard a voice from Heaven say, "Write: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on." "Yes," says the Spirit, "they will rest from their labour, for their deeds will follow them" (Revelation 14:13). There's only one way that I would want to die, and that's with faith in Jesus Christ. But we also need to have laboured for Christ so that our deeds follow us. The work of saving lost souls fills Heaven with more treasures. If you want your treasures to be stored in Heaven, start leading people to Jesus.

The Bible calls us to remember this: 'Whoever turns a sinner from the error of his way will save him from death and cover over a multitude of sins' (James 5:20). Turning people back to God is so important. We have to break the strongholds of unbelief and overcome the shallow and false arguments that people cling to. It's not hard to see that the fruit of sin is death, whereas faith in God leads to eternal life. Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die" (John 11:25).

The apostle Paul was not afraid of death because he knew that to be away from the body is to be at home with the Lord. So whether we are in the body or away from it, our goal is to please Him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due to him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad. Since, then, we know what it is to fear the Lord, we try to persuade

men (2 Corinthians 5:6-10). Once we are saved, we have to try and persuade others.

We need to help people and warn them to look ahead to the judgment seat of Christ. All things will be laid bare and every act brought to judgment. You've heard the gospel message and you know the true way of salvation. Don't act foolishly when it comes to the eternal salvation of your precious soul. Don't play with Death. None of us knows when our time to die will come, so we should always be prepared to stand before the Lord and give an account of our lives. Death is a stepping stone into eternity; it is the passing from this world into the fullness of unveiled reality. I have a serious question to ask you. Please think about this very carefully, so that you can make the right choice:

“If you were to die tonight, would you be ready to go to Heaven, or would you die in your sins and be lost forever?”

3

HIS SACRIFICE FOR YOUR SALVATION

“The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life – only to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord...” (John 17:17-18).

When mankind first rebelled against God, it released the curse of death and brought the whole world under the devil’s power. In order to save us, Jesus had to sacrifice His life in our place, die for our sins and rise from the dead. We are all growing old and slowly dying day by day, but the good news of salvation is that Jesus has conquered the grave. He has risen from the dead and He is alive forever and ever.

The suffering of Jesus is what paid the price for our redemption. His death and resurrection has sealed the devil’s fate in the lake of fire. As the author of salvation, Jesus will bring those who believe in Him into glory. He who tasted death for everyone is now crowned with glory and honour, seated at the right hand of God (Hebrews 2:9-15). He is the magnificent Saviour and conquering King.

JESUS TASTED DEATH FOR YOU

Jesus allowed Himself to suffer. A large crowd armed with swords and clubs came to arrest the Lord. Satan had already entered Judas, the unfaithful disciple, prompting him to walk up to the Lord and betray Him with a kiss. Then armed men seized Jesus and took Him away as a prisoner. Those who had been His followers deserted Him and ran away in fear. Bound with chains, Jesus was handed over to be sentenced. The high priest tore his robes in outrage when Jesus confessed to being the Christ. They spat in His face and

struck Him with their fists. Others slapped Him and said, "Prophecy to us, Christ. Who hit you?" Jesus was brought before Pilate, who wanted to set Him free, but the crowd kept calling for Him to be crucified. Although He had done no crime, Pilate gave in to the frenzy of verbal hatred. He had Jesus flogged and handed Him over to be crucified.

The soldiers treated Jesus without mercy, as the Lord patiently allowed His body to be whipped to shreds. The whips were made of leather strips with small pieces of metal or bone tied to them. They ripped off His clothes and bound Him with ropes to a pillar so that He couldn't move. The whipping would cut deeper into the wounds until His back became a mess of blood and flesh. After that they took some twigs from a thorn bush and twisted them around to make a crown of thorns, which they put on Jesus' head. They spat on Him and beat His head with a stick. It is written, "I offered my back to those who beat me, my checks to those who pulled out my beard; I did not hide my face from mocking and spitting" (Isaiah 50:6).

Jesus was made to carry His cross, the object of His coming torture, up the streets and out of Jerusalem. When He fell to the ground, soldiers forced a man called Simon from Cyrene to carry the cross. Many women were weeping and wailing as this went on. Jesus was despised and rejected, a man of sorrows and familiar with suffering. Surely He took our infirmities and carried our sorrows; He was pierced for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities, the punishment that brought us peace was upon Him, and by His wounds we are healed. The LORD laid on Him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed and afflicted, yet He did not open His mouth; He was led like a lamb to the slaughter (Isaiah 53:3-7). This was the Lamb of God carrying our sins to the cross. He gave His life to die a shameful death so that we could have the hope of salvation.

When they got to the site for the crucifixion, the mob stirred as Jesus was thrown down hard to the ground. Without a struggle He stretched out His arms. There was a heavy thud of the hammer as it struck the nails and drove them through His flesh and bone. The cross was lifted up and dropped in the

hole. A deep groan came from the Lord's throat, as the entire weight of His body came against the nails. The smell of blood and body fluids filled the air. Jesus was left to die from exhaustion and pain, and the pain was intense as His whole body was strained. Nailed to the cross, the blood poured down from His body. The agony of crucifixion could be seen in His eyes and upon His face.

You may have seen pictures of Jesus on the cross with a tiny bit of blood dripping from Him, but the Bible says that many were horrified and shocked when they saw Him because His appearance was so disfigured beyond that of any man (Isaiah 52:14). Jesus was beaten so badly that He hardly looked human. He was so disfigured from the beatings that He looked horrible. You may wonder how people could be so cruel, but Satan and his servants hated Jesus so much that they hungered for His death and relished in it.

People were still laughing and mocking the Lord. They said, "He saved others, let him save himself if he is the Christ. Come down from the cross, then we'll believe in you." They sneered and ridiculed the Lord, while Jesus simply prayed, "Father, forgive them, for they don't know what they are doing" (Luke 23:34). People are sinning against Almighty God, not realizing the extent of the terrible things they are doing. Darkness has come into their hearts, but Jesus cries out for mercy and He prays specifically for you. Jesus chose to humble Himself and He chose to forgive. He had mercy and love towards those who were doing this to Him because He is filled with perfect love.

Jesus prayed that amazing prayer for you, as He was hanging on the cross for your deliberate rebellion towards God. He took the full curse of sin upon Himself. He was willing to die in this ghastly way so that He could take the punishment of your sin. I want to emphasize the point that Christ suffered and died this painful death because of your sin. Your sin nailed Jesus to the cross.

When they hurled their insults at Jesus, He did not retaliate; when He was abused, He made no threats. He bore our sins

in His body and He carried our sins to the cross, so that we might die to sin and live for righteousness (1 Peter 1:19; 2:21-24). Darkness came over the land for three hours as a sign from God, and another cry came from His swollen and bleeding lips, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit" (Luke 23:46). His head fell lifeless upon His chest and He was dead. Death by crucifixion usually took a long time, but Jesus was so weak and beaten up that He died in about six hours of hanging up there. Sin brought death. Your sin, my sin, all the sins of the world were placed upon Jesus Christ. Our revolting sin nailed Jesus to the cross and killed Him. Remember this when you next face some difficulty or temptation.

At that moment the curtain in the temple was torn in two. The earth shook and the rocks split. Tombs broke open and the bodies of many holy people who had died were raised to life. When the Roman centurion and the soldiers guarding Jesus saw the earthquake and all that happened, they were terrified and cried out, "Surely this man was the Son of God!" (Matthew 27:54) A soldier thrust his spear into Jesus' side to make sure that He was dead, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water that poured out from His body.

Jesus was betrayed, denied and rejected. He was beaten and left hanging until He was dead. This wasn't just the death of a martyr, but the death of the righteous and perfect Son of God. God says that this is the proof that He loves us. 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 how God showed His love among us: He sent His one and only Son into the world that we might live through Him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins (1 John 4:9-10).

To appreciate the love of God, we need to understand why Jesus was willing to be crucified for our sins. We need to understand that the wages of sin is death, yet the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 6:23). You cannot enter the kingdom of God unless your foul and dirty sins have

been covered by the precious blood of Jesus. The blood of Jesus is holy and righteous. His blood alone is all that can cleanse our hearts from all sin.

For people to get saved there has to be a deep conviction of the Holy Spirit as to how terribly they have sinned against God. The evil, the wickedness, and the extreme foulness of man's sinful nature have to be exposed. Look into your own heart. Do you have the light of Jesus shining within you? Or do you still have the guilt of sin pulling you down? Most people have been so hardened about sin that they need to be told exactly what it is. Realize that the following sins crucified the Lord of glory, yet it is by His precious blood that your heart can be washed clean.

SOME SINS THAT CRUCIFIED JESUS

1) Sexual Sins And Unfaithfulness In Marriage – Those who are impure and immoral (those who have sex before or outside marriage) will not enter the kingdom of God unless they repent (1 Corinthians 6:9). Adultery, fornication, homosexuality, sex-change, incest, rape, and all forms of sexual abuse are terrible sins against the Lord. Sexual abuse includes uninvited caressing, masturbation in front of another person, forced oral sex, sodomy and ritualistic sex, etc. It is obvious that sexual relations with an animal is an abomination (Leviticus 18:23). Indecency like pornography is an open door to becoming unrestrained and promiscuous, and this is another terrible sin that leads to destruction.

We are warned to flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body. Those who have sex outside of marriage have turned away from God, and this is the sin that defiles the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:18-20). Marriage should be honoured by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral (Hebrews 13:4). The Bible says that there must not even be a hint of sexual immorality among you, for no immoral, impure or greedy person has any inheritance in the kingdom

of Christ (Ephesians 5:3,5). Your attitude towards sex and marriage has eternal consequences.

God established the marriage covenant for a husband and a wife to be faithful to each other. Jesus said, "Anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, causes her to become an adulteress" (Matthew 5:32). The Lord gives this command: a wife must not separate from her husband. But if she does, she must remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband. And a husband must not divorce his wife (1 Corinthians 7:10-11).

If there is any problem within your marriage, you urgently need to pray for the wisdom of God to mend this area of your life. The husband must choose to love his wife and the wife must choose to love her husband. Make time to communicate and share with each other from the heart, so that you remain close. We must highly value and esteem the importance of holy matrimony. The person who is unmarried should be careful who they marry. Marry a person who is faithful to the Lord. Realize that all sex outside marriage is sin. If you are living in sin you must stop right now and immediately change your ways. God expects absolute sexual purity and faithfulness to the covenant of marriage.

2) Anger And Hatred – If you hate your brother, the Bible warns us that you have murder in your heart, and you know that no murderer has eternal life in him (1 John 3:15). Jesus doesn't want hatred in our hearts. He wants our hearts to be filled with love towards one another. Jesus said that we should love our enemies and pray for them (Matthew 5:44). To overcome hatred, start praying for God's blessing upon those who have annoyed you. The commandments are summed up in this rule: 'Love your neighbour as yourself.' Love does no harm to its neighbour. Therefore love is the fulfilment of the law (Romans 13:9-10). Murder stems from hatred, and hatred has rejected love.

One subtle, yet ghastly form of hatred is abortion. Selfishness and moral corruption have hardened the consciences of many to commit legalized murder. Innocent

lives have been murdered through abortion. Jesus said to His brothers, who were at that time refusing to believe in Him, “The world cannot hate you, but it hates me because I testify that what it does is evil” (John 7:7). Jesus confronts us with our sins and exposes the evil of this world. The sinful heart of man then causes those who are wicked to reject Jesus. Those who hate God and are angry at Him need to realize the seriousness of their sin.

3) Unforgiveness – You cannot allow bitterness or unforgiveness to grow within you. Jesus said, “If you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins” (Matthew 6:14-15). Understand this because it is very important. If a person does something wrong to you, are you going to let darkness come into your heart and say that you won’t forgive that person, or will you let the love of God wash those sins away?

God will have mercy on you if you have mercy on others. But Jesus warned us with a parable about the unmerciful servant who was handed over to the jailers and tortured. Then He spoke these strong words, “This is how my heavenly Father will treat you unless you forgive your brother from your heart” (Matthew 18:23-35). God is a righteous Judge and we reap what we sow. You cannot expect God to forgive you of your sins if you are unwilling to forgive someone who has sinned against you. You have to forgive in order to be forgiven.

4) Lying – The devil is called the father of lies (John 8:44). He deceives the world because people do not love the truth. It’s our own sinful heart that allows the devil to come and lead us astray. The devil is called the tempter (Matthew 4:3). He always challenges what God had said. The serpent deceived the first woman by saying, “Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden’?” (Genesis 3:1).

God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He tempt anyone; but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived,

it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full grown, gives birth to death (James 1:13-15). Sin blocked the first woman from God because she gave in and believed the lie of the devil. If you want to follow the light of Jesus you have to follow the truth. Jesus is the truth and those who follow Him cannot tell lies. We are warned that all liars will be thrown into the lake of fire (Revelation 21:8). All who love to practise falsehood will be shut outside the heavenly city (Revelation 22:15). The world has lied to you, but speak the truth of God and you will discern error.

5) Stealing – Satan is a thief who comes to steal, kill and destroy, but Jesus comes to give us life (John 10:10). Thieves break into houses, bandits rob in the streets; but they do not realize that God remembers all their evil deeds. Their sins are always before God (Hosea 7:1-2). The Bible says, ‘Woe to him who piles up stolen goods’ (Habakkuk 2:6). It also gives us a warning that the LORD Almighty will send a curse into the house of the thief (Zechariah 5:3-4).

Thieves cause so many problems for other people, but in the end pain and misery shall fall upon their own heads. They will have to give an account before the throne of judgment for what they have done. The Lord Jesus does not want us to do these evil things. He wants us to be kind, compassionate, to give, and to be thankful for what we have. The thief must confess his sins and return what he has stolen, otherwise he will never enter the kingdom of God (1 Corinthians 6:10). Judas fell away from Christ because he was a thief and for a mere thirty silver coins he was willing to lose his soul (Matthew 26:15; John 12:4-6).

6) Foul Language And Careless Words – Jesus said, “The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in him, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in him. But I tell you that men will have to give account on the Day of Judgment for every careless word they have spoken. For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned” (Matthew 12:35-37).

Your words reveal what is in your heart. If you have evil in your heart then evil words will come out of you. To have the light of Jesus within, you have to speak that which is good. Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouth, nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking (Ephesians 4:29; 5:4). The apostle Paul gave Timothy this advice, 'Avoid godless chatter, because those who indulge in it will become more and more ungodly' (2 Timothy 2:16). Speak beneficial words of love, wisdom, and truth, so that you may follow the path of eternal life.

7) Drunkenness – This sin has destroyed many people's lives and wrecked many families, but the Bible commands us not to get drunk (Ephesians 5:18). Drunkenness is a form of pleasing the desires of the sinful nature (Romans 13:13-14). Jesus warns us that those who waste their lives in this way will be caught unexpectedly, as in a trap (Luke 21:34). A drunk woman is a wicked woman and a drunk man is a very foolish man (1 Samuel 1:13-16; Proverbs 26:9). No drunkard will enter the kingdom of God (1 Corinthians 6:10).

Jesus told a parable to expose the foolishness of being unfaithful to His commands. The wicked servant began to eat and drink with drunkards, but when the master returns he will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth (Matthew 24:48-51). Alcohol causes people to waste their lives. Instead of truly living for God they sit with their friends drinking too much. You have to decide where you stand. If your friends turn away from the things of God and gather together to party, will you go with them and deny Jesus Christ, or will you obey the word of God?

Those who take pleasure in wild parties or become unrestrained and rebellious will not inherit the kingdom of Heaven. Turn away from drunkenness and the abuse of drugs, and give your life wholeheartedly to Jesus. He went to the cross for this sin, so that the power of drunkenness can be broken off those who truly call upon the name of the Lord.

8) Self-indulgence And The Love Of Money – Jesus said, “Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man’s life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions” (Luke 12:15). If you have lived in luxury, ease and comfort to satisfy your own desires, you may be in for a shock. Jesus said, “Woe to you who are rich, for you have already received your comfort. Woe to you who are well fed now, for you will go hungry” (Luke 6:24-25). People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs (1 Timothy 6:9-10).

Balaam was a prophet of God, yet because he loved the wages of wickedness he taught people to do evil (2 Peter 2:15). Many people are willing to sin for a few extra dollars, but in doing this they ruin their own character. No servant can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money (Luke 16:13). Money can be used for good or for evil. Avoid all evil and use your finance for that which is good.

9) Pride And Arrogance – The devil is so proud and arrogant that he tried to exalt himself above the sovereign and eternal Most High God. He tried to make himself great, but he was thrown out of Heaven. We need to humble ourselves and acknowledge that Jesus is the mighty one. We don’t want pride or arrogance in our hearts. The Bible says that God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you (James 4:6-7). Pride leads people to become boastful, but humility allows us to receive the grace of God. In humility we must consider other people as being better than ourselves (Philippians 2:3). In humility we must honour our father and mother (Exodus 20:12). Yet in humility we also reject the sins and false traditions of our ancestors.

Anyone who does not obey the gospel is living in rebellion towards God. You can be quietly living your own life, doing your own thing, following your own path, and even considering yourself to be a good person, yet the whole time you are living in rebellion towards the Sovereign Creator of this universe. Pride blinds a person to their true spiritual condition and causes them to reject their only hope of salvation. Self-righteousness and legalism makes people look very religious, but without the fruit of the Holy Spirit they are far away from the Lord (Galatians 5:22-23). God is calling you to humble yourself before the Lord Jesus Christ.

10) Witchcraft And The Occult – The devil is not sitting back because he's got most of the world. He's out for more, and he's after your soul. Therefore make sure that you aren't involved with any of the following evil practices: clairvoyance, fortune telling, seeking help from crystals, eastern meditation, horoscopes, hypnosis, palmistry, psychics, reincarnation, Satanism, séances, tarot cards, voodoo, white or black magic, the Hindu philosophy behind yoga, etc... Behind martial arts, kung fu, aikido, tae kwon do, karate, tai chi and judo, which are rooted in Taoism and Buddhism, there is idolatry as well as witchcraft. Whatever focuses on a higher power or some kind of spiritual force, but ignores a true concept of God through Jesus Christ, has serious deception.

The Bible says, 'Let no one be found among you who sacrifices his son or daughter in the fire, who practices divination or sorcery, interprets omens, engages in witchcraft, or casts spells, or who is a medium or spiritist or who consults the dead. Anyone who does these things is detestable to the LORD' (Deuteronomy 18:10-12). Get rid of anything that belongs to the occult; destroy it, smash it, burn it and keep away from it. Be aware that the devil is at work in every person who is disobedient towards the gospel (Ephesians 2:2). To enter the kingdom of God you have to be rescued from the dominion of darkness by the wonderful light of Christ (Colossians 1:13). Do not give the devil a foothold in your life (Ephesians 4:27).

11) Idolatry – Another way that Satan has led people away from pure devotion towards God is through idols. There is a vast difference between going to an idol and going by faith to the living God. If you go to an idol, God will not live in your heart. It is written, ‘Cursed is the man who carves an image or casts an idol – a thing detestable to the LORD, the work of the craftsman’s hands – and sets it up in secret’ (Deuteronomy 27:15).

An idol is not God and idolatry is not the way to God. Idols are made by the hands of men and man-made gods are not gods at all (Acts 19:26). An idol does not come from God; therefore the spirit behind an idol is a demon (1 Corinthians 10:20). Never worship or pray towards a statue. We are warned that those who worship idols, which is an act of the sinful nature, will not inherit the kingdom of God (Galatians 5:19-21). Those who have been brought up under the influence of idolatry have to make a decision as to whether they will continue to go to idols or whether they will turn and follow the living Saviour.

Idolatry stems from not putting God first in our lives. If we put our possessions, house, car, ministry, family, employment, etc, ahead of God, it is idolatry. Some people literally worship their favourite film actor, singer, musician or sports athlete. They love them more than God and make them into their idols. But these people, no matter how talented they are, cannot save you. Those who call upon idols will die in their sins. Many people do not think seriously about who or what they are worshipping. If you are not worshipping the Supreme Being – the one and only Eternal Creator who stands distinct from His creation – your religious devotion is all in vain. You desperately need to accept the Lord Jesus into your heart if you want to be saved. Get rid of your idols and worship the one true God.

12) Refusing To Listen To God – The reason many people are not going to enter God’s kingdom is because they have hardened their hearts. They have refused to listen to the word of the Lord. ‘They refused to pay attention; stubbornly

they turned their backs and stopped up their ears. They made their hearts as hard as flint and would not listen to the law or to the words that the LORD Almighty had sent by his Spirit through the earlier prophets. So the LORD Almighty was very angry' (Zechariah 7:11-12).

Many people don't care. They pay no attention to the messengers whom God sends to warn them because they don't want to listen. They're so busy with the things of the world that they have no time for securing their own salvation. They are not interested in seeking after God. They don't know how to pray. Their hearts are always going astray and they don't know the ways or purposes of the Lord. They will stand before Him on the Day of Judgment completely unprepared. False beliefs such as atheism, agnosticism and self-centred humanism cause people to be cut off from God. There is great wisdom in contemplating the depths and wonders of the Holy Scriptures. The people who don't have time to read the Bible will end up with eternal regrets. They would rather watch trivia on the TV or read the newspaper than really know what God has to say to them. He who has ears, let him listen carefully, otherwise he will not perceive or understand the message sent to him by God.

13) Refusing To Love Jesus – If a person claims to belong to God just ask them if they love the Lord Jesus with all their heart, soul, mind and strength. Jesus said, "If God were your Father, you would love me" (John 8:42). Do you love Jesus more than money? Jesus said, "You cannot serve both God and Money" (Matthew 6:24). Do you love Jesus more than everything in this world? Jesus said, "Any of you who does not give up everything he has cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:33).

Do you love Jesus more than your family? Jesus said, "Anyone who loves his father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves his son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; and anyone who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me" (Matthew 10:37-38). Do you love Jesus more than your own life? Jesus said, "Whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses

his life for me and for the gospel will save it” (Mark 8:35). The key to becoming a friend of God is to love Jesus with all your heart. If you love Jesus you will turn away from your sins and obey His commands (John 14:15). If you love Jesus you will acknowledge that He is divine and you will worship Him (Matthew 14:33).

Beware of cults, such as the Jehovah’s Witnesses, who deny the divinity and Sovereign Lordship of Christ (2 Peter 2:1). False religion and cultic heresies promoted by the Bahai Faith, Buddhism, Freemasonry, Hinduism, Islam, Latter Day Saints (Mormons), New Age Movement, Rastafarianism, Satanism, Scientology, Taoism, Unification Church (Moonies), Da Vinci Code, etc, lead multitudes of people astray. Jesus said, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me” (John 14:6).

14) Spiritual Hypocrisy And Backsliding – Many people confess faith in God with their mouths while their hearts are still far away from Him. They claim to know God, but by their actions they deny Him (Titus 1:16). Jesus gave a tremendous warning to the religious hypocrites of His day, “Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of dead men’s bones and everything unclean. In the same way, on the outside you appear to people as righteous but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness” (Matthew 23:27-28).

Those who follow Jesus must be faithful; otherwise they are in danger of being numbered among the hypocrites. The person who begins to follow the Lord and then turns back to his old sinful ways is likened to a dog that returns to its own vomit, or a pig who after being washed goes back to wallowing in the mud (2 Peter 2:20-22). Their only hope is to realize the seriousness of what they have done and to cry out to God for mercy.

The most regretful people in Hell will be those who were on their way to Heaven but turned back just before they got there. They were close, but not close enough. They were about to

inherit the kingdom, but like Judas they sinned unto death. Not all sin leads to death or instant damnation, but there is a line that can be crossed in denying Christ that makes it impossible to be saved. The eternal remorse and shame for rejecting the Lord makes backsliding a most frightening sin. We must highly value our salvation so that we remain steadfast in Christ.

As long as you can let God's love come into your heart, you can be saved. As long as you can love Jesus for what He has done for you upon the cross, you can return to God and find eternal life. The mercy of God to wash away all your sins is tremendous, but you have to receive forgiveness in order to be forgiven. You have to believe, accept and trust in the grace and mercy that God has made available for you. Some of the most wicked of men have repented and been saved towards the end of their lives. This should give you hope and encouragement to come back to God if you know that there is a gap between you and Him.

We must pay careful attention to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away (Hebrews 2:1). This means that we can fall away from God if we don't continue to pay attention to Him. God doesn't want to lose any of His people and He will earnestly plead with them to come back. But, if you deliberately keep on sinning after you have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left, but only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God. The Christian who rejects Christ has trampled the Son of God under foot, spat upon Christ's holy blood and insulted the Spirit of grace. It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God having been a believer but then to have denied the faith (Hebrews 10:26-31).

Once we have come to the Lord, we have to continue to work out our salvation with fear and trembling (Philippians 2:12). We do this by remaining in Christ and by walking in righteousness. Remember that the very elect can be deceived if they are not careful (Matthew 24:24). Do you really care about the state of your soul? Many turn against the very one who loved them and saved them. They reject the blood that could

wash away their filth and in so doing they reject God's eternal love. This is also why the false religions are so evil, especially the religion of Islam, which insists that Christ never died upon the cross for their sins.

JESUS PRAYS FOR YOUR SALVATION

Please remember that Jesus prayed for you when He was hanging on the cross. Even now Jesus is praying because He cares for you. He wept over backslidden Jerusalem (Luke 19:41), just as He weeps for His lost children today. His prayers are offered with loud cries and tears (Hebrews 5:7-10). Jesus prayed that Peter's faith would not fail, so that Peter would turn back from his sin (Luke 22:32). Jesus intercedes for the restoration of those who have fallen. He mourns for what has happened to this world and He weeps for those who are pursuing their own destruction.

Jesus' soul was overwhelmed to the point of death as He prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane because He was about to carry every sin that you and I have ever committed (Matthew 26:38). Every lie, every murder, every act of selfishness and pride, every jealousy, greed and impurity, every idolatry, witchcraft and abomination to God, every wicked evil thing which is so filthy, Jesus took upon His body as the High Priest to offer the final and complete blood sacrifice. The cross of Jesus Christ is our only hope and that is why those who reject His precious blood are eternally lost.

If you have done some or many of these horrible sins, you desperately need to cry out to God to get your life right with Him. Open up your heart to Jesus and ask Him to take away the evil that you have done. If you know that you have been crucifying Jesus with your sin, repent, weep before the Lord and be saved. Jesus said, "Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you" (John 6:53). Our sin broke Christ's body and spilled His blood, but out of that God provided the only way of salvation.

Men loved darkness instead of the light because their deeds are evil. They are lost and dying in their sins because

they refuse to come to Jesus and accept forgiveness. Whoever denies the death and resurrection of Christ is unclean before God. Everything to do with salvation hinges upon the crucifixion of Christ. The cross was a place of prayer for the salvation of the world and it is with faith in the cross of Christ that we have to pray for our own salvation. The message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God (1 Corinthians 1:18).

Many have come close to entering God's kingdom but then they put it off by not making a proper commitment to the Lord. They say, "One day I'll follow you Jesus. One day I'll give my life to God," but they never do it. Some people say that they will give their life to God just before they die, but at the moment they want to keep on living for themselves. That is a great sin and a terrible deception. Once today is gone, it is gone forever. It's too late for those who die in their sins to repent. You must live for God while you have the chance. Today is the acceptable time.

The minute you hear the gospel the invitation to come to Christ has been given to you. If you say, "No," God offered you eternal life but you refused it.

You cannot go to Heaven if you refuse to accept Christ's crucifixion for your sins. Once you have heard the gospel that was your chance to be saved. At the moment the door of salvation is still open. God is reaching out His hands of love, mercy and forgiveness, but please don't reject your salvation any longer. Accept the love of God and follow that love for the rest of your life. The love and grace of God is available to wash away all your sins through the precious blood of Christ. God's love is poured out from the cross onto the whole world, so take Jesus as your Lord and Saviour right now!

WHAT HAVE YOU DONE TO AND WITH JESUS?

4

MAKE PEACE WITH YOUR CREATOR

There is a question that I want to ask you: Are you a friend or an enemy of Jesus Christ?

There are only two kingdoms: the kingdom of darkness, which is ruled by Satan, and the kingdom of light, which is ruled by the Lord Jesus Christ. The number one enemy of God is the great dragon, known as the devil or Satan (Revelation 12:9). He is called a murderer (John 8:44), the prince of demons (Matthew 12:24), the tempter (Matthew 4:3), the accuser (Revelation 12:10), the ruler of darkness (Ephesians 6:12), the evil one (Matthew 13:19), an unclean spirit (Matthew 12:43), the enemy of Christ (Matthew 13:39), and the enemy of man (1 Peter 5:8).

Satan is the ruler of the kingdom of the air and the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient (Ephesians 2:2). He is the one who leads God's enemies, for those who turn away from God are under his diabolical influence. Living in deliberate sin means that you have joined the devil's rebellion. This is the terrible mistake that many have unwittingly or deliberately made. By following their sinful nature they have declared war against God.

The apostle Paul wrote these words, 'I have often told you before and now say again even with tears, many live as enemies of the cross of Christ. Their destiny is destruction' (Philippians 3:18-19). Many people are fighting against the Lord and the work of His kingdom, which is to turn people to the path of righteousness. Paul often warned the believers about these enemies of the cross. Before his conversion, Paul, who was known as Saul, was himself an enemy of the gospel. He persecuted the church and tried to destroy the Christian faith (Acts 9:1; Galatians 1:13). He threw men and women into prison

and voted that they should be put to death. He tried to force them to blaspheme against the Lord and to give up their faith (Acts 22:4; 26:11).

Before a person is converted and puts his trust in the Lord, he is an enemy of the gospel. His sinful mind has turned him into an enemy of the cross. The sinful nature is in opposition to everything that God wants to do. It refuses to submit to the will of God. Many people do not know Jesus as their friend, but God is merciful and He will give them a chance to repent. That is why we continue to preach the gospel to those who are continually sinning against God. The gospel is calling God's enemies to repent before it's too late. If they are willing to gaze upon the awesome holiness of God and contemplate how they will stand before Him on the Day of Judgment, they will be shaken and they will have a life-changing encounter with the Lord.

As Saul was travelling to another town to hunt down and destroy the Christians, a light from Heaven that was brighter than the sun suddenly flashed around him. His companions also fell to the ground and then he heard a voice saying, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" He asked, "Who are you, Lord?" The Lord replied, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting" (Acts 9:3-5). Jesus revealed to this man his sin and from that day his life was changed. He was a broken and humbled man. Realizing that the Jesus he had hated showed him so much love compelled Paul to preach the gospel throughout the world. No wonder Paul would cry with many tears when warning the believers about the enemies of the cross. Paul knew the path that he had once followed and how blinded he had been, but never again would he be an enemy of Christ. That place of humility, brokenness and full surrender to Christ needs to be our constant attitude.

The apostle Paul wrote to the Thessalonian church to expose the work of God's enemies: 'You suffered from your own countrymen the same things those churches suffered from the Jews, who killed the Lord Jesus and the prophets and also drove us out. They displease God and are hostile to all men in their effort to keep us from speaking to the Gentiles

so that they may be saved' (1 Thessalonians 2:14-16). The enemies of God try to stop the preaching of the gospel. This greatly displeases God because it hinders or stops the unreached people from being saved.

The enemies of the cross drove the apostles out, yet they were warned, "If it is from God, you will not be able to stop these men; you will only find yourselves fighting against God" (Acts 5:39). What a shock it will be for people on the Day of Judgment to find that they were in fact fighting against the Lord God Almighty, but then it is too late. Jesus warned the religious leaders of His day, "You shut the kingdom of Heaven in men's faces. You yourselves do not enter, nor will you let those who are trying to. You snakes! You brood of vipers! How will you escape from being condemned to Hell?" (Matthew 23:13,33).

MANY PEOPLE WILL TRY TO STOP YOU FROM FOLLOWING JESUS

I was doing house to house evangelism in an area where most of the people were Muslims. Some ladies invited me into their house, so I gave them a copy of the Jesus film and some Bible literature. When I asked the host lady what work her husband was doing, she replied, "My husband is living next door with another woman. This is very painful for me to handle." I told her that it is better to follow Jesus and she agreed. I said a prayer that God would put a brick wall between her husband and the young girl he was living with. After the prayer the Muslim lady asked me to come and visit them again.

It was a couple of weeks before I had another opportunity to visit that house and this time the room was full of Muslim ladies. Her husband was also there, sitting on the floor. I asked the lady if she had watched the film or read the booklets, but she claimed that she had no time. She was obviously taking a completely different attitude towards me because of the presence of her husband. The husband then said to me in an angry tone, "If I had a gun, I would get it out

and shoot you right now.” All the women quickly got up and left the room, so I was left alone with the angry husband. I said that all murderers belong to the devil, but he said that he was willing to die for his religion. He then told me that his family will never convert to Christianity and he started accusing me of condemning his religion.

Talking to him I soon found out that I knew more about Islam than he did. He couldn't answer my questions, so he told me to wait for his father to come. I asked him if he wanted me to leave the house because the atmosphere was getting very tense, but he told me to wait. An old man with a long beard came in and after giving an Arabic greeting he asked what message I had to share. I spoke to him about Jesus Christ being the Saviour of the world, told him that he can change, and then invited him to give his life to Jesus. He asked me how many Muslims I had converted. The Muslim religion has such a tight grip on people that they vehemently hate it when one of them leaves their religion.

Another old Muslim man had asked me the same question a month or so earlier when I was taken to visit his Christian son. To visit that place we had to walk far into the bush and cross some rapids. It was like an adventure movie walking across the rocks and a small plank of wood where the rapids were otherwise impassable. The son said to me that if his father asks me that question again (if I have converted any Muslims), tell him that his own son has converted. This Muslim son had become a Christian while in prison with a five year sentence. After being given a Bible and reading the story of how an angel escorted Peter out of prison (Acts 12), he pleaded those Scriptures. He prayed and fasted and was soon released. When he arrived at his father's house the family were scared because they thought that he had broken out of prison, but he told them that it was through faith in Jesus that God had moved the officials to reduce his sentence and to release him.

The angry adulterous husband and his father with the long beard then started arguing against the Holy Trinity and saying that Jesus cannot be the Son of God. The old man was getting

very angry, and I was told to go and speak at the mosque or on the television and then I'll see what Muslims can do to me. I said that I'm willing to speak to anyone and I would have been quite happy to expose the errors of Islam on TV, even if they wanted to cause a riot. After the grandfather made further threats as to what they could do, I replied by saying, "Many Muslims are evil." This erupted their full fury and I was shouted out of the house as they continued their threats. I was chased off their property and warned of the consequences if I ever took one step onto that place again. I felt like this was a small taste of having to deal with the same murderous spirit that Jesus had to face in the Pharisees.

I admit that these kinds of experiences are not easy to go through. They are heart crushing, but they really challenge your priorities in life. In one sense I got myself into trouble because of the way I had spoken, and in my booklet I had clearly revealed why Mohammed is a false prophet and an antichrist; but in another sense I saw the hand of God exposing the spiritual darkness that enslaves the Muslim people. Not all Muslims are deliberately evil, but rather the demonic power behind the religion of Islam has ensnared them. It is the spirit of antichrist (1 John 2:18,22; 4:1-3).

When I left that house I was shaking on the inside, so I prayed for God to reveal to me what He thought about that situation. As I continued to pray I received this passage of Scripture: 'Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in one spirit, contending as one man for the faith of the gospel without being frightened in any way by those who oppose you. This is a sign to them that they will be destroyed, but that you will be saved – and that by God. For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for him' (Philippians 1:27-29).

What a serious word to receive from God when He has decided to raise you up as sign so that those who oppose the gospel will be destroyed. One thing the Muslim husband said to me was that he has never had a dream in his whole life, so I

interceded for him that God would speak to him and warn him through a dream. I also made a request to those who received my missions newsletters to intercede for his salvation. It is our job as believers to warn those who are following the evil ways of the world to repent before they die (Ezekiel 3:17-21). We must constantly preach against sin and teach people the eternal benefits of righteousness. Do not be afraid, but be strong and courageous for the sake of Christ. Warn the lost people of the world, even if they pay no attention.

I was shocked when I found out that this Muslim man died that very same year, only a few months after I left his area. He went to hospital, died on the operating table, and the doctors couldn't bring him back. He was only in his mid thirties. God had given him a strong warning to repent of his adultery and of denying the sovereign lordship of Christ. God had already determined to place a stumbling block before him so that he would die (Ezekiel 3:20); not meaning that he is necessarily in Hell, for in bringing about that man's soon destruction the Holy Spirit may have been able to convict him of his guilt in regard to sin, righteousness and judgment (John 16:8), or speak to him through a dream in answer to our prayers.

He may have confessed his sins and asked Jesus for true forgiveness before going to the operating table, so I don't know the final outcome for that man's soul, but I do know that God had arranged all these circumstances and has called me to give a strong warning to those who are living in adultery and are trampling upon the precious blood, which Christ shed for us upon the cross. If you are living in adultery you must repent immediately. If you are denying the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus, you will soon find yourself shut outside the gates of Heaven unless you can humble yourself and believe. Only the precious blood of Jesus can wash away your sins, while those who threaten God's messengers are soon removed from the earth.

Evil people will try to stop you from following Jesus. They will come up with all kinds of arguments against believing the gospel. Those who belong to the devil and are under his influence will try to stop you from receiving eternal life. But do

not be afraid of them. Share your testimony earnestly and lovingly, and call them to repent. Continue to seek the Lord so that your life can impact many unbelievers. As you remain earnest in following the Lord and have a dread of evil, a holy fear will come upon others so that they take their salvation more seriously.

It's too frightening to be an enemy of God. Those who love their sin hate Jesus for no reason (John 15:23-25), but every person in Heaven truly knows the King of Kings as their best friend. Make peace with the Almighty, join with His people and unite yourself to the Lord. Remember that all things were created through Christ (John 1:3). All things were created by Him and for Him (Colossians 1:16). You were created to belong to the Lord; therefore, give your life wholeheartedly to our Great King and you will find your eternal purpose. Worship your marvellous Creator – Jesus Christ.

CALLING PEOPLE TO BE SAVED

I was blessed to be able to start witnessing and preaching on the streets from when I was about sixteen years old, but a short time later I was confronted with a difficult situation that challenged what I should do. I was walking around the streets late one Friday night and asking people to believe in Jesus. One young guy, who claimed to be the leader of a little street gang, walked up to me and said, "If you preach about Jesus around here, I'm going to kill you."

I didn't know how to take that kind of threat, so I prayed about it and soon went back into town. It wasn't long before that same young man walked up to me again, but this time he apologized and said that he needed to know God. When I bumped into him years later, I reminded him of the words he had first spoken to me and he was again open for me to share the message of Christ with him. Many years later I met him again, at the end of a church service. This time he was holding a Bible in his hands and he was a Christian.

During one evangelism trip I was hitchhiking around my home country of New Zealand with another evangelistic friend.

As we were standing on the side of the road, waiting for some cars to come, a middle aged man walked past us. I politely asked him if he had ever thought about believing in Jesus. Immediately he became enraged and his face filled with anger. He lifted up his fist and threatened to punch me if I ever mentioned anything like that to him again. Once I was attacked by a group of young men. Thankfully they only threw soft punches that had no effect, but on a couple of occasions I was knocked to the ground by vicious blows.

When I was doing some witnessing outside some nightclubs one guy gave me a perfect punch and broke my nose. While still holding my nose to stop the flow of blood, I walked up to that person and shook his hand. I said to him, "That was a good punch, but you still need to give your life to Jesus." I had to get the top bones of my nose pushed back into place. When another angry man punched me to the ground I thought that he had wanted to kill me. I had tried to help him so many times to follow the Lord. A couple of years later I reminded him about how he had punched me, and he apologized. A few years after that, when I was first going to India as a missionary, that same man handed me twenty dollars; so God bless him and may he overcome to inherit eternal life and have a close place with Jesus.

In my early witnessing days I saw some vicious fights where people were knocked unconscious on the streets, but my job was to witness for Christ in those places. I saw one nightclub bouncer stand up on a small brick wall and kick a drunken man in the head very badly. One night a man was beaten up by a large group of teenage boys. He went into a nightclub and came out with about twenty men. These men began running down the street to chase the teenagers. As these men charged down the road, I can still picture myself thinking, "What kind of crazy behaviour is this? The people have gone mad!"

We are living in an age where people have become disgustingly wicked. In the car park I saw a man and woman openly having sex. Homosexual men would make sinful offers to me as I was sharing the gospel. Another time I saw a big

fight take place amongst a group of people. I was so stirred up that I started shouting and calling everyone to turn away from their wickedness. When the fight stopped I walked up to each person and asked them individually if they wanted to come and follow Jesus. Each person said, "No," until I got to one man who asked me to come away with him. He took me to a darkened park and under a big tree he shared with me his problems.

We are called to gently instruct people, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth, and that they will come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will (2 Timothy 2:25-26). Coming to Jesus is our only hope for removing the veil of darkness that encompasses the spiritually naive. Childlike faith in Jesus can change a hard heart and wash away the filth of wasted years. These are some things you should do:

- 1) Soften your heart and let your conscience convict you of even your smallest sin.
- 2) Humble yourself under the mighty hand of God.
- 3) Fall down in awe of God, for that is the attitude to have when approaching the Lord's absolute holiness.
- 4) Cry out for mercy, knowing that a life of wickedness deserves to be punished.
- 5) Confess your sins and acknowledge your desperate need for the Saviour.
- 6) Get on your knees, call upon the name of the Lord and meet with God.
- 7) Pray for the salvation of your precious soul, so that you can make peace with the Sovereign Lord before it's forever too late.

DON'T WAIT ANOTHER MINUTE!

While photocopying tracts and testimony booklets, I'd hand them out to whoever came into the shop. A lady gladly took some and then she shared with me that she hated her

husband. I spoke to her about the true love that God wants to develop in our lives and encouraged her to pray for the salvation of her husband three times a day. He was claiming to be a Christian, but he was making life miserable for his wife because he was a drunkard. A few weeks later I bumped into that same lady again and she invited me to her house to share the word of God because things were getting worse. As soon as I got to the house I could tell that her husband had been drinking that morning, so I confronted him with what he was doing to his family and his sin against the Lord.

As I shared with him what it means to be a true Christian the atmosphere became a little tense. He began to speak against the pastors and to make excuses for himself. Due to the tense atmosphere I said that I would say a prayer and leave. The man responded by saying, "I'm too angry for you to pray. Let's wait in silence for five minutes." I waited in silence until he nodded his head, then I prayed for his salvation. He was somewhat happier as I gave him some more booklets to read and then I left. About a week later that man was in a head-on car accident and while in hospital God sent another messenger to warn him to repent. I hope that he will be saved, but I don't want you to put off your salvation by waiting another minute. Pray to Jesus right now. Confess all your sins and make peace with God by opening your heart fully to Him.

I don't go out to make people angry, but many times people burn with hatred when their sins are exposed. It is infinitely better to be confronted with the truth now than to stand trembling before Almighty God on the day of retribution when there is no mercy. The weeping and wailing of lost sinners will not grant any of them salvation once the judgment is set. Today you can change the course of your eternal destiny, but once a person is in Hell, gnashing their teeth and crying out in torment, their prayers will have no effect.

Many times my heart has been stirred to preach the gospel and to openly confront the forces of evil. My heart is burning for the salvation of lost souls and again I am stirred to ask you an important question: "Will you turn away from your sins and take the Lord Jesus as your Saviour?" If so, get on your hands

and knees and start crying out to God right now. Say “Yes” to Jesus, and say “No” to the unbelievers. Become a true Christian, a wholehearted follower of Christ, and live for the kingdom of righteousness from this day onwards. Let God change you from the inside. Then you will know what it means to be born again and to begin a new life. A spiritual transformation will take place and you will become a child of the Living God (John 1:12-13).

THE PRAYER OF A LOST SINNER FOR SALVATION

“Lord Jesus, I need You to save me. I know that I have sinned, but I don’t want to be lost. Thank You for dying on the cross and paying the penalty for all my wicked ways. I confess these sins to You now..... (name those sins).

I turn from them and I look for You to help me to walk the path of righteousness. I realize that my evil deeds are to blame for Your painful crucifixion, so I am truly sorry and I ask You to forgive me.

I believe the good news that You rose from the dead and that You are alive forever. I believe that You are watching me at this very moment, so I open the door of my life to receive You as my Lord and Saviour.

Come into my heart, take away my sins, and make me the kind of person You want me to be. I want to be Your friend. Fill me with the power of the Holy Spirit and let me overcome all the works of the devil.

Thank You for saving me and giving me assurance of a place in Heaven. I give all praise, honour and glory to Your holy name. Amen.”

**I have decided to follow Jesus
all the days of my life!**

Yes

No

For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever (your name)

believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life (John 3:16).

Date of birthday into God's family:

(The day you accepted Jesus as your Saviour)

When you receive Jesus Christ as your Lord and Saviour, you have made the most important decision of your life. You have become a child of God. But new Christians are likened to newborn babies, who must crave spiritual milk so that they can grow up in their salvation (1 Peter 2:2-3). To reach spiritual maturity you must be trained to walk in obedience to the commands of Christ. Learn to pray about everything and study the word of God. Go to a Bible believing church that teaches you how to walk closer and closer to the Lord. Pray for your friends and ask them to also make sure of their salvation.

Do not be afraid to tell others about what Jesus has done for you and do not be afraid to sacrifice your life for the sake of the gospel. Help other people to enter the kingdom of God. Be a strong Christian; a Christian who loves God with all their heart, soul, mind and strength. Be a Christian who is going to be a powerful witness for the Lord and allow God to do a great work in your life. Persevere in your walk with Jesus and never give up. If you do these things and build into your life more godly character, you will never fall, and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour (2 Peter 1:11).

REPENT AND BE BAPTIZED!

Your next step in obedience to Jesus is to get water baptized. To become a disciple of Jesus you must be baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and you must be taught to obey everything that Jesus has commanded you to do (Matthew 28:19-20). Jesus said, "Go

into all the world and preach the good news to all creation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned” (Mark 16:15-16). Why does believing the gospel move a person to be baptized? When the lost sinner finds the great salvation that is in Christ, he will want to publicly declare himself as a follower of the Lord through baptism. Baptism symbolizes being united to the death and resurrection of our Lord. It symbolizes dying to sin and being raised to life with Him. To unite yourself with Christ and to enter this new life, you need to be baptized in water (Romans 6:3-8).

The Spirit of the Lord guided Philip the evangelist to go near the chariot of an Ethiopian eunuch who was reading the book of Isaiah the prophet. Philip asked, “Do you understand what you are reading?” “How can I,” he said, “unless someone explains it to me?” So Philip began with the passage the Ethiopian was reading and explained to him the good news about Jesus. As they travelled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, “Look, here is water. Why shouldn’t I be baptized?” And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him (Acts 8:26-40). When the eunuch learnt about the sacrifice of Jesus upon the cross, he wanted to be free from his sins by uniting himself to the Lord. If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! (2 Corinthians 5:17) Therefore the Ethiopian didn’t wait; he got baptized immediately he believed.

This is the key to overcoming sin: righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. Jesus saves people from their sins and purifies their hearts through faith in His precious blood (Acts 15:9; Romans 3:22-26). Repentance and faith go hand in hand. When you repent, which means to do a complete turn away from evil, then Jesus saves you by releasing His power and righteousness into your life. You cannot save yourself. Only Jesus saves His people from their sins (Matthew 1:21). Through baptism you are declaring that you will follow Jesus all the days of your life and you will trust in Him alone for your salvation. It is written,

‘Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved’ (Acts 4:12). Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me” (John 14:6). A complete trust in Jesus is declared by baptism.

Jesus has called millions upon millions of people to follow Him. Many people are willing to follow the Lord until they find out what it really involves. They follow Jesus for what they can get, rather than what they can give. Jesus did powerful miracles, claimed to be the only way to God, and then He left it up to the people whether they would follow Him or reject Him. To become a friend of Jesus is not a half-hearted decision. It means that Jesus is your Lord, your Master, your Ruler and your King. To enter God’s kingdom you must love Jesus more than your own life.

Baptism symbolizes death. You must die to yourself and live for righteousness. If you are unwilling to die to sin, you will not be saved. It is written, ‘Count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus’ (Romans 6:11). The good news is that baptism also symbolizes the resurrection into a new life, for following Jesus allows you to partake of the righteousness and holiness of God. Only those who are united to Jesus have the Saviour who resurrects them from death to life.

Jesus said to His disciples, “Greater love has no one that this, that he lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command. I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything I learned from my Father I have made known to you” (John 15:13-15). How can you know if Jesus calls you a friend? You are His friend if you do what He commands. If you are faithful in following the Lord, He will take you from the place of being a servant to being a friend.

Abraham was a friend of God (James 2:23). Moses was a friend of God (Exodus 33:11). Those who obey what Jesus commands are given this same honour. To enter the kingdom of God you have to be a true friend of Jesus Christ. There is no other way. Jesus has commanded us to baptize those who

believe; therefore to go on in your friendship with Christ you need to be baptized in water.

I converted a Muslim boy who became my helper in evangelism work in Nepal and India. His friend also joined us and became the camera man filming our preaching and witnessing around Kolkata. Many times I saw him repeating the sinner's prayer as we led other people to Christ. He was so humble when he began to follow Jesus. Upon their request I baptized these two boys in the sea, but both of them were under great pressure to abandon the Christian faith. One of them overcame the persecution, but the other went back to Islam and denied his allegiance to Christ. He then went on to verbally abuse those who love and follow Jesus.

In challenging people to follow the Lord, I also have to warn them to count the cost. While people must feel the urgency of repenting immediately they hear the gospel, they must also understand the seriousness of the lifelong commitment needed to secure their eternal salvation. Jesus said, "No one who puts his hand to the plough and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God" (Luke 9:62). If those who fall back want to be restored, they have to return to the elementary teachings about Christ; the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death, and of faith in God, instruction about baptism, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment (Hebrews 6:1-2).

DON'T HOLD BACK FROM GOD

We should teach people that if they want to follow Jesus they should get water baptized and publicly unite themselves to Him. When I first publicly accepted Jesus as my Saviour, as an eight year old boy, I was not specifically taught about water baptism. The years went by and then God worked mightily in my younger brother's life.

My brother Philip had always been a sensitive boy. From when he was very small he had a conscience that worried him if he had done something wrong. As a young child he started

to wonder if he was going to Hell. Even when he was five years old he had difficulty going to sleep because he was thinking about God and scared that he was going to Hell. He would run into our parents room because these fears were so real. They would have deep discussions with him about how you could be assured that your sins are forgiven. While still in primary school he would lie in bed and ask God to fill him with His joy, and he would find happiness welling up in his heart, but he still wasn't fully assured in his own mind that he was saved.

When Philip was about eleven we went to Auckland for a concert and saw a Christian film called 'Twice Pardoned.' This film was about a man who gave his life to God while he was in prison and upon release this man shared his testimony with many young people. This touched Phil's heart, and when the call was given to come forward and make a commitment to Christ, he went up. I was standing behind my brother and when I saw him responding I also had an urge to go forward, but I held back and stayed at my seat. From that night Phil knew that he was saved and he never had to worry again about going to Hell. This gave Phil a real desire to please God and he knew that it said in the Bible that you should be baptized.

Phil had a strong hunger for God around that time, and he used to go to the back of our farm by himself and sing to God. He was baptized in a spa pool on his twelfth birthday. I was so happy when my brother was being baptized, but I was also greatly convicted. I knew inside my heart that I had to get water baptized, but I was still unwilling to take the final step. That conviction was in my heart for a couple of years. It wasn't until I was seventeen years old, after God had met me in a powerful way a few months earlier, that I finally submitted and was water baptized on the 9th of December, 1990.

When Paul and Silas were imprisoned for preaching the gospel, they were praying and singing hymns to God at midnight, and the other prisoners were listening to them. Suddenly a violent earthquake shook the prison. Everybody's

chains came loose and the prison doors flew open. Thinking that all the prisoners had escaped, the jailer was about to kill himself. But Paul shouted, "Don't harm yourself! We are all here!"

The jailer rushed in and fell trembling before Paul and Silas. He then brought them out and asked, "What must I do to be saved?" They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved – you and your household." Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house. At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; then immediately he and all his family were baptized (Acts 16:25-33). The jailer and his entire family were baptized as soon as they believed. Take immediate action. Don't hold back. Repent of your sins, put your faith in Jesus, and get baptized as soon as you can. Do not rebel against God for another moment. Make peace with your Creator at once.

To sit with Jesus in Heaven you must live as His friend on the earth. The Day of Judgment will declare you as either a friend or an enemy of Christ. To get your life right you must obey His commands. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved.

5

POWER TO LIVE FOR GOD

*'For the kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but of power'
(1 Corinthians 4:20).*

In preaching the gospel and challenging people to repent of their sins, it is very important to stress the greater purpose for which we are called to follow the Lord. That is what Jesus did in calling new followers: "Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will make you fishers of men" (Matthew 4:19). He emphasized the greater purpose or mission for which they were called. Often we have made the mistake of only calling people to come to Christ for the sake of their own salvation, whereas Jesus called people to follow Him so that they could save others.

How you first come to Jesus is very important and often determines the level of earnestness that you have for God. Many people who come forward to repent of their sins at a gospel outreach are only halfway to being converted. If you do not hear Christ's voice calling you to share your faith with those who are lost and dying in their sins, your experience with Christ is not yet complete. Not only are you to secure your own salvation, you have to come to the place of full submission so that you actually obey the will of God and desire the salvation of others. The Lord takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked. Rather He is pleased when they turn from their evil ways and live (Ezekiel 18:23). He doesn't want anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance (2 Peter 3:9). Knowing the heart of God should give every Christian a tremendous desire to win this world for Jesus.

When we preach the gospel, not only are we to bring people to repentance and faith for the forgiveness of their sins, we must also proclaim the responsibility of all believers to

share their faith with their old friends, relatives, or whoever God gives them the burden to reach. Jesus calls new converts to go and tell what great things He has done for them. The man delivered from a legion of demons did this and all the people were amazed when they heard his testimony (Mark 5:19-20). When the Samaritan woman received the revelation that not only is Jesus a prophet, He is the promised Messiah, straight away she went and told her entire town (John 4:19-30). After Saul met the Lord, the Bible says, 'At once he began to preach in the synagogues that Jesus is the Son of God' (Acts 9:20). When Matthew heard the call of Christ, he organized a dinner at his house so that all his sinful friends could come and get saved (Matthew 9:9-13).

The best time to do evangelism is when you are first cleansed and delivered from your sins. As soon as people come to the Lord they receive the ministry of reconciliation and they are ambassadors for Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17-20). The best time to learn about evangelism is immediately you become a Christian. A lack of zeal for evangelism among many professing believers shows that we have failed to teach them this point. Therefore, many Christians are only half-converted. My heart is filled with earnestness, zeal and a great concern to get the gospel to those who have never heard. People are perishing and we have to reach them. Let the fire of God burn within your heart.

POWER TO WITNESS FOR CHRIST

You are called by the King of kings and the Lord of lords to be a witness for the kingdom of Heaven, so that through you Jesus can turn back lost souls headed to destruction. To complete such a high calling you have to understand that you cannot succeed by your own strength. Like Christ, you need to be anointed with the Holy Spirit (Luke 4:18-19). When the apostle Paul first met some of the believers at Ephesus he asked them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" (Acts 19:2) By asking that question Paul was meaning the power experience of Acts 1:8, when Jesus said,

“You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

There is an actual experience where the Holy Spirit comes upon you so that your witness for Christ is empowered. Jesus said to His disciples, “Stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high” (Luke 24:49). Once you have received Jesus as your Saviour, you then need to receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit. This will give you the power to live for God and to be a witness for Him.

A GREATER AWARENESS OF GOD

I knew the reality of forgiveness for sins from a young age because I believed the gospel. When I did something I knew was wrong it felt like there was darkness in my heart, but when I prayed to Jesus it felt like I was made clean and pure. As a young person I was walking as a true Christian, but there were still blockages in my life. I didn't comprehend the tremendous plans and purposes that God is outworking through us.

When Paul asked the believers at Ephesus if they had received the Holy Spirit, they replied, “No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit” (Acts 19:2). I was also like that. I knew about God the Father and I knew about the Lord Jesus Christ, but I didn't realize that the Holy Spirit is a Person whom we can know in a real way (John 14:17; 2 Corinthians 13:14). It was so exciting when I first joined a Bible group that was studying the Spirit of God. I had no idea that Jesus was going to call me to be an evangelist and a missionary until I was baptized in the Holy Spirit. Then the call of God overwhelmed my life.

I was invited to a Christian youth camp when I was sixteen years old. At first I had no desire to go, but somehow my parents persuaded me to go along. When I got there on the Friday evening a man was sharing his testimony about how God had saved him. As the man was preaching I felt a strong pressure come upon my chest. I came under deep conviction

and I knew in my heart that I had to go forward for prayer. As he kept preaching on and on, that conviction and pressure upon my chest became stronger and stronger. I was sitting in my seat knowing that the hand of God was upon me in a mighty way, so as soon as the preacher called for anyone who would like to come forward for prayer I went straight up.

When I got to the front I found myself crying uncontrollably and I didn't even know why I was crying. I had no reason to cry except for the fact that God was doing a mighty work in my life. Suddenly my eyelashes were blinking incredibly fast and when I closed my eyes it was like I was surrounded by a bright light. This was a small glimpse of the pure and glorious light that comes from Jesus (John 8:12; Acts 9:3). A glorious shining light continually shines from Christ and through the preaching of God's word the Lord can manifest Himself in many ways.

The preacher started praying for the people who had come forward at this meeting. When he came to me he made a funny sound. He went, "Whoosshhhh," and right at that moment from the top of my head to the bottom of my feet I felt a wave of warmth and power passing right through my body like electricity. It was a bit like an electric shock or being hit by a bolt of lightning. It was powerful, yet it was also gentle. It was some kind of electric warmth that went right through me. I never fell to the ground, but when I looked around most of the other people who had been prayed for had fallen to the ground. Someone was standing behind me holding me up and I just stood there thinking, "What has happened to me?"

I didn't know about the power of the Holy Spirit before that experience. I just stood there crying, but that was the day my priorities in life were totally changed. After that I would rush home from school to read my Bible. The Scriptures were alive and I had a burning longing in my heart to get closer and closer to God. A greater awareness of God came into my everyday life and I certainly had no excuse for putting off any longer getting water baptized. When I was walking to school the next week, I was suddenly hit by a strong awareness that God was watching me. It was incredibly real. It was far more than head knowledge. It was a true realization that God was

with me, even as I was just walking along the footpath. Now I had a deep desire and burden to start telling all my friends that God is real.

THE WORK OF JESUS TODAY

There was a prophet called John and he was sent as a messenger to prepare the way for the Lord. He was preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. This was his message: "After me will come one more powerful than I, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. I baptize you with water, but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit" (Mark 1:2-8). We have to look to Jesus as the greater one who baptizes people in the Holy Spirit. It is His work to do this. Just before ascending into Heaven, Jesus said to His disciples, "Wait for the gift my Father promised, which you heard me speak about. For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 1:4-5).

The baptism in the Holy Spirit is referred to as the promised gift. It is the gift that God has promised the church. After the apostle Paul found out that the Christians at Ephesus had only been baptized for the repentance of sins under John the Baptist, they were then baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then the Bible says that Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied (Acts 19:3-6). Every Christian needs to receive this gift.

This is the Pentecostal message: "God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are witnesses of the fact. Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear... Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off – for all whom the Lord our God will call" (Acts 2:32-33,38-39).

The gift of the Holy Spirit is for everyone who is called to follow the Lord Jesus, so do not reject this gift. The prophets Isaiah and Joel both spoke of this time (Isaiah 44:3; Joel 2:28-29). Some people say that the Holy Spirit is not for today, but Jesus said that the Holy Spirit will be with us forever (John 14:16). The command, "Be filled with the Spirit," must be upheld by all believers (Ephesians 5:18). We have to stand upon the word of God, which makes it clear that the promise of the Holy Spirit has been given for every true Christian.

THE BLESSING OF SPEAKING IN TONGUES

The first gift that was manifested on the day of Pentecost from the outpouring of the Spirit was that they began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them (Acts 2:1-4). Notice that to speak in tongues you need the Holy Spirit to enable you to do it. It's not man-made gibberish. It is speaking in another language, either the heavenly languages of angels or the languages of other nations and peoples of this earth (1 Corinthians 13:1). It's not man inventing or repeating his own words. Our faith has to be in God and in receiving from the Lord to be enabled by the Holy Spirit to operate this spiritual gift.

By the authority of the Scriptures, we have to believe that Jesus Christ is the one who baptizes His people in the Holy Spirit and from that time the Spirit of God will enable us to speak in tongues. The Bible says, 'Build yourselves up in your most holy faith and pray in the Holy Spirit' (Jude 20), for, 'He who speaks in tongues edifies himself' (1 Corinthians 14:4). The apostle Paul said, 'I thank God that I speak in tongues more than you all' (1 Corinthians 14:18). As long as the gospel has to be preached, one of the signs that will follow is that those who believe will speak in new tongues (Mark 16:17). Those who do so are built up and edified in their faith.

I needed the benefit of being given a good book about this subject of speaking in other tongues. It was clearly written and it took me step by step through all the Scriptures that teach on

this precious gift of the Spirit. At the end of this book it had a little prayer to receive the gift, so I prayed that prayer with childlike faith. Suddenly into my mind I could see words written in front of me. I could literally see these words written in my mind. I had no idea what they meant or what language it was, but I could actually read it. I started reading these words out loud and that is how I personally began to speak in other tongues. After a little while those words in my mind vanished and I continued to speak this new language.

I knew that when I received the gift of tongues it didn't come from man or by repeating some gibberish words; it came by the enabling of the Spirit. This gave me a great hunger for God, so I joined a small Bible group that was studying the personality of the Holy Spirit. As we were studying the Scriptures it hit me as a fresh revelation that the Holy Spirit is a Person that we can know. Just like the early disciples who were literally walking with Jesus on the earth, we are literally walking with the Holy Spirit. Learning about the Holy Spirit and having first experienced the Spirit's power was truly fantastic.

PRAYING FOR PEOPLE

The apostle Paul met the Lord Jesus on the road to Damascus. After he was blinded by a light from Heaven, he found out who Christ really was and he submitted his life to obey the Lord's will. He was then praying and fasting for three days. God sent Ananias to lay hands on him and he was healed, baptized in the Holy Spirit, and from that day on he was a vessel that the Spirit of God could manifest Himself through (Acts 9:3-18). That is what God is looking for; people who are vessels through whom the Holy Spirit can manifest God's power. But what we also see in Paul's testimony is that even this man who met with Jesus so powerfully still needed someone to come and pray for him. That is how God works. God works through us as we pray for one another. Therefore, God calls us to go and pray for people that they may be healed and baptized with the Holy Spirit.

One time when I was being prayed for by an anointed man of God, he said to me, "You're not receiving. Relax." So I just relaxed a little and immediately I felt the presence of the Lord enter me. We can open or close ourselves to the Spirit of God, so we need to learn to receive with an open heart. After Jesus had breathed upon His disciples, He said, "Receive the Holy Spirit" (John 20:22). Baptism in the Holy Spirit is a gift that can be received or rejected. To receive from Jesus we have to allow the wind of His Spirit to enter us. We should be aware if people are receiving or not, so that we can help them to open up more to God.

Jesus has promised to manifest Himself and move in answer to our prayers, but we have to learn to be sensitive to Him and do what He wants us to do (Matthew 18:20; John 14:21). As we are sensitive to the Lord's direction, people will realize that God is ministering to them through us. On one occasion my whole being was filled with a heavy presence of God. A Scottish evangelist who moved in the word of knowledge and healing spoke at our church, but it was actually one of his helpers who prayed for me. Suddenly I felt the Holy Spirit fill me with God's presence, as an amazing peace and joy arose within my chest area. It felt like something massive had entered into me and again I experienced the literal presence of the Lord.

When I first started sharing the gospel with people on the streets I felt so weak and that I couldn't do it, but by the grace of God I persevered. As I travelled through my home country, the Holy Spirit gave me boldness to preach and to witness on the streets. There was a time when the early believers prayed and the place where they were meeting was shaken. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly (Acts 4:29-31). For bold evangelism, seek to be filled with the Spirit of God.

I was witnessing outside the night clubs when two boys asked me this question: "How do you know that God is real?" I just said to them, "Let's pray and God will show you that He is real." As we were standing there on the street I said a simple

prayer like this, “Lord Jesus, reveal yourself to these boys,” and immediately I felt the presence of God. I looked up and both of those two boys had tears in their eyes and they knew that God was real. I didn’t have to argue with them. They believed because they had experienced it. They felt His presence! God can move in power through those who believe and call upon Him. Ask God to give your boldness, so that you will not be bound or hindered from sharing the gospel.

POWER TO CRUSH SATAN’S KINGDOM

Jesus said, “If I drive out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you” (Matthew 12:28). When the Holy Spirit is really moving, demons will often manifest. As the devil is exposed he is being defeated and cast out. Jesus came to this earth to destroy the works of the devil and set people free. God is infinitely greater than the devil, and the Bible promises that God will not give a snake or scorpion to those who seek Him. He will give the Holy Spirit to those who ask (Luke 11:9-13).

If you are truly seeking God, He will give you His true Spirit, not a counterfeit. But the Bible does warn us to test the spirits because there are many false prophets (1 John 4:1). People are in danger of receiving a demonic spirit when there is unconfessed sin in their lives, especially involvement in witchcraft, or ancestral curses through false religions and cultic heresies. Nevertheless, all of these curses can be broken by the precious blood of Jesus. When a true Christian speaks in tongues it releases the presence of God and the manifestation of the Holy Spirit. But I have also seen demons speaking in tongues through people and manifesting an evil presence.

After God’s power first touched my life, I then saw a very strong demonic manifestation as a demon struggled to retain his grip on one person. A young man went forward for prayer. As he was raising his hands and singing to God, suddenly he fell backwards onto the floor. It looked like he was slain in the

Spirit, but there was a counterfeit spirit at work and a demon began to manifest. The whole body of this man became bright red, his hands twisted up and contorted as the demon began to speak through him in such an evil voice. The demon was speaking in a foreign language and it had a feeling of intense anger. His body twisted and he was speaking so fast that he was foaming at the mouth. All this frothy saliva was pouring out from around his lips.

The Christians were praying, "In the name of Jesus we command you to come out. Go, go, go from him now." That foul spirit didn't want to obey or give up, but as they stood in faith upon the word of God, the chains of darkness were broken and the demon had to flee. The person was delivered. He still needed ongoing counselling and further prayer, but peace was restored to the room and once again it showed me the spiritual battle that we are in for the complete salvation of people's lives. Satan is real, demons are real, and they are at work to stop people from knowing the one true God.

I met a young African man who couldn't understand why every time he wanted to go to church he felt something trying to stop him. He asked for prayer, so I told him that it must be an evil spirit that was hindering him from enjoying fellowship with God's people. I rebuked the spirit and immediately I felt a pressure or bondage leave and he was released.

A man from Bangladesh asked me to pray for him because he was feeling oppressed and he looked greatly troubled. As soon as I mentioned the name of Jesus the atmosphere changed. Jesus said that some spirits don't go without much prayer and fasting (Matthew 17:21), but many spirits go as soon as you proclaim the name of Jesus because there is so much power in Christ's name. There is tremendous power in the blood of Jesus!

While in India an evil spirit manifested as I was preaching about the glory of God. A lady seated on the floor suddenly started going crazy and talking without any control of herself, so I rebuked the devil and kept praying until she quietened down. I gave a little teaching about Jesus' power to cast out

demons (Mark 6:7,12-13; Luke 10:17-20), then I went back to my main message. On another occasion I could feel the Holy Spirit breaking a curse off an Indian woman who fell to the ground when she came forward for prayer.

I have met a number of young men scared to go to sleep at night because they were constantly afraid of being harassed by evil spirits, but after prayer that kind of fear was broken and they were able to sleep properly. Often you find that in a house where a murder has taken place there is spiritual oppression in that area and you need to break that curse by pleading the blood of Jesus.

While witnessing on the streets late one Friday night, I had an interesting experience. I had shared the gospel with a couple of young men and at the end I raised one hand to pray for them. As I raised my hand an evil spirit began to manifest through one of those young men right there on that busy street. His face started twisting and contorting. He went into a trance-like state and he was obviously possessed by a demonic power. The other man quickly pulled my hand down and the demonized person returned to normal, so I raised my hand back up and the demon started manifesting again.

Again my hand was pulled down and the young man became quiet, but I realized that these two guys had been involved in witchcraft. It's not a game. Many people are being deceived by the works of Satan and they are heading for eternal destruction, but we have the greater power in the name of Jesus Christ and that's why we need to be constantly calling upon the true power of Almighty God.

The apostle Paul was sent by Jesus to open people's spiritual eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to the power of God (Acts 26:18). We cannot bring people into the power of God unless we preach about it, believe in it, and pray with faith to release the power of the Lord into people's lives. Many people have been deceived to seek after messages through fortune telling, witchcraft, the new age movement and all kinds of false spirits. But we have

to proclaim the greater power of Jesus Christ and encourage people to seek after the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

One of the nine gifts is called discernment of spirits, which enables us to receive supernatural discernment as to what is of God and what is of the devil. Jesus said, "These signs will accompany those who believe: In my name they will drive out demons" (Mark 16:17). It is the anointing of the Holy Spirit that enables us to cast out demons and break curses off people's lives.

RECEIVE THE HOLY SPIRIT

A revival took place under the preaching of Philip the evangelist. With shrieks, evil spirits came out of many, and many paralytics and cripples were healed. So there was great joy in the city. After seeing the miraculous signs, crowds of people paid close attention to what Philip said. When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to increase the effectiveness of the ministry. When they arrived, they prayed for the new believers that they might receive the Holy Spirit, because the Holy Spirit had not yet come upon any of them; they had simply been baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. When Peter and John placed their hands on them, they received the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:5-7,15-17).

On another occasion the apostle Peter was still in the middle of speaking when the Holy Spirit came on all who were listening to his message. The Jewish believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles; for they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God. Peter acknowledged that these people had received the Holy Spirit just as they had (Acts 10:44-47). We also receive the Holy Spirit in the same way, and that is the way of faith in Jesus.

The apostle Paul asked the Galatian believers a question: 'Did you receive the Spirit by observing the law, or by believing what you heard?' Paul gave the answer to his own question by saying: 'He redeemed us in order that the blessing

given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit' (Galatians 3:2,14). Faith in Jesus is the key to receiving the baptism or infilling of the Holy Spirit. You must pray in faith and simply believe that God will do it.

Jesus said, "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened. Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!" (Luke 11:9-13)

When we ask God the Father to give us the Holy Spirit, we have the full assurance that we will receive. Remember that it is God the Father's promise. When you repent and put your faith in Jesus, you are then ready to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. This promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off – for all whom the Lord our God will call (Acts 2:38-39). If you have been called to follow Jesus Christ, the promise of the baptism in the Holy Spirit is for you. By faith in Jesus I pray for a release of the power of God to touch your life today.

HAVE YOU HAD THIS POWERFUL EXPERIENCE?

I want to ask you the same question that Paul first asked the disciples at Ephesus, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" (Acts 19:2) We have to ask every Christian this question because the Lord wants us to be empowered for the works of His kingdom. You can now wait upon the Lord with confidence that the power of the Holy Spirit is going to come upon you. The baptism in the Holy Spirit is a part of your inheritance as a Christian. If you seek the Lord and believe, Jesus will baptize you. The devil tries to deceive people by making them think that they will not receive. This is to make them give up seeking the Lord, but persevere.

Jesus will baptize you to make you into a powerful witness for His kingdom. As we come into the fullness of Christ, He will grant us power to cast out demons and to heal the sick, so that many people will believe the gospel. Keep in mind that the prime reason you were called by God is so that He can use you to save other people. Jesus said, “You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8). Notice that Jesus said, “You will receive.” You can win people for Christ and share your faith in an effective way. You can walk in the power of God.

This is an important truth well worth repeating: You are called to follow Christ, not just to get your own salvation, but so that you can save many who would otherwise be lost. That is why you need the power of the Holy Spirit to work through you. God the Father anointed Jesus with the Holy Spirit to preach the good news to the poor, to deliver those who were bound by the devil, to open the eyes of the blind, and to release the oppressed (Luke 4:18-19; Acts 10:38). The glory of the Lord will arise upon those who belong to Christ to shine His light into the thick darkness that covers the earth. Then the nations will come to the light of the gospel (Isaiah 60:1-3).

The same power that raised Jesus from the dead is at work in those who believe (Ephesians 1:19-20), and Jesus has called us to do the works that He did and even greater works (John 14:12). Right now the power of God is at work in your life. Jesus wants to do miracles and save other people through you. He wants to reveal His glory, so wait upon the Lord, seek His presence and prepare your heart to receive a mighty baptism in the Holy Spirit. Cry out for the power of God to anoint your life.

PRAYER FOR BEING BAPTIZED IN THE HOLY SPIRIT

“Heavenly Father, I commit my life wholeheartedly to You. Once again I ask You to forgive me of any sin and I

plead the precious blood of Jesus Christ, Your Son, upon my life. Now I ask You to fill me with the Holy Spirit and grant me power to be a witness for Your kingdom.

I believe that this gift is for me because I am called by the name of Christ to belong to You. I believe that Jesus is the One who baptizes people with the Holy Spirit; therefore I put my faith in Him and I open my heart to receive this gift. I believe that promise is for me, so I ask for Your power and anointing to come upon me right now.

Baptize me with Your Spirit and fill me to overflowing with Your power. I receive the gift of speaking in other tongues. I also request that You release to me the gift of prophecy and any other gift according to Your will. Thank You Father, for hearing and answering this prayer. In Jesus' mighty name I pray. Amen."

Once you are baptized in the Holy Spirit the word of God will come alive to you in an incredible way and you will receive a greater burden to share this new life with others. Being baptized with God's Spirit will awaken within you a desire to step into other gifts; for we are called to follow the way of love and eagerly desire spiritual gifts, especially the gift of prophecy (1 Corinthians 14:1). We all need to hear from God so that we can prophesy.

The Holy Spirit manifests Himself and glorifies the Lord Jesus Christ through the message of wisdom, the message of knowledge, faith, gifts of healing, miraculous powers, prophecy, distinguishing between spirits, speaking in different kinds of tongues, and the interpretation of tongues (1 Corinthians 12:7-10). These gifts are to build up the church and cause unbelievers to fall down and worship God, exclaiming, "God is really among you!" (1 Corinthians 14:12,25)

The true effect of walking in God's power is that people will clearly see that God is here among us. We need the presence of God in our churches and we need the presence of God upon our lives, so that when we go out to witness and pray for people the power of the Holy Spirit will come upon them and change their lives. Demons will be driven out and the kingdom

of God will be revealed. One of my favourite Scriptures calls us to be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power (Ephesians 6:10); therefore be encouraged to always stand in the power of Jesus.

On one occasion God laid upon my heart to pray and intercede prior to the church service the following Scripture: 'I long to see you so that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to make you strong' (Romans 1:11). I kept praying for God to do this until I felt an open heaven for the service. At the end of the meeting my translator made this remark: "I felt something come into me," so I knew that the Lord had answered my prayer. The Holy Spirit came into him to impart a spiritual gift even as he was translating my message. God is great!

On another occasion I had a translator who collapsed in the middle of my message. He felt dizzy and looked spiritually oppressed. Afterwards the pastor said to him, "You'll have to get delivered of demons before you want to translate the word of God." You never know what might happen next when you go out in Jesus' name! I was invited to preach in a Catholic Church that was full of idols of saints, Mary and Jesus, so I preached about why Jesus is the only mediator and not Mary, nor idols (1 Timothy 2:5). At the end of the message everyone in that church wanted to commit themselves to the Lord, so I led them in a salvation prayer. Suddenly I felt the presence of God fill the place and for the next two days I was filled with joy and the presence of the Holy Spirit.

While I was doing evangelistic crusades in Africa I did a series of messages on the power of God and began to see demonstrations of God's Spirit. When the altar call was given quite a large number of people would come forward, so I took the method of raising my hand and saying a general prayer such as this: "I release the power of God over these people." Different ones would start shaking and trembling, some people started manifesting demons, a man at the front shouted out in repentance, "I'm a drunkard, I'm a drunkard," and other interesting things began to take place. The people knew that the power of God was being manifested and they were

awakened to a greater reality of God. A lady was healed of ulcers in her mouth, which had stopped her from eating, and another woman came the following day to tell of a dream that she had that night.

Spiritual gifts can be received by thought, impression, enlightenment from Scripture, inspiration while preaching, dreams, visions, angelic encounters, the audible voice of God, the presence of the Holy Spirit, or by direct manifestations and appearances of the risen Christ. We should encourage people to share any thoughts or words they believe that the Holy Spirit is giving them in order to glorify the name of Christ. A supernatural door is opened when you have faith in the power of God. Fan into flame the gifts of God in your life (2 Timothy 1:6). Step out in Jesus' name and minister in the power of the Holy Spirit.

TO GOD BE THE GLORY FOREVER AND EVER!

CONCLUSION

I woke up from a dream in which I was holding a book. As I was looking through the book I came to a page with a small hole in it. Looking into the hole I saw something wriggling around. When I opened some more pages the hole was a lot bigger and there were two very fat worms that fell out of the book and onto the ground. As I went to crush these worms the ground opened and they escaped down a crack into the earth. I knew that this book symbolized my life.

When I prayed about it I received a Scripture, 'Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or discouraged' (1 Chronicles 22:13). The two worms were fear and discouragement, for this is how the devil works to hinder and frustrate the call of God that is upon our lives. We must search our hearts and reject that which is not of God, for we all have a book and we must allow God to cleanse our pages. The worms fell out because they were exposed by the light of God. God's pure light always removes what is hidden in darkness. The ground opened up and took those worms to where they belong – back into Hell.

THE BOOKS WILL BE OPENED

On the Day of Judgment the books will be opened. The apostle John saw into the future when the devil was thrown into the lake of burning sulphur, where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever. Then he saw a great white throne and Him who was seated on it. Earth and sky fled from His presence, and there was no place for them. And he saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened.

Another book was opened, which was the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what he had done.

Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire. The cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practise magic arts, the idolaters and all liars – their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulphur (Revelation 20:10-15; 21:8).

The King of Heaven also gave this warning: "You have said harsh things against me," says the LORD. "Yet you ask, 'What have we said against you?' You have said, 'It is futile to serve God. What did we gain by carrying out his requirements and going about like mourners before the LORD Almighty? But now we call the arrogant blessed. Certainly the evildoers prosper, and even those who challenge God escape.'"

Then those who feared the LORD talked with each other, and the LORD listened and heard. A scroll of remembrance was written in his presence concerning those who feared the LORD and honoured his name. "They will be mine," says the LORD Almighty, "in the day when I make up my treasured possession. I will spare them, just as in compassion a man spares his son who serves him. And you will again see the distinction between the righteous and the wicked, between those who serve God and those who do not' (Malachi 3:13-18).

Is your name recorded in the scroll of remembrance? Do you fear the Lord and honour His name? One of the men crucified next to Christ acknowledged that he was getting a just punishment for his crime, whereas Jesus was innocent. Then he looked towards the Lord and said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." Jesus answered him, "I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise" (Luke 23:40-43). Will Jesus remember your name or will He have to tell you plainly, "I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!?" (Matthew 7:23)

As I was sharing the gospel in the middle of town with a couple of young men, I looked up to the clouds and told them about how Jesus will return to judge the world. They did not

believe, but then I felt the eyes of God watching me and that on the Day of Judgment the Lord will remember my name. Another time I was going from house to house to share the gospel and again I felt the eyes of God watching me. The Bible says that the eyes of the LORD range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to Him (2 Chronicles 16:9). Multitudes of lost souls are perishing and who is going to reach them? Ask God to give you a passion for saving lost souls. I hope that you will be known as one of God's good and faithful servants, and that good things are written about you in the books of Heaven.

ACKNOWLEDGE THE LORD AND SERVE HIM WHOLEHEARTEDLY

In this presentation of Biblical truth we have looked at the evidence compelling us to believe in God. I have shared personal stories of those who accepted the gospel and those who did not to show the wisdom of calling out to Jesus. Billions of people have already stepped into eternity. Now we have to be aware that our turn can come at any moment. We have looked at Christ's enormous sacrifice to save us and we were confronted with the huge extent of man's sin. You have been given an opportunity to open your heart to the Lord and to plead for Him to save you. You have also been challenged to unite yourself with Christ through water baptism. God sent His Spirit, not only to convict us of our sins, but also to awaken us spiritually and to give us the power to live for Jesus. Our God is a God of miracles. Jesus has conquered Satan and His kingdom is on the increase as multitudes of people are coming to the Lord.

Realize that everything you have done and thought has been recorded in the books that will be opened on the Day of Judgment. The Lord knows those who are His, and everyone who confesses the name of the Lord must turn away from wickedness (2 Timothy 2:19). We are called to lead people to the Lord, so every one of us needs a concern not only for our own salvation, but also for the salvation of others. I hope that God

has awakened you to the importance of being an ambassador for Christ and that you will use your testimony to glorify the name of the Lord. Jesus said, "He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me, scatters" (Luke 11:23). Are you with Jesus or are you against Him?

Joshua told the people to fear the LORD and serve Him with all faithfulness. But if serving the LORD seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve. But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD (Joshua 24:14-15). Will you unite yourself to the Lord Jesus by declaring that you are His? Acknowledge the Lord before men and Jesus will acknowledge you before God the Father and the heavenly angels. Disown Christ and you will be disowned before the very throne of Heaven (Matthew 10:32-33; Luke 12:8-9).

I praise God that Jesus revealed Himself to me and called me to preach the gospel, so that I could give you this message. My hope is that you will go on to do great things and that you will fulfil the call of God upon your life. Many will come from the east and the west, and will take their places at the feast with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of Heaven (Matthew 8:11). Will you be among them? As a final warning to challenge you to enter the kingdom of Heaven, I want to share with you a story from India that came through a good friend of mine. Let this encourage you to humble yourself before God and live for Him while you have the chance:

"There was one man and he was known as being very bad. He got married with seven or eight women and we don't know how many he kept outside, but everyone used to say, "He's a very bad guy." At last he got some sexual disease and his sexual organ was totally off, totally spoiled. His wife started coming to our church and she said to us, "My husband wants you to come to our house and pray for him." We went there and her husband was not even able to sit in a chair because of the pain. His sexual organ was already rotten. It was gone. The doctor had put some small pipe there. He wasn't able to sit properly. He was in too much pain. He used to bow his head onto the table as he was sitting on half the chair. The

whole house was stinking, smelling so bad because all his body was rotten.

We started going to his house and we started praying for him, but we knew that he was already gone. One day he told us that, "I want to take the baptism." We asked him, "Then we will do the sprinkle baptism to you," but he said, "No! I'll go to the water top and I'll get the baptism there." We took him to the fishpond and we gave him the baptism. After three days he died. When he died we got the phone call at night and we went to his house. With my first and second brother we were taking him off from the bed outside, and he parted into two pieces. From the waist down it became one piece, and from the upper part it became one piece. His body was so rotten.

It was smelling so bad. Still sometimes when I smell some bad thing I remember that smell. Oh it was smelling bad, and all the house had that smell. But I am a hundred percent sure that he became a true Christian before he died. He became so humble. Many people used to say that he is not a good guy, but at last he decided to become a Christian. At the end he understood the gospel very well and after understanding he took the baptism. I think not just because he wants to get into the Heaven, but because he wanted to realize all his sins. So in front of us he confessed all his sins. His wife is doing very well now. She is a very nice Christian and they have two sons and they are also very good Christians."

"MAKE SURE OF YOUR SALVATION!"

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Matthew Needham is an international evangelist called by God at the age of 16 to begin an evangelistic ministry. He stepped out by faith in 1991 to travel through his home country of New Zealand, witnessing on the streets and working through whichever churches gave him opportunity.

After six years of doing street evangelism he went on his first overseas missions trip to Fiji in 1997, but returned home feeling unprepared. A call to the mission field came a second time in 1999, which led him into evangelism among Muslims in Africa. The third time the Lord called him to leave everything and go at once was in 2003 to preach the gospel to the Hindus, Muslims and Buddhists of India and Nepal. In 2009 Matthew went on his first and second mission to Pakistan.

His testimony booklets have been translated into many languages and over 220,000 copies were given out in street witnessing to share the gospel with those who have never heard the good news of salvation. Thousands of copies of his books have also been distributed to reach unbelievers and to strengthen the church in the work that Christ has given us to do.

Matthew's passion is to reveal the glory of the Lord Jesus to those who are living in spiritual darkness and to press ahead to reach the fullness of Christ for the ministry of the evangelist. This is an evangelistic, literature, crusade ministry, doing large and small outreach meetings, leader's seminars, Bible College teaching and constant street evangelism and witnessing. His love for the Lord and for the salvation of lost souls is bringing many into the kingdom of God.

BOOKS BY MATTHEW G. NEEDHAM

Make Sure Of Your Salvation (2007)

The Awesome Magnificence Of Jesus Christ (2009)

Walking In God's Power (2010)

The Church That Might Save The World (2010)

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