

CHANGE YOUR LIFE. CHANGE YOUR WORLD.

ACTIVATED

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BITTER OR BETTER

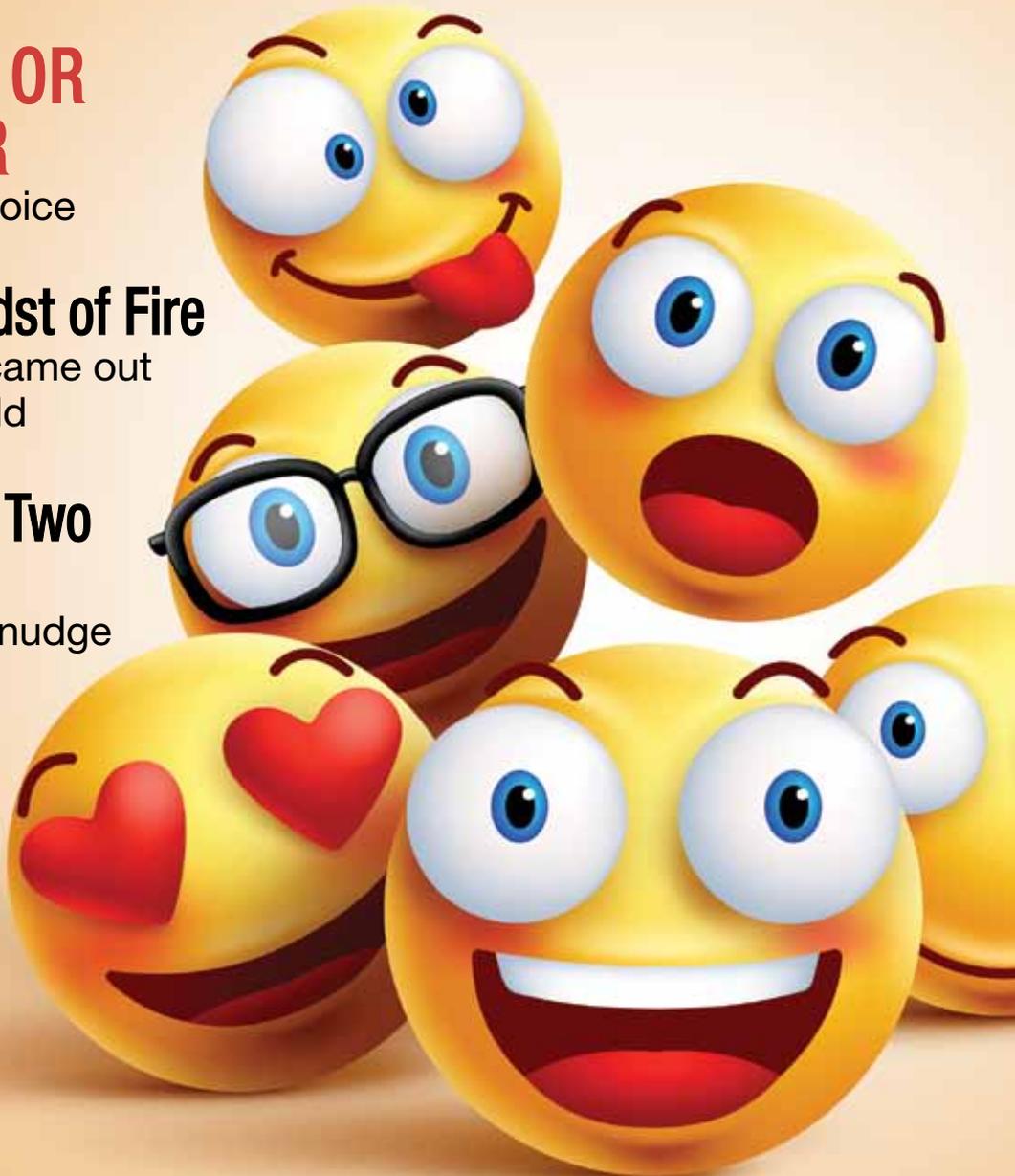
It's your choice

In the Midst of Fire

Faith that came out
pure as gold

A Gift for Two Brothers

Follow the nudge





EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION CHRISTIANITY IN ACTION

One winter some years ago, a group of friends and I were traveling on a mountain road in a passenger van in the southern United States. It was past dusk on a Friday evening, and we were heading to a ski resort a few hours away. We were nearly there when someone pulled up next to us at a stop sign and

motioned to the driver to roll the window down.

"Pretty sure your back tire's losing air," he said. "I can take a look if you'd like."

We parked under a floodlight next to a convenience store just ahead, and everyone got out in bundles of coats and hats.

"I'm Jim," the man said, as he shook hands and crouched by the tire. "Definitely going flat. See that?" Jim pointed to a visible nail.

Jim asked about the spare tire, then wasn't too impressed with the jack in the emergency kit so pulled his own out of his pickup and took direction of the work. We were all willing to help, but none of us really knew what we were doing.

"Y'all headed to the slopes?" Jim asked, pointing to the gear strapped to the roof. I told him it would be my first time snowboarding.

"Ouch! Hasn't snowed since Monday. That ice up there gonna be hard. You really wanna put yourself through that?" he asked jokingly. I chuckled, but not too confidently.

Jim was a fast worker and the spare was soon installed.

"All rightie. God bless you guys. Y'all have fun, now.—And I'll pray for you to get that fresh powder you'll be wanting." He raised his eyebrows toward me.

As he drove off, I noticed a bumper sticker on the back of his truck. "Christ is Lord," it said.

Jim hadn't preached a sermon, but he'd let his Savior's light shine through him. He hadn't talked up his faith, but he'd walked the walk. And his example of Christianity, taking time to help a vanload of somewhat clueless strangers on a freezing dark evening somewhere in the mountains, is one I still remember.

Samuel Keating
Executive Editor

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ALL WILL BE WELL

BY KOOS STENGER

WHILE SURFING THE INTERNET, I stumbled upon a Positive Outlook test. I consider myself a fairly positive person, with some room for improvement, but I was curious to see if I was right. Since the test would only take a few minutes, I filled in the answers.

When the results appeared, I wasn't too surprised. There was a sentence noting my tendency to worry too much, and another on my bad habit of giving too much time and thought to the worst possible outcomes. But the conclusion was encouraging: "Overall, you rarely view the world as a place of bad experiences and events. You tend to invest trust and faith in the belief that things will turn out well in the end."

Reading that last sentence, I smiled. In spite of hardship and

suffering, I *do* believe that things will turn out well in the end. How, I don't know, but I know that they will. That is because of my faith that God cares, and that He keeps His word. When He promises to keep me until the end, I know He will.

I didn't always believe in Him, neither did I always believe things would turn out well in the end. Those were days filled with stress, tears, and anxiety, when I felt crushed by the weight of the whole world on my shoulders. I could already tell that the insecurities about my life, my health, my finances, my family, and my future were too big to carry alone, but I didn't yet have the solution until I found God and my faith grew through reading His Word.

An acquaintance of mine has bad health. Not just small problems with

a cold or the flu, but major issues that have kept him under fairly intensive medical oversight for the last 10 years.

Unfortunately, faith is the last thing on his mind. "I don't need God," he told me. "I can carry it myself!"

But he can't. He wasn't meant to, but because he thinks he needs to, his life is much more of a struggle than it would need to be.

I am not a better person than he is. I am not smarter, more patient, or more perseverant. But there's one thing I do have which he doesn't.

I have faith that God cares.
And that's the key.

KOOS STENGER IS A FREELANCE WRITER IN THE NETHERLANDS. ■

BITTER OR BETTER



BY MARIA FONTAINE

EVERYONE HAS TIMES IN THEIR PAST that they look upon as “dark nights”—tragedies or difficulties that were largely beyond their control and sometimes the direct result of other people’s wrong choices or unloving actions. How people react to those wrongs can determine whether they become bitter or better for them.

Those who have a hard time seeing any good in the difficult times they’ve been through can often become resentful, which makes them even more unhappy. Perhaps they were wronged, but Jesus could have used those situations for their good in some way. “We know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.”¹

1. Romans 8:28

It’s very possible that in many of these cases that people look back on as “mistakes,” the circumstances were used or even engineered by God in order to bring out the best in them, or to draw them closer to Him, or to teach them something valuable, or even just as a test. It’s not that God *wanted* these things to happen; He wants only the best for His children. But since they did happen, He wants to turn them into something good. That’s the way He is—He can and will turn anything to good, if we’ll let Him.

Finding the good in a bad situation isn’t just a “glad game” exercise or a good idea; it’s vital to our emotional and spiritual health. If we can’t accept that there could be a silver lining to some of the rain clouds of our past, then we’ll probably never fully forgive and forget those things—and that can lead to bitterness.

For this reason it’s vital that we not allow ourselves to look back at any situation, no matter how terrible it was, remembering only the bad. It may not be our favorite memory, it may even be painful, but if we ask God to show us specifically how He would like to use that situation for good, He can set us free from that bitterness or other ill feelings and bring about beautiful victories.

What greater triumph is there than to bring good out of bad? That’s the ultimate way to conquer our past hurts—not by bitterness and thoughts of getting even, but by allowing God to make us better as a result of them.

MARIA FONTAINE AND HER HUSBAND, PETER AMSTERDAM, ARE DIRECTORS OF THE FAMILY INTERNATIONAL, A CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY OF FAITH. ■



WEAK YET STRONG

BY EVELYN SICHROVSKY

NINE YEARS AGO, I underwent a surgery that changed my life. When I was rushed to the hospital with terrible pain in my lower right abdomen, tests revealed that a large gangrenous cyst had ruptured, requiring emergency surgery. My surgeon assured me that I would be back on my feet within two months, and I held on to his promise.

But after I was released, my health steadily declined as I struggled with a mysterious digestive disorder characterized by severe bloating, indigestion, nausea, weight loss, and acid reflux. Many specialists and dozens of tests later, I learned that I was suffering from intestinal adhesions and other gastrointestinal problems caused by internal surgical scars.

My condition caused daily discomfort and required a strict diet. I prayed and searched relentlessly

for a cure, believing there had to be a “happy ending” where I would be healthy, pain-free, and able to eat whatever I pleased. But with time it became clear that while I would gradually regain some strength, the repercussions of my surgery would likely be permanent.

This realization shattered me. My situation was so painful and bleak that I could not imagine what “good” could come from it,¹ but I began thanking God for His love, wisdom, and the benefits He would bring from my struggles. Gradually, I found peace and courage to accept my condition as a gift from Him. This perspective made the discomforts much easier to bear and also helped me appreciate blessings I had not even noticed.

My health has improved somewhat, but some of my post-surgical conditions are irreversible. Nonetheless, I’ve come to be grateful for these pains and limitations. I’ve learned to value my life, family, and friends. I’ve grown in empathy and compassion for others.

I’ve discovered that fortitude and resilience come through allowing life’s blows to deepen my character rather than dictate my attitude or destroy my happiness.

Most of all, I’ve experienced how God can give strength in weakness and triumph in the midst of trials. Through my struggles, He has deepened my faith, taught me to depend on Him, and given me His abiding joy that overrides any physical discomforts. As He promised the apostle Paul, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.”² With God’s help, Paul’s reply is also mine: “Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me. ... For when I am weak, then I am strong.”³

EVELYN SICHROVSKY IS A UNIVERSITY STUDENT. SHE IS ALSO INVOLVED IN MISSIONARY VOLUNTEER WORK AND LIVES WITH HER FAMILY IN TAIWAN. ■

1. See Romans 8:28.

2. 2 Corinthians 12:9 NIV

3. 2 Corinthians 12:9–10 NIV



BY MICHAEL OWENS

A GIFT FOR TWO BROTHERS

HAVE YOU EVER WANTED TO DO SOMETHING TO HELP someone or longed to make a difference in the world, only to have your good intentions sidetracked by thoughts of why your efforts wouldn't work?

One such occasion happened last summer when my wife and I stopped to eat at a fast food restaurant that serves fried chicken. After placing our order, we brought our trays of food to a table in the middle of the dining area.

At a table nearby sat two young men who were obviously brothers. I noticed that they were sharing only one meal and it was the cheapest and smallest one on the menu. Furthermore, one of them didn't look well at all.

The thought came: *Buy them another meal.* I started to get up to go place the order when another thought gave me pause: *How are you going to bring it to their table and offer*

it to them? They probably won't accept charity from a total stranger, and you'll look like an idiot standing there with a box of chicken in your hand!

I immediately sat back down.

After long minutes of agonizing, I leaned toward my wife and in a hushed tone explained the situation. She looked over at the brothers, then turned back to me, stating, "If God is laying on your heart to buy them a meal, that's what you should do!"

Her encouragement was exactly what I needed to hear, and I went to order more food for them. However, I was still unsure about walking over to their table to give them the meal. But that problem was soon solved.

The younger brother walked up next to me at the counter to ask for some ketchup. I asked him to wait for a minute longer, as the cooks were putting together a meal box for him, a gift from us.

His eyes welled up as he explained that his brother had a terminal illness and had been sent home from the hospital to live out his final days with his family. "My brother loves fried chicken, so I brought him here to enjoy a meal. But I'm between jobs right now and don't have much money, so we're sharing a meal. Thank you so much!"

Then it was my turn to tear up, realizing how close I came to missing being a blessing to these two brothers. My concern about the gift not being received was totally unfounded. And my following through on God's nudging had brought a little bit of happiness into their difficult situation.

MICHAEL OWENS AND HIS WIFE, MARIA, ARE MISSIONARIES TO THEIR HOME FIELD OF SOUTH FLORIDA. ■



BEFORE JUMPING INTO THE DAY TO TACKLE A LONG TO-DO LIST, I stopped for a half hour of devotional reading, prayer, and reflection. My Bible fell open to Hebrews 11, which is also called the Faith Chapter. As I read through the amazing miracles faith had wrought throughout the ages, I realized that many of these accounts fit into my life as well. Since I had just turned 60, I spent some time reflecting back on the road of faith I have traveled so far, and I came up with my own Faith Chapter:

Through Faith, I have had the strength to endure the many challenges life has brought along my path.

By Faith, 20 years ago I ventured out to Africa, and God hasn't failed in any of His promises concerning my safety here.

Faith has provided me with endurance to cope with a chronic illness and brought the right

people along my path who helped me.

Through Faith, the cycle of giving I embarked upon many years ago has continued, grown, and inspired others to join in, and there has never been any lack.

With Faith, financial crunches were overcome and obstacles swept aside. When thick clouds covered my path, they were lifted at just the right time and the view ahead became clear again.

When I reached major crossroads in life, Faith nudged me in the right direction.

In times of disappointment, when Faith shone dim, the light of God's Word revived its flame and rekindled new hope.

Through Faith, the pain brought on by the death of a child was healed, and I found comfort in God's Word.

Faith strengthened through prayer wrought miracles, built bridges where there were none, and created possibilities out of seeming defeat.

Faith brought victory over sickness and opposition, turning disadvantages into golden opportunities.

Faith shed light on the darkest stretches of life's journey and shone through every tunnel.

Through Faith, a friend was healed from cancer and gained the strength to reach out to comfort others stricken by the disease.

Faith brought new vision when all seemed lost.

Through Faith, hardened hearts were softened, lost souls were rescued, and depression was healed.

Faith has been the golden thread in the tapestry of my life and has proved again and again that it is sufficient to weather any storm. If all was lost but faith in God and His goodness, it would be no loss at all.

IRIS RICHARD IS A COUNSELOR IN KENYA, WHERE SHE HAS BEEN ACTIVE IN COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTEER WORK SINCE 1995. ■

In the MIDST

BY JEWEL ROQUE

SHADRACH, MESHACH, ABEDNEGO, and their pal, Daniel, were four young men who might have passed into obscurity if not for some remarkable things that happened in their lives.

The story begins around 500 years before Christ with these young men being taken far away from their homeland as captive slaves by Nebuchadnezzar, king of the Babylonian Empire.

We don't know how old Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were, perhaps barely teenagers, nor what their life was like before their journey into exile. Did they know one another? Perhaps they were friends and shared their dreams and hopes. Maybe one of them dreamed of having a dozen

sons like his forefather Jacob, and of teaching his children to be godly. Perhaps another one wanted to be a teacher. Then there might have been the storyteller, who told the others, "You fulfill your dreams, and I'll tell the story afterward."

But all those dreams and hopes, whatever they might have been, were cast aside when their land was conquered and they were taken into captivity. What were those first days and nights like? Under guard, shackled, and chained? Corralled together like animals, looking for a familiar face? One can picture them finding one another, banding together, perhaps the optimist of the group saying, "Fear not, God is with us. Regardless of what happens, we are in His hands." The others agreeing, perhaps making a pact that no matter what happened, they would stay faithful to God.

Faithful and true they did stay. First of all, they refused to eat food straight from the king's table. There must have been all kinds of delectable delights. Yet they didn't touch it.

Was it a challenge for them to forgo the delicacies of the king's table? Perhaps, but they did it to follow the dietary laws God had given their people. It was a little decision, but our lives are comprised of just that: little decisions. They appear so small, when in reality, they may decide the course of our destiny.

Later, when Nebuchadnezzar ordered the court to bow before his image, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refused to bow down. Only God knows what thoughts were running through their heads, how horrified they were at the audacity of an earthly king commanding his subjects to worship him. Yet their

1. Daniel 3:16–18 NIV
2. Daniel 3:29 NIV
3. www.just1thing.com

of FIRE

answer was respectful, calm and collected, trusting.

“King Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to deliver us from it, and he will deliver us from Your Majesty’s hand. But even if he does not, we want you to know, Your Majesty, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up.”¹

Nebuchadnezzar’s response was much less calm and collected. He ordered the furnace to be fired up. It turned out to be so hot that it killed the men who threw Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego into the fire. But within moments, the king realized something was not as he expected.

When King Nebuchadnezzar peered into the blaze, he saw the

three youths walking around, and in the midst of them—shining brighter than that brilliant blaze—was another whom he recognized somehow—perhaps because regardless of our religious beliefs, when we come face to face with such a sight, there is no mistaking it. He knew it was Jesus, the Son of God, and he called the bold and brave young men out of the flames.

They walked out unscathed, without even the smell of smoke on their clothes. And the king made another impetuous decree—“that the people of any nation or language who say anything against the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego be cut into pieces and their houses be turned into piles of rubble, for no other god can save in this way.”²

What brought the Son of God into the flaming furnace? Those three young men were far from

home and loved ones, from anything they might have clung to. But they held on to their faith. I think it was that faith that brought Him to their side at the moment they needed it most.

It is what brings Him to our side today too. A word of prayer, a decision to trust by faith. A simple word or decision when we don’t know how things will turn out. A belief that, even in the flames, God is able.

Jesus never fails to reach out from the throne of grace to protect and honor those who trust Him.

JEWEL ROQUE LIVED IN INDIA FOR 12 YEARS AS A MISSIONARY. NOW IN CALIFORNIA, SHE WORKS AS A FREELANCE WRITER AND EDITOR. THIS ARTICLE WAS ADAPTED FROM A PODCAST ON JUST 1 THING,³ A CHRISTIAN CHARACTER-BUILDING WEBSITE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE. ■



BY ROSANE PEREIRA

FOLLOW THE MELODY

IN *THE SOUND OF MUSIC*¹, the mother superior tells Fraulein Maria, the boisterous postulant nun, to leave the convent to help a motherless large family. When she protests, the abbess asks her, “What is the most important thing you have learned during your time in the abbey?” “To find out what is the will of God,” Maria replies, “and do it wholeheartedly.” And so she goes, albeit quite scared, to fulfill the greater purpose God had for her life and eventually find her happy ending.

When I was young, I was puzzled by the choice that Jesus made in the Garden of Gethsemane. He wept, He prayed . . . and then He yielded, saying:

1. Robert Wise. 20th Century Fox, 1965.
2. Matthew 26:39 NLT

“My Father! If it is possible, let this cup of suffering be taken away from me. Yet I want your will to be done, not mine.”² He didn’t have to die, but He did so, for our sake. This concept is something I’ve always struggled with, but I’ve been trying to learn.

Once when I had just had a baby, my husband was asked to drive a group of young people to a three-day Christian seminar in Córdoba, Argentina. He was a good driver and the only person the organizers and parents trusted for this assignment. However, I was miserable at the thought of him leaving right then, and I let my feelings be known, which made things uncomfortable. It was only when I decided to accept that it was the right plan that my soul felt at ease, and in the end, everything ended

up working out just fine. My husband’s trip was a success, while I was well cared for by dear friends.

A modern Christian leader said that life is like a beautiful melody playing all the time; we just have to learn how to tune in to it. As Fraulein Maria sang, “The hills are alive with the sound of music”—the Creator’s music is playing everywhere, and we can participate in His orchestra by doing His will on a daily basis. It doesn’t matter what instrument we play, or even if we can only clap our hands—we can all be a part of His wonderful symphony!

ROSANE PEREIRA IS AN ENGLISH TEACHER AND WRITER IN RIO DE JANEIRO, BRAZIL, AND A MEMBER OF THE FAMILY INTERNATIONAL. ■

A Lesson from BO

By JOYCE SUTTIN



BO WAS OUR GOLDEN LAB WHO LOVED TO SWIM IN OUR POOL.

He lived for his exercise, and the pool was his domain. One day, my son was learning new strokes and tried the dead man's float. Bo decided his boy was in imminent danger and jumped into the pool to rescue him. Instinctively, he pushed my son's head up and held onto him with his paws in an effort to save his life. My poor son choked and sputtered as he tried to keep Bo away and ended up with water in his lungs and a chest full of scratches.

I praised Bo as he shook water all over me in his zealotry to get my opinion of the event. I knew that he'd accomplished more harm than good, but I could relate, because I know I've often done the same thing in my interactions with others.

I was talking with someone the other day about their relationship with their teenager and offered my advice. After forty-some years of parenting, grand-parenting, and teaching teenagers, my wisdom was really quite simple: "Don't take things personally."

It's hard not to react with annoyance, anger, or sensitivity when you feel like you are being rebuffed. It's hard not to take unkind words or actions personally, not to think of all the times when there were other things you wanted to do, but you stopped and listened and attended to your kids' needs.

It's hard to stand on the edge of the proverbial pool and watch and pray, knowing you have said all that needs to be said and done what you could. Now is the time to just step back a bit and let them try. Let them make

the clumsy dive. Let them try the new strokes. Let them imitate their friends. But don't jump into the pool like Bo and try to rescue them prematurely. Just watch and wait in case they call for help. And pray. Because in the end, prayer and unconditional love are really what will make a difference.

If they eventually call out to you, don't berate them for all the times they didn't. If they knock on your door, don't tell them you're too busy. Be the anchor. Be the rock. Be the stable place in the unstable world and let them know that things will be all right. Then treasure that moment with your arms around them again, and give them faith to jump back in the pool.

JOYCE SUTTIN IS A RETIRED TEACHER AND WRITER AND LIVES IN SAN ANTONIO, USA. ■

BY MARA HODLER

ANOTHER LAYER OF EASTER

I WAS THINKING ABOUT EASTER the other night when a line popped into my head: “He did not leave my soul in hell.” It sounded like a Bible passage, but I wasn’t sure. Neither was I sure if the writer was referring to Jesus.

I would like to say I pulled out my Bible and flipped to the passage, but no, I pulled out my smartphone and googled the phrase. It *was* in the Bible, and you can find it in Psalm 16: “You will not leave my soul among the dead.”¹

Next I wanted to confirm who David was speaking of, so I looked a little further. The passage is quoted by the apostle Peter in his very first sermon at Pentecost.² Jesus had just ascended into heaven and had told His disciples the Holy Spirit would come to them. The believers anxiously huddled together in an upper room waiting to see what was next. Then the Holy Spirit swept through in the form of flames of fire, and they were all filled with a power and boldness that they had never known.

At that time, Jerusalem was filled with Jews from all over the world. These devout believers were in Jerusalem to celebrate Passover—one of the most significant events in the Jewish calendar.

Upon being filled with the Holy Spirit, the disciples trickled out of their upper room and into the public, where they began declaring the gospel—in foreign languages none of them previously knew! All the pilgrims to Jerusalem were astounded that these people spoke their languages. People were trying to figure out how it could be possible for them to speak in languages they had never learned. Some took to making fun: “They must be drunk.”

Then Peter, the same Peter who had denied Jesus just a few weeks before, stood up and addressed this huge crowd: “We aren’t drunk; it’s only nine o’clock in the morning. We’re filled with the Spirit just like the prophet Joel prophesied.”

He went on to explain that Jesus of Nazareth, the one who everyone knew had recently been crucified, was the Son of God, whom God had raised from the dead. And that’s where he referenced David’s prophecy in Psalm 16:

“Brothers and sisters, I can speak confidently about the patriarch David. He died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this very day. Because he was a prophet, he knew that God promised him with a solemn pledge to seat one of his descendants on his throne. Having seen this beforehand,

1. Psalm 16:10 NLT

5. John 16:7 CEV

2. See Acts 2.

6. Luke 11:13 CEB

3. Acts 2:29–32 CEB

7. www.just1thing.com

4. See Isaiah 53:5.



David spoke about the resurrection of Christ, that he wasn't abandoned to the grave, nor did his body experience decay. This Jesus, God raised up. We are all witnesses to that fact."³

Peter's delivery was so powerful and anointed that 3,000 believers were added to the church that day. And that was just the beginning.

When I read this chapter, I was so impressed with Peter's delivery. He wasn't just bold, he also sounded educated. He referenced Jewish prophets and prophecy and spoke with a clarity that he wasn't previously known for. It was obviously the work of the Holy Spirit.

Through His death and resurrection, Jesus gave us gifts that have completely altered the course of mankind. These gifts are:

1. Salvation and a personal relationship with God,
2. The Holy Spirit, and
3. The gift of healing, through His suffering on the cross.⁴

When Jesus was with His disciples, they could not have the gift of the Holy Spirit. He had to leave them in order for them to be able to have the Holy Spirit: "I am going to do what is best for you. That is why I am going away. The Holy Spirit cannot come to help you until I leave. But after I am gone, I will send the Spirit to you."⁵

I haven't always thought of the Holy Spirit as something to celebrate at Easter, but I do now. Because of Jesus' physical departure from His disciples, they

were—and we are—able to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit simply by asking: "If you who are evil know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him?"⁶

Thinking about the Holy Spirit in this way has added another layer to my appreciation of Easter. I'm grateful for this deeper understanding of what Jesus has done for me, and it's something I never want to take for granted.

MARA HODLER IS A FORMER MISSIONARY TO THE FAR EAST AND EAST AFRICA. SHE CURRENTLY LIVES IN TEXAS WITH HER HUSBAND AND CHILDREN AND RUNS A SMALL FAMILY BUSINESS. THIS ARTICLE WAS ADAPTED FROM A PODCAST ON JUST I THING,⁷ A CHRISTIAN CHARACTER-BUILDING WEBSITE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE. ■



WHAT IF?

BY KEITH PHILLIPS

MAHATMA GANDHI (1869–1948) IS QUOTED AS SAYING, “I know of no one who has done more for humanity than Jesus.” Much of the world, Christian and non-Christian alike, would agree. Yet have you ever considered how the world *wouldn't* have been changed for the better if Jesus' disciples hadn't told others what they had seen and heard and learned with Jesus? The teachings of His life would have stopped with them.

Remember, Jesus' three-year public ministry wasn't documented by daily newspaper reports or sent around the world by 24-hour TV coverage or social media, as it no doubt would be today. How many people, do you suppose, ever saw the miracles Jesus performed or heard Him speak?—Fifty thousand?—One

1. See John 21:2–3.
2. Luke 24:49 NLT

hundred thousand? How many saw Him die on the cross?—A few hundred, perhaps. How many did He appear to after He rose from the dead on Easter morning?—A little over 500, we are told in 1 Corinthians 15:4–6.

Jesus did what only He could do—He died for our sins—but His disciples also did what only *they* could do. They kept His message alive.

What if, after Jesus' death, Simon Peter and his fellow former-fishermen disciples had gone back permanently to their fishing?¹ What if Matthew had gone back to collecting taxes? What if doubting Thomas had continued to doubt? What if the disciples hadn't obeyed Jesus' final instruction before His ascension to wait for the promise of the Father, the Holy Spirit, and received “power from heaven”?² How many millions would have died without knowing the Savior? Would we even have the gospel today?

And then [Jesus] told them, “Go into all the world and preach the Good News to everyone.”—Mark 16:15 NLT

As we celebrate Jesus' resurrection this Easter, let's also celebrate the Holy Spirit's power and those who kept the gospel alive by sharing Jesus with others. It was up to them. Now it's up to us.

KEITH PHILLIPS WAS *ACTIVATED'S* EDITOR-IN-CHIEF FOR 14 YEARS FROM 1999 TO 2013. HE AND HIS WIFE CARYN NOW WORK WITH THE HOMELESS IN THE U.S.A. ■

If you don't yet know Jesus as your personal Savior, you can invite Him in right now. Simply pray:

Thank You, Jesus, for coming to earth to forgive and save me. Please come into my life and help me get to know You better. And help me to share You and Your message of love and salvation with others. Amen.

The MAN in WHITE

BY ROHIT KUMAR



WE HAD JUST FINISHED A PROGRAM FOR 300 TEENAGE INMATES at a correctional center in northern India, and many of the boys gathered around us. The theme of our program that day had been the importance of faith in the face of difficulty. That had been something they all could relate to, especially the difficulty part.

A thin fellow standing off in a corner caught my eye. I could tell he wanted to talk but was too shy to make the first move, so I introduced myself and asked him to tell me about himself. He was from a village about 900 km (550 mi) away, he explained, and had come to the big city in search of work. He was penniless when he was caught traveling without a railway

ticket and was sentenced to three months in jail.

“A few days ago,” he told me, “I was sick with a very high fever. All I could do was lie in the corner. I could barely move. I have never been so sick before, and I honestly thought I was going to die. I was so scared! I thought of my parents and brothers back home. I desperately needed someone to be with me and take care of me, but here I was, far away from home, with no one. I started crying and asked God to please not let me die.

“Just then, something very strange happened. I opened my eyes and a man in white clothes was standing over me. He had the kindest eyes I have ever seen. He didn’t say a word, but just waved his hand over me and my fever was gone. I felt cool and

relaxed. The man disappeared and I never saw him again. Would you happen to know this man’s name?”

I looked through the bag of inspirational material I had brought along until I found a poster with an artist’s conception of Jesus, and I asked him, “Was this the man?”

He broke into a big smile and said, “Ah, yes! That was the man! What is his name?”

I told him about Jesus, His wonderful love, and His power to heal, and that afternoon the young man prayed to receive Jesus as his Savior. It was a beautiful reminder of how much the Lord cares for each of His children. We’re never alone.

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FROM JESUS WITH LOVE

I'LL COME THROUGH

If you reflect on My great men and women who have gone before you—those mentioned in the Bible, and others since that time—you will note how each lived for Me and accomplished great things in My name. Some of them, such as those listed in Hebrews 11, never received all that I had promised them during their time on earth. But their faith didn't fail, and because of that, they went on to receive their full and great eternal rewards.

Are there areas in your life where you wonder if I'll ever come through for you? Or is there something I've said that you worry might not happen the way you hope or expect? Think on that great cloud of witnesses in the Bible, and meditate on what advice they'd give you. Let your spirit be refueled by their example, and let your mind be set at rest by their fortitude. Just as I came through for them, I will come through for you.