

This is a story of my journey from frustration, discouragement, and despair to sweet rest and joy in the saving and transforming power of Christ. What I have learned has made such a difference in my life that I have to share it with every other seeker after the righteousness of Christ.

I don't know about you, but I want more out of my Christianity than being forgiven, justified, cleansed and declared just as if I had never sinned.

I'm sure that would shock some people because justification, which I partially described above is vital to salvation, but there's more, much more that God longs to give His children and I want that too.

Besides needing to be justified I also need to experience God's power in my life; daily changing the kind of person I am, (sanctification) and I need Him to be my 'very present help in time of trouble'.

What this means is that along with justification I need God to provide sanctification, and I need to

know He's so close that even a silent prayer brings the help I need.

There is real delight in a relationship with God that's built on gratitude, trust and reliance on Him. Such an experience brings a person so close to God that praise is a natural result. Praise and gratitude from a heart that's in God's hands brings joy to His heart. God delights in answering the prayer of His children, He delights in a heart that's surrendered to Him, He delights in fixing what's broken in us and teaching us to delight in Him. He delights in praise that comes from a heart filled with love and gratitude, not just for what He does for us but for Who He is.

We have probably all have thought, at one time or another, that wealth would make us happy, that if we didn't have to struggle so much we would be content. But, each day we find that instead of our ship having come in we have missed the boat. We

seem to be always seeking and never finding. Could it be that we're looking for the wrong treasure and in all the wrong places? This was true for me in my spiritual life, until I finally did find the Pearl of Great Price, the Way of Gladness. The relief and joy that comes with this discovery can't be described it must be lived.

When I first committed my life to God I really did so with love and gratitude, and the desire to serve Him. During the years that followed I had huge ups and downs. I would have periods of struggling to do what God wanted me to do, sometimes doing pretty well, I thought, and other times wondering why I couldn't get it right. I would pray about a particular thing in my life, resolve to overcome the temptation to give in to it and try hard not to fail. But fail I did, over and over, day after day, prayer after prayer. Finally I would just give up and leave the whole issue alone, but eventually it

would come back to nag me. Then filled with guilt, disgusted with myself, I would go through it all again. These weren't the huge 'ugly' sins that you might suspect that I was fighting; they were things like appetite, attitude, and lack of power to change myself. I would swing from being squeaky conservative in everything to giving up and just doing whatever seemed easy. Mostly though, in my desire to be 'right with God' I leaned hard to the conservative legalistic side.

I was going about things all wrong. I was trying for results without doing what it took to get them. It would be like reading about growing apples, buying fertilizer and apple picking equipment, preparing the orchard, and agonizing over the fact that you are growing no apples, trying everyday to think of a way to grow them, even pleading for apples to grow, but never planting an apple tree.

I eventually became so discouraged that I was convinced I could never be saved. Just look at me! Anyone could see that I had no victory in my life, and without that there was no hope for me. I still intended to live the ‘Christian life’ and try to lead others to the Lord, but had no hope for myself. It was the darkest hole I have ever been in. I reached out to family, pastors, anyone I thought could help me, but no one knew what to do or say. I don’t recall any defining moment when hope came alive again. God just never let the hope die out, and kept me clinging to scripture promises until I was back to being a ‘functioning Christian’ again.

During the years that followed I went through several personal tragedies. By the grace of God I made it through them, but each one took its toll until I was emotionally, mentally and physically exhausted. My father had died, my best friend had died in a car accident that I was in with her. My

marriage was over, children were wounded and scattered and I lost my job because I couldn't function.

During the next three years I fell flat on my face in the mud. I made frighteningly stupid decisions that should have turned my Christian friends against me, or so I thought, but thank God that didn't happen.

It's amazing that you can be living your life in ways that are opposite everything you believe, and still go to church, but that's just what I did. I THANK GOD, that He loved me through the arms, tears and love of my Pastor and church family. Only two people in my church turned against me, when I expected them all to do so.

I only ever saw love mixed with sadness, and unconditional love in the eyes of my church family and my pastor. He asked if he could be my dad and I

gratefully accepted. When I made really stupid, self destructive choices he just loved me. When my actions deeply disappointed him, he just loved me. When I was in pain I couldn't bear, he bore it with me and loved me. My church family did the same. They acted as if I had not sinned, as if it were not my fault I was suffering! I will love those people till the day I die because I saw Jesus in their eyes, in their hugs, in their unconditional love for me.

Though I hate all that I did and all that I suffered, I will always be grateful to have experienced God's love as I did through those wonderful people.

I was so beaten down by all I had gone through I had nothing left. I didn't even have the strength to read the Bible or pray. All that was left was to throw myself into God's arms and let go. If only I had known that's all He wanted from me in the first place! I stopped struggling with myself because I had no strength left to struggle. I stopped worrying

about it because I knew I was helpless to fix anything. From then on it had to be Him because there was nothing left of me.

In the midst of all this pain, on a day that I was in such agony that I couldn't stop crying and could hardly breathe, I lay in bed begging God to help me. He spoke words of release in my mind, stopped the crying, and flooded me with peace that has never left. There has still been pain in my life since then, but no matter what happens the peace is always still there. Though I had peace, and praised God for it, I still hadn't found all that God had waiting for me.

As I look at my own life and the lives of most of the Christians around me, I see people trying for results which are always just out of reach. We want victory over sin; we want power to live godly lives, have joy in the Lord and experience peace. Oh, how we want peace! We plead with God to help us to overcome, to help us to want the right things, and we

hope that if we combine those prayers with our own efforts then victory will be ours.

It may seem to work for a while, if we try really hard, but then we are weak or forget to pray. Our efforts never take us as far as we want them to, and we give up trying for a while. I know there are people whose upbringing and self discipline seem to get them where they need to be, but I suspect there are many things in themselves they know they can't change and that they need the power of God in their lives as much as the rest of us do.

I don't know about you but this life of struggle and failure isn't the kind of spiritual life I envisioned when I accepted Jesus as my Savior. It's the life I've led, but not the one I wanted.

The good news is that the Good News can change all that. It's not the hard walk, the painful giving up of things, the decisions too hard to make,

that you may fear it to be. It's the fullness of the Gospel as you may never have understood it to be.

You will wonder why it took so long to find the path and be amazed at the utter relief you feel. When I first discovered it I was almost giddy with relief and joy, and every day that I experience it is filled with relief, restfulness, and wonder! I still have days when the world tries to cave in on me, when everything seems to be falling apart around me, but the underlying joy and peace, and assurance of God's presence never leave, they are never shattered, though it sometimes feels like they must be.

If you want to live a life of victory that you've come to think is not possible for you, if you want to experience real joy, real peace and real relief, come with me and find Saving Grace.

Chapter 1

My Journey to Joy

A few years ago my class at church studied the final outpouring of the Holy Spirit that is to precede the Second Coming of our Lord. I was so very hopeful that our studies would result in understanding and receiving this experience, but I can't point to any clear indication that anything happened. I was very disappointed, but not discouraged. I just kept praying and hoping.

One day a few months ago I picked up one of the missionary story books my mother had given me. My grandmother used to bring us books like that from campmeeting and I read all I got my hands on. The stories of the dangers, sacrifices and accomplishments of real families bringing help and hope to backward, suffering people thrilled me. It was in some of those books that I became fascinated

with the Pidgin English spoken by the ‘Fuzzy Wuzzy Angels’ of New Guinea.

The book I was now reading told the story of Gus Youngberg¹, his wife Norma, and their children, as they worked in Sumatra, around the 1920s and 30s. Amongst all the stories of their missionary experiences there was a disturbing story of problems between the workers and director at the Malayan Union Seminary in Singapore. Many had taken sides and people who were supposed to be working together for God were making themselves enemies of each other. All of this bothered Gus and Norma a great deal. They made it a matter of prayer and tried to help, but saw no solution.

During one mission trip, on board ship, they met a godly woman named Mrs. Gussie Booth whom they came to know and love. On this same ship

¹ Norma R Youngberg and Gerald Minchin, *Under Sealed Orders* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1970)

there were a number of missionaries of various faiths, and one day there was an announcement made that they were all going to meet in the ship's lounge on Sunday morning. One of the clergymen, a young Methodist minister, suggested they each tell their name, church affiliation and give a short statement of their faith.

The first to speak was an Indian theosophist who spoke with such grace and kindness that all were impressed. As the missionaries took their turn to speak some expressed their views that “the old fashioned doctrines about the blood of Jesus Christ had little part in the modern world where a social gospel of united brotherhood seemed so much more practical.”² This attitude in men, whose job it was to bring the gospel their people, greatly pained the Youngbergs and Mrs. Booth.

² Ibid p.87

When Gus' turn came to speak he said in part, "I believe there is no salvation possible except through the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. I believe we are sustained by his Holy Spirit, and that through Him we have hope of redemption to be revealed at His second coming which is now eminent."³

Mrs. Booth was so shaken by the expressions of disbelief in the blood of Christ by some of the protestant missionaries that she needed to pray the rest of the day to clear her mind of the 'shock' of the morning meeting. Impressed by the Youngberg's expression of faith, she came to them later and asked if she could join them for prayer and Bible studies which she did for the rest of the voyage.

Mrs. Booth's godliness, and obviously close relationship with God, impressed the Youngbergs and made them feel their lack of spiritual power.

³ Ibid

They didn't know what to do about it, but felt sure God wouldn't leave them with 'such dissatisfaction and not send help'.

When Mrs. Booth later expressed interest in visiting the Malayan Union Seminary Gus and Norma, concerned that she would see the dissension there and be turned away by it, hoped she wouldn't follow through with her plan for a trip there.

Sometime later, when Gus was sent to Batakland to fill a vacancy while a worker there took his wife for medical treatment, this faithful lady came to the mission and requested Bible studies, after which she was baptized. After a short trip to Japan she returned to the mission. She could see the problems between the workers and the director, and began to pray for revival.

During this time the General Conference of the church sent Elder Meade McGuire, and his wife to

the mission to minister to the spiritual needs of the workers. I'll let Norma tell what happened in her own words.

“Elder McGuire gathered the compound workers into one of the seminary classrooms. He wrote on the blackboard three statements:

A MAN CAN BE SAVED BY HIS OWN EFFORTS.

A MAN CAN BE SAVED WITH THE HELP OF GOD.

A MAN CAN BE SAVED WITH NO EFFORT ON HIS PART.

Norma looked at the three statements and felt that her heart would burst for relief and joy. How she wished that Gus were here. She listened to other mission workers express their views. Most of them took the second statement to be their belief.

Finally she burst out, "Oh, Elder McGuire, we can be saved with no effort on our part. It is the gift of God!" Everyone looked at her astonished, for she had spoken in the tone of one who has just made a discovery of the first magnitude.

Elder McGuire smiled and went on talking about "Christ Our Righteousness." Since Elder McGuire came with the authority of the General Conference behind him, everyone listened. The revival had begun.

It came slowly, with small groups on the compound and in the city meeting for prayer, with deep convictions of great need, with searching of the Scriptures to see if "those things were so."

Although she took no prominent part in the events that followed, no one rejoiced more than Gussie Booth. She told Norma that God had shown her that her part was to pray; and pray she did for

every person on the compound by name, and for Elder McGuire most of all; for she believed him to be God's instrument of revival in Singapore.

Norma wrote daily to Gus telling him of the important happenings, but they sounded to him like an impossible dream. He even wondered if Norma hadn't gone overboard a bit.

He wrote to Norma describing an accident in which he had come close to losing his life, and said he would soon be home again. (This experience convinced him that God watched over him.)

Norma thanked God that Gus had been spared. How she longed for him to return, for by now the work of revival and reformation had accelerated. Enemies of years confessed and embraced each other with tears. Parents were reconciled to children and children to their parents. Petty quarrels vanished; criticism ceased.

It was time that Elder McGuire and his wife must leave, and now the director of the Singapore Mission, Mr. Lake, stood up in the church on Sabbath and in a broken voice said to his congregation, "I must lead you through this revival of the Holy Spirit, and I myself am ignorant and inexperienced in the life of the Spirit. Pray for me."

Never had the church felt so close to their pastor. They had regarded him as an excellent preacher with a rare gift of oratory. Now they saw him as a fellow Christian as deeply moved by his own need as they were by theirs.

He began with a series of studies on the Holy Spirit, searching them out on his knees week by week, and he led the church into such a revival as the city had never known. At Wednesday prayer meetings eager people packed the church, and many stood in the street unable to enter. He set Friday

night aside as praise night, and equally large crowds pressed in.

Into this atmosphere charged with the presence of the Spirit, Gus Youngberg returned. He arrived on Friday and went with Norma to the praise meeting that night. Had he stepped into another world? He heard the praises of his brethren, saw sworn enemies sitting together, heard the old Advent hymns of victory rise about him, and felt himself on an island—a most uncomfortable island. He sat in stunned silence.

He realized the enormous change that had taken place on the compound. Winds of gossip and criticism blew no more through the corridors of the offices and the houses on the hill. No one could talk of anything but the joy of knowing their sins forgiven and their salvation assured through the finished work of Christ. Nell Smith spoke for most of them: "If it were not for the great unfinished

work, I would want Jesus to come today. Today we are ready to meet Him."

Never an emotional person and fearful of any religious excitement or experience based on feeling, Gus spent days in an agony of heart-searching. He longed for the joy and freedom, the healing and the calm, that had come to others. At times he despaired. Perhaps after all he was too hard-hearted, too faithless. The door might shut, leaving him on the outside. He prayed and studied his Bible with new urgency.

One night he lay awake praying until two o'clock in the morning. Then he felt a gentle Presence soothe away all his fears, and he knew that God had heard his pleadings. He wakened Norma. "God has just given me the assurance that He has accepted me."

Neither of them could sleep. They spent the hours till daylight praising the Lord, and the time

seemed all too short. "Now I can understand how those glorious beings around the throne of God can praise Him day and night and never weary of it," Gus said.

Not everyone accepted the revival message. A few men in high places scoffed and called it emotionalism. Hadn't the church always believed in righteousness by faith? It was inherent in the doctrines.

More than forty years (after those events) those men had been laid to rest; but the years have proved that without exception they took the wrong turn in the road in 1929.

Gussie Booth saw the desire of her heart fulfilled, and now she longed to go back to Japan

and tell her people about the revival. She took passage for Nagasaki.”⁴

When I finished reading that story I was so excited! THIS is what we need now! The term ‘Christ our Righteousness’ took on a whole new meaning for me. So I began to pray and search for information on Righteousness by Faith. I looked on-line for information and came across some books of questionable value, but not to be stopped I kept searching. When an evangelist came to speak at our church for a weekend, I asked him what he knew about it and he recommended a chapter out of his book on the Character of God.

Then one day Pastor Phil Dunham, who had served our church for a time previously, came to speak. I asked him about righteousness by faith, and he recommended his book, ‘Sure Salvation’. That

⁴ Norma R. Youngberg and Gerald H Minchin, “*Under Sealed Orders* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1970) pp 92-95

book was what I'd been looking for. I could hardly put it down, and in its pages I found what I had been longing for ever since I'd given my life to God, what I wish every person would find.

Chapter 2

A Handshake and Two Hugs

Before I relate what I want to share with you, I have to say that when reading the words of the Apostle Paul “I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances I find myself in” I thought that might be fine for Paul but I didn’t want to be content in my situation, I wanted to change my situation so that I could be content. Now I want to experience contentment in the Lord in spite of my circumstances, and let Him take care of everything.

This book is about how to have assurance of salvation and how to live a victorious, joy filled life. It’s not about making our daily troubles go away or winning the lottery. It’s much more basic, and much bigger than any of that.

We are going to look at what God has to do, what I have to do and what the results will be.

God's part is to give everything He has, my part is to give everything I have, and the results are a joy filled, victorious life. Sound too simple? It is that simple in a complex sort of way.

Before we can get to the bottom of this issue we have to have a clear understanding of the Gospel. Gospel means good news. The Bible is full of good news from one end to the other. Sometimes you have to dig to see it but its there.

There are many books written explaining the Gospel so I won't go into that in detail. I want to give you the short version.

God created mankind perfect, and with free choice. Mankind chose to disbelieve and disobey God, and brought sin with all its horrors into this world. The wages, or just result, of sin is death. We have all sinned so we all deserve, and have earned

the death penalty, but we don't want to die that death. God doesn't want us to die that death either.

God the Father and God the Son, knowing that no created being could pay the penalty for the sin of all mankind, and rescue us from the death penalty we are all living under, made a plan to rescue us
Themselves.

There was only One worthy, only One whose death could pay the penalty and set us all free. That One, Jesus the Son of God, asked His Father for His blessing to give His life for us. So God was made manifest (evident to the senses, esp. to the sight) in the flesh and lived among us as a man acquainted with our sorrows and temptations. He took our sins and nailed them to the cross, and died in our place removing the penalty of death from us. This made our salvation possible.

This salvation is provided to us at infinite cost to God, but we are not charged a penny for it. God offers it to us as a free gift. Jesus took our sinfulness and death sentence which He did not deserve and gave us His righteousness and life which we do not deserve. Who couldn't love a God like that?

To encapsulate the gospel I like to say that we are saved by a handshake and two hugs. I borrowed this concept from the book, *Sure Salvation*,⁵ and expanded on it a little here.

First God, Father and Son, agreed on the plan of salvation.

“Before the foundations of the earth were laid, the Father and the Son had united in a covenant to redeem man if he should be overcome by Satan. They had clasped their hands in a solemn pledge that Christ should become the surety (A person who

⁵ Phillip Dunham, *Sure Salvation* (Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press, 2007)95
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binds himself for the payment of a sum of money or for the performance of something else, for another, who is already bound for the same.) for the human race. This pledge Christ has fulfilled. . . . the Compact has been fully carried out.” The Father and Son, clasping hands to the plan to make Christ the surety of our salvation, is the handshake.⁶ It was no easy thing for God to agree to allow His beloved Son to die for us, but His love for us is so great. ‘For God SO loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.’” John 3:16. God didn’t learn to love us because His Son died for us, Jesus died for us BECAUSE God loved us so much!

When any contract is entered into it must be carried out. This He did on the cross. After Jesus fulfilled the conditions of the contract He had made with His Father He needed to show the proof that

⁶ EllenWhite, *The Desire of Ages*(Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press, 1940) 843; 29

He had faithfully carried out all the provisions of the agreement. After a life of toil and service, His death on the cross, and then His resurrection, Jesus ascended to the Father to present His sacrifice. Can you imagine the excitement of the angels at the return of their Lord from the degradation of this world, and their joy that His sacrifice won salvation for all of mankind? How they must have rushed with great eagerness to worship Him and welcome Him home!

“But He waves them back. Not yet; He cannot now receive the coronet of glory and the royal robe. He enters into the presence of His Father. He points to His wounded head, the pierced side, the marred feet; He lifts His hands, bearing the prints of the nails. He points to the tokens of His triumph, He presents to God the wave sheaf, those raised with Him as representatives of the great multitude who shall come forth from the graves at His second

coming. He approaches the Father with whom there is joy over one sinner that repents, who rejoices over one with singing (did you catch that? Your Heavenly Father rejoices over you with SINGING, Oh how I want to hear that!). . . . Now He declares: Father, it is finished. I have done thy will, O My God. I have completed the work of redemption. If Thy justice is satisfied, “I will that they also, whom Thou has given Me, be with Me where I am.” (Isn’t this beautiful?)

The reason for everything Christ did for us is expressed in His plea to His Father: ‘I will that they also, whom You have given me, be with Me where I am’!) The voice of the Father is heard proclaiming that justice is satisfied. Satan is vanquished. Christ’s toiling, struggling ones on earth are “accepted in the Beloved” The Father’s arms encircle His Son

and the word is given, “Let all the angels of God worship Him”⁷

This is the first hug. How anyone can turn away from such love, after they learn of it, is beyond me.

My salvation can never be won, can never be secured, by anything I can do. All my righteousness is filthy rags, as filthy as those of a leper. The only righteousness that does me any good is His. I need that righteousness, without it I am lost, but how does it get applied to me?

If you are reading this book you must at least be curious about salvation, if not interested and searching. Many people get to this point in their lives, and turn back because they fear God will require them to give up things they don't want to give up or that He will require them to make changes

⁷ Ibid 834

in themselves or their lives that they aren't interested in making.

Let me assure you that God never asks anything of you that He won't make you able to do, and that He will never force His will on anyone. It was a wrong use of our freedom of choice that got us into this mess in the first place and a right use of our freedom of choice is the pathway out.

Chapter 3

It's All About Jesus

‘In the beginning God...’ When you read the story of creation notice that God refers to Himself in the plural, ‘Let Us make man in Our’ image’, etc. The apostle John tells us “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made.” John 1:1-3. So Jesus is our Creator. Through Him God created all that was created.

We’ve already seen that He is our Substitute and Redeemer. There is much more that He does for us.

Here is the second hug:

“Arise and go to your Father. He will meet you a great way off. If you take even one step toward Him

in repentance, He will hasten to enfold you in His arms of infinite love. His ear is open to the cry of the contrite soul. The very first reaching out of the heart after God is known to Him. Never a prayer is offered, however faltering, never a tear is shed, however secret, never a sincere desire after God is cherished, however feeble, but the Spirit of God goes forth to meet it. Even before the prayer is uttered or the yearning of the heart made known, grace from Christ goes forth to meet the grace that is working upon the human soul. ⁸

Every part of our salvation and growth in grace is a gift from God; it is nothing of our selves except choosing to accept it.

Here is what God offers:

Repentance: He calls us to repentance, and gives us repentance.

⁸ Ellen G White *Christ's Object Lesson* p. 206
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‘God exalted Him to His own right hand as Prince and Savior that He might give repentance and forgiveness of sins to Israel.’ Acts 5:31

‘I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.’ Luke 5:32

This is what the Sovereign LORD, the Holy One of Israel, says: "In repentance and rest is your salvation, in quietness and trust is your strength. Isaiah 30:15”

If you’ve ever underestimated the blessings of quietness, rest, and trust, you won’t once you’ve experienced it.

Transformation: He transforms us, changes us, and makes us new creatures in Christ. “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. . . .” 2 Corinthians 5:17. Being made ‘dead to sin’ and ‘alive in Christ’ indicates a complete transformation. We can’t accomplish this transformation any more

than Lazarus could bring himself back to life after spending 4 days in the tomb. We can't make of ourselves a 'new creation' any more than we could have created ourselves in the first place.

Works: It's not our works that please God, they don't recommend us to God or add one whit to our salvation. They do not keep us saved or keep us from being lost. The works of Jesus in us: that's what God is looking for, that's what makes us acceptable to Him.

“For we also are weak in Him, but we shall live with Him by the power of God.” 2 Corinthians 13:4
“Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us” Ephesians 3:20 For it is God which works in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure. Philippians 2:13

We are just as dependant on the power of God to live a righteous life as plants are to live and grow. We have no power to resist temptation or to change our sinful nature.

Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. John 15:4, 5 Just as we are not saved by ‘works lest any man should boast’, we aren’t sanctified by works either. “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.” Ephesians 2:8 – 10

Do you see the beauty of this? If the one who is powerless to save himself and to keep himself in God's good graces, is required to do so, his case is hopeless. But, if God who requires obedience and a clean heart provides those things, if we will only accept, we have assurance of salvation!

I heard a story once of a man who was on death row awaiting execution. A local pastor had tried several times to visit him in prison so he could minister to him, but the prisoner refused to see him. He wanted nothing to do with this 'man of God'. During the months leading up to the execution date the pastor worked to have the man's sentence of death, changed to life in prison. He thought there was hope for a transformed life, and he wanted to give the man a chance to find the Lord before it was too late. When he saw that he was not going to be successful he went to the governor to plead for mercy for the man. At the last moment the governor

issued a full pardon! With the pardon in his hand the pastor rushed to the prison hoping he would be in time. When he arrived the warden allowed him in to see the prisoner before the execution, but the prisoner refused to see him, refused to accept anything from this ‘Christian’, and demanded that the pastor be made to leave. The pastor had the man’s pardon in his hand, a piece of paper that would have saved the man’s life, but he would not accept it.

The intended gift had cost the pastor many hours, much hard work and frustration, all a labor of love, but the gift could do no good because it was rejected. I think you get the idea: God has made provision for our salvation, repentance, and transformation, but if we refuse to receive those gifts they can have no effect in our lives.

“By His perfect obedience He has made it possible for every human being to obey God’s

commandments. “When we submit ourselves to Christ, the heart is united with His heart, the will is merged in His will, the mind becomes one with His mind, the thoughts are brought into captivity to Him; we live His life. This is what it means to be clothed in the garments of His righteousness. Then as the Lord looks upon us He sees not the fig-leaf garment, not the nakedness and deformity of sin, but His own robe of righteousness, which is perfect obedience to the law of Jehovah.”⁹

Who could refuse such perfect and complete gifts? God asks of us perfect obedience and He provides His own perfect obedience. If we give our heart and will to God He will produce right thinking and actions in us. These are gifts, not impossible standards.

Confess – There are two kinds of confession here.

⁹ Ellen G White, *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 312

First to confess or declare your beliefs:

“That if you confess with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.” 2 Timothy 2:19
"Everyone who confesses the name of the Lord must turn away from wickedness." (turning away (repentance, that God gives) 1 John 1:9 Do you see how vital confession of Christ is to salvation? It's not enough to know, to have mental ascent that Jesus is Lord, we must believe it in our hearts and confess it with our mouths and let it show in the life.

Second is to confess, or admit, our sins to God:

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.” 1st John 1:9

When there is something required of us God always makes us able to obey and gives us so much more in return. In return for our confession

(admitting sins to God that He already knows all about) we receive forgiveness of sins, and cleansing from ALL unrighteousness. There is no sin so awful that Jesus' sacrifice isn't good enough to cover and no unrighteousness of ours that God's righteousness isn't big enough to replace.

If I came to you and said, 'If you will give me a list of all your debts, I will pay them all and clear your credit record, so that you can have a fresh start', and if you believed that I was able to do this for you, and that I was willing to do it, would you accept? What if the condition was that you must stay out of debt and I assured you that I would provide all you needed so that going into debt would never again be necessary, and that if you did happen to go into debt I would pay that off too, would you refuse my offer? Would you think that giving up your debt was too much to ask? Would you complain about a newly perfect credit record? Would you feel that my

promise to provide all that you could ever need was an intrusion and that it would take control of your life away from you?

Be willing:

When Jesus was suffering under the burden of our sins in the Garden of Gethsemane, He wanted relief. In His humanity he wanted to run from the suffering, but He surrendered His will to the will of His Father. "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will." Matthew 26:39. Where would we be if He hadn't been willing to do His Father's will, to fulfill the compact He had made with His Father? If you find you aren't able or willing to surrender your will to God you can ask Him to make you willing to be willing. God provides all the power. His strength is made perfect in our weakness.

Chapter 4

Let Go Of the Banister!

I've heard lots of reasons for not making a full surrender of the will to God. Mostly, though I've seen it in people's lives. Some people seem to have the idea that if they surrender their will to God that He will hold them in slavery to His will, or that He'll make decisions for them that they won't like. I have to say to those who are afraid they will be required to give up some 'guilty pleasure', or anything else, that what you would gain so far outstrips anything you may give up, that you'll wonder why you haven't done it sooner.

For those who think God will 'trap' them I want to remind you that the whole reason we are in this mess of sin is because God would not take away mankind's free will. If you give Him your will you can take it back any time you want to, but I doubt

very much that you will want to do that after you experience the blessings you receive in return. Besides, look at your life and see what you've made of it. Are you happy with the way it's turning out? Are you really where you want to be, satisfied and content? Or is your reluctance really about your desire to control or a lack of trust, or both?

John Powell, in 'Prayer as Surrender' relates the following story:

"I used to carry my aged mother up and down the stairs of our home here in Chicago. And she would grab onto the banister while I was carrying her up and down the stairs and hold on to it so tightly we couldn't move.

I'd say, 'Momma, you have to let go of the banister or we can't move. "

And she looked at me with her plaintive little eyes and said, "I'm afraid you'll drop me.

I said, ‘Momma, I’m going to drop you right now. When I count to three, I’m going to drop you!’” And then she would let go, and we’d go two more steps, when she would grab on again.”

If you’re afraid that God won’t do for you what you would want Him to do consider these verses:

”If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give what is good to those who ask Him!” Matthew 7:7-11.

”He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?” Romans 8:32.

When we’re anxious about our needs, and worried that God won’t take care of us, we are saying in effect that we don’t trust Him and don’t believe His promises. I’m sure you’re thinking now that God has left many of your prayers unanswered

and that's why you have trouble believing He will keep His promises. Have you ever considered that your refusal to surrender your will, your all, to Him may be getting in the way of answered prayer? Just from my own experience I suspect this may be true. Stressful worrisome things still happen but God takes care of them all. There isn't much He can do though if you won't turn loose of the banister and put your full trust in him.

We all have a choice to make. Are we going to truly let go and trust God to take care of us or are we going to keep hanging on to our lives and wills and not allow God to carry us upward to where we need to be?

I know, and have known in the past, people who beg God with tears, to give them some assurance that He is with them, to change their lives for the better, or to free them from some sin or addiction, but they cling so tightly to control of their own lives, to

anger, temper or pride, that God can't do for them that which He so longs to do.

In the book of Malachi God urged His people to test Him on the issue of tithes. "Test me in this," says the LORD Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it."

I urge you to test God: give Him your whole will, make a complete surrender, and see what He will do for you. Remember that you can back out at any time, you're not trapped. Just give God a try, a real try, not a scoffing challenge, but give Him a real opportunity to show you all that He has in store for you. Please don't get the idea that it's a small thing to accept God and turn back, because it's not. I just want to make it clear that God doesn't force anyone to do anything.

If He would give His precious Son for you, and if He has all the glories of heaven waiting for you, don't you think He wants to bless you now? He not only wants to forgive you and cleanse you of all sin, He also wants to change you and take away the hold sin has on you. He wants to make your life one of victory over sin, and full of joy, peace and restful trust in Him.

“Everyman is free to choose what power he will have to rule over him. None have fallen so low; none are so vile, but that they can find deliverance in Christ. The demoniac, in place of prayer, could utter only the words of Satan; yet the heart's unspoken appeal was heard. No cry from a soul in need, though it failed of utterance in words, will be unheeded”.¹⁰

¹⁰ Ellen White, *The Desire of Ages*(Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press, 1940) p 258
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Chapter 5

Sanctification – a Life of Victory, Power and Peace!

When I talk about these things at church there are people who worry that what I'm saying may be misunderstood. They worry that some will get the idea that everything is up to God and they are relieved of any responsibility for their life or character. But this couldn't be further from the truth. God does do everything and it is His will and power that makes it happen, but everything is up to us. God does not seek to control us or change us against our will. If we don't cooperate with God, if we don't choose to submit our will, our sinful habits, our all, to Him He can do very little with us or for us. Thank God He never gives up on us!

Think of it this way: If a man goes to his doctor because he has a life threatening disease, and the

doctor says the man needs surgery, he has a choice to make. He may be afraid of surgery, afraid to submit himself to the doctor, but if he is to live he must choose to submit. The surgeon will do all the work the patient just has to cooperate. He doesn't have to hold or use the scalpel, he doesn't have to administer the anesthesia, sew himself up or decide which medications he needs after surgery.

What he does have to do is say yes to surgery, sign the consent form, present himself at the hospital on the appointed day, submit to the IV needle and allow the anesthesia to be administered. After surgery he must submit to the nurse when she comes in to change his dressings, and willingly take the prescribed pills, stay down when he feels like getting up, and walk even when it feels painful. In short we must choose to submit, to cooperate in every way with the medical care we need to get well.

If we refuse to cooperate there is very little the doctor can do to help us. We can't just sit back and think, 'It's the doctor's work to heal me, I don't have to do anything, and if I die it will be the doctor's fault!'

I have often heard the phrase 'Sanctification is the work of a lifetime' and it's usually quoted in the context of a life of trying hard to obey, failing, praying, trying harder and still failing to reach the goal of character perfection. The idea seems to be that sanctification (1. To be set apart for sacred use; to consecrate. 2. To make holy; purify.) is the responsibility of the individual, that it is attainable with God's help, and though they haven't been able to achieve it, maybe over their lifetime it will happen, and if not maybe God will just transform them before it's too late.

The WHOLE point of this book is to help you understand that this life of struggle, failure, and

powerlessness is NOT what God meant for his children.

Romans 10:2,3 says: 'For I can testify about them that they are zealous for God, but their zeal is not based on knowledge. Since they did not know the righteousness that comes from God and sought to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness.' This attitude is more dangerous than failing to change yourself.

“Sanctification - the work of a lifetime” should mean a life characterized by one victory over sin after another, becoming more Christ-like moment by moment, day by day. Sound impossible for you? Don't you long for a life of victory and power to make a real change in your character? Don't you want to see evidence in your own life that God is at work there? Nothing is impossible with Christ. The key to a life of victory is to understand Who is to do the work and what your part is.

Here are some encouraging quotes that I hope will help you understand it clearly:

Philippians 2:12-13 ‘continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you both to will and to act (or do) according to his good purpose.’

Isaiah 26:12 ‘Lord, thou wilt ordain peace for us: for thou also hast wrought all our works in us.’

Galatians 3:2,3 ‘ This is the only thing I want to find out from you: did you receive the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith? Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?’ (The expected and clear answer here is no, you are not perfected by the flesh, but by faith in the grace of God)

Colossians 2: 6,7 ‘Therefore as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, having been firmly rooted and now being built up in Him and

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established in your faith, just as you were instructed, and overflowing with gratitude.

‘He is able to keep that which you have committed to Him. If you will leave yourself in His hands, He will bring you off more than conqueror through Him who has loved you.’ Steps to Christ pp 71-73

‘By faith you became Christ’s, and by faith you are to grow up in Him – by giving and taking. You are to give all, - your heart, your will, your service, - give yourself to Him to obey all His requirements; and you must take all, - Christ, the fullness of all blessing, to abide in your heart, to be your strength, your righteousness, your everlasting helper, - to give you power to obey. Steps to Christ pp 69,70

‘But man cannot transform himself by the exercise of his will. He possesses no power by which this change can be affected. The leaven – something

wholly from without – must be put into the meal before the desired change can be wrought in it. So the grace of God must be received by the sinner before he can be fitted for the kingdom of glory. All the culture and education which the world can give will fail of making a degraded child of sin a child of heaven. The renewing energy must come from God. The change can be made only by the Holy Spirit. . . . As the leaven, when mingled with the meal, works from within outward, so it is by the renewing of the heart that the grace of God works to transform the life.’ (I highly recommend reading the whole chapter ‘Like Unto Leaven’) Christ’s Object Lessons pp 96, 97

We are saved by faith through grace. We are justified (declared legally just as if we had never sinned) We are not then left to our own strength to transform ourselves no matter how much we may want to do that as an act of love to our Savior. We

cannot transform ourselves by the exercise of our will, by practice, struggle, increased prayer and Bible study, or any other way we may try to do it.

There are those who are strong willed or disciplined enough to make outward changes or who were brought up doing the right thing, but even they can't transform their character or fit themselves for heaven.

So the good news: Even as we are justified by faith in the grace of Christ we are also sanctified by faith in the grace of Christ and that faith itself is a gift of God to us.

We can and must rest in the grace and power of Christ. Rest from our own works, our own struggle to obey, and submit to the righteousness, grace and power of Christ. If we do this He will give us victory over sin, transform our characters and fit us for heaven. It can be done, it can start now! We need it

now and should not wait for some time in the future. Sanctification is – God’s – work – in us – for a lifetime!

We can, and should, have a life characterized by God producing victory after victory, abiding peace that the trials of life cannot take away, a character that draws people to Jesus, and we can have it if we choose to receive it by faith in Christ. When the temptations, problems, and attractions of a worldly life seek to take our attention from Christ, we need to choose to submit to Christ, to ask Him to take our will. If we choose Him, and His righteousness, He will take care of the rest.

The thing that’s astounding to me is that our will is selfish and determined when it comes to taking care of number one. If anyone dares to challenge our will we dig our heels in, throw our defenses up and prepare to fight to the finish. But then our will is so weak that when we need to discipline ourselves our

will is usually as useful as a limp rag. And when it comes to changing who we are, how we think, what we want, our will is completely powerless.

Our hearts are no better an ally in our fight against sin than our wills are. The Bible says our hearts are ‘desperately wicked’ and that our righteousness is as filthy rags. Why would anyone want to keep such awful weapons in their arsenals? More than that, why would God want us to offer Him those disgusting things? The astonishing thing is that God is eager for us to give those things to Him because He is ready to replace them with His powerful will, to replace our stony heart with a heart of flesh that can pump life and power to every part of our being, and to cover us with His robe of righteousness. Why would anyone hesitate to make a trade like that?

You may be asking ‘how am I to surrender myself to God?’

In Steps to Christ there is an answer: ‘You desire to give yourself to Him, but you are weak in moral power, in slavery to doubt, and controlled by the habits of your life of sin. Your promises and resolutions are like ropes of sand. You cannot control your thoughts, your impulses, (or) your affections. The knowledge of your broken promises and forfeited pledges weakens your confidence in your own sincerity, and causes you to feel that God cannot accept you; but you need not despair. What you need to understand is the true force of the will. This is the governing power in the nature of man, the power of decision or of choice. Everything depends on the right action of the will. The power of choice God has given to men; it is theirs to exercise. You cannot change your heart, you cannot give to God its affections; but you can choose to serve Him. You can give him your will; He will then work in you to will and do according to His good pleasure. Thus your whole nature will be brought under the control

of the Spirit of Christ; your affections will be centered upon Him, your thoughts will be in harmony with Him. Desires for goodness and holiness are right and good as far as they go; but if you stop here, they will avail nothing. Many will be lost while hoping and desiring to be Christians. They do not come to the point of yielding the will to God. They do not now choose to be Christians. Through the right exercise of the will, (choosing to surrender it to God) an entire change may be made in your life. By yielding up your will to Christ, you ally yourself with the power that is above all principalities and powers. You will have strength from above to hold you steadfast, and thus through constant surrender to God you will be enabled to live the new life, even the life of faith.” Steps to Christ pp 46-48

Remember that God, who gave His only begotten Son to die in your place, will freely give you all things that are for your good. Like a Father

who loves His precious little ones and who delights to see their eyes light up with joy at his gifts of love, God delights to do everything He can for us.

You might be wondering if my life has changed as a result of discovering that my failed struggle to change myself could be given up by giving my will to God. I can tell you first that we will still face difficulties. We live in a world of sin and until we leave it things can be hard at times. However, the way these things affect you should change as your reliance on God grows, and you see He is willing to take care of all your needs.

The first thing I experienced was a sense of such relief that God would do for me that which I couldn't do for myself. I wanted everyone I know to have that experience. I have also had more answers to prayer than I can ever remember having. I notice God moving me in one direction or another and if I listen and let Him move me I feel peace and

confidence in His leading. I know that God is in control of my life so I don't have a desire to worry about tomorrow. If I am tempted to worry He prompts me to give the problem to Him and He always takes care of it. I think one of the most exciting results for me so far is a change I discovered that God had made in me.

For years I had struggled with the negative feelings I would have toward those who had hurt me. If they hurt me bad enough for long enough I would reach a point where something snapped and I no longer wanted anything to do with them. I had only a negative attitude toward them even if I had chosen to forgive them. I felt very ugly inside for that attitude, but I tried to excuse myself in whatever way I could think of. One day recently I realized this ugly attitude I'd had toward a few people was just gone, and I couldn't remember what it felt like.

I've been through some very difficult things recently and because I tried to deal with them all by myself my health was greatly affected. God led me to share my problem with my family and a couple of counselors which helped a lot, but it wasn't until I took the problem to God and asked him to take the terrible weight that was pressing me down that I was free of it.

I just told God that it felt like I was being oppressed, though I didn't know if that's what it was, but I wanted God to remove this weight from me, and He did. The pressure on my chest that was so bad that I went to Urgent Care was gone. The exhaustion and other troubles that it caused were lessened. I am learning that God CAN do anything and that He's willing to do all that we need if we just choose to give everything to Him.

For years I've been praying for my children. They left church as soon as they were on their own.

You can imagine my pain and fear for them if you've had loved ones who seem to have left God behind.

When this happens you examine your performance as a parent and try to figure out where you went wrong. Recently an event in my son's life helped me to conclude that one of the major reasons our children don't want our church, or religion, and why new converts don't stay for long after they join the church is the lack of evidence of Christ in the lives of those who go to church.

All my Christian life I wanted to see this evidence myself. I wanted to see victory over sin, a godly character, power in prayer and other evidence, but I just didn't see it. My children didn't see it either. As a teenager my daughter was spoken to very unkindly at church by adults who only saw the teens as a menace, but that's not all. When she was young I caught her in a lie. Later she came to me in

tears and asked me how she could stop lying, and do you know that even after all the years I'd been a 'church-goer' I didn't know what to tell her. I grieved over this for years. I failed her when I should have been able to tell her how a person gets victory over sin, but I didn't know how to have victory myself so I couldn't help her.

Even as a young teen my son saw a lack of anything attractive in the church. As an adult he hadn't stepped foot in a church for years, except for weddings and funerals, until recently he and a friend were asked to provide music for a local church congregation. They invited a friend they work with to come and listen.

I got this letter from him a few days later, "Played the church today. Me and Marc really know how to play the religious material. We are, after all the genuine articles. Alan came to see us. All he had to wear was work clothes. (He had just driven down

from a job site to see them play) He was looked up and down at. He was asked "can I help you". He was sneered at, and made to feel unwelcome. He said it made him feel shaky. He said to himself, "I don't belong here." Got into his truck and left without seeing me and Marc ply our trade before the congregation. I would like those (people) to know just whom it was that they made feel unwelcome. I have never met anyone in the whole of my experience in the Kingdom of Darkness, the Christian church, who is anywhere near the equal of Alan on ANY level. We all know he is a genius. He is also the kindest man I have ever met. Very probably one of the top 5 stone masons in the entire world. But these people whose lives reek of mediocrity would look down their noses at Alan. I knew it by the time I was 16 that the church was a whitewashed mausoleum. EVERY time I set foot in one I swear I shall never again. I look at the people, and realize that they are either in a social club or

they are using the church as an anchor. This saddens me, because I know the sea has no bottom. Diana says, they are not all like that. Well I know there are accepting people in churches. But I also know that they would be good people without their religion. The key to doing good is the desire to do good. . . . I will say this. In MY club we toss the hypocrite out very fast. So again, I swear I shall not set foot in a Christian church again; Because -Jesus has been gone for 2000 years but his followers still won't stop drivin the nails.”

I don't know what to say except that this broke my heart. I know my prayers for him are not wasted, but I also know that the people we pray for, the people we long to see 'come back to God' and church would be better off waiting until the church is ready to receive them. I believe that if we would surrender our will to God that He would be able to create such a revival in us, and in the church that our

prayed-for ones would be willing and eager to come back. They need to see evidence that God is working in our lives as much as we need to see it.

Let's not keep them waiting. Let's not keep God waiting.

Chapter 6

Why Do We Need Grace

A friend recently said that cheap grace is a concern. I believe he was saying that some people think all they have to do is say 'I believe' then nothing more is required of them. Besides this not being true it would deprive the person who thinks this way of a great many blessings, and of salvation itself. I don't believe there really can be cheap grace. There can be a misunderstanding of grace or an attempt to abuse grace, but grace is never free.

If you've had to forgive anyone of a very big hurt and love them in spite of what they've done to you, you know that grace cost you something. Grace cost God everything. Grace is never cheap.

The primary reason to seek the Grace of God is to rest from our own works, our own attempts to

please God by our works, to sanctify ourselves by our own efforts.

“Today, after such a long time, as it has been said: ‘Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts.’ There remains, therefore, a rest for the people of God. For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His. Let us be diligent to enter that rest. . .

“ Hebrews 4:7, 9-11

I’m not saying that we need make no effort, but that our efforts are not to be in the area of trying to sanctify ourselves. God wants us to cease from our works and rest in Him. There are things we must do to cooperate with God in this process, but there are things we cannot do for ourselves. Here’s a story to illustrate.

A young man I know had been trapped in a downward spiral of drug and alcohol use. For a time

he would give in and go on binges, staying away from his family off and on, and being very hard to live with when home. During these times he got caught driving under the influence of alcohol several times, racking up charges while damaging his health and hurting his family. Then when a crisis would come he would want desperately out of this cycle and so fall on his face before God sobbing and pleading for help. He has offered his heart and life to God many times, but had not been willing to surrender his will to God. He would stay sober for a short time, but still be constantly fighting the drive to return to drugs and alcohol. There was never peace, and though he was sober he wasn't happy, and was not an easy person to be around. Finally he could hold out no longer so he would return to drugs and alcohol.

Then one day, sometime after a dangerous experience with drugs that damaged his heart and

nearly took his life, he decided to check himself into a psychiatric hospital for help.

There he was given medication that stopped the tortured thoughts, and the irresistible drive to take drugs and alcohol. His thinking cleared and he was able to see things in a better light. His relationship with his family improved dramatically and finally after years of struggle he has peace, joy, and rest from the battle he could never hope to win on his own. He had to have help outside himself, but didn't get that help until he was willing to reach out for it.

His heart is now full of love and gratitude, and he is a joy to be around. His focus is on what God has done for him, and what he can do for other people. His desire, his drive, is to share the things that give him such help and hope with others.

We need just such a rest from the battles we cannot win. God wants us to have that rest. No

matter how disciplined or well trained we are, no matter how able we seem to be to live the life we know God wants us to live, we cannot change ourselves. We cannot transform the thoughts and intents of our hearts. Only God can do that but He can't, He won't, unless we give Him permission. We have to ask Him to take our will, sometimes we have to ask Him to make us willing to be willing to do that.

I talked to a man named Dick Post, whom I met in church awhile back about this, and here is the story of his experience.

My prayer to God was something like this: "If you want me to stop smoking, you will have to give me the desire and ability to make a decision that I will never smoke again for the rest of my life. I simply do not have the desire or ability to make that decision yet alone the power to carry out the decision." Immediately, God gave me the desire and ability to choose not to smoke. I then made the decision not to smoke, and from that moment forward God gave me the power to carry out the

decision. That was 44 years ago, and by God's grace I never smoked again. I continued to crave cigarettes for 8 to 10 years, but the urge came less and less frequently, and the intensity of the urges slowly subsided as well. Righteousness by faith in Christ is amazing! When we choose to be forgiven, He covers us with His righteousness and we stand before God as if we had never sinned. When we choose to obey, He fills us with His righteousness which enables us to obey. The only thing that we can do to in order to be saved is to believe in Christ and by faith choose to accept the free gifts of forgiveness and power to obey.

Sanctification by grace through faith is not about saying 'I believe' and then resting on the idea that now you're saved and nothing more is required. I don't know why that would be attractive to anyone who really wants salvation. Sanctification by grace through faith is about being changed by God's grace and power. It's about victory over sin! It's about living a life of peace and happiness, being empty of self and filled with God Spirit. It's about living with God power not your feeble ineffective will power.

Wouldn't you want to hear someone say, 'I don't know what you have, but I want it in my life!?'
Wouldn't you like to have something to report every time the call is made in church for answers to prayer during the last week? Wouldn't you like to have your character flaws disappear, and struggles with sin resolved by God? Or would you rather come into the wedding banquet of the Son with your own filthy garment on only to be thrown out for refusing the garment God freely provided at such cost to Himself? I hope you choose the path of grace.

My Contract with God

Because I hold these things to be true:

1. I am a sinner who falls short of the glory of God

2. Even as my righteousness is as filthy rags, so my efforts to change myself are useless.¹¹ Just as the leopard cannot change its spots¹² I cannot change my heart. Jeremiah 13:23

3. If I would receive the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, which would fit me for service here, and for life with God through eternity, my only hope is to make a complete surrender of my will to God

¹¹ Ellen White, *Steps to Christ*(Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press, 2000) p 49 (68-69)

¹² *Jeremiah* 13:23

4. God is eager for permission to reproduce His perfect character in me, but He can do so only with a willing surrender of my will to Him.

I choose today to pray the following prayer:

Take me O Lord as wholly yours. I offer my will to you, please take it. I give up my useless efforts to change myself in exchange for Your transforming work in me. I lay aside my self-righteousness and submit myself to the righteousness of Christ. Just as I accept justification by faith as a gift from You, I also accept sanctification by faith as a gift from You. I thank You for the gift of Your grace, for all the provisions You have made for my salvation, and for Your willingness to answer this prayer. In Jesus name, Amen.