

God's Unlimited Promises to Hold On To

UNLIMITED LIFE



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Good News Unlimited

DEVOTIONAL

FROM ELIEZER TO YOU

Dear Friend

Welcome to the fourth edition of GNU's devotional, *Unlimited*. These little booklets, produced every two months, will help you walk closer with Jesus as you discover his unlimited and unchanging promises to hold on to.

The theme of this edition is *Unlimited Life*, focusing on the certainty of unlimited life through salvation in Jesus Christ, as well as the present joy and peace in your Christian life today. I also hope you enjoy, as much as I have, the inspirational stories about how people's lives are being changed as GNU helps to spread the Gospel. What a privilege that God uses each of us to help spread the Word fast!

We look forward to sharing reflections on *Unlimited Lordship* in our next edition, which will focus on your faith in Jesus as the Lord of your life.

Our Unlimited devotional booklets have been designed to offer practical wisdom, opportunities to reflect, and insights on how to serve others.

I love hearing your stories of how these devotionals are helping you personally to grow in Christ.

Receive this with our prayers, and an abundance of the blessings of life in Jesus Christ.

Grace and peace,

Eli

Eliezer Gonzalez
Senior Pastor, GNU



UNLIMITED LIFE

God's Unlimited Promises to Hold On To

KNOWING FOR SURE ABOUT UNLIMITED LIFE

Faith in our Lord Jesus Christ's person, work, and office, is the life, heart and mainspring of the Christian soldier's character.

I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life (1 John 5:13).

It's a very big question. How can you really know that you have eternal life? If you don't have a clear answer, you will live in insecurity and fear. And that's not God's will for anyone!

Some people will tell you that you can't know for sure whether you have eternal life until the end of your life. How wrong they are! Our text tells you the exact opposite. That's why John wrote his letter to his Christian friends.

We know that we have eternal life because God has promised it to those who have believed in Jesus (John 1:12; John 3:16). And Jesus made it perfectly clear in John 5:24 (CEV):

I tell you for certain that everyone who hears my message and has faith in the one who sent me has eternal life and will never be condemned. They have already gone from death to life.

That declaration trumps every other objection we can throw up.

Later in the New Testament, we read the only test that Scriptures give us to gauge whether we have eternal life:

Our love for each other proves that we have gone from death to life. But if you don't love each other, you are still under the power of death (1 John 3:14, CEV).

▼ **ELIEZER GONZALEZ**

Eli's Reflection: *So our love for each other is the 'ultimate test', the place where the rubber hits the road of our Christian life. Take some time today to examine your life. Have you allowed God to pour his love into you?*

THANK GOD THAT CHRIST IS OUR JUDGE

The Crucified One is to be the Judge of sinners.
Good News indeed!

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to that he has done, whether good or bad (2 Corinthians 5:10, NKJV).

Who is this Judge of all the earth before whom we each must stand? The text referred to “the judgment seat of Christ.” Did you ever think about that? Listen: *The Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son* (John 5:22).

The same story is found also in Romans 2:16: *God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel.*

It is by Jesus Christ through whom God will judge the secrets of men. It wasn't for nothing that Paul added, “according to my Gospel.” A major part of the Good News is that One with our human nature, the Son of man, our Elder Brother, is to be our Judge.

The Crucified One is to be the Judge of sinners. Good News indeed! This is where the judgment differs from the law courts of our day. It is not to be just an indictment because of sins committed. In fact, the real issue is not the sin question primarily, but the Son question. The Judge himself has declared:

He that believes in him [Christ] is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God (John 3:18, NKJV).

▼ **DES FORD**

Eli's Reflection: *It's good to know that you have a Friend in court, but it's even better when you know that your Friend is the Judge! How does knowing this change the way you view the judgment?*

SHARE THE EVERLASTING GOSPEL

**We can restate the Gospel, but never redefine it;
we can magnify it but never augment it;
we can reclaim it but never claim to own it.**

And he said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned (Mark 16:15–16, NKJV).

The writers of the New Testament are at pains to point out that the Gospel that must be preached is the same identical Gospel as preached by Christ and the apostles. That's why the Bible calls it "the everlasting Gospel" (Revelation 14:6).

Read the Bible's own definition of the Gospel in 1 Corinthians 15:3; the Gospel is that "which you heard from the beginning" (1 John 2:24). This special message cannot be changed, redefined or added to. Note how strongly Paul makes this point in Galatians 1:8–9, where he says that it cannot be altered even by divine revelation ("an angel from heaven").

The everlasting Gospel was first announced by the apostles on the basis of the Cross and resurrection of Christ, and it remains until the end of the world. This is how God has chosen to save sinners. There are no adjustments, no fine-tuning to this good news for every sinner, in every circumstance, and for all time.

We can restate it but never redefine it, we can magnify it but never add to it, we can reclaim it but never claim to own it – that's the everlasting Gospel! And we must always confess that we are the ones who need it most.

▼ **ELIEZER GONZALEZ**

Eli's Reflection: *Who needs the Gospel the most? The sinners "out there," or you yourself? The answer to that question will determine your religious experience, and may determine your salvation. Ask God to find a way to convince you even more of your personal need of his grace.*

HOW TO HAVE THE VERDICT OF THE LAST JUDGMENT TODAY

When the believer accepts what Christ did for him on the Cross, he has the verdict of the last judgment already.

By grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast (Ephesians 2:8-9, NIV).

Sin is like a burden on us, like a law over us, and a disease within us. The guilt of sin, the power of sin, the presence of sin can only be dealt with by Jesus Christ and his Gospel.

God removes the guilt of sin the moment we believe. The power of sin is simultaneously crushed in principle as we behold God's great love for the sinner. Sin's presence no longer reigns in us, though our sinful nature remains.

We are "accepted in the Beloved" (Ephesians 1:6, KJV), "complete in him" (Colossians 2:10, KJV), without "condemnation" (Romans 8:1), and made to "sit with him [Christ] in the heavenly places" (Ephesians 2:6, RSV).

The Bible promises that we are saved through faith, the gift of God, and not by any good that we do ourselves. If we forget this and trust anything in ourselves for acceptance and for peace, we are inviting turmoil and stress.

Find your greatest comfort only in Christ's gift of righteousness. When you accept what Christ did for you on the Cross, you have the verdict of the last judgment already, and for as long as you believe.

▼ **DES FORD**

Eli's Reflection: *Let the thought sink in that you already have the favourable judgment of the last judgment and that you have been saved (not that you might be saved). How does that make you feel about your life? What can you do now that was more difficult to do before?*

EVERYONE CAN BE SAVED

Heaven is for everyone who believes.

I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes... For there is no difference ... the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him (Romans 1:16; 10:12, NIV).

The religion of many people is like a headache: they have no desire to lose their head, but it hurts them to keep it. This leads to the question: is Christianity hard or easy? Or put another way: does salvation depend mostly upon God's doing, or mine?

The word Gospel means "Good News," but Christianity would not be good news if those with handicaps through heredity and environment could not be saved. The Scriptures, however, promise that those who are saved are made strong "out of weakness" (Hebrews 11:34).

Our salvation depends more upon God than upon us, for the Bible is emphatic that everyone, whatever their temperament or natural advantages, are powerless of themselves to live a righteous life: *The mind governed by the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so (Romans 8:7, NIV).*

Paul encourages all who become aware of their weakness:

God has chosen the foolish things of the world, ... the weak things of the world, ... and base things of the world, and things which are despised (1 Corinthians 1:27,28, NKJV).

Heaven is for everyone who believes.

▼ **DES FORD**

Eli's Reflection: *Yes, heaven is for you! How do you express joy when you are really happy? Express your joy for salvation in Christ. Let heaven know how happy you are (and perhaps some of the people around you as well!)*

Letter from India...

SEWING THE SEEDS OF THE GOSPEL

When Jesus said "I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full" (John 10:10), he was not only talking about the life to come. The Gospel also has the power to transform lives in the here and now. Thanks to your generosity, GNU's leaders in India are helping to preach that kind of Gospel to the most needy of society.

Pastor Joseph writes that he and his dedicated team have established sewing classes at the Good News Children's Care Centre in Nandiwada. It offers practical tuition to children from the centre and women from the surrounding community.

These children come from the lowest strata of Indian society. They have very little opportunity to climb from the disadvantage into which they have been born. A practical skill, such as the ability to sew, can transform their future lives by giving them a skill they can use to earn a living.

A teacher has been appointed to hold three classes per day. And news of the classes has spread. Women from the village and surrounding communities have asked to join. Most of these people are Hindus, who have never heard of Christianity.

This is a Christianity that offers them practical help for their impoverished lives today, and in doing so, arouses their curiosity about a religion that is based on such love and compassion. As always, Pastor Joseph is on hand to tell them the story of Jesus and the Good News of salvation, and how it can transform their lives today.



▼ **The practical Gospel in action:** *GNU Sewing School in Nandiwada teaches practical, life-changing skills as well as the Good News of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.*

We heard from Lakshi, a woman from the village who has been attending the classes herself.

This Sewing School is very, very helpful and useful for our future life as well as for the futures of the young girls. It is God who has helped Pr Joseph to start this program. We all are so happy and glad to learn for our bright future. Thanks to Jesus.

So the Gospel of hope touches the lives of more people in this desperately needy part of the world.

Pastor Joseph returns to one of his regular themes:

Thanks to Jesus that he uses us to help his children. We can improve their lives, and then they are more receptive to the message of the Gospel. They are happy to learn about Jesus and his love for them.

▼ **Prayer Point:** *Take a moment to thank God for the practical beauty of the Gospel, and the hope it injects into the present as well as the future. Ask God to guide your contribution to his work.*

YOU CAN'T BRIBE GOD

The only thing that can make us acceptable before God is the atoning blood of Christ that was shed for us at Calvary.

“Is anyone thirsty? Come and drink—even if you have no money! Come, take your choice of wine and milk—it’s all free! (Isaiah 55:1, TLB).”

The story of Simon the Sorcerer in Acts 8 illustrates how Christianity was misinterpreted even in the times of the earliest church. Simon was a magician in Samaria. He liked to portray himself as having great wonder-working powers. So he offered the apostles money so that he could receive the power of the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:18–19).

Simon tried to bribe God. He thought that if he gave God his money, that God would give him his blessing. He was as mistaken as you can get.

Too many people relate to our religious experience as if it were some kind of reciprocal business transaction with God. “If I am good, then God will save me; if I follow the rules then God will love me; if I am faithful then God will heal me.”

But God’s blessing is his own free gift to us. We shouldn’t cheapen the blood of Christ by trying to bribe God with the paltry, miserable things that we offer up to him.

You can’t bribe God (Acts 8:20). All religion that tries to offer God something in exchange for his favour is false religion. The only thing that can make us acceptable before God is the atoning blood of Christ that was shed for us at Calvary.

▼ **ELIEZER GONZALEZ**

Eli’s Reflection: *Think carefully about your life, and about how you have tried to bribe God in the past. The truth is that we’ve all done it in some way or another. The important thing is to recognize it for what it is. Pray a prayer of repentance and ask God to help you appreciate his free gift to you.*

JESUS IS THE WAY, THE TRUTH, AND THE LIFE

Faith needs to lay hold of the glorious truth that Christ has come all the way down to sinners.

I am the way, and the truth, and the life (John 14:6, NIV).

"I am the way." Christ spans the distance between God and the sinner. Many of us would gladly manufacture a ladder of our own, and climb up to God. But that is impossible.

By faith, we need to grasp the glorious truth that Christ has come all the way down to sinners. Christ is not merely a Guide who came to show men the right way to God: he is himself the Way to the Father.

"I am the truth." Christ is the full and final revelation of God. Truth is not to be found in a system of philosophy, but in a Person. Christ reveals God and exposes our unworthiness. In him we find "all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Colossians 2:3). Christ is not merely a Teacher who came to reveal to the human race a doctrine regarding God: He is himself the Truth about God.

"I am the life." Christ is the Deliverer from death. He is not just a doctor (John 10:10). The whole Bible teaches us that we are spiritually lifeless. But the person who believes in Christ has passed out of death into life (John 5:24).

"He that believes on the Son has everlasting life"
(John 3:36).

▼ **A.W. PINK (ADAPTED)**

Eli's Reflection: *There has never been any other religion whose founder has made anything close to these claims of Christ. They transcend every other philosophy, every teaching, and every need. Because Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, he is able to supply for your needs today. Trust him.*

JUMP FOR JOY!

The happiness promised to believers is not simply a vague hope in the future, but the unshakeable reality of present joy.

*Be truly glad. There is wonderful joy ahead
(1 Peter 1:6, NLT).*

The actual Greek word that Peter uses, that is translated here as truly glad, and as in the KJV, literally means “jump for joy.”

The Christian can jump for joy even though he or she may have grief in all kinds of trials (v6a). What’s the reason for all this jumping around?

This jump-for-joy gladness is because we have been born again (v3), and so we now live in breathless expectation (v3), because we have a priceless and incorruptible inheritance (v4). And even if we suffer now, nothing can touch us unless God permits it (v5).

There are too many mopey Christians who seem to live in perpetual gloom. Perhaps they have not yet got the message that Christ came so that we may have “life to the full” (John 10:10). The happiness promised to believers is not simply a vague hope in the future, but the unshakeable reality of present joy.

This is deep, genuine happiness that we can enjoy now. Yes, there most certainly is “wonderful joy ahead.” That doesn’t mean there isn’t joy now. Think about it. It just means that however good it may be now, it’s only going to get better!

Excuse me. I have to stand up. I have to jump for joy!

▼ **ELIEZER GONZALEZ**

Eli’s Reflection: *How do you develop joy in your life? A joyful life starts with joyful thoughts. Joyful thoughts come from gratitude and praise. Gratitude and praise come from worship. So worship in such a way that you will experience God’s joy.*

CHRIST IS THE BEST TEACHER

Oh for grace to study the Bible
with Jesus as both our teacher and our lesson!

He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself (Luke 24:27, KJV).

The two disciples on the road to Emmaus had a great journey, because they were walking with the best teacher, who could interpret the Scriptures with all the wisdom of God. Let us, also, walk with this wonderful teacher, because until we have learned his wisdom, we will never understand the gift of his salvation.

This great Teacher used the best book in the world for his textbook. He could have told them things they had never heard before, but instead he taught them from familiar passages of Scripture. The Son of God knew that as he interpreted the Word of God, its wisdom would touch their hearts in a way that reasoning and speculation could never do. Meditation upon the Word of God would convince them of truth. When Jesus himself sought to enrich others, he used the Holy Scriptures as his textbook.

Jesus led these fortunate disciples to consider the best subject in the world, for Jesus spoke about Jesus, and explained everything about himself. Our Lord chose the most beautiful topic possible – himself and his work. And when we are studying the Word of God, these are the topics we should also focus on. What a blessing it is to study the Bible with Jesus as both our teacher and our lesson!

▼ **CHARLES SPURGEON [PARAPHRASED]**

Eli's Reflection: *My mother was a very humble lady who used to pray that the Lord would teach her children, because she felt insufficient for such a great responsibility. The Bible says that Jesus himself will teach us if we let him. Make that your prayer, to be taught by Jesus.*

THE “GOOD NEWS” RELIGION

The believer has no need to make his peace with God,
for Christ has already done that,
and Christ is his Peace.

*This man welcomes sinners and eats with them
(Luke 15:2, NIV).*

There are just two religions in the world, and only one of them is pleasing to God. The most common religion of the world says, “Be good and God will love you.” This religion is human-centred, and dependent on good behaviour and ‘works’. People believing in this kind of religion depend on their feelings about their relationship with God, and deep down they know they will never be able to please him.

Bible religion, in contrast – the Good News religion – teaches that Christ came into the world to save sinners. He loves and accepts us even while we are sinners. It is this acceptance that changes us. God “justifies the ungodly” (Romans 4:5).

The glory of the New Testament religion is that we are saved on the basis of what Christ has done, not by what we do; by what he has felt, not by what we feel. Salvation is by grace alone, through faith alone.

The righteousness by which we are justified is 100 percent, but it is imputed (credited to us) rather than imparted (given to us). The righteousness of sanctification is imparted (given to us) by the Holy Spirit, but it is never 100 percent in this life.

The believer has no need to be anxious about what God thinks of him but only what God thinks of Christ, his Substitute. The believer has no need to make his peace with God, for Christ has already done that, and Christ is his Peace.

▼ DES FORD

Eli’s Reflection: *Which religion do you believe in: the good news religion or the good works religion? Does your religion bring you stress, or does it bring you peace? Share this devotional with someone you know who needs peace in their Christian walk.*

FORGIVENESS: THE GIFT OF THE GOSPEL

Forgiveness is the beating heart of the Gospel.

In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace that he lavished on us (Ephesians 1:7–8, NIV).

Forgiveness is the beating heart of the Gospel. It is what pumps its life-giving power throughout the world. In fact, the Gospel is all about forgiveness. Everything else that the Gospel is about stems from forgiveness.

It's taken me a long time to realise this truth. That's because all of my religious experience was about the Gospel being something difficult to understand. And it's because all my life I was taught that we get what we deserve. Well, we don't. Not from God when we are under his grace.

I used to think that the Bible was all about the grandest sweep of history, and grand philosophy and prophecy, and advice about how to live. But while all those things are there, that's not what the Bible is all about. The Bible, from the beginning to the end, is all about God's forgiving grace (Isaiah 53; Luke 1:76–78; 3:1–3; Acts 2:38; 13:38–40).

Let's not complicate the Gospel. We need to see afresh the sacrificial love of Christ, so we can understand that what we need is forgiveness, and then we need to simply accept it as God's gracious gift. And everything else just flows from there.

▼ **ELIEZER GONZALEZ**

Eli's Reflection: *Anyone for whom forgiveness is only a nice idea is lost eternally. It must be applied, both received and released. If there is anyone whom you need to forgive, don't delay. Do it today.*

NO CONDEMNATION

**If Calvary does not move us,
God has nothing better to convince us.**

God will not take away a life; he will devise plans so as not to keep an outcast banished forever from his presence (2 Samuel 14:13, NRSV).

As Adam represented the race in Eden, so Christ—the second Adam (1 Corinthians 15:45)—represents humanity at the Cross: *One has died for all; therefore all have died* (2 Corinthians 5:14, NRSV).

When Christ died for the sins of the world, God counted it that you paid the price for your sinfulness. The Bible tells us that because of Adam's disobedience, everyone who has ever lived is sinful by nature. Jesus, the 'second Adam' has paid the penalty for sin by his perfect life and his death on behalf of everyone.

Now, whosoever will, may come. Now, all sins will be forgiven. Now, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins because the claims of the righteous, eternal law have been met. We have died through our Substitute and Representative, Jesus.

God will not ask us to pay the price a second time if we abide in Christ. *"You are complete in him"* (Colossians 2:10, NKJV), and *"accepted in the beloved"* (Ephesians 1:6, KJV), so *"There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus"* (Romans 8:1, NRSV).

If Calvary does not move us, God has nothing better to convince us. The Cross is the centre and the basis of Christianity. To refuse the Cross is to treat our own destiny with contempt, but when we accept it, we begin eternal life.

▼ DES FORD

Eli's Reflection: *What have you seen used to try to attract people to Christianity? The promise of earthly blessings? The fear of hell? Examine closely your own reasons for being a Christian. Is it the attraction of the Cross?*

TELL SOMEONE ABOUT JESUS

True grace is not a spiritual monopoly.

He first found his own brother Simon, and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which is translated, the Christ) (John 1:41, NKJV).

This is an excellent example of a positive, productive spiritual life. As soon as a person has found Christ, he or she wants to invite others. True grace is not a spiritual monopoly—it wants to include everyone.

The Bible story tells us that Andrew first found his own brother Simon, and then others. The lesson is that we should not neglect our own family when it comes to sharing the good news of the Gospel, but make sure that our loved ones benefit from our deep friendship with Christ.

When Andrew went to find his brother, he could not have imagined the impact Simon would have on early Christianity. Simon Peter was worth ten Andrews so far as the growth of the church was concerned, and yet Andrew was instrumental in bringing him to Jesus. You may not have great talent yourself, and yet you can still draw people to Christ so they too can serve him.

Ah, dear friend, you cannot imagine the possibilities you have for service to God! You might just speak a word to a child, but that child might be inspired to do great things for God in the future. Andrew might have had only two talents (as in Jesus' parable in Matthew 25:14-30), but he used what he had in the service of God. He found Peter for Jesus. You can do the same..

▼ **CHARLES SPURGEON (PARAPHRASED)**

Eli's Reflection: *What are the talents that God has given you? The question is not how many or how great you think they are, but how you are using them. Make a list of them, and next to each, write down one way in which you are using your talents for the Kingdom of Heaven. Dedicate your talents anew to God and his work on earth.*

APPROACH GOD BASED ON HIS MERCY

Like David, we should plead with God for mercy, not based on our blameless life, but according to God's unfailing love and compassion.

Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions (Psalm 51:1, NIV).

Psalm 26 is very different to the Psalm quoted above. It is a Psalm of David's youth, written before he understood the depths of his weakness, and the evil he was capable of.

Read Psalm 26 and you will hear David claiming to have led a blameless life, never to have faltered, nor sat down with evil-doers. He claims that his hands are innocent – all unlike the wicked, who are scheming and bloodthirsty. David asks God to save him because of his personal blamelessness. David is so confident in his superior moral position in relation to sinners, that he asks God to try his heart.

God did try David's heart. And David was found wanting. David was horrified to discover later in life that he was fully capable of adultery and the vilest murder – in short, that he himself—to borrow the apostle's term—was the "Chief of Sinners." This is when he penned a very different Psalm.

We must learn, like David, to pray the prayer that the older and wiser David later prayed in Psalm 51. Like David, we should plead with God for mercy, based on our blameless life, but according to God's unfailing love and compassion. This is the only basis of salvation and acceptance with God.

▼ **ELIEZER GONZALEZ**

Eli's Reflection: *Take some time to reconsider how you approach God. Is it on the basis that you have done some good things, or even just that you have tried to be a better person? Or is it simply because you trust in his love and mercy? You may want to start your relationship with God all over again.*

NO MORE HATRED!

Sacrificial love has transforming power.

I will help you, says the Lord (Isaiah 41:14, NKJV).

There is no greater love than to lay down one's life for one's friends (John 15:13, NLT).

There is a power that is stronger than hatred. It is the power of forgiveness.

In Ernest Gordon's book *Miracle on the River Kwai*, Dale Ratzlaff tells how, during WWII, Scottish soldiers were forced by their Japanese captors to labour on a jungle railroad. Under the brutality of the Japanese, the men degenerated to barbarous behavior. One afternoon, a shovel went missing. The officer got his gun and threatened to kill them all unless the shovel was found. Finally, one man stepped forward. The officer picked up another shovel, and beat the man to death. Afterwards the missing shovel was found in its right place.

The word spread like wildfire through the whole camp. An innocent man had been willing to die to save the others! The incident had a profound effect. The men began to treat each other like brothers. When the victorious Allies swept in, the survivors, human skeletons, lined up in front of their captors, and instead of attacking their captors, insisted:

No more hatred. No more killing. Now what we need is forgiveness.

Sacrificial love has transforming power. It is the very power of Christ, given to us through his Spirit. We don't need more hatred. We need to learn what it is to walk as God's forgiven children, and never look back again.

▼ **ELIEZER GONZALEZ**

Eli's Reflection: *Is there someone whom you need to forgive – perhaps have needed to for a very long time? It can be one of the most difficult things in the world. Look to the sacrificial love that Christ demonstrated at Calvary. Let its power transform you.*

Letter from Ukraine...

ALLA FINDS PEACE IN CHRIST

This is Alla's story, a story that is replicated many times in the misery that is Ukraine today. Your gifts have enabled GNU to help lift desperate people from their hopelessness and give them new life in Jesus Christ.

It was summer, 2014, when we were forced to leave our home in Eastern Ukraine. Each time I remember it brings tears to my eyes. Once, before we left, there was a bombing with an explosion that was so strong that it threw us to the ground. After that we concluded we had to leave.

At first, we moved around the region, living in hotels, but that became too expensive. Then we moved to Kharkov, where we stayed at hostels or slept at the railway station when we had nowhere else to go.

At last we went to Poltava, where, again we slept at the railway station. By now we understood that the war would last a long time and we could not return home, so we started searching for permanent accommodation. This was difficult. Sometimes accommodation owners would take our rent money, but did not provide us with any facilities, not even a bed.

Just before the conflict, I was diagnosed with breast cancer, and had an operation in 2011. Medicines are expensive and I was given some for free from governmental organisations. But when the war began, they stopped helping me. I also suffer from various after-effects along with other diseases: hypothyroidism, hepatic steatosis, cataract, glaucoma, and diabetes.



▼ **Alla:** *I have gone through so much, but I am joyful in the hope I have found in Christ.*

In March, 2015 I was living in Poltava, and I read an advertisement on a bus about some evangelistic programmes being run by GNU's Dr Eliezer Gonzalez and Dr Philip Rodionoff. I had been acquainted with the Bible for a long time, having attended the Orthodox Church, and then since 2005, attending Protestant churches.

After reading the advertisement, I attended all the meetings. There the church gave me food and clothing, and that helped me greatly. I continued studying the Bible after the meetings, but only decided to be baptised when the meetings were held again in 2017. At the last meeting, a strong, unstoppable desire awoke in me to be baptised. I decided that it was time to grow up – I want to grow up in Christ.

▼ **Prayer Point:** *Thank God for his blessings to you, and prayerfully ask him for guidance as to how you can best help his people who are most in need.*

JESUS IS THE TRUE TEMPLE

Every “temple” concept in the Bible,
whether on earth or in heaven,
always ultimately points to Jesus and his ministry.

I was glad when they said to me, “Let us go to the house of the Lord” (Psalm 122:1; NASB).

Sometimes, the building in which Christians meet is called their “church,” the “house of the Lord,” the “sanctuary,” or even the “temple.”

The Old Testament is full of expressions that point to how good it is to be in the “house of the Lord.” However, this expression only ever refers to the Jewish temple in the city of Jerusalem. This, and everything associated with it, are called “shadows of things to come” (Colossians 2:17.)

One of the very first things that Jesus did in his earthly ministry was to stand right in the middle of the Jewish temple and announce that he himself was the true temple (John 2). The temple only ever pointed to him. Every temple concept in the Bible, whether on earth or in heaven, always ultimately points to Jesus and his ministry.

Jesus announces that salvation, safety, and blessings are found only in him, in whom the fullness of the glory of God dwells (Colossians 1:19). Jesus is himself now the true “house of the Lord,” and through Jesus, his people can be God’s house as well (1 Corinthians 3:16).

The Bible tells us that one day soon there will be no more temple—not in heaven, and certainly not on earth—because the Lamb of God is revealed as the True Temple. (Revelation 21:22).

▼ **ELIEZER GONZALEZ**

Eli’s Reflection: *Spend some time meditating and praying about the reality and meaning of Jesus as the truest temple for you. What does the Lord reveal to you about the blessings that will come from this New Testament teaching?*

CHRIST IS OUR PEACE

Looking at the Cross, the believer
sees the holiness of God, and repents;
sees the power of God, and believes;
sees the love of God, and is born again.

As one man's trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one man's act of righteousness leads to acquittal and life for all men (Romans 5:18, RSV).

Humanity's need for meaning, guidance, forgiveness, and moral strength are provided for in the Christian gospel, and nowhere else. Because of this, we should all make the gospel first in our thinking and doing. Paul saw this and wrote:

Now I would remind you, brethren, in what terms I preached to you the gospel... For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures (1 Corinthians 15:1-4 RSV).

How few, even of professing Christians, understand the words of Romans 5:10,18! These verses clearly state that the atonement of Christ restored the whole human race to favour with God. Christ is our peace, because he broke down the wall between God and humanity. By his own blood Christ signed the ransom papers for the race. And the Gospel is the glad word of that event.

Calvary is the "double cure" for sin. It takes away both sin's guilt and its power. Looking at the Cross, the believer sees the holiness of God, and repents; sees the power of God, and believes; sees the love of God, and is born again.

▼ DES FORD

Eli's Reflection: *Do you have peace in your life—a peace that can't be shaken whatever today may bring? To have peace, seek Christ. He is your peace. Set aside some time today to ask God to fill you with the peace of Christ.*

THE MOST IMPORTANT FORMULA IN THE WORLD

Obedience and godly living are always the fruit of salvation, but never the reason.

If by grace, then it cannot be based on works; if it were, grace would no longer be grace (Romans 11:6, NIV).

I remember, as a teenager, trying to understand salvation in terms of this formula:

Salvation = X+Y, where X = My Goodness and Y = Jesus' Goodness. Now I look back and realise how totally silly I was! It's the most common mathematical error in the world! (Romans 3:22; 11:6; Ephesians 2:8–9).

The truth about the gospel was one of the hardest lessons I have ever had to learn. And I am still learning it every day, that Salvation = Y+0 (where Y = Jesus' Goodness and 0 is the value of anything I have ever done). My performance, deeds, character, past, or present, doesn't even make it into the formula—never, ever!

The truth is, I was never much good at maths. I really should trust God on this most important equation of all.

Everything in our lives seems to conspire to tell us that Salvation = X+Y. Surely there is something you must do? However, we must come to understand the depths of our sinfulness so that we may come to a total dependence on Christ.

Obedience and godly living are always the fruit of salvation, but never the reason. They're just not part of the formula for how we are saved!

▼ **ELIEZER GONZALEZ**

Eli's Reflection: *Have you ever had any wrong ideas about salvation? What was it that helped you see the truth? Share that with someone today.*

YOU HAVE BEEN SOUGHT OUT

That anyone should be sought out
is matchless grace,
but that we should be sought out
is grace beyond degree!

You shall be called Sought Out (Isaiah 62:12, NKJV).

The surpassing grace of God is seen very clearly when he tells us that we were not only sought, but sought out. There is a difference. If you drop something on the floor, you seek it—you look for it. But ‘seeking out’ is far more intense, more persevering.

It is as if we are some precious piece of gold that has fallen into a sewer, and the search for the gold is intense and detailed. This search goes on until the treasure is found. There is no thought of abandoning it, because what is lost is too valuable to let go. This is the way God seeks us out. This is what happens when God’s mercy seeks us out to show us the Gospel.

Glory and thanks to God for this endless love and grace! We were sought out!

There were no shadows dark enough and no filthiness capable of hiding us! God found us and brought us home! Praise God for his infinite love, for his power to restore us!

That anyone should be sought out is matchless grace, but that we should be sought out is grace beyond degree! We can find no reason for it except God’s matchless love, and can only lift up our heart in wonder, and praise the Lord that today we wear the name of “Sought out.”

▼ **CHARLES SPURGEON (PARAPHRASED)**

Eli’s Reflection: *Take some time to reflect from where God has sought you out, and where he has called you to be. In what way can you praise him today for his wonderful grace?*

YOU ARE A WINNER THROUGH CHRIST

Conquerors? That's good.
More than conquerors? That's better!

In all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us (Romans 8:37, NIV).

According to General Douglas MacArthur, "In war, there is no substitute for victory." This is true of the Christian conflict also. "What?" asks a concerned Christian. "Why this talk of war? War implies effort, struggle. I believe in God's gift of salvation by faith alone."

Salvation is by faith alone. However, the evidence that we have received so great a salvation is the experience of being more than conquerors in the daily clash with evil. It was Paul, the apostle of justification by faith alone, who had so much to say about the Christian warfare. Read his comments in Romans 7:23; 13:12; 2 Corinthians 6:7; 10:4; Ephesians 6:17; and 1 Thessalonians 5:8.

Paul tells us that we are more than conquerors through Jesus! Conquerors? That's good. More than conquerors? That's better! And not "so shall it be one day," but we are conquerors right now, this very day.

And the method of victory Paul offers is the best method of all. "Through him who loved us." That takes a lot of the strain out of it. The victory is not through us, but through Christ.

Even when discussing warfare Paul does not depart from his chief theme: Christ. The Saviour is Alpha and Omega—the beginning and the end—not only in rescuing us from sin and offering us full and free salvation, but in the entire Christian experience.

▼ DES FORD

Eli's Reflection: *Do you feel like a conqueror? It's true that we often don't. Think of one practical step that you can take in your life to strengthen your faith-walk so that you can live more in the reality of Christ's victory?*

START AGAIN IN THE POWER OF THE SPIRIT

The essence of the Gospel is that if we hold on to Christ, we always get to start again.

*Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit
(Zechariah 4:6, KJV)*

Where would we be if we couldn't start again—if there were no second chances, if we could never try again, if nothing was ever new? There would be no dawning sun, no newborn babies, and no birthdays. There would be no forgiveness, no renewal, and no restoration.

Our God is much more than the God of second chances. If that's all he was, then it wouldn't be enough to save anyone.

The essence of the Gospel is that if we hold on to Christ, we always get to start again, we can always be renewed in Christ when by faith we have him as our Lord and King! We can be accounted as perfect before God, and we can live as if we had never sinned, never failed, and never fallen—ever!

When Peter wanted to get Jesus to tell him what the maximum number of times was that he should forgive others, Jesus told him that there is no limit at all to the mercy of God, no limit to his forgiving, restoring, and renewing power in our lives (See Matthew 18:21–22), and that we should do the same to others.

So, if God is like that, then how can we start again? Only in the power of the Spirit of God.

▼ **ELIEZER GONZALEZ**

Eli's Reflection: *Do you need to start again? To start again is to give control of your life to the Spirit of God, who works in his own ways, and not always in ours. Are you willing to start again in the Spirit and not in your own strength? Spend some time in prayer about this today.*

GOD IS NOT EXCLUSIVE

Thank God that Heaven's condition is the acceptance of the perfect righteousness of Christ, not our tattered, grimy human robes of our own characters.

There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all (Ephesians 4:4-6).

There is just one family of God, though its members are scattered among many groups. According to the New Testament, "no man can call Jesus Lord save by the Holy Spirit" (1 Corinthians 12:3). Thus, anyone having Christ as Saviour and Lord is a member of his family, of his church. This is true, even though not all believers see the particulars of duty alike. They are none the less God's children.

You don't have to have a perfect understanding of Scripture to be God's child. Our God looks at the heart, the inclination, the will, and where there is the intent to please God and obey his known will, there that person is regarded as his child.

Accurate knowledge is not required. Neither is perfection called for. If it were, all of us would be excluded.

Read the story in Luke 1:5-20, where Zechariah the priest and his wife Elizabeth are described as perfect before God, keeping all his commandments. Yes, this is the way they were described, even though both their understanding of the will of God and their performance of it was defective.

Thank God that the condition of Heaven is the acceptance of the perfect righteousness of Christ, not our tattered, grimy human robes of our own characters.

▼ DES FORD

Eli's Reflection: *Do you attend a church regularly? If so, make the next day you attend special by inviting someone to come with you. If you don't attend church regularly, find a church near you and visit it. Pray that the Lord will lead you to the right one for you.*

COSTLY GRACE

Cheap grace is not enough.

The only kind that can save me is the grace that cost God everything and is free to me.

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life (John 3:16, NIV).

Costly grace is the gospel which must be sought again and again and again, the gift which must be asked for, the door at which a man must knock. Such grace is costly because it calls us to follow, and it is grace because it calls us to follow Jesus Christ.

It is costly because it costs a man his life, and it is grace because it gives a man the only true life. It is costly because it condemns sin, and grace because it justifies the sinner. Above all, it is costly because it cost God the life of his Son: 'Ye were bought at a price', and what has cost God much cannot be cheap for us. Above all, it is grace because God did not reckon his Son too dear a price to pay for our life, but delivered him up for us. Costly grace is the Incarnation of God. – Dietrich Bonhoeffer

There is another gospel: the gospel of cheap grace. So, what is the gospel of cheap grace? It is any gospel that says that your salvation is so easy that you could do something to contribute towards it.

I believe in costly grace. Cheap grace is not enough. The only one that can save me is the grace that cost God everything and is free to me.

▼ **ELIEZER GONZALEZ**

Eli's Reflection: *The reality is that the free grace of God is the costliest grace in the universe. Work it through in your own mind, and when you next gather with believers, encourage them with your experience of God's grace in your own life.*

JESUS FILLS YOUR NET WITH FISH

**He who asks us to let down the net,
will fill it with fishes.**

Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch (Luke 5:4, NKJV).

This story teaches us how God uses people for his work on earth. The catch of fish was miraculous, but the story doesn't forget about the fisherman, his boat, or his fishing tackle. This miracle used ordinary fishermen and their equipment. It is the same when it comes to saving people for God's kingdom.

Our own skills by themselves are not enough. The fishermen said to Jesus, "Master, we have toiled all the night and have taken nothing." What was the reason for this? After all, they were skilled fishermen, and they knew how and where to fish. They had worked all night. Were there no fish in the sea? Certainly not, as it turned out, for as soon as Jesus came, they swam to the net in shoals.

So why were they not able to catch the fish before Jesus arrived? Jesus used this experience as a powerful lesson that we need him to accomplish everything useful in our lives. The Bible tells us: "Without him we can do nothing" (John 15:5). But with Christ we can do all things.

Christ's presence brings success. Jesus sat in Peter's boat, and his will, by a mysterious influence, drew the fish to the net. When Jesus is lifted up in his Church, his presence is the Church's power. He who asks us to let down the net, will fill it with fishes.

▼ **CHARLES SPURGEON (PARAPHRASED)**

Eli's Reflection: *Is there a blessing that you have been seeking in your life which until now seems to have eluded you? Ask Christ about it again in prayer. Ask him to show you, in your life and in this situation, what it means for you to "let down your net" so that he can fill it with blessings..*

THE STORY OF JESUS IS THE STORY OF THE CHURCH

It is magnificent to see how,
whatever the Bible is writing about,
somehow it always directs us to Jesus.

*“I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God,
“who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty”
(Revelation 1:8, NIV).*

I wonder if you've noticed that the book of Revelation couches the experience of the church in terms that remind us about Jesus. It is magnificent to see how whatever the Bible is writing about, somehow it always directs us to Jesus.

The “anti-Christ” is described as a duplicate, a counterfeit, of Christ. This is because false religion is always near the truth; the one thing it lacks is the blood—confidence and trust in the blood of Christ.

But then we look at the story of the true church. It also is expressed in terms reminiscent of Jesus. Did you notice here what it said? The church would prophesy—that is, uphold the truths of the Old and New Testaments—for 1260 days. That's how long Jesus preached for when he was here on earth. The story of our Lord Jesus Christ is the story of his church.

The scenes of the judgments of Christ, the unfairness, the false witnessing, the lying and deception—all these will take place in every part of the world. It will be a time of trouble indeed. And my main question is, “How do we prepare for it? How did Christ prepare for it? Trust and obey, for there's no other way!

▼ **DES FORD**

Eli's Reflection: *Read the first and last chapters of the book of Revelation. These chapters clearly reveal the key theme and the central focus of the book. What do you discover when you read them?*

THE CRITERION IS LOVE

Christ never made total uniformity in doctrinal understanding or perfect faith to be the criteria for being his disciple.

'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbour as yourself.' (Matthew 22:37–39, NIV).

We have a natural human tendency to categorise everything as true or false, good or bad, and yours or mine. And then, even worse, we use that to build walls between others and ourselves. We put people into little boxes.

Jesus taught that in the Kingdom life, it must not be like that (Matthew 12:48). Jesus taught that the greatest commandment is to love God, and the second is to love your neighbour as yourself (Matthew 22:37–40). Jesus puts God above all, and everyone else is on a level playing field.

Christ never made total uniformity in doctrinal understanding or perfect faith to be the criteria for being his disciple. If so, none of the original twelve disciples would have made it. Rather he said that the criterion was love (John 13:35). Those who share this love will never consider themselves closer to God or more favoured by him than those who belong to another Christian group.

We should fellowship in a Christian church according to our understanding of that truth as found in the Word, and as the Spirit of God convicts our conscience. However, let's do that knowing that all those who love Christ are our brothers and sisters.

▼ **ELIEZER GONZALEZ**

Eli's Reflection: *Do you know some people who are Christians, but not part of your denomination or church? Invite them over to your place for a meal. Spend some time praying together for each other.*

JESUS IS ALWAYS WITH YOU

I am with you.

That's the great message of Jesus
and of all of Scripture.

*I am with you always, even unto the end
(Matthew 28:20 KJV)..*

These were Jesus' last words to his church on earth. You may know that in the Greek (and in Hebrew also), 'I am' is the expression for 'God.' It means the ever-living Yahweh (or Jehovah).

The literal translation of 'I am with you always, even unto the end,' is: 'I with you am all the days unto the end.' All the days: the bad days, good days, blue days, daze days, all days. Jesus is not only with us, he is around about us. 'With you' separates the 'I' and the 'am.' 'I with you am.' Jesus is round about us. That's why the Psalmist writes:

*Where can I go from your Spirit?
Where can I flee from your presence?
If I go up to the heavens, you are there;
if I make my bed in the depths, you are there...
even there your hand will guide me,
your right hand will hold me fast.
(Psalm 139:7-10 NIV).*

I love Lamentations 3:57. Here, the prophet cries out in agony and pain, says, *You came near when I called, and you said, 'Do not fear.'*

The message, 'Fear not', is found 365 times in the Bible. You need not be afraid any day because, I with you am. That's the great message of Jesus and of all of Scripture.

▼ **DES FORD**

Eli's Reflection: *Do you want less fear and more confidence in your life? The antidote is to spend more time with God. Decide right now to do that this week, and see what happens.*

THE CHURCH THAT BROKE MY HEART

There is no work more important, anywhere on earth, than to announce Jesus Christ and the Good News of his salvation to those who need to hear it.

How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? (Romans 10:14, NIV).

The smallest church I ever preached in was in India. Little more than a dozen people could sit crossed-legged and pressed together under its tiny thatched roof.

I asked them, "How long did it take the thief on the cross to be saved?" I hoped they would say 'immediately'. But after some consultation, they said, "15 years."

Later I found out that the people had given this answer because that is how long they thought it would take to learn all the teachings of Christianity properly, and to have perfected your life sufficiently in order to be saved.

That little church broke my heart. I hope it breaks yours.

There are many thousands of churches across India just like that little church. Who knows how many more there are around the world? How many people are living and dying, even today, without knowing that they are loved by Jesus?

There is no work more important, anywhere on earth, than to announce Jesus Christ and the Good News of his salvation to those who need to hear it. How can they believe if they have not heard?

▼ **ELIEZER GONZALEZ**

Eli's Reflection: *The story of the thief on the cross astonished the members of this little church; they really struggled to believe that Christ could have saved that thief then and there. What is it that most astonishes you about the grace of God? With whom will you share that today?*

OVERFLOW WITH JOY FOR GOD'S REMEDY

People often mistake a full stomach
for a good conscience.

*All have sinned and come short of the glory of God
(Romans 3:23, NIV.).*

Jesus told his disciples that they were to be the “light of the world”. The early Christians were on fire to share the good news of Christ's life, death and resurrection.

Two thousand years later, many Christians appear not to have that fire. Once people truly understand the Gospel, the “living water” of the message of salvation through Jesus Christ will overflow from them into the wider community.

When I preached in countries where there is trouble and poverty, I saw people overflow with joy when they understood the Gospel. They wanted to tell everyone. Why doesn't this happen where life is more comfortable? Perhaps it is because we do not fully understand the Gospel or our own need.

People who have been ill most appreciate good health, so the Good News of the Gospel is most appreciated when people have known the darkness that exists without it. Often when people are physically comfortable, they ignore their spiritual needs. They mistake a full stomach for a good conscience. They mistake a good suit for the robe of righteousness. They mistake a home for the Kingdom home of salvation.

If we don't know the disease, we will never appreciate the remedy. What is the disease? Romans tells us: we have all sinned and we all come short of the glory of God.

▼ DES FORD

Eli's Reflection: *Why do you think it is hard to reach many people with the Gospel in our comfortable society? Whatever answer you give, remember that you yourself are not necessarily immune to it. Ask the Lord to show you how you can be more receptive to his love and grace.*

THE FIRE RELEASES YOU FROM YOUR BONDS

God has permitted the fire for the very purpose of releasing you from your bonds.

"Look!" he answered, "I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire; and they are not hurt"
(Daniel 3:25, NKJV).

Are you in the fire? Have you got a good reason for being there? Here is a reason that might apply to you: God has permitted the fire for the very purpose of releasing you from your bonds. The three Hebrews had been thrown into the fire with their hands bound, yet the king saw them without their bonds. Yes, the limitations that circumstances and conditions outside of us put upon us, the frustrations of which we are so conscious, they are dealt with in the fire.

But what about our own particular problems, perhaps our limitations, the personality traits that are unpleasant, perhaps a temper that flares too easily? The same is true. Here is a loving God permitting the fire and allowing the enemy to stoke it to maximum heat, because God sees that this fire can help us let go of those problems.

Even if we feel we cannot endure these problems, it may be that we are actually being liberated by them. Perhaps God has a greater plan for us; perhaps in this way we are getting rid of things that spoil our lives, disrupt our walk with God, and interfere with our Christian outreach.

Maybe you are feeling that you have not got any bonds. Well, most of us have, and some of us are satisfied that this is what God is doing in the fire. Bonds are released in the fire.

▼ **T. AUSTIN-SPARKS (ADAPTED)**

Eli's Reflection: *Look back on your life. Can you see how going through trouble has released you from bonds in the past? Are you able to thank God for having allowed you to go through those trials?*

Letter from Africa...

JESUS FINDS JANE ALL OVER AGAIN

Jane has had the joy of rediscovering the good news of the Gospel, and reconnecting with Jesus, thanks to your support of GNU's evangelistic ministry in Africa.

Jane's Christian life died with her marriage. She had worked alongside her husband to pastor a small, thriving church community, but her husband abandoned her and their two children for a woman he met at a seminar. Her spirit was crushed, along with her belief in a God who cares.

Instead of working to bring others to the joy and hope of the Gospel, she found herself running a bar near the central park in Nanyuki, Kenya.

Then came a life-changing event.

The Grace Revolution Crusade, jointly sponsored by GNU and like-minded churches in Kenya, came to town. Volunteers visited her bar to hand out invitations. Still bitter, Jane wanted nothing to do with Christianity, which she saw as having brought so much pain into her life. Nevertheless, she was polite, and accepted the two GNU-produced books the volunteers offered her: *Tree of Life* and *How to Manage Stress in Partnership with God*.

People filled the park to listen to the Crusade. Jane was an unwilling listener, for the loudspeakers made sure she could hear every word that was preached. Eventually, a simple story broke through her barriers. The preacher told the story of the woman who had been suffering from an illness for twelve years, but who was healed when she simply reached out and touched Jesus.



Jane: *I want to be that woman who, because she reached out and touched Jesus, could then be used to touch other people's lives.*

The Crusade left town and life returned to normal—at least on the surface. But in her heart, Jane felt the call of God. She realised that God had not left her, but in her pain, she had stumbled away from him. Now she knew she needed to go home. Two months later, she reached out to the name and contact number written inside the books, and the local minister came to visit her. She told him:

I want to start a new life in Jesus. I want to be that woman who, because she reached out and touched Jesus, could then be used to touch other people's lives.

Thanks to your support of the Grace Revolution Crusade, Jesus now has another joyful person sharing the good news of salvation in Kenya.

▼ **Prayer Point:** *Thank God that when trouble overwhelms you, he is always there, within touching distance. Pray that he will guide you to find practical ways you can share this great news with others.*

THE SHEPHERD RISKED IT ALL FOR YOU

When the Shepherd is in the wilderness, searching for his sheep, we must be there too.

What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he loses one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness, and go after the one which is lost until he finds it? (Luke 15:4, NKJV).

One of my favourite Jesus' stories is about the lost sheep. A shepherd had 100 sheep, and he lost one of them, so he went back to find it. This story beautifully illustrates the love of God for even one lost sinner.

But what about the ninety-nine other sheep? The story says that the shepherd left them in the wilderness. The shepherd risks it all for that one lost sheep. His love for the one is so great, that he is prepared to lose everything for its sake.

That is what the Cross was all about. For you, he was prepared to give up the universe, to risk it all.

However, the ninety-nine must share in the risk of the search. Because the shepherd risks, they too must risk. Belonging to the shepherd is not just about comfortable church lives. When the Shepherd is in the wilderness, searching for his sheep, we must be there too. That's a hard lesson, especially for those ninety-nine people who consider themselves just and without a need to repent—those who think they have already made it (v.7).

You see, the Shepherd wants us all to go home together—yes, all the wounded, all the lost, all the broken—and none of us will get there before the other.

▼ **ELIEZER GONZALEZ**

Eli's Reflection: *We all like being comfortable, and we don't like taking risks. Are you sharing the risk of the Shepherd's search for his lost sheep? What can you do to push your boundaries for sharing the Good News?*

THE HUMBLE CHURCH

The true church, like the true Christ,
is always in disguise.

The foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than human strength (1 Corinthians 1:25, NIV).

When the true Christ came, he came in disguise. They expected a conqueror, but he came as a carpenter; they expected a king but he came as a peasant; they expected one who was lofty, but he came in lowly guise; they expected one clothed with glory but he came clothed with humility; they anticipated their Messiah would proclaim law, but when he did come he proclaimed love.

The true church, like the true Christ, is always in disguise.

Christ uses many pictures to describe the Christian life: the yoke, the towel, the sword, and the Cross. A watered-down gospel offering only an anaesthetic is not the genuine article. But look at that man Simon on the Via Dolorosa carrying his cross behind Christ – there is a picture of the true church. See Mary breaking her expensive box of perfume – there is another picture. See Christ washing his disciples' feet – a third picture. And most of all, observe the Man hanging on the cross!

Like Jesus' Cross between the crosses of the two thieves, the true Gospel is always crucified between two thieving false gospels. One of the false gospels teaches that we can work our own way to salvation, and the other teaches that we can do whatever we please and still make it to heaven. Neither of these contains the true love and the true faith that are central for the genuine Gospel of God.

▼ **DES FORD**

Eli's Reflection: *Can you see through the disguise to God's truth? There are three pictures here of the church. Which picture speaks best to your heart? Why? What can you do today to identify more with that picture?*

WE ARE UNPROFITABLE SERVANTS

Jesus was compelled only by love,
and as his followers, so must we.

When you have done all those things which you are commanded, say, 'We are unprofitable servants. We have done what was our duty to do.' (Luke 17:10, NKJV).

In this “hard saying,” Jesus is honing in on a truth with laser-like accuracy. He is zeroing in on the spiritual pride that seems to be too often found in Christianity.

We so are proud of our churches, proud of our Christianity, proud of what we do for Jesus, and so proud that we are better than others who do not have the privilege of being who we are. But Jesus says,

“Wait a minute! Hold on there! Don't you know that it's all my doing? Don't you know that I owe you nothing and you owe me everything? Don't you realise that without me you, and all you do, simply totals zero? So, don't be so proud about the things you do for me. Start from the basis that you are simply doing your duty, a duty that is owed to me because you have been acquitted and blood-bought only by what I have done.”

It is because Jesus took upon himself the duty of love to save us, that in turn we can serve him. In return, we must confess ourselves to be worthless servants in everything we do, and respond to his love with humble, selfless service.

Jesus was compelled only by love, and as his followers, so must we.

▼ **ELIEZER GONZALEZ**

Eli's Reflection: *Can you ever really serve another out of love if feel you are owed something? Of course not. Pick a project in which you will do something for someone who can never repay you, and then carry it through out of love.*

THE SPIRIT BUILDS YOU UP

We are living stones
prepared by the silent moving of the Spirit.

In building the temple, only blocks dressed at the quarry were used, and no hammer, chisel or any other iron tool was heard at the temple site while it was being built (1 Kings 6:7, NIV).

Solomon's life was marked by glory, riches, wisdom, and peace. Do you know what the name "Solomon" means? "Solomon" means "peaceful." Solomon is thought of as the wisest man who ever lived, the richest man who ever lived, and he had a glorious kingdom (1 Kings 5:4).

But I have left out the best thing about Solomon. He built the temple.

That temple was a symbol of the church. Just as Solomon built the temple, Christ, referring to his people, said, "On this rock I'll build my church" (Matthew 16:18). We are the living stones of Jesus' church. We have been shaped by the silent moving and moulding of the Holy Spirit. Just as Solomon's temple was built in silence, so God's spirit works on our hearts until we become the "living stones" in the living temple of Christ's church.

Christ compared the Holy Spirit to the wind. The wind blows where it likes. You can't see it. It makes a sound but it is mysterious (John 3:8). The temple of God is the same. It was built without noise, because everything was prepared in a different location. We are those living stones prepared by the silent moving of the Spirit (1 Peter 2:5).

▼ **DES FORD**

Eli's Reflection: *Sometimes you can't sense what God is doing in your life, but he is always at work in it. When you pray, ask the Lord to show you what area of your life he is working on.*

WE HAVE PASSED FROM DEATH TO LIFE

On the Cross, Christ cried, "Why?"
in order that we might never need to cry it.

He who hears my word and believes in him who sent me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life (John 5:24, NKJV).

We were all ruined by Adam, our first representative. But Christ came as the second Adam, the second representative of the human race, and he redeemed us all. Legally it is so. Personally it becomes so as I believe it (1 John 4:17).

Only this can explain those mysterious sections of the Gospel narrative which tell us of the intensity of Christ's mental anguish when he sweat great drops of blood and later cried, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

It was not fear of death that explains Christ's agony. It was the awareness that he was suffering for the sins of the human race. He was forsaken of God, or so it seemed, that we might not be. On the Cross, Christ cried, "Why?" in order that we might never need to cry it.

The lightning bolts of judgement struck the innocent Son of God in order that the guilty might find safety at the seared site of Calvary. It is no travesty of justice. The unchangeable law of God was more honoured by the death of the infinite Son than if the whole guilty human race had perished.

Furthermore, anyone who receives the blood-bought gift of righteousness cannot remain the same. The forgiveness given to rebels dissolves their spirit of rebellion.

▼ **DES FORD**

Eli's Reflection: *None of us can thank God enough for the Cross, and all of us have something of the spirit of rebellion within us. Make time to thank God for Calvary, and ask him to dissolve your spirit of rebellion.*

Letter from Ukraine...

GOD'S LOVE IS NO GAMBLE

Valerii's last-minute decision to be baptised at the end of GNU's Gospel Campaign in Ukraine is a heart-warming story, made possible once again by your generosity. After his baptism, Valerii presented Eli with a shiny Ukrainian coin. It was God's coin, there to catch his child and bring him home.

Here is Valerii's story in his own words:

I thought about God for the first time when I was in prison in 2002, for stealing drugs to feed my addiction. I went to church services in prison, only because my mother sent me things through the pastor. When I was released from jail, I continued using drugs and returned to jail two more times.

In 2015, I was being treated at the rehab centre, where the GNU pastor shares the Gospel. I decided to learn about God. This time, I didn't have an ulterior motive.

One time we talked about the importance of making vows to God, and I promised God that I would read the Bible every day. That day I received the gift Bible from the GNU pastor. Since then, I've read at least one chapter from each of the Testaments every day.

My eyes began to open as God repeatedly saved me and continues to save me. I have had HIV since 1998. In 2010, I was in hospital for the HIV and also for sepsis, a common blood poisoning. I wanted to die, but God saved me.

Another time, when my parents died, I had a lot of debts, including a bank loan. They seized the apartment. And I still do not understand how, but I became free of those debts.

When the evangelists from Australia came this year, I went to all the meetings. The pastor invited me to be baptised, but I refused. I came on the day of baptism just to watch. But



▼ **Valerii:** *I no longer need to toss a coin to know that God loves me and cares about me.*

after everyone was baptised, the pastor stayed in the water, and the evangelist made a call from the pulpit. I felt that he was talking directly to me and I consulted my friends, who encouraged me to be baptised. I threw a coin and decided that if it fell out the eagle side up, I would be baptised. The eagle side came up and I went to the front and was baptised.

I had finished my last packet of cigarettes before the baptism and I decided not to smoke anymore. A week later I began to study to become an Addiction Recovery Consultant. I talked to a group of men about how I quit smoking, and during the two-week session all 15 of us quit smoking!

Now I am very optimistic about the future. God has already done a lot for me, so I believe that he will continue to give me both work and strength, despite the fact that I have a trophic ulcer and cannot do physical work. I could not even pay for my studies, but my new Christian family have found a sponsor for me, and I am able to study for free.

Now I know that God risked everything for me, but it's no gamble for me to follow him. On top of every other blessing, I have 6 months of freedom from drugs this month! I thank God, and I thank the generous GNU people!

▼ **Prayer Point:** *Praise God today for the thousands of ways he uses to bring his children home. Ask him for guidance as you seek to repay his goodness to you.*

GOD'S CHURCH WILL SMASH DOWN THE GATES OF HELL

When you understand the message of the Bible, sad news gets turned into glad news!

I will build my church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it (Matthew 16:18).

In ancient times the fiercest fighting was always to gain control of the gates of the city. These were the strongest point of defence, and if an attacking army could destroy the gates, then all was lost for the defenders.

I used to think that Jesus was talking about a defensive military action here, as if hell were attacking the church. That would be kind of sad news for us, then.

But when you understand the message of the Bible, sad news gets turned into glad news!

The image here is of the church—the messengers of the Good News of the kingdom of God—battering down and totally smashing the very gates of hell. I thought it was the church under siege, but it isn't! It is the other way around.

Under our victorious Lord, it is us—the church—who are conducting the offensive action. We are attacking hell at its strongest point, and we have the guarantee of our Commander that we will win! The gates of hell will not withstand the proclamation of the gospel.

The gates of hell will be smashed in the name of Jesus. There will be sin and death no more, because Christ has overcome! There is certain victory for those who believe in Jesus!

▼ **ELIEZER GONZALEZ**

Eli's Reflection: *We don't always feel victorious, do we? What daily habit can you begin now, to help you silence the misguided feelings that try to take away your hope and joy?*

THE GOSPEL IS BETTER THAN LAW

The law says “Pay me what you owe.”
The Gospel says, “I freely forgive you everything”.

The law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ (John 1:17, NKJV).

Any religion that puts the law given to Moses at Mount Sinai ahead of the Cross of Christ is a false religion.

The law says, “Do this and you will live.”
But the Gospel says, “Live and you will do.”

The law says “Pay me what thou owe.”
The Gospel says, “I freely forgive you everything”.

The law says, “The wages of sin is death.”
The Gospel says, “But the gift of God is eternal life.”

The law says, “The soul that sins shall die.”
The Gospel says “Whoever believes in me, though he were dead, yet he will live.”

The law says, “Get yourselves a new heart.”
The Gospel says, “I will give you a new heart.”

The law says “You will love or else.”
The Gospel says “Here is love: not that we’ve loved God, but that he loved us and gave himself as a sacrifice for our sins.”

When the law was given at Mount Sinai, 3,000 people died in a matter of days.

When the Gospel was proclaimed at Pentecost, 3,000 people lived.

Three thousand sermons on the law won’t convert one person. One sermon on the Gospel will convert 3,000.

▼ **DES FORD**

Eli’s Reflection: *Had you thought of it like this before? If you like it, print it out and put it in your Bible or somewhere where you won’t forget it.*

GOD'S CHURCH IS UNLIMITED

There's nothing small about God's church.

For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name (Ephesians 3:14–15, NIV).

As Neil Armstrong gazed at the earth from space, he is reported to have reflected, “[i]t suddenly struck me that that tiny pea, pretty and blue, was the Earth. I put up my thumb and shut one eye, and my thumb blotted out the planet Earth. I didn't feel like a giant. I felt very, very small.”

Perhaps the perspective that we often have about God's church is too small, because we are limited in our natural perception of space and time. Perhaps God wants us to see the bigger picture. Wherever it is that you gather with God's people, it is wonderful to realise that God's church is unlimited.

God's church is unlimited because it extends throughout heaven and earth, and throughout the universe. (Colossians 1:20; Hebrews 12:22–23). Its extent is beyond our comprehension.

God's church is unlimited because it cannot be limited to any one denomination. The different Christian communities have been a great blessing to the church of God in different ways, however none of them can ever claim to encompass God's church within themselves (Acts 2:21; Acts 13:39).

God's church is unlimited because it does what Jesus Christ did when he walked on earth, and that is to welcome sinners (Luke 15:2). There's nothing small about God's church. So, let's live big for Jesus!

▼ **ELIEZER GONZALEZ**

Eli's Reflection: *We all feel small, weak, and alone at times. Make a new connection with someone else in God's family. Think of who that person might be, pray about it, then invite them home or plan a social event with them.*

YOU CAN ACCESS THE BANK OF HEAVEN

You can go to the bank of heaven any day in the year,
and any hour of the day or night,
and get from that bank all that you need.

*The church was earnestly praying to God for him
(Acts 12:5, NIV).*

Suppose I announced to everyone in the city that I knew how they could go to any bank and get all the money they needed any day of the year. Suppose, also, that I really did know the secret for getting all the money they wanted and that I could prove it actually worked for them. Do you think that people would consider this information important?

Yes, it would be difficult to think of anything that they would consider more important!

But praying is going to the bank, going to the bank that has the largest capital of any bank in the universe, the Bank of Heaven, a bank whose capital is absolutely unlimited. You can go to the Bank of Heaven any day in the year, and any hour of the day or night, and get from that bank all that you need.

The Bible's teaching about this has been put to the test of practical experiment by tens of thousands of people, and has been found in their own experience to be absolutely true.

God answers prayer that is prayed to him as God the Father, because of the atoning blood of Jesus Christ his Son, and through the direction and the power of his Holy Spirit.

▼ **R.A. TORREY (ADAPTED)**

Eli's Reflection: *The analogy of prayer being like going to a bank might make it seem like you get whatever you ask for, whatever it might be, and under any circumstances. Is that how it is? Read the last sentence again.*

YOU CAN TELL GOD'S TRUE CHURCH FROM THE FALSE

The true church loves to witness
to God's other lost children,
telling them they have already been redeemed.

*We know that we have passed from death to life,
because we love the brethren (1 John 3:14).*

Jerusalem (God's true church) becomes Babylon (the false church) when it offers only rest instead of rest and struggle together. Babylon knows only a gospel of good advice and good views instead of the Good News.

Babylon has a series of orthodox works and beliefs that bring artificial rest rather than the ecstatic gladness resulting from the knowledge that our sins have been dealt with and the decision (acquittal) of the Last Judgement is ours already.

Babylon has much to say about people while the true church points first to what God has done in Jesus, the God-man. Babylon fears the second coming and finds witnessing a burden, but the true church, having accepted Christ's atonement is ready today through His imputed merits. And it loves to witness to God's other lost children, telling them they have already been redeemed (See Romans 5:14-19.)

A church is not a church when it ceases to demonstrate the unselfish fruit of love that results from a living union with the Redeemer.

The false church preaches about itself rather than its Lord; it has forgotten that our salvation is given freely through God's grace, that the blood of Christ is our righteousness through faith, and that our joy in our completed salvation is seen in our willing works of love.

▼ **DES FORD**

Eli's Reflection: *We must make our Christianity not about ourselves, but about our Lord. Reflect on your own Christian life. How can you make it more about Jesus?*

Letters from Africa...

BRINGING THE LOVE OF CHRIST TO AFRICA

GNU's mailbox receives a regular stream of letters from people in Africa who have come to understand the good news of the Gospel on radio, in GNU publications, or from other GNU supporters, thanks to your ongoing selflessness in being part of spreading the Good News fast—everywhere!

Here is a sample of their personal thanks for your faithful generosity. Be encouraged that God is blessing this work.

Ishimwe's Letter from Rwanda

My name is Ishimwe Pelerin, 24 years old and Rwandan by nationality. I was raised in a Christian family where I had been taught that in order to be saved one needed to be a good keeper of God's law. Therefore I strived to please God with my works but my heart was never at peace. I felt that I was never good enough to please God.

I finally found that peace six months ago when I met GNU. A book entitled "Jesus Only" introduced me to the gospel for the first time in my life. Then that was strengthened when I attended a seminar co-hosted by GNU, entitled "The Great Invitation" (Matthew 11:28). GNU has opened a new chapter in my spiritual pilgrimage, and I now see the Bible in a completely new way. Now I feel liberated.

My testimony can be summed up in this: I can feel the love of Jesus.

Thank you GNU for bringing the love of Christ to me.

**Francis Subulwa's Letter from Zambia**

I have heard and listened to your great and touching messages on Radio East Africa recently. Your programme messages change many lives, and I am one who has received favour in healing. Thank you and God bless you.

Martin Muguongo's Letter from Kenya

I thank you for bringing us the truth about God's holy Word. The world is becoming a lonely place to live but through your program I am understanding more about the scriptures. May you continue to influence the lives of people all over the world.

Kennedy Liswaniso's Letter from Zambia

I write to inform you that I have enjoyed your radio programmes on Radio East Africa and I appreciate you very much. Your messages have completely changed my spiritual life and I am being greatly transformed and refreshed in my life because of my new walk with the Master. Please keep on sharing the word of God mightily in your life. I pray that God continues to be by your side and that your ministry is granted resources to continue reaching many souls in Africa and across the world.

▼ **Prayer Point:** *Thank God that he offers you the opportunity to be his partner in spreading the Gospel to the world, for there is no greater privilege. Pray that this work may continue to grow and bless more people.*

CHRIST IS THE FOUNDATION OF THE CHURCH

The very foundation of the Christian church is the truth about Christ.

I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church (Matthew 16:18, NIV).

In response to Peter's answer, Jesus calls Peter a rock, and speaks of building the Christian church upon a rock (Matthew 16:17-19). Much has been made of this passage.

Peter is a great man, whom God used to open the church to Jews and gentiles. Every time the apostles are listed, Peter is always first, and Judas last. Peter is very important; but some have claimed too much for him. In this discussion, the main issue was the question of who Jesus is. Peter replies, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God."

When Peter gives this correct answer, Jesus tells him God revealed the answer to him. Then Jesus said, "Peter, your name means a stone or a rock. This truth that you have uttered about me being the Christ, is a rock foundation into which you and the other disciples are built. You are built upon me, the Cornerstone. The temple of the Christian church will be built on that Cornerstone."

The very foundation of the Christian church is the truth about Christ. If Christ is merely human, then Christianity is only a philosophy. If Christ is only human, he was but a martyr on the cross, not a Saviour. If he was a sinner, too, as you and I are, he cannot forgive our sins.

▼ **DES FORD**

Eli's Reflection: *What is the most important truth about Christ to you? How can you share this with someone this week?*

EXPULSED TO ETERNAL LIFE

He might have been thrown out of the synagogue,
but he found true salvation.

Jesus heard that they had thrown the former blind man out of the synagogue, so he went looking for him. When he found him he said, 'Do you believe in the Son of Man?' ... 'The man said, 'Lord I believe,' and he worshipped him" (John 9:35-38).

Jesus had healed the man who was born blind, but the church leaders were furious. They could not accept that Jesus had healed a man they believed was blind because of his or his parents' sin. In their opinion, Jesus was a sinner because he didn't follow their rules. But the man held his ground. In front of all those accusing him of lying, he insisted, "If this man were not from God, he could do nothing."

They threw the man out of the synagogue, which was a grave punishment in those days. But Jesus, who was the God they were meant to be worshipping in the Temple, went and found the man. In their simple conversation, Jesus told him plainly that he was the Son of God and the man's reaction was opposite to that of the Jewish leaders. He believed without question and worshipped Jesus. Just as Jesus had restored his physical sight, so he opened his spiritual eyes and saw his God before him. He might have been thrown out of the synagogue, but he found true salvation.

Jesus well knows what it costs to step out and follow him, but he offers to compensate you for your loyalty to him with the greatest gift possible (Matthew 28:20). Others will forsake you; but he never will.

▼ **ELIEZER GONZALEZ**

Eli's Reflection: *What has it cost you to follow Jesus? Can you say with Paul that you consider it all garbage compared to the surpassing worth of knowing Jesus?*

BEYOND THE WALLS

The best stuff happens beyond the walls.

“He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation” (Mark 16:15, NIV).

Have you noticed how all the best stuff in the Bible happens beyond the walls?

The best stuff happens when Jesus goes beyond the borders of Judaea, and even the borders of Israel (Luke 8:26–39; Matthew 16:21–28). But it wasn't just geographical boundaries that Jesus crossed.

The best stuff happened beyond the moral walls of Christ's society, when he asked for a tomb to be opened, when he touched the sick, ate and drank with tax collectors and sinners, and forgave those who deserved no forgiveness.

The ministry of Jesus Christ, except for the final week, all happened beyond the walls of Jerusalem. And it was beyond the walls that Jesus Christ made the ultimate sacrifice for our sins (Hebrews 13:12) that gives eternal life to all who believe. It was beyond the walls that he rose again in power for all who accept him today.

The risen Lord commanded his followers to “Go” into all the world, and not stay within the walls. If church exists only inside buildings, and not within our communities, then we have failed in our mission.

Let's start praying over our cities and towns. Let's bring the Good News to the places and the communities where its healing and transforming grace is most needed—beyond the walls.

▼ **ELIEZER GONZALEZ**

Eli's Reflection: *We all build walls, separating us from others and from the “best stuff” that happens out there. Get a piece of paper, pray for insight, and make a list of walls that you have been building in your life. Do something today that even in a small way, breaks down one of those walls.*

JESUS DELIVERS YOU EVEN FROM THE SMELL OF THE FIRE

If we accept the fire and allow Jesus to deliver us even from its smell, it will lead to joy beyond speech, full of glory.

Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance... (Ephesians 6:18, NKJV).

When the three Hebrews emerged from the fire, the Bible story tells us there was not even the smell of fire upon them. I think that is wonderful! When we are experiencing time in the “fiery furnace” of trouble, the devil does all in his power to make sure the “smell of the fire” remains with us.

Why? To draw attention to us, because the devil knows that if attention is drawn to us, the Lord is hidden. Having a “smell of burning” about us means that the suffering and the trial that we have been through are more obvious than the glory of God’s love and grace. The enemy does everything he can to make sure we do not reflect the glory of God.

If you can emerge from any trial of your faith showing only your joy and gratitude to God, then the words of 1 Peter 1:8 can be fulfilled in your life: *Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy.*

The Lord has many crowns for us, if only we will recognize them. It may be a dark time of suffering, or testing of our faith. If we accept the fire and allow Jesus to deliver us even from its smell, it will lead to joy beyond speech, full of glory.

▼ **T. AUSTIN-SPARKS (ADAPTED)**

Eli’s Reflection: *Think about your own life. Do you have the smell of the fire about you in any way? Do you complain about your life? As hard as it may be to understand, God can turn our lives into ones of praise and gratitude. Ask God to do it for you today.*

RAISED UP TO SIT IN HEAVENLY PLACES

The only feelings that we can trust are those that agree with what Christ has promised.

I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand (John 10:28).

I encourage you to find a quiet place and read the first two chapters of Paul's epistle to the Ephesians. It's such a wonderful reminder of our perfect acceptance by God. They reassure us that life unending and unlimited is waiting for us:

"...God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions - it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus..." (Ephesians 2:4-6).

There are times when our feelings can play tricks on us, when we feel unworthy and afraid, when we doubt whether God has accepted us and wonder how God could ever give us eternal life. This is the voice of your old, 'carnal' nature, and it is not to be trusted.

God gave you a new, spiritual, nature when you accepted Jesus Christ as your Saviour. With the assurance of salvation comes peace, joy and love. God's Word promises that you are treasured, and he reminds us also that his Word is truth.

The only feelings that we can trust are those that agree with what Christ has promised. He has promised eternal life, but more than that, he has also promised that no one can snatch you from him.

▼ **ELIEZER GONZALEZ**

Eli's Reflection: *Which voice do you listen to? Is it difficult for you to shut down the chatter in your head that tries to convince you that God could never love someone like you? Smile at yourself in the mirror every morning and tell yourself: "God has made me alive in Christ today".*

Letter from Ukraine...

GOD'S HIGHER PURPOSE FOR LEONID

Leonid's life has been transformed by his encounter with God in prison, thanks to your support of GNU's Ukraine ministry.

He had been interested in religion for most of his adult life, but this didn't stop him leading a life of petty crime and dangerous behaviour.

Finally, Leonid's lifestyle caught up with him, and he found himself in prison, with time to consider his life. Someone gave him a copy of the New Testament, and this time he was truly drawn by its message.

He began to attend the prison Bible study classes led by GNU's pastor. The joy of Christianity became a real part of his life. A vision formed in his mind: he wanted to study the Bible until he was also able to preach the Gospel. He recounts:

I had a vivid dream, where I saw the stone tablets with God's 10 Commandments. Written in capital letters were the words: GOD LOVES YOU.

Two months ago, I decided to do something really good in my life. I decided to follow Jesus and renew my relationship with God by being born again in baptism. Since then the Scriptures have become more clearly revealed to me, and I now have confidence in the future. I have done wrong, but I have now repented and asked for God's forgiveness.

What I am certain of is that I did not come to this prison by chance. There was a higher purpose. I came so I could make friends with God.

▼ **Prayer Point:** *Praise God right now that he leads you through the difficult times to grow closer to him. Pray that he will use you to draw others to Jesus.*

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Biblical Quotations

The following translations of the Bible have been used:

NIV	New International Version
KJV	King James Version
AKJV	American King James Version
NET	NET Bible
ESV	English Standard Version
ISV	International Standard Version
NLT	New Living Translation
RV	Revised Version
NASB	New American Standard Bible
TLB	The Living Bible
BSB	Berean Study Bible

Where no Bible reference appears, the authors have paraphrased the original text.

GET TO KNOW THE AUTHORS

DR DESMOND FORD



Dr Desmond Ford has a vibrant enthusiasm for spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ. Affectionately known as “Des”, he’s worked as a pastor, and been a Bible teacher, minister and theologian for more than sixty years. He’s earned several degrees including two PhDs in theology, and has written twenty books.

Des Ford’s preaching emphasises justification by faith – the Good News that Christ, by his life and death, redeemed the world so that now “whosoever will, may come” to God. He affirms that the gospel is for everyone, following the instruction that Christ’s name should “be declared throughout all the earth”.

DR ELIEZER GONZALEZ



Eliezer Gonzalez is passionate about the gospel. With a previous background in teaching and management, he was called by the Lord into the gospel ministry. He’s earned Master’s degrees in Theology and Early Christian History, and a PhD in Early Christian History.

Most importantly, Eliezer communicates the gospel of Jesus Christ in a simple yet powerful way, and has presented this life-changing message in many countries and in many different forums. He’s praying for “millions upon millions of people to be in the Kingdom of God” as Good News Unlimited partners with you to spread the Word fast about Jesus.

**God's Unlimited Promises
to Hold On To**

UNLIMITED LIFE

Unlimited Life is the sixth in GNU's ongoing series of nine-week devotional booklets. Written by Eliezer Gonzalez and Des Ford, these encouraging devotionals are interspersed with wisdom and insights from great Christian thinkers. Inside, you'll find personal reflections and inspiring testimonies from GNU's global ministry to help you live daily for Christ, and to inspire you with the proven power of God's love in action.

It's our prayer that *Unlimited Life* will take you deeper into God's promise of unlimited love for you.

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