



NON-PROFIT



TAX-EXEMPT

"Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" MARK 16:15

April 2018

FROM US TO YOU

It's April! A special month to us. The air feels fresh and clean here on Long Island. And spring flowers end their winter hibernation and begin to pop through the earth. It's a time of renewal, the month of Easter. The worldly folk may think of it in terms of bunnies, chocolate eggs, parades and fancy hats. But to us, it's a time of remembrance of the love of God. For He sacrificed the most precious thing He had for us, *"...His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved"* (John 3:16-17 KJV. Also, see 1 Peter 1:18). These scriptures stand in vibrant contrast to the way things have been lately in the media and politics.

The hatred we have seen in people toward our holy Redeemer is both revealing and enlightening. No more do people try to cover up their hatred toward God and pretend to be neutral. The mass media has made it clear which side they are on, whether it's the mainstream news reports, popular sitcoms, political magazines, sports players, or movie stars. And, by the way, the idols of this world are often called "stars." In the Bible the word "star" is synonymous with the word "angel." In the case of anything carnal, like secular entertainment, it refers to "fallen angels." *"For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms"* (Ephesians 6:12 NIV). That means that the problems we Christians have do not originate with human beings. But the humans that attack God's people are puppets being influenced to do evil by high ranking demons. The demons are **fallen angels** working in the spirit world under their leader, Satan.

For, long before mankind was ever created, the angels existed. And one of the most powerful angels was called "Lucifer" (in the King James Bible). It means "light bearer." The name "Lucifer," is translated "Morning Star" in the more recent translations, such as the "New International Version," and the "American Standard Version." We believe it is really a title more than a name. Most likely meaning that he had authority over the earth at that time. Remember the dinosaurs? They probably existed during that period. However God destroyed the old world before He remade it for us. For the Lord told Adam and Eve to *"...replenish the earth..."* (Genesis 1:28 KJV). That indicates that there had been a civilization here before mankind was created. Eventually, Jesus will rule the planet earth when He returns as *"...Lord of lords and King of kings - and with Him will be His called, chosen and faithful followers"* (Revelation 17:14 NIV). At that time, He will be the "Morning Star" (Revelation 22:16).

However, that will not happen until the millennium (Revelation 20:4-6), which will not occur until the time that God originally gave to Adam runs out. Right now, we are living in the "last days" before the return of Christ (2 Timothy 3:1). And Satan is, once again, controlling this earth. He lost it the first time because *"...there was war*

in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven. The great dragon was hurled down - that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him" (Revelation 12:7-9 NIV). God spoke about the fall of Satan and his kingdom when He said, *"How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit"* (Isaiah 14:12-15 KJV).

The term "mornings stars" is also mentioned in the Bible, meaning that it can apply to multiple angels, not just one. God used it when responding to Job and said, *"Where were you when I laid the earth's foundation? Tell Me, if you understand. Who marked off its dimensions? Surely you know! Who stretched a measuring line across it? On what were its footings set, or who laid its cornerstone - while the morning stars sang together and all the angels shouted for joy?"* (Job 38:4-7 NIV). So the term "stars" can refer to God's angels. Or to Satan's fallen angels, called "demons" in the newer Bible translations. And "devils" in the KJV. So anyone who is called a "star" in this world (especially those who are considered idols) are operating under the authority of the devil and demons. For God's people are warned *"Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world - the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does - comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever"* (1 John 2:15-17 NIV).

Now you know why this world is so evil and getting worse all the time. God's people are making some headway finally and are beginning to fight back with the election of President Trump. For he is doing his best to protect the traditional Christian values we hold so dear. But don't be surprised at the attacks that are launched again him and anyone who tries to oppose the dark powers of this evil world. Pray for our President, and for all those who are endeavoring to *"Fight the good fight of the faith..."* (1 Timothy 6:12 NIV). *"Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that He may lift you up in due time. Cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you. Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour"* (1 Peter 5:6-8 NIV). *"...Because the devil has gone down to you! He is filled with fury, because he knows that his time is short"* (Revelation 12:12 NIV).

Till next time everyone, *Eric and Anne Kaestner*



Learning To Pray Successfully

By Anne Kaestner

While pondering how I would write this article I began to recall two memories from my past, when I was only in my twenties. The first was when I was working at a trucking company many years ago. My boss was out of the office we shared and I was alone in it that day. Suddenly one of the dispatchers came into the room and saw me sitting with my hands clasped together, in a kind of prayer position. I wasn't praying at the time but I was deep in thought. "Praying doesn't work," he told me. And I guess it hadn't been working for him. A few years later, after I was married, we had some friends over our apartment one evening. One of the women was telling me about all the problems in her life and I casually suggested she pray about it. "I have and it hasn't worked," she said. These were two people from different lifestyles but their reaction to prayer was the same. Why was that? I believe that they had both tried praying at one time or another but with disappointing results. Does this sound familiar? Has it happened to you? Why didn't it bring comfort and peace? Why didn't God help you? I am going to tell you what may have been the problem.

(1) First, did you have a relationship with the Lord through His Son Jesus Christ? Were you living for Him at the time? Had you repented of your sins and asked the Lord to come into your heart and take control of your life? In the examples above I doubt very much that the two people mentioned had done so. The problem is that too many people have the wrong idea about God. Although He is full of love (1 John 4:8) and kindness (Titus 3:4), that doesn't mean that He is one big Santa Clause in the sky. The God who created this whole universe, and formed human beings out of dust (Genesis 2:7), does not exist to serve us. We were created to serve Him (Matthew 4:10)! And people have the wrong idea about that too. On a talk show, a number of years ago, the late Steve Irwin (also known as the crocodile hunter), stated that his whole reason for being put on this earth was to bring more attention to wild animals and teach people about them. More recently a well-known wartime journalist was interviewed on television. I won't mention her name as, at this writing, she is still alive. When the interviewer asked her why she does such dangerous and difficult work, her response was similar to Irwin's. And I'll paraphrase, "That's why I was put on this earth," she said. "It's my purpose in being here. Because this story needs to be told."

The problem with this reasoning is that it clashes with the Word of God, which says, "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep His commandments: for this is the whole duty of man" (Ecclesiastes 12:13 KJV). Are animals important to God? Of course. Jesus said, "Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from the will of your Father" (Matthew 10:29 NIV). In Numbers 22:21-34, God used a donkey to save the life of the prophet Balaam. When Balaam beat the donkey, the angel of the Lord got angry at Balaam. The Lord put these animals on the earth for us (Genesis 1:21-26). And it is never God's will for people to be cruel to animals in any way. But what is God's most important commandment for us? It is, "... '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 neighbor as yourself'" (Matthew 22:37-39 NIV. Also, see Deuteronomy 10:12-13). And that has nothing to do with animals! So now that we know that loving God is the most important commandment of all. How do we manifest that love? We seek His will and do it!

Providing people with information about what is happening in

troubled nations around the world may seem important to a journalist. And it has its place. But is it really the most important thing that God wants from us? A young man came to Jesus one day and asked Him what he must do to get to Heaven. Jesus said, "You know the commandments: 'Do not murder, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not give false testimony, do not defraud, honor your father and mother.'" 'Teacher,' he declared, 'all these I have kept since I was a boy.' Jesus looked at him and loved him. 'One thing you lack,' He said, 'Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow Me'" (Mark 10:19-21 NIV).

The young man was very rich and he would not give up what he had. And he walked away sadly. That's because the man's wealth and social prestige meant more to him than Christ. And Jesus said, "Anyone who loves his father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; anyone who loves his son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me; and anyone who does not take his cross and follow Me is not worthy of Me" (Matthew 10:37-38 NIV). No one and nothing should come before Christ in the life of a Christian! Jesus said, "But whosoever shall deny Me before men, him will I also deny before My Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 10:33 KJV). People wonder why God does



Steve Irwin

not help them when they pray. Well there are two possible reasons. Either God is allowing the devil to test them, as He did with Job (Job 1:8 thru 2:8). Or there is sin in their life. Remember what God said regarding the house of Israel, "And when the people ask, 'Why has the LORD our God done all this to us?' you will tell them, 'As you have forsaken Me and served foreign gods in your own land, so now you will serve foreigners in a land not your own'" (Jeremiah 5:19 NIV. Also, see Deuteronomy 32:15-24).

The problem is that the leadership in many churches is so worried about offending their congregation that they do not teach the people what sin is. Consequently, some people think it is alright to buy a lottery ticket or go to a casino. But the Bible says, "Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. Because of these, the wrath of God is coming" (Colossians 3:5-6 NIV). Whole denominations, these days, have been taken over entirely by demon spirits (1 Timothy 4:1-2). Because, as Paul prophesied of these last days, "...the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths" (2 Timothy 4:3-4 NIV).

Hirelings (John 10:12) like that are giving gullible people a false sense of security. They believe that because they once repented of their sin and asked Christ to come into their heart, they have a reservation waiting for them in Heaven. But Jesus said, "I am the true vine, and My Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in Me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit He prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. You are already clean because of the Word I have spoken to you" (John 15:1-3 NIV). Jesus was speaking to His own disciples when He said that. They had received Him and become saved through Him. But then He said, "If anyone does not remain in Me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned" (John 15:6 NIV).

Of course, such a person who knowingly commits habitual sin and does not repent of it, will be cut off. But the devil will tell him

that he is still a child of God and on his way to Heaven. He will use his false prophets to convince the person that God is love and will always forgive them. There's that Santa Clause image again! But Jesus said it doesn't work that way. He said, *"To him who overcomes and does My will to the end, I will give authority over the nations"* (Revelation 2:26 NIV). False prophets will tell you that once you are a Christian, you cannot lose your salvation no matter what. But the Bible tells us that salvation is conditional. Jesus said, *"He who overcomes will, like them, be dressed in white. I will never blot out his name from the book of life, but will acknowledge his name before My Father and His angels. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches"* (Revelation 3:5-6 NIV).

So God has a blotting pad that He uses to blot out the names of those who have fallen away from Him. How do you know that you will go to Heaven? Do you think so? That means you have a doubt. And for something as important as being saved from the fires of Hell, you need more than a "think so" faith. You need a "know so" faith. But there are too many Cains around these days. Cain thought he could please God by growing his own fruit for the Lord. But God didn't want Cain's own fruit. He wanted his obedience (see 1 Samuel 15:22-23)! *"You who are trying to be justified by law have been alienated from Christ; you have fallen away from grace"* (Galatians 5:4 NIV). You can't fall away from something you never had! So Paul is speaking about those who already accepted

Christ. It is so easy to get caught in the "works" trap. Martha loved the Lord very much. But she wanted to please Him her way, through doing things for Jesus. Mary on the other hand was more interested in listening to what Jesus had to say to her than in preparing food for Him. Mary wanted spiritual food (John 6:51). Martha was more interested in food that would perish (Luke 10:40).

It's so sad that so many people have deluded themselves into believing they will go to Heaven when they die. Yet they are deliberately living lives that are an abomination to God. For example, my husband told me this morning about a certain political commentator who promotes himself as a Christian. Yet he admits to being openly gay! Doesn't he know that God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah because of homosexual behavior? One of the problems is that many people rely on Bibles like the King James Version, which uses words like "whore-monger" and phrases like "abusers of themselves with mankind." They are words and phrases that people don't understand, so they just ignore them. But in good newer translations of the Bible, the message is in plain English, such as, *"Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders"* (1 Corinthians 6:9 NIV).

If that's not clear enough Paul's letter to the Romans should clarify it even more. *"They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator - who is forever praised. Amen. Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones. In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion. Furthermore, since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, He gave them over to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done. They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity..."* (Romans 1:25-29 NIV).

People, serving God is not like a Chinese restaurant. You can't take one from column A and one from column B, and a little of this and ignore that. It's a package deal! Christ doesn't want any lukewarm

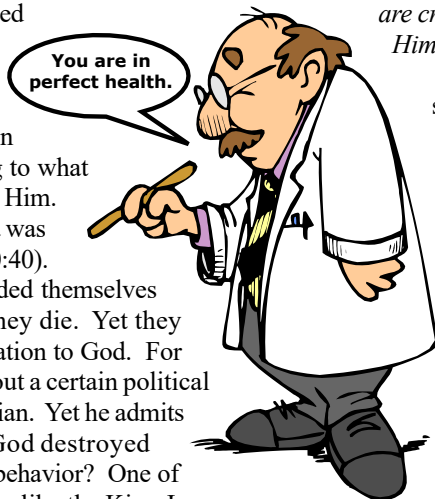
(Revelation 3:16) or fair weather Christians. If it comes down to it, you may be called upon to give your life for the Gospel. Many already have. Even these days, Christians by the thousands have been tortured to death because they will not renounce Christ. Is your commitment to Him that strong? Peter thought he would be willing to die for Christ (Luke 22:33). But he denied Him three times (Mark 14:72). In the end though he did give his life for Christ. Church history tells us that he said, "Crucify me upside down. I am not worthy to die the same way as my Lord." Peter's beloved wife was crucified too, as he was made to watch. Do you love Christ that much?

Perhaps you will never be called upon to die for Christ. But are you willing to live for Him? He said, *"Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Will he not first sit down and estimate the cost to see if he has enough money to complete it? For if he lays the foundation and is not able to finish it, everyone who sees it will ridicule him"* (Luke 14:28-29 NIV). Jesus is saying that He doesn't want any half-way Christians. Either give your heart **totally** to Him, or serve Satan, the god of this world (Ephesians 2:1-2). Because a half-way Christian is a hypocrite who makes Christ look bad. *"It is impossible for those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, who have shared in the Holy Spirit, who have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the coming age, if they fall away, to be brought back to repentance, because to their loss they are crucifying the Son of God all over again and subjecting Him to public disgrace"* (Hebrews 6:4-6 NIV).

That does not refer to simply backsliding. Doing so requires contrition and repentance (Psalms 51:16-17, Luke 18:10-14). Hebrews 6:4-6 is talking about the type of person who has been saved in the past. They have repented of the sins and received God's salvation. Then, with their eyes wide open, they knowingly live in a state of wickedness, defying the Word of God and choosing to live according to their own greed and lust instead. It's like shaking their fist at God in open defiance (see 2 Peter 2:20-22). That person will eventually die and go to Hell (Luke 12:5, Revelation 20:15)! I know that sounds harsh but sometimes it takes a lot of love to tell someone something that they don't want to hear.

For example, a man who has cancer goes to the doctor. But the physician doesn't want to upset him. So he tells him he is healthy, and just needs vitamins. The man could have survived if he'd known about the cancer and gotten treatment in time. But he dies because the doctor was afraid of upsetting him. That's not love! And I am convinced that there are a lot of people in Hell right now who are saying, "If only someone would have only told me about salvation, I may have been offended, but I might have repented and not ended up here!" So, the most important ingredient in getting the Lord to answer your prayer is to have a proper relationship with Him. Good works that you do for God don't do it (Ephesians 2:8-9). Only Christ can get you there (1 Timothy 2:5-6).

(2) Then the next step is to seek the Lord's will. People make the mistake all the time of trying to get God to do their will. That was why God was so angry at Balaam (Numbers 22:1 thru 24:25). Balaam had acquired a certain reputation for prophesying the truth. So Balak, the King of Moab, tried to bribe Balaam into cursing Israel. However, God wanted Balaam to bless Israel. Originally Balaam did as the Lord had said. But when he saw how angry Balak had been, and how wealthy and prestigious he seemed to be, Balaam tried to get God to do what Balak wanted. He kept building altars and sacrificing animals on it in the hope that the Lord would change His mind and curse Israel. Balaam was supposed to be God's representative to Balak. But Balaam didn't want to **(Continued On Page 4)**



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upset King Balak. So he hoped that all his animal sacrifices would persuade the Lord to acquiesce. However, it doesn't work that way! We are to find God's will and do it. Yet too many Christians try to bribe God, through their sacrifices, in an attempt to get the Lord to do their will!

(3) Be careful what you ask for. I once knew a man who had become a Christian in prison. In fact, he had worked for us for a while. He wanted to get custody of his son, who was very rebellious. So he began fasting and praying for the Lord to give him the custody. He had the idea that he could turn his son around and make him behave. However, it didn't seem to be the Lord's will. But, the man kept up his fasting and praying anyway. So, finally, God seemed to want to teach him a lesson. And He allowed him to receive the custody. However, instead of him influencing his son for Christ, the boy seemed to be influencing his father to backslide. Remember the Lord's warning in Matthew 10:37. The father finally realized his mistake and came back to the Lord.

When I was a child, I used to pray that God would let me marry one of the Beatles. I am sure glad the Lord did not answer that foolish prayer! He found the perfect husband for me. And I wouldn't trade Eric for anyone. The only person I love more is Christ. And I hope that Eric loves the Lord more than me too! When I tell people that I have been happily married for 38 years, they say, "What's your secret?" Well, that's it! We put our love for Christ ahead of our love for each other. And God has blessed our marriage for it.

(4) Lesson number four is worship. God does not want us to just be asking for things all the time. He wants us to love Him enough to take the time to show our devotion through our prayers, songs, and praise to Him. Because He is worthy (Psalm 96:4)! And that's where the power is! It helps me to listen to spiritually edifying music when I worship the Lord. I feel the Holy Spirit more when God is being glorified through songs. If I don't have any music available I like to sing. And, if you have the Baptism in God's Holy Spirit (Acts 19:3-7), it helps to pray in tongues as well.

(5) Make sure you don't have any unconfessed sin in your life. I came to Christ when I was only ten years old. But when I was twelve, my parents moved out of the city and bought a house on Long Island. They chose a church that believed in being Born Again. But the leadership did not believe in the Baptism in the Holy Spirit, as had the Pentecostal church where I had originally accepted Christ. As a result, the services were soooo boring that I hated to go. The people seemed nice, but they were not always good examples of Christianity. For instance, there was a young boy I will call Bob, but that is not his real name. Bob was about my age at the time and very good looking. Consequently, I had a crush on him. But I was shy with boys. So, to break the ice, I took a Catholic friend of mine to a young people's meeting they had at the church. I'll call her Loraine.

About a week later, to my surprise, Bob called me up at my house. I was so nervous talking to him that my voice shook. Unfortunately, all he wanted was Loraine's phone number! I gave it to him and Loraine went out on a date with Bob to the beach. Later, I wanted to know how the date went and if Bob had said anything about me. She told me he had. He thought I was too religious and boring. I was shattered. That, among other experiences, caused me several years of backsliding. I had thought that, since I met Bob at my church, and he even took up the collection, that he would want to date a

Christian girl. I was wrong! As I grew older, I stopped going to the church.

I was young and lonely, and my family had rejected me emotionally when I came to Christ. It had been the same with Joseph (Genesis 37:4) and David (1 Samuel 17:28-29). Both of my parents would hit me across the face often, for trivial things. Sleeping in the same room with my sister was a horrible experience. So I got my own apartment in the city and made new friends. But I was looking for love in all the wrong places. It was a five year period that seemed like forever. And, despite not being physically and emotionally attacked anymore, I was never happy. I had tried to pray often, but felt that God was always a million miles away. Jesus had been trying to reach me in many different ways. Thank God I returned to the Lord. Now He hears me when I pray, and I feel His Holy Presence. Never again do I ever want to be without Him! He means more to me now than life itself! And I finally found love, both from Christ and my wonderful husband, Eric. God hears those who love Him and live for Christ.

(6) Accept the Lord's decision as final. Don't be a Balaam! God's answer will be either yes, no, or wait patiently. I confess it's not easy. Sometimes it will be a long wait. But in the end, it will be all worthwhile! Paul had to accept the fact that God's answer was no regarding his "thorn in the flesh" (2 Corinthians 12:7-10).

I once knew a young man, I'll call Dick. He became a Christian after being totally blinded by diabetes. Dick was so anxious to get his eyesight back that he sought out preachers who promoted the "name it and claim it" doctrine. This is a poisonous teaching in the church based on the theory that God is a big Santa Clause in the sky who exists to grant the will of those who seek Him. It's promoted as being "faith based" but it is really "presumption based." The idea is that if you follow a certain formula or technique, you can get God to grant your wish. To prove his faith, Dick broke his cane and refused to learn Braille. He said God had told him that he would get his eyesight back. But the Lord didn't say when. It has been decades since then and he has still not been healed. Personally, I believe He still will be because I saw it happen in a mental image. However, God will do it in His own time, not when we humans say so.

I know how Dick felt. The Lord told me something years ago that He was going to do for me. I spent several years brooding and feeling sorry for myself because He didn't do it when I wanted it done. I took the attitude that, "I want to serve You Lord but how can I serve You when you still haven't done this for me, as You promised you would." Well, I had to repent of that sin. And after I did, God gave my husband the Baptism in the Holy Spirit and we started this ministry. I still don't have what I wanted and it has been decades since the promise.

The point is that you can't bargain with God. It has to be His will in your life, not yours. I had to learn not to be a backseat driver, and to let the Holy Spirit have control of the wheel and navigation. It doesn't matter whether you know where you're going or not. The Lord knows where He's taking you! Remember, God promised Abraham that he would be the father of many nations (Genesis 17:4-5). But Sarah didn't give birth to the promised child until she was 90 years old and Abraham was 100 (Genesis 17:17, 21:5). So, *"be still before the LORD and wait patiently for Him; do not fret when men succeed in their ways, when they carry out their wicked schemes"* (Psalms 37:7 NIV). *"Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths"* (Proverbs 3:5-6 KJV).

