



NON-PROFIT



TAX-EXEMPT

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

AUTUMN 2002

FROM US TO YOU

It has been quite awhile since our last issue of "The Good News Letter." So it is nice to finally meet together again. Frankly, it feels a bit like déjà vu. About this time ten years ago, there was another George Bush in the White House. The President's chief nemesis was Saddam Hussein. It was a time of financial turbulence for the nation and an election year. Our ministry had been suffering from a steady decrease in funding over the previous four years. The newsletter had been going out less and less often. Our equipment had been breaking down and we could not afford to fix or replace it. Our health problems had also taken a turn for the worse! And there were some very weird things (1 Peter 4:12) going on, such as bizarre computer problems, strange medical conditions, and an endless stream of time wasters and stressful mishaps (see Ephesians 6:12). That was 1992. During that year we had also been accepted into the nationwide Combined Federal Campaign. The following year everything changed! We received enough funding to open up an office in town and hire a staff. The next year, 1994, God more than doubled our funding and we were able to greatly expand our ministry.

Now, ten years later, we are waiting upon the Lord once again (see Isaiah 40:31)! This year we became members of "Christian Charities USA," a nationwide federation. This has opened up many new opportunities for us. As a result, we have also been included in state run campaigns in California, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Connecticut and Michigan. However, funding alone is not the answer. We have also been feeling the heat of God's Refining Fire (Matthew 3:11, Hebrews 12:29, 1 Peter 1:3-7). Last year, Anne was suffering with a series of rashes and unbearable itching. Initial laboratory tests point to a rare disease called Bullous Pemphigoid. She still has the disease, but it is more under control, with the aid of some strong antihistamine and several herbal remedies. Eric's health has gotten worse this year and, at times, he cannot walk without the use of a cane. He is frequently plagued with muscle, joint, and nerve pain. However, the Lord has promised to heal both of us of **all** our afflictions (Psalm 103:2-5), and we believe that His healing is not far off. We want to thank those of you who have prayed for us. Please keep it up!

There are many spiritual levels to reach as we live for Jesus Christ. How far any of us go depends upon whether or not we pass the preliminary trials and tests of faith (1 Peter 2:18-23). Everything will be going well for awhile. Then, the Lord begins to turn up the heat (Proverbs 17:3). When this occurs, most people wonder, "What happened? God was blessing me so much!" Life suddenly becomes a lot harder (Matthew 10:34-38, John 16:33). You don't feel the nearness of Christ the way that you used to. You have been striving for a closer walk with Him, trying hard to "...walk by faith, not by sight" (2 Corinthians 5:7 KJV). But the Lord isn't there to hold your hand anymore (Psalm 139:10, Isaiah 41:13). And Satan will try to convince you that God is against you (Job 2:7-10). You see, when we first come to the Lord all of us are little babies in Christ (Matthew

18:3-4, 1 Peter 2:2). But a baby can't give birth to other children. We need to mature spiritually (Hebrews 5:11 thru 6:2). The Sower (Matthew 13:18-23) provides the seed of faith, but we, the Bride of Christ (Ephesians 5:29-32, 2 Corinthians 11:2), must be a fertile field (Luke 13:6-9, John 15:1-8, Isaiah 5:1-17) in which His seed can grow. The most fertile soil of all is earth that has been purified through fire.

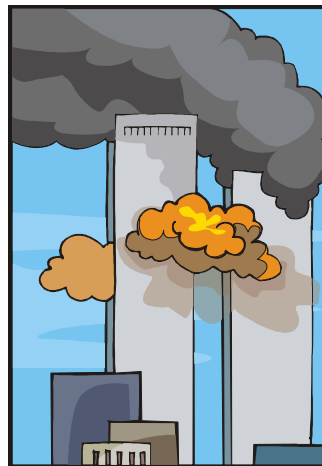
It's easy for a child to behave himself when he knows that he is being watched. However, will you remain faithful to Christ when you don't feel Him watching you? You see, a child who is learning to ice-skate will feel secure when his Father is holding his hand. But his Father can't hold his hand forever or he will never learn to skate. Do you feel abandoned by the Lord? You may not see Him, but your Heavenly Father is not far off. He's watching you from a distance. He sees you stumble a few times, fall, get up, and try again. Yet He is close enough to reach you in a flash before you hit your head upon the ice (Psalm 91:11-12, Matthew 14:30-31). The Lord

"...has said, 'Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you'" (Hebrews 13:5 NIV). It may take months or even years, but when you finally learn the lesson that God has been trying to teach you, it will feel as if you have just broken through the clouds of smoke and now you see everything so much clearer, in the Light of the Son (John 1:4, 3:19-21, 9:5).

As we prepare this issue, it is near the anniversary of the attack on the World Trade Center. The shock waves that followed reached all around the world, but here in New York there has been a greater sense of anxiety. Anne used to work for brokerage firms in lower Manhattan during the 1970's. The last was Merrill Lynch, at their headquarters, which was then located right next to the World Trade Center! So it is easy to empathize

with those who were attacked. Some of you have been wondering, why God would allow it to happen. Was God the one who did it? No. God was **not** the one who caused the attack directly. The devil has been wanting to launch such an attack for a long time, but the Lord has been holding him back! However, the Bible tells us that God gets to a place when He becomes angry at those He has previously blessed, when they persistently sin against Him (Deuteronomy 32:10-29 and Psalm 78). He says, "Why should I continue to help these people? They don't love or serve Me anymore. They are so far from the Light of Christ (John 8:12 and 9:5) that they do not even see the sin in their lives." For their *"...consciences have been seared as with a hot iron"* (1 Timothy 4:2 NIV). So, the Lord allows the devil to attack. But even then there are limits on what the enemy will be able to do. For Satan can do nothing to us unless God gives him permission (see Job 1:12, 2:6 and Luke 22:31-32). Therefore, those who are holding a grudge against the Lord should consider that if it were not for God's mercy, things could have been a lot worse! Our main article for this issue, is "**A Chasing Of The Wind.**"

In Christ we remain, *Eric and Anne Kaestner*



A CHASING OF THE WIND

By Anne Kaestner

There is a song recorded by Christian vocalist, Steve Green.* Each time I hear it the words amaze me with their insight. **“Every heart is filled with longing to be free from all life’s pain. Yet the search through earthly pleasures always ends in vain. Only God who made the heavens can satisfy our souls. Apart from Him and all His meaning all things fail as they begin. And hearts deceived can only know a chasing of the wind. All achievements, all possessions, all with time return to dust. Only God can be our reason for deep and quiet trust. He will guard us from the dangers that gladly make men fools. Apart from Him and all His meaning all things fail as they begin. And hearts deceived can only know a chasing of the wind.”** From the time that we were children we all started out with one misguided belief. That the road to joy and fulfillment in life is paved with material blessing. I recall the times I have been at a supermarket and heard the shrill scream of a child after his mother refused to buy him some toy. He does not understand that it may not be safe for him. All he knows is that he has a want, and he expects it to be fulfilled (see 1 Corinthians 13:11). As he grows up his tastes and cravings will change, but his attitude will not. You see, in our natural human state, we never lose our desire for the things of this world. It may be something tangible, like a bigger house, or something more ethereal, like a yearning to travel. Whatever it is, there is a hunger in each heart that wants to be fed, but is never truly satisfied (Ecclesiastes 2:1-11).

No matter how rich a man may be, he always wants to be richer. No matter how pretty a woman is, she always wants to be prettier. Power works the same way. It becomes intoxicating. No matter how much one has, it is never enough. History records that Alexander the Great, after he had conquered all of the known world of his day, began to weep because there was no more land left to possess. Jean Paul Getty (1892-1976), a business tycoon who amassed a multibillion dollar fortune, said that having money wasn’t any fun. The fun came from making it! I saw a television biography about actor, Peter Falk. As star of the hit television show, “Columbo,” he is certainly a success as far as this world is concerned. Yet he said sadly, “Success does not necessarily equal happiness.” There is a similar account about the late George Harrison. As lead guitarist for the 1960’s rock group, the “Beatles,” it seemed that he had reached the pinnacle of wealth and prestige. His music influenced an entire generation. Even so, he told a reporter, “One minute you’re seventeen and the next you’re forty-seven.” He snapped his fingers and said, “It passes just like that!” Harrison was only fifty-eight when he died. But some celebrities live to be quite old. However, to me, it is a pathetic sight to see some aging movie star talking about her past, when she was young, attractive, and prolific in films. **All she has is her past!** She has no future to look to! She is a has-been, a relic from another generation. She sits around all day watching old movies she has made. How dreadful it must be to have nothing to await you but death (Hebrews 9:27)! Yet, she will not renounce the things of this world in exchange for eternal riches (Matthew 13:45-46, Mark 10:21, Luke 18:22). They are her pride (Proverbs 16:18), her sense of accomplishment (Luke 16:15). So, she will clutch onto them until death finally draws down the curtain on her life.

This world is like a carousel spinning out of control. There is an insatiable appetite for excitement that has reached unprecedented levels. Rides at theme parks have become so dangerous that people have been killed on them! The simple things of the past are no longer good enough. Sports records that seemed so impressive fifty years

ago are blasé to people today. I recently saw a film clipping of figure skater Sonja Henie. She won Olympic gold medals in 1928, 1932, and 1936 and ten consecutive world championships (1927-1936). Yet, these days she would be laughed off the ice! Today’s generation wants everything faster, more perilous, and in the raw, to surpass its predecessors with skill and ability. Yet, even when they win the gold, the glory of it lasts only a short time (1 Corinthians 9:24-27). Someone else will always come along who will do it better, quicker, and with more pizzazz. And they will get the acclaim that once belonged to you. The desire to achieve fame, riches, and power is so strong that people will do just about anything to obtain it. It will all seem grand for a season (Ecclesiastes 3:1-8). A man who has eaten a full meal is content for awhile. But he will eventually hunger again (see John 6:35)! Why is it that no matter how much people achieve, it is never enough? The natural human tendency is to keep searching for that special something that we believe will give us the serenity we crave (John 14:27, 16:33, Philippians 4:7). However, the Bible tells us that, no matter what we achieve in this world, it will never be enough to fill our need (Ecclesiastes 5:10-11). You see, the search for riches and glory becomes like a narcotic. After each new thrill, the person needs a stronger fix. But what happens when they finally achieve all their goals and there is nothing left to receive? They are

left with the realization that the pain is still there. For there re-

mains a big empty hole in their hearts that nothing this world has can fill. It is a Christ-shaped hole! And only He can fill it (see John 14:6, 11:25-26, 1 Timothy 2:5-6). However, Christ said, **“...My kingdom is not of this world... My kingdom is from another place”** (John 18:36 NIV).

Two thousand years ago, the Apostle Paul wrote **“...There will be terrible times in the last days. People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money... conceited, lovers of pleasure...”** (2 Timothy 3:1-5 NIV). He was talking about the **Christian church!** **“For certain men whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you. They are godless men, who change the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord”** (Jude 1:4 NIV). Consequently, Paul was stating that the influence of this sinful world would become so great upon the church (see Matthew 24:24, 1 Thessalonians 2:9-12), that many believers would be led astray by it (1 Timothy 4:1, 6:10, 2 Peter 2:17-22). Thus, the church would become defiled by people who are **“...lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God - having a form of godliness but denying its Power...”** (2 Timothy 3:4-5 NIV). The “Power” of God is the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8, Galatians 5:16, 25). But since they deny God’s Spirit, they do not even realize that they have fallen into idolatry (Isaiah 42:18-23 and 2 Thessalonians 2:9-12). For Satan has infiltrated their ranks with his wolves and hirelings (Jeremiah 14:14, Matthew 7:15, John 10:12-15, Acts 20:29-31, Galatians 1:6-7, 1 Timothy 4:1). As Paul said to the Corinthians, **“I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy. I promised you to one husband, to Christ, so that I might present you as a pure virgin to Him. But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent’s cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ”** (2 Corinthians 11:2-3 NIV). James also touched on this when he wrote, **“What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don’t they come from your desires that battle within you? You want something but don’t get it. You kill and covet, but you cannot have what you want. You quarrel and fight. You do not have, because you do not ask God. When you ask, you do not receive, because you**

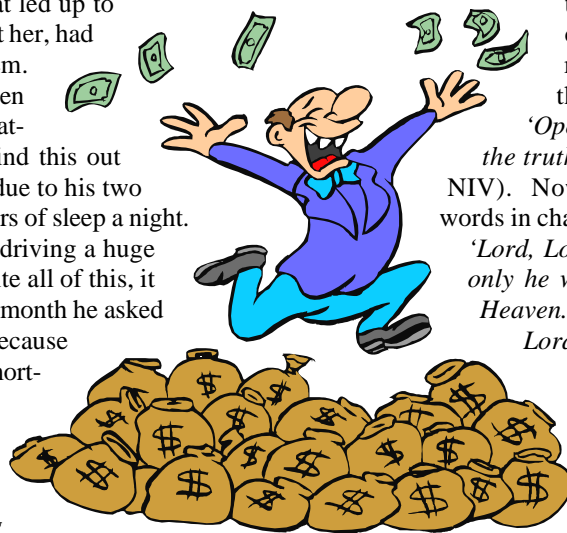


ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on **your pleasures**. You **adulterous people**, don't you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God? **Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God**" (James 4:1-4 NIV). Also, see 1 John 2:15-17). Idolatry by His people is adultery, as far as God is concerned (Joshua 24:19-20).

Money is one of the biggest stumbling blocks to Christ (see 1 Timothy 6:10, Hebrews 13:5, James 5:1-3, Revelation 3:17)! It is one of the world's premier idols. That's why the poor buy lottery tickets and the rich play the stock market. Either way it is gambling, which is a terrible sin because it is precipitated by greed. Many wealthy people are not limited to just one opulent home, but several! They also own jets, yachts, fancy cars, exotic animals, and anything else their hearts desire (Luke 12:16-21 and 16:19-31). This attitude of "nothing is too good for me" is not only pandemic among the rich, but also the general population as well. A couple of years ago my husband and I decided to get our house painted. We hired a man I will call Larry, although that is not his real name. Larry already had a well-paying job driving a tractor trailer for an overnight delivery service. But, typical of people today, he spent more money than he made at his regular job. So he began painting houses in order to supplement his income. During the time he worked for us he frequently bragged about the granite countertops his wife had chosen for their kitchen, and the granite steps that led up to their house. Larry, unwilling to disappoint her, had gone into hock in order to purchase them. He also spent a lot of money on fancy kitchen cabinets, top of the line appliances, and whatever else her heart desired. We didn't find this out until his work was almost finished. But, due to his two jobs, Larry was only getting about two hours of sleep a night. I cringed every time I thought about him driving a huge truck on the nation's highways. Yet despite all of this, it was not enough to pay his debts. And one month he asked for his payment earlier than scheduled because he did not have enough money to pay his mortgage!

The love of money is a natural part of the carnal nature (1 Timothy 6:10, Psalm 62:10). It is a propelling force in the lives of those who still live "...according to the course of **this world**, according to the **prince of the power of the air**, the **spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience**" (Ephesians 2:2 KJV). As the earth revolves around the Sun, their lives revolve around their possessions (Luke 12:15). Sadly this is true even among many who claim to love the Lord. God blessed them and they prospered. But they eventually took their eyes off of Christ and put them on the things of this world. As they filled up their hearts with carnal pleasure, there was no longer any room there for Christ. As His Spirit (John 14:26, 15:26) slowly began to depart from them (1 Samuel 16:14, 2 Peter 2:20-22), they continually looked for worldly enticements and drifted further away from the **Light** (John 8:12) of their salvation. They stumbled in the darkness of sin (Jeremiah 13:16, Matthew 15:14, Isaiah 42:16-20) even though they had been warned to "**Put to death... whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry**" (Colossians 3:5 NIV). They gave the Lord lip-service (Psalm 78:35-37, Isaiah 29:13, Mark 7:6-8). But their hearts had found another lover (2 Timothy 3:4-5). They, who should have been among the Bride of Christ (Mark 2:18-20 and John 3:28-29), had become unfaithful to their Husband (2 Corinthians 11:2-3 and Galatians 1:6). Consequently, they no longer knew how to live by faith (2 Corinthians 5:7, Hebrews 10:38, 11:1, 6). They trusted in their riches to save them (James 5:3, Isaiah 10:3-4, Psalm 62:10).

Remember the parable of the ten virgins (Matthew 25:1-12). Five of them were ready for the Bridegroom when He returned, but the other five were lazy and self-indulgent. They had such a high opinion of themselves (Revelation 3:17) that they thought that the Groom would wait for them. The wise virgins had oil in the lamps. Oil is symbolic of the Holy Spirit (1 Samuel 16:13). They needed oil in order to operate their lamps. The wise virgins could see clearly where they were going (Matthew 7:12-14), because the light of the lamp went ahead of them (Exodus 13:21, Psalms 27:1 and 119:105, John 8:12). So they were able to find their way no matter how dark it got (Job 29:3, Isaiah 60:2). They could see the obstacles in their path (Psalm 140:5), and were able to avoid them. However, the stupid virgins didn't worry about having enough oil. They thought that they could wait until the last minute and then buy what they needed. That's the way a lot of Christians are today. They know there is sin in their lives, and that they are not living as they should. But Satan has deceived them into believing that they can just repent at the last minute and still get to Heaven (Isaiah 55:6, 2 Corinthians 6:2). They are living in darkness (Isaiah 6:9-10, 43:8, 42:6-7)! They want to do it their own way (Isaiah 64:6 and 53:6, John 14:6), falling over every encumbrance Satan can throw in their path (see Matthew 15:14, 1 Timothy 6:10, 20-21, 2 Timothy 4:10, 1 John 2:16). However, Jesus said that the Bridegroom will not wait for them! Jesus is



the Bridegroom (Matthew 9:14-15)! The church is the bride (Ephesians 5:29-32). And much of the church will not be ready when the Lord returns! "...**'Sir! Sir!'** they said. **'Open the door for us!'** But He replied, **'I tell you the truth, I don't know you'**" (Matthew 25:11-12 NIV). Now compare this scripture with the Lord's words in chapter seven. "**Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of Heaven, but only he who does the will of My Father who is in Heaven. Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?'** Then I will tell them plainly, **'I never knew you. Away from Me, you evildoers!'**" (Matthew 7:21-23 NIV). Also, see Luke 14:16-24).

Several years ago I was watching the news at night when they began talking about a major strike that was occurring in a top United States industry. Labor had already gone weeks without a contract and the situation was getting desperate. A worker was interviewed. He said, "I went to church last night and we talked about the strike. And I decided that I will just trust the union to guide me." I was appalled at his comment! For "**No servant can serve two masters... You cannot serve both God and Money**" (Luke 16:13 NIV). Also, see Luke 12:13-15)! Many Christians claim to love Christ, but when put to the test (Proverbs 17:3, 1 Peter 1:3-7, 4:12-13) it is not God they trust (Proverbs 3:5-7, John 14:1, Philippians 4:6), but their shop steward or 401K! This is reminiscent of the Fall of the Roman Empire. At its zenith, Rome encompassed territories stretching from Britain and Germany to North Africa and the Persian Gulf. It had retained world dominance for 500 years. There were no more lands left to conquer. Rome was not only the most powerful nation, but also the wealthiest. The citizens denied themselves nothing (Ecclesiastes 2:10-11). They indulged their every craving with fancy foods, sports, entertainment, drunkenness, spas, homosexuality, and wild sex orgies. However, they grew bored with it all. No nation had been able to defeat the mighty power of Rome. But, due to their chronic lethargy, pampered lifestyle, and contempt for all that is Holy (see Romans 1:18-32), their (Continued On Page 4)

nation began to decay from within! Finally, after 395 A.D., it was split, and then rapidly sank into anarchy.

During the early years of my marriage, there was something that I wanted God to give me. Everyone else seemed to have it but me. And Satan kept reminding me of this, especially when I was at church! He said, "God doesn't love you. He is blessing everyone else but you. And you have loved Him more than they have. You have sacrificed more for the Lord. Yet, they are gloating in front of you, right in God's house! They are flaunting what they have, and treating you with contempt because you don't have it. If God loved you, do you think that He would treat you this way?" I actually began to believe Satan's lies (John 8:44), and it built up a resentment in my heart, which was exactly what Satan wanted! I felt so much pain within me. I did not want to live for the devil but I felt as if God had abandoned me. Time after time, events would occur that would lead me to believe that I would finally have what I wanted. I would get excited and think, "God's finally answered my prayer." Then my hopes would be dashed once again. I felt so depressed and discouraged! It was as if I was living in limbo between two worlds, and not feeling loved or at peace in either one of them. I kept going, but I felt as if I was trudging through a desert and every oasis just turned into another mirage. I used to say, "I want to serve you Lord. But how can I serve You when I don't have what I want so badly? I have no joy left to serve You, only sorrow."

I thought that, since I could not have what I wanted most, at least I could cheer myself up with material things. I was working at the time, so I bought myself a fox fur jacket, then a mink coat. However, the animal rights groups began to become so intimidating that I was afraid to wear them. By the time that things began to calm down, the coats didn't fit me anymore. I had begun collecting jewelry, and Eric had bought me some. Then crime became worse in our area, and I was afraid to wear it. One year our apartment was robbed and my jewelry was stolen. People said that I made good cheese cakes. So one day I entered a contest at a department store. Everything that could possibly go wrong did. I couldn't find the right kind of cherries at the grocery store and I had thought that I had other ingredients I needed at home. But when I began to make the cake, I discovered at the last minute, that I did not. The cake was a disaster! So much for me trying to glorify myself through earthly enterprises. "Yet when I surveyed all that my hands had done and what I had toiled to achieve, everything was meaningless, a chasing after the wind; nothing was gained under the sun" (Ecclesiastes 2:11 NIV).

It took years before I finally came to my senses! However, when I did, I realized that my desire to receive that which I wanted had become greater than my love for Christ. Yet God had sacrificed the very thing that meant the most to Him in order to purchase my salvation (1 Peter 1:18-19). I realized that if I am truly to serve the Lord as He demands that we serve Him (Matthew 10:34-38), I could not allow anything to come between Christ and myself. I repented of my sin and oh, how great it felt to have that heavy weight of misery lifted from my shoulders! I felt as light as a feather. No, the Lord didn't give me the thing that I had wanted. It has been fifteen years since then and He still hasn't given it to me, although He promised long ago that I would eventually receive it. I had not realized what a terrible toll my self-pity had taken on my husband, Eric. It must have been awful being around me at that time. I have



known people who have wallowed in self-pity. I felt depressed just being around them. I could feel the presence of demons in the air. It was spiritually suffocating! However, when I changed my attitude and felt the Presence of God in my life once again, He gave me the most incredible sense of peace and joy. It wasn't joy as the world knows, because it didn't come from anything this world has. It was "...the peace of God, which transcends all understanding..." (Philippians 4:7 NIV. Also, see John 14:27). It can only be found through Jesus Christ! Well, the Fire of God's Spirit began to burn in my heart, and Eric started to feel very uncomfortable. For he was coming under conviction! My whole lifestyle had changed, and I was no longer interested in the things of this world. I stopped watching the television soap operas, and other shows, that I had been addicted to. I began to read my Bible more and spend time in prayer. Eric couldn't stand it! As a result, within weeks Eric received the Second Work of Grace, the Baptism in the Holy Spirit (Matthew 3:11-12, John 20:22, Acts 2:1-4, 18:24 thru 19:6). Then, within a year, God led us to begin Bible Believers Fellowship, Inc. If I had received what I had wanted back then, we would not have this ministry today! So I am blissfully content to wait for the Lord to choose the timing in all things.

In one of His parables, Jesus described the Christian walk as a man going on a long journey. Before He left, He entrusted His property to His servants. He gave them each the money they would need to maintain it until His return. One servant received five talents, another two, and a third received one. "The man who had received the five talents went at once and put his money to work and gained five more. So also, the one with the two talents gained two more. But the man who had received the one talent went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid His Master's money. After a long time the Master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them" (Matthew 25:16-19 NIV). Both the servant who had been given five talents and the servant who had been given two had doubled their investment. To each of them their Master said, "Well done, good and faithful servant!" (Matthew 25:21 NIV). Then the man who had been given one talent returned it to his Master. It had not gained any interest or increased in value. So right away he began making excuses (Matthew 25:24-30). Like most sinners, he refused to take personal responsibility for his own shortcomings. Worst still, he blamed his Master! His Master said, "throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matthew 25:30 NIV. Also, see Revelation 21:8 and 20:11-15). The Lord has given to each of us certain attributes and abilities. The wicked servants bury their talents in the earth, symbolic of this world, rather than putting them in the bank (Matthew 6:19-21) where they can receive interest. They have greedily sunk God's blessings into worldly investments, which they expected would make them rich (Matthew 6:25-33). Many of them have suffered great financial losses. "...This too is meaningless, a chasing after the wind" (Ecclesiastes 2:24-26 NIV). Therefore, "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in Heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Matthew 6:19-21 NIV).