

“I WAS SENTENCED TO DEATH IN THE ELECTRIC CHAIR” - Part 2*A True Story told by Clyde Thompson***THE PLEASANT VIEW PLUMB LINE****A Hard Road Ahead**

The governor debated about commuting my term to twenty years, but decided on advice of counsel, that he would commute it to life. They took me off death row, and for a year I lived as faithful to my Lord as I could in prison. Not one Christian from outside came in to encourage me in the way of the Lord. Had Christians come in, and services been held in that institution, I am sure that the horrible things which happened afterward would not have happened and I wouldn't have spent twenty-five more years in prison after I had already been in for three. But I spent twenty-eight years in confinement.

A year after I was released from death row they sent me to the Retrieve Farm which is down close to Angleton on the Gulf Coast, and this was a living hell on earth. They worked us as high as seven or eight weeks (from daylight until dark) without even one Sunday of rest. There was no time to even wash our socks. We would come in so tired at night that we would just fall in bed and not even remember that we had come into the building or whether or not we went to supper; we would just fall exhausted and then the next morning we were up and at it again.

I lost my faith completely. I didn't believe that there could be a God who was merciful and could let these things happen to me. My daddy came to see me after I went to the Retrieve Farm, and I took the Bible that he had given me on death row and handed it to him and told him to take it because I didn't believe it any more, and I would not try to live it. I know how that must have hurt my daddy, and it probably put him in an early grave. In 1938, he died at the age of fifty-three.

The next six years I tried with great determination to escape from prison. I made four major attempts to escape, but I was always plotting and planning to escape. I felt that if I was going to spend my life in prison it would be a very short one. And I would make them kill me or I would get away. At one time, trying to escape, a young man was shot down by my side and killed, and another one was shot and wounded. The guard rode up to within thirty feet of me and said, "Stop or I will kill you too." I stopped and looked back and saw him about to shoot me and I ducked my head. I had a high crowned hat on and he shot it off with a load of buckshot. Had his intentions been carried out I would not be here tonight.

I had two knife fights with fellow inmates on that prison unit and killed both of those men. Because of my past record of having been sentenced to death for murder (and this is a good example of what a past record can do for a person) they tried me for my life. Ordinarily a fellow would get five years or maybe ten for a crime of that kind in the prison (for lighting for his life and killing somebody) and yet they sentenced me to life both times. I now had three life sentences in the penitentiary and practically no hope of ever getting out, unless I broke out.

Well, things went from bad to worse. The officials soon realized that I was not a man who was afraid to die, and that I was determined to get away, so they put me in with other people of this kind so that we might be watched more closely. This was at the Central Farm. Then they built what they called "Little Alcatraz" out on the Eastham Farm, Northeast of Huntsville, and they took me out there with about twenty-five other fellows. They wouldn't even let us out to work in the field without two guards because they knew that we were going to break if we could.

Finally, over on the Eastham Farm, four of us plotted and planned to take the arse-

"...then said the Lord, Behold, I will set a plumb line in the midst of my people Israel..." (Amos 7:8)

READ THAT YE MAY KNOW

Text: _____

I. Read _____

Notes:

II. Read _____

Notes:

III. Read _____

Notes:

IV. Read _____

Notes:

V. Read _____

Notes:

VI. Read _____

Notes:

**PERFECTING HOLINESS
IN THE FEAR OF GOD**

Text: _____

I. _____ from Sin

Notes:

II. _____ of Service

Notes:

III. _____ of Self

Notes:

nal and give guns to everyone who would shoot one. We hoped to kill anybody who got in our way as we escaped from that penitentiary. I had fallen so far that I would have killed every official and every inmate in the institution to escape from it. I was determined to get out of prison.

We captured two picket guards, got their two pistols, and with our knives and the two guards as shields, we went up the stairs to the arsenal. But they had laid a trap for us and we went right into an ambush. As I stepped out to open the door where the men could go into the arsenal, I was shot with a 30-30 slug through my shoulder. The guard was shooting at my head and missed. As I pulled this door open I looked around and saw these two men, that were friends of mine, lying on those two steps dying. One of them still had his pistol in his hand. I ran over and grabbed it, but I could only use my left hand and I'm not a very good left-handed shooter.

I stayed in the hospital forty days and forty nights and they sent me back to Eastham Farm. I couldn't even raise my arm. It was about two years before I could use it. I went out into the field and worked with a hoe with one hand. About six or seven months after I went back out there, a man was killed in the wing where I was and they charged me with murder for the third time in the penitentiary. (They were determined to sentence me to death.) You know, if one of those guards had been killed that I was shooting at, I certainly would have received the death penalty again. But it was just fortunate they were not. All three of those men who went up those stairs with me died, and it is just amazing that I didn't—or that I hadn't killed somebody and been executed for that. So they charged me with a stabbing though I didn't kill the man, and the only reason they didn't try me for my life on that case is because they couldn't find a witness to testify against me.

*-continued
-Clyde Thompson*

THE VALUE OF AFFLICTIONS

There is a legend about a grandfather clock that stood in a corner for three generations, faithfully ticking off the minutes, hours, and days—its means of operation was a heavy weight suspended by a double chain.

One of its new owners, believing that an old clock should not bear such a load, released the weight. Immediately the ticking stopped. According to the legend, the clock asked, "Why did you do that?" The owner replied, "I wanted to lighten your burden." "Please put my weight back," replied the clock.. "That is what keeps me going."

THE BOOK OF JOY AND DEFENSE

According to Paul, it has only been one year since his first epistle of reproof to the Corinthians and yet he now pens another. Paul had since time left Ephesus and had made his way to Macedonia where Titus met him with a report from Corinth and what reaction they had to Paul's plea for penitence and unity. Would the news be good or would it be bad? Would the people accept his instruction and put away sin or would they spitefully scorn his message and live in denial? To answer that question is to understand one part of the two fold purpose of II Corinthians.

First, the answer to the questions asked above is that Paul realized success. Paul dealt with a number of doctrinal and moral issues in I Corinthians and the report received was news for which he so earnestly hoped:

“For when we were come into Macedonia, our flesh had no rest, but we were troubled on every side; without were fightings, within were fears. Nevertheless God, that comforteth those that are cast down, comforted us by the coming of Titus; and not by his coming only, but by the consolation wherewith he was comforted in you, when he told us your earnest desire, your mourning, your fervent mind toward me; so that I rejoiced the more. For though I made you sorry with a letter, I do not repent, though I did repent: for I perceive that the same epistle hath made you sorry, though it were but for a season” (II Corinthians 7:5-8).

Proceeding from there, Paul goes on to state his joy in their repentance that they would enjoy only the blessings of God and not His “damage” (vs. 9). Contained therein is a marvelous message of the gospel's power. Some scoff and claim that scathing reproof and church discipline are outdated, antiquated, ineffective means of overcoming sin. However, if one simply looks at the severity of language Paul used in I Corinthians to make his remarks personal and then notice their response, it is easily recognized that time period has nothing to do with the results, but the gospel's ability to cut to the heart and convict the soul was the reason these people listened and obeyed. In fact, in response to Paul's plea for them to withdraw from those guilty of adultery (I Corinthians 5:1ff), the people followed his instructions so adamantly that Paul even had to tell them to back off of them because they had repented (II Corinthians 2:5ff). To sum up Paul's pride in these brethren's willingness to correct themselves, Paul stated, *“I rejoice therefore that I have confidence in you in all things”* (II Corinthians 7:16).

The second general purpose of II Corinthians is that Paul might defend his credibility and maintain his trust among the brethren in Corinth and other places. In his absence, a host of false teachers arose in Corinth and began preaching doctrines contrary to the truth taught by the inspired Paul. This issue, in and of itself, caused two problems. First, these false teachers went about spreading their own propaganda with no concern at all for objective, divine truth; and thus caused a confusing situation for brethren who still were relatively young as Christians. Second, these false teachers, in order to substantiate their doctrines, planted the seeds of distrust in the minds of the Corinthians regarding Paul, thereby trying to ruin his credibility among them and disprove his teachings. They could not disprove his message, thus they tried to disrupt the messenger and what influence he had among them. In order to protect the church and himself from these false teachers and false teachings, Paul used a great deal of this book to warn them about these teachers and to restate the qualifications and proof that would solidify his apostleship in their minds (II Corinthians 11-13).

To establish a little more detail regarding the material Paul includes in this book, Dunn provides the following outlined purpose for his writing:

1. Paul's ministry—his trials, principles, and consolations as a preacher (1:1-7:16).
2. The collection for the saints (8:1-9:15).
3. Paul's apostolic authority (10:1-13:14).

The book of II Corinthians is a marvelous example of what one's faith in God, love for the church, and loyalty to Christ can and will do when put to practice. Many of the issues faced today are those faced by the Corinthian brethren almost 2,000 years ago. How can those issues be resolved to the satisfaction of God like they were in Corinth? The simple answer is to rely upon the power of the gospel just as Paul did. By teaching and preaching the pure and simple doctrine provided by God's word, sin can be defeated and unity and righteousness can reign among the people of God once more. *“For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds...”* (II Corinthians 10:4).
-Andy Brewer