

“I WAS SENTENCED TO DEATH IN THE ELECTRIC CHAIR” - Part 4*A True Story told by Clyde Thompson***THE PLEASANT VIEW PLUMB LINE**

The hardest thing for me to overcome was cursing and bywords. I had lived about six years with every other word I said being a curse word or a byword. For about two years after I turned back to the Lord these things would pop up in my mind, but I would say in my heart, “They won’t come out of my mouth,” and they didn’t. I took about two years to overcome this. I understood what James meant when he said, “Resist the devil and he will flee from you.”

I studied diligently in that cell to educate myself. Among other courses of study, I took a two-year Bible course from Lee College in Tennessee. When I began studying in that isolation cell I couldn’t even speak or spell the most common words correctly. Your little seven or eight year-old children can spell better than I could spell at that time. When I quit school in the fourth grade, I was fourteen years old, the oldest and dumbest kid in my class—and the most embarrassed.

My daddy always planned for my younger brother to be a preacher, but he didn’t become one, and neither my older brother. But the “ugly duckling” became a preacher. My daddy died before I came back to the Lord, though, and I’m sad about this, because I wish he knew that I am a preacher—for that would please him very much.

A Changed Life

I think that my life is a testimony to the fact that a person who has committed murder can be saved. I committed murder, and there are a lot of people saved in this world today because I have lived in it—even though there are eight dead because of me. I thank God that He used me for His cause, but I don’t thank God for sin. I thank God that He brought me to a sense of understanding that I couldn’t save myself, and the only hope was His mercy through Christ Jesus.

When one finds out that he is a sinner, lost, undone, and without hope, and he turns back to God, God will help him, and use him in this world. If we have committed sin, we need forgiveness of that sin, and until we realize that we are lost and undone, and unless we have repented of sin, we won’t be saved.

Finally they sent me out to Ramsey Farm and I did real well. I put the Christmas play on for Captain McAdams the last two years, and I’m real proud of those plays and the men who worked with me. Those men were from the Bible class I was teaching on the farm. When I left Ramsey Farm, I had eighty-one men in class and sixty of them had been baptized into Christ. We baptized nine out there at one time in a stock pond.

Final Developments

Later, my case came up for consideration for parole. The parole officers decided they would put it off for three years, and they wrote me a letter to that effect. I’d been in prison twenty-eight years, but they said they would review my case again in three years.

I had gotten acquainted with a Christian lady through a preacher friend who had been coming to see me. After a year of knowing one another, she and I fell in love and planned to be married as soon as we could. She worked and would not give up. She went to everybody about me—trying to get me out of isolation and then out of prison. Mr. Ellis, the manager of the prison, told her one day about four or five years before I got out, “Young lady, you might as well go on and forget this fellow. He’ll never get out of prison.” Well, that was the opinion of most of the officials down there and most of the inmates—and me, too. I just thought there wasn’t much hope of getting out of

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

THE PRESERVATION OF A NATION

Text: _____

I. Preserving our _____

Notes:

II. Preserving our _____

Notes:

III. Preserving our _____

Notes:

IV. Preserving our _____

Notes:

**A GOOD RELATIONSHIP MADE
THE DIFFERENCE!**

A girl who received a book from a young man, read it and said, "What a tiresome book!" The young man said, "Did you notice who wrote it?" She looked at the front page and saw that her sweetheart was the author. She began to read it again, and at the end she said, "I never read a greater book." What made the difference? Her relationship to the writer.

Look at God. Is He good or evil? It all depends on whether you are single in heart or evil in heart. If you look at Jesus, you may see Him either as a deceiver or as a Savior. What makes the difference? Your attitude, your eye.

Psalm 121:1-5

there. But all of these people underestimated the power of God and the influence of a good woman. The board turned me down, but two months later they released me on conditional pardon.

I was released from Huntsville prison after being in two months past twenty-eight years. My wife was there with a suit of clothes, a borrowed shirt, and a necktie. I was an old country boy and I had never owned a suit of clothes, and had never even worn a necktie.

My Concluding Work

My work now involves meeting those released inmates. When those boys come out, I invite them to my house and dress them in a suit of clothes so they will have something decent to wear when they ask somebody for a job. Before I send them on their way, I try to teach them the gospel of Christ and bring them to the Lord.

I have counseled with a number of men on four units of the prison system, but the doors are practically barred to me now because there were too many of them wanting to be baptized, and the denominational chaplains and the manager of the prison did not want those people baptized. It was all right to teach them and encourage them to live right, but not to baptize them. The devil is pretty smart; as long as he can keep a person from being saved he is real happy, and he has a lot of people working for him in this world today.

Beloved, the possibilities of teaching people who have been in trouble are tremendous. These people are really open-minded. They know they need help, and all it takes is somebody to guide them in the right way.

I want you to know how glad I am to tell you that there is a God in heaven who is a merciful God. And Jesus Christ His Son died for your sins. It makes no difference how great your sins or how small, the blood of Christ is the answer. And then a faithful life unto death will bring eternal life to you.

If you haven't obeyed the gospel of Christ we would encourage you to do so while time and opportunity are given you. If you have fallen short of God's will, won't you make it right with Him and live for Him in full dedication of life that He may bless you here and hereafter?

[NOTE: Clyde Thompson died of a heart attack July 1, 1979. His life story has been recorded in a book by journalist Don Umphrey (The Meanest Man in Texas, Quarry Press, P.O. Box 181736, Dallas TX).]

-Clyde Thompson

AS A CHRISTIAN IT IS MY DUTY TO...

Webster's defines duty as "a moral or legal obligation; obligatory tasks, conduct, service, or functions that arise from one's position" (355). Vine's defines duty as "to owe, to be indebted" (344). As a Christian servant, we don't serve out of duty alone. Christ warned against this attitude when he said, "*So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable: we have done that which was our duty to do*" (Luke 17:10). This passage doesn't negate our duties. Some will take comfort in doing nothing, as long as they can appease their conscience with a passage that they feel teaches no personal responsibilities. But Paul boldly states, "*I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise*" (Romans 1:14). Paul felt the obligation to pay back what had been given to him. Do we ever feel the need to pay back what has been done for us? Doesn't it make us question, "What are our duties?"

As Christians it is our duty to love others. God gave us the example we need. "*For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life*" (John 3:16). Do we truly love the lost? How concerned are we about a brother or sister who has gone back into the ways of the world. Will we be like the shepherd who will leave the ninety and nine to seek the one (Luke 15:4)? Our love should be visible to those around us. One way that God is glorified is through the love we show. Christ states, "*A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another*" (John 13:34-35). Are we taking into consideration the effect our love has on others? When we demand things done our way and no other, what effect does it have on those around us? The true genuine love that we owe to others is a selfless, caring, and considerate love. Paul wrote, "*Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another*" (Romans 12:10). Our love cannot be based on hypocrisy (cf. Romans 12:9) and it be the kind of love that will pay the debt we owe.

As Christians it is our duty to live a life that represents the gospel of Christ. I owe it to God, to others, and to myself to let my light shine in a world of darkness. Christ said, "*Let your light so shine before me, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven*" (Matthew 5:16). The way we live our life is not about bringing glory to ourselves but to God. The way we live demonstrates who is in charge of our lives. Paul states that we were raised from the dead "...so we also should walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:4). That is why Paul told the Christians at Colosse to "put off" the old man of sin and sorrow and to "put on the new man" (cf. Colossians 3:5-15). Sin is no longer in control of our lives but Christ! Paul encouraged, "*Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel*" (Philippians 1:27). Christianity is not a "talk about" religion. We must be doers, not hearers only. "*But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves*" (James 1:22). What should our lives look like? Paul said, "*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law*" (Galatians 5:22-23). There is one question we all should ask and answer. When the world sees us, do they see Christ? Can we say as the children's song says, "I've got the joy, joy, joy down deep in my soul?" If we can't there is something desperately wrong.

As Christians it is our duty to preach the gospel of Christ. Paul stated, "*I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise. So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also*" (Romans 1:14-15). It is my obligation, duty, and responsibility to share the good news about Jesus Christ. Christ paid a price for me that I could not pay (cf. Hebrews 9:27-28). What will I do for Him? We shouldn't proclaim the wonderful message of the Savior just out of debt, but it should tug on our heartstrings. We should want to shout the saving message from the rooftops. We should want to tell our friends, neighbors, and loved ones.

I saw a bumper sticker that said, "I owe, I owe, it's off to work I go!" As Christians we can see what has been done for us and know where we were, a state of hopelessness and helplessness. Thank God for His love, mercy, and grace. How do we feel the debt?

-Ronnie Hayes