

As I grew up, my family were not church-goers. However, we had a neighbor girl who babysat me, and she took me to Sunday School where she attended church. As I grew older, we grew apart because of our age difference and I found reasons to not continue my visits to church.

Although I was married in a church (my first wife had been a church-goer), I really didn't find the need for religion or Christ in my life. Still, I made sure both of my daughters were baptized and went through confirmation classes. At best, I "played church" poorly. We attended infrequently, when it fit my schedule – Christmas, Easter, and when I didn't have to mow the yard or go hunting.

I always believed in God and Christ, but I had a hard time with the concept of the trinity. This was more out of ignorance than unbelief. I always felt because of the good things I did, I was set. I was a great guy! I helped people, was fair, was a below-average husband, but tried to be an above-average Dad.

After a divorce, I was into a second marriage and a second family. I was still hard at work "doing things." We never went to church – we were too busy "doing things."

Then, on February 17, 2005, I was arrested. It was at this point in time it became very apparent that I had "missed the boat," that I had taken myself and all my kids down the wrong path. I was not at all in control of my life like I thought I had been. I needed direction!

It was at this point that I became aware of God reaching out to me. One fellow I had worked with, actually fired and turned my back on, came to me first. He came on a clergy visit to the jail to see me. Then another old friend and co-worker sent his Pastor to visit with me.

I got out of jail and in an attempt to find myself and find God, I went to a couple of churches. At one it seemed like every sermon was "aimed" right at me. I was going to church but I was struggling.

Then I went back to jail to await sentencing. There, the Chaplain encouraged me and I started to not only read, but study the Bible. The Chaplain gave me the 23rd Psalm and told me to read it four times per day – once with each meal and at bedtime. I did.

After four days, I began to grasp how gracious and loving God is. It was then I knew which road I wanted and which way to go.

Since that time, the Lord has continued to put people in my life who continue to help me increase my time in the Bible and strengthen my relationship with Jesus Christ.

I am a work-in-progress, but one with a longing to walk toward the Light daily.

I'm thankful to God for that Jail Chaplain and the others He has put into my life. He has used them to "open my eyes" and soften my hard heart. God has brought me a long way from the person I used to be.

I am very grateful to Him!

PSALM 23

- 1 ***The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not be in want.***
- 2 ***He makes me lie down in green pastures,
He leads me beside quiet waters,***
- 3 ***He restores my soul. He guides me in paths of righteousness for His name's sake.***
- 4 ***Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil,
for You are with me;
Your rod and Your staff,
they comfort me.***
- 5 ***You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies.
You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.***
- 6 ***Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the LORD
forever.***

Jesus, the Good Shepherd, said,

"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep." John 10:11

Jesus said, "*The time has come! The Kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the Gospel!*"

Mark 1:15

Repent means to turn away from the sinful ways of the world! Turn to Jesus!

To believe the Gospel is to put your faith in the GOOD NEWS that:

"... Christ died for our sins just as the Scriptures said. He was buried, and He was raised from the dead on the third day..." 1st Corinthians 15:3-4

Faith in the Gospel is

LIFE-CHANGING FAITH !

Those God converts WILL change!

So, before entering into a faith relationship with Jesus Christ,

COUNT THE COST !

Jesus said, "*Unless you repent, you too will all perish.*" Luke 13:3

You **MUST** repent! You **MUST** turn away from your sins – and keep turning away for the rest of your life! In fact, repentance is the lifestyle of a healthy Christian!

At times, it will be **HARD!**

Hard or not, acceptance or refusal of this GOOD NEWS will determine your destiny.

"He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him."

John 3:36

- ♥ Thank Jesus for dying for your sins,
- ♥ Declare that you're turning from your sin and turning to Him,
- ♥ Thank Jesus for rising from the dead so you can have a new life, and
- ♥ Believe on Jesus, trust Jesus, and receive Him into your life and be your Lord (your Master) and your Savior.

Bill's

NEW LIFE

in Christ

"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." Matthew 7:21