**7 *GOOD* THINGS**

**THAT *MAYBE* YOU DO NOT KNOW!**

In the state of Texas in the USA during the time of economic depression, there was a poor farmer called Ira Yates, who struggled to pay his bills through the sheep that he raised on a small piece of land. One day a seismographic team from an oil company came to inspect the land for oil. As they drilled, they struck a huge reserve that provided up to 125,000 barrels of oil a day … and Mr Yates owned it all! It is now one of the most famous oil fields in the world called *Yates Pool*. He was a millionaire and he had been living as a poor man. He suffered all those years from the lack of knowledge. Maybe you have been suffering for a lack of knowledge too?

We have some wonderful discoveries to share with you. Perhaps today we can be like that seismographic team in your life and help you to discover things that you did not know were so close to you. You may not have oil on your land but there are greater springs of blessings that you could benefit from if you only knew. It could be that you are living like a pauper when you could be living like a prince. Perhaps you are suffering from a lack of peace and joy, when you could be one of the happiest people on earth, or you are struggling with sicknesses or have stuck in a rut in life, when there are cures and greater things for you to experience.

We are sure that the following 7 GOOD THINGS can completely transform your life too and bring you great joy.

1. **No matter who you are … you are much loved!**

Imagine a young lady dreams of getting married but she is determined to wait for the right man to come along. Being a church girl, she prays and then waits on the Lord. Then one sunny day, during a church service, she notices a handsome, young man step out of a shiny sports car and walk into the building. It just so happens that the only seat available is next to her and he politely asks if he can sit there. The young lady notices that he is well-dressed and wearing an attractive perfume. At the end of the service he looks into her eyes and asks whether, as he is new in town, she might show him around. When their eyes meet it is as if invisible electricity is passed between them. A short while later, over a candlelit dinner the young man, asks the young lady if she will marry him. Image how that young lady would feel. On top of the world? Certainly… especially after waiting for so long for Mr. Right to come along. You see life gets much better when you know that you are loved.

We are not here to tell you a romantic story about a boy meeting a girl. No! We have far better news than that. We are here to tell you that the eternal God of heaven loves you! The One who was there before the beginning, that created all things, that will be there after the end. The powerful, glorious, beautiful God of heaven loves you. Listen to one of the most famous verses in Scripture:

*For* ***God so loved*** *the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that* ***whoever*** *believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.* (John 3.16)

God is so much more wonderful than the young man in the story.

* The young man may have driven a shiny sports car, but the eternal God rides a white horse and travels in a chariot of fire.
* The young man may have been dressed in an Italian suit, but God is clothed in shining garments of glory.
* The young man may have used an expensive perfume, but God has His own fragrance that is sweeter than the *Rose of Sharon* and more aromatic than the *Lily of the Valley*!
* The young man may have been handsome, but our God is the fairest among a thousand and His beauty is His very holiness.
* The young man may have been wealthy, but our God is the owner of “the cattle on a thousand hills” and “all the gold and all the silver” belong to Him.
* The young man may have made a vow of fidelity at the wedding, but God is faithful even when we are faithless. His love is unconditional and eternal.
* The young man wanted to marry and share his future and his possessions with his young bride, but this is a dim reflection to the God of heaven who wants to marry us and share his glory and eternity with us, He delights in sharing all that He is and has with others.

**Deeper Thoughts:** God’s love for us is not a sentimental, emotional love. God’s love was expressed through real actions, not simply through promises of affection.

*But* ***God demonstrates His own love*** *toward us, in that while we were still sinners,* ***Christ died for us*** (Romans 4:8)

God loves us not only in word but in truth and deed. He became a man and died for you so that you could be with Him for eternity in His glorious home. That’s real love!

I heard a story about a husband who always told his wife he loved her, but she always doubted it. But one day a thief entered their apartment and aimed his gun at the woman. To save her the husband jumped in front of her. He was willing to be shot in her place. That day, he proved his love for her, and she was convinced that her husband really loved her.

*Greater love has no one than this, than* ***to lay down one's life*** *for his friends.3*(John 14:13)

God does not love us because we are perfect. To the contrary He loves us despite our imperfections. In the tale of Cinderella, the prince falls in love with her because of her beauty. It is easy to love lovely things. However, we learn of a deeper kind of love in the tale of Beauty and the Beast, Beauty falls in love with a beast and her love turns him into a prince. You see God loved us when we were ugly and unpleasant; when we were sinners and enemies. His love transforms us from the beast into beauty.

You may not have experience true genuine love here on earth in your relationships. But our first piece of wonderful news: *No matter who you are … God Himself loves you!*

1. **No matter what you have done … there is forgiveness available!**

Nearly 200 years ago a large, strong teenager was playing football with his smaller, faster friends. Frustrated that he could not keep up with the others, when the ball came near him, he picked it up and ran with it. The other players tried to stop him by jumping on him, but he kept going until he ran inside the goal. The game known as *rugby* was thus invented! This is not the only difference between the games. Often at the end of the game of rugby the players get so covered in mud and sweat that it is difficult to discern which team they belong to. However, in the communal changing rooms there are powerful showers which, with the help of soap and shampoo, all the mud and sweat gets washed away down the plug holes. The players dress into dry, clean clothes and emerge to enjoy a warm dinner. It is a wonderful sensation to be get clean after you have been dirty, and to strip off filthy clothes and to dress in fresh, clean ones.

Obviously, we are not here to talk about soap or shampoo, we have much better news than this. We are here to tell you that all your sins away can be washed away through the cleansing blood of Jesus. Soap may clean the body, but Christ’s blood is able to clean your heart.

In the Old Testament, the Scriptures say: *“Come now, and let us reason together,” Says the Lord, “Though your sins are like scarlet,* ***they shall be as white as snow****; Though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool.1(Isaiah 1:18),*

In the New Testament, the Scriptures say: *the blood of Jesus Christ His Son* ***cleanses us from all sin****. (1 John 1:7),*

Jesus’ blood was poured out on the cross at Calvary. Like the mud and sweat going down the plughole in the shower, all of our sins can be removed from us never to return. The Bible says that they are removed from us, as far as the East is from the West! This is vital if we are to enter God’s presence. His presence is so powerful and His light so pure that unless we have been cleansed, we would not be able to approach Him.

Perhaps you think that you have committed so many sins or done such terrible things that you cannot be forgiven. However, the blood of Jesus has power to wash away all sins forever.

I have four children who like to play sports and sometimes their clothes go into the washing machine dirty and come out still stained. But as every mother knows, there are special cleaning products (one is appropriately called "Vanish"). Apply this lotion and even the filthiest of stains is removed. The blood of Jesus has the power to cleanse you of your worst of sins. In a sense Jesus swapped cloaks with us. He took upon Himself our dirty cloak of sinfulness and gave us His clean cloak of righteousness.

At the time when Jesus was put to death, there were two thieves crucified at his side. The Romans had invented this way to punish the worst criminals as it was both painful and served as a deterrent to others. These were not small-time thieves but dangerous crooks who had likely murdered as well. As death approached one of the thieves cried out to Jesus: "Lord, remember me when you come into your kingdom". Jesus replied: "Truly I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise". The thief had lived a life full of sin - many sins, terrible sins - but in the last few minutes of his life, he reached out to Jesus as his saviour, and, in response, Jesus promised him paradise! One small simple prayer with his final gasps was sufficient for the Lord to wash him of a life lifeful of terrible sins so that he could enter paradise.

Friend remember though that you cannot saved on by your own merit. None of us are good enough to go to heaven. Don’t be like the self-righteous pharisees who thought that they were better and holier than others. God resists people who are proud of their own goodness, but He gives grace to those who are humble enough to admit they need saving. The pharisees did not recognise the need of a saviour because they trusted in their own goodness. My friend, our goodness is not good enough! If we were good enough to go to heaven, then Jesus did not need to die. It is only through His blood that we are perfected and thereby able to enter into His presence.

*For He (God) made Him (Christ) who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.* (2Cor 5:21)

Where we have failed, God has triumphed in Christ. Here’s our second piece of wonderful news:

*No matter what you have done … God has made forgiveness available!*

1. **No matter what you do in the future … this has been paid for already!**

**Story:** Imagine you have a 100 *thousand* pound or dollar debt and the criminal justice system is pressing you to pay up or face time in prison. You would not enjoy your day or sleep well at night. Now imagine that a benevolent friend hears of your plight and pays off the debt, not requiring anything back from you in return. How would you feel? Wonderful no doubt! However, imagine again that the friend not only pays off your debt, but leaves 100 *million* in a special account in your name in case you get into debt again. How would you feel now! If you felt wonderful before you would now feel over the moon!

**Application:** You see the good news gets even better! The blood of Jesus not only has paid for our past sins but for future ones too. His sacrifice dealt with sin, once and for all. You see, Jesus’s sacrifice was an overpayment for the debt of our sin. In other words, His blood leaves us in credit should we ever get into debt again, or in other words, all of our sins – past, present and future have already been accounted for.

It is not that God wants us to continue in sin. Absolutely not! That would be to despise His suffering and sacrificial death. When we accept Christ, we receive a new heart and a new nature and therefore we no longer desire to sin. The apostle John stated: *Whoever has been born of God does not sin.* The proof that you have become a child of God is the fact that you no longer live in sin. Jesus said, “You will know them by their fruit.”2  This means you will know the true believers by their lifestyle. A change of beliefs will show up in a change of behaviour. However, if you fall back into sin, there is already a provision for you. Imagine you are driving your car and singing along with worship music when suddenly somebody cuts in front of you. Suddenly your song changes too less savoury expressions as you let the driver in front of you know how you feel about his driving. I call this a fit of carnality. Or perhaps you have genuinely come to Christ but after your conversion, you fall back into old habits that you know are wrong. In these moments the Lord wants you to experience more of His abundant grace. Once again the apostle John stated:

*My little children, these things I write to you, so* ***that you may not sin****.* ***And if anyone sins****, we have* ***an Advocate with the Father****, Jesus Christ the righteous. And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.3* (1John 2:1),

Sadly, none of us will live a perfect life whilst we are here in this fallen world and living inside bodies that are still susceptible to temptations. However, whatever you do from now on, you are safe in Christ forever. How can you have true peace if you are constantly worrying that you will be judged by God or thrown out of the family for bad behaviour? Listen to these words of Jesus:

*Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and* ***believes*** *in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but* ***has passed from death into life****.4* (John 5:24),

Every day you can wake up knowing your eternal life has already started. It is this peace that produces real change in you. If you are afraid of judgment, you have yet to know of and believe in the perfect love of God. It is the same with children. When they know that their parents love them unconditionally, they grow up to be emotionally healthy and spiritually mature. If not, they become anxious, fearful beings that seek comfort and affirmation in other places and things. God’s grace is sufficient and available to you at all times.

**Deeper thoughts:** The film “Pretty woman” tells of a rich businessman who married a poor prostitute and they live happily ever after. This story is based on an ancient Bible account about a young man of God called Hosea. As a prophet he kept God’s commandments and represented God’s high standards to the people. However, to his surprise, Hosea was instructed by the Lord to marry a prostitute called Gomer. Through this, God showed His people, that though they had prostituted themselves with other gods, He still loved them and wanted them to be in covenant with Him.

In comparison to the film, the Bible story does not stop there. Extraordinarily we read that sometime later Gomer, his wife, went back to the streets and began to sleep around again. You would think that this time God would send His prophet to judge and condemn her. Surely she should now be punished? But to the contrary, God sent Hosea to seek her out, pay for her in silver, and bring her back home once again, just as if it never happened.

Such is God’s grace towards us. Out of His love and goodness, He saves us and brings us to His Kingdom. Now, even if we (tragically) deceive ourselves and fall back into sin, God does not lose patience with us. Rather He lovingly comes after us again and invites us to return to Him just as if we hadn’t sinned! The Scriptures say:

*There is therefore* ***now no condemnation*** *to* ***those who are in Christ Jesus5*** (Rom 8:1)

You do not need to worry about losing your righteousness once you have given your life over to God. It is not your own righteousness that saved you, it is the righteousness of Christ that you receive when you trust in Him as your saviour. Therefore, the question is not whether you will ever sin again but whether you are in Christ Jesus. You were not saved because of your works, but by faith; therefore you cannot be un-saved because of your works. It is faith in Christ that counts.

Listen again to this wonderful piece of news: *No matter what you do in the future … God has already taken this into account!*

1. **No matter the area of your need … provision has been made for that too!**

**Story:** I heard about a young man who was travelling by plane from Europe to Brazil and at the airport check-in he was given an upgrade from economy class to business class. He was thrilled with the news that his flight would be more comfortable now that he would have a larger seat and better food. However, because of bad weather, all the flights were delayed that night, and the terminal packed out with people, so that there was nowhere for him to sit down or get a coffee. Finally, the plane arrived and, as he lined up to find my seat, now cold, hungry and tired, he re-read his boarding pass and only then noticed that written in small print that he had access to use VIP lounge. He could have been enjoying the free provision of hot food, refreshing drink, internet access, and a comfortable sofa in a spacious environment. He still had the flight to look forward to, but he could have enjoyed the wait much more.

**Application:** So too with our lives here on earth. We have eternal life to look forward too, but God has also made many things available for us while we wait here on earth. The blessing of salvation is more than getting into heaven, it includes healing for our bodies, provision for our physical needs, deliverance from addictions and oppressive thoughts, and much more. However, many of us, as we travellers through this world, have not read all the small print on the ticket!

The apostle John states: *Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in* ***all things*** *and be in* ***health****, just as your* ***soul prospers****.1* (3John 1:2),

On the cross at Calvary, Christ took upon Himself our sins. However, He also took upon Himself our sicknesses and curses so that we can be healed and blessed. He took upon Himself our pains and sorrows so that we could live in peace and joy. Salvation is for every area of our life.

*He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us* ***all things****?2*  (Rom 8:32),

The apostle Paul affirms that God delivered His precious Son to die for us and that this high payment is more than enough to provide for every area of our lives – spiritual or material.

This is seen in action after Christ rose from the dead. In John 21 we read that as He walked along the beach at Galilee, the disciples saw Him at a distance but did not recognise Him. Jesus instructed them to throw their net into the sea. Immediately it filled with 153 large fish. Their net was so weighed down that they had to drag it to shore rather than get it into the boat. Peter realised it was Jesus and dived in to go to be with Him. The other disciples brought in the net and then joined in. They found that Jesus had already prepared a fire and was cooking a grilled fish breakfast for them after their long, cold, and unsuccessful night. Jesus supernaturally provided food for their stomachs, money for their purses (through the sale of the fish), and a fire to warm their bodies. It was also around this fire that Jesus restored His disciples to their ministries. He met all of them at in every point of need.

So too Jesus came to meet all your needs. Through His grace there is food for your table, clothes for your back, and an existential purpose for your life.

**Deeper thoughts:** Centuries before God had used Moses to lead His people out of slavery in Egypt to the Promised Land. This story is a picture of what happens to us when we are saved. Egypt represents the kingdom of darkness from which we are delivered. Pharaoh represents the devil; under whose oppressive power we were held. Moses is a type of Christ who leads us out of captivity into the promises of God.

On the journey to the Promised Land, God provided for all the needs of His people. He caused the Egyptians to hand over their wealth to the Israelites before their departure and He supernaturally kept them healthy and made sure that their clothes and shoes did not to wear out. In the evenings God sent birds, called quail, to their camp and, in the mornings, He put a type of bread, called manna, on the ground for His people to collect and eat. God miraculously caused a river to flow from a rock so as to provide water in the desert. He also protected them with a cloud that shaded them from the hot sun during the day and a cloud of fire at night served as a warm blanket for them to sleep under.

*He also brought them out* ***with silver and gold****, and there was* ***none feeble*** *among His tribes.3* (Ps 105:37),

You can see here that God thought of everything to get them through the tough journey of travelling through the desert. When they finally arrived in Canaan, they inherited cities that were already built and vineyards that were already planted. So too God has thought of everything to provide for our needs here on earth. The Scriptures say:

*He is also Mediator of a* ***better covenant****, which was established on* ***better promises****.4 (Heb 8:6)*

If all this provision came to God’s people under the Old Covenant that was based on the blood of animals, so much more are these blessings and greater ones are available under the New Covenant that is based upon the blood of His own dear Son. So, here’s our next wonderful point:

*No matter the area of your need … God has made provision for that too!*

1. **No matter what happens from now on … all things will work together for your good!**

**Story:** One of the most well-known Old Testament Bible stories is that of Joseph. It is memorable because what happens to him, paints a series of very clear pictures in our minds. Let us consider Joseph’s life in three pictures. In the first we see Joseph healthy and well, dressed in a multi-coloured robe, being brought up in a house of plenty as the favourite son of his father Jacob.

In the second picture we see him, having been nearly killed by his envious brothers, being taken to Egypt to be sold as a slave. In this period of history slaves were put on display in local city squares and sold off like cattle to prospective buyers. They were stripped naked so that they could be inspected for strength as well as infections, diseases or abnormalities. The buyer would want to make sure that he got good return on his investment.

In the first picture we found Joseph well-dressed, surrounded by people he knew, living in the provision and protection of his father’s house. Now in the second picture we find Joseph stripped of everything – he is without clothes, money, friends, family, language or local knowledge. However, the Bible says the “The Lord was with Joseph.”1  (Gen 39:2), Because of this Joseph’s story was not yet over but would have another chapter represented in our third picture. Here we see Joseph, seated at Pharaoh’s right-hand side, dressed in royal splendour, ruling over the whole of Egypt and the surrounding lands and being used to alleviate thousands from famine and death.

**Application:** On the one hand this is a picture of the story of Christ, who was stripped of all He had on the cross of Calvary, only to be raised up by His Father to sit at His right-hand side in order to provide sustenance and deliverance from death to the world. On the other hand, it is also our story. No matter how bad things become in your life, God uses them to mould you and make you, and to get you into places of increased influence. You may go through some really tough times, but the Lord has promised that He will use the negatives to bring about positives.

Like Joseph, you may have suffered betrayal, poor treatment or false accusation from others, but God will turn this for your good. You may have hit hard times but understand the God will use this to get you from one place to another into order to bless you further. Because of the grace of God, even our obstacles become God opportunities to show His glory and goodness.

*“And we know that* ***all things work together for good*** *to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.”2*  (Romans 8:28),

**Deeper thoughts:** Having faith in God’s grace this does not exempt you from having difficulties during your life here on earth. When you express faith in Christ, you may find that life gets tougher through persecution or criticism. The devil himself will attack you in the hope of minimising your effectiveness as a witness to God’s saving power. Added to that you live in a fallen world and may well suffer due to someone else’s selfish desires. All this is a recipe for times of tribulation. As someone once said, “You are either going into a trial, through a trial, or coming out of a trial, but trails are part of this life!” However, the good news is that no matter what struggles you face, God uses them to refine you and take you to higher places.

*Instead of your shame there shall be a double portion; instead of dishonor they shall rejoice in their lot; therefore in their land they shall possess a double portion; they shall have everlasting joy. (Is 61:7)*

In the Old Testament a servant of God called Job was attacked viciously by Satan and lost his family, his house, his health and his wealth. He did not understand that the devil was trying to destroy him, but he waited on God and a few months later all was restored to him and twice as much again.

Jesus, of course, was stripped to nothing on the cross. It seemed like a day of defeat in the natural. His lost his life, his followers, his reputation, and put to shame by being exposed naked on the cross. But three days later God raised Him up and gave Him the name above all name and clothed Him in His own glory and honour!

Hence, we have more good news for you too: *No matter what happens from now on … God will make all things work together for your good!*

1. **No matter your weakness … there is divine strength available!**

**Story:** A couple who suffered a terrible tragedy. They had a beautiful baby boy whom they loved dearly. One fateful day the little boy was playing, when part of the structure of the building where he was fell down and injured him fatally. Imagine how it was for the parents to have to pick up his lifeless, little body? How was it for them to see their little boy placed in a small coffin and lowered into an earthy grave. It is one thing to bury a parent but another thing to bury your own precious son. There can be no greater pain on earth than to watch your child die and be buried. Every good father would prefer to die in their place.

At the funeral service this young couple were in floods of tears. However, they were reminded of the fact that 2000 years ago another Father who watched His beloved Son die. This Father did not become distraught because He knew that His Son would rise again in three days’ time. All seemed lost on Friday night, but Sunday was on the way! On that glorious morning Jesus rose again from the grave. Forty days later He ascended into heaven and sat down at His Father’s right hand, now alive forevermore.

When the parents heard this, something supernatural began to happen. A strange comfort came into their hearts that they began to be strengthened and even to smile. They were consoled by the knowledge that their little boy was not dead but rather he was alive with Christ in heaven. Our God is the God of the living not of the dead! Suddenly their separation from their beloved boy became bearable. It was not that they could change the facts, but now they could face the facts and continue on by the comforting strength of the Holy Spirit. Human words had no strength to comfort at a time like this, but the promises of the Word of God have consoling power. The human spirit is left bereft at a time like this, but the Holy Spirit comes to give comfort and strength.

**Application:** The Holy Spirit comes to us to do two things: *to change things that can be changed, and to strengthen us to bear the things that cannot be changed.*

God’s divine empowerment is able to strengthen us in the area of our weaknesses. He is able to give you wisdom from above so that you can succeed. He is able to give you favour to put you in the right place, at the right time, in the right company. Weak, sickly people have become strong. Stuttering speakers have become eloquent preachers. Poor, uneducated children have become leaders of industries.

A new believer once asked: “What is the anointing of God’s Spirit?” His friend replied, “Imagine you walk in the countryside and you see that cow mowing in the field. That is not the anointing! The you look up and see that bird singing in a tree. That too is not the anointing! But if you look again and see the cow sitting in the tree, singing like a bird, then that would be the anointing!” You see the Holy Spirit comes to give us a supernatural capacity to do things that we normally cannot do.

*“Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think,* ***according to the power that works in us****,”1(Eph 3:20),*

When Peter was filled with the Holy Spirit, he lost his fear and boldly preached to the same crowds who had crucified His master, Jesus Christ. When Paul was filled with the Holy Spirit, he commanded a cripple to rise up and walk. He became a channel of heaven’s power. God gives us His strength so that we can do what we would not normally be able to do.

Nonetheless, there are things that cannot be changed. In these cases, the Holy Spirit comes to strengthen us so that we can get through things that we normally could not get through.

*“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort,* ***who comforts us in all our tribulation****”2 (2Cor 1:3),*

If God is able to strengthen us in the worst of our sufferings, such as burying a child, then He is able to strengthen us in all other sufferings as well. Yes, this is the good news. No matter your weakness, no matter your difficulty, God is able to strengthen you through His word and power. You could be suffering in a bad relationship, from financial pressure, from loneliness, or from addiction. We would like you to know that God’s strength is available to you in the place of your weakness.

**Deeper thoughts:** In chapter 11 of the book of Hebrews, we read that God closed the mouths of lions but also strengthened others to face being eaten by lions. He gave some the power to defeat huge armies with a sword and others the strength to face being cut in half by a sword! Some were given outer-strength and others were given inner-strength. No matter the situation, they had a testimony of God’s goodness and blessing, and each of them received a reward for his or her faith.

It is in the place of our weaknesses that God specialises in releasing His strength. When we confess that we are weak, God makes His power available to us. God told the apostle Paul: *“My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.”3*(2Cor 12:9)Therefore, Paul learned to boast in his infirmities, so that the power of Christ may rest upon him.

Heaven’s strength does not come to us because we deserve it, but God has made a way to help us through Christ. When we trust in Him, heaven’s blessings become a reality in our lives. Once again, we can declare to you more wonderful news: *No matter your weakness … God can strengthen you!*

1. **No matter if you’ve been rejected on earth … you will be welcomed in heaven!**

**Story:** Some time ago a young preacher was invited to minister in the city of Sao Paulo. The church that was receiving him had organised for me to stay in a hotel. Being a missionary, he had learned to sleep almost anywhere and to be content no matter the circumstances. However, that day he was surprised when he arrived in front of a beautiful hotel. He crossed the marble floor of the lobby and went to the front desk where a receptionist greeted with a s smile. “Good afternoon! Your name please, sir?” She searched her computer, found his name and prepared a key for his room. As she did so, she said: “There is a note on the system saying that your hosts have reserved one of the best rooms in the hotel for you. It is on the top floor and has a panoramic view of the city. Your hosts also want you to know that the room and all your expenses are already paid for. You have free access to the mini bar, the gym, the pool and the sauna. In addition, we have a highly-rated restaurant here where you may eat and drink as you like.”

As the preacher was preparing to leave a businessman arrived at the front desk beside me. A second receptionist greeted him in the same manner, “Good afternoon, sir! Your name please?” The businessman gave his name and the receptionist began to search for it on the computer. After a few moments she informed him that there was no reservation in that name and suggested that perhaps he had used different name for the booking. When she could not find this on the system, she asked if perhaps the room had been booked in the name of the company. The businessman gave the name of his company. However, the receptionist informed him that there was no booking in his name and that, as there were no more spaces in the hotel, he would need to leave.

During their conversation, the businessman, who had arrived smiling and relaxed, had become more and more agitated. He had begun to frown, and then speak curtly to the receptionist, increasingly irritated with the situation. Now he began to shout and swear! He called curses down upon the receptionist. He was last seen heading out of the front door of the hotel into the hot streets of the city. But do you know what the young preacher did? He entered the elevator, pressed the button for the top floor, and went up to the top floor. He went into my room, opened the curtains and enjoyed the panoramic view of the city. He then opened up the mini bar, took out a variety of snacks and drinks, and jumped on to the bed to relax in the comfort of his air-conditioned room. Why could He do this? For one reason alone… because his name was on the register. The young preacher had a reservation, but the businessman did not.

**Application:** Once again, we have not written this booklet to tell you about a 4-star hotel but to tell you of something far superior. There is a place called *The Kingdom of Heaven* which is so much greater. There are more than panoramic views and air-conditioned rooms with mini bars in heaven! It is a place of such incredible beauty that it is difficult to describe in human words. The Apostle John talks of golden streets and pearly gates, of a sea as clear as crystal and a river with trees laden with sumptuous fruits. The Bible also says that this is a place of extraordinary pleasure and peace where this is no more suffering and no more tears.

*In Your presence is fullness of joy; At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore. 1* (Ps 16:11)

In heaven there are angels and other heavenly beings that are so awesome and beautiful that, when they have appeared here on earth, people have been tempted to worship them. Heaven’s human citizens are glorious because they live in glorified bodies that shine light stars in the night sky. Beyond this the people there have wonderful natures. There are no cowards, liars, cheats, thieves, murderers or selfish people there. No one will be robbed, and the angels do not need to defend themselves from being attacked by lustful men! No! The gates of the city are left open! All the citizens of this celestial city will have been born again and received new hearts and new bodies. However, above all, the best thing about heaven by far is the fact that its residents live in the presence of God and see Him in the fullness of his glory. Seeing Him and being with Him is the highest of all pleasures.

It’s one thing to be rejected from a hotel; it’s another thing to be miss out on heaven! Friends, the doors to life eternal are open for those who desire. Jesus has made a way and gave clear instructions on how to get there. He said:

*Therefore* ***whoever confesses Me*** *before men, him* ***I will also confess*** *before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven. 2* - (Matt 10:32),

In other words, when you confess Christ as your saviour, Jesus will write your name in the register of heaven called the Lamb’s book of life! The Apostle Peter declared:

*And it shall come to pass That whoever calls on the name of the Lord Shall be saved.’ (Acts 2:21)*

He died for everyone to be saved! What we do with His offer of forgiveness and eternal life is up to each one of us. My heartfelt prayer is that you receive this free gift of life. You are not saved because of your goodness but you are saved because you trust in His goodness. Simply believe and confess and you shall be saved.

**Deeper thoughts:** Before we finish, allow me also to say that when you accept Christ you will be safe and secure forever. You can never be separated from God again. Throughout His earthly life whenever Jesus prayed, He called God “My Father”, but on the cross He cried out for the first time “My God”. When He became Sin in our place, He was separated from His Father for the first time. For this reason, He exclaimed: *“My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” 4* (Matt 27:46).Through this He revealed another of the great exchanges that happened on the cross – not just our sin for his righteousness, not just our death for His life, but also our separation from God for His unity with God.Hence now He promises each one of His children: ***“I will never leave you nor forsake you.” 5*** (Heb 13:5).

We all like to be embraced and accepted by others but being embraced and accepted by God is the main issue. He made you, He loves you, He sent His son to rescue you, and He has marvellous blessings for you. The more you discover His love for you, the more you will love Him in return. Today could be the beginning of a life full of peace and joy in the Holy Spirit because of the wonderful grace of God.

Friend, our final piece of wonderful news for those who accept Christ is: *No matter if you are rejected by others … God will never forget or forsake those who belong to Him!*

**CONCLUSION:** Just as travel companies will advise you to make your reservations before you travel, so too the biggest issue in life is to ensure your name is on heaven’s register before you depart from this earth. There will some people will be surprised and disappointed when they realise that their name is not there. Why not be sure of your eternal destiny and make a confession of Jesus as your Saviour right now?

To receive them simply put your faith in Jesus as your saviour. Pray the following prayer out aloud: *“Father, thank you for sending your Son Jesus, to die in my place, so that I can be saved, healed and blessed. I believe that He died for my sins and rose again to bring me life. I accept Him now as my Lord and Saviour. Thank you that I am cleansed from all sin and have been justified in your sight. Fill me with your Spirit and give me a daily a revelation of your amazing grace. In Jesus name I pray. Amen!”*

We believe that when you prayed this prayer you were born-again and became a child of God. All these 7 promises are available to you through Christ. We encourage you now to join a Christ-centred church near you and to pray and read your bible daily.

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