



NEW LIFE FOR ALL

Jim Stauffer

**Spring is sprung
The grass is 'ris
I wonder where
The flowers is**

I am not sure when I first heard this little rhyme, but it must have been early springtime one year.

While I won't attempt to speak for all, it has been a difficult winter and I, for one, am happy to see the warmer weather approaching.

For me, Spring is the ideal season. It brings new life which exhibits the abundance of energy and in general brings a positive outlook on life.

New life is always uplifting. Whether vegetation, animal or the new baby born into a family, it gives encouragement to those who have planted or in any way fostered that birth or regeneration.

It is assuredly a part of that to which Paul refers in **Rom. 1:20** as a demonstration of the everlasting power and divinity of God.

When God created the vegetation that perennially comes forth each year with new life (**Gen. 1:11,12**), the birds of the heavens, creatures of the sea, the living creatures of the earth and finally mankind (**Gen. 1:20-26**), He saw it was good. (**Gen. 1:31**)

Life was given by God and the regeneration process was put in motion in order to sustain itself, thus each year about this time we are reminded of the creative and sustaining power of God.

However, we realize the central figure in God's creation, mankind, who was given authority over all other living things (**Gen. 1:28**), soon fell from God's favor by breaking trust and violating God's law. (**Gen. 2:17; 3:6**)

The question raised by man's sin was how can God restore this broken relationship. (**Isa. 59:1,2**) We know He is not only a God of loving kindness but a God who is righteous Himself and therefore demands righteousness in His people.

Our good fortune is the omniscience of God. He had planned for this contingency before the foundation of the world. (**Eph. 1:4-7**)

He therefore sent Jesus to the earth to be a living example of the righteousness of God and to subsequently die as a propitiatory sacrifice for all men. This was to provide a path for man to be restored to a righteous condition and a peaceful relationship with God. (**2 Cor. 5:14; Rom. 3:24-26**)

The death of Christ on the cross not only provides a pathway to righteousness for man, but it was to appease the need for justice by God. Notice in **Rom. 3:26** how it identifies the action of Jesus as that which allows God to be both just Himself, while justifying sinful man. The payment that would have been required of us, Jesus paid in His death.

All this occurs because we sinned (**Rom. 3:23**) and due to the just nature of God (**Deut. 32:4; Jer. 9:24**), a price had to be paid for sin. Jesus willingly paid that price. (**Isa. 53:4; 1 Pet 2:24**)

So, as a result of God's love and mercy, we can meet His standards of righteousness through the blood of Christ. **Heb. 9:14** *how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish unto God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?*

Isn't it truly marvelous that our new birth (**John 3:3-5**) follows our death through sin (**Rom. 5:12**), and results from the death of our Savior on the cross.

Paul describes this as the righteousness of God through the death of Christ. **2 Cor. 5:17** *Wherefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature: the old things are passed away; behold, they are become new. 2 Cor. 5:21* *Him who knew no sin he made to be sin on our behalf; that we might become the righteousness of God in him.*

Alas! New life abounds for all. We merely need to put on Christ in baptism as sons of God through faith and become heirs of the promise to Abraham. (**Gal. 3:26-29**)

God has offered the pathway, we must follow it.

THE PRODIGAL SON'S FATHER

by Kent Heaton

The small caravan glided over the horizon with the setting sun and only a cloud of dust remained. A father stood motionless in the spot where he last said goodbye to his son. He had watched him leave with tear filled eyes until he could be seen no more. As he turned back to his house, his mind went back to that day so many years ago when his little boy had been born. There was so much hope and so much promise as the small lungs of his newborn first filled with air and he cried with joy. Lifting his young infant boy in his arms he held him high before the heavens for all to see.

He watched him grow from an infant to childhood to manhood. There was nothing lacking for this young boy as every blessing the father possessed was bestowed upon his two sons. He did not spoil them as there were times he would chasten them and admonish them. The youngest grew up with his brother enjoying the bounty of a gracious and loving father.

The servants enjoyed a good life as they had bread to eat in abundance. As one who looked after his servants, the father bestowed upon all men his kindness. The home was filled with love, mercy, truth and righteousness.

As the father came near the house, he remembered how he noticed a change in his youngest son. It was small at first but something seemed to be troubling the young son. The father responded with love and understanding but the young man began to drift away from the care of his father.

The mind of the young son began to spend time thinking about what was out in the world, away from his father's protection and care. Soon his mind was filled with a curiosity to leave and enjoy the good life on his own. The father well remembers the day he had known would come. "And the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the portion of goods that falls to me.'" **(Luke 15:12)** So the father divided his livelihood to his two sons.

Not many days after, the young son announced he was leaving. The heart of the father was mournful at the decision of his son to leave all the blessings offered by him. He had tried to be a father to the young man that would show his love and tell him his love for this young boy. This seemed to be of no avail and the boy left. The father knew what would become of the boy apart from the watch care of the father's love.

He knew the kind of world that was waiting for his young son. There were people who would use his money to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin for a moment and then cast the young boy aside. The world was filled with those who sought after their own desires and would be in subjection to no man. The wealth of all the worlds could not prepare his son for the poverty of men's spirits. In a far country, the young son "wasted his possessions with prodigal living." **(Luke 15:13)**

As the days went by, the father looked out at the same spot on the horizon, hoping and praying that his son would come back to him. He could take an army of servants and force the young son to return but he knew that his son must come back to him on terms of godly sorrow. How often the father must have stared down the empty road to see his son come home. Would he have time to return? Had some terrible thing happened to his son that would not allow him to come back?

The young boy had spent all he had and grew hungry. His friends of wealth now were only spiteful enemies of his poverty. He was so hungry that he became a slave to a citizen of the country. His job was to feed the swine in the fields. His hunger was so deep that he would gladly have eaten the pods that the swine ate. No one cared about him, no one checked on him or inquired about him in this land of pleasure. The young son was all alone.

In his misery, he began to remember his home. He thought of his loving father who blessed him with so many things. He knew his father to be a kind and merciful man who showed his love even to his servants. While he wallowed in the mire of pig filth and hungered, the servants of his father dwelt in houses of comfort and had their bread filled to overflowing.

He knew the kind of man his father was. He knew that to return to his father would require repentance and sorrow. No longer delaying, he arose and began the long journey home. As he traveled from that far country, he thought of the many blessings he had turned his back on from his father. How could he have denied his father's love? How could he have left his father's protection? What could he gain from living apart from his father? The answers were all the same: every happiness that was worth living for was to be found in the house of his father.

For the father, the day was much the same. He

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thought of his lost son and longed for him to return home. He did not desire that his young son perish. He knew that the young boy must return home on his own. He looked to the horizon once again. Many people traveled the road but the figure in the distance looked all too familiar.

The father stood motionless for a moment as the figure drew closer and he realized his lost son was coming home. His heart leaped for joy and his eyes filled with tears as his lost son drew near. He ran to his dear son and fell on his neck and kissed him. His heart ached as he heard the sorrowful words of his son, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight, and am no longer worthy to be called your son." But the father said to his servants, "Bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet. And bring the fatted calf here and kill it, and let us eat and be merry; for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found." And they began to be merry. **(Luke 15:21)**

The story of the prodigal son in Luke 15 is the story of a father's love for those who seek to find happiness apart from God. We find in this story the plight of the young son who wasted his life on prodigal living. We also see the love that God, our Father, has for those who seek to leave His care. There is never a time that lost children cannot come home.

The prodigal son realized the blessings found in the Father's care and knew his life was being wasted in the filth of the world. He knew that to come home he must recognize his lost state and seek to become a servant of the Father. "When he came to himself," was the turning point of his life. He did not just speak the words but turned the words into action. "He arose and came to his father," is the climax of his return home.

Many who have named the name of Jesus Christ have left their first love. They wander in the mire of the world seeking to find hope and happiness in the trappings of the world. Some never regain a love for the Lord and perish apart from the Father's love. Others retain a love of God but find it difficult to return home. The first step toward home is heading in the right direction and then taking that first step.

The prodigal son knew the kind of father he had. He was full of mercy, compassion and forgiveness. He knew that no matter how terrible he had been, with a repentant heart, his father would receive him again. Friend, what have you done that

God cannot forgive you? The measure of God's love is found in Jesus dying on the cross. Jesus died for all men and all sin. There is nothing that you have done that from a repentant and sorrowful heart, God will not forgive you.

Paul said he was the worst sinner that ever lived. **(1 Timothy 1:15)** Have you done worse than Paul? Even if you have, Jesus died for you and came to save you. You can come home to be cleansed and released from the guilt of sin. Remember the Father you knew when you were home? He still loves you and He still looks out over the horizon of time and longs to see you come home - if only you would make that decision - that resolve - to come home.

You are the one sheep out of one hundred that Jesus the Shepherd will seek after to bring home and say, "Rejoice with me, for I have found MY SHEEP which was lost!" **(Luke 15:6)** You belong to Jesus! Jesus looks at your life and says, "You are MY SHEEP - come home."

It is not for you to understand how God can forgive you of your life apart from him. How can we understand the death of Christ? What Jesus tells us in **Luke 15** is that you can come home to a father who is loving, forgiving and waiting for you - yes, you - to come home.

Softly and tenderly Jesus is calling, calling for you and for me. See, on the portals He's waiting and watching, watching for you and for me. Why should we tarry when Jesus is pleading, pleading for you and for me? Why should we linger and heed not his mercies, mercies for you and for me? Time is now fleeting, the moments are passing, passing from you and from me. Shadows are gathering, life's end is coming, coming for you and for me. Oh, for the wonderful love He has promised, promised for you and for me. Though we have sinned, He has mercy and pardon, pardon for you and for me. Come home, come home! Ye who are weary come home. Earnestly, tenderly, Jesus is calling - calling, O sinner, come home." (Will L. Thompson)

God loves you, friend. His Son stands at the door and knocks. The Holy Spirit implores you. Open your heart today and let him come in. What a wonderful Father we have. "There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents." **(Luke 15:10)** *****

For godly sorrow worketh repentance unto salvation, a repentance which bringeth no regret: but the sorrow of the world worketh death. 2 Cor. 7:10

Eph. 2:19 *So then ye are no more strangers and sojourners, but ye are fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, 20 being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief corner stone; 21 in whom each several building, fitly framed together, groweth into a holy temple in the Lord;*

1Pet. 2:9 *But ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that ye may show forth the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:*

Psa. 1:1 *Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked, Nor standeth in the way of sinners, Nor sitteth in the seat of scoffers: 2 But his delight is in the law of Jehovah; And on his law doth he meditate day and night. 3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the streams of water, That bringeth forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also doth not wither; And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. 4 The wicked are not so, But are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. 5 Therefore the wicked shall not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. 6 For Jehovah knoweth the way of the righteous; But the way of the wicked shall perish.*

HOURS OF WORSHIP

Sunday A.M. 9:30 Bible Study
Sunday A.M. 10:20 Assembled Worship
Sunday P.M. 5:00 Assembled Worship
Wednesday P.M. 7:00 Bible Study and Worship

Visitors welcome

We conduct in home Bible Studies

We offer Correspondence Courses

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NEWS AND NOTES:

SICK IN NEED OF PRAYERS:

JAN PATRICK, J.R. DANIEL,
LILLIE KEECH, ALMA
BAUMGARTNER.

GOSPEL MEETING WITH
RANDY HARSHBARGER WILL
BE APRIL 20-23. IT DOESN'T
HURT TO PLAN EARLY AND
SET THOSE DATES ASIDE.

OUR BIBLE CLASS ON SUNDAY
AND WEDNESDAY IS
CURRENTLY IN ZECHARIAH AS
WE TAKE THE MINOR
PROPHETS IN ORDER.



What Must I Do To Be Saved?

Hear the gospel - Romans 10:17

Believe in Jesus Christ - Hebrews 11:6

Repent of sins - Acts 17:30

Confess Christ as Lord - Romans 10:9,10

Be Baptized for remission of sins Acts 2:38

Be Faithful unto death - Revelation 2:10