

My Experience of Christ's Power and Grace

A Quest for Meaning and Hope

I begin to wonder about the purpose of life before I became aware of my need for God.



My sense of need of God's intervention to save both me and the world around me goes back to childhood. My parents went through the horror of the Nazi occupation of Holland and some of my earliest memories as a pre-schooler involve hearing the stories of that unspeakable evil as my parents shared them with other survivors.

My parents were deeply devoted to Christ and my childhood memories were happy in their care.

In my teens however increasingly I begin to seek answers to the purpose of life and to the need for a strong hope to overcome evil both in a world beset by war and injustice and in my own heart.

At 13 I was confronted with my need for Jesus the Savior but my understanding was initially limited. I knew I wanted and needed to "be saved" but did not fully recognize that, in receiving Jesus as Savior, Christ was also my rightful Lord and Master. This vital gap resulted in very little discernable change of attitude or life direction during my teens.

I attended a frequently violent vocational high-school and worked in a garage where I learned to fix cars and, in particular, my own rather too fast cars. The Lord protected me from much danger and foolishness in those years.

Recognizing Jesus as Lord

At 19 I had a remarkable experience while eating lunch with a 65 year old mechanic about to retire. He and I were playing crib while appreciatively noticing the young women passing by the garage. Suddenly it was as if the Lord gave me a vision in which I saw myself in his greasy coveralls when I had become 65, still eating out of a lunch bucket, playing crib, ogling girls and coming to the end of my life wondering, "What was that all about?"

That same year I lost a girlfriend for reasons I didn't understand at the time. In an effort to find out, I

drove 2,000 miles and had much time to think. During the journey I came across a magazine published by Billy Graham titled "Decision."

The Lord graciously revealed to me the nature of that decision. It was the decision I needed to make to respond to Jesus not only as the Saviour who came to earth to die as a ransom for me on the cross so that I could be freed from the power of evil and hell, but also to receive Jesus as the God who owned me and to whom I was responsible as Lord and King forever.

I surrendered the battle to be my own lord with a simple prayer like this:

Lord Jesus,

Thank you for giving your perfect life freely on the cross in exchange for my sinful life. I accept your offer of exchange and thank you for saving and forgiving me though I deserve nothing.

I return my life to you. You already own it. I'm only now recognizing that You do. I will follow you as Lord even though I don't know what it means or where it will lead.

Show me the way and I will follow. Thank you. I am yours.

Amen.

I knew at once that my life had changed and would continue to change.

The first test of Christ's Lordship was my inner sense that I should leave mechanics and go to college, despite the fact I disliked school and had made choices in high school which closed the door to that possibility. I determined, nevertheless, I would follow Christ and see what He would do.

The Difference Christ Makes

Amazingly, despite failing the ACT achievement test, a Christian college in Iowa took a chance and accepted me for one semester on academic probation. I worked hard, found I enjoyed college, graduated, and went on to graduate school.

I began to seek greater fullness of God's Holy Spirit. I begin to know God as Father. I begin to love the Scriptures where God showed me the authority of Jesus Christ over all forms of brokenness, fear and

evil. I've found the power of Christ's love and sacrifice to be sufficient in every battle. I've found Christ's presence to be my comfort and peace.

I've found deep meaning and joy in introducing others to Christ and seeing new life begin again and again.

In the journey God gave me a wonderful wife Carol, together with five married children and eleven grandchildren in whom we delight.

Though the years I've leaned on Christ alone and found Him faithful, utterly faithful; powerful against the evil one where human power fails; and the sure Way, Truth and abundant Life as He promised in the Scriptures (John 14:6).

My deepest desire is that you would know and follow Christ also, who to know is strength, healing, and peace in this life, and eternal life to come (John 17:3).

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