



Don't Waste Your Deployment (DWYD) was written by Mark D. Waite, Joel Adams, Steven Froberg, and Pastor Mark S. Waite. We wrote DWYD as a ministry to our fellow soldiers as we deployed to Iraq. The things we wrote in DWYD are very dear to our hearts and we pray that they are dear to your heart as well. If you are a believer in the Glorious Lord Jesus Christ, we pray that DWYD might minister to you. If you are not a believer in the Glorious Lord Jesus Christ, we pray that you would realize all the joy that Christ offers!

DWYD is dedicated to the glory of the One who alone deserves glory, our All-Powerful King, Jesus Christ! We also dedicate DWYD to the men and women who are serving our great nation in the Military.

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For their help in the production of DWYD, we would like to thank:

The Lord Jesus Christ

One Thirst Ministries  
[www.onethirstministries.org](http://www.onethirstministries.org)

Covenant of Grace Bible Church  
Edgewood, New Mexico  
[www.covenantofgracem.org](http://www.covenantofgracem.org)

Faith Baptist Church  
Fairbanks, Alaska  
[www.faithbaptistfairbanks.org](http://www.faithbaptistfairbanks.org)

All Scripture Quotations are taken from the New International Version (NIV) unless otherwise stated.



## INTRODUCTION

### A LESSON FROM ANOTHER SOLDIER

It was July 21, 1861, and the first major battle of the American Civil War had begun. Politicians in Washington assumed it would be a relatively easy battle with little or no consequences.

Approximately 50,000 Union soldiers under the command of General McDowell marched into Southern territory to put down General Beauregard and the infant Confederacy. The battle ensued at a place called Manassas by the South and Bull Run by the North.

McDowell's 50,000 troops met Beauregard's approximately 30,000 strong force and began the fight early in the morning. As the battle progressed that morning, it appeared as if the Confederates would falter and become nothing more than a bump for the Union masses to run over on their way to a sure and quick victory.

By noon, Beauregard's flanks were caving in under the flawless tactics and maneuvers of the Northern forces. When all seemed lost, Beauregard saw one of his brigades, the 1<sup>st</sup> Virginian, under the command of Colonel Thomas Jackson. Up to that day, Colonel Jackson had been *affectionately* referred to by his men as "Old Tom Fool". But on this day, the Lord would honor one of His faithful servants.

Beauregard saw that as the rest of his army was falling back, Jackson's Virginians were standing fast and holding their ground. In fact, Jackson himself boldly defied death as he rode back and forth on his horse in plain sight of enemy marksmen and artillery. Beauregard shouted "There stands Jackson like a stonewall! Rally behind the Virginians!"

With their great display of courage, Jackson and his brigade inspired the rest of General Beauregard's army to continue the fight and even to turn the course of the battle. The perfect Union Army finally faltered, and Confederate forces took the advantage. As the battle persisted, they routed the 50,000 strong, Northern Army. The Union would never take the Southern army lightly again.

Shortly after this battle, Colonel Jackson was promoted to the rank of General and given the nick-name "Stonewall", a nick-name he continued to live up to until his death at Chancellorsville. Jackson demonstrated determination and courage in every battle he led his men into. Once when asked by one of his young aids why he could be so bold in the face of death, Stonewall replied, "*Captain, my religious belief teaches me to feel as safe in battle as in bed. God has fixed the time for my death. I do not concern myself about that, but to be always ready, no matter when it may overtake me...That is the way all men should live, and then all would be equally brave.*"

Stonewall never lost a battle during his deployment. However, much more important than that, Stonewall Jackson did not waste his deployment.

General Jackson did not waste his deployment because during the two years he fought in the Civil War before his death, he continued to live life as God desires mankind to do. During his deployment, he maintained fellowship with the Lord, reading his Bible and talking with God through prayer consistently. In fact, Stonewall said that he took many of his battle strategies from the Old Testament books of Deuteronomy and Joshua.

Stonewall kept from wasting his deployment by being faithful to and loving his wife, Anna, even while far away from home. He did this by writing many letters to Anna, whom he called his *Esposita* and arranging for visits home whenever possible. He did not allow the distractions of life, war, and other engaging interests to take the place of prominence in his heart set aside for his wife and later his daughter who was born shortly before he died.

Stonewall ensured his men received the ministry of Christian Chaplains. In fact, he often arranged for visiting pastors to come into the camp to preach the gospel to and provide spiritual counsel to soldiers about to engage in fierce combat on the battlefield. He also continued to send financial support to a Sunday School class he had started in his home town of Lexington, Virginia. This Sunday School class was one of the few that was a ministry for slaves.

Stonewall Jackson demonstrated his faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, as he lived the life of a Soldier. Being a Christian enabled him to fight with boldness and fierceness. He

detested retreat. Once, when told of a great Northern Force that he would face in a battle, Jackson said, "Then we shall give them the bayonet!"

Stonewall had a correct understanding of his relationship with God. He knew and embraced the gospel of his Lord Jesus Christ. He had the proper view of life and death. Because of this, Stonewall was bold and courageous as a Soldier and a Christian, and he did not waste his deployment.

I pray that we as Soldiers, would learn from this great Soldier's story, and keep from wasting our deployment. In this book, you will find things written on the gospel, life, death, Spiritual disciplines, and other things that my friends and I believe will help keep us from wasting our deployment. I ask the Lord that these lessons might help you and us during this time of service.

\* \* \* \* \*

Those people who have made the decision to follow Christ have enlisted into His Army. We are soldiers of His cross. 2 Timothy 2:3 says,

**"Endure hardship with us like a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No one serving as a soldier gets involved in civilian affairs--he wants to please his commanding officer."**

Whether you know it or not, as Christians, we are all SOLDIERS! As soldiers, we will be deployed according to the all-knowing, all-good, wisdom of our Commander in Chief, Jesus Christ. Our deployment is called "LIFE". One day we will go home, and may the Lord quicken that day. But until then, let us serve Him selflessly!

Some of us are stationed as Ambassadors to the Kingdom of Business. Others represent Christ in government. The King has most important soldiers deployed at Home with the kids. Some of our brothers and sisters are deployed as missionaries around the globe. A much forgotten assignment is that station of Pastor. We must not forget that we are all on a special assignment, given by the King Himself! Hebrews 12:1 says,

**"...let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us."**

This book has been written to those individuals who are Soldiers by profession, but I pray the Lord might also use it in those who are Soldiers by Faith.

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The title "Don't Waste Your Deployment" is sparked from a much greater work entitled, "Don't Waste Your Life" by John Piper, which is available free online at this address:

[www.desiringgod.org](http://www.desiringgod.org)

"Don't Waste Your Life" is truly a life-changing book, and I would ask you all to read it.

\* \* \*

"Don't Waste Your Deployment" is broken down into 5 Sections. They are a mixture of truths and thoughts on the Gospel, Deployment, the Bible, and Life. My prayer is that those who read this would be challenged in some way to live out this deployment and the rest of their lives without wasting them.

This can only come through embracing the Gospel of Jesus Christ. So, I pray that every Christian who reads this would in some way learn to love and embrace the Gospel and Jesus Christ in a greater capacity than before.

I pray that you who have never embraced or loved the true Christ of the Bible would do so, and that the Holy Spirit might open your eyes!

\* \* \*

Finally, this book has been written to be even a small tool for Christians that we may keep from wasting our deployment in the service to the United States, and our even greater deployment in the service to Jesus Christ!

In His Hands,  
Mark D. Waite  
August 2008

## SECTION 1

### THE GOOD NEWS OF JESUS CHRIST

**“If you do not begin or continue a consuming relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ, God the Son, You will have wasted your deployment and your life!”**

Not all who read this have a relationship with Jesus Christ, and so, I start this “book” with the presentation of the Gospel or Good News of Jesus Christ. ONLY if you have embraced the Good News do you and can you have a relationship with Christ.

Only if you continually enjoy and embrace this Good News can you thrive in an existing relationship with Christ.

Because of this, I have written the Good News for two groups of people, “Those who Do Not cherish the Christ of the Bible as their greatest treasure” and “those who Do Desire to Cherish Christ as their greatest treasure”.

When all is said and done, your eternal destiny is determined by which group you choose to be in!

#### THE GLORIOUS GOOD NEWS OF JESUS CHRIST (PART 1)

**By: Mark D. Waite**

*For Those Who **DO NOT** Cherish the Christ of the Bible as their most precious and valuable Treasure*

I am convinced that the majority of individuals in the world, who claim to be Christians, are only Cultural Christians. You may ask, “What does that mean?”. That means, that the majority of people who think of themselves as Christians and who go to church (some regularly, some only once in a while) are in the fast lane that leads straight to the pits of hell!

Every culture in all of history has fashioned gods to worship. Nothing has changed in the modern age and the United States. Things are just more sophisticated...or are they? I believe that American culture has fashioned itself a god, or at least a horrible misrepresentation of the real and true God. We have fashioned a god in our own image; a god we believe honors the American dream more than the Bible. We trust in a god who has an eternal party for everyone who has done some good or nice deeds in this life – excluding the mean guys like Hitler and bin Laden. The god most Americans trust in is a god who hasn’t the fortitude to condemn anyone, because this god exists for us!

Frankly these beliefs sicken me! If you believe and follow this false god, you will burn in hell for eternity! In fact, if you do not cherish the Lord Jesus Christ as your most precious possession, He will judge you in the depths of the lake of fire. Disturbing isn’t it?!

What I have just written is the Bad News which is very depressing and sad. What troubles me is that so many are perishing by believing in this false god, and the True Church of Jesus Christ is standing by watching. At times we even participate in the worship of the false god. But now I pray that the Almighty God might let His glorious Good News shine through the darkness. Many will spiritually drown and never come to Christ, but God willing, YOU will listen to this wonderful and Good News that Jesus Christ wants YOU to hear and be saved from eternal punishment.

Now let me tell you the Good News.

There is a God in heaven. He is One God, made up of three persons, God the Father, God the Son (Jesus Christ), and God the Holy Spirit. The Father, Son (Jesus), and Holy Spirit are all equally God and equal in power, however they have different roles in the Godhead. God is holy and righteous and just, and these are only some of His attributes. God is love and does love human beings, but God also loves Himself. (Many might be turned off by this statement, but please continue to read and hear what I have to say). The tragedy is that human beings have rebelled against God and do not love Him.

Jesus Christ says that the greatest commandment is, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.” (Matthew 22:37 NIV). If this is the greatest commandment, then disobeying this must be the greatest sin. Not loving the Lord our God with everything we have is the chief evil in the universe. We are all guilty of this great treason against God. The reason we are to love God above all else is

because He is the supreme and most valuable one we could ever value and cherish. Everyone would agree that there are some things that are more valuable than others in this world. We may disagree as to what they are, but we would agree that we should value certain things above other things.

Human beings were created to be happy! God wants you to be happy. God wants us to be supremely happy, not just a little happy. When we are happy in Jesus Christ, we are supremely happy. When we put anything in front of Him, we may feel happy, we think we are happy, but we are not supremely happy. God, the supreme being of the universe, says that supreme happiness can only come from Him. God is so concerned with our happiness that He commands us to love Him above all else. To love anything more than Him is to be miserable compared to the happiness He offers.

Please take to heart the following quotes:

***"Our Lord finds our desires not too strong, but too weak. We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition, when infinite joy is offered to us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in the slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased."* ~ C.S. Lewis**

***"Sin comes when we take a perfectly natural desire or longing or ambition and try desperately to fulfill it without God. Not only is it sin, it is a perverse distortion of the image of the Creator in us. All these good things, and all our security, are rightly found only and completely in him."* ~ St. Augustine (The Confessions)**

***"He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. He who has found his life shall lose it, and he who has lost his life for My sake shall find it."* ~ Jesus Christ (Matthew 10:37-38)**

What Jesus has said is hard. But once He has opened your eyes to see that He is indeed the superior treasure to value, He will bring you to the point of loving Him above all else. This is a life long task. Only in loving the Lord our God with all of ourselves, will we ever find fulfillment in the life He gives us.

The Good News is that through Jesus Christ, we who were far off in rebellion, unable to love God, can be brought near to God. Through Jesus Christ, God the Son, you and I can draw near to God and love Him and treasure Him above all else...fulfilling our God-given longing in life!

The Bible says in 1 Peter 3:18, "For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, **in order that He might bring us to God**, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit..."

"Why did Jesus have to die?", you may ask. The answer is, because the penalty for not loving the Lord God is death. God told Adam about sin in these words, "From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you shall surely die." (Genesis 2:16-17). Because of Adam's choice to love the fruit more than God, we have all died spiritually and will one day die physically.

These passages reflect God's feelings about the sad state and plight of sinful man.

*Romans 3:10-18*, "As it is written: 'There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one.

Their throats are open graves; their tongues practice deceit.

The poison of vipers is on their lips.

Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness.

Their feet are swift to shed blood; ruin and misery mark their ways, and the way of peace they do not know.  
There is no fear of God before their eyes."

*Romans 3:23*, "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God"

*Romans 6:23*, "For the wages of sin is death..."

*Colossians 1:21*, "Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior."

*Genesis 6:5*, "The LORD saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time."

*Jeremiah 17:9*, "The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?"

*James 2:10*, "For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it."

*Ephesians 2:1-3*, "As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath..."

But please pay attention to the rest of this Ephesians passage (Ephesians 2:4-6):

"...But because of His great love for us, God, Who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions – it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with Him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus..."

This is the Good News, that God makes us alive in Christ and enables us to love Him, our greatest need!

You may wonder how this glorious work happens, in which God makes a person spiritually alive. In the book of Acts, Peter answers a crowd who asked this same thing. Peter says in Acts 2:38, "Repent, and let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and your children, and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God shall call to Himself."

Again in Acts 16:30, a man asks the Apostle Paul, " 'Sirs, what must I do to be saved?' They [Paul and Silas] replied, 'Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved – you and your household.' "

Paul quotes Joel 2:32, when he writes in Romans 10:13, "For, 'Everyone who calls on the Name of the Lord will be saved.' "

This calling on the name of the Lord involves, knowing that God is Who He says He is in the Bible. It involves knowing that you and I are sinners only deserving of hell. We are calling on the name of the Lord to save us. We ask Him to save us from sin, from ourselves, from hell, and from God. God loves humans, but He must love Himself above all else. For us to love anything more than God is the chief sin and idolatry. The same would be true if God treasured anything of lesser value than Himself. He is the superior and most precious treasure, so God must value Himself above all else. Praise God for this, for if God valued anything else as more valuable than Himself, we would be lost forever! Because God values Himself and His glory above all, He must punish sin – someone must pay by death. If you think that your sins are not that big of a deal,

consider that it cost the very life and blood of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, to pay for our sin! Those who call on the name of the Lord for salvation, will receive the forgiveness of God and complete access to God. We are freed from our death and imprisonment and freed to love God with all our hearts! Those who refuse the forgiveness of God, will face eternity under His wrath and torment.

So I beg you to come to Christ and receive His salvation. I also beg you to examine your "faith". There are far too many people who think they are saved but are not and will rot for eternity in hell. 2 Corinthians 13:5 states, "Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you – unless, of course, you fail the test?"

To be saved, you must place your faith in Jesus Christ as your Lord, God, and Savior. You must approach God the Father by coming through the Son and in the confidence Jesus Christ gives you. "And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to Him must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who earnestly seek Him." (Hebrews 11:6).

Lest you think you are too sinful for God to forgive you, consider this verse, 1 Timothy 1:15. The Apostle Paul, who wrote most of the New Testament says, "Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners – of whom I am the worst." Paul says that he is the worst sinner, and yet Christ still forgave him and used him mightily for His glory.

Many Christians would end a presentation of the gospel with a model prayer. I will not. I think that far too many people are trusting in a magical prayer they prayed when they were a young child, instead of trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ. I will not end with a model prayer guaranteeing you salvation, but I will end with a prayer for your salvation.

*Dear Heavenly Father,*

*I pray that You, Almighty God, would use this very humble presentation of Your Glorious Good News. I pray You would cover over my mistakes and still glorify Yourself through this attempt of mine. Please save the Person who is reading this right now! Please fill them with the horrors of their sins and the desire to find safety in Your salvation! Please make alive the person who is reading this. May your Holy Spirit take the Word of God and Awaken the dead Soul who is reading this right now!*

*Fill my Friend with the peace and joy that is only found in Jesus Christ! Show my friend the words he or she should say to You. Right now, I call on You to make this person call on Your Name for salvation!*

*Glorify Yourself, O Lord!*

*In Jesus Name,*

*Amen*

## The Glorious Good News of Jesus Christ (Part 2)

**By: Mark D. Waite**

*The Power of the Gospel for those who **DO DESIRE** to Cherish the Lord Jesus Christ as their greatest Treasure!*

### A Meditation on Hebrews 10:19-22

Three Reasons why Christians can be completely confident to draw near to God through the power of the gospel even when everything else screams, "DON'T!"

#### **INTRODUCTION**

Every religion, culture, and I believe every person on this earth has a plan of how they will deal with their sins before they die. God has given every human being the knowledge that there will be a day of reckoning for sins committed.

People on the British Isles devised a plan known as "Sin Eating" to deal with their sins. These people followed this practice even into the 1800 hundreds! "Sin eating" was built on a false belief that one person, selected from the community, could bear the sins of the others upon their deaths. The selected person was called the "Sin Eater".

The Sin Eater lived a lonely, dark life, as an outcast from society. Superstition kept people from associating with the Sin Eater except at funeral services. Before burying a loved one, the people would summon the Sin Eater. The Sin Eater was to eat a piece of bread and drink a flask of wine that had been placed on the deceased's chest. In doing this, it was believed that the Sin Eater took that person's sin upon himself. People sought after the Sin Eater to ease their guilty conscience which told them, they were condemned.

We as Christians, sometimes revert back to these old beliefs that we have to deal with our own sins. We often take the feelings of our conscience without focusing on Christ as the one who took our guilt away. God designed the conscience to show us our sins and cause us to draw near to Himself. However, when you and I place all of our focus on the feelings of guilt and unworthiness, we begin to stray from God. Our greatest need is to draw near to God, but many times we misinterpret our conscience and hide from God when we should be running to Him.

In this section of Don't Waste Your Deployment, we will be looking at Hebrews 10:19-22. In this passage the Holy Spirit shows us the power of the Gospel and gives us three reasons that show us why we can draw near to God, even when everything else tells us we cannot because we are unworthy.

Hebrews 10:19 states, **"Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water."**

#### **BACKGROUND**

We do not know who the human author of the Book of Hebrews is, but we do know that the Holy Spirit is the ultimate author of this rich book. The Holy Spirit wrote this book to Jewish Christians before the year 70 A.D. The reason for the book was that some of these Jewish Christians were close to reverting back to the teachings of Judaism. The reason this is significant to you and me is because Judaism was a religion of works based merit. In Judaism, a person's worthiness and acceptance before God comes from himself and his own actions. We may never be tempted to convert to Judaism, but you and I do struggle with the feelings of guilt that tell us we cannot draw near to God because we are displeasing to God. What the Holy Spirit told the Hebrews and is telling us, is the message at the very heart of the gospel. "...there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus..." (Romans 8:1)

So the Holy Spirit gives every Christian the book of Hebrews, which is devoted to displaying the sufficiency and greatness of Jesus Christ our Savior and Sacrifice. In Hebrews 10:19-22, the Holy Spirit gives us three reasons for why we can have confidence to draw near to God.

Let us look at the first reason.

**REASON # 1:**

**We can have confidence to draw near to God, Because of What Jesus Christ has Done For Us.**

First of all, the text, Hebrews 10:19, says that you and I have Confidence to enter the Holy Place, where God is.

The Greek Word for the confidence that we have is *parrhhsian*. (PARRESIAN). This is a word that means boldness in the freedom and frankness of speech. This boldness comes from setting aside our guilt, and talking with God. It is manifested in our undoubting prayer to the Father.<sup>[1]</sup>

So, the Holy Spirit begins this passage by declaring that We have complete Confidence to speak with God. We have a perfect mediator, and we do not have to approach God through any mere man on earth. We have confidence to come to the very God of the Universe **THROUGH** the very God of the Universe – Jesus Christ, alone! And this is where the battle starts. We are too preoccupied with ourselves and we fail to talk to God.

To combat this, we must grasp how amazing our relationship with God is. The problem is not if we have the right to talk with God. We either don't desire to talk to God, or we don't believe He desires us to talk to Him.

In this passage, GOD is calling out to you and me, declaring that He wants us to talk to Him.

This past May, a terrible accident took the life of Steven Curtis Chapman's (a Christian Songwriter and Musician) young daughter, Maria, when his older son, Will, was driving into their driveway. I can only imagine the feelings of horror and guilt that Will must have felt when his car hit Maria and even now after that accident.

I recently watched a Good Morning America interview with the Chapman Family. In it, Steven told of his concern that he not lose his son also in this terrible accident. As Steven was driving away with Maria to the hospital, he looked at his son and said, "Will, your father loves you!"

This is exactly what Our Father is telling us in Hebrews. He is telling us, "I love you and want you to talk to Me!" You might think, that, that is fine for everyone else, but there is no way God would want you with what you have done. The HOLY Spirit is telling you and me in this passage, that no matter what we have done, what Christ has done is greater. He is a greater Savior, than We are sinners.

Now just exactly what has Christ done for us? Hebrews 10:19 says,

***"...since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus..."***

Jesus Christ, God the Son, has shed His precious blood for His people.

Listen to Hebrews 9:22:

***"...In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness."***

...and Colossians 1:19:

***"For God was pleased to have all His fullness dwell in Him, and through Him to reconcile to Himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through His blood, shed on the cross."***

We must never lose sight that our sin is great! Only the precious blood of God the Son, Jesus Christ, could pay our enormous debt. If it took the very life and blood of God to pay for our sins, ask yourself, "How great is our sin?"

But Jesus Christ is a greater Savior than we are sinners! And His righteousness, credited to our account, far outweighs the depths of our grievous sins! Now ask yourself, "How great is our Savior?!"

Hebrews 10 goes on to say:

*"since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, **by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body...**"*

"Why did Jesus have to be the member of the Trinity to die for me?", and "Why was Jesus Christ the only member of the Trinity who could pay for our salvation?"

The reason that only God the Son, Jesus Christ, could do this is because of His Divine Role in the Trinity. It is the eternal responsibility of God the Son to display the holiness and greatness of God the Father. John 1:18, states, "No, one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father's side [JESUS], has made Him known."

This is why Jesus is the member of the God-head who created everything. Jesus created everything out of nothing to show just how awesome and beautiful God truly is! Colossians 1 speaks of Jesus being the creator of everything. Hebrews 1 declares that God created the universe through Jesus Christ. John 1 tells of the Word of God, Jesus, through whom everything was made.

Not only is Jesus charged with the display of the magnificence of God, He is also responsible to defend the magnificence and holiness of the Father. According to Hebrews 10:19-22, Jesus Christ is the Curtain which protects the Most Holy Place from any who might enter unworthily.

Revelation 14:10, "...he, too, will drink of the wine of God's fury, which has been poured full strength into the cup of his wrath. He will be tormented with burning sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and of the Lamb." We often don't think of Jesus being present at the punishment of those in the lake of fire. But He will be, because He is the protector of God's holiness. It is Jesus' duty, to execute the wrath of God on all those who have rebelled against the God of the Universe.

According to Hebrews, the Son is the Curtain, guarding the Holiness of God from the Unholy, sinful Rebels on Earth. Jesus could not and would not let sinners defame God by approaching Him unworthily.

On the same note, it has always been God's plan to redeem fallen humanity, but this could never be while Jesus was functioning as the divine Curtain, guarding God's holiness. However, Jesus also knew the plan to redeem humanity. The only way to bring the Unholy through the Curtain was to tear the Curtain. So, the Son willingly submitted to the Father crushing Him that sinners might pass through the Curtain to the Father.

Isaiah 53:10 says, "Yet it was the LORD'S will to crush him and cause him to suffer..." The Father crushed the Son, because He willed to save sinners. The only way to save sinners was to tear and crush the Curtain, Jesus Christ, who was responsible to destroy sinners.

When Jesus Christ died on the cross, the curtain in the temple, which was a picture of Jesus, was torn from top to bottom (Matthew 27:51). This symbolized that the Father had crushed the Son, and made access to Himself through the true Curtain, Jesus Christ. Jesus, the Son, willingly submitted to the Father's crushing Him, because it is Jesus' responsibility to carry out the will of God. Because it was the will of God to save sinners, Jesus submitted to being torn and crushed. In Matthew 26:39, Jesus says, "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will." Acts 2:23 says, "This man was handed over to you by God's set purpose and foreknowledge..."

It is Jesus' responsibility to magnify and glorify God the Father at any cost. It glorified God most to redeem man. Jesus had to be crushed to redeem man. Thus, Jesus willingly gave Himself to be crushed and torn, so that we could be made Holy and draw near to God which is what glorifies God most, which is what Jesus is responsible to do!

Now Jesus defends us with the same passion that He defends the Father's holiness and punishes His enemies. We are of heavenly interest to the Father, and thus we have complete confidence that the Son will defend us from every enemy of God's holiness! The Curtain now covers us, protecting us from the unholy. And we are also priests according to 1 Peter 2, charged with defending the glory and holiness of our God to the world.

In addition to what Jesus has done for us, the Holy Spirit goes on to tell us reason two of why we can draw near to God.

### **REASON # 2:**

#### **We can draw near to God in confidence because of Who Jesus is for Us!**

The text, Hebrews 10:21 says:

***"...and since we have a great priest over the house of God..."***

The Holy Spirit devotes a vast part of the book of Hebrews demonstrating that Jesus Christ is our High Priest. This role of Jesus as our High Priest is of overwhelming significance!

Examine Exodus 28:36, "Make a plate of pure gold and engrave on it as on a seal: HOLY TO THE LORD. Fasten a blue cord to it to attach it to the turban; it is to be on the front of the turban. It will be on Aaron's forehead, and he will bear the guilt involved in the sacred gifts the Israelites consecrate, whatever their gifts may be. It will be on Aaron's forehead continually so that they will be acceptable to the LORD."

Again, this is a picture of Jesus Christ, our true High Priest. What this passage says is, the High Priest was responsible before God for the gifts the Israelites offered to God. God charged Aaron with ensuring the offerings of the Israelites were acceptable. Aaron could certainly ensure that these gifts were "acceptable" in outward appearance. However, there is no way that a mere man could make the hearts of the Israelites acceptable to God. In the same way, there is no way a mere animal sacrifice could save a person.

Because Jesus is greater than the Priests in the line of Aaron, because Jesus is our High Priest, we are demanded to draw near to God! Because Jesus Christ is our High Priest, He and not you or me, is responsible to make us acceptable to God. If left to ourselves, even as Christians, the best we could ever earn is a place in Hell!

Look at Hebrews 10:12-14, "But when this priest [Jesus] had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God. Since that time he waits for his enemies to be made his footstool, because by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy." The reason we can confidently approach God is because our High Priest, Jesus Christ, God the Son, is waiting in the presence of God for us. He is calling us to join Him before the Throne of God. We will never face God without Jesus Christ, our righteousness, at our side!

Colossians 3:1-3, "Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God."

1 Corinthians 1:30, "It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God – that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption."

Because Jesus is our High Priest, God looks to Jesus to make us acceptable. With the acceptance that God accepts Jesus, so God accepts you and me! This is how God looks at and accepts His children. So, how should we view ourselves? That being asked, how should we view our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ? We would be far less critical and judgmental of ourselves and each other if we chose to look at ourselves and other Christians as God sees us. When God looks at us, He sees Christ's merit, righteousness, and holiness – He sees Christ!

On our best day, we are never more able to draw near to God than on our very worst day as a Christian. Because when God looks at us, He sees Jesus Christ, our High Priest. When we are tempted to stay a far from God, we must remember that He wants us to draw near...He gave His very Son's life so we could draw near.

Because Jesus Christ is our High Priest, at this very moment, He defends us. Hebrews 7:25 says, "Therefore, he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them."

1 John 1:8-2:2 states, "If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives. My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world."

Right now, as Satan and everything else accuse us and suggest condemnation, Jesus Christ is defending us before the Father!

I know that you and I would ever make the claim that Jesus Christ is not acceptable to God. But when God's people live as though they themselves are not acceptable to God, they are telling God and the World, "My sin is a greater debt than Jesus Righteousness can pay!" We declare by our actions that Jesus Christ is not worthy, when you and I act as if we are not worthy to draw near to God. The Father accepts us as He accepts Christ. So, if it is true that the Father does not accept us, He does not accept Christ! Praise God, that this is not true, and that He **DOES, IN FACT, ACCEPT** Christ and Us!

We must put an end to this false teaching that is wounding the church! We must preach the gospel to our souls and draw near to God in Christ Jesus' righteousness. We must remember that when God sees us, He sees our High Priest, Jesus Christ. This is what God says of Jesus Christ. "This is my Son, whom I love; with Him I am well pleased." (Matthew 3:17). So often we are confused in regards to pleasing God. You and I cannot be any more or less pleasing to God than Jesus Christ is. WE ARE PLEASING TO GOD! Because when God looks at us, He sees Christ, this verse applies to you and me! "You are my Child, whom I love; with You I am well pleased!" Our actions may or may not please God, but You and I are pleasing to the Father. Our actions will never please God, until We recognize that We are indeed pleasing to God, because of Jesus Christ!

When sin and Satan and self try to distract us with ourselves, look to Jesus Christ, our High Priest. He is responsible to make us acceptable to God, and He will certainly do it! We look to Him our Victorious Champion to rescue us!

Philippians 1:6 says, "...being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus."

Our High Priest is in the presence of God, beckoning us to draw near through Him, because of all that He is for Us! Now the Holy Spirit shows us how to draw near to God in Hebrews 10:22.

### **Draw Near To God**

***"...let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith..."***

We must combat and destroy the sin of Avoiding and Neglecting God by drawing near to Him! What an insult to the work of God in Christ for us to persist in doubting God's provision and the worth of His Son Jesus Christ, by refusing or simply neglecting to draw near to Him.

Drawing near to God does not mean attending church. Drawing near to God does not mean participating in empty Spiritual Pilgrimages. These words, "Let Us Draw Near" mean a Spiritual Movement. It does not mean that we should move our physical bodies, but rather our immaterial spirits must draw near to God!

The problem with many Christians is that we go to church...at least physically. We are involved with ministry. We are doing God's work. But, all the while our hearts and spirits are failing to draw near to God. Remember this is a spiritual drawing near.

The verb also indicates a "continual" drawing near to God and a "draw near to God NOW!" in the Greek. This is something you and I must never stop doing. I pray that now even as we read these words, we would all draw near to God. We must do this, at this very movement! Ask God to help you draw near to Him as you read these words.

If you are a Believer, draw near to God spiritually or you will be very spiritually sick! Remember that God has attributed all God the Son's righteousness to you! If you do not

believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, I implore you to recognize that Jesus Christ's righteousness is not attributed to you. You are not worthy to draw near to God, until you call out to Him, begging Him to save you and give you Jesus Christ's righteousness. When you have come to God and Christ's righteousness has been given you, you too, are given the right to draw near to God and be among His people.

"Let us Draw Near" is subject to a certain condition in the Greek. Jesus Christ has met that condition for us. The condition was this: the unholy had to be made holy, before we could come to God. Because of the work of Jesus Christ and His role as our High Priest, we are assured the confidence to draw near to the throne of God.

If we only realized the significance of this, would we pray more? Would we read our Bibles more? Would we memorize more Scripture? Would we fast? Would we risk everything for the sake of Jesus Christ? Would the Holy Spirit change the world through us? How much do we miss out on because we fail to draw near as we should because we're worried about having to meet the condition ourselves, when Jesus has already met it?

Now what is the gospel...really? We were far off and Jesus brought us near! Look at 1 Peter 3:18, **"For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God..."**

Acts 2:39 says, **"The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off – for all whom the Lord our God will call."**

The gospel of Jesus Christ is this, "God the Son, Jesus Christ, brings us to God and KEEPS us there!"

The Holy Spirit now even gives us the third reason of why we can draw near to God.

### **REASON #3:**

**We can draw near to God because of What Christ Did in Us!**

***"...let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water."***

The tense of these words, "having our hearts sprinkled" and "having our bodies washed" indicate an action that took place in the past with results continuing to the present. Because Christ has sprinkled us with His blood and washed us with His pure water, we may draw near to God. So when everything around us screams, "GUILTY! UNWORTHY!", when our own consciences condemn us, we must preach the gospel to our souls.

We must not reserve the gospel for the lost only and keep it on a shelf waiting for a chance to share it. You and I must preach the Glorious Gospel of Jesus Christ to our souls every day! For it is only through the truth of this gospel that we may draw near to God! So I ask us all, "How well do we know this Gospel?"

Romans 1:16 states, "I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes..."

This is a salvation to bring sinners to God, and also to keep sinners, like you and me, in the presence of our God! We must declare the gospel that in Jesus Christ we are worthy to draw near to God, because of what Christ has done for us, because of Who Christ is for us, and because of what Christ has done in us. When our thoughts whisper to us, "You really messed up this time! Just stay away from God a little bit, and show Him your remorse", even though they seem religious and pious, **CUT** those evil thoughts down with the sword of the Spirit!

In my own life, I am tempted to not read the Bible or pray because my feelings tell me I am unworthy. I also struggle believing I can sing and worship God until I have dealt with every little sin. I fail to realize that Christ already has dealt with all my sin! I think that others also struggle with this. Some of you may feel you are not worthy to serve God. You may think, He does not want your service. The truth is, the Father does want your service.

Luke 1:74 states that Jesus was sent:

***"...to rescue us from the hand of our enemies and to enable us to serve him [the Father] without fear..."***

So when Satan, and Self, and everything else tell us we are condemned, remember the three reasons from Hebrews 10:19-22 that tell us why we can draw near to God. Those three reasons are because of What Jesus Christ has done for us, because of Who He Is for Us, and because of What He has done In Us!

Our consciences and feelings of guilt are meant to push us to God not keep us away from Him. When tempted to seek ways of dealing with our sin like those people in the British Isles who invented "Sin Eating", remember this:

We already have a Sin Eater, who has eaten and absorbed every one of our sins, so that we can draw near to God, despite everything else telling us we are unworthy! You are worthy, because when God looks at you and me, He only sees Christ!

If we do not embrace the gospel of Jesus Christ and draw near to God in this deployment, we will have wasted it!

~ ~ ~ ~

*Dear Heavenly Father,*

*I pray for my Christian brothers and sisters during this deployment and through out the rest of their lives, that through the power of the gospel, we will draw near to You!*

*That is our greatest need and desire! Fulfill this in us. May Your Spirit glorify Christ in us as we embrace the gospel by drawing near to You.*

*Help us to pray and approach Your throne, through Christ's righteousness. We are weak, but we have a Mighty Savior!*

*In Jesus' Name,*

*Amen!*

## SECTION 2

# DON'T WASTE YOUR DEPLOYMENT

**By: Mark D. Waite**

*~ My Prayer For You ~*

*Dear Heavenly Father,*

*I pray for my very good friends as we approach our scheduled deployment. I pray that You would keep and protect them, both physically and spiritually! May those who embrace You be taught to embrace You even more and in ways never before imagined. And I pray for those who have not yet embraced You. I cannot bear the thought of entering glory without them, so I ask You Father to embrace these friends of mine and draw them to Yourself! Please hear my prayer, Lord.*

*Please take what is written here and use it for the advancement of Your Kingdom and the glorification of Your Name. You are my very precious and costly treasure! Thank You for saving me and giving me the joy that we all long for and that is only found in Your Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. To Him I give all the glory, praise, and honor! Please cover over my mistakes and use this book in spite of my own faults and errors.*

*I love You, O Father!*

*In Jesus Name,*

*Amen*

I am a Christian – a “sold-out” believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. I am also an American Soldier. I feel that this is where my God has called me to serve Him in the present scene of my life. I have a handful of devout Christian buddies in my unit. I also have a handful of buddies who openly reject Christianity. And several of my friends are somewhere in between. I am writing this short book for you guys, my buddies. These are a few things I would like you think about and meditate on as we prepare for the soon coming combat.

I confess the title “Don’t Waste Your Deployment” is borrowed from a far greater piece of literature written by Pastor John Piper. It is called, “Don’t Waste Your Life”. I highly recommend reading this book.

Some of this might sound like I’m rambling. I hope not. However you take it, I pray the Lord will use it to minister to you!

### **God Always Gives Me the Greatest Good**

At times, I am accused of being an unrealistic optimist. This is quite possibly true, however, I feel that I am far too ready to complain. To combat the desire to complain, I find that optimism helps. But the main reason I try to be optimistic is because of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Bible teaches that God is completely in control of all things. He is in control of the good that comes to me and also of the “bad” that comes to me. And everything that comes to me is a blessing from God, whether I feel it is good or bad. The reason I can say this is because of what I find in the Bible.

It says in Roman 8:28, **“And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose.”**

Through Christ’s work in my life, I love God, and so I know that the very One who created everything that exists, will work out everything for my good. I think we are confused at times as to what “good” means. “Good” is not always the thing I want most. The “good” that God works out for those who love Him, is the “good” that we need most and SHOULD want most. We don’t always want what is good for us; it might even be unpleasant and un-enjoyable. Medicine is a good example of this. Often times, the medicine we need to overcome an illness is not very pleasant. I doubt the cancer patient enjoys chemo therapy. I doubt the diabetic enjoys taking insulin multiple times a day. I don’t even like swallowing the cold medicine that tastes horrible, but will bring me relief.

Now suppose we were to step away from reality and look at life as through a window. Suppose we observed a young child thrashing and throwing a tantrum against his mother, who was attempting to remove a splinter from the child’s finger. Even though

the child says it hurts, the mother should still impose on the child what she knows is the child's greatest good! Would we not think the child is foolish to be fighting his mother for helping him? The child might even create a worse injury by fighting the good that feels bad.

In the same way, sometimes God gives us the good that feels bad, because He loves us so much. We need to remember that He is the One with the whole and complete perspective. The first thing I think people will throw at what I have just said is that if God is loving, how can He allow rape. I do not claim to understand why God allows so many evils to exist, but I do trust that He is a good God. I trust the verse that is written above, "God causes all things to work together for the good of those who love God..."

### **God Even Told Jesus "No"**

You and I are not the first ones to ask God to take away something that we dislike. And You and I are certainly not the first ones God says, "No" to. I think the Supreme example of this is Jesus Christ, God the Son. Jesus prayed to God, asking, "**My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from Me.**" (Matthew 26:39). Jesus prayed this asking God not to send Him to the cross. Jesus even said, "**My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death.**" (Matt. 26:38). And yet, Jesus did not accuse God of injustice or of being unloving. Jesus completed His prayer by saying, "**...Yet not as I will, but as You will.**" (Matt. 26:39). Jesus, God the Son, trusted God the Father. And the Father did will to send Jesus to the cross. "**This man was handed over to you by God's set purpose and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put Him to death by nailing Him to a cross.**" (Acts 2:23).

It was God's plan for Jesus to suffer, and it was good. This leads us to the assurance that no matter what happens to us in Iraq, it will be good. It may not feel good and it might not be the good we desire. But for those who love God, it will be the good that we need most. This leads me again to Romans 8, where Paul says in verse 32, "**He who did not spare His own Son, but gave Him up for us all – how will He not also, along with Him, graciously give us all things?**" We should be most assured by this verse. WHY? Because it means that God is not a God who applies a band aid to a wound that needs a tourniquet. God will give you what you need regardless of how it feels.

### **Jesus Was Deployed!**

For the Christians who are reading this, it should be our goal to be made more like Christ. We should desire to have the old man chipped away. God promises us that He will do this. I'm sure if the tree could feel the carpenter cutting and chipping it away, the tree would not be enjoying the process. But the process is necessary.

Hebrews 12 addresses how God disciplines us for our good and that this is a proof of true salvation. Verse 8 says, "**If you are not disciplined (and everyone undergoes discipline), then you are illegitimate children and not true sons.**" Verses 10 and 11 say, "**Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in His holiness. No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.**"

We will have wasted our time in Iraq if we fail to place our trust in God, trusting that He is in sovereign control of all that happens to us. I pray that we would all be able to have this assurance as we enter a place of great insecurity. In addition to this, I feel we will have wasted our deployment if we fail to recognize it as a God appointed ministry.

Christians are God's Ambassadors on Earth. We are called to live out the Gospel before all peoples. This includes our families and friends. This includes Fellow Soldiers and the people of Iraq. 2 Corinthians 2:14 says, "**But thanks be God, who always leads us in triumphal procession in Christ and through us spreads everywhere the fragrance of the knowledge of Him.**" Who knows what God will do in you and through you during this deployment. Most times, difficult situations bring about the greatest good and greatest ministry.

Remember your ultimate Commander and King, the Lord Jesus Christ. In a manner of speaking, Jesus went through a deployment. He left His Home and His Father Whom He loved. He took upon Himself flesh, a uniform if you will. Imagine the discomfort of the Almighty and Infinite God of the universe, restricting Himself to a finite, weak, and limited body. He, out of any of us, could have been miserable in His circumstances. But He wasn't. His joy was in the right place, and not dependant on circumstance.

Philippians 2 is a "must read" passage that sums up for us Jesus' attitude during His deployment, and what our attitude needs to be during ours. To pick one of the verses, it says in verse 14, "**Do everything without complaining or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe, as you hold out the word of life...**"

If everything God does is for our good and His glory, then we have no room for grumbling or complaining. We should embrace everything as a ministry to live the gospel before the un-reached and display Jesus Christ as the supreme treasure that we value. Remember, we are always being watched, to see if Jesus really is our supreme treasure.

Because of our sinfulness, we will always be confronted with the temptation to complain. Something always tells us that the situation we are in is not ideal. I find that people who are "Chronic Complainers" are not even happy when the reason for their original complaint is gone. They always seem to find something to complain about. So when we are in Iraq, let us set our hearts on obeying our Lord and following His example of not complaining. Had Christ complained about saving us, where would we be?

### **Rejoice and Minister**

While our situation may not always be the "nicest", our God should be our primary delight, not our circumstance. William Wilberforce, a great Christian Politician in Britain in the 1800s said this, "*We can scarcely indeed look into any part of the sacred volume without meeting abundant proofs that it is the religion of the Affections which God particularly requires...Joy...is enjoyed on us as our bounden duty and commended to us as our acceptable worship...A cold...unfeeling heart is represented as highly criminal.*"

We must not waste our deployment by failing to trust God's love, or failing to recognize the ministry and service He has for us to do. Through it all, the only way we will not waste the deployment is by finding all our Joy in Christ, and combating the "cold, unfeeling heart".

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 declares to us, "**Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.**" No matter what comes, God commands us to thank Him. Remember, everything that comes is from God and for our good! I think that rejoicing and thanking God are the medicines that will keep us from wasting our deployment. Psalm 61:8 says, "**So I will ever sing praises to Your name, as I perform my vows day after day.**" (ESV).

So as we fulfill our "vow" or commitment to this country, let us remember to praise God. In the day by day grind of life, this will pull us through.

As we rejoice in the Lord during our deployment, I pray that our fellow soldiers will take notice. I pray that the glorious good news of Jesus Christ will be witnessed and cherished and accepted! I am convinced that true Christians "wear" the uniform 24/7. True Christians are easily picked out. We will be watched and studied. Our friends will wonder how we will respond to certain situations. I pray that our great God will help us to please Him with our actions and reactions. May everything we do be done to magnify and glorify His precious Son! Our deployment will be wasted if we become so consumed with stress, home, ourselves, or safety that we refuse to evangelize and live the gospel for our fellow soldiers. We never know whom the Lord will choose to save. Often times He saves the most unlikely candidate. This being said, love everyone with the love of Christ, in hopes that they will be saved. Imagine the joy you will have upon returning home, if one of our buddies joins us in the ranks of Christianity because of how God used you in his or her life in Iraq? Paul writes in 2 Timothy 2:10, "**Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they too may obtain the salvation that**

**is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory.”** Persevere in this deployment, because I am confident that the Lord will save Soldiers in Iraq! Persevere because He will use you. Do not waste this precious opportunity given you by our Lord.

I feel there is danger in being idle and the wastefulness this inspires. I completely understand needing to relax and being still before the Lord. I also understand the need to distract yourself from your surroundings. I just pray, that the Lord would keep us from becoming idle. What I mean is, becoming lazy. I cannot be more insistent, then when I say you must read your Bible in Iraq! You must pray to the Lord! You must minister in the strength of the Lord Jesus Christ! You will become deathly ill in your spirit if you **REFUSE** to do these things. Please, take some time to grow in the Lord while you are in Iraq. This is something I ask the Lord for help with. I pray He will help me to read His Word, to pray, and also to read other great works of the faith. Remember also that listening to the preaching of God’s word is necessary for the Christian’s Health. Get online and download sermons. I will help you with this if you need! Email me at [onethirst@gmail.com](mailto:onethirst@gmail.com)

**“So teach us to number our days, that we may present to Thee a heart of wisdom.”** (Moses in Psalm 90:12 NASB). May our Lord teach us how to use our time for His glory while we are deployed. Ask Him to keep us from wasting it.

### **Worry is a Joy Killer**

Another way to waste our deployment is if we are anxious and worrisome. What do you and I need to worry about if God is in complete control of all things? Ephesians 1:11 says, “In Him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of Him Who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of His will...” We also know that everything God works out according to His will is for our greatest good. So why worry? The great General, Stonewall Jackson, a devout Christian, said this, *“Captain, my religious belief teaches me to feel as safe in battle as in bed. God has fixed the time for my death. I do not concern myself about that, but to be always ready, no matter when it may overtake me...That is the way all men should live, and then all would be equally brave.”*

Jesus also tells us not to concern ourselves with worry. He says in Matthew 6:31, **“Do not be anxious then, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘With what shall we cloth ourselves?’ For all these things the Gentiles eagerly seek; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you. Therefore do not be anxious for tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.”** (NASB). We will NOT waste our time in Iraq if we REFUSE to give into worry and doubting God’s promise of goodness to us. Not worrying but trusting is an incredible witness to our friends and foes who will have no hope or who become fatalistic (not caring about life).

Philippians 4:4 says, **“Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice! Let your forbearing spirit be known to all men. The Lord is near. Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”** (NASB).

There are many different forms of worry, I might add. This seems to be a great sin struggle for me. While I do not worry so much about circumstance, I become consumed with my motivations and actions in life. I know that Jesus Christ has taken all my sins and given me all His righteousness, but I act like it is my responsibility to deal with these things on a day by day basis. May the Lord help me to trust in the work that only He can perform in my salvation!

Whatever you may be tempted to worry about...don’t. Worry will kill your joy in God. Don’t waste valuable rest in God by worrying about what God has already planned and accomplished!

**RESPECT AUTHORITY...even bad authority!**

One more thing I would like to bring up is an area which affects us greatly as humans...RESPECT. You might not respect the Person's leadership, but respect the position our God has CHOSEN to place him in. **"Let every person be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God. Therefore he who resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves."** (Romans 13:1-2 NASB). Paul probably wrote this during the reign of Nero, one of the greatest persecutors of Christianity – a very bad authority figure. While there may be a person in authority whom you have no respect for, remember, you are Christ's ambassador to his or her lost soul. Remember that one day you will reign with Christ. This life is where we learn submission and obedience. Lest you think you do not need to learn this, remember Hebrews 5:7, **"In the days of His [Jesus] flesh, when He offered up both prayers and supplications with loud crying and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and who was heard because of His piety, although He was the Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered..."** (NASB)

Remember God uses all things for our good and to conform us to the image of His Glorious Son! *Thank you, God, for even using corrupt Authority for this end!*

Don't waste your deployment by being disgruntled with the Authority God has established. You will find you're only fighting God. I confess this will be something I will struggle and need prayer over. My God will help me!

### **Don't Waste Your Deployment!**

The things I have written are things that are on my heart. I am concerned for you, my Battle Buddies. I want us each to grow in our relationship with Jesus Christ and His Joy! I really think that the thread that holds us as Christians together is the fact that God works everything out for our greatest good. God wants us to be happy in Him, and He works out everything for this end.

Being happy in God and rejoicing in Him is how we will Make the Most of our deployment and not waste it. Enjoying Jesus Christ is the antidote for complaining, for idleness, for pride, and disrespect. Loving the Lord our God with all our hearts is the only way we can love each other and minister to everyone we have contact with during this deployment. We will NOT have Wasted our deployment if we love our God!

One of my favorite quotes is from Augustine, a great Christian who lived in the late AD 300s and early 400s. He says in his book, the Confessions, "Thou hast prompted him [man], that he should delight to praise Thee, for Thou hast made us for Thyself and *restless is our heart until it comes to rest in Thee.*" You and I will be restless until we come to rest in the truth that God works all things out for our good and His glory! Whatever happens to us during this deployment, let us approach God as Jesus did when He said to the Father, "Not my will, but Your will be done."

Let us not come to the end of this deployment and say, "I have wasted it!"

## **SECTION 3 READ THE BIBLE AND PRAY**

*"Sin will keep you from this book [the Bible], or this book will keep you from sin."*

*~ John Bunyan*

We will waste our deployment if we refuse to grow in our Relationship with Jesus Christ. As is the case with any other relationship, it can only grow through spending time with the other person. So our relationship with Christ can only grow through spending time with Him. How do we do this? By reading the Bible and Praying!

There are a few different articles in this section about reading the Bible and Praying. I know we all struggle with these Spiritual Disciplines, but I pray we will take this topic to heart! I pray that our Great God will help us.

### **HAVE YOU READ YOUR BIBLE TODAY ?**

**By: Pastor Mark Waite**

*Have you read your Bible today???*

*Did it cost you anything other than time???*

*If it cost you your life would you continue to read it???\*

William Hunter, a teenage follower of Christ went to London in 1553 to apprentice as a silk weaver. That same year the young Protestant king Edward VI died and his sister Mary became queen. Queen Mary was a staunch Catholic who was determined to purge England of the protestant heresy so she could reestablish the Catholic Church as England's state religion. William didn't stay in London long. He lost his apprenticeship when he refused to receive communion in the Catholic Church so he returned home to Burntwood.

He wasn't home long when he was arrested and transported to a London prison. The crime he was charged with was reading his Bible. A local priest in Burntwood, obviously aware of William's protestant leanings caught him reading his Bible one day. The priest asked him why he was meddling with the Bible and William's reply was that it brought him comfort. The priest then warned William that he would broil for his sin of reading the Bible to which William retorted, "God give me grace that I may believe his Word, and confess His Name, whatsoever may come thereof."

After being imprisoned for nine months, William was finally sentenced to death by London's Catholic bishop. Queen Mary signed the death warrant and William was led to the stake where he was to be burned on March 26, 1555. William, only nineteen, was offered an opportunity to change his mind and recant but he refused. As he was being led to the stake, his father, weeping, spoke to him saying, "God be with thee, son William." And William said, "God be with you, good father, and be of good comfort; for we shall meet again when we shall be merry."

Once fastened to the stake, the fire was started and William's brother yelled to him saying, "William, think on the passion of Christ and be not afraid." William answered, "I am not afraid." Then he lifted up his hands and said, "Lord, Lord, Lord, receive my spirit" and lowering his head into the billowing smoke he soon burned to death—all because he read his Bible for comfort one day.

Now, perhaps, you understand my questions.

## TREMBLE AT HIS WORD

**By: Mark D. Waite**

Nothing can succeed apart from God's Sovereign permit. From running for President to breathing, nothing can be accomplished unless He graciously allows. Having God's blessing on a task will surely result in success; likewise, God's curse means failure. In life, there are many questions about what will incur God's blessing for success. Many attempt to appease an angry God through their own works, in order to purchase His blessing. This is a failed attempt, because God does not sell His blessing. In the Word of God, God Himself sheds light into what He will bless. There are a number of things and reasons for why God blesses. One very, very important and life changing promise God commits to blessing is found in Isaiah 55:11. It states, "...so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it." (ESV)". One thing in which each and every Christian should be completely confident is that God will bless His Word. Psalm 119 gives the example of how a child of God should view the Scripture. "*Your testimonies are my heritage forever, for they are the joy of my heart.*" (Ps. 119:111 ESV). With many similar verses, the author of Psalm 119 writes of his love for the Word of God. The author says, "...I will meditate on your precepts." (verse 78 ESV). People spend time doing the things they value; this is how God made us. Athletes spend time playing sports. Musicians spend time playing music. Bible-Valuing Christians spend time reading the Bible. Like the author of Psalm 119, Christians must value the Word of God in order to persevere in meditating on it. The Scribe, Ezra, is likely the author of Psalm 119. In the book of Ezra, there is a verse that describes this man who is completely in love with God's Law. "...for the good hand of his God was on him. For Ezra had set his heart to study the Law of the Lord, and to do it and to teach his statutes and rules in Israel." (Ezra 7:9-10 ESV). The good hand of God was upon Ezra, because his heart was dedicated to the Law of God. God blesses the believer who lingers in the Word and does not rush to get on to "more important things".

"And we also thank God constantly for this, that when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men but as what it really is, the word of God, which is at work in you believers." (1 Thessalonians 2:13 ESV). The Word of God is at work in the lives of God's people. Sadly, many Christians do not realize this or take it to heart. When Satan was tempting Jesus in the wilderness, Jesus quoted this Scripture to Satan, "**Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.**" (Matthew 4:4 ESV). Just as the body needs food to be healthy, so the Christian needs God's Word in order to thrive in the faith. God's Word will powerfully work in the Believer, however, not all believers feast on this powerfully working and readily available spiritual food. If a person were only to eat one hamburger patty a day, but nothing else, perhaps they would survive. They would certainly not be a healthy, thriving individual. In the West, it is unthinkable to imagine someone choosing only to eat only one hamburger a day, when this person has access to as much food as he could want. However, many Christians share this example in a spiritual sense. They may read a passage of Scripture here or there, today if they're able. Maybe they read the devotional book for the day. If they are true believers, the Lord will keep them alive, but these Starving Christians will not thrive in their walk with Christ apart from solid nourishment in the Word. The Christian who recognizes that God's Word is and will be at work in his life will surely be blessed.

"And I am sure of this, that He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ." (Philippians 1:6 ESV). God is at work in the lives of His people, making them more like His Son...sanctifying them. This is a work that God alone can complete. God will work in His people in many ways. However, the primary way in which God transforms His people is through His Word. Jesus Himself offers this prayer for His people, "**Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth.**" (John 17:17 ESV). To walk in godliness is to walk in the Word. Most people can accept the name God. Less can accept the name Jesus. Hardly any can accept the Biblical portrayal of either One. People

can accept God and Jesus, only because they have created a fictitious version of them in their own minds. When confronted with what the Bible actually declares, the godless flee. The people of God, however, will be blessed by, ministered to, and made more like Christ through healthy spiritual time in the Word.

As nothing will succeed that is contrary to God's will, so nothing will ultimately succeed that defames the Word of God. It is of utmost importance for the Believer to read God's Word. Not because this earns special favor with God, but because Believers can be completely confident that God working His Word into their lives will make them more like Christ, transform their minds, and strengthen them in their Journey. A person cannot value the Word of God unless he values the God of the Word. Those who value God will value His Word.

*"But this is the one to whom I [the LORD] will look: he who is humble and contrite in spirit **and trembles at my word.**" (Is. 66:2 ESV)*

## **MY PRAYER DISTRACTIONS**

**By: Pastor Mark S. Waite**

As is usually my custom, I rose early this morning, made some coffee, read a couple chapters in my Bible, and then went for a walk so as to spend some alone time with the Lord in prayer. My expectations of communing with the Lord were as big as my intentions but once I got out the door on this beautiful cool morning my heart became more of a marketplace than a place of prayer. I saw the backyard that needed to be cleaned up, which caused me to realize I needed to get gas for the chain saw so I could cut some firewood (go figure on how that connection came about). Then I began to realize I ought to order some gravel for the driveway and just about the time I got into the "Good Morning Lord" part of my praying it dawned on me that I needed to send out the announcements, finish the message for Sunday as well as make about ten phone calls today. Talk about distractions.

Well the good news is, I put all this behind me and did have some time in prayer but oh what a battle it was to keep my mind clear so as to talk with the Lord rather than myself. And in all honesty, a mile or two down the road, as I started to pray for and through the church I found myself struggling again with such distractions as our church's finances, relational issues, personal needs and struggles I have been made aware of in our church family, and a variety of other interesting and not so interesting things to think about.

Finally, I finished my circuit and as I walked back in the door to sit down and write this I wondered about the value of my quote unquote "prayer walk". As I considered whether I should just go right back out there and do it again only this time with a much more serious approach to dealing with all my distractions, it dawned on me that distractions are life. And since life is what we pray about—distractions may not really be distractions at all—they may be prayer requests in disguise. In fact, perhaps they are the very things God wants to talk about.

I've never found that talking to my wife was any more intimate and pleasurable because I came to her with a list and an agenda. Most of the time, what passes for good conversation between us is talking about all the distractions that interrupted our agenda and made scrap paper out of our lists. Well, after giving it some more thought I think prayer without distractions may not be prayer at all. Paul told us that we are to pray without ceasing (1 Thess. 5:17) and that we are to be anxious for nothing but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving we are to let our requests be known to God (Phil. 4:6). How can we pray without ceasing and over everything and not include our distractions?

So, I didn't go back out on the road to repray my prayers. I simply thanked the Lord for listening to me as I talked to Him and for listening in on me as I talked to myself. Then I committed all my distractions to Him.

## **THE WORK OF GOD THROUGH HIS WORD IN MY LIFE**

**By: Steven Froberg**

My name is PFC Steven Froberg. I first entered Basic Training starting out really strong in my faith. I spent a great deal of time in His Word and in constant prayer. I was a very out spoken Christian and loved sharing my story to everyone no matter the reaction I received.

After Basic, I was stationed in Alaska and my relationship with Christ seemed to change. My impression of Alaska was: a cold, dreary, and dark place. I was thrust into a world I did not recognize and to be honest it scared me and I started to try and do things my way. I did not place a great deal of importance on fellowship with God and I began pushing Him to the side. By doing so, my time with God in his word plummeted and my fellowship with Him in prayer was absent.

I started to see changes in me that I didn't like. I was looking more and more like the person I was before Christ was in my life. I was starting to do what everyone else was doing and though I still prayed on occasion and went to church here and there it wasn't enough. Something was severely wrong.

I noticed this change and tried to stop it as quickly as possible, so as not to stray from God and continue in my path toward self destruction. However, it seemed like everything I tried did not work. I attempted to be a better person, doing more for others, but frankly, it was all about me. My problem was **how** I was going to do things.

This was a very hard season in my life. One of the reasons is because, sadly, there are few born again Christians in the Military. Fellowship with other believers was hard to find during work. Then I met a fellow Christian who I now see as one of my spiritual leaders and advisors. He reminded me of two things that turned me around. These two things are: to READ God's Word and to trust God, giving everything to Him. God is sovereign and His Will, will be done as it says in Psalms 40:8 "I desire to do your will, O my God..." and Psalms 143:10 "Teach me to do your will, for you are my God..." We need to put our complete trust in Him alone. He knows what's best for us even if we don't see it or understand it. We need to have faith in Him and not rely on our own understanding. "For the foolishness of God is wiser than man's wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than man's strength." (1 Corinthians 1:25).

My Christian friend helped me to start reading the Bible faithfully again; it was hard at first. However, he kept encouraging me and keeping me accountable to reading the Word. He was never harsh with me about it but he was firm about the importance of spending daily time in the Word of God. With prayer and God's grace I began to read more and more. As I read more faithfully, I felt God was opening my eyes. God was drawing me closer to Him through His word. My friend kept challenging me telling me to read more and to look at both the Old and New Testaments. I began to grow stronger in my faith again. I was closer to Christ because of His Word.

The Bible is a direct link between humans and God. It is His very words written through His Servants of years ago to us, His Servants of today. Spending regular time in the Word of God, the Bible, is the best way for us to be in fellowship with God.

As I gear up and get ready for deployment, I know that I need to keep in constant prayer, and fellowship with believers, and also to keep in fellowship with God through His Word. This is one way we can avoid wasting our deployment.

## **THE IMPORTANCE OF PRAYER**

**By: Joel Adams**

***"Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved."***

Acts 16:31

This is true but our walk with Christ does not end here. One of the most basic ways to praise God and show Him our love is the spiritual discipline of prayer. Praying without ceasing, like the Bible says, also happens to be one of the most difficult because it requires us to go against everything we are taught about self sufficiency and strength.

Why should we ask God for help? Basic prayer is more than just talking to with God; it is essential communication with our Creator.

To often prayer is made out to be a long, drawn out ceremony where you must ask just the right questions in just the right way, or God has deaf ears. The Bible stresses over and over the necessity of prayer, and there are many specific prayers we can pray, but ultimately God wants to talk to his children and take care of their needs. So, "Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you." (1 Peter 5:7) The Father wants to bless and love us! Talk to Him like your best friend and lay anything on your heart at His feet.

He will gladly accept anything you can offer and believe it or not, God loves to listen to our struggles! He loves to hear our pains, our worries, our mistakes, and our joys. He loves to listen not because He is an angry God who rejoices in rebuking us, but because He is our loving and gracious Father who wants to heal our hearts, calm the storms of our lives, and teach us to walk with Him in abundant life. Daily prayer with a humble heart is the basis for reaching our full potential and glorifying God with our lives. Daily prayer is essential for us to avoid wasting our deployment.

The discipline of prayer is not about finding time in the midst of our hectic lives because it is something we should prioritize. Prayer is something we must be purposeful about and make a part of our daily lives! Without this essential communication we become spiritually stagnant and lukewarm. If Jesus is the template of righteousness for us to follow, what does this teach us about prayer? Every day Jesus took time, away from His disciples, to talk to the Father. He humbly came to the Father to ask for strength and guidance for the day and whatever challenge He might face. He confided in God and had complete faith and trust in the answers He might receive. As Christians we must follow this example. Jesus has become our link to God, and we are no longer separated from Him by sin. So, "[We] can do everything through him who gives [us] strength." (Philippians 4:13) Jesus is the counter to sin and the antidote to death! Like Jesus, we must put aside our arrogance and pride and come before God, the Father.

Humility often has a bad connotation and the word "submit" comes to mind. Humility and submission to the will of God are not signs of weakness and our inability to control our lives, but a sign of trust in our Father to take care of us and recognition that we cannot live without Him! Where pride often stems from insecurity, humility and submission can only happen when we are confident in God's superiority and trust His plan. Asking for help is one of the hardest things to do and daily prayer is not easy.

Why does God make it this way? He chooses to continually test us, within our limits, so that He can condition us to feel our need for His presence in our lives and ultimately seek abundant life! If we could always live life alone, we would have no need for God.

As we understand our need for Him and grow in a desire to know Him deeper, we begin to see His overwhelming love for us. We begin to trust His plan and live for Him. The God of the Universe, our Creator, desires a relationship with us and without the essential communication, we cannot be near Him! Through daily prayer, God builds us up and teaches us to walk upright so we are ready to face our enemy head on! We can be happy sometimes, but only God, through His gracious love, has the power to make us truly joyful all the time! That is the abundant life He has for us!

"And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast." (1 Peter 5:10)

When we start each day in Christ and walk with Him, we can ask the Holy Spirit to live in us that day and every day and prepare us for any battle we might face.



## **SECTION 4**

### **SEND THE GOSPEL TO IRAQ**

If we do not take the Gospel to Iraq, we will have wasted our time and deployment. Taking the Gospel to Iraq will take on many forms. It will be loving our fellow soldier. It will be representing Christ to all we come in contact with. It will be proclaiming the Bad News of Humanity and the Good News of Jesus to our friends and enemies. Ultimately, I pray the Lord will spread His good news in Iraq through us, however He wills to do so. Please join me in this prayer!

### **MISSIONARY WORK IN IRAQ**

In 1946, after the close of World War 2, a General appealed to American Churches to send 1,000 missionaries to the islands of Japan. The Supreme Commander of Allied Powers in Japan, General MacArthur knew that the only way to bring freedom to the people of Japan was to bring Jesus Christ. American Churches answered General MacArthur's call and sent over 2,500 missionaries and countless dollars to spread Christ to the lost people of Japan.

Today, I, appeal to American Christians yet again, to raise up arms and pray for the people of Iraq and Afghanistan. The truth that General MacArthur knew in 1946 has not changed in 2008. There can be no lasting liberty or freedom in these countries, until Jesus Christ is proclaimed.

I feel that we, the American Church, have chosen to view the war in Iraq and Afghanistan as purely a physical war; we feel that the triumph of Democracy and political Freedom are our chief gifts to these people. All the while I think we have neglected to pray as faithfully as we should for the salvation of the lost in Iraq and Afghanistan. This is just as much a spiritual war as physical, and Victory for Christ in these regions is far more important than Victory for the American Way of Life. It is not for me to decide on the morality of this war, but if God is the Sovereign whom we preach, than this war is a divine opportunity to preach Him more. I also understand that given the delicate nature of these two regions, it is nearly impossible for missionaries to go. So I implore the Church to pray. Pray that God would evangelize these people in the way He will see fit.

As history progresses, U.S. Service Men and Women will deploy to Iraq and Afghanistan. I ask for prayer that God would use me and other Christians serving in the Military to be the missionaries during the present situation in these countries.

In closing, what I am asking for is your faithful prayer for God's work to be done in these two countries, Iraq and Afghanistan. Everyone seems to have a different strategy on how to fix our nation's activities in these countries. I submit that the only way to make a lasting difference is to pray for these people and proclaim the gospel to them in their own environment. Please join me!

### **STATISTICS**

Iraq is a country in need of great prayer. Our country calls our current activities in Iraq, *Operation Iraqi Freedom*. It will be wonderful if Iraq joins the world as a free nation. However, as great as political freedom is, Spiritual Freedom is far more necessary for humanity and Iraq. The only thing we may be able to do is pray, and by God's grace, we intend to do this well!

Please look at the statistics on this page and use them to direct your prayer for this country.

### **IRAQ**

**POPULATION:** 27,499,636 (a little more than the population of the state of Texas)

**LAND AREA:** 437,032 sq. km (a little bigger than the state of California)

**ETHNIC GROUPS:** ARAB 75%-80%; KURDISH 15%-20%; OTHER 5%.

**RELIGIONS:** MUSLIM 97% (Shia 60%-65%; Sunni 32%-37%); CHRISTIAN/OTHER 3%.

**ESTIMATED:** 26,674,646 = Muslim Iraqis; 824,989 Other/Christian Iraqis.  
VS. THE UNITED STATES

**POPULATION:** 301,139,947

**RELIGIONS:** Protestants 51%; Catholic 23%; Mormon 1.7%; Jewish 1.6%;  
Buddhist 0.7%; MUSLIM 0.6 %.

**ESTIMATED:** 153,581,372 = Protestant Americans; 69,262,187 = Catholic Americans;  
1,806,839 = MUSLIM Americans. [\[2\]](#)

## SECTION 5 CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

***"For to me to live is Christ and to die is gain!"***  
***~ The Apostle Paul***

***"He is no fool who gives up what he cannot keep to gain  
what he cannot lose."***  
***~ Jim Elliot***

### IS THIS A GOOD DAY TO DIE?

**By: Pastor Mark S. Waite**

Some time in the early spring of 1876, Sitting Bull climbed to a hilltop, seeking a vision. In his dream, a great dust storm swirled down upon a small white cloud that resembled a Lakota village. Through the whirlwind, Sitting Bull could see soldiers marching. The little cloud was swallowed up for a time, but the storm eventually dissipated and the village emerged unharmed.

It was an encouraging dream. And in the spring of 1876, the Lakota needed encouragement, for General Philip Sheridan had already drawn up a plan that would send three columns of soldiers to find Sitting Bull and drive him and his followers onto the reservations.

The unit responsible for the carrying out of this plan was the Seventh Calvary, made up of 210 men and led by none other than General George Armstrong Custer.

On June 6th, some 3,000 Lakota and Cheyenne were camped along Rosebud Creek in Montana. There they held their most sacred ritual -- a sun dance -- in which prayers were offered and vows made to Wakan Tanka, their Great Spirit.

Sitting Bull slashed his arms one hundred times as a sign of sacrifice. Then he had another vision: The soldiers came again to attack his people -- "as many as grasshoppers," he said -- but this time they were upside down, their horse's hooves in the air, their hats tumbling to the ground as they rode into the Lakota camp.

On June 21st, Custer set out from his camp on the Yellowstone River for a place the Indians called Greasy Grass. The soldiers called it the Little Bighorn. Fearful that Sitting Bull would elude him, Custer pushed his column hard -- 12 miles the first day, 33 the second, 28 the third. The exhausted troopers began to grumble about the man they privately called "Hard Ass."

As they followed the Indians' trail, they did not grasp the full meaning of the fresh pony tracks that seemed to cross and recross it. In the last few days, 3,000 more Indians -- Lakotas, Arapahoes and Cheyennes -- had left the reservations to join Sitting Bull. His encampment now stretched out for three miles along the Greasy Grass, a gathering of more than six thousand Indians, eighteen hundred of them warriors.

On the evening of June 24th, Sitting Bull made his way to a ridge that overlooked the encampment, gave offerings to the Great Spirit and prayed for the protection of his people. The next day was June 25th, a Sunday, cloudless and hot. Custer's Crow scouts spotted the village from a distant hilltop and called Custer up to have a look. Even with a telescope, he was unable to see much more than a white blur on the valley floor. His only concern was that he had already been spotted and that unless he attacked right away, the Indians would split up and flee in so many directions that he could never stop them.

Custer hurried toward the Little Bighorn. He saw dust rising over a ridge just ahead of him and thought the Indians were already on the move to escape. It was now or never. Some 40 warriors appeared, then began racing back toward their camp. Custer sent three companies -- 140 men -- in pursuit, promising to support them. The Battle of the Little Bighorn was about to begin. The men crossed the river, formed a thin skirmish line, and began firing into one edge of the village, assuming that Custer would reinforce

them. They were soon outnumbered and began to retreat. The soldiers were falling into the village, just as Sitting Bull's vision had predicted.

Outnumbered more than four-to-one, Custer led his troops down toward the village, firing as they came. Stunned at the sight of hundreds of warriors headed right at them, Custer and his men stopped short and began a headlong retreat toward the summit of a long, high ridge.

In the end, all of the men in Custer's command -- 210 of them -- lay dead. It was the greatest Indian victory of the Plains wars. Americans were celebrating their centennial that summer, proud of 100 years of independence. The news that Custer and all his men had been killed by Indians was greeted with disbelief: How could native warriors with absurd names -- Low Dog, Crazy Horse, Sitting Bull -- have defeated so gallant a soldier?

Years later when interviewed about this battle, which became known as Custer's Last Stand, those Indians who agreed to discuss the battle made the point that what made them better warriors than Custer's soldiers was the fact that they were ready to fight because they were ready to die. In fact, many recalled that as Crazy Horse led them into the battle he cried out to them "Today is a good day to die, follow me!"

It goes without saying that Crazy Horse was a great leader of men and in particular fighting men, but regardless of the fact that he was able to persuade his warriors to be willing to give their lives for the cause of defeating Custer and the Seventh Cavalry, the victory they won was temporary at best. In retaliation for Little Bighorn Congress ordered General Philip Sheridan and 2,500 additional cavalymen to hunt down the Indians who had massacred Custer's men and force them to surrender. Sheridan was successful and thus Custer's last stand really became the Plains' Indians last stand as well.

Thus, the tragedy of Little Bighorn is that both the soldiers and the Indian warriors who died there died for a cause that would not and could not outlast them. There is absolutely no doubt that they all fought well and that those who died did so bravely but in the end the cause they fought and died for was a temporary one. And this is how it is with all of life unless what we are living for and willing to die for is a cause bigger than ourselves and our own small ambitions.

The Apostle Paul made this point in much fewer words when he wrote, "*for to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.*" (Philippians 1:21). Isn't it interesting and somewhat ironic that Paul would state that for death was gain. The word "gain" as recorded in the New Testament actually has the idea of being a means to great gain or profit. Thus, what Paul is saying is that dying has more value for him than living. In other words, it would be a good day to die.

But why was Paul able to say this? Why would dying be of greater value to him than remaining alive? The answer to that is found in the first part of the verse where he writes, "*for me to live is Christ*". You see, the reason Paul could look forward to death not as a victorious enemy but rather simply the portal to a greater and even more desirable life was that Christ was not only his cause, Christ was also his greatest treasure and pleasure.

Paul lived his life pursuing and enjoying Jesus Christ and his cause was sharing Christ with others so they could pursue and enjoy Him as well. He certainly enjoyed all life had to offer him but always with the realization that it was never meant to totally satisfy him as much as it was meant to point him to the One Who could—Jesus. And because Jesus was his life and in fact his life's goal, death was not a fearful foe that brought an end to all that was good, pleasurable, and satisfying. Rather, because of his love for and desire for Jesus, death was simply the means of moving from a state of being in which Jesus was experienced by faith and in spirit to a state of being in which he was actually in the very physical presence of the One his soul delighted in. Death was gain to Paul because death meant being in the very presence of Jesus Christ Himself for all of eternity to enjoy life and the world as it was originally meant to be experienced and enjoyed.

Everyday was a good day to die for Paul because he was ready to die because he was living for the right reason—to know and better enjoy His Creator and Savior, Jesus Christ. I am a police officer. Everyday, I ask myself if this would be a good day to die. As I strap on my bullet proof vest, slip into my uniform, and slide my Glock into its

holster I ask myself if this would be a good day to die. Racing to an accident at over 100 mph on narrow single lane roads in the dark of the night I ask myself if tonight would be a good night to die. Quickly making my way to a "domestic" where a husband has blockaded himself in his home after beating up his wife, I ask myself if this would be a good day to die. And every time I ask that question—I smile and say "Yes, it would". Not because I don't want to keep living here with my wife and kids or because life is hard and I don't always get my way—but rather because my greatest treasure and my greatest pleasure is not here on earth—He is in Heaven. And if Jesus Christ is your greatest treasure and pleasure in life than any day is a good day to live and a good day to die.

When this is our view of life and death, we will have kept from wasting our lives and this deployment.

## **JESUS' DESIRE FOR YOU...**

**By: Mark D. Waite**

In the beginning of this book, you will find the statement, "...your eternal destiny is determined by which group you choose to be in...", the groups being, *Those who do not desire Christ as their greatest treasure*, and *Those who do desire Christ to be their greatest treasure*.

Through out this book, I have written some of my prayers for you, and now I feel compelled to write about Jesus' prayer for you.

Now remember, there are two types of people in this world. Jesus has a different prayer for people in the two groups.

By understanding and believing Jesus' prayer for you, you will keep from wasting your deployment and your life!

### **Jesus' Desire for those who desire Him to be their greatest treasure and pleasure in life**

In John 17:24, Jesus prays,

***"Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory You have given me because You loved me before the creation of the World."***

If you are one of His own, King Jesus wants you to be with Him where His glory is visible. This is not on Earth, this is in Heaven!

Jesus loves His people, and wants us to have the greatest gift He could give us...Himself. Right now, on Earth, we do indeed have Christ in our lives, but we are not in a place where we can see and enjoy His glory.

1 Peter 1:8 says, "Though you have not seen Him [Jesus], you love Him; and even though you do not see Him now, you believe in Him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls."

If you are receiving the salvation of your souls, you must be loving and delighting in Christ! This will not always be as evident as it should be, and sometimes, might feel quite hidden, but it is present none the less, in Christ's people.

This life is not our final home, attached to it though we may be. For Christ's people, whom He loves, being with Him is our final destiny. The place where we can enjoy and gaze at all His glory is our true home!

The portal to our true home is through the mysterious and frightening door of *death*.

Right now, as we walk the earth, we are serving our King in a far off place, and He misses us. Jesus longs for us to be with Him.

When we loose a loved one in Christ, it seems all we focus on is our loss. We should consider their gain, and the happiness of our King having our loved one with Him.

For this reason, we must not fear death!

Our deployment will have been wasted, if we do not have this proper view of death. Now, we are called to fight for the glory and kingdom of our Lord in this Spiritual Battle called life. Soon, our King will call us Home, and in that day rejoice!

Now, we must take on Jesus' attitude. In John 18, immediately after His prayer in John 17, He was arrested, and later executed. Jesus knew that this was God's will for Him, and He also knew it would end in Him going back Home. Much pain and fears awaited Him before that glory, however.

Jesus' disciple, Peter, was not so sure this was best for Jesus. So he took matters into his own hands and attacked one of those who had come to arrest Jesus. However, Jesus rebuked Peter and said in John 18:11, "Put your sword away! Shall I not drink the cup the Father has given me?"

All of us, as those who desire Christ as our greatest treasure, have a "cup" to drink which comes from the hands of the Father. There will be sorrows and pains, but our Father gives us what is best for us. Medicine is not always sweet, but it is good. Eventually we will finish the cup, and will come to the point in our lives when we leave this world. This may come soon or not so soon. Only God knows. But we must remember, "...as long as we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord." (2 Corinthians 5:6). He misses us.

A character, named Reepicheep, in C.S. Lewis's book, *The Voyage of the Dawntrader*, makes this statement, "Let us take the adventure Aslan gives us."

So, as soldiers of Christ, let us serve well, knowing that soon, we will be finished with our deployment and will go Home. But for now, let us take the adventure our King gives us, knowing that He wants us to be with Him! This is His desire for us, and He will accomplish it...someday soon! Maybe today!

### **Jesus' desire for those who do not desire Him to be their greatest treasure and pleasure in life**

There is a lot in this book, *Don't Waste Your Deployment*. As you come to the end, I know that not everyone reading this will have made a decision to follow Christ. So for you, my friends, who have not yet tasted and seen that the Lord is good, I want you to know a few things.

God loves you. We take these three words for granted so much, and yet the meaning of these words is why you and I are breathing right now able to read this! Everyone in America knows John 3:16. Everyone also knows that if all you eat is junk food you will be unhealthy. Just because we know does not mean we take to heart. So please take John 3:16 to heart now.

***"For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life."***

But almost everyone "believes" in Jesus...at least they say and think they do. 1 Timothy 2:4 helps clarify this for us. It states:

***"...God our Savior, Who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth."***

Many "believe" in a Jesus they have been told about all their lives, but few actually come to the "knowledge of the truth" of Jesus. This is humanity's greatest need; it is also God's desire.

So to everyone right now who does not desire Jesus Christ as their greatest treasure, I can confidently say that God desires for you to be saved and come to the true knowledge of the truth. God desires for you to desire Jesus as your greatest pleasure. And because God wants this, Jesus Christ also wants this for you.

So Jesus desire for each and everyone who reads this, is that you not waste your deployment and life by pursuing the fleeting and temporal pleasures that sin and this world offer. Jesus'-God the Son- desire for you is that you be saved, by His saving work, and come to the knowledge of His truth - the truth about Him, about God the Father, and about You. When a person is saved and has come to a knowledge of the truth, they realize that Jesus Christ is the greatest pleasure and treasure to be found. Jesus' desire for you is that you prize Him above all else and in so doing, use your deployment and life well!

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- [1] *Zodhiates, The Complete Word Study New Testament*, page 929
- [2] Statistics came from the *CIA World Fact Book*