

God's Paratroopers

Like an elite rescue squad, we have the privilege of partnering with God in ushering to safety those who will perish without Him

I was once told by a paratroop instructor that there are four important commands given to the parachutists before every jump: (1) attention, (2) stand in the door, (3) look up, and (4) follow me!

Thinking of these commands, I am reminded that Jesus is preparing men and women for the new heaven and the new earth, and He has given His co-workers the same orders that the parachutists receive. The apostle Paul wrote: "Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters" (Eph. 6:5, KJV). Our task is not to give God His instructions. Rather, we must report for duty.

Attention!

Some people do not believe that there are souls to be saved for eternity. They think, rather, that everyone will be saved as a matter of course. They need to hear the bad news before the glad news has any value (see John 14:6).

During the war, friends often warned me of the danger of working in the underground movement to save the Jewish people in Holland and told of the cruel treatment that would befall me if I should be caught and sent to a concentration camp. To such warnings I always replied that these stories of such atrocities could not be true—that they must surely be anti-German propaganda—and so I turned a deaf ear to them.

But did my deaf ear help me when I was in Ravensbrück and saw my sister and thousands of other people perish at the hands of the Nazis? It did not help me at all. And neither will it help a person, when he is in hell, to have disbelieved in the existence of hell.

If we love our fellow men, we must tell them of the danger of a lost eternity, of Jesus who came and lived among men to teach and warn them, and of His death on the cross to save them from the agonizing darkness in an eternity shut off from God. For He, and only He, is the “the way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:6).

His Word also teaches that “whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16). God has given men eternal life, and this real life is to be found only in His Son.

The man who believes in the Son has eternal life. The man who refuses to believe in the Son will not see life. He lives under the anger of God (see 1 John 5:11; John 3:36).

I have seen people ready to go wherever they were sent in order to take a message of a godless philosophy all over the world. They have surrendered their bodies, souls, minds, family lives, money, time and, in fact, their all, for the sake of their convictions.

We Christians are called to bring to a hungry world the bread of life—the message of salvation, love, eternal life, riches immeasurable and a peace that passes all understanding—God’s plenty. But how can the world believe this message if they do not hear it, and how can they hear it if we do not tell them? It must be a case of attention!

Stand in the Door!

The Great Commission, in the book of Matthew, says, “Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations” (28:19).

In my travels throughout the world I have often visited mission fields, and what a joy it has been to be used by God for the strengthening of missionaries. But there are far more women than men in this work for the Lord; and I think there must have been some young men who, when surrendering their lives to Jesus Christ, prayed, “Here I am, Lord, but do send

my sister."

Peter said, "No, my Lord," but had to learn that he could not say "No" if he said "my Lord," nor "my Lord" if he said "No." "Stand in the door!" means that we must be obedient and go where God tells us, whether it be a call to the mission field or a call to work for Him at home.

God can use us only when we are in the place where He wants us to be. We dare not hoard the Gospel secret, but we must herald His story forth to all.

Look Up!

When we look at ourselves we are sure that we are unable to be used by the Lord; but when we look to Jesus we become His mirrors. It is true that, of itself, a mirror does not do much; but when it is hung or placed in the right position, it does its job properly.

Paul said that "we all, with unveiled face, reflecting as a mirror the glory of the Lord, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory" (2 Cor. 3:18, English Revised Version). It is very important, then, that we should be in the right position. And that position, for a Christian, is "looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith" (Heb. 12:2, KJV), for we have no light of ourselves.

Unfortunately, there are times in our lives when we experience a different truth: "Mine iniquities have taken hold upon me (hindered me), so that I am not able to look up" (Ps. 40:12).

On these occasions, it is very necessary for us to bring our sins in repentance to the Lord Jesus and restore our vision of Calvary. I have a small Dictaphone, and when it breaks down I do not make any attempt to repair it, but I return it instead to the manufacturer, who restores it to its former efficiency.

In the same way, when my faith breaks down, I send it back to the *manufacturer*, Jesus, for repair because when He corrects

the fault it will most assuredly work properly again. He is the Author and Finisher, the Manufacturer of our faith.

Yes, let us always be in the right position, so that we can be good mirrors for the Lord no matter what the circumstances may be. I recall an occasion when I suffered a slight accident in my hometown.

The policeman who helped me pulled out his little notebook to record what had happened. In Holland, when something occurs in which the police are involved, it is always necessary for them to make a report.

"What is your name?" he asked.

I said, "Corrie ten Boom."

He looked surprised and questioned me further, "Are you a member of the family of that name who we arrested about 10 years ago?"

"That is right," I replied.

During the war, the good Dutch policeman had been in the service of the Gestapo, remaining there for the express purpose of helping the political prisoners. This man had been on duty the day that my family was arrested.

"I'll never forget that night in the police station," he said. "The atmosphere was more of victory than of horror at the thought of dying in prison or a concentration camp. I often tell the story of how your father, who so shortly afterwards was to die in prison, opened his Bible and read Psalm 91."

Even after 10 years, that policeman still remembered which Psalm Father had read: "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.

"I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress: my

God, in him will I trust" (Ps. 91:1-2).

When I arrive in heaven and see my father again I shall ask him, "Do you remember that night in the police station in Haarlem?"

I think he will answer, "Yes! That was the last time we were all together."

I shall ask, "Do you remember the policeman who was on duty?"

It is more than possible that he will reply, "No, I don't remember," for Father was always a very relaxed person. He never would have thought to himself, *Now, I must do or say something that will be a blessing to this policeman.* It was simply that his life and eyes were turned towards Jesus; so on that terrible evening he was made a mirror of God's light.

Someday, we will ask in amazement, "Did I invite you to heaven?" Then we will learn that it was during the time we were looking unto Jesus, mirroring His joy. We are not suns to burn others with our self-goodness, just moons to reflect His clear light.

Follow Me!

Mark 8: 34 says, "Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me."

Denying ourselves, taking up our crosses, and following Jesus is not like jumping from an airplane toward earth with parachutes on our backs. Following Him means being safe in His hands—yoke-fellows with Him, His joy in us and our joy fulfilled.

Paratroopers for Jesus must trust Him. Our commission is to bring the gospel to the whole world. For this task, Jesus has promised us His Holy Spirit and His power to do the work (see Acts 1:8).

When we trust ourselves, we are doing the wrong thing. We can

fall into the error of spiritual pride on the one hand or discouragement on the other. We are really strong when we are weak, weak when we are strong.

A branch cannot bring forth fruit of itself, but however strong or weak it may be, it will bring forth much fruit if it is connected to the vine. When it is connected, the branch is given the nature of the vine (see John 15:1-8).

Following on in the footsteps of Jesus, taking the steps—yes, and the jumps into the unknown—we can become the paratroopers. We can storm the enemy's territory and win souls for Jesus. But only if we obey.

Jesus said, "Follow Me." Then His promise takes effect, "I will make you fishers of men" (Matt. 4:19).

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Corrie ten Boom (1892-1983) *was introduced to a life of sacrifice by watching her Christian parents during her early years in Haarlem, near Amsterdam. She was captured, along with her father, brother and sister, while hiding Jews in February 1944, and unexpectedly released on Dec. 28 that year. For the next 40 years, Corrie traveled the world, telling everyone that God is fully able to shine His light anywhere, even amid the worst human depravity.*