

A person wearing a red and yellow helmet and black riding gear is riding a red mountain bike. The background is a wall of light-colored square tiles. The person is leaning forward in a riding posture. The bike is red with black and white accents. The overall scene is captured with a motion blur effect, suggesting speed.

Echoes of Grace

# Getting HOME

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# Getting HOME

I grew up in a Christian family, attending church (or meetings as we called them) every Wednesday and Friday night, as well as three times on Sunday. From the time I was a little boy, my mother would read Bible stories to me before I went to bed every night and have me learn Bible verses for Sunday School. My father would read a chapter from the Bible after breakfast and supper every day, regardless of where we were or who we were with. It was something that I had grown used to through time, and I never questioned it much, nor did it really bother me till I started school. This was when I first learned that the other boys and girls celebrated things that we didn't and didn't go to any kind of meetings.

Throughout these first years of my life, I would pray with my mother every night beside my bed and pray that the "Lord Jesus would help me to

wash away my sins.” I never really understood anything about this, other than I knew it was what I was “supposed” to be saying and I thought it made my mother and father happy. These were relatively peaceful years of my life before my stubbornness showed itself.

At the age of six or so, I began to dislike doing what I knew made me different from other children—going to meetings, staying home from parties, and other things. I didn’t say much about it though and kept my thoughts to myself other than arguing with my parents about “Why can’t I go here?” and “Why can’t I go there?”

I can’t actually tell you the exact date of the following story, except that I think it was just after my eighth birthday.

I wanted a bike! I mean I really wanted a bike! I wanted one with all my heart. When my parents told me to write out a birthday list, the very first item (maybe the only one), was my coveted bike. I can still remember vividly when a neighborhood friend told me that my parents had gotten me a bike for my birthday. “But don’t tell anyone that I told you,” he said.

Wow! My very own bike! Those next days, knowing that I had my bike but not being able to see it, were hard days for an eager eight-year-old boy. Finally, May 23 rolled around and we ate the supper and the cherry cheesecake, and then the present was about to be unveiled. My father asked me to come with him. We went around behind our neighbor’s

toolshed. There it was! A beautiful, black, shiny Sky-line dirt bike. The only thing that an eight-year-old boy could want. It had big fake yellow leather pads on the crossbar and the handlebar, which were all the rage, and no handbrakes—I really hated handbrakes. In big, shiny, metallic letters on the down-bar, it read Skyline. Ecstatic! Thrilled! Words couldn't begin to express my excitement. It was bigger and better and badder than all the other bikes in the neighborhood.

I spent many fun hours on that bike! I rode the “trails” out behind our house. I took off for hours at a time and turned my mother's hair prematurely gray.

At first, I wanted to bike everywhere. No place was too far and especially not the meeting room which was only a mile away. It was the perfect place to show off my new bike to all the envious others who wished (or so I thought) that they had one. I would get it going really fast, turn into the parking lot, jam on the brakes, and I know I could get at least a 10-foot skid out of that baby.

Anyway, one day I asked my parents if I could take the BMX to meeting and they said it was okay. Off I went alone, pedalling my heart out. It was always a game to me to see if I could beat my father to meeting. (Sometimes I think he went slow on purpose to let me win.) I arrived there this particular evening and took the bike inside.

After meeting, I did my usual fancy showing off as the older people (who I thought never did anything fun) talked to each other. As everyone was preparing to leave, I got on my bike and raced off, determined



once more to beat my father home. I remember getting home, leaning the bike against the house, and strolling slowly around, waiting, trying to keep the cat's grin off my face. I did it again!

But they didn't come! I waited and waited and waited and waited! They never came. I began to get worried. Usually they were home only seconds after or even before me. I hadn't seen them on the way home, but we took a different route since I could take a shortcut on my bike, so that hadn't bothered me. I began to wonder and doubts came into my head.

After waiting, I'm not sure how long, I decided maybe I'd better ride back to the meeting room and see if they'd decided to stay and talk longer. Back to the meeting room I pedalled. I had a lump in my throat. The kind of hot one that doesn't bring tears—but almost. I prayed the whole way back. "Our God and Father, please help Mommy and Daddy to be at the meeting room. In Jesus' name, Amen."

Not there! The lump grew bigger! The tears were closer! I began to pray harder!

Back home I rode—a little slower this time. And all the way, there was this little voice in my ear, "Danny, you know how they're always saying the Lord is coming back to take the Christians to heaven. Well, you're too late. They're gone. And you've been left behind!" I tried to ignore the voice, my conscience, but it wouldn't go away. The tears started to come. My last hope was that they had passed me as I went back to the meeting room and now were waiting for me at home.

They weren't. I got off my bike on the front lawn and began to cry! And cry! My family all went to heaven and I was left on this earth. I knew that the Lord was coming back soon, but I had put it off till it was too late. The lump in my throat was the size of a balloon now. I wasn't saved and my parents had gone to heaven. I was on my way to hell.


I began to pray ... and with more meaning than any other time in my life. I can't remember the exact words, but I distinctly remember asking the Lord, if He hadn't already come back for the Christians to take them to heaven, to wash away my sins and come into my heart. I was sorry for all the times I had done things I knew were wrong and I knew that I needed Him to save me from my sins. I prayed this over and over! And the Lord Jesus answered my prayer.

As I was sitting there, crying on the front lawn, in front of the text on the front of my house which said, **"Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners,"** my parents drove up in their big van. I don't think I could have seen a happier sight except the Lord coming down to take me to heaven with Him.

As it turned out, my parents had gone to Dairy Queen to treat the family. I don't think I even minded all that much. The royal treat I received was far better than anything my parents could have bought—my parents were still here and I was a child of God. I knew I was ready if He did come back to take those who were born again into His family to heaven and I would go too.

I don't think I told my parents the story till years later, but I'm sure that this is when I accepted Christ Jesus into my heart. And now **"I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate [me] from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus [my] Lord"** (Romans 8:38-39). I can say for myself now, the **"Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me"** (Galatians 2:20).

I thank God that I was saved before it was too late. But what about you? The Lord is not going to wait forever. It tells us in His Word that He is not slack concerning His promise to return; He is just waiting for the very last person to accept His free gift because He does not want anyone to go to hell (2 Peter 3:9). However, once He comes to call believers up to heaven, there will be no second chance like there was for me. **Are you ready?**

Find out more of God's wonderful provision in *The Ultimate Welfare Program*. 







# The **ULTIMATE** Welfare Program

Many governments in the world have welfare programs that help provide for the poor. I would like to introduce you to the absolute best program—the ultimate in welfare assistance.

This program takes the poorest of the poor and gives them assistance all through this life, so that they are maintained in a state of supernatural well-being. “Well-being” is another word that has an almost identical meaning to welfare. Unlike other welfare programs, which are terminated at

death, this ultimate welfare program will keep on giving. Those enrolled can look forward to the time when they will receive full benefits.

Welfare systems are expensive, and many



governments are hard pressed because of limited resources. But this ultimate welfare system has access to a never-ending supply of wealth. In fact, it is so well-funded that every person in the world could make as many demands on it for as long as they want, and the supply of wealth would still be limitless.

Also, this welfare system extends across all international borders. No matter what country a person may come from, all are invited to enroll and start receiving benefits immediately. In truth, the One in charge *wants* all people to take what He freely offers.

Sometimes welfare systems have the unintended effect of making people behave like victims and become dependent on handouts. But the ultimate system takes the poor and weak and makes them strong. It is completely honorable to seek this assistance. The only dishonor is to refuse it.

Are you ready to enroll? *God's grace* is the "Ultimate Welfare Program," because it takes the poorest of the poor—sinners—and gives them the most joyful welfare possible to humankind—eternal life.

It just so happens that every member of the human race ranks as the poorest of the poor spiritually, because not one of us can work our way to heaven. We can't get to heaven without God's grace. Sin has infected our nature. It has made us ill-willed where we ought to have good will



towards others, including God, and unsettled our heart so that our desires are out of order. Because of these ill effects of sin, each one of us needs God's grace in our lives. Only God has the ability to undo these ill effects.

God's grace, when put into our hearts, begins to bring healing to our souls.

Grace is God's supernatural favor given to those who don't deserve it in any way. You can have all the wealth in the world, but if you don't know the love of God through the Lord Jesus Christ, you are not "faring well," because you are still in your sins and headed to a lost eternity.

To enter heaven, a person must receive God's grace, not earn it. This is because a person can't, by his own efforts, remove the serious consequences of sin from his life. He can't remove the stain of sin from his soul. He can't bring order into his desires. He can't pay the debt of everlasting punishment his sins deserve. Only by God's grace can these evil consequences be removed.

On the cross, the Son of God gave His life so that



His blood might wash away our sins. **“The blood of Jesus Christ [God’s] Son cleanse[s] us from all sin”** (1 John 1:7).

In His body, as He hung on the cross, He bore the punishment for the sins of all those who would believe on Him. **“Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree”** (1 Peter 2:24).

By God’s grace, we can live our lives properly. **“The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world”** (Titus 2:11-12).

The riches of God’s grace will never run dry. If the entire world were to trust in Him for salvation, there would be an abundance of grace for each one. And that is what we all need—an abundance of grace.

God is deeply concerned about your welfare, and that includes your eternal welfare. Won’t you consider how much He loves you and then receive the Lord Jesus Christ as your Saviour? **“By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God”** (Ephesians 2:8). Your name will be written in the Book of Life when you do, and when this life is over, you will be welcomed into heaven!

But God’s offer of grace will expire.

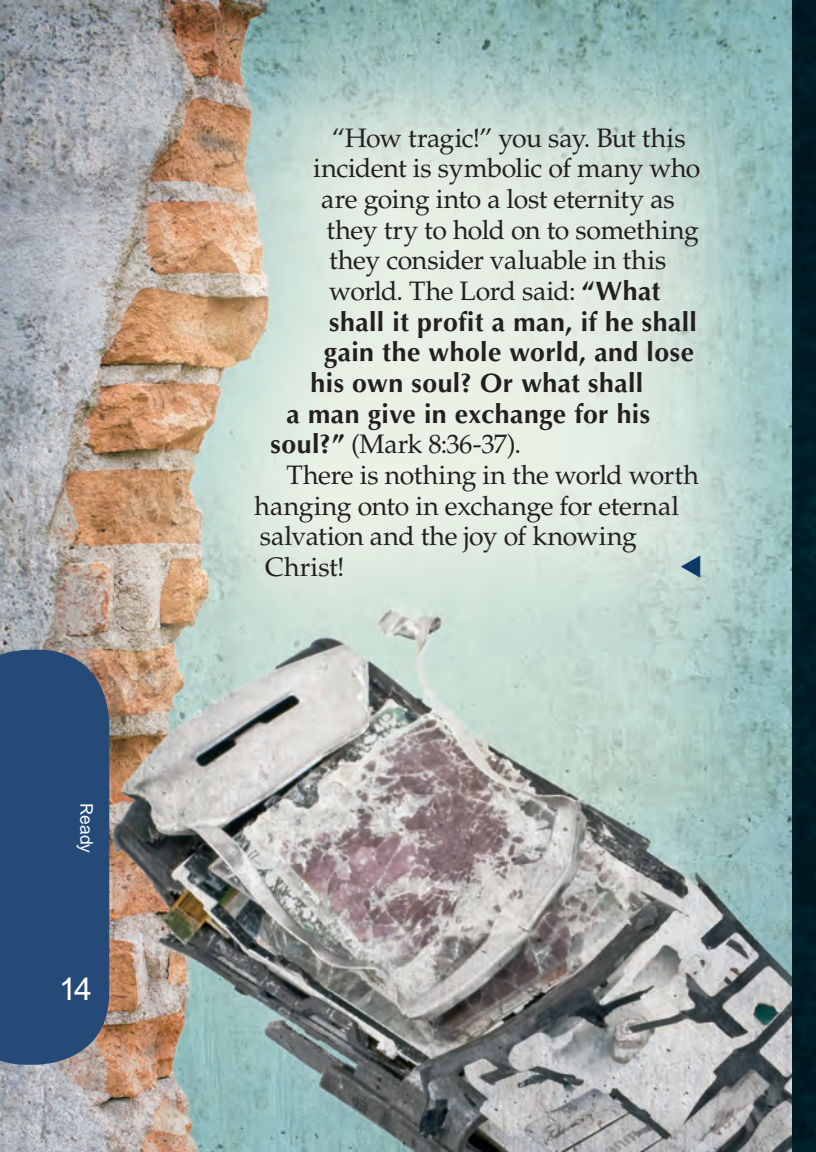
You’ll discover what that means if you continue on to read *Ready*. ◀



# READY

It was Christmas Eve 2013 when a tropical trough hit the island of Saint Vincent as well as some other islands in that region of the eastern Caribbean. The islands in that area are very mountainous and the rains came so heavy and so fast that it caused great flooding and landslides. As the dirt and rock cascaded down the mountains in the middle of the night, a family escaped from their home that was directly in its path. However, one of them realized they didn't have their cell phone, and thinking they had enough time to retrieve it went back into the house. The sad result was that they died in a tangled mass of concrete, corrugated steel, wood and household items.





“How tragic!” you say. But this incident is symbolic of many who are going into a lost eternity as they try to hold on to something they consider valuable in this world. The Lord said: **“What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?”** (Mark 8:36-37).

There is nothing in the world worth hanging onto in exchange for eternal salvation and the joy of knowing Christ! ◀

By **Grace**  
Are ye saved  
Through **Faith.**

EPHESIANS 2:8

## ECHOES OF GRACE

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*Jesus said: "I am the way, the truth, and the life:  
no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me" (John 14:6).*

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