

# CAUGHT IN A *MUDSLIDE*



Echoes of Grace

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# contents



**3** Caught in a Mudslide



**8** The Salvage of the *Costa Concordia*



**12** Lessons From a Wisdom Tooth



**15** Love Found a Way

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# CAUGHT IN A **MUDSLIDE**

Bob Coyle was awfully proud of his logging truck. The top of his cab was over ten feet high, the engine powerful enough to pull a heavy load of timber up steep logging roads. He kept his truck in tip-top condition, polishing it and waxing it until it shone. The truck had plenty of chrome: chrome mufflers, chrome gas tanks, wheels and mirrors. His truck was a beauty!

Bob was driving home to Forks, Washington. It had been raining for days, but people are used to lots of rain in the Pacific Northwest. It's one of the reasons the trees grow so tall. He was driving along the edge of Lake Crescent on a narrow, winding road squeezed in between the lake and the steep mountains covered with dark green forests. Every so often a small waterfall tumbling down the side of a mountain splashed the shoulder of the road. The road had lots of twists and turns, and driving was slow. It took a lot of

concentration for Bob to keep the big rig upright on the S-curves.

Bob was close to Barnes Point when the mudslide hit. Suddenly the face of the mountain came sliding down with countless tons of rock, trees and dirt. It blindsided him, taking him completely by surprise! The mudslide crashed against the side of the truck, pushing the vehicle sideways into the lake. The mudslide pushed the truck through the guard rails at the edge of the road as if they were made out of tin foil and not thick steel, and then down the short embankment and into the lake!

Bob Coyle could do nothing against the overpowering force of the mudslide. Lake Crescent is fed by glaciers, and the ice cold water from the lake flooded into the cab of the truck. When the water got chest deep in the cab, Bob decided it was time to make his escape out of the truck. He cranked down the window and climbed out into the water. He didn't know how to swim, so he waited till a drifting log approached, then pushed off with his feet, reaching out his arms and grabbed onto it. All the while, the mudslide kept pushing the truck farther and farther into the lake. Clinging to the driftwood, Bob kicked and paddled his way around the mudslide, which was about a hundred feet wide, and back to shore.

Soon his beautiful rig disappeared completely beneath the water! It would stay in the lake until

the next day, when, after a lot of work with heavy machinery, a path was cleared so the truck could be towed up out of the water. The truck was severely damaged by being submerged in the water, but thankfully Bob wasn't injured in the ordeal.

Do you know that we are all travelers down the winding road of life and are headed towards eternity? All of us are looking for happiness. At the end of this life, God has promised endless happiness and joy in a place called heaven to all those who love and obey Him.

The problem is that each one of us has been knocked off the road to heaven as if hit by a mudslide. Sin has pushed us off the road that leads to heaven, and the debris from the mudslide has left the road impassable. Romans 3:11-12 reads, **“There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are**



**together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one."**

Bob had to grab a floating log to help him return to shore. And each one of us needs to grab onto something too, to escape the consequences of our sin. That something is the salvation that is offered freely through the Lord Jesus Christ. This alone can keep us afloat when the entire world around us is sliding deeper and deeper into sin.

Jesus Christ can save those who trust Him because of who He is. From all eternity He was God, equal in power and wisdom with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit. Then just at the right moment in history, He became a man also, so that from that time forward He will forever be both God and man in the



same person. As a man He went to the cross and gave His life for sinners, and as a man He arose from the grave. His death has infinite power to cancel out the guilt of sin and make you and me prepared for heaven.

Because of Christ's death and resurrection, people can find salvation through faith in His name.

The way to get to heaven is to realize that we are ruined sinners, unable to save ourselves, and then to reach out by faith to the Lord Jesus, the Saviour of sinners. Those who put their faith in the Lord Jesus will have their sins forgiven and receive the gift of eternal life. **"The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord"** (Romans 6:23).

Not a single one of us could ever deserve the salvation God offers by our own endeavors. But He is pleased to give the free gift of salvation to all who believe on the name of His Son. Someday all those who believe in the Lord Jesus will experience the never-ending joys of heaven. Will you reach out and take hold of God's salvation through faith and be saved?

God saves repentant sinners. But He does far more than salvage broken lives to try to make them better. Find out how in *The Salvage of the Costa Concordia*.

# The Salvage of the **COSTA CONCORDIA**



The once beautiful cruise ship, the *Costa Concordia*, over 290 meters long, lay on its side, dwarfing the mouth of the small harbor of the Island of Giglio off the coast of Italy. About two-thirds of the cruise ship was submerged in saltwater. The portion of the ship that could be seen above the water still towered over its surroundings. The ship, which cost over a half billion euros (560 million USD, United States dollars) to build, had been declared a total loss.

It now lay rusting and rotting, an environmental risk and an eyesore for the people living on the island. The American salvaging firm, Titan Salvage, won a contract from the cruise ship line to remove the giant hulk. First, they would refloat the ship, which required the construction of underwater platforms and large floats, called sponsons, on both sides of the ship. Then the ship would have to



be towed a considerable distance to a shipyard in Genoa, where it would be cut up for scrap metal. The cost of the entire salvage operation would be more than a billion euros (1.12 billion USD), which was approximately double the cost of building the ship in the first place.

## SALVAGED OR SAVED?

The word salvage comes from the Latin word “salvare,” which means “to save.” It is the same Latin word that the words “salvation” and “savior” come from.

But how different the idea of salvage is from salvation! To salvage a wreck at sea means to save whatever has not been completely ruined of the ship or its cargo. In the case of the *Costa Concordia*, it was precious little. But God’s salvation through Christ saves *all* that has been ruined by sin and brings it into a much better state than ever before.

To make the salvation of sinners possible, God’s Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, gave His life on Calvary’s cross. It cost over a billion Euros to salvage the *Costa Concordia*, but to redeem souls from death and destruction, it cost far more. It cost the life of the Lord Jesus on the cross.

And what a salvation He provides for all those who believe on Him! Please consider these immense blessings that come to ruined sinners when they believe on the Lord Jesus for salvation.

## THREE HUGE BLESSINGS

First, for guilty sinners, the stain of sin is forever removed. A stain is a blot, or ugly mark, that ruins what is bright or beautiful. After the act of sin is completed, the stain of sin remains. The stain of sin mars a person's life and wrecks all chance of ever entering into heaven. That stain is washed away the moment a soul places his or her faith in Christ. **"The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanse[s] us from all sin"** (1 John 1:7).

Second, because all have sinned, all have incurred a debt of eternal punishment. Ezekiel 18:4 reads, **"Behold, all souls are Mine. . . . The soul that sinneth, it shall die."** The death referred to includes the eternal separation of the soul from God in hell. The debt of eternal punishment is a horrible debt to carry through life. Those who carry it run the risk of passing into a lost eternity at any second. However, no one needs to carry this debt through life because of what the Lord did on the cross. When a person believes on the Lord Jesus, that debt is completely discharged. Only through faith in the Lord Jesus can a sinner ever be rid of this terrible debt.

Third, the *Costa Concordia* was raised from a partially submerged state to later be cut up for scrap metal. The bodies of believers will be raised again, too. Although their bodies may be lying in the grave, at some future moment, God will raise them from



the grave and reunite them with their souls. The resurrection bodies will be far more wonderful than our earthly bodies. They will be free from pain and suffering. These resurrected bodies will be able to enjoy the glories of heaven and the presence of God forever. **“I am the resurrection, and the life,”** the Lord Jesus said; **“he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live”** (John 11:25).

## KNOWING THE SAVIOUR

What a Saviour! How marvelous that He should give these immense blessings to all those who believe on Him! The blessings that come to those who believe far exceed the losses they have suffered because of sin. No one could ever be worthy of these gifts, but God is very pleased to give them by His grace to all who believe. Won't you be among the number of those who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, so that you may learn firsthand the wonderful power of God to save sinners?

**“This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners”** (1 Timothy 1:15).

God works to remove the pain and stain of sin from our life. Are we thankful? Find out the proper attitude in *Lessons From a Wisdom Tooth*. ◀

# LESSONS FROM A WISDOM TOOTH

In reflecting on the majesty of the Lord his Maker, David, the psalmist of Israel wrote, **“I will praise Thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvelous are Thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well”** (Psalm 139:14). Of the original creation, we read, **“God saw everything that He had made, and, behold, it was very good”** (Genesis 1:31). However, we know from God’s Word that sin soon entered into the beautiful creation. Adam and Eve sinned when they disobeyed God and ate fruit from the forbidden tree in the Garden of Eden. We have been reaping the consequences of that sin and of our own sin ever since. Those consequences include suffering, sorrow, pain and death.

One part of our bodies that has been fearfully and wonderfully made is our teeth. We should be thankful for healthy teeth that enable us to enjoy the many varieties of food God has graciously provided for our nourishment. We need

to take care of our teeth, because food particles not removed from them can cause decay. This requires a trip to the dentist, who will drill out the decay and replace it with a filling.

Recently, I told my dentist that, while chewing, I was feeling pain in my lower right wisdom tooth. He looked into my mouth and said he couldn't see any problem, but that he would take an X-ray. The X-ray revealed that there was decay underneath an old filling. I had two options: I could either have him try to repair the tooth or I could have the tooth extracted.

This reminded me of what we read in the Bible about sin. It isn't always apparent at first glance, but when we consider what God says about it, we learn that **“all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God”** (Romans 3:23). The Word of God reveals what is hidden in our hearts.

I chose to have my wisdom tooth extracted and had to make an appointment with another dentist to do that job. We all have





an appointment that must be kept, as a result of our sin. **“It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment”** (Hebrews 9:27). We are thankful that God has a remedy for sin that is available to anyone who takes God at His word and accepts the remedy He has provided. The next verse tells us, **“So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many”** (Hebrews

9:28). I hope that everyone reading this is trusting in the Saviour, who shed His blood to wash their sins away.

After the dentist did the extraction, I asked if I could have my tooth. The dental assistant gave it to me in a plastic bag. It was interesting to see the decay, now so clearly evident under the old filling. Now that the tooth was no longer alive, the decayed part blackened over the next few days, and I was very thankful it was no longer in my mouth. If you have received the Lord Jesus Christ as your Lord and Saviour, you have been cleansed from your sin, and you have been given a new life. Are you thankful? We trust you are thankful for this great salvation provided by God at such great cost. We trust that you can say, **“Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift”** (2 Corinthians 9:15). ◀

# LOVE

## Found a Way

*I was a sinner! No hope could I see  
Till, in His mercy so wondrous and free,  
Jesus looked down in compassion on me,  
And Love found the way to my heart!*

*Love found the way to my heart!  
Love found the way to my heart!  
Darkness was round me,  
For Satan had bound me,  
Yet Love found the way to my heart!*

*Darkness and sin had enveloped my soul;  
I was completely in Satan's control,  
But, bless the Lord, Christ in love made me whole—  
And Love found the way to my heart!*

*Never shall sin rule within me again;  
Jesus has cleansed every blemish and stain;  
King of all kings He forever shall reign,  
For Love found the way to my heart!*



## **ECHOES OF GRACE**

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*“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ,  
and thou shalt be saved” (Acts 16:31).*

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