



A
BLIND
DOG
FALLS
INTO

Echoes of Grace



a WELL

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A close-up, black and white photograph of a dog's face, showing its eyes and muzzle. The dog has a black coat with white grizzle around its muzzle.

A BLIND DOG FALLS INTO *a Well*

The medium-sized dog with a black coat and white grizzle around its muzzle had seen better days. Over the years cataracts had formed in his eyes, and he was now completely blind. His master had recently died and left him alone in his apartment. When no one came to claim the dog, the manager

of the apartment building shoved the dog into the back seat of the car and drove into the Bosnian countryside. It was late fall and getting cold. They drove by several farmhouses until they came to a big field that had been plowed over and was now just empty furrows of mud. The driver checked to see if anyone was watching, then stopped the car and pushed the old dog out of the back seat. Quickly the man drove off without looking back.

The blind dog wandered through the cold field looking for food or a friend. As the dog meandered through the field, he came to the edge of an empty well and stumbled in. The well was a shaft, 3 feet

wide and 25 feet deep. Alone and friendless, the dog was trapped in the bottom.

A Worse Trap

It's sad when anyone loses their sense of sight and becomes blind, but the spiritual blindness that is afflicting many people is far worse. In their spiritual blindness, they are not able to see the truth of a God who loves them and would send His Son to save them.

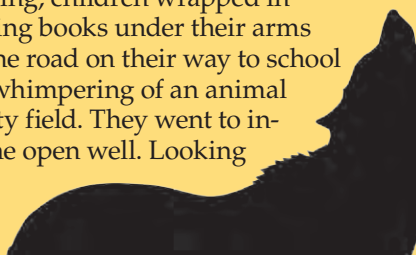


The blind dog never saw the hole in front of him and fell into the well. The spiritually blind never see the dangerous pitfalls in front of them either. The worst pitfall in front of them is that those who continue in their sins will

one day be cast headlong into the dark, deep pit of hell from which there will be no return. This fall will take them by surprise, because they didn't see it coming. But God says, **"Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved"** (Romans 10:13). The Lord Jesus is the great physician of souls, and He can restore spiritual sight to those who have lost it.

Help

The following morning, children wrapped in winter coats and holding books under their arms were walking down the road on their way to school when they heard the whimpering of an animal coming from the empty field. They went to investigate and found the open well. Looking



over its edge, they could barely make out the form of a black dog with white patches on its eyes. The hearts of the children went out to the poor animal. They knew they could never reach the dog to pull it out, but realizing the dog must be hungry, they dropped parts of their lunches into the well so it wouldn't starve. Then every day for the next three months they would drop table scraps to the trapped dog: bones with a little bit of meat attached or crusts of bread. Trapped in a dark, damp well, with scraps to eat, the dog was barely surviving.

Do you know that souls who remain in their sins are missing out on a lot of good too? God reserves His best blessings for those who love and obey Him. To those who love God, it's His delight to pour out a wonderful knowledge of Himself. Compared to this knowledge, fame, pleasures, and the riches of this world are nothing but meager scraps. If you want to know the fullness of life and joy, then you need to believe with all your heart on the Lord Jesus who said, **"I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly"** (John 10:10). Why go through life eating nothing but scraps when God promises a feast of good things to those who love Him? Our hearts were meant to live by continually feeding on God's goodness and love. **"I am the bread of life: he that cometh to Me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst"** (John 6:35).

Rescue

After three months, word finally reached an animal rescue organization, based in a distant city, about



the dog's trouble. They sent out two young men with extensive rock climbing experience to the site. One of the young men attached a strong rope to a climbing belt around his waist, and with the assistance of his partner and a few local farmers, he was slowly lowered into the shaft of the well. At last his feet made contact with the bottom of the well.

The rescue worker didn't stand at the top of the well and yell down, "Climb out in your own strength," or, "Use your legs and jump out of there." No, he came right down to where the dog was trapped in order to help. Thank God, we have a Saviour who came down from heaven to this earth to help us right where we were. If God had only spoken from heaven and promised forgiveness to all who believe, that would have been a great favor. But God did so much more. He became a man and, in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, came to earth. **"That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life"** (1 John 1:1). The one who spoke a word and the world leaped into existence walked as a man among men. And as a man, He went to the cross and died for sinners. His death has infinite value to cancel out our sins.

The message He wants delivered to every man, woman and child is not, "Keep My law and live," or, "Save yourselves by your own strength," but it

is, **“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved”** (Acts 16:31). God can offer free salvation to every soul because of what the Lord Jesus did on the cross. Are you a sinner ... lost, blind, foul, starving, undone, and fallen into a pit of sin and misery? Don't be afraid. Tidings of great joy are sent to you. Christ died in your place, and the moment you genuinely believe on Him, He will pardon your sin and give you a new life. Then He will be with you to help you all the way through this life, until you reach heaven.

Once the rescue worker reached the bottom of the well, he put a jacket on the dog. The jacket had a hook which the man attached to a rope. His partner then gently hoisted the dog to the top of the well. The dog seemed content to be in the company of people again. In the photographs taken at the time, he looked contented being held in the arms of one of the rescue workers. I wish I could tell you that the old blind dog found a family of humans to live with, but I can't. I just don't know. But I can tell you that God promises salvation and an everlasting home in heaven to all those who believe on the name of His Son. Will you bow your heart and mind to the Lord Jesus and receive Him as your Saviour?

The dog knew it was trapped, but many people don't know that they are. Find out why in *Modern Slavery*.



Modern Slavery



Experts have estimated the number of slaves in our present world at 27 million. This makes the current number of slaves in our world higher than at any previous time in history! One stronghold of slavery is the country of

Mauritania, located in the Sahara desert of Africa. It's estimated that nearly 20% of the population of this country, or nearly 600,000 men, women, and children, still live in slavery. Slavery has been the rule for many centuries in this country. Abject poverty and a frightening ignorance of the outside world are so rampant here that many who are slaves don't even realize it. They simply accept the lack of freedom for themselves and their families, because it is the way it has always been and the way it must always be.

Does it surprise you that people can live their entire lives as slaves and not even know it? It shouldn't. It goes on in the spiritual realm all the time. Many people in this world have sold themselves into slavery and don't even know it. Slavery is defined as a person held



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in servitude as the physical property of another. By rejecting the knowledge of God, many people have unwittingly put themselves under the power of God's enemy, Satan. Some he controls through desires and lusts; others he controls through the spiritual sin of pride. They don't need to make any kind of conscious

decision to be his slave. All they have to do is live at a distance from the God who loves them. Satan's goal is to keep as many souls as possible under his deadly influence. If they die never having come to repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, they will remain under his power forever.

A terrible poverty towards God and a frightful ignorance of God's truth make it possible for many people to be enslaved by sin. However, God doesn't want anyone to continue to live apart from Him until they perish. He wants them to come to Him by faith for salvation. **"This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners"** (1 Timothy 1:15).

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God doesn't want you to go through life carrying the heavy load of sin, which is, and always will be, slave labor. Just because you have had a sinful past doesn't mean you can't escape the slavery of sin in the future. Come to Jesus Christ, the Saviour of sinners, and find the wonderful freedom God wants you to have!

"If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed" (John 8:36).

Find out how to be free from the worst possible debt in *Two Ways to Deal With a Debt*.



Two Ways


to Deal With a Debt



There is a large personal debt that every person has incurred which must be paid in full. This debt is of far greater significance than any mortgage, credit card debt or student loan. How we handle this debt will determine our future welfare, so the utmost care should be exercised when dealing with it.

This personal debt is the debt of sin before God. Each one of us has incurred this debt when we have sinned and done things which were displeasing in His sight. The Bible says, **“All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God”** (Romans 3:23). There are two ways of dealing with this debt.

The first way to have it paid is to repent of our sins and to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ—the Saviour of sinners. On Calvary’s cross, the Lord Jesus suffered, died and paid the terrible debt of sin for all those who



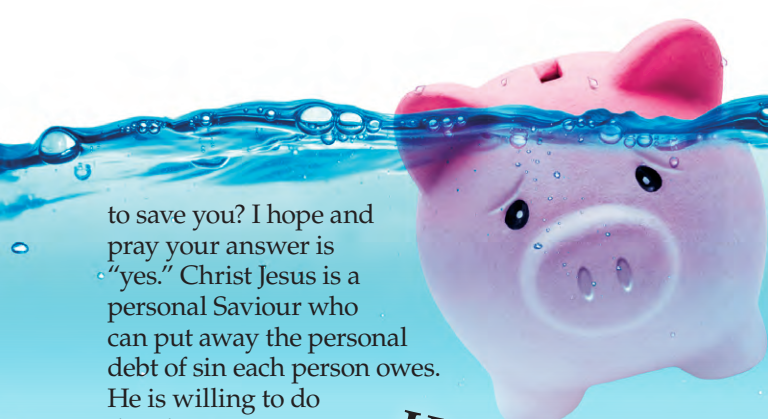
would believe on Him. **“Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures”** (1 Corinthians 15:3).

His death can put away sin because of who He is. He is both God and man in the same person. As man He could suffer death. His death has infinite value to cancel the debt of sin.

When the Lord Jesus was crucified, cruel men drove nails through His hands and feet into the beams of wood. Then the cross was pulled upright. Arms open wide, the Lord Jesus was lifted up between heaven and earth. But it wasn't only the nails that held Him to the cross. It was also His love to lost sinners. He knew if He didn't come and die in their place, there would be no way for them to escape the debt of everlasting punishment their sins deserve. God the Father's love is deep and measureless in giving His Son to die for sinners. The same love that brought the Lord Jesus to the cross is in the world today, calling sinners to return to God and believe on Him for salvation. Do you know how much you are loved? This much—Christ Himself died in love for you.

Your Personal Decision

You have a personal decision to make. Will you believe on the One who loved you and gave His life




to save you? I hope and pray your answer is “yes.” Christ Jesus is a personal Saviour who can put away the personal debt of sin each person owes.

He is willing to do this the moment we put our faith in Him. **“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved”** (Acts 16:31).

The second way to deal with this debt is as dark and dismal as the first way is full of light and love. Those who die in their sins, who have never come to Christ for forgiveness, will pay for their sins in the darkness of hell. The intense sufferings

He knew if He didn't come and die in their place, there would be no way for them to escape the debt of everlasting punishment their sins deserve.



of hell will never cease. **“If thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire: where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched”** (Mark 9:47-48).

If you are reluctant to believe in hell, please consider the following three truths. First, the Lord Jesus spoke more about hell than any other person in the Bible. The One who taught men to love their enemies and to turn the other cheek spoke plainly and with great force about the suffering of the wicked in hell. Second, consider that sometimes people suffer intensely over long periods of time in this life. If people suffer in this life, why should anyone think it impossible to suffer in eternity? And third, in a very real sense, it is not God who chooses that people go to hell. People themselves make that choice when, in the hardness of their hearts, they refuse God's offer of grace, love and salvation. Somebody once said, “Those hearts must be harder than iron and stone that will not be softened by Christ's love.” Won't you let your heart be softened by His love and come to the Saviour?

“Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved” (Acts 4:12). ◀

*Wishing,
Hoping,
Knowing*

A long time I wandered in darkness and sin,
And wondered if ever the light would shine in;
I heard Christian friends tell of rapture divine,
And wished, how I wished, that their Saviour were mine.

I heard the glad gospel of “good will to men”;
I read “whosoever” again and again;
I said to my soul, “Can that promise be thine?”
And then began hoping that Jesus were mine.

O h, mercy surprising, He saves even me!
“Thy portion forever,” He says, “will I be”;
On His word I’m resting — assurance divine —
I’m “hoping” no longer — I know He is mine!

ECHOES OF GRACE

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*“God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world;
but that the world through Him might be saved” (John 3:17).*

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