

An Act of COURAGE

Echoes of Grace

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An Act of Courage

It was late in 1944 and World War II was clearly nearing its fiery end. However, American soldiers were still being shipped overseas to fight in this terrible war. Roddie Edmonds, a young man from Knoxville, Tennessee, was one of them. He was just twenty-five years old at the time, but he had applied himself and quickly risen to the rank of master sergeant.

After arriving in Europe, he was immediately caught up in the Battle of the Bulge. This was to be Germany's last major offensive, and it caught the Allies completely by surprise. Being new and inexpe-

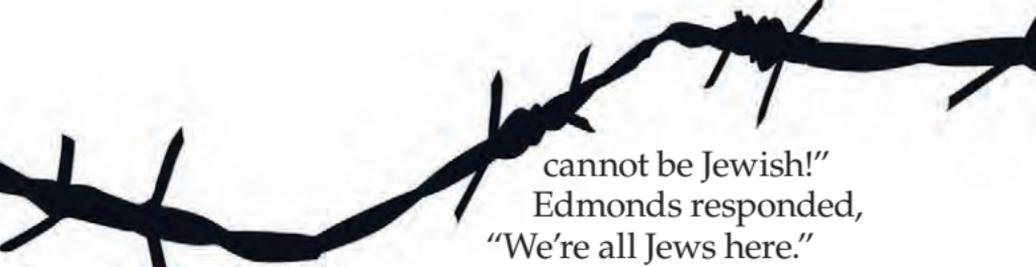


rienced soldiers, Roddie Edmonds and his men were quickly captured and shipped to a prisoner-of-war camp in the heart of Germany. It was there that a memorable act of courage took place.

There were about 1,275 American prisoners-of-war in their part of the camp, and since Roddie Edmonds was the highest ranking non-commissioned officer among the men, he became responsible for answering to the commander of the camp for them. On the very first day at the camp, the American prisoners were instructed to have all of the Jewish soldiers remain standing after roll call the next morning. Adolph Hitler, the leader of Germany, had a plan called the Final Solution. Energized by Satan, he intended to kill as many Jews as he could. He oversaw the murder of about 6 million Jews—how tragic for God's chosen people!

True Courage

When Roddie Edmonds heard the news, he determined that he was not going to allow the Jews to be singled out for death—instead, he instructed all of the men to remain standing after roll call. Sure enough, true to his word, after roll call the next morning he remained standing along with the 1,275 other American soldiers. The camp commander was very angry and demanded of Edmonds, “All of you



cannot be Jewish!"
Edmonds responded,
"We're all Jews here."

Again, the camp commander ordered, "I'm commanding you to have your Jewish men step forward."

Edmonds refused, saying that the Geneva Convention only allowed him to give the prisoners' names, ranks and serial numbers. By now, the camp commander was truly furious! He pulled out his gun and held it to Edmonds' forehead, demanding: "You will have your Jewish men step forward or I will shoot you on the spot."

With great courage Edmonds responded, "If you shoot, you will have to kill all of us, and you will have to stand trial for war crimes after we win this war."

He pulled out his gun and held it to Edmonds' forehead, demanding: "You will have your Jewish men step forward or I will shoot you on the spot."

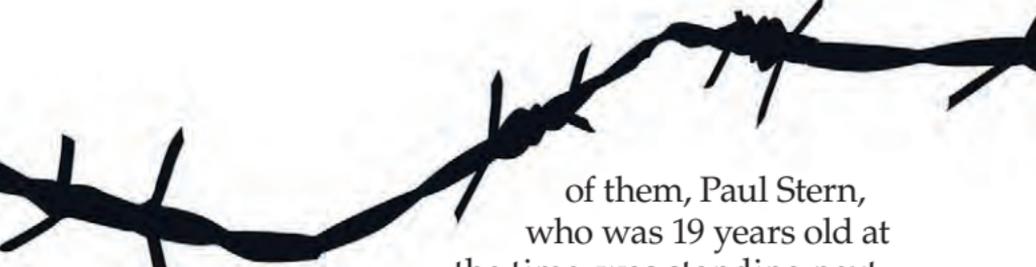
Though he was still furious, the commander put his gun in his holster and walked away. How relieved and happy those men were! How thankful the Jewish prisoners were that their lives had been spared because of the courage of one man! We can all admire the courage of Roddie Edmonds, and yet the Bible, God's Word, tells us of One who did far more for us than risk His life for us. Because we are sinners and unfit for God's presence, the Lord Jesus came down to this earth to die on Calvary's cross.



“When we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly” (Romans 5:6). Just as those Jewish soldiers were helpless and could not save themselves, so we were helpless and could not save ourselves or make ourselves fit for the presence of a holy God. God loved us so much that He devised a wonderful plan of salvation. **“God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us”** (Romans 5:8). When we repent of our sins, trusting in the work that was done on the cross, we can be sure of eternal salvation. **“Being now justified [being made right with God] by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him”** (Romans 5:9).

True Motive

Roddie Edmonds never told anyone, not even his family, about this incident. Over twenty years after his father’s death, his son Chris decided to do a Google search on his father to see what he could find. To his surprise, he came across an interview with a Mr. Tanner, who mentioned that he had been saved from likely death in a Nazi prisoner-of-war camp due to the efforts of Roddie Edmonds. When he was finally able to meet Mr. Tanner, he learned of his father’s heroic act of courage. Using his father’s war diary, he was able to contact two other fellow-soldiers who confirmed the story. One



of them, Paul Stern, who was 19 years old at the time, was standing next to Roddie Edmonds and heard and saw the whole exchange. “Although 70 years have passed,” Stern said, “I can still hear the words he said to the German camp commander.”

It was estimated that there were about 200 Jewish-American soldiers whose lives were saved that day. The Holocaust Museum in Israel, Yad Vashem, honored Roddie Edmonds as a “Righteous Among the Nations,” an award given to non-Jews who risked their lives to save Jews during the Holocaust. When asked why his father would risk his life in this way, his son replied that his father had given his life to Jesus Christ before he joined the service and that “he thought it was part of his responsibility, his duty, not only as a soldier of the U.S. Army to protect his men, but also as a Christian, a man of faith, to do the right thing for his fellow man.”

If you are a Christian, you should never stop thanking and praising the Lord Jesus for giving His life for you. Christians can say, “**We love Him, because He first loved us**” (1 John 4:19). Our Lord said, “**Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature**” (Mark 16:15). We have good news to share, so let us honor Him in whatever we do or say!

Find out more about a true Saviour in *Saviours of the Jews at Riga*. ◀

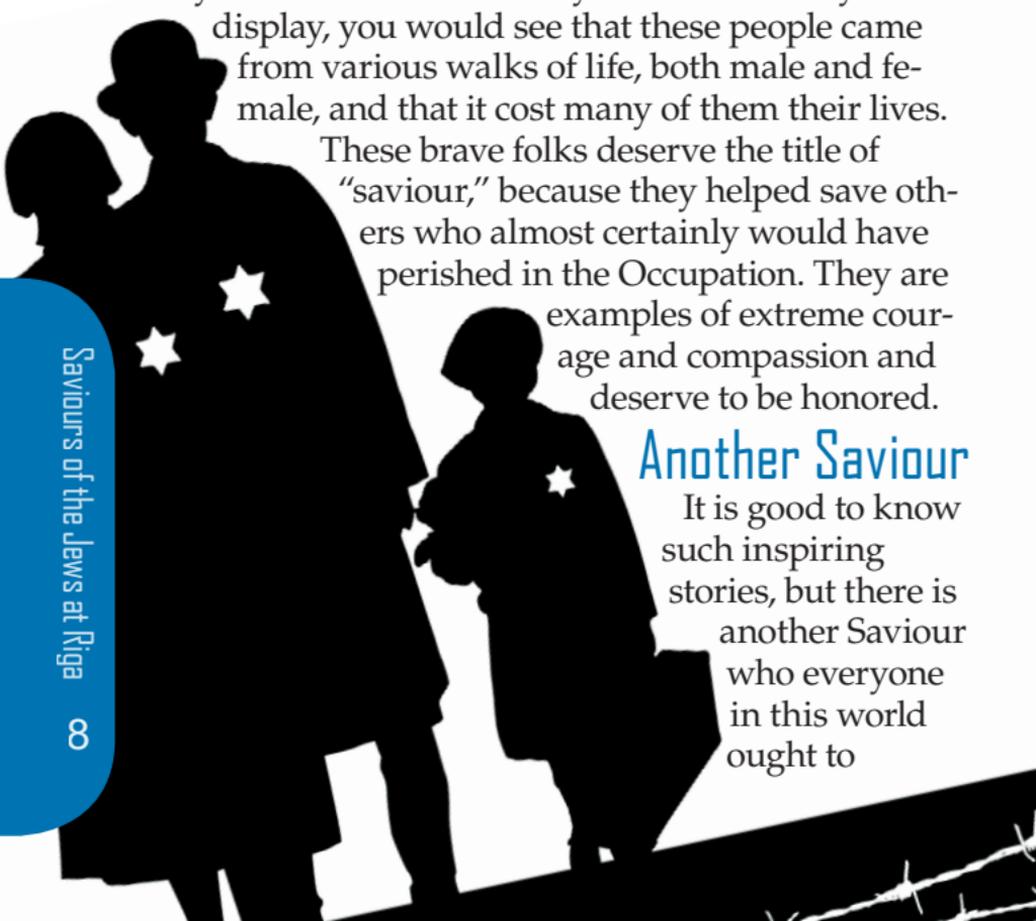
Saviours of the Jews at Riga

On the staircase wall as you enter into the Jewish Museum in Riga, Latvia, there is a large display entitled, "Saviours of the Jews at Riga." It is dedicated to a number of ordinary citizens who hid Jewish people in their homes to save them from the Nazis during the years of World War II. If you looked closely at this display, you would see that these people came from various walks of life, both male and female, and that it cost many of them their lives.

These brave folks deserve the title of "saviour," because they helped save others who almost certainly would have perished in the Occupation. They are examples of extreme courage and compassion and deserve to be honored.

Another Saviour

It is good to know such inspiring stories, but there is another Saviour who everyone in this world ought to



know. This Saviour left His wonderful home above and came to save those who were held by an enemy's hostile power. This hostile power has marked out men and women for eternal death.

This world is a place where sin and corruption cause tremendous turmoil. Because of sin, every person in this world needs the Saviour. **"All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God"** (Romans 3:23). A Saviour is needed, because men and women in their own strength cannot escape the hold that sin has on their lives.

To deliver sinners from the power of sin, the Lord Jesus let Himself be nailed to Calvary's cross. He died in the place of sinners, so that sinners might have a way to be forgiven and receive the gift of eternal life.

Here are three, all-important reasons why you should believe on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation:

First, the salvation He offers is an everlasting salvation. It will outlast this life and never end for all eternity. This is the kind of Saviour we need, because these souls of ours will never go out of existence. Those who turn to God for salvation will live forever in heaven, while those who never turn from their sin will end up in the horrors of hell. From the Bible we learn that hell is a place of intense suffering that will never end. It is a place where death never dies—a place to be avoided at all cost. If you would avoid hell, then come believing to Christ and make Him your Saviour. **"There is none**





other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved” (Acts 4:12).

Second, the Lord Jesus is able to save anyone who comes to Him. The heroes listed in the Latvian museum had limits as to what they could do. The Lord Jesus can do this because He is more than just a

... the Lord **Jesus is able to save anyone who comes to Him.**

man. He is both man and God in the same person. As man He could suffer death. As God, His death has an infinite power to

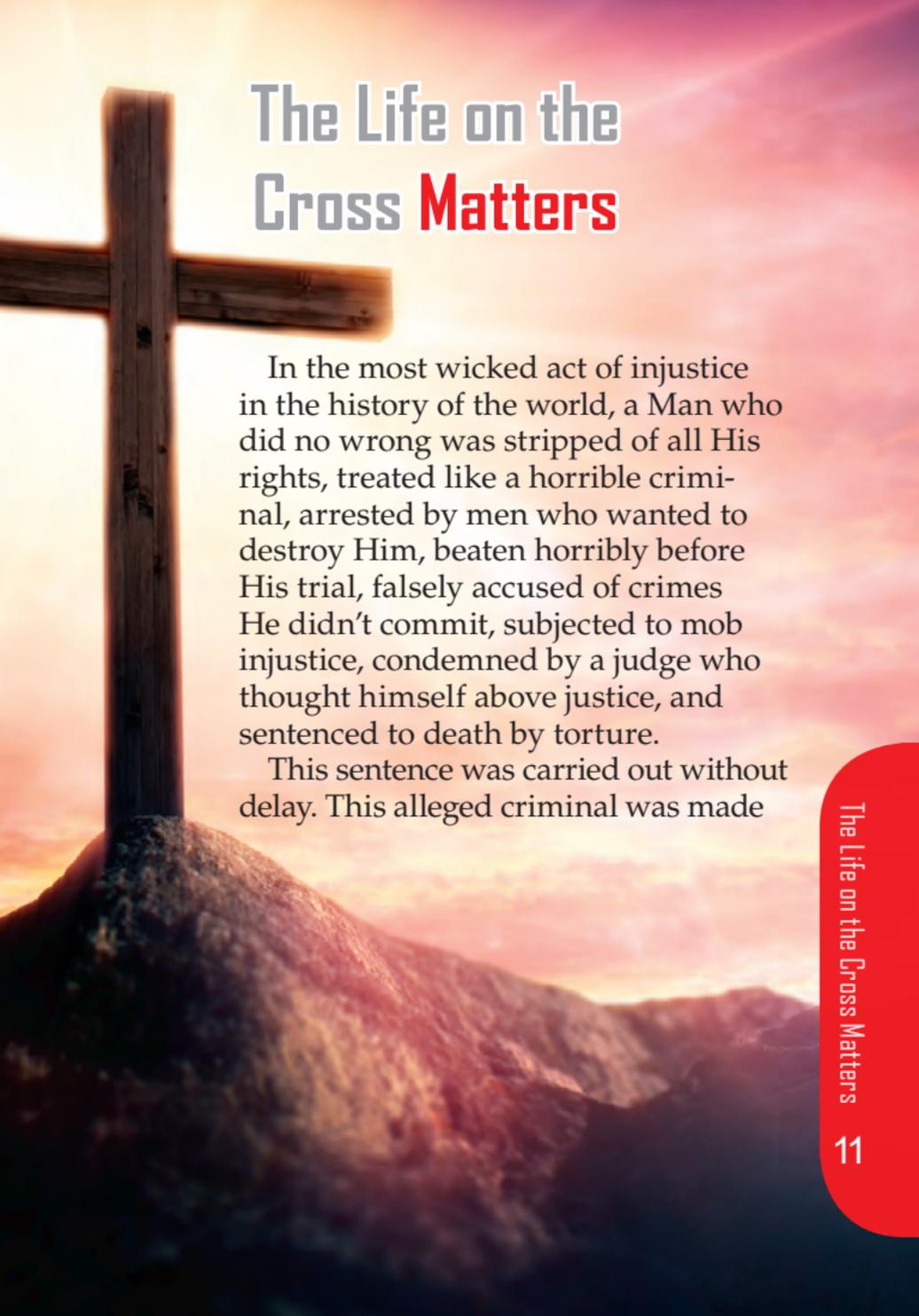
save. **“The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin” (1 John 1:7).**

Third, the Lord Jesus is the only One who can deliver us from our great enemy. The hostile enemy power that tries to lead people to eternal death is Satan. He is an angel—a spirit with immense power. He rebelled against God and is filled with hatred for God and God’s interests. He does all he can to keep as many as possible in the dark about spiritual truths. His goal is to have them miss out on God’s greatest blessing. The Lord Jesus is the only One who can deliver sinners from Satan’s power.

The men and women listed as the saviours of the Jews in Riga on the museum display rightly deserve to be honored. The Lord Jesus deserves not only honor, but the worship and love of every heart, for what He has done on the cross. Don’t spend another day in the darkness of sin. Come to the Lord Jesus and receive the everlasting salvation He offers today!

The Life on the Cross Matters will tell you much more about the only true Saviour.

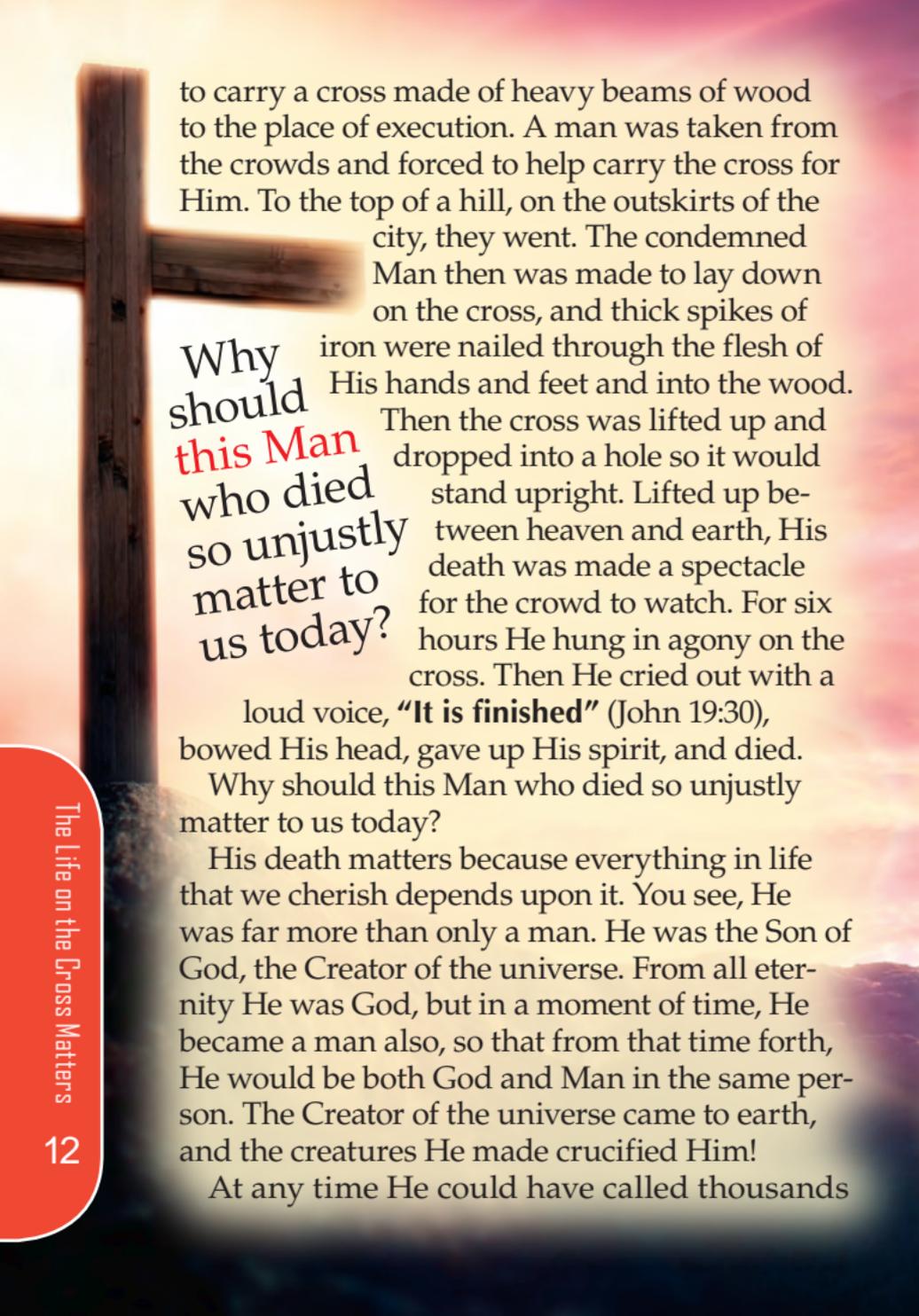


A wooden cross stands on a hill, set against a dramatic sunset sky with warm orange and pink tones. The background shows rolling hills and a valley.

The Life on the Cross Matters

In the most wicked act of injustice in the history of the world, a Man who did no wrong was stripped of all His rights, treated like a horrible criminal, arrested by men who wanted to destroy Him, beaten horribly before His trial, falsely accused of crimes He didn't commit, subjected to mob injustice, condemned by a judge who thought himself above justice, and sentenced to death by torture.

This sentence was carried out without delay. This alleged criminal was made

A wooden cross is positioned on the left side of the page, extending from the top to the bottom. The background is a soft, glowing sunset or sunrise sky with warm colors of orange, pink, and purple. The text is arranged in columns, with some words in red for emphasis.

to carry a cross made of heavy beams of wood to the place of execution. A man was taken from the crowds and forced to help carry the cross for Him. To the top of a hill, on the outskirts of the city, they went. The condemned Man then was made to lay down on the cross, and thick spikes of

iron were nailed through the flesh of His hands and feet and into the wood. Then the cross was lifted up and dropped into a hole so it would stand upright. Lifted up between heaven and earth, His death was made a spectacle for the crowd to watch. For six hours He hung in agony on the cross. Then He cried out with a

loud voice, **"It is finished"** (John 19:30), bowed His head, gave up His spirit, and died.

Why should this Man who died so unjustly matter to us today?

His death matters because everything in life that we cherish depends upon it. You see, He was far more than only a man. He was the Son of God, the Creator of the universe. From all eternity He was God, but in a moment of time, He became a man also, so that from that time forth, He would be both God and Man in the same person. The Creator of the universe came to earth, and the creatures He made crucified Him!

At any time He could have called thousands

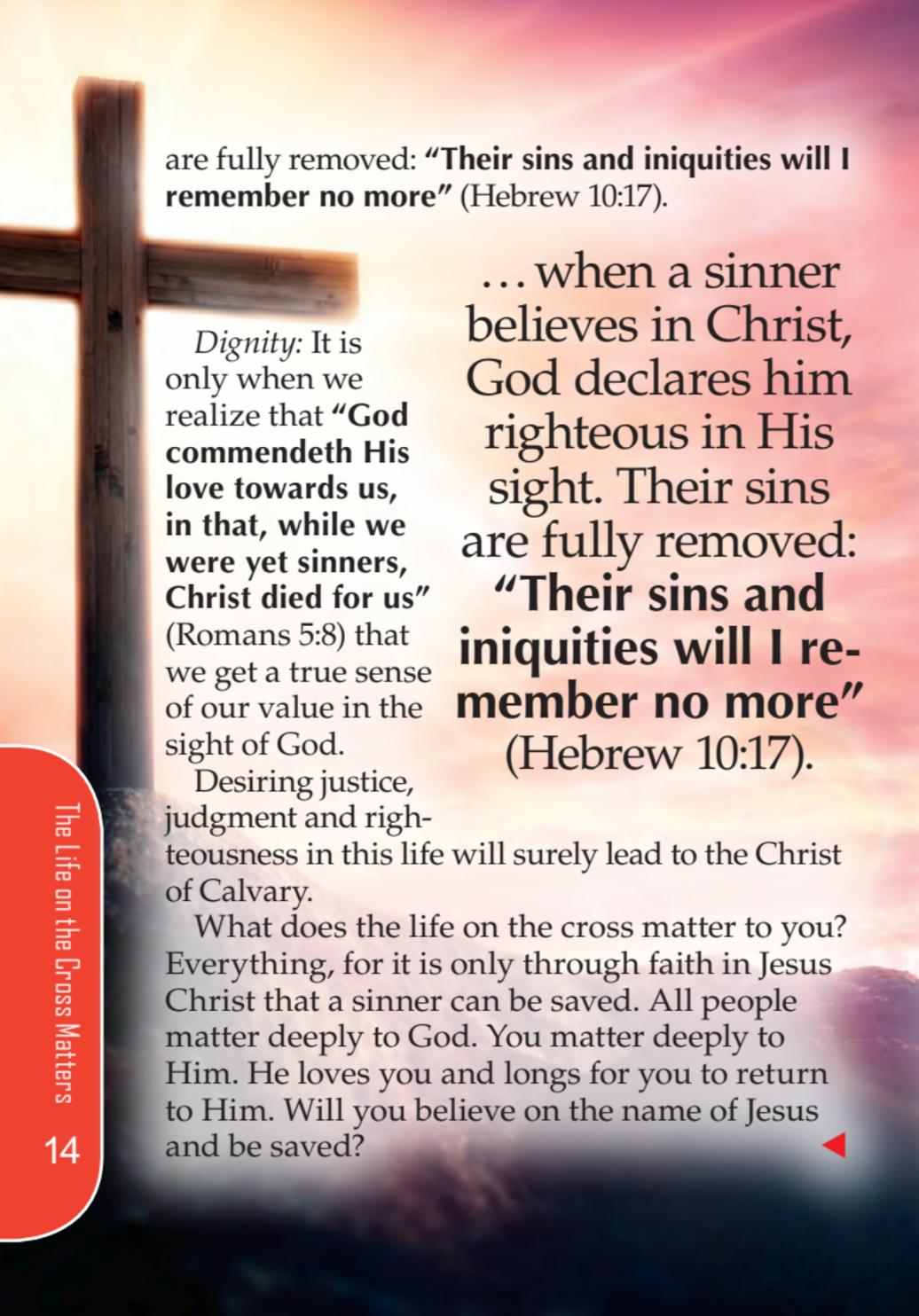
of angels to come and stop His crucifixion, but this He would not do. He knew He needed to die and shed His blood, so that sinners might have a way opened to them to find the forgiveness of sins and the gift of eternal life. Oh, the immense favor God conferred on mankind when Christ died for sins! **“The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord”** (Romans 6:23).

Justice, Righteousness and Dignity

If everything in life were weighed in an even balance, we would find that justice, righteousness and dignity are some of the personal qualities that would matter most to us.

Justice is the idea that all persons are treated fairly. God is deeply concerned that we treat others decently and with respect. He does so Himself. He made men and women and endowed them with special gifts. If they never use these gifts for Him, He will let them have their way, even if it means that when they die, they pass into a lost eternity. The justice of this world sometimes miscarries, but God's justice never miscarries. Sin is nothing to trifle with. God in His perfect justice will see that every person receives their proper due. To those who believe on Him, He will give the gift of eternal life. Those who reject Him and remain in their sins will receive eternal punishment. **“These shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal”** (Matthew 25:46).

Righteousness: When a sinner believes in Christ, God declares him righteous in His sight. Their sins



are fully removed: **“Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more”** (Hebrew 10:17).

Dignity: It is only when we realize that **“God commendeth His love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us”** (Romans 5:8) that we get a true sense of our value in the sight of God.

Desiring justice, judgment and righteousness in this life will surely lead to the Christ of Calvary.

What does the life on the cross matter to you? Everything, for it is only through faith in Jesus Christ that a sinner can be saved. All people matter deeply to God. You matter deeply to Him. He loves you and longs for you to return to Him. Will you believe on the name of Jesus and be saved? 

... when a sinner believes in Christ, God declares him righteous in His sight. Their sins are fully removed: **“Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more”** (Hebrew 10:17).

I HAVE A SAVIOUR

I have a Saviour; He's pleading in glory:
A dear, loving Saviour, though earth-friends be few;
And now He is watching in tenderness o'er me,
But oh, that my Saviour were your Saviour too!

Refrain: *With you He is pleading;
With you He is pleading;
With you He is pleading;
He's pleading with you.*

I have a Father: To me He has given
A hope for eternity, blessed and true;
And soon will He call me to meet Him in heaven—
But oh, that my Father were your Father too!

I have a peace: It is calm as a river—
A peace that the friends of this world never knew;
My Saviour alone is its Author and Giver,
And oh, could I know it was given to you!

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

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