

THE EVANGELISTS

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Issue 22 Winter 2017

Faking Death

Hot Water Gospel

10 Ways to Raise Labourers
in Your Church

DVD Released in August 2017



The Commission with Tim Knowing

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SOTC Aims:

Soldiers of the Cross, founded by Tim and Leah Knowing, is dedicated to evangelising the lost and seeing the church become the mighty, mature and fully-functioning army of God it is meant to be, in a war that has already been won through Christ's atoning death and resurrection.

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Soldiers of the Cross

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“For we are the sweet fragrance of Christ [which ascends] to God, [discernible both] among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing; to the latter one an aroma from death to death [a fatal, offensive odour], but to the other an aroma from life to life [a vital fragrance, living and fresh]. And who is adequate and sufficiently qualified for these things?” 2 Corinthians 2:15-16 AMP

Those who give themselves to the work of propagating the Gospel will always face many interesting challenges. Opposition to the Gospel is, and should be, expected. The above Bible passage makes it clear that there will be those who will be offended by the message we bring. Now I know that there have been people who have offended through their manner and not necessarily because of the message they bring. However, the true proclaimer of the Gospel will do so because of his genuine concern and love for those who are lost. Ephesians 2:1 says, they are *“dead in trespasses and sins”*. Our hearts go out to them for we remember that that was formerly our position as well.

Of late though, I have found it necessary to correct some of the misunderstandings that exist, even among believers, when it comes to witnessing for Christ. Take the following example. You may be sharing the Gospel with someone either verbally or by handing out Gospel literature. This person gets offended and lets you know. The seasoned witness will usually just brush this off. For the less experienced, it could be somewhat demoralising.

However, equally unhelpful is the response that we may sometimes get from within the church. Many think, that if you have a negative response, then obviously the person you were communicating to wasn't ready, so you shouldn't have spoken to them. The thought being that every Gospel encounter will have a positive response if it is of the Lord. A brief look at the scriptures though, shows us that if we are to be about the Lord's work then we have to be prepared for every situation.

How often we forget that we are involved in a spiritual struggle and the results that we see manifested confirm the truth of this. Proverbs 29:27 says, *“An unjust man is abominable to the righteous, And he who is upright in the way is abominable to the wicked.”* Consider

these words of Jesus also. In Matthew 10:22 He said, *“You will be hated by everyone on account of My name, but the one who perseveres to the end will be saved.”* Jesus also warned in John 15:18, *“If the world hates you, understand that it hated Me first.”* The Apostle John also tells us, *“So do not be surprised, brothers, if the world hates you.”* (1 John 3:13)

Many years ago I heard of a minister who, when questioned about how many responded to his Gospel work, replied, *“100% of the people made decisions, most said ‘No’”*.

When we examine the ministry of Jesus and the Apostles, we also see similar results. Many heard the message and because the Lord had opened their hearts (Acts 16:14), they repented of their sins and placed their faith in Christ. However, we also read of others who remained hardened in their hearts (John 12:40) to the Gospel and not only rejected it but in many cases persecuted those who brought the message.

Our Gospel efforts can only be done through the grace and power that God provides. We know that because He has called us and told us to *“Go into all the world..”* (Mark 16:15), He will be with us. It is my prayer that each and every one of us will receive a new refreshing from the Holy Spirit, so that like the early church, we will be bold in our witness for Christ (Acts 4:29-31). I pray that we would gain encouragement from the saints that have gone before us like we read about in Acts chapter 5, when Peter and John were flogged and ordered to not speak about Jesus. In verse 41-42 (Berean Study Bible version) it says, *“The apostles left the Sanhedrin, rejoicing that they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name. Every day, in the temple courts and from house to house, they did not stop teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Christ....”*

We pray that the Lord would encourage and equip you through the various articles in this issue of TEM. There is an ongoing battle to freely proclaim Christ in this nation of Australia, and much prayer is needed, so we also aim to keep our readers informed about ministries, such as Operation 513, who are on the front-line of the battle.

Please also remember we welcome correspondence from our readers that may encourage others in fulfilling the Great Commission.

Brisbane ministry's court date set



The team from the Brisbane-based Evangelism ministry, Operation 513, now have a date set for when their appeal to the Supreme Court (Court of Appeal) will be heard, regarding the \$10,000+ worth of fines received from the Brisbane City Council for sharing the Gospel in Queen Street Mall. It is scheduled to be heard on Tuesday, 29 August 2017 before three Supreme Court justices.

For those who not aware of the background: For each of the outreaches that OP513 had, they made sure they had the proper permissions under Queensland's Peaceful Assembly Act 1992.

The ministry have said, "The council did not like that we were using a state law for permission to have our outreaches instead of their local law. For they wanted to be able to put such severe restrictions on us, in essence to not be able to share the Christian message at all in the area." However, as they said "we knew that state law overrides local law in any inconsistency."

So the Council began fining them for things like handing out a gospel tract, and for starting a conversation with someone. The matter initially went before a Magistrate in September last year who ruled against them. But when they appealed to the District Court in January almost all the points that the Magistrate had ruled against them on were overturned, but he still ended up siding with the Council on only one point. OP513 said, "We are now appealing to the state's highest court, as we believe the law is on our side."

Please be praying for this matter, so that Operation 513, as well as others, will continue to have the freedom of sharing the Gospel in public. It also has major implications of freedom of speech in general.



WE HAVE MOVED!

Tim and Leah Knowling, the founders of this magazine and the ministry that produces it, Soldiers of the Cross, have moved.

Earlier last year, Tim and Leah felt the Lord calling them to serve their spiritual father, Bishop Harry Westcott, at his ministry in Alectown, NSW. However, God's timing being always perfect, is not usually the same as ours. So, wanting it to be the Lord's will and work, for His Glory, they waited on the Lord to open the doors. This happened in October last year, when the Lord spoke to Bishop Harry as well. However, with commitments already in South Australia, the big move didn't happen till the end of January.

Now whilst Tim and Leah and their three children have moved interstate, SOTC will remain based in Queensland with other members of the ministry. Therefore, the postal address and registered office remain unchanged.

So what does this mean for SOTC and The Evangelists Magazine? Essentially nothing. Except for the fact that this



issue is late (for which we apologise), TEM will continue to be produced, same as usual. As for Soldiers of the Cross ministry, what it does do, is expand our area of witnessing influence, with some exciting things in the pipeline.

As our ANZAC Day report on page 13 testifies, even though Tim and Leah weren't there, the outreach in Rockhampton was a wonderful success, whilst they were also able to have a great outreach in Parkes as well. And isn't that the point of the five-fold ministry, to "equip the saints for the work of the ministry" (Ephesians 4:12).

“You must have, more or less, a distinct sense of the dreadful wrath of God and of the terrors of the judgment to come, or you will lack energy in your work and so lack one of the essentials of success.”
CHARLES SPURGEON

Christian pollster George Barna may have put his finger on the problem in many of our churches when it comes to witnessing. He said, “It occurred to me that in our work with secular organizations, the leader shapes the heart and passion of the corporate entity. In our work with non-profit organizations, we have found the same principle to be operative. If this is true, and most churches seem to lack the fervour and focus for evangelism, is it reasonable to conclude that it may be because of the lack of zeal most pastors have for identifying, befriending, loving and evangelizing non-Christian people?”

I pray that this is not the case with you or your church. Here’s how to avoid becoming complacent in your Christian walk and how to faithfully, fearlessly share the Gospel with the lost.

1) Pray the Prayer.

In Luke 10:2 Jesus said, *“The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few: pray therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest.”* It has been 2,000 years since Jesus told His disciples to seek God in prayer for labourers, and it seems that we still have the same dilemma. In his book *The Coming Revival*, Bill Bright reports that “only two percent of believers in America regularly share their faith in Christ with others” (NewLife Publications, p. 65).

One would therefore suspect that Luke 10:2 is probably the most neglected exhortation to prayer in the Bible. What

church is going to feel comfortable praying for labourers if it is not labouring in the harvest fields itself? It will instead pray for a sovereign revival, for a “move of God,” for a manifestation of His power. . . anything but for labourers. In doing so they hand the job of evangelism back to heaven. In essence they are saying, “We know you have commanded us to preach the Gospel

to God about men, than to talk to men about God.” Luke 10:2 should be boldly stamped on the forefront of every praying mind, and on the front of every Christ-centred pulpit. If we love Him we will keep His commandments, and this commandment is to pray for labourers.

2) Use the Law.

Experience has shown that those who know what they have been saved from know what they have been saved for. The Law reveals that sin is exceedingly sinful (Romans 7:13), and therefore it makes grace abound in the hearts of those who come to Christ (Romans 5:20). If this is your experience (you find that gratitude for God’s mercy continually feeds your zeal to do His will), then seek to bring others

through the same door. Christians must be taught that the Law prepares the way for the Gospel to do its work (Galatians 3:24). It is the solid soil from which Calvary’s cross arises. This is the foundation for biblical evangelism.

3) Stir the Lukewarm.

Gently confront those who don’t share their faith. They need to be reminded of the sobering words of Jesus in Matthew 7:21–23 and Revelation 3:16. Those verses should cause to tremble all who name the name of Christ yet lack a concern for the unsaved. Some who sit within the church are false converts and need to be awakened by the Law; others are Christians who have not been taught the biblical priority of the church —that they have a moral responsibility to reach out to the

to every creature; but we will stay here and pray. Your Word says, *‘How will they hear without a preacher?’* but we will stay here and pray. You have told us that the Gospel is the power of God to salvation, but we will stay here and pray; because it sure is easier to talk



lost. There are masses within the Body of Christ who have never once identified with Paul's "Woe is to me if I preach not the Gospel," and as long as they remain in that state we will lack labourers.

4) Use Tracts.

God has saved multitudes through tracts, so encourage Christians to always carry some with them. Let them know that literature can be used as a conversation opener ("Did you get one of these?"), a conversation closer ("Here's something further for you to read"), and can also be left in places without the daunting thought of human confrontation. Many Christians, like four-days-dead Lazarus, have nothing to do with the outside world. They have been scared to death by the very thought of evangelism. They sit paralysed on the pew, wrapped in the shroud of the fear of man. Therefore, groan in prayer for them, then lift up your voice and call the dead church to come out of the grave. There is great joy among labourers when a cold and lifeless corpse comes out of the tomb of inactivity, to be a living witness of Him who is the resurrection and the life.

5) Preach the Fear of God.

In Romans 3:10–18, the apostle Paul gives a stinging indictment of the moral state of humanity. He says that we are corrupt, ignorant, rebellious, and violent. Then he puts his finger on the cause of such a sinful state. He says, "There is no fear of God before their eyes," and immediately swings the subject to God's Law—the cure to the moral dilemma.

Psalm 111:10 informs us, "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do his commandments." Therefore preach that which is the beginning of wisdom. Teach the true character of our Creator using the Law to show His perfect righteousness.

A failure to use the Law lawfully has left few in the world (or even in the church) ever hearing that sinners are enemies of God in their minds through wicked works (Colossians 1:21). They are by nature children of wrath (Ephesians 2:3). His wrath abides on them (John 3:36). Our God is a consuming fire, and it is a fearful thing to fall into His holy hands. Eyes should be plucked out, and hands severed at the thought of sinning against Him. We should fear Him who has power to cast the body and soul into hell. It is when we see Him in truth that we will say with Paul, "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men" (2 Corinthians 5:11). Those who don't persuade men don't know the terror of the Lord, so let His terror be known among your brethren.

Notice that Psalm 111:10 also links the "commandments" with the fear of the Lord. After speaking of the fear of the Lord the psalmist tells us "a good understanding have all they that do his commandments." It is the Commandments that make sinners and saints tremble. The Law puts the fear of God in their hearts. Sinners tremble when they have an understanding that the wrath of the Law calls for their blood (Romans 4:15).

Saints tremble at the foot of a bloodied cross, because it was the Law that called for their blood (1 Peter 1:17–19) but instead shed the precious blood of the Saviour. Always remember that it is the fear of the Lord that makes men depart from sin (Proverbs 16:6), both before and after the cross. The fear of the Lord doesn't disappear when we come to know His love. It remains and continues to do its most necessary work: "The fear of the LORD tends to life: and he that has it shall abide satisfied; he shall not be visited with evil" (Proverbs 19:23). Memorize that verse—and live by it.

Scripture likens sin to leprosy, a disease characterized by spots on the flesh. When we reach out to sinners we are exhorted

to "hate even the garment spotted by the flesh" (Jude 23), and to keep ourselves "unspotted from the world" (James 1:27). A symptom of leprosy is that the victim loses any sense of pain. Mild pain prompts us to move around when we sit or lie down for too long in one position. This allows blood to flow freely throughout our body, and our blood is the life of our flesh. If there is no pain, there is no movement, and the flesh therefore rots. Sin dulls the pains of an accusing conscience, so that there is no movement away from it (repentance). It causes the soul to rot ("fleshly lusts, which war against the soul," 1 Peter 2:11). Jesus is coming for a spotless Church—for a "glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle"—so we need to therefore continually wash ourselves in the water of the Word, scrub the walls of our minds, and burn anything that may be contaminated by the defilement of this evil world. The fear of the Lord will give us motivation to do so. See Psalm 37:30,31.

6) Preach Future Punishment.

It's not enough to preach the Ten Commandments, or even to open up the spiritual nature of the Law. We must couple that with the truths of Judgment Day and of the horrifying reality of hell. Without the threat of punishment, no one will flee from the wrath to come. The very thought of the existence of hell will be scorned by the world if the Law and the consequences of its transgression are not preached. Great damage has been done for the cause of the Gospel by "hell-fire" preaching (the preaching of hell without the "reasoning" of the Law). Great damage has also been done by swinging the pendulum the other way, with many in the church (out of a fear of man) adopting worthless clichés such as a "Christless eternity" and "eternal separation from God." These soften the thought of God's wrath, and at the same time defuse our evangelism of a sense urgency.

10 Ways to Raise Labourers in Your Church

By Ray Comfort

The true and faithful witness will make sure the evangelistic pendulum remains where it should.

7) Break Out of the Comfort Zone.

Many Christians live in monasteries without walls. They fellowship in the holy huddle and cosy comfort of the Saved. Excommunicate yourself from the monastery. Show by example that we are called to be in, but not of the world: *"That you may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom you shine as lights in the world"* (Philippians 2:15). We should be in the midst, among, in the world. We should be accused (like Jesus) of being a friend of sinners, and our mingling with them should be motivated solely by a deep concern for their eternal welfare. Have you ever heard a clap of thunder that was so loud it seemed to make the heavens tremble? Did its noise terrify you for a moment? It will be but a tiny whisper compared to the "great noise" and "flaming fire" that will be revealed when Almighty God rips apart the sky at the Second Coming. In that *"great and terrible Day of the Lord,"* the elements *"shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up"* (2 Peter 3:10).

Is there any fear when we read these words: *"Whose voice then shook the earth: but now he has promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven"* (Hebrews

12:26)? Where is our horror at the fate of the lost? Where is our concern for them? We must be the most hard-hearted generation since Adam. We have so much light and yet we keep it to ourselves. We say that we are rich, and yet compared to the church of the Book of Acts, we are poor, blind, wretched, miserable, and naked. We have become so introverted, we have forgotten the meaning of the word "compassion." Once the walls of the monastery mindset have been broken down, prohibit any "vows of silence." Monks in monasteries and vows of silence are for the religious, not for the Christian. We have something to shout from the housetops. We are called to lift up our voices like a trumpet, not silence them, and we will not do that unless we go into the world and reach out in our personal spheres of influence.

8) Feed on the Word.

If we want to see labourers raised up and witness the miracle of a worldwide revival, we would be wise to fulfil the requirements of Psalm 1. If we meditate on the Law of God both day and night (and like Job we say, *"I have esteemed the words of His mouth more than my necessary food"*), then we will be as a tree planted by rivers of water. We will bring forth fruit in season. Our leaf will not wither. . . and *"whatever"* we do will then *"prosper."* That includes our evangelistic efforts.

9) Meditate on the Destiny of the Ungodly.

Meditate on and remind Christians of the fate of the ungodly. Pray for a tender heart that will weigh heavy if we meet an unsaved person, or even walk past them without reaching out to them either verbally or with a tract. May we weep over Jerusalem and may our tender hearts shame the hard hearts within the church. It seems that most of us can weep at every human tragedy, except the ultimate tragedy of hell. Our dry eyes reveal a hard heart. We either don't believe the horror that *"whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire"* (Revelation 20:15) or we don't care. Both are sin.

10) Redeem the Time.

Teach folks to make the best use of every moment. This life is like a burning desert, and time is like water cupped in our hands. An ignorant man will let its precious drops fall through his fingers, not realizing that it is his very life. We must treat every valuable minute as though it was our last drop of time, because one day it will be. Remind yourself of that fact at the beginning of every day. Spurgeon said that men have been taught to live by remembering that they have to die. So use your time very wisely, and the wisest thing you can do with that most precious of commodities is to seek and save that which is lost.

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THE CASE FOR CHRIST, based on Lee Strobel's best-selling book about his own journey as an award-winning investigative journalist and resolute atheist who sets out to disprove Christianity, debuted on the big screen earlier this year.

"The book, *The Case for Christ*, lays out the overwhelming foundation of evidence from which personal faith can rise," Strobel said. "The film gives the dramatic story behind the story of a man with personal animosity for Christianity who used journalistic and legal techniques to evaluate its claims. *THE CASE FOR CHRIST* takes audiences on an exciting journey from skepticism to belief."

The film draws on the true story of Lee and Leslie Strobel, whose marriage struggled mightily as her growing faith collided with his determined atheism. The dramatic retelling of their journey offers heart and a human touch on the in-depth research Lee Strobel conducted. *THE CASE FOR CHRIST* is a moving story that will inspire everyone who sees it: believers, those who are searching for answers, and even those who are where Lee Strobel once was.

From Pure Flix and Triple Horse Studios, *THE CASE FOR CHRIST* stars Mike Vogel (*THE HELP*), Erika Christensen (*Parenthood*), Academy Award® winner Faye Dunaway (*BONNIE AND CLYDE*, *CHINATOWN*), Academy Award® nominee Robert Forster (*JACKIE BROWN*), L. Scott Caldwell (*Lost*) and Frankie Faison (*The Wire*).

In 1980, after he won prestigious awards for investigative journalism, Strobel (Vogel) was promoted to legal affairs editor for the *Chicago Tribune*. When his wife, Leslie (Christensen) became a Christian, Lee utilized his journalistic and legal training to disprove the claims of Christianity. Working as an investigative reporter would, Strobel interviewed leading scholars on Evangelicalism and Christianity, offering them an opportunity to defend their views. Contrary to his intent, Strobel's investigative efforts convinced him of Christianity's reliability. The book became a worldwide best-seller and launched Strobel in a new direction – defending Christianity himself.

THE CASE FOR CHRIST is an ideal movie for anyone who has ever pondered the existence of God ... and what role He could play in their lives. The DVD is due to be released in early August.



THE CASE FOR CHRIST

Tim Chaffey, AiG–US, examines a couple of views that admit Jesus was crucified but claim that He somehow managed to survive for a short time after being taken off the Cross.

In addition to studying the importance of the Resurrection of Jesus, we have looked at the “infallible proofs” and other evidences for this event. We have also critiqued many of the skeptical and critical attempts to explain away the historical evidence recorded in the New Testament. Each of these alternative hypotheses can account for portions of the evidence, but they do not come close to explaining all the facts. Unbelievers have posited that Jesus did not exist or was not even crucified, that the disciples were just seeing things, that someone moved the body, or that His body was buried in a family tomb. This article will examine a couple of views that admit Jesus was crucified but claim that He somehow managed to survive for a short time after being taken off the Cross.

The Swoon Theory

Proposed by Heinrich E.G. Paulus in *The Life of Jesus* (1828), the swoon theory states that Jesus was not actually dead when He was removed from the Cross. Instead, He had fallen into a coma-like state (a swoon) on the Cross and was then buried in a tomb in that condition. He later revived, rolled away the tomb’s stone from the inside, evaded the Roman guards, and escaped. He then appeared to His disciples proclaiming He had conquered death. But rather than making a full recovery, Jesus died soon thereafter due to His numerous injuries.

In his popular book, *The Passover Plot* (1969), radical New Testament

scholar Hugh J. Schonfield attempted to resurrect the swoon theory with some modifications.¹ He proposed that Jesus set out to fulfill the Old Testament’s messianic prophecies. According to Schonfield’s version of the swoon theory, Jesus enlisted the aid of men like Joseph of Arimathea and Lazarus of Bethany to help Him accomplish an elaborate hoax. Joseph arranged for an unidentified person to give Jesus a drink on the Cross that would cause Him to lose consciousness and appear to be dead. However, no one involved in the scheme anticipated the spear wound, which gravely injured Jesus. He was removed from the tomb the next day, briefly regaining consciousness before dying and being reburied elsewhere.

Did Jesus Fake His Death?

Neither the swoon theory nor its stepchild, the Passover plot, can account for the evidence, although these views cleverly attempt to bypass Christ’s death by crucifixion, claiming that He merely deceived others into thinking He had died. So these views rely upon Jesus being a very clever deceiver and a fraud. This is certainly a different view of Jesus than most scholars hold—even many ardent skeptics admit that Jesus was highly moral.

These two views cannot account for three of the five key evidences: the appearances to the disciples and the conversions of James and Paul based on their beliefs they had seen the risen Lord. Both the swoon theory and the “Passover Plot” require that Jesus not only somehow survived the Crucifixion somehow, but He also must have recovered from the brutal torture leading up to the Crucifixion and from the Crucifixion itself.

Ingenious conspiracy theories often convince those who are ignorant of history, particularly of the details of flogging and crucifixion. But there are good reasons why no one in the ancient world proposed that Jesus survived the Crucifixion and why even the “historical Jesus” scholars acknowledge that Jesus died on the Cross. Simply put, the Romans were experts at executing people, and to think that someone could survive the horrors Jesus endured displays either the critics’ willful ignorance or their desperate attempt to deny the obvious.

Roman Soldiers and Death

A major problem with the swoon theory is that it implies that Roman soldiers were too incompetent to determine whether or not Jesus was actually dead. However, the soldiers at the Cross would readily recognize the signs of death. After all, that was their job, they performed numerous crucifixions (which is not just any commonplace form of execution), and the Romans were lethally efficient.

Most Western people live in “sanitized” cultures where death is rarely witnessed. Even in the cases when we are in the presence of an individual when they die, the coroner soon arrives and takes the body. The next time we see the body, it has been carefully treated to make it presentable at a memorial service. So the notion that a person could fake death is perhaps somewhat believable in our culture. However, Roman soldiers would have been more than qualified to determine whether or not Jesus was dead. Yet proponents of the swoon theory must believe that the Roman centurion and other soldiers at the Cross were wrong in their

Faking Death

By Tim Chaffey

pronouncement that Jesus was dead (Mark 15:44–45; John 19:33).

To speed death along, crucifixion victims would sometimes have their legs broken with an iron club in an act known as *crucifragium*.² On the day Jesus was crucified, the Jews requested this procedure so that the bodies would not remain on the crosses during the Sabbath (John 19:31). The soldiers broke the legs of the two thieves crucified along with Jesus, “but when they came to Jesus and saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs” (John 19:33). Instead, one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear. This important action will be discussed below.

Brutality of Crucifixion

By the time Jesus was nailed to the Cross, He would have been in an extremely poor condition and would have been unlikely to recover even if He had received a stay of execution. Let’s briefly survey the physical torment Jesus endured in His final hours.

The Lord’s suffering began with an intense “*agony*” while He prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane. His sweat fell “*like great drops of blood*” (Luke 22:44). This rare condition is known as *hematidrosis* or *hematohidrosis* and is caused by the rupture of tiny capillaries that feed the sweat glands, and is brought on by conditions of extreme physical or emotional stress.³

Next, Jesus was betrayed by Judas (Matthew 26:49), arrested and bound (John 18:12), and led to several illegal trials (Matthew 26:57).⁴ In addition to

being mocked, spat upon, and falsely accused during these overnight trials, Jesus was also brutalized as He was blindfolded, beaten, and struck in the face (Matthew 26:67–68; Mark 14:65; Luke 22:63–64).

Despite the fact that Pilate declared Jesus to be innocent multiple times (John 18:38; 19:4, 6), He was still condemned to some of the harshest torture imaginable. Pilate ordered Jesus to be scourged.⁵ This ruthless form of whipping often killed its victims. Jesus would have been bound to a post

while soldiers, called *lictors*, would use short whips (*flagrums*) made of several braided leather thongs with sharp pieces of metal, bones, or rocks tied into them to lash Him. In their excellent treatment of the subject, Drs. Thompson and Harrub describe the gruesome results of flogging.

The common method of Jewish scourging was via the use of three thongs of leather, the offender receiving thirteen stripes on the bare breast and thirteen across each shoul-



der (which explains the 40 stripes less one administered to Paul in 2 Corinthians 11:24). However, there was no such limit on the number of blows the Romans could deliver during a scourging, thus Christ's flogging at their hands would have been much worse. Christ would have received repeated blows to His chest, back, buttocks, and legs by two soldiers (known as lictors), the severity of which depended mainly on the mood of the lictors at the time. Initial anterior blows undoubtedly would have opened the skin and underlying subcutaneous tissue of His chest (Davis, 1965, 185). Subsequent blows would have tattered the underlying pectoralis major and pectoralis minor muscles, as well as the medial aspects of the serratus anterior muscle (Netter, 1994, 174). Once these layers were ravaged, repetitive blows could fracture intercostal ribs [sic] and shred the three layers of intercostal [sic] muscles, causing superficial and cutaneous vessels of the chest to be lacerated. However we know that Christ did not suffer any broken bones because He was crucified in such a manner that "a bone of him shall not be broken" (John 19:36), as was foretold by earlier prophecies (cf. Exodus 12:46; Numbers 9:12; Psalm 34:20). Therefore, at best, the exposed superior epigastric artery and vein may have been compromised, while all other major anterior vessels would have been protected behind the ribs themselves (Netter, 175).⁶

Following the scourging, which often killed an individual, Jesus was further tormented. The

Roman soldiers made a crown of thorns for His head. The thorns are traditionally thought to have come from the Zizyphus spina christi tree, but they could have also been from the date palm, both of which have thorns greater than an inch long.⁷ This "crown" was not gently placed on Him. Instead the soldiers beat Him over the head with a staff, undoubtedly driving thorns into His scalp (Matthew 27:29–39, NET).⁸

Next, Jesus was led away to be crucified. Although popularly depicted as carrying both beams of the Cross, Jesus probably had to carry just the crossbeam, known as the patibulum, to "the Place of a Skull, which is called in Hebrew, Golgotha" (John 19:17).⁹ Battered and exhausted, Jesus could not carry it the entire distance, so the soldiers forced Simon of Cyrene to bear the beam for Him (Mark 15:21).

Upon arriving at Golgotha, Jesus refused the wine mixed with gall offered to Him, which would have helped deaden some of the pain. He was then nailed to the Cross. This would involve driving spikes through His wrists or hands and one long spike through both feet.¹⁰ While on the Cross, Jesus would endure unimaginable torture as He struggled to breathe for the next six hours.¹¹

Crucifixion was designed to be an extremely humiliating and painful form of execution.¹² This method was so agonizing that the word "excruciating" ("out of crucifying")¹³ was coined to describe intense torment. Besides the severe injuries racking His body, Jesus also endured the shame of being wrongfully accused, as He was completely innocent of all charges.

Likely worse than everything else, the perfectly holy Son of God

suffered the unfathomable mental and spiritual anguish of bearing the wrath of God for the sins of the world upon the Cross (Isaiah 53:4–6; John 1:29; 2 Corinthians 5:21).

“
*...to think
 that someone
 could survive the
 horrors Jesus
 endured displays
 the critics' willful
 ignorance.*”

The Spear in the Side

After Jesus breathed His last, a soldier "pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out" (John 19:34). This unexpected detail in John's account destroys any possibility of Jesus faking His own death. Medical examiner Dr. Alexander Metherell explained why "blood and water came out":

Even before He died ... the hypovolemic shock would have caused a sustained rapid heart rate that would have contributed to heart failure, resulting in the collection of fluid in the membrane around the heart, called a pericardial effusion, as well as around the lungs, which is called a pleural effusion. The spear apparently went through the right lung and into the heart, so when the spear was pulled out, some fluid—the pericardial effusion and the pleural effusion—came out. This would have the appearance of a clear fluid, like water, followed by a large volume of blood, as the eyewitness John described in his gospel. John probably had no idea why he saw both blood and a clear fluid come out—certainly that's not what an untrained person like him would have anticipated. Yet John's description is consistent with what modern medicine would expect to have happened.¹⁴



John apparently recognized the strangeness of his report. Throughout his recounting of Christ's arrest, trials, and execution, John delivered detail after detail, explaining what Jesus had gone through. Then immediately after mentioning the "blood and water," John stopped his narration of events to stress to his readers that he really saw blood and water flow from Christ's side. He wrote, "And he who has seen has testified, and his testimony is true; and he knows that he is telling the truth, so that you may believe" (John 19:35). It's almost as though John was telling his readers, "I know this is really strange, but I'm not lying, I really saw blood and water flow." And while perhaps unbeknownst to John, this brief verse provides modern medical doctors with evidence that demolishes the swoon theory and any other position that claims Jesus did not die on the Cross.¹⁵

The Mighty Death Conqueror or the Mighty Fraud?

The swoon theory enjoyed popular support among liberals for several decades after being introduced in 1828. That all changed when another liberal theologian, David F. Strauss, delivered a fatal blow to the view in *A New Life of Jesus* (1865).

It is impossible that a being who had stolen half-dead out of the sepulchre, who crept about weak and ill, wanting medical treatment, who required bandaging, strengthening and indulgence, and who still at last yielded to his sufferings, could have given to his disciples the impression that he was a Conqueror over death and the grave, the Prince of Life, an impression which lay at the bottom of their future ministry. Such a resuscitation could only have weakened the impression which he had made upon them in life and in death, at the most could only have given it an elegiac voice, but could by no possibility have changed their sorrow into enthusiasm, [and] have elevated their reverence into worship.¹⁶

Let's pretend that against all odds, common sense, and medical expertise, Jesus somehow managed to survive the Crucifixion. After being taken down from the Cross, His body was wrapped in linen cloths, along

with a "mixture of myrrh and aloes, [weighing] about a hundred pounds" (John 19:39). It was then sealed in a cold, dark tomb behind a massive stone. Consider what would still need to occur if Jesus was somehow still alive at this point. He would have to revive in the tomb, unwrap Himself from the linen cloths, roll away the huge stone (weighing over a ton) from the inside of the tomb (a job that required multiple people from outside the tomb), sneak past the guards (or beat them all up), and then appear to the disciples to convince them that He had conquered death.

But remember, Jesus would not have been able to walk because of the injuries caused by the spike through His feet. Nor would He have been able to crawl on His hands, let alone use them to roll away the stone, since they had just been pierced with spikes. At best, He could perform some sort of military crawl, but even this type of movement would have been acutely painful considering His other injuries caused by the spear and the scourging.

As Strauss pointed out, no sane person would mistake a barely-clinging-to-life Jesus as the mighty, death-conquering Son of God and then spend the rest of his life risking life and limb to promote Him as the long awaited resurrected Messiah. If anything, seeing their master in such a pitiful state as a result of his elaborate plan gone wrong, the disciples would reject Him outright as a fraud. Yet according to church history, every one of Christ's apostles faced death or exile for their message. So neither the swoon theory nor the Passover plot can account for the dramatic change in the lives of the disciples. The faked death views also fail to account for the conversions of the former skeptics, James the half-brother of Jesus and Saul of Tarsus.

Conclusion

Much more could be written concerning the suffering Jesus endured in His final hours. The proposal that Jesus survived the Cross betrays an ignorance of the brutality of Crucifixion, depends upon unbelievably incompetent soldiers at the Cross, fails to account for the evidence, and cannot explain why the disciples would willingly die for their belief that Jesus had risen from the dead.

Identifying Jesus as a fraud is noth-

ing new; some of His contemporaries claimed He was a deceiver. John 7:12 states, "And there was much complaining among the people concerning Him. Some said, 'He is good'; others said, 'No, on the contrary, He deceives the people.'" Now 2,000 years later, rebellious men still charge Jesus with deception. It is interesting that the subject of Jesus causes so much stress and discomfort to those who claim He was just a fake. Why would they worry so much about Him? Yet the power of Christ's Crucifixion and Resurrection still converts sinners to saints, sobers drunks, gives hope to many millions, and saves men and women from lives of sin and eternal destruction.

Understanding the extent of torture Jesus endured for us helps us appreciate even more "the width and length and depth and height" (Ephesians 3:18) of the love God has shown to us by sending His Son to die in our place. The Father "made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Corinthians 5:21). We do not deserve the grace, mercy, and love God has shown us. Instead, we deserve to bear the punishment Jesus endured and should be separated from God forever because of our sinfulness.

“This method was so agonizing that the word ‘excruciating’ was coined to describe intense torment.”

Sadly, many people scorn the gracious offer of eternal life and often resort to ridiculous ideas like the swoon theory to justify their unbelief. If you are an unbeliever, I urge you to turn from your rebellious ways and call on the mighty Death Conqueror, Jesus Christ. He is the only one who can save you from your sins and is the only hope for this world.



Footnotes

1. Schonfield admitted the imaginative nature of his work when he wrote, "We are nowhere claiming for our reconstruction that it represents what actually happened, but that on the evidence we have it may be fairly close to the truth." Hugh J. Schonfield, *The Passover Plot* (New York: Bantam Books, 1969), 165. He also had the audacity to claim that the image of Jesus which emerges from his book "does not, when honestly examined, detract from his greatness and uniqueness" (p. 7). Frankly, it is beyond absurd to think that demoting the Son of God to a deceitful, scheming, wannabe Messiah does not detract from Christ's greatness and uniqueness.
2. Gerald L. Borchert, *The New American Commentary: John 12–21*, (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2002), 273–274.
3. Frederick Zugibe, *The Crucifixion of Jesus: A Forensic Inquiry*, second edition (New York, NY: M. Evans and Company, 2005), 8–9.
4. Robert Bucklin, M.D., J.D., explained that the Jewish leaders violated the following laws while handling the trials of Jesus: (a) no trials at night; (b) no trials during Passover, Sabbath, or the eve of either of these holy days; (c) defense attorney was not allowed; (d) the Sanhedrin could not bring the charges but only investigate them; (e) the Jews could not sentence someone to death since Rome reserved that right; and (f) they could not find two or three witnesses to agree. Robert Bucklin, "The Legal and Medical Aspects of the Trial and Death of Christ" *Medicine, Science, and the Law* 10 (January 1970): 14–26.
5. Piecing together elements from Luke and John, a number of scholars believe Jesus was whipped two separate times. The first occasion was the least severe form of flogging, known as *fustigatio* (*paideusas* in Luke 23:16). Pilate hoped this beating would appease the Jews and he could then release Jesus since he could not find any fault in Him (Luke 23:14–15). John 19:1–15 reveals that this occurred prior to the crowd shouting for His Crucifixion and prior to the death sentence being handed down. Later, Pilate gave into the mob calling for crucifixion and had Jesus scourged, which was the severest form of flogging, known as *verberatio* (*phragellōsas* in Mark 15:15). Matthew 27:26 indicates that this occurred after Jesus was sentenced to be crucified. A. N. Sherwin-White, *Roman Society and Roman Law in the New Testament* (Oxford University Press, 1963), 27–28. See also Donald A. Carson, *The Pillar New Testament Commentary: The Gospel According of John* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991), 596–597.
6. Bert Thompson and Brad Harrub, "An Examination of the Medical Evidence for the Physical Death of Christ" available online at <http://www.apologeticspress.org/apcontent.aspx?category=13&article=145>. Accessed March 22, 2013.
7. Carson, *The Gospel According of John*, 598.
8. Many Bible translations render *κάλαμον* (*kalamon*) as "reed" instead of "staff" as in the NIV and NET. The Greek word can refer to either idea.
9. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, volume 7, electronic ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964), 573.
10. There has been considerable debate about whether the spikes would be driven through His hands or His wrists, but that discussion is beyond the scope of this article. See Thompson and Harrub, "An Examination of the Medical Evidence for the Physical Death of Christ" for a helpful discussion on this point.
11. Mark 15:25 indicates that Jesus was crucified at the "third hour" (9:00 AM) and Matthew 27:46–50 records that Jesus died about the "ninth hour" (3:00 PM). John may have made use of Roman timekeeping (John 19:14) rather than Jewish reckoning, although other possibilities have been presented to account for the differences in times provided in the Gospels. For a helpful survey of views on the timing discrepancy, see Carson, *Gospel According to John*, 604–605 and Gerald L. Borchert, *The New American Commentary: John 12–21* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 2002), 257–258.
12. Crucifixion victims were often stripped of their clothing and hung naked on the cross. In addition to fulfilling prophecy (Psalm 22:18), the fact that the soldiers cast lots for Christ's clothes (John 19:23–24) seems to imply that He was also crucified without any clothing.
13. *Excruciate* is from the "Latin *excruciat*, past participle of *excruciare*, from *ex-* + *cruciare* to crucify, from *cruc-*, *crux* cross." Frederick C. Mish, Editor in Chief, *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, Eleventh Edition (Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster, 2008), s.v. "excruciate."
14. Dr. Alexander Metherell in an interview with Lee Strobel, *The Case for Christ* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1998), 199.
15. For more details on the suffering and Crucifixion of Jesus from the perspective of a medical doctor, see Dr. Tommy Mitchell, "Our Suffering Savior: A Physician's Perspective." Accessed March 25, 2013.
16. David Friedrich Strauss, *A New Life of Jesus (in Two Volumes)*, Vol. 1 (London, Williams and Norgate, 1865), 412.

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ANZAC Day Outreaches

ANZAC Day has always been a special day of reflection for my family, especially the ANZAC Day parade, which we have gone to for as long as I can remember.

The ANZAC Day parade has always held a certain fascination for me. My grandfather served in WW1, along with some of my uncles in various other wars. So there is a personal aspect. But, I think perhaps it was the image of these once young, now old men and women, who long ago marched excitedly off to war, now marching each year to remember the sacrifice, suffering and cost of war to life and limb, both their own, but especially of their mates who no longer march beside them. The people who come to watch the parade all have their own reasons of course, but this theme of remembering 'sacrifice' is embedded into everything ANZAC represents.

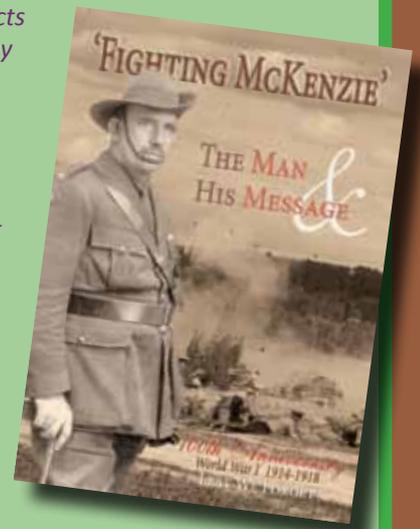
When I became a Christian, I came to realise that whilst our brave men and women have fought gallantly over the years in the various wars, there was a sacrifice that was far greater than any of them could have ever hoped to aspire to. For Christ's sacrifice was not to save a 'mate', but His enemies. He did not die to free one group of people in one time, but to free everyone, everywhere. He did not die to save us from tyranny, but from the last enemy, death itself. And finally, whilst our brave men and women have been sent off to fight in war after war, Jesus' battle - his sacrificial death and subsequent victorious resurrection - was only once, for all time. That is certainly something to celebrate.

It was with these things in mind, that we first saw the untapped opportunity to share the Gospel through tracts at the ANZAC Day parade. That was six years ago. During that time, we have handed out around 10,000 tracts at the ANZAC Day parade in Rockhampton, as well as seen thousands more distributed throughout other parts of Australia and New Zealand, as others have been inspired to do the same.

This year's outreach in Rockhampton was a little different however, as Tim and I, and our family were not there. We were in Parkes, NSW, establishing a new outreach there, so whilst we did help organise the team of about 13 labourers, who gave out around 2,000 tracts, it was so encouraging to see others taking the lead. The following are some of their testimonies.

“Thankyou so much for the opportunity to be used in bringing the gospel message to the city of Rockhampton. Our area was well covered .. everyone, bar just a handful, willingly took the tracts. We used all of our tracts and I believe there were many more at this year's parade with similar reports reflected Australia wide.

“I had one gentleman thank us for what we do. And a Salvation Army officer was very chuffed that we were telling this story. We prayed and believe for the supernatural impartation of God's love to tangibly pass through these tracts, that people's hearts would be turned to Jesus, our Lord and Saviour.”



“It was a very positive experience and a great opportunity for us to connect with the community. There was only one negative experience....

While handing out tracts at the Anzac Parade in Rockhampton a man passed by and was asked if he would like a tract. He instantaneously exploded, asking me if I was one of those 'religious nuts'! I could not help but say 'no'. I went on the defensive as is a natural human response. He continued to yell at me telling me that you religious zealots are the cause for all the wars... Then as quickly as he came across my path he left.

I was shocked and walked over the road to my husband to debrief, as spiritually all I could see was two black hands coming for my throat to stop me from talking. My husband encouraged me and so I went back to handing out tracts.

Within a few minutes a lady was standing near me. I asked her if she would like a tract, which she did. Then we started to talk, she told me that she had thyroid cancer and had lost her faith. I asked her if she would like prayer which she was happy to receive.”



“Today we got to hand out over 4,000 Gospel tracts in Brisbane to those who came out to see the Anzac Day March. God raised up a team of about 10 of us.” said Ryan Hemelaar.

He said as people remembered the great sacrifices that people have made for our country, they were able to bring people's attention also to the ultimate sacrifice that Jesus made to bring us freedom from our biggest enemy, our sin and its effects.



As a wife, and mother of three young children, domestic chores done at night, when everyone else is asleep, is usually my best time to talk to the Lord and meditate on His Word. And it is often through these very ordinary, everyday duties, that the Lord will give me revelation about spiritual truths. This article comes from one of those lessons.

Recently, I was washing the dishes and the Lord gave me a glimpse about the how and why the Gospel message has deteriorated to the current watered-down state it is in, in many churches and ministries around the world today.

Most of you reading this will be familiar with the message of the modern 'Gospel'. For those who are not, the basic premise is that Jesus came to give us a wonderful life - love and

The other issue is not on what is said, preached or even believed, but on what is missing. And what is missing from the modern 'Gospel' is any mention of hard truths, like sin, justice, judgement and hell. It is in this area, that I believe the Lord gave me understanding through the simple task of washing dishes.

Our home does have a dishwasher (it was already here when we moved in), but there are times when there are more dishes than can fit in the dishwasher. This was one of those nights.

I have always been a person who likes to wash dishes in really, really hot water. As hot, or hotter than I can stand. Why? Because hot water cleans better of course, and because it kills any germs and gets the grease and grime off quicker. Not to mention, the dishes dry quicker.

The dishwasher on the other hand - well, it heats its own water to temperatures well beyond what our mere human hands could stand. Dishes come out clean, dry (usually) and ready for use.

Now, whilst the intense heat and extreme force of water in a dishwasher can get the dirtiest dishes clean, I need to also use a scourer to scrub my dishes clean. Those, however, using a regular soft cloth invariably find the cleaning process long and arduous and generally not very successful. Rinsing under hot water usually finishes the task.

The analogy, I hope, is fairly clear. The Gospel is the water. The temperature of the water relates to the amount of hard truth that is mentioned. The scourer or force of the water is the cleaning agent. The rinse is, of course, Christ's forgiveness.

Hot Water Gos

By Leah Knowling

joy and peace and everlasting happiness - our best life now. All we need to do is ask, say a 'salvation prayer' and 'wa-la', it is all ours.

Now there are scriptures that preachers of this message will use - John 10:10 (KJV), "*I [Jesus] am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.*" Romans 10:9 (NIV), "*If you declare with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved*", to name a few. And these are wonderful scriptures.

But when they are twisted to mean something they were never meant to say that's when problems begin.

When the devil deceived Eve, he started with what God had said, then twisted it slightly. What was left was a lie, no matter how much truth was in it.

However, hot water, when it's really hot, is very hard on your hands. It burns. I seem to have a fairly high tolerance to heat. I think I get that from my Mum, or maybe it's a Queenslander thing. ☺ But it is still very hot and hard to stand. So what do we usually do? We add some cold water to make it a bit more comfortable for our hands. But the compromise is that the cooler water won't clean as well, nor will it dry the dishes as easily.

I know some people who wash in cold or luke warm water, that understandably find their handwashing efforts rather difficult, both to clean and to dry. Their dishes, glasses, pots, pans and cutlery are never really clean. They look sort-of clean, but after a while they get a film or coating on them - a build-up of grease and grime - that is then very hard to remove.

When sin, righteousness and the judgement to come, along with the eternal consequences of hell, are proclaimed, and explained, alongside the glorious Good News of forgiveness, life and hope through Jesus' death and resurrection, then the hot water of the Gospel can cleanse the dirty heart of the sinner, so they are ready to be used by the Lord.

But, when these truths are missing, or worse, twisted, then we have given them nothing but a soft cloth and cold or luke warm water to clean in. And the result is that they are not really clean - they are not truly saved. All we have done is created a false convert, who looks clean on the outside, but is actually still in their sin and is then a lot harder to reach.

People who remain in that state, never have victory over sin, nor true biblical assurance of salvation



(Romans 8:16 - *"The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God"*). They like being comfortable in their luke-warm water, so rather than hearing and heeding the challenges of the 'hot-water' message, they instead build up a veneer of Christianity to try to fool everyone, sometimes even themselves, but never God.

Jesus said in Revelation 3:15-16, *"I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! So, because you are lukewarm – neither hot nor cold – I am about to spit you out of my mouth."*

We need to be people who will share a hot-water Gospel with the lost - the goodness, justice, holiness and righteousness of God, as well as His mercy, grace and love. Don't water it down to make yourself or others comfortable. It won't help them or you. In fact, it will only be to everyone's detriment.

ospel

No matter how uncomfortable it can be to tell someone the hard truth of sin, judgement and hell, it is a necessary part of proclaiming the Gospel to sin-hardened people.

As John Wesley famously proclaimed, "Before I can preach love, mercy, and grace, I must preach sin, Law, and judgment. Preach 90% Law and 10% grace."

"Speak the truth in love", with "gentleness and respect". But speak the truth - the whole truth and nothing but the truth - nonetheless.

ONLY ONE LIFE

By C.T. Studd

Two little lines I heard one day,
Travelling along life's busy way;
Bringing conviction to my heart,
And from my mind would not depart;
Only one life, 'twill soon be past,
Only what's done for Christ will last.

Only one life, yes only one,
Soon will its fleeting hours be done;
Then, in 'that day' my Lord to meet,
And stand before His Judgement seat;
Only one life, 'twill soon be past,
Only what's done for Christ will last.

Only one life, the still small voice,
Gently pleads for a better choice
Bidding me selfish aims to leave,
And to God's holy will to cleave;
Only one life, 'twill soon be past,
Only what's done for Christ will last.

Only one life, a few brief years,
Each with its burdens, hopes, and fears;
Each with its days I must fulfil,
living for self or in His will;
Only one life, 'twill soon be past,
Only what's done for Christ will last.

When this bright world would tempt
me sore,
When Satan would a victory score;
When self would seek to have its way,
Then help me Lord with joy to say;
Only one life, 'twill soon be past,
Only what's done for Christ will last.

Give me Father, a purpose deep,
In joy or sorrow Thy word to keep;
Faithful and true what e'er the strife,
Pleasing Thee in my daily life;
Only one life, 'twill soon be past,
Only what's done for Christ will last.

Oh let my love with fervour burn,
And from the world now let me turn;
Living for Thee, and Thee alone,
Bringing Thee pleasure on Thy throne;
Only one life, 'twill soon be past,
Only what's done for Christ will last.

Only one life, yes only one,
Now let me say, "Thy will be done";
And when at last I'll hear the call,
I know I'll say "twas worth it all";
Only one life, 'twill soon be past,
Only what's done for Christ will last.



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