


Good News Guide
The TRUTH Shall Set You FREE

Look for the Blessing

May, 2020

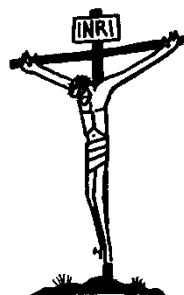
In 1910 the boll weevil wiped out the cotton crop in the southern United States. Southern farmers, whose livelihood was dependent primarily upon this single crop, were forced to diversify by planting peanuts and other new crops. Unexpectedly, this change brought prosperity to the region. The farmers in Enterprise, Alabama, were so grateful that in 1919 they erected a monument to the boll weevil in their town square. What had seemed a curse had turned out to be a blessing.



Here's another story: Corrie Ten Boom, in *The Hiding Place*, told how she and her sister, Betsy, had just been transferred to Ravensbruck, the worst German prison camp they had seen so far. They found that the barracks were extremely overcrowded and flea-infested. Their Scripture reading that morning in 1 Thessalonians reminded them to rejoice always, pray constantly, and give thanks in all circumstances. Betsy told Corrie to stop and thank the Lord for every detail of their new living quarters. Corrie at first flatly refused to give thanks for the fleas, but at Betsy's insistence she finally did. During their months at that camp, they were surprised at how openly they could hold Bible study and prayer meetings without interference. Several months later they learned that the guards would not enter the barracks because of the fleas.

What should we learn from these stories? That insect pests are always a blessing in disguise? That "Every cloud has a silver lining"? Even that "All things work together for good," with or without conditions?

Now consider what surely seemed to be a disaster to those who lived through it. Jesus of Nazareth, a powerful teacher, believed to be the long awaited Jewish Messiah, sent from God to restore the glory of Israel, suddenly was done. He was arrested and subjected to a hasty and illegal trial, convicted by the Jewish leaders, condemned by the corrupt



Roman governor, humiliated, beaten horribly, then killed by crucifixion—perhaps the most "cruel and unusual" method of punishment ever devised.

Jesus' closest friends, His companions, His disciples, were devastated. Their hopes for the future were killed along with their Teacher. How could God let this happen?

He had told them that He would be killed, and on the third day would rise again. They had not understood; they had not wanted to believe His prediction. After He died they were without hope.

But God did not "let" it happen; God planned it and orchestrated it and caused it to happen. It was essential to His plan to provide His great, ultimate blessing: GRACE. God loved the people of the world so much that He gave the life of His only begotten Son as a sacrifice to atone for their sins. "For the wages of sin [your sins and my sins] is death, but the free gift of God [grace] is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 6:23)

Jesus died to pay the penalty for our sins. He rose from death to show that He has overcome death, and we do not need to fear it any longer.

From these three stories and others, I believe God wants us to reach two important conclusions:

- ♦ In all circumstances, He is in control.
- ♦ We can't understand how He works—and we don't need to.

Right now the world is suffering in the throes of a pandemic. Many millions have become infected with the COVID-19 coronavirus. Many thousands have died—probably over a million by now. This is obviously a very grim and painful situation. Is there a blessing to be gained from it? We don't know yet, but my expectation is that God will ultimately provide one, and maybe several.

Meanwhile, brothers and sisters, keep trusting and obeying Him as well as you can. Peace —

Brother Roland

John Chapters 13-16

On His last evening with them before going out to pray and be arrested, Jesus gave His disciples some things to think about and remember. We should pay attention to them as well.

Puzzle:

O L D A G T E A U R W J R I W I L L S E E Y O U A G A I N A F K
 F U O V B V U K L O O Y A E F A T X S A R O E L W B Z A B O U O
 O O R V Z I R W T L Y M U H G I F P N E W C O M M A N D M E N T
 V Y N A E Y D E K H T D K O D N M N P F N M P M Y G U R M P Z H
 K E V C I O O E V R E H E P Y R O L U O Y E D I U G L L I W E H
 Y V E K X F N U I E A S E T Y E E L G H R F Q P V M B C O T T D
 U I M R E B M E W N R G P T A H T Y O U C A N D O N O T H I N G
 U G N C F D I H A I M O H I R H I U E N O M U P N S Y X M U E H
 W L I W C P E A T N L E F E R U T G C N E Y C S F F M S C R V A
 U L S P D I H S U K O L H U G I T I G E I M D P M Z P V G F G N
 K I E B E S E R V A N T S T O O T H E R S V E E K N H O O H Y O
 A W D O B A P M C U O A H E P Y X O W R W R E E V G Q Q R C O P
 N E I O R Z Y E G N S S L E E N H Z F A O S E H S O T Z E U U E
 W H B F A P A L A K X D R Z R M N T S T P F O P T X L K F M A O
 A G A I N A L I T T L E W H I L E H I W R Z E R O M S E X S R P
 S S R Y C B P H M S Z E R I Y N O X H W A U L B R S A M V R E L
 H V E D H J E W X M I N P D Q N B Y D K N P T Y Z O L I H A T E
 E X V G C F U E F B I W R H E W X K J M C D A H P R W A T E H W
 D S E L A A D L B R E H C A E T D N A D R O L R U O Y N H B E I
 Y Z O T N P O T I R G T N M I F K D V R E G J E T P Z H O M B L
 O B H P N P W T M O I O F Q W W V X I O K T F G A F P G D W R L
 U E W R O U U I F J T H E Y P E R S E C U T E D M E R E H O A K
 R W Z W T S S L L H X M D V L X A X R R U W I U E D T O G U N N
 F Q C B B B T A E O P Z F M Q M D W C N L D E V B A R A M D C O
 E Y V B E E W R E C I O J E R L L I W S T R A E H R U O Y M H W
 E C C U A X S E L P I C S I D Y M J O X E G O S G L I A L V E D
 T F Q A R F H H K B B I T A V Y Q B K P Z S A U N S X S F U S M
 U O Y S E T A H D L R O W E H T F I I J O H V C S O M W C F Q M
 K V H E W J T P L L H R I W U X J B T I T M V Q E D H Q M C E L
 V J T S E D I B A T I S S E L N U C C I Q V Q H I T B D B J T D

Words: Each underlined phrase is a “word” in the puzzle.

1. Be servants to others. “If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet.” (John 13:14)
2. “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you ... By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” (John 13:34-35)
3. “Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.” (John 15:4-5)
4. “I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever ... When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth ...” (John 14:15-17; 16:13)
5. “If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you ... If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you.” (John 16:18,20)
6. “A little while, and you will see me no longer; and again a little while, and you will see me ... you have sorrow now, but I will see you again, and your hearts will rejoice.” (John 16:16,20)