

Would you like to receive an extra copy of the "Good News Guide" each month to share with a friend, neighbor, or family member? Let me know.

## Open Our Eyes, Lord

Open our eyes, Lord,  
 we want to see Jesus,  
 to reach out and touch him,  
 and say that we love him.

Open our ears, Lord,  
 and help us to listen.  
 Open our eyes, Lord,  
 we want to see Jesus

— Robert Cull, 1976

How many times have I heard that song, and sung that lovely song, in a worship setting? A hundred, maybe; at least a good many. It's a beautiful song, and a beautiful thought. Make Jesus real for us, please, Lord.

How many people — how many of our loved ones, our family members, friends, neighbors — how many are going through life **without wanting to know Jesus**; completely oblivious to the fact that God loves them and has planned an eternal destiny for them that is beautiful and joy-filled far beyond anything we can begin to imagine?

**"There are none so blind as those who will not see; none so deaf as those who will not hear."** This is not strictly biblical, but it accurately restates Bible truth.

Many people are not even aware that they have shut God out of their lives. If they ever think about the end of this earthly life, they have a foolish notion that God will somehow grade them "on the curve," and since their sins are "not all that bad," God will probably let them into heaven. They hope.

Ignorance can be deadly. What you don't know, and choose to ignore and go on ignoring, can land you in hell. God does not "send" people to hell, but He lets them choose hell by ignoring His love and His gift: *For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.* (Romans 6:23)

Do you have loved ones who are ignoring God; living life without knowing God or paying any attention to Him? What do you want to do about that? More importantly, what does God want you to do about it?

1. Obviously, pray for them. Pray that God will protect them, and make the truth of His love known to them. Pray He will give them the gift of faith, and help them to receive it.
2. Tell them the truth about God and His Son, Jesus, not in a threatening way, but in an inviting way. If this seems hard to do, pray the Lord will help you do it. Without His help, you'll fail; with His help, you will ultimately do it well.

This second thing is often hard to do, because they don't want to hear it. They're comfortable in their ignorance; the truth makes them uncomfortable. We need to suck it up, ask God to help us, and tell them.

*How can people have faith in the Lord and ask him to save them, if they have never heard about him? And how can they hear, unless someone tells them?* (Romans 10:14 CEV)

We shouldn't expect quick results. That could happen, but often it doesn't. I know of two people, one in our family and one among our close friends, for whom it took 40 years of prayers to "open their eyes" and bring them to accept God's gift of salvation and relationship. God is always faithful. We need to be faithful, too.

*God our Savior ... desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.* (1 Timothy 2:4)

Pages 3 and 4 of this letter are an "Invitation" that you and I can use in various ways to help others come to the knowledge of the truth about God's love, and His desire for each and every one of us to come to Him, receive His forgiveness for our sins, and be adopted into His eternal family. Feel free to tear the sheet off and share it with someone.

In this season of Lent we remember Jesus' suffering and death, for us — to pay the penalty for our sins. Soon we'll celebrate His Resurrection and Ascension. Hallelujah! Our Lord lives! Let's accept His invitation to go to Him and be with Him in Heaven forever, and let's invite as many to join us as we can.

Peace and Joy be yours, forever —

*Brother Roland*

# We Are Easter People

Our Lord Jesus died for us, horribly, then rose from death victorious! In Him, we have that same victory. Let's live to demonstrate His power and His love to others. Hallelujah! He is Risen!

## Puzzle:

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

## Words:

JESUS REALLY DIED  
FOR ME, FOR YOU  
THAT BLACK FRIDAY  
HE WAS TORTURED  
BEATEN WITH WHIPS  
LAUGHED AT  
SPIT UPON  
STRIPPED NAKED  
NAILED TO A CROSS  
HE WAS CRUCIFIED

THE UGLIEST DEATH  
MEN COULD DEVISE  
BURIED WITH CARE  
BY LOVING HANDS  
LAID IN A TOMB  
SEALED WITH A STONE  
SUNDAY MORNING  
MARY AND MARY  
WENT TO THE TOMB  
STONE ROLLED AWAY

ANGEL TOLD THEM  
DON'T BE AFRAID  
HE HAS RISEN  
SEE WHERE HE LAY  
TELL HIS DISCIPLES  
GOING TO GALILEE  
MEET HIM THERE  
OUR SAVIOR LIVES  
HE IS ALIVE  
AND HE TELLS US

GO MAKE DISCIPLES  
IN EVERY NATION  
BAPTIZING THEM  
IN THE NAME OF  
FATHER, SON, HOLY  
SPIRIT  
TEACH TO OBSERVE  
ALL I'VE COMMANDED  
AND I AM WITH YOU  
TO END OF THE AGE

***Always remember—  
God loves YOU!***

**Send Bible questions or updated mailing address information to  
Brother Roland, PO Box 14, Fayetteville PA 17222  
Inmates -- include name, DOC No., and SID with your address.**

# Invitation

**You are invited. Really.** You're invited to join God's family gathering at a wonderful, ongoing celebration of Peace, Love, and Beauty, better than any party you could ever imagine.

I was discussing this invitation with a man whom I know and respect. I said, "All anyone really has to do is say 'Yes.'" He corrected me by saying, "All they have to do is not say 'No.'" He was right.

God — Father, Son, and Holy Spirit — invites you, when you come to the end of your life on earth, to join Him in His home in Heaven. He wants you to join His family, to be His own adopted child, and to live joyfully with Him and His other children forever. He invites you to enter into that relationship now, with all of its blessings.

How do I know this? Let me tell you.

For many years, when I was young, I was afraid of dying, because I knew I would end up in Hell. I had lied, stolen, broken other laws, disobeyed my parents, and done quite a number of other things that were wrong. I believed sinners are sent to Hell. I would rather go to Heaven, because Hell is certain to be horrible; but I knew I was damned. Mostly I avoided thinking about it — after all, I still had many years ahead of me.

For years I lived with this burden of guilt and fear. Then one day I learned the truth, from a class where God's word, the Bible, was being taught: God really does not want me to go to Hell. My sins deserve punishment — but Jesus Christ took all the punishment that my sins deserve. He suffered and died to pay for all of my sins — and for yours, and for everyone's. I am forgiven! You are forgiven. Hallelujah!

Who says so? God's word, the Holy Bible, says so, in several places, like this:

*God desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. (1 Timothy 2:4)*

*For God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. (John 3:16-17)*

*As it is written: "There is no one who is righteous, not even one..." (Romans 3:10)*

*For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 6:23)*

*For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of [doing good] works, so that no one may boast. (Ephesians 2:8-9)*

What did I have to do so that my sins would be forgiven? What do you have to do for your sins (many or few) to be forgiven? Nothing. Jesus did it all, for me and for you.

God is saying to me, and also to you, "Please say you want to live with me forever in Heaven. I love you. I want you to be with me. That is the special destiny I have planned for you. That's what I created you for. Please say 'Yes.'"

Is that it? Is that all there is to it? Just tell God, 'Yes,' and then go on with our lives as we have been? Well, no, not if we really mean it. Our "Yes" has to be "Yes!" — not "Yes, but ..."

We can't come into God's family on our terms — it has to be on God's terms. If that sounds like there's a "catch" to it somewhere — well, there is.

If you had a four-year-old child, you would love that child, of course. But would you want that child to stay four years old forever? Or would you rather have your little child grow up to become an amazing adult? Similarly, God loves you just as you are, but He also wants you to become more than you are today; to grow and mature into the beautiful human being He created you to be.

The sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross “justifies” us and makes us eligible to enter God’s Heaven. Saying “Yes” to God’s invitation is the beginning of the process that prepares us for our new life there.

Look at it this way: If you were invited to a grand formal party, you’d be uncomfortable going to it unbathed, in grubby shorts and sneakers. You would want to take a bath and put on some decent clothes. Without that preparation, you could not enjoy the party.

God wants to prepare you and me for Heaven. He will clean us up — help us stop sinning, little by little, making us more and more like Jesus. And He will give us a new outfit to wear to the party — a garment called “the righteousness of Christ.”

Wow! That seems like a lot to sign up for! But relax — God’s Holy Spirit will do all the hard work. All we have to do is show up, and keep following His lead.

Now it’s true that, if you say, “Yes, Lord,” and then do absolutely nothing, nothing will change. A truth I like to quote is, “You can’t steer a boat that’s dead in the water.” If the boat is sitting still, it doesn’t really matter in which direction it’s pointed, does it? It won’t go anywhere. So you need to do something to get the process going. Then the Holy Spirit can help you with directions.

Try this: say a short prayer, asking for God’s help. Maybe something like this:, “Lord, please help me get started in the right direction.”

Then take another important step: find a church. If you have a spouse or a friend who goes to church, start there. If you get into a church that doesn’t teach that the Bible is God’s word, find a different one. In a good church, two important things will happen: you will hear the word of God preached and taught, and you will begin to experience the beauty of God’s love being shared among that church family. I know, I’ve been there. I’m still there.

I promise you, if you accept God’s invitation and start going God’s way, being guided by His word and the Holy Spirit, rather than just going your own way, you will agree and understand after a while that you did the right thing.

This, from the book of Proverbs, is one of my favorites among all of God’s promises. It is pure, practical wisdom:

*Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths. (Proverbs 3:5-6)*

Our merely human understanding is often faulty. The following proverbial warning is given twice:

*There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death. (Proverbs 14:12 and 16:25)*

Jesus didn’t promise to fulfill all our desires and give us a life without difficulties, but He did promise to meet our needs and be with us and help us with whatever comes our way.

*“Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” (Matthew 11:28-30)*

There is no better way to go through life than to be “yoked” together with Jesus, because He knows what to do, and He will pull most of the weight.

There are many more promises in God’s word. I’ll leave you with this one, from the Apostle Paul:

*I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. (Philippians 1:6)*

I pray that one day, in God’s timing, you and I will celebrate together in the place He has prepared for us, with Him, forever. Amen

*Brother Roland*