

I Found Peace



In A
Prison
Cell

Alone In The World: My mom died when I was just a boy, and a few years later my dad died too. My twin sister and I hoped we could stay together, but we were placed with different relatives. For several years I lived with my grandmother. She made me go to church, but I still got into a lot of trouble.

I ran away at sixteen because I didn't feel that anyone wanted me. I became an alcoholic, which led to a life of cheating, sex, stealing, assault, and even murder. I don't think there was anyone worse. For about four years I worked on ships, and got involved in drugs and gambling.

Alone In Prison: On one trip to sea I killed someone and was sentenced to twenty years for manslaughter. After doing fourteen years in a Mississippi prison I was released. But because I was still serving the same master (the devil), I found myself going back to the same life of sin. Romans 6:16 says, "Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slave ... whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness?" The devil was my master and he was ruling my life.

In three months I got into more trouble. But

just before this, I attended a church in Mississippi where the pastor tried to get me to turn my life over to Jesus Christ. Something told me I wouldn't have a good time if I did. I know now that the things I thought were good times were only the devil's tools to destroy me.

If I had said "yes" to Christ that night, I'd be a free man today instead of a prisoner in this cell. I didn't realize that when I told the pastor "I'll wait a while," I was really saying "no" to God. Little did I know the grip the enemy had on me and the problems that would soon come into my life for rejecting Christ. On the way home from church I stopped for a few drinks, and six days later I found myself in jail again with the same charge as before.

Alone With Sin: My relatives begged me to confess. I did, but still received this sentence. They urged me to pray and trust God. A preacher prayed with me in jail and talked to me about Jesus Christ. I was carrying such a heavy load that I finally decided to give my life to the Lord to see what would happen. I began by talking to God and reading the Gospel of John.

Next I read how the Philippian jailor asked, "What must I do to be saved?" He was instructed to "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 16:31). Also in Acts 3:19 I read, "Repent, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out." Luke 13:3 added, "unless you repent you will ... perish." I got the message.

Gradually much of my burden was lifted, in spite of my sentence. I found in the Bible (John 3:16) that whoever believes could receive the free gift of eternal life. There were no restrictions as to race, color or anything – just whoever believes. No intellectual, social or economic requirements were mentioned. God said eternal life was free to all, and that included me for sure. I accepted. Praise God!

Alone No More: I came to know the meaning of repentance: a deep, sincere sorrow for all my sins. I deeply regretted hurting the Lord so much for so long. Humbly I asked for His forgiveness and mercy (Ps. 34:18).

He has promised never to turn away anyone who comes to Him, and He didn't turn me away. I am a new creature now in Christ Jesus, a child of God. I found peace in my prison cell – a peace that passes all under-

standing. Now my life is His to live through me as He wishes. I have changed masters – from Satan to the Savior.

I learned from experience that the devil can never give a person real happiness. He caused me to waste my life chasing after a “good time.” The *pleasures* of sin are only temporary, while the *payment* is permanent – death. But the gift of God brings eternal life (Rom. 6:23).

What have I gained by serving the devil these past years? It cost me everything and brought me nothing but grief and pain too great to bear alone. If I could have seen this earlier, how different I would have lived those years! But I was blinded by sin and the devil, even as you are now, if you are living in sin today. I can speak for both sides now – and, believe me, a person living in sin is capable of almost anything. *I am glad I changed masters!*

This Peace Can Be Yours! I'm praying that every sinner reading this will listen and turn from the devil before it is too late. Jesus Christ came to destroy the works of the devil. Maybe you are living deep in sin. Maybe you are a good person and a fine citizen. It doesn't matter. If you haven't repented and accepted Christ as your own personal Savior, *you are lost.*

There is only one way to be saved. Jesus said “I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through Me” (John 14:6). I urge you not to wait as long as I did. You have heard His voice. Don't harden your heart. Jesus said, “Come to me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matt 11:28). Please, turn to Him today.

I write from my prison cell. I do not know my future, but I have peace with God. He holds the future, and I can safely trust Him with everything. Though a prisoner, I am spiritually free. “If the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed” (John 8:36).

– E. B. (Revised)

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