

# "Where Will You Spend Eternity?"

**Terror gripped this man as he left the tavern that afternoon.**

**By Pete Friesen**

As a child, I was taught about God, but for a long time the Gospel just never appealed to me. When I was about thirteen, I went to the altar to pray and the Lord showed me some marbles I had stolen. He asked me about making restitution and I refused. I went out of there and never prayed again to get saved until I was over forty-three years old.

I went through high school as an amateur boxer and a football player. I should have been happy because I was young and healthy. I had all the things that young people want, but there was something inside that was never satisfied.

When I got out of school, I went to work in the logging camps. There I lived just like the rest of the loggers. I came to town and drank, fought, and got into all kinds of trouble. I never thought about serving the Lord. Nobody could convince me that you could be a Christian and enjoy living. When I visited my mother I would go to church with her, but as soon as the service was over I would walk out the door. She asked me about going to church more often and I said, "Mom, why should I go when it makes me so miserable? There are all kinds of places I can go where I can really have a good time." I didn't realize that God was convicting me when I went to church.

## **A question from God**

I was ambitious and worked hard. I made lots of money, and I spent lots of money. But one day, things changed. I had been working on a construction job in Medford, Oregon, and when that job was finished I didn't know what to do next. On a Saturday afternoon I was sitting in a bar watching a football game on television when I heard a Voice say, "Where will you spend eternity?" I turned toward the stool next to me, but nobody was there. I turned back to watch the game, and I heard that Voice again. This time it said, "What difference is it going to make out in eternity who wins that ball game?" Right then I knew Who was talking. I got up and went out of that place.

Although I was never one to be afraid, that afternoon I was terrified. I was afraid I was going to die before I could get to church. The next Sunday morning I went to church and started to pray. And I didn't quit praying until God came down and saved my soul. He made a wonderful change in my life. The habits and appetites of a lifetime were gone in a moment and I had a brand new outlook on life. Up until then I could never understand why people wanted me to go to church. But from that day to this, they just can't have church often enough to suit me.

## **Something was lacking**

After I had been saved for a few weeks, I heard that I needed to be sanctified. I knew nothing about sanctification. I was just as ignorant as the worst sinner out on the street concerning that experience, but one night sitting there in my apartment, I realized something was lacking in my life. I told God, "You know what I need. You know I want it, so please give it to me." Right there the Lord sanctified me. The glory of God filled that apartment. I couldn't stay inside. I went out and walked up and down the streets of Medford. I laughed and shouted and cried. Finally I told the Lord, "You'll have to stop now. I just can't hold any more."

And I went on that way, so happy in the Gospel. Then one night in a mission meeting, I heard a testimony that touched my heart. The Lord told me, "There's a testimony I can use because this man



has his baptism." I didn't have the baptism, and right there I realized that I needed that experience. I didn't understand what it was and had never seen anybody receive it, but a hunger sprang up in my heart.

A few days later, the pastor of our church asked me, "Would you like to go to the Midwest camp meeting?" I said, "Yes, I would." He said, "Well, I have room for you. The Lord told me to take you, so I'm going to take you, if you will go." I went to Midwest Camp with one purpose in mind, I wanted to receive my baptism. Camp meeting started on Saturday night and I prayed Saturday night, Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday. By Wednesday I was getting pretty discouraged. But when I went into church that night, I told the Lord, "If any Power falls around here tonight, some of it is going to fall on me, because I'm going to be here."

## **God's way**

I had some ideas of my own about receiving the baptism. I was never one for a great deal of noise. I felt that when the Lord baptized me I would just speak a few words in another language and that would be it. I wasn't interested in a lot of demonstration. All I wanted was the experience. But the Lord showed me that He was going to baptize me in His own way. That night He said, "Now will you let Me baptize you?" I said, "Amen," and that's the last I remember. Afterwards I asked those praying with me, "Did I leave this tabernacle? I felt as though the roof just lifted." Well, I had the baptism and that was the important thing. It has been a wonderful experience, something every Christian needs.

I moved to Roseburg, and went back to work felling timber. One day I had an accident, a tree fell on me. I knew I was seriously injured because I couldn't get up. They got me on a stretcher and called an ambulance. When we got to the hospital, our pastor in Roseburg was there to pray for me. I said, "It's all right, where I'm going it won't hurt anymore." I felt the presence of the Lord and it really didn't make any difference to me if I lived or not. I knew where I was going if I died, and I tell you, that's a wonderful feeling.

But the Lord spared my life. The nurse on duty that night said two different times she went to get the doctor to come and cover me and take me out of the room because I was gone. But in the morning I was still alive. The nurse said, "There was a Presence around your bed last night, a peace that I have never felt before in all my nursing experience." I could tell her, "Yes, the Prince of Peace was here last night."

## **Not expected to live**

I had been torn up so badly that nobody expected me to live. My back was broken in three places. Most of my ribs were broken or torn loose from the backbone, my shoulder was smashed, and my spleen was ruptured. I don't know what else was wrong inside, but the Lord came down and healed me. Two months after that accident, I was back to work.

I've found that I can go to God with my financial problems, and He takes care of them. One time I bought a house to remodel and sell. But I couldn't work for a few months, and by the time I got the house finished, the economy was in such a state that banks weren't lending money to finance a house of that kind. The real estate broker told me, "Pete, there is no way to get financing on that house." I said, "I've got some notes coming due in about four months and they must be paid in full. I've got to get cash for this house." I went to the church and started to pray. I prayed until one Friday afternoon the Lord said to me, "The house is sold." I thanked the Lord and got up and went home. That was it as far as I was concerned. I didn't know how it was going to work out, but I knew the house was sold. The latter part of the next week, the broker called me and said, "Pete, your house is sold." When I went down to look at the contract, the broker told me, "This is the best contract possible." The people paid cash for my house and not only that, they paid exactly the price I had it listed at. I ended up doubling my money at a time when people were happy if they could break even. Yes, the Lord takes care of His people.

Down through the years I have proved God in all kinds of situations. You know, the Gospel is the only thing I've ever found that gets better with the using. Shortly after I was saved, some of my old acquaintances told me that the Gospel would get old on my hands and I would soon be back drinking and carousing around. But they were wrong. Today I love the Gospel more than ever because I know a lot more about God. I know how He can work. I know what He can do for me. The Gospel makes life worth living and I intend to hold on to it for the rest of my life.

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