

A PEACEFUL HARBOR FOR A TROUBLED SOUL

"I love to tell people about Jesus! He has done so much for me! It thrills me to think of the miracles He has performed in my life, especially when He turned me right-about-face — from the misery of an ill-spent life to the joy of living for Jesus.

Sadness Comes into Young Life

"I loved my mother. She was a Christian and taught us children about Jesus. Through sickness she became crippled and blind and I remember the tenderness in my heart as I would help feed her.

"But the sunshine went out of our home when I was ten years old_ My mother died, and the old home place was no longer the same. I used to climb the hills overlooking our town, and up there in the quietness of the cemetery I would look down on her grave and wonder why I had been born. Torment would grip my young heart.

"My father did the very best he could for me after Mother died. *He* wanted me to go to church and live a good life. I used to think to myself: I want to be good; I want to do what is right in life. But I found I couldn't live like that.

"We didn't have a fine home or many of the things other people have. In school the kids used to make fun of my brothers and sisters and me because we had only ragged clothes and poor food. I took their ridicule for a while; then I started using my fists.

Small Wrongs Become Big

"I began doing a few little things wrong, and in time they piled up into mountains I could not get around. I took little things that did not belong to me. The neighbor's chickens used to come across the creek; and because I was mad at the neighbors, I killed their chickens and buried them.

"I used to roam the prairies, hunting and fishing, and before long I came to the place where I said, 'I will do what I want to do, regardless of the law.' My wrongs caught up with me, and I was brought before the court. The town officials asked, 'What are we going to do with this boy? Send him to reform school?' In my heart there was misery, but I couldn't change the way I was living.

A Runaway

"At last I ran away from home, thinking if I could just get on my own I would really have a good time. But things didn't work out that way for me. I became a drifter — got jobs here and there, worked in the harvest fields when I could. Life was hard. Many times I slept in boxcars because I was broke, and wondered where breakfast was coming from.

"When I did make a few dollars, I spent **it** all looking for a good time. I would go into town and take in the movies, bowling alleys, dance halls, racetracks and other places of iniquity. If there was any money left, I spent it gambling. Sometimes I would gamble all night, and then go to work the next morning feeling miserable.

"I became bound by bad habits. I used four or five packs of cigarettes a day — smoked **day** and night. I had bitterness, blasphemy and hatred in my heart. I put on a poker face — no smile for anyone. That thing grew on me. Soon **I** couldn't smile any more. There was no laughter in my heart.

Troubles at Sea

"During the war I started sailing the seas. **I** spent five years out there visiting many different countries. Because I wanted people to think I was tough, I sailed on some of the worst ships I could get on. I chose the ammunition ships and tankers, serving among men who did not care anything about life. They didn't care if they lived or died. What a 'hell' it was on those ships! But that was where **I** chose to be.

"God had mercy on my soul, and many times spared the ship I was on. I saw the floating mines as we passed

them; depth charges churned the waters about our ship. In times of battle, the night sky around us was lit by fiery bullets and exploding bombs.

"In one terrible storm, the ship rolled past the point where it should have tipped over, but God brought it back. Even the men on our ship said it was a miracle that it had not sunk.

Contemplates Suicide

"One day as I stood alone by the ship's rail out there on the ocean, the misery in my heart seemed to overwhelm me. I did not want to live any more. As I looked down into those murky waves dashing against the side of the ship, I thought to myself, 'I am going to end it all. I will jump overboard and that will be the finish.' The devil told me, 'Jump! Nobody will ever miss you!'

'But in that moment Jesus spoke to my heart. He said, If you jump into that ocean, what will the end be?' I knew that Voice came from Heaven, and I began to think. I realized what the end would be — and I didn't jump. But that misery was still in my heart.

A Peaceful Harbor

"One night the old ship I was on pulled into Portland, Oregon. One of the men from the Apostolic Faith church was down on the dock when we tied up. I could see right away that he wasn't like the people I ran around with. My associates didn't have any reality in their lives — only thought of the foolishness and sin of this world. But this man had peace written on his face, and I could see the difference.

"He asked me if I would like to go to church. I told him I wasn't interested. I was getting ready to go uptown to have a good time. He said to me, 'You know, it would do you good.' I couldn't turn away from that. The Spirit of God began working on my heart. As the man left, I ran down the dock after him and told him I would go with him the next night.

Happy People

"The following evening he came back to our ship, and that night I went to church with him. As I walked up the stairs into the auditorium, I saw people there who had peace on their faces. Such happy people! It was a surprise to me. I had not seen that in any other part of the world. The people I dealt with had a different look.

"That evening I listened to the most beautiful music I had ever heard in all my life. I felt God's Spirit in that music, and in everything about the service. When the testimonies went forth, one person after another spoke of the wonderful deliverance God had given from sinful habits and desires. They spoke of finding happiness and peace in serving Jesus.

A Way Out

"That night I realized there was a chance for me to get out of the misery and the mess I was in. I hadn't had tears on my cheeks since I was a boy, but they were there that night as I listened to this wonderful Story. These people told me that Jesus could straighten out my whole life; and from that moment on I wanted to be a real Christian.

"An altar call was given at the close of the service, and I went forward to pray. The people of God knelt beside me in prayer. But that old devil was still raging in this heart of mine. He said: 'They are all lined up before you; you can strike them and take several in one swing' I had fought from the time I was a lad, but this time I held onto my hands, clenched my fists, and sat on them. I didn't want any more trouble! I was through with fighting for the rest of my life.

A New Start

"Even though I didn't pray through to salvation that night, I had made a start. When I went back aboard ship, the first thing I did was to clean out my locker. I threw my tobacco out the porthole before we ever left port. Out into the water went some of the things I had planned to have a good time with at sea.

"I started reading the Bible. I couldn't understand everything I read, but what I did understand touched my heart. My shipmates saw what I was doing, and how they made fun of me! But I didn't care what anybody said any more. I just wanted the peace that Jesus gives.

"One day I was reading my Bible in the mess hall, and some of the crew said, 'Throw that thing into the furnace. It isn't going to do you any good.' Another said, 'You had better see a psychiatrist. You need help.' I didn't pay any attention to them — I went on my knees and talked to the One who knew my heart. I had a prayer meeting all by myself on that ship

A Changed Life

"When my ship returned to Portland, my one desire was to get back to church and to pray at those altar. On my knees I sought Jesus in earnest. I didn't know much about praying but I told Him I was sorry for my sins, that I wanted to make Heaven my home. And God answered my prayers! He came into my heart, took out the desire for sin and gave me real peace and joy.

"Jesus took me from the skid row of life, delivered me from all evil habits and evil ways. My life was changed completely in one moment! I became a happy young man, clean and; pure in heart. All the turmoil, bitterness and discontent vanished. Think of it! From a life so miserable I considered suicide, to a life filled with joy and victory, in an instant of time!

"My contract called for one more voyage at sea. While the ship was in dock being repaired, I spent my time at the Apostolic Faith campground, helping get things in order for the coming camp meeting. How I enjoyed the fellowship of God's people! I wanted to stay right there — and, the Lord permitted it, too. It wasn't long before we were notified that our ship would sail no more. I was free to stay in Portland!

"Since Jesus saved me I have had many years of peace and satisfaction. I enjoy serving the Lord. I have a happy home, a Christian wife and three nice children. We have contentment in our home. I have many Christian friends, a glorious hope of Heaven, and I feel good inside.

"Jesus did that for me." — D. M.

This man is now one of the workers who visit the ships that dock in our Portland harbor, inviting others to attend church with him — just as he was once invited.