

Good News Today

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"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." — Jeremiah 29:11

PURPOSE AND MEANING

Read Jim's full blog at www.mightywind.org/blog

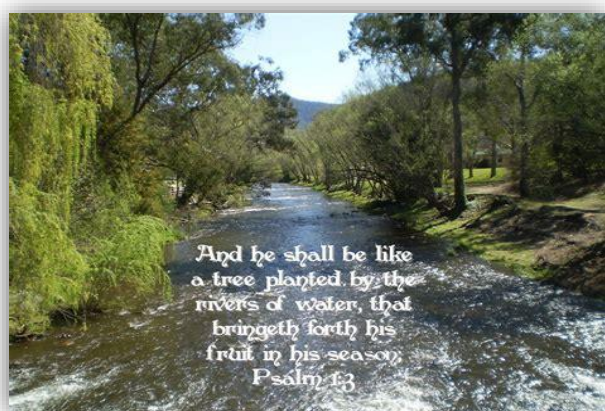
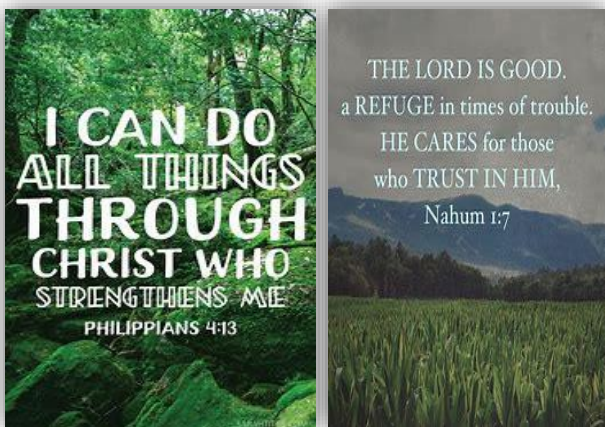
No doubt, hundreds of "How-To" books have been written over the years.

But when it comes to life's biggest questions—our purpose and meaning—we would be best served by diligently searching the ultimate **Owner's Manual**—the one true manual provided by the very Author of life Himself.

This all-time best seller, the Bible, is also known as:

Basic-Instructions-Before-Leaving-Earth.

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GRUMBLING AND COMPLAINING

"Do all things without grumbling or complaining"
Philippians 2:14

This scripture has been knocking on my wooden noggin all week.

Lately, as I inch my way toward eighty—just a couple of months away—I've been reflecting on how much grumbling and complaining I've done throughout my life.

Why? I ask myself. Why does my glass so often seem half empty instead of half full?

Sure, there have been moments of fullness, but not as many as I would have liked over the years.

It's easy to blame my past—my upbringing—because for most of my life, I used it as an excuse for my behavior. Even now, I can still see how it tries to influence me, leading me to walk around with a grumpy attitude and a big, gray, gloomy cloud hanging over my head.

When I came to Christ about thirty-five years ago, and I knew my life could change—and it has, for the most part. Yet, old habits don't always die quickly. I've also learned that true transformation can only come by the renewing of my mind—by always being willing to let new perspectives move in. How often had I heard the phrase: **"Good stuff in, good stuff out. Bad stuff in, bad stuff out."**

If I find myself spending too much time letting the negative influences of this tumultuous world dictate my thoughts, the **Old Man**—his old nature, his old habits, and his old ways of thinking—seizes the opportunity to creep back into my life.

I know who I am in Christ. I know the positive and hopeful scriptures. Oh, but how quickly I can forget when I allow myself to react impulsively instead of being someone who is quick to listen and slow to speak.

The book of James paints a vivid picture of this struggle:

"Anyone who hears the word but does not act on it is like a person who looks at their face in a mirror, sees themselves, and then immediately forgets what they look like." — **James 1:23-24**

One thing I know for sure—God still loves me, and I long to be more like Him. He never gives up on me and I will never stop striving to be changed and transformed into the man He created me to be.

The world is full of problems, but His Word—the Bible—is full of Good News. The choice will always be mine: Will I allow negative people, daily turmoil, health problems, or stinkin' thinkin' to shape my attitude, or will I let go and let God and His promises fill my glass?

My goal today and every day forward is to stay reminded to let His Word fill my glass with the **Fruit of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.**

"One of the first steps to fixing a problem is recognizing that you might just have one."

Hopefully, when someone asks me how I'm doing, I can answer like my good friend Mike Perryman in Texas does:

"Blessed and Highly Favored"

Mike Lewis

Here's a crazy thought:

"When I woke up this morning and thought about all that I had written, I started laughing and wondered—was I just grumbling and complaining about grumbling and complaining?"

What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us? Romans 8:31

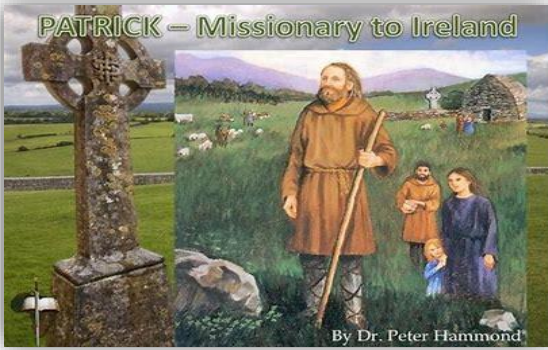
Today is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it! Psalm 118:24

Go Ye into the World and Make Disciples

Matthew 28:19-20

FELLOWSHIP OF THE UNASHAMED

THE TELEPHONE CALL



Shamrocks, leprechauns, and the color green often mark the celebration of Saint Patrick's Day on March 17. But there is much more to the story of the man named Patrick, a truly bold and faithful missionary.

Born in Britain in the fourth century, Patrick lived a life filled with suffering and adventure. Just before his 16th birthday, he was kidnapped by Irish pirates and sold into slavery to a Druid tribal chieftain in Ireland.

During his enslavement, Patrick found faith in Christ. In his autobiography, *Confessions*, he wrote:

"The Lord opened my senses to my unbelief, so that ... I might remember my many sins; and accordingly, I might turn to the Lord my God with all my heart."

Patrick's deep devotion earned him the nickname "Holy Boy" among his fellow slaves.

After six years in captivity, he escaped, traveling 200 miles to the coast, where he boarded a departing ship. Two years later, he finally reunited with his family and began studying to become a priest—until he had a life-changing dream.

A Calling to Return

Patrick dreamed of a man carrying a letter titled "The Voice of the Irish." He heard familiar voices calling:

"Holy broth of a boy, we beg you, come back and walk once more among us."

Convicted by this vision, Patrick knew he had to return to Ireland. Despite concerns from his parents and church leaders, he followed God's call to share the gospel with the people who had once enslaved him.

Patrick later wrote:

"So, at last I came here to the Irish gentiles to preach the gospel. ... And should I prove worthy, I am ready and willing to give up my own life, without hesitation, for His name."

Patrick preached across Ireland, even to his former slave owner. He faced opposition, imprisonment, and assassination attempts, but he remained faithful, calling himself a "slave of Christ."

Until his death on March 17, A.D. 461, Patrick devoted his life to spreading Christianity throughout Ireland. Over time, leprechauns and shamrocks became part of the holiday, but Patrick's true legacy remains his unwavering faith and dedication to Christ.

May his courageous life inspire you to stand firm in your faith and share the greatest gift of all: salvation through Jesus Christ.

*This story was shared on September 11, 2003
It was a call by Robert Matthews to a Norfolk, VA radio station.
Two years after the tragedies of 9/11/2001*

These are his words:

A few weeks before September 11th, my wife and I found out that we were going to have our first child. She planned a trip to California to visit her sister. On our way to the airport, we prayed that God would grant her a safe trip and be with her.

Shortly after I said "amen," we both heard a loud pop, and the car shook violently. We had blown a tire. I replaced it as quickly as I could, but we still missed her flight. We were very upset and drove home

A few hours later I received a call from my father, who was a retired NYFD firefighter. He asked for my wife's flight number, but I explained that we had missed the flight. After I gave him the number, he told me that her flight was the one that crashed into the southern tower. I was too shocked to speak. He also had more news for me; he said he was going to help. "I can't just sit by; I have to do something."

Of course, I was concerned for his safety, but even more because he had never given his life to Christ. After a brief debate, I knew his mind was made up. Before he got off of the phone, he said, "Take good care of my grandchild." Those were the last words I ever heard my father say; he died while helping in the rescue effort.

My joy that the prayer for my wife's safety had been answered quickly, would soon turn to anger. I was angry at God, at my father, and at myself. For nearly two years, I blamed God for taking my father away. My son would never know his grandfather, my father had never accepted Christ, and I never got to say good-bye.

Then something happened.

About two months ago, I was sitting at home with my wife and our son. There was a knock at the door. I looked at my wife, but I could tell she wasn't expecting anyone. I opened it to find a young couple standing there with a small child.

The man looked at me and asked if my father's name was Jake Matthews. I told him it was. He quickly grabbed my hand and said, "I never got the chance to meet your father, but it's an honor to meet his son."

He explained that his wife had worked in the World-Trade Center and had been caught inside after the attack. She was pregnant and my father had found her pinned under the debris. He was able to help and set her free. My eyes welled up with tears as I thought of my father giving his life for this young woman.

The young man said, "There is something else you need to know." His wife then told me that as my father worked to free her, she spoke to him and led him to Christ.

I began sobbing at the news.

When their baby boy was born, they named him Jacob Matthew, in honor of my father, who gave his life so that this mother and child could live.

Now I know that when I get to Heaven, my father will be standing beside Jesus to welcome me, and that this family will be able to thank him themselves.

Please take time to share this amazing story. You may never know the impact it could have on someone. ***God doesn't call the qualified, He qualifies the called.***

