



### Walk A New Way

BY BECKY COMBEE

I woke up this morning singing a song I am sure I had not heard in fifty years. The human spirit is an amazing computer, storing the many concepts and ideas that have been regularly repeated in our life. Rolling out of this vast God-given computer was the music and words to a wonderful song by Oswald Smith. What a blessing!

In this song, our brother highlights the great joy of being forgiven. He writes, "Once my heart was burdened, but now I am forgiven." While exposing our past darkness, bondage and misery, He declares that Jesus has set us free. With the broadest stroke of joy, he speaks of a new melody ringing in our heart, a song of praise, a triumphant song of liberty. This song that vibrates the strings of our heart he calls, "The Song of the Soul Set Free."

**Freedom from sin through the death and Resurrection of our Lord is more than a trite concept. It is a biblical, spiritual fact.** When we accept Jesus as our Savior and Lord, our sins are remitted or blotted out. We can understand this if we think of a teacher erasing notes from the blackboard. With the eraser, every written instruction is eliminated. Gone!

The blood of Jesus is God's eraser to cancel sin. The sacrifice of Jesus has rescued us, releasing us from past guilt. We are forgiven! We are free!

### No Looking Back

BY SUZANNE D. WILLIAMS

I noticed the other day when driving my daughter to work that I spent an awful lot of time looking in the rearview window. I like to think I'm a safe driver, although I know I'm impatient at times, but that day, I realized how unsafe a behavior that was and how much of a habit it'd become.

Throughout the Scriptures, God said to look forward. He told the Israelites to "go forward" into the Red Sea.<sup>5</sup> He warned Lot's family of the dangers of looking back.<sup>6</sup> So serious was his wife's mistake that in the New Testament we're told to remember her behavior.<sup>7</sup>

Why? One commentary said of the passage about Lot's wife that to look back increases the DESIRE to return. Think again about the Israelites, who mourned the loss of food they'd eaten in Egypt. They no longer had God's vision as their goal, but instead, DOUBTED His love for them and, as a result, formed a DECEIVED view of the truth.<sup>8</sup>

Their past wasn't as great as it seemed at that moment. Men and women do this with their memories all the time. Suddenly, what was actually a road lined with potholes becomes smooth sailing when viewed through rose-colored glasses. Lot's wife looked back with longing for what God had decided to DESTROY, and because of DISOBEDIENCE, her DEATH was the result.

The Israelites wandered in the DESERT for 40

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We are sons and daughters of God, carrying the DNA of heaven, eternal life. This is why we sing hallelujah! We have been ransomed. The penalty of sin was paid by the only-begotten Son of God, and now we have God's nature. Our heart is full of wonder. Joyfully we sing of our Redeemer and His loving sacrifice.

But, here is the problem. In times of stress, we often retreat to the past, forgetting the great sacrifice of our King. We wallow in our dilemma and at the same time, rehearse our tragedies and mistakes. We remember the harsh words of decades prior, the subtle lies and exaggerations of our childhood, the friend we ignored yesterday, and so much more. These sins consume us, hanging over our head like a dark cloud. For the moment, forgiveness seems so very far away.

However, the apostle Paul gave us wise counsel when he said, "Forgetting those things which are behind."<sup>1</sup> When we confess our sins, God forgives us. He buries our sin in the deepest sea, casting it as far away as the east from the west. Therefore, there is no record of our past that needs to be reviewed over and over again.

There is no pathway that must be tread one more time. No mistake commands our constant attention. No voice from heaven rails against us.

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(Continued from NO LOOKING BACK)

years after they looked back. Not because they were lost. Moses had traveled across the Sinai Peninsula when he return from his father-in-law's house. He knew the way, and it was, in fact, a known trade route. No, they wandered around because after all God had done for them, the signs and wonders in front of Pharoah, the parting of the Red Sea, they looked behind, DESIRING to return.<sup>9</sup>

You'd think we wouldn't want what has been so awful, but the devil is a liar and subtle sometimes. He changes the heart of society and we find ourselves not as tough on sin as we used to be. We let popular figures or family members DRAG us away from the straight-and-narrow.

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WE ARE FORGIVEN!

The memory of our faults and flaws should bring no pain. We *were* guilty. We *are* forgiven. Yesterday, our lifestyle screams, "Don't follow me," but today, we are an example of divine recovery. We may have a story to tell (one we wish we did not ever experience), but our sin and stupidity is FORGIVEN. We may have suffered because of sin. We may have harmed our family and friends. But, never again must we walk downcast and dejected.

**God is our Father. He is faithful to forgive us and cleanse us from ALL the wrong that we have done.**<sup>2</sup> When we confess our sins, He erases them. The New Living Translation writes that He will never think of them again.<sup>2</sup> This is the reason, the apostle Paul said we could, "Look forward to what lies ahead."<sup>1</sup> But, we must never forget his Holy Spirit inspired words. "Now that we are on the right track, let's stay on it."<sup>4</sup> In the Contemporary English Version, we read, "We must keep going in the direction that we are now headed."

We must let these great words of wisdom guide us. God has spoken. We are FORGIVEN and today is a NEW day. Yesterday we bowed our heart at the cross and stood at the empty tomb. Now we sit in the upper room to be empowered as heaven's ambassador and walk a NEW way. Walk, child of God. Keep walking and don't look back.

**Our focus shouldn't shift.** Jesus looked before Him, and we follow His example.<sup>10</sup> God has provided the shield of faith to protect us as we advance. He has also promised to take care of what lies behind. We can rest in that promise and stop looking back as if there's anything to retrieve from the past. Our forgiveness is a complete one. We don't need what was given to us during our bondage, and in fact, to look back at it is DANGEROUS, except through the eyes of faith.<sup>11</sup>

Our attention should be on God. We shouldn't stand around, worried about the fig tree when God spoke to it already. Instead, we DELIGHT in Him, knowing He's already paved the way into a glorious future. He DEFEATED the devil, and we share His victory. There is our DESTINY.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Php 3:13 <sup>2</sup>1Jn 1:9 <sup>3</sup>Is 43:25 <sup>4</sup>Php 3:16 MSG <sup>5</sup>Ex 14:15 <sup>6</sup>Ge 19:17 <sup>7</sup>Lk 17:32 <sup>8</sup>Php 3:13, Jamiesson-Faussett Brown Commentary;

Num 11:5 <sup>9</sup>Ex 3:1; Ex 4:18; Ex 12:35-36 <sup>10</sup>Heb 12:2 <sup>11</sup>Eph 6:16; Ps 139:5; Mt 16:23 <sup>12</sup>Mt 21:19,21; Ps 1:2; Ps 37:4; Col 2:15