



# Becky Combee Ministries, Inc.

For God SO LOVED the world...

Jn 3:16

## *SO Love*

BY BECKY COMBEE

I was raised in a Christian home, yet you might jokingly say I was brought up in the church parking lot because we were always at church. I loved it! I did not resent church attendance, as many others did, but was glad to be there. It was our life.

My parents kept us very close to the Bible and our great and mighty God. They also enforced the many do's and don'ts that were considered a part of every Christian's life. If you are a new believer, you probably have not heard these rules of yesterday, but as a Christian, you would not play cards, attend dances, watch movies, or use dice. In some places, you could not drink Cokes on Sunday. Although, I believe there is wisdom in some of these prohibitions, I know, very often, they did not represent the voice of God.

My father had strong convictions about these rules, and on occasion, he would comment on them. I don't remember ever asking for an explanation, but I remember well his remarks. He would usually say, "I tried that. You wouldn't like it." Since I was not one to skirt the principles I was taught, this explanation was okay with me. He would also say, "You will never fit in." He was right!

Jesus didn't fit in with the established religion

of His day. In fact, the religious leadership bitterly resented His intrusion into their "established system." They should have welcomed Him with open arms as God's promised Messiah, but instead they plotted to get rid of Him. With the cooperation of Judas, one of Jesus' disciples, they were finally successful.

However, Jesus came to die. He told His disciples, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me."<sup>1</sup> From the book of Acts, we understand that His death was accomplished through the "determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God."<sup>2</sup> I love the Message translation, which clarifies this verse saying that His death was the "deliberate and well thought out plan of God." In the New Living translation, His death is called a "prearranged plan."

Although the religious leaders thought they orchestrated Jesus death, it was always God's plan. Jesus reiterates this when He said that no man took His life, but that He laid it down. In obedience to the Father's plan and His great love for all men, Jesus surrendered Himself to die.

The foundation of God's plan to save mankind from sin is God's great love. In John 3:16, we read that God SO loved the world. This small word SO cannot be overlooked or minimized. It is the foundation of many extremes in our life. We often

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hear someone emphasize a dilemma saying that it is SO confusing, SO devastating, or SO behind schedule. We are also familiar with the expressions SO tired, SO ridiculous, and SO uncalled for. In a very positive sense, we enlarge our vision declaring that someone is SO beautiful, SO wise, and SO gifted. We need this little word SO.

God SO loved the world! He SO loved us that He walked through the ages with a plan of rescue in His heart. Jesus would die! He would die for the world. In the fullness of time, Jesus would be born in Bethlehem and raised in Nazareth as the carpenter's son. At the age of thirty, He would be baptized by John the Baptist, receiving the power of God's Spirit so that He could accomplish the will of God on earth. Then after three years of preaching the gospel, healing the sick and training twelve disciples, He would die.

The apostle Paul wrote that Jesus died for the ungodly, the sinner, and the weak.<sup>3</sup> This means that God's SO love and great plan of rescue was for everyone because no man escapes sin. According to the apostle John, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves."<sup>4</sup> But, I am not deceived. I know that I WAS a sinner, but today I am a child of God.

Everyone who accepts Jesus as Savior and Lord becomes a child of God. But, here is something that is very, very important. As God's child, we recognize that Jesus is no longer dead. After three days and nights, He fulfilled God's plan and was raised from death by the Spirit of God. Now, He is in heaven at the right hand of His Father as our glorified Lord.

One day, all God's children will be in heaven to bow before God's throne. Throughout eternity, we can praise Him for His GREAT plan of rescue and His SO love. The songwriter accurately wrote, "Oh that will be glory for me. When by His grace, I shall look on His face. That will be glory. Be glory for me."<sup>5</sup> I wholeheartedly agree. What a day that will be!

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<sup>1</sup>Jn 12:32 <sup>2</sup>Acts 2:23 <sup>3</sup>Rm 5:6,8 <sup>4</sup>1Jn 1:8 <sup>5</sup>"O That Will Be Glory"  
by Chas. H. Gabriel, 1900

## Unbeaten

BY SUZANNE D. WILLIAMS

We're not meant to match, to blend in. God didn't dress us in camouflage and say, "Assimilate." In fact, His instructions were specific. We're called "peculiar". We're told not to "conform", but to stand out.<sup>1</sup>

We're outcasts, outsiders who believe in a world we cannot see. In forces held in the heavens by a Being others deny exists.

We're fluorescent pink in a sea of beige. A red flower growing in a bed of yellow.

We're the voice crying out in the wilderness of darkened minds and shaking heads. Of hatred. "Make way for the Lord."<sup>2</sup>

We hold our light high for the world to see, while they try with clawing fingers to snuff it out. They'll fail. And fall. Because our light comes from a source that no man can reach on his own.

There's only one way to it, one skinny path, leading through a field of thorns to the foot of a cross, bathed in the blood of a Man who died as a criminal to defeat the greatest power of all – death. And unseen from the people of his day, from the priests and populace who condemned him, He did defeat it and rose triumphant.<sup>3</sup>

A man like no other, who followed no one, but drew everyone and loved anyone. Including those who hung him there.

"Go and do likewise."<sup>4</sup>

Be distinct. Be definite. Leave no one guessing Whose you are, but stand in the center of an earth in conflict and dare to trust that the target on your back is, in fact, a shield powered by the greatest Source of all. Impermeable. Impenetrable. Unbeaten.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>1Pe 2:9;Rm 12:2 <sup>2</sup>Mt3:3;Jn 1:23 <sup>3</sup>Jn 14:6;Col 2:15 <sup>4</sup>Jn 5:19 <sup>5</sup>Eph 6:16