**The Sovereignty of God in the Salvation of My Father's Slayer**

In April 1994, I was invited to fly round the world and expound the Lord's Prayer in the U. S. A. during September. Having acquired the plane ticket, as an only child I was much looking forward to visiting my parents in Barrydale (near Swellendam in South Africa) on my way from Australia to America.

However, in July 1994, my father (almost 86) was robbed and left for dead in his home. My mother (having lost her mind and the use of some of her bodily functions) was permanently hospitalised. One week after being assaulted, my father died in hospital and went to be with the Lord.

Upon my arrival in South Africa in September, I headed for Swellendam (where my mother is still in hospital). There, I was amazed that the police had apprehended a young man in connection with the death of my father, and that the young man had signed a statement alleging that he alone had attacked my father. I also learned that my father, before dying, had given a description to the police of the young man (which description is altogether in harmony with the appearance of the accused) and that the latter was being held in jail precisely in Swellendam, while awaiting his preliminary trial just one week after my own arrival there.

I immediately contacted the jail, requesting permission to come and speak to the accused (of whom it is alleged that he had killed also someone else even before attacking my father). The police warmly supported my request, but informed me the accused had the right to refuse to see me. He, however, being told who I was, agreed and even requested to meet with me.

On the 15th of September I went to the jail, where I was told to surrender my camera and tape-recorder and any firearms I may have been carrying. I was escorted to a room where three armed policemen and their officer were doing clerical work. One minute later, the accused was brought through the door into the room and stood there in front of me.

He was a strongly-built medium-sized man, answering exactly to the description given by my father to the police. He stood there, just looking down at the ground. I silently prayed to God for guidance as to what to do next. Then I got up from my chair; addressed him politely by his full name; greeted him with a handshake; thanked him sincerely for granting me the interview; and requesting him to sit down before I again did so.

I then said: "Mr. W., are you getting enough to eat here?" He replied: "Yes, thank you." I said: "Have you peace of mind here?" He replied: "Sir, I am very unhappy. I have been praying to God in my cell for the last three nights, but it's as if my prayers bounce back off the ceiling and don't get through."

I then said: "Mr. W., I am the only child of the old man who was left for dead behind the front door of his house in Barrydale on the 10th of July whom you are accused of having assaulted. I had been looking forward to spending a week with him in September, but as you can see this is now impossible." The young man nodded; looked down; and said nothing.

I then continued: "Mr. W., my father was not a Christian many years ago, but there came a time in his life when he turned from his sins and received Jesus as his Lord and Saviour. That is why he is now in heaven, and waiting for me to join him.

"I assure you Mr. W., that if you make your peace with God -- whether you die right now of a heart attack; or are to be put to death for murder; or die naturally later on -- you too will go to heaven. I also assure you that my father, whom you are accused of having murdered, will then be the first to welcome you there. However, Mr. W., if you do not repent and if you die in your sins, I assure you that you will spend eternity in hell-fire and damnation forever!

"Mr. W., whether you repent and become a Christian, or you harden yourself and die in your sins, know for sure that if found guilty by the court I would want you to receive the maximum penalty.

"I will plead no leniency whatsoever for you, even if you become a Christian, but I am offering you everlasting life in heaven after you die, if you will repent and come to Jesus.

"Mr. W., three men died on a little hill called Calvary. Two were guilty robbers; but the One in the middle, the Lord Jesus, was innocent. Robbers, as you know, include those who go around beating up old people and leaving them for dead after stealing from them. Both of those robbers jeered at the innocent Jesus crucified between them.

"But then one of the robbers repented, turned to the other, and said: 'We are being condemned justly. For we are receiving the punishment due, for our deeds. But this man (Jesus) has done nothing amiss!' Then the penitent robber said to Jesus: 'Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom!' So Jesus said: 'Truly, I tell you, today you shall be with me in paradise!'

"Mr. W., do you not see yourself as one of those two robbers next to Jesus on Calvary? Will you die in your sins and go to hell like the impenitent robber? Or will you, like the other robber, repent of your sins; receive Jesus as your Lord; and be assured by Him that you will go to heaven when you die?

"Mr. W., if you wish, I will leave this jail right now. But if you prefer, I would be privileged to show you right now how you too can become a Christian. Which is it to be?"

Mr. W. then tried to look in my eye. He said: "Sir, would you please show me how to become a Christian?" I then realised that the four policemen in the room had all put down their pens; had stopped working; and were straining their ears, listening to us. So I said: "Officer, could you kindly get us a Bible?"

The officer went galloping out of the room, and immediately returned with a Bible and put it on my lap with great respect. I opened it at John 3:16, and asked Mr. W. if he could read. When he so indicated, I handed him the Bible, and asked him to read it. Loudly and clearly, he read it out, and then said: "I am too big a sinner!" But I replied: "Mr. W., it says here: 'whosoever'; and that includes you too, if and when you put your trust in Jesus."

The atmosphere was electric. All in that room felt the awesome presence of God the Holy Ghost. The silence was terrifying. Then I said: "Mr. W., will you come to Jesus?" He replied: "I will!"

So, two wicked hell-deserving sinners Rev. Prof. Dr. Nigel Lee and his father's slayer Mr. W., then went down on their knees in that jail together. I put my arm around his shoulder, and prayed first. I thanked God for our meeting; (re)confessed all my own fresh sins to the Lord; and then asked Him to have mercy on Mr. W., for Christ's sake.

Mr. W. then prayed. He said: "Lord, I'm a miserable sinner! Please don't let Satan destroy me! I am sorry for all my sins. Forgive me, for the sake of Jesus who died for people like me!"

We then got off our knees. I assured him: "Mr. W., if you really meant that, you are now my brother. In that case, here is my right hand of fellowship. I will help you in any way I can. Here is my address in Australia. If you write to me, I promise to reply to every letter you may write, for the rest of my life. When is your trial?"

He replied: "Thursday 22nd September." I promised to pray for him on that day (when I would be overseas), that justice would be done and that he would continue to receive God's grace whatever the outcome. I then again shook his hand and left the jail to the astonishment of both the grateful police and the bewildered convicts there who just kept on staring at me in amazement.

Driving back to Barrydale, I praised God and sang His Psalms the whole time -- realizing anew that God is not dead but very much alive on this great planet earth. For God had revived my soul -- and, I trust, those of all in that room in the jail.

Four days later, I visited the jail again. This time Mr. W. was waiting for me with a smile. He had been reading the Bible since I last saw him, and claimed to have peace. I urged him to speak to the other prisoners about what had happened to him; to tell the full truth at his trial.

I also urged him to work and witness for the Lord for the rest of his earthly life (be it short or long). He then prayed for both of us; thanked God for my visits; and boldly asked the Lord to bless me wherever I went (that same day to England, and thereafter to America).

God heard his prayer. In London, the Lord spoke powerfully even through my there relating the above events. In America, the effect was electrifying, and the tape-recording of my account is spreading like wildfire and producing awesome enquires and results. I used it there, as an illustration, while preaching on the fifth petition in the Lord's Prayer: "And forgive men their debts, as we forgive our debtors!"

My fellow sinner, how stands it with your soul? Are you certain you are right with God for time and eternity? For Jesus assures us: "If you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses!"

O that God would melt the heavens and come down, and touch and revive His hard-nosed children here on earth! Do you have the certainty that all your sins have been forgiven, for Christ's sake? If not, settle this matter forthwith!

Sincerely in the Lord's service, from a sinner saved by grace

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