

*Thanks to my wife for her encouragement  
– and for always being on my side.*

*Thanks also to my daughter Esther for her  
help with the photographs and designing  
the cover of this book.*

*Most of all thanks to the Saviour, who has  
saved my soul and redeemed my life from  
destruction.*

*While I Was Musing The Fire Burned*

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Kenneth Michael Miller

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All Scripture quotations are from the Authorized King James Version of the Bible.

# *Preface*

This book is a collection of articles I have written over the past few years. They did not come from academic study but from the things God has worked out in my own life. There are many things in this book that were learned the hard way, so please do not read through them lightly. I promise you that there are things here that will feed and strengthen your soul, your faith in God, and your understanding of God and his ways. There are things in this book that will help and strengthen your relationships with others, if you will let God speak to your heart and apply it to your life.

I have been a foreign missionary and a pastor. Preaching is a calling for me – not a profession. Although I have been in the ministry for the past 28 years my life has included a lot of hard physical work. It has helped me to stay more in touch with real life application of the Word of God. Working for a living has also given me freedom from the pressure to conform in order to keep my salary. I have never been one to run with the crowd so I am less affected by the opinions of others than most people are. This gives me a freedom to say things that many others refuse to say anymore because it has become unpopular.

My earnest prayer is that Lord may use the things in this book to strengthen and help the people of God.

– *Kenneth Michael Miller*

Dear Reader,

*"And all the people went their way to eat, and to drink, and to send portions, and to make great mirth, because they had understood the words that were declared unto them." – Nehemiah 8:12*

In this world of uncertainties and worries, it is good to know that there are still some who look to the truth of the Word of God for their sustenance. In the glorious pages of the Bible we can find help in time of need, peace in tribulation, and joy in sorrow.

For the most part, the preaching in our pulpits today has become a hollow, shallow thing. Men enter into Bible Schools and seminaries to learn how to speak, how to promote their ideas, and how to become successful, but obviously not how to humble themselves in the sight of God. The churches grow to be monstrous works of men, as the mustard seed grew into a tree that the birds of the air came to roost in (Luke 13:19); an unnatural thing that harms the Kingdom of God instead of helping the souls of men. There is a famine in the land as souls are not being fed from the pulpits, nor is salvation and sanctification presented as a necessity for Christian living. Holiness is shunned and ridiculed, proclaimed as an impossibility, even though the Bible clearly states, "Be ye holy."

If you are wondering how I know all these things, it is because I grew up in church hearing these kinds of "truths," which left me with the idea that if I said a prayer and really meant it, I was saved. I based my hope on a

profession of faith as a ten-year-old, but as I passed through my youth, the sin that I became involved in left me wondering how I could do the things I was doing and be saved. I would try to go back to the altar and "get saved" again, but with no more results than I had before. But through the great mercy and longsuffering of God and the patience and love of my husband, I have found heaven on earth, peace in my soul, and a deep seated contentment that only forgiveness of sin through the Lord Jesus Christ can bring. Only God can bring deliverance, and He works through a godly person surrendered to His will.

The goal my husband has set forth in this book is to bring you truth in a way that will provoke you to think. Some have said that, "the truth hurts," and there are things that you might read here that may seem to be very hard. I challenge you to look for yourself, search the scriptures and read the context of the passages that he uses in these devotions. If you are to find help for your soul you must put aside the ideas of men and focus on the Word of God. The doctrines of men are polluting the truth of salvation and redemption and can only be purified by the truth of God's Word. Purging is never accomplished without the heat of the fire, and redemption is never achieved without the pain of conviction. Mike takes his calling seriously, and that calling is to "make straight the way of the Lord," to present the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ in a way that will clear up some of the confusion that is so common now.

Do you have a hunger for the truth and for something more than the common cliches and rhetoric we have heard so much? Then you have come to the right place. All you need is an open heart and a willingness to hear. The key to finding answers to the questions in your soul is to find a voice that will tell the truth to have a heart that will listen. That is what you will find in this book; one voice crying in the wilderness of this dark world to the souls that are hungry enough to listen.

You have in your hands a book full of the truth of God. There is food for your soul within these pages. I trust that you have chosen to read this book because you are hungry for something real. I pray that as you read you will find answers to troubling questions, bread and water to keep you many days, and joy in the truth of God's Word. May God bless you richly is my prayer for you.

In His Care,  
*Teresa Miller*  
Proverbs 28:13

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# Forgiveness

*And the scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, Who is this which speaketh blasphemies? Who can forgive sins, but God alone? – Luke 5:21*

“Who can forgive sins, but God alone?” The Pharisees were showing their self-righteous pride and were wrong again. It is NOT only God who can forgive sins! We are all able to forgive, not only that, but God requires us to forgive!

*But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses. – Mark 11:26*

God’s forgiveness toward us is conditioned upon our forgiveness of others. God promises that if we refuse to forgive those who do us wrong then He will not forgive us either. With so much at stake we better understand what forgiveness is, what it is not, and how we can do it. We better not think like the Pharisees and relegate it to a spiritual realm that is out of our reach.

First of all, forgiving is not forgetting. Most people take this view and therefore think it impossible to forgive because they know they cannot forget. God never says He will forget. He says He will not remember, and there is a big difference. To forget is to purge it from your memory, and therefore to never think about it – as if it never happened. To “not remember” is to refuse to recall it to ponder and think about it again. It is to stop living in the past and start living from this day forward.

To forgive does not erase all the effects of the transgression. Sin causes pain, sorrow, and grief. Someone gets hurt. In fact, everyone gets hurt. Sin is deadly and it eventually kills everything it touches unless forgiveness enters into the picture. The transgressor has defiled his conscience and his soul and the guilt will destroy him if he does not find forgiveness. He may not think so right now and he may not appear to have any remorse, but one day he will. The one who is hurt by the sin will become bitter and their life will be tainted by the feelings of resentment and revenge if they do not find a way to truly forgive. Their bitterness will spread to those around them.

*Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled; – Heb 12:15*

God is our example for forgiveness. If He can forgive what has been done against him then surely we should be able to forgive anything that could be done against us in this temporal world. The Bible does not say that God so loved the world that he forgave them all their sins. It says that God so loved the world that He GAVE HIS ONLY BEGOTTEN SON. God does not forgive us based on the fact that He loves us. God put himself in a body of flesh and suffered and died in our place and it is on that basis that He forgives. He took our place.

If you truly forgive you will also have to be willing to take the place of the transgressor. Jesus called it bearing our “cross.” One big obstacle to forgiveness is that our sense of justice demands that they be punished. By the law we

have a right to demand punishment, but forgiveness is much better and does much more to repair the damage and salvage the lives that are affected by the sin. There will be an argument in your soul that says, “It just is not fair!” But you must realize that God could have felt that way about us, too. However, He loved us and counted our redemption worth the cost, so He bore our sins in his own body on the tree. To truly forgive you must be willing to suffer the hurt yourself so the sinner can be free and be reconciled to the one he has wronged.

*Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins. – James 5:20*

If you forgive you will suffer pain, but you will also salvage the life and maybe the soul of the one you forgive. God requires it of us. We cannot receive his forgiveness if we cannot turn around and give to others what He has given to us. “For the joy that was set before him he endured the cross, despising the shame...” Nothing is as sweet as being forgiven, unless it is being the one who forgives. It is a wonderful gift that enriches everyone touched by it, and remember – it is not “only God” who can forgive sins, you can, too!

\* \* \* \*

*Forgiveness means giving up all hope for a better past.*

*Forgiveness is me giving up my right to hurt you for hurting me. –Author Unknown*

## *So You Are Mad at God?*

He did not give you what you wanted, or maybe you are blaming him for taking away something or someone that was dear to your heart. Maybe you have a burden to carry in life that you think is just not fair and you blame God for not treating you right. You prayed and He did not answer your prayer the way you expected or the way you wanted Him to. You see others around you that seem far less worthy and yet they seem to prosper and be blessed and spared the painful trials that are your lot in life.

Without a doubt there are a lot of people who can see themselves in the words above. If you are angry with God chances are you are doing wrong things in your life to get even with Him. If you are not doing that yet, you will. The first thing to consider is that you are going to lose this fight. You may treat your parents this way, or your wife or husband this way, and get away with it, but you will not treat God this way without suffering the consequences. He is God – not just another person! God is the One who is just and you are being unjust by being angry with Him.

The basic problem here is that you have decided God is not fair. You have decided what is just and unjust based on your own personal desires and opinions, and then you have laid your homemade measure up to God. You have condemned yourself by doing this because Jesus said in Matthew 7:2, “For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall

be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.” You will be judged by the same measure with which you judge others – including God. You have judged God according to your idea of justice and so you will have to measure up to the same standard.

Apparently, your idea of justice is that God should do exactly as you please. If He denies you what you want from Him then He has not treated you fairly. So here is a question for you: How have you treated God? Have you done exactly as He wanted you to since the day you were born? If you are honest you must admit that you have denied God most of what He has asked of you. In fact, if you are honest at all you will have to acknowledge that you have hurt God and wronged Him more times than anyone can count. How did God react when you treated him wrong? Did He react to you the way you are reacting to what you think are His wrongs? Absolutely not! We all know that God forgives! He is not only willing to forgive, but He came to earth and put Himself in a body of flesh like ours and allowed Himself to be beaten, spit upon, and put to death for the wrongs you have done to Him. And you cannot allow Him any space? There is no room in your heart to forgive Him for the perceived wrong that you think He has dealt to you? Because you cannot have things your way you are going to abandon God forever, defile your body, pollute your mind, and wreck your home to get even with Him? What kind of a wretched creature would do that? If you demand “your kind of justice” then you will be judged by “your kind of justice.” But it is far better to base

your relationship with God on mercy and forgiveness because it works both ways.

Here is the truth of the matter: God has never done anyone wrong! The injustices, the evil, the bad things that happen in this world are the result of sin – NOT a loving God! It was BECAUSE of all this injustice and misery God was made flesh, suffered, and died. God is not about sending trouble to make you miserable, He is about delivering you from trouble if you will turn to Him and trust Him. Remember, He is the Savior! You have not suffered the injustice or the pain He suffered!

Another thing you must consider is the fact that God knows more than we do. We only see the present and we are blinded by the circumstances, but God sees past all that and has a plan to do something wonderful with you through your trouble. He does make all things work together for good to them that love God. By being angry with God and rebelling against Him you are wrecking the plan of God and making the world a more miserable place.

The thing that has made you angry with God is not anything that others have not suffered also. All our trials are “common to man.” You are just so full of self-pity and plain-old selfishness that you think you have had to endure something beyond what any other human has ever had to suffer. I wonder what your trial would look like if it were laid alongside some of the trials others have had to endure through the ages? Many have been burned at the stake, or had their children tortured and killed in front of their eyes.

Others have lost everything simply because they refused to deny the Christ that redeemed their soul. There is no cruelty, or hardship, or tragedy that has not been done to the people of God through the ages. But you have been wronged so much more than they and therefore you have a right to be mad at God. I am telling you that you will want to find a place to crawl and hide yourself when we all stand before God. Your trial may be hard and your burden may be heavy, but chances are you are rubbing shoulders with people who are carrying heavier burdens and have endured harder trials that you know anything about. The hardest trials are those that are endured in secret without the comfort of the prayers and sympathy of others.

Those who are truly right with God will love Him with all their heart. If a person truly has a relationship of love with God they will not be able to walk out on Him like you are doing. When you love someone and your lives are all tied up together you will find a way to forgive any wrong, or perceived wrong because you cannot face life without them. If you truly love God you would be willing to forgive Him even if He did do you wrong. Job said, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him." It is unjust for you to expect God to forgive you while you refuse Him any grace or mercy at all.

So are you going to throw your life away because you are mad at God? While you are doing that you are going to be throwing away your children's lives also. Remember that! Add to that list your spouse and your parents and anyone else who has looked to you as an example. But that is all

OK, with you, because everyone else needs to suffer because you did not get your perfect wish?

Of all the beings in the universe, God is the last One anyone has a right to be angry with. He is the only One that is completely just and right. He is the ONLY One that can be trusted completely. For blind, sinful creatures such as we to charge God with injustice is certainly one of the most abominable things a human can do.

If this little article has described you then you must turn from this evil now. You will see, as multitudes have seen through the ages, that God IS faithful. You just have not waited long enough to see what He has in mind. Trust Him! Whatever it is that you are angry with God about is now a part of your life – with God or without Him. If it is that great a burden it will be much easier to bear with God's help and grace. You need Him, and He will be there for you if you will let Him.

And one more thing you must know: God will not hold a grudge. He will forgive you of this wicked thing if you will come to Him in repentance and faith. He desires reconciliation because He loves you and He wants you in spite of how you feel about Him right now. Would it not be better to find the sweetness that the person who wrote the words below found in their trial than to continue in the bitterness that is eating your soul right now?

*He giveth more grace as our burdens grow greater,  
He sendeth more strength as our labors increase;  
To added afflictions He addeth His mercy,  
To multiplied trials He multiplies peace.*

*His love has no limits, His grace has no measure,  
His power no boundary known unto men;  
For out of His infinite riches in Jesus  
He giveth, and giveth, and giveth again.*

Why not turn back to God and trade your misery for joy and peace?

\* \* \* \*

*Anger blows out the lamp of the mind. It is a child's reaction to an adult situation. – Author Unknown*

*Bitterness arises in our hearts when we do not trust in the sovereign rule of God in our lives – Jerry Bridges*

*God has never done anything that should legitimately cause anger in any of His children. We are never warranted in getting angry at God. Ever. It happens. And we should admit it, and tremble, and repent, and turn back to humble trust in His sovereign goodness. – John Piper*

## *What Must I Do to Be Saved?*

“What must I DO to be saved?” That is the most common question asked by the awakened soul who is seeking the Lord. It is also the biggest cause of stumbling when it comes to finding true salvation. It is the main reason that most people who seek to enter in will miss God and end up in hell. It reveals the blindness of the heart toward what salvation is all about. It shows the lack of understanding about what God is like, about what is wrong between the lost soul and God, and about what God desires, and what He requires of us. More people attach themselves to a false hope by DOING some religious exercise than anything else.

Being reconciled to God is to be made a new creature. Therefore, it is about what you ARE – not what you DO. To DO is far easier than to BE. It is the BEING that the soul estranged from God resists so strongly. If I can DO something that will assure me that I am OK, then that is what I want to do. Many are willing to DO anything just to know that they will not go to hell when they die, but few are willing to BE what they must be.

These continual attempts at DOING are the surest way to end up in hell. Many people have said about the state of their soul, “I’ve done all I know to do! What else can I do?” They are still lost and know it in their heart, but they are still looking for something else to DO! You MUST stop

thinking that way before you have any hope of entering the kingdom of God! The hopelessness of folks like this is a great grief of soul because they seemed trapped in this futile way of thinking. They go to church seeking the peace of God in their soul and they are told to pray the sinner's prayer, be baptized, and become faithful to the church activities. If you DO all those things then you will have assurance of salvation – supposedly. But EVERYONE finds out that those things do not give you assurance in your heart. Sadly, most people stop there and do not enter in, just as Jesus warned would happen in Luke 13:24:

*Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.*

In order to be saved you must COME to God and BE his. You must BE-COME his!

*And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul. – **Gen 2:7***

God gave us physical life and it is God alone who can give us eternal life – there is nothing we can do of ourselves that can bring forth life of any kind. So what is the key? How does it happen? How do we get this life from God? First of all, you must understand that God wants you and you must say “yes” to him. You must give up your rights to yourself and give God the reins of your life. You must give up your identity and BE the bride of Christ. Your life must cease being about you and start being about Him. You must BE his! So the question is: WILL you BE his? Will you allow God to own your life, your will, and everything else

about you? This is not works, it is a matter of giving your heart to another – to God.

It is a wondrous thing that the King of the Universe would even want such poor wretches as we, who have defiled our souls and wrecked our lives with sin! Yet He offers to pardon our sins, wash our minds, purge our defiled consciences, give us new life here, and eternal life with Him in Heaven if we will simply stop maintaining our independence and give ourselves to him. He will save us if we will simply STOP trying to DO something to buy a ticket to heaven and TRUST HIM and what He has done to redeem us.

The issue between God and every person is sin. It is our sin that has separated us from God. Therefore, the sin must be dealt with before there can be reconciliation. You can never deal with sin by hiding it. God demands that you confess your sin. Your sin has not been only against God, so simply confessing secretly to God will not do. Most people have sinned against someone else, also. You cannot receive forgiveness from God without attempting to get forgiveness from those you have wronged – a husband, a wife, a father or mother, for example. The Prodigal Son came home to his father – he did not stay in the pigpen and tell God he was sorry and ask for forgiveness there. THIS is truly dealing with sin in your life and anything less than this will NOT WORK! If you are not willing to confess your sin to God AND to those you have offended it is guaranteed that you will NOT find peace with God. Many people miss God and heaven right here because they are

not willing, or someone tells them that all they have to do is confess to God in private and He will forgive them. None who try it this way ever find true peace in their souls.

Sin includes more than what you have done to others and to God. It includes your demand to maintain your independence and your right to your life. You must be willing to give that up to God. You must realize that YOUR sin nailed the Savior to the Cross and that He gave himself to make atonement for your sin because He loves you and does not want you to perish. You are “bought with a price and ye are not your own,” and it was a very high price He paid for your soul! The old man must die before there can be a burial and a resurrection in your life. It seems that most people seek a resurrected life without a death and a burial. That is not the gospel.

When sin has been dealt with you will find there is nothing else to DO except fall into the arms of a loving God, trusting the keeping of your soul to him as unto a faithful Creator. If you will confess and forsake your sin He has promised that you will find mercy. If you haven't found mercy it is because you have not dealt thoroughly and honestly with your sin.

You must realize that becoming his gives Him the right to do with you as He pleases. It gives Him the right to make you into what He wants you to be. He is a holy God and He will certainly make you holy, also. Are you willing to

allow Him free reign in your life to do that in ALL areas of your life?

*But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy. – 1 Pet 1:15-16*

So what must I do to be saved? Very simple – BE his. “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.” That is not just acceptance of some facts of knowledge, but it means to become the bride of Christ. It means you will CONTINUE to believe on Him and what he says in his Word. You will be a follower of Christ and not of other men. You are not just identifying with some religious order or denomination, but with Christ himself. Have you dealt with your sin honestly and thoroughly? Are you his?

*He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it. – Mat 10:39*

When you are his and He owns you completely, that is when you will truly find life. You will find the chains of sin are broken and your heart filled with joy unspeakable and full of glory, and in your soul you will have the peace of God that passeth all understanding. Let God set up his kingdom in your heart today!

\* \* \* \*

*There is not an inch of any sphere of life of which Jesus Christ the Lord does not say, "Mine." – Abraham Kuyper*

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