



The John 14:6 Streetcorner

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THE TREE

THE TESTIMONY OF GARRY MEIER



I was born in Saskatchewan in 1952, finished grade 12 there, and moved to Hazelton in 1971.

My love for flying started while I was in grade 1 at a country school, the teacher gave me a book to read, it was called "The Barn Stormer". After that, I knew what I wanted to be when I grew up. While I was in grade 2, my Dad arranged for me to go for a ride in a friend's airplane. Once in the air the pilot let me take the controls and I was hooked.

The weekend after I moved to Hazelton, I drove to Smithers and signed up for flying lessons.

Raised in a Christian home, I first gave my heart to the Lord when I was about 12, in a Pentecostal church in Star City Saskatchewan. However, when I was in grade 12 and on my own, I started to get into trouble with the usual things that any grade 12 teenager would get into.

In 1972 I completed flying lessons. I promptly went out and bought a 1939 J5 Cub with a 75 hp. engine. One month later, after experiencing an engine failure, I found myself hang-

ing upside down on a telephone line in Hazelton. It is a miracle I survived! A friend of mine, out for a walk, happened to witness the whole accident, it was then she said to me, "*The Lord is speaking to you, Garry.*"

I had a job at the time, as a Cat skinner, working for a local logging company. During that time, my life was a mess and my unsaved boss confirmed it. One night after work, he asked me, "What in the world is wrong with you? Why aren't you like your parents?" It was then he said that they were moving the camp to another location and told me to take some time off, because he didn't want me there.

My oldest brother and his wife who had been visiting decided it was time to return home and asked if I was interested going with them so I said "yes". On the way home, we were listening to an 8 track of Burl Ives singing "Only Believe, All Things Are Possible". It was then that I said "Lord I can't do this anymore, please forgive me.", and recommitted my life to Christ.

In March 1973, I moved to Smithers, it was there that I met my future wife Diane, we got married on Oct 20th of that year.

In the summer of 1980, my dream of becoming a commercial pilot was finally fulfilled when I started to work with Smithers Air. A year later I accepted a flying position with another local airline, and I continued working for them until 2001. It was in those beginning years that I realized that even though I loved flying it was not without its dangers and tragedies.

One such tragedy came in the fall of 1983. My boss was on a charter flight from Campbell River with a hunting party bound for Smithers. They never arrived. His name was Mel Mellison. It was one of the biggest air searches ever in North America. They never did find him. It was a blow to all of us. Then about a year later I found myself in a similar situation.

I was flying what I thought was just a routine trip from Smithers to Sturdee Valley to pick up some core samples and return to Smithers. It was on this trip that my faith in God was severely tested. It was in late October 1984, my boss and I took off from Smithers around 8 am. He was flying a Cessna 206 and I was in our Cessna 185. As typical for late October, the sun was shining and as usual, the fall colours were breathtaking. Also, for that time of year, there would be several build ups of cumulus nimbus clouds, which could reach as high as 25,000 feet. These clouds came and went as fast as they appeared. To me they are awesome to look at but, they were no place for a light aircraft to be in.

About 50 miles from our destination, I noticed Tom went into a snow shower around 3500 feet. When I lost sight of him, I called him, "Are you ok, Tom?" "Yes, I'm ok..... can see Thutade Lake.", he replied.

With that, I started to descend and entered the cloud, thinking I would be through it in a matter of minutes. Then it started to snow. The harder it snowed the more I had to descend to maintain contact with the ground. I knew I was only minutes away from the lake and it wouldn't be long till I was out in the clear.

The area I was flying over is called Bird Flat Creek. I had flown over this area hundreds of times before and knew it like the back of my hand. The whole area was a beautiful alpine meadow surrounded by mountains. In the center of this meadow was a lone spruce tree I judged to be about 30 feet or so in height. Every time I flew past this tree, I always thought if I ever encountered bad weather I would come back

to the tree as it was right at the confluence of three valleys offering three different ways out.

Within minutes I lost site of the ground and was forced to turn back. I knew I had to get back to the tree and try one of those valleys that was open only a few moments ago. When I got back to the tree, I tried the way I came in, that didn't work, so I tried the other valley with no success, I then made my way back to the tree, throttled back, lowered 20 degrees flap and started circling, waiting for the cell to pass over.

While circling the tree, the snow got worse and worse, it started to stick to the wings and windshield. I knew then that it was only a matter of time before the aircraft stalled and I would probably die. At that moment I saw my life before my eyes. Things like growing up on the farm, going to school, etc. Then,

I saw my wife and kids and knew that I may not see them anymore. Out loud I said, "Last year it was Mel and now it's me, what will they say to Diane and the boys?"

At first I contemplated just pulling the throttle back and try a controlled crash and hope for the best, but I just couldn't do it, so I yelled out "God what am I going to do—please get someone to pray for me, I'm in real trouble". It was then I looked at my watch and said "Its 9 o'clock and I am going to die."

At that moment I heard the Lord say "GO UP". "You've got to be kidding me," I replied, "I can't fly on instruments." "GO UP", He said again. It was then I replied very reluctantly, "OK". Reluctantly I....

How many times have we gotten ourselves into a pickle, then cry out to God "what do You want me to do, I need Your help?" Then, when He gives us a simple answer we say "You're kidding me, I can't do that, I've never done that before." So you give up and go it alone. But the Bible says, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him and He will make your paths straight". Proverbs 3:5,6

...So reluctantly, I pushed the throttle wide open, the propeller to fine pitch, and started to climb at a 30 to 40 degree bank, knowing that I had mountains all around me up to 8,000 feet, in a valley barely three quarters of a mile wide and with so much ice frozen to the wings, the aircraft should have stalled.

It seemed like forever, then, at 12,000 feet, I broke into clear blue sky. It was then I heard my boss say, "YIS, where are you...?" I called back and said that I had gotten into a bit of a snow squall but I was on my way to pick up the rest of those samples.

When I landed at Sturdee Valley and got out of the airplane, I could not believe how much ice was still frozen to the wings. It was a miracle that I was able to stay aloft at all.



The rest of the return trip was uneventful. After I landed in Smithers, I went to see a good friend and told him what had happened. “What time was that?” he asked. I replied “Well, I looked at my watch and said ‘It’s 9 o’clock and I am going to die.’”

My friend said “Do you know what? It was 9 o’clock and I felt the Spirit say to me, Garry is in trouble and you need to pray.”

God certainly was faithful then and he continues to be faithful. He will always remain faithful, no matter what happens. *“For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Romans 8:38,39.*

“GO UP!”

by Mike Cunningham

With clouds pressing in and no visible way out, Garry could relate to this crazy (but real) signpost!

*Are you in a situation where you can't see which way to go?
Searching for a solution but all options simply seem impossible?*

In a valley with mountains hemming him in on all sides, cliffs and jagged outcrops threatened his life.

Do life's dealings tower over you like overwhelming peaks? Are you crushed by massive obstacles that seem to steal all hope of escape and freedom?

Looking out his window, Garry saw his wings getting heavier and heavier with ice. As his ability to control his plane diminished, how much longer could he circle and put off the inevitable crash?

You've been trying for so long, but desperation is setting in. You're losing altitude and feeling the weight of despair at every hand. The only option seems to be to give up and surrender to the crash. God, this must be the end!

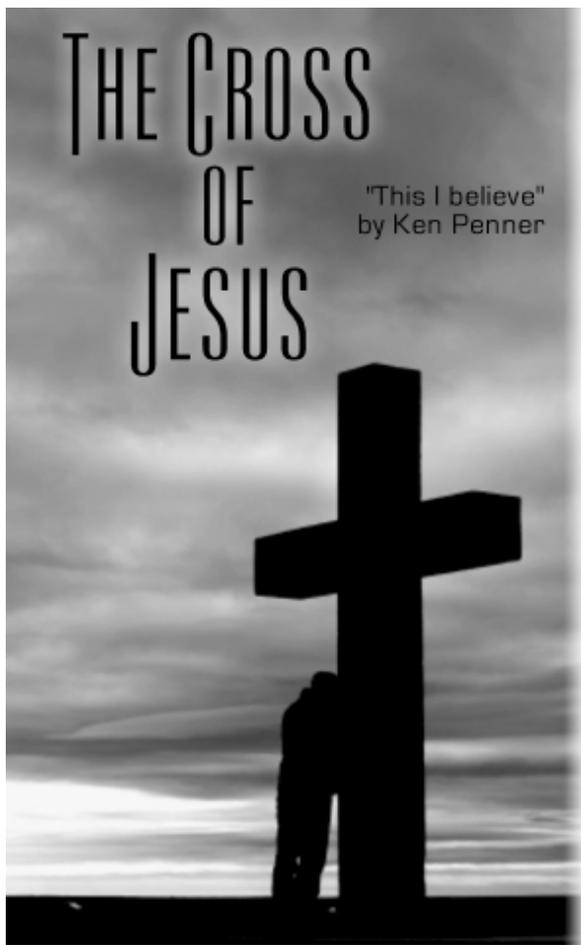
Perhaps this situation describes you. There is a growing desperation as your options fade away and your obstacles rise up to overwhelm you. Friend, please read on. The story is not over. In the darkest moment a quiet voice whispers something crazy, almost ludicrous. “Go UP!” But, you say, up just means a farther fall, up is...impossible!! “Go UP?!”

If you have a Bible, I encourage you to read Psalm 107. Is it possible that God has brought you into this storm, into this valley for a reason? Has he brought you so close to the end of your own strength to teach life’s most valuable lesson? The only way out is God. The only solution is found in the answers he gives.

Friends, we are all in a desperate situation without God! We need his love, we need his strength, we need his direction, we need his Life. I don’t know the particulars of your situation. But I know God has a way for you to go. I don’t know what his plans are, but I know his eye is on you and his sunshine is there for you beyond the clouds.

What is he asking you to do in your situation? It’s almost guaranteed to sound impossible and be opposed to much. But it is God bringing you to the end of your strength that you might rely on his. The Bible calls that faith, and the use of it, wisdom. Will you trust Him? Will you follow his lead and “go UP?!” Place your life in his hands and do what he’s asking you to do, and like Garry, you will find the way out indeed!





In the feature story of this issue of “The Streetcorner”, as Garry Meier shared how the tree helped give him direction out of a seemingly hopeless life threatening situation, I was reminded of another tree that is our only hope out of a much more dangerous situation. That tree is the cross where Jesus Christ, the very author of life, suffered and died to pay the penalty for our sins that have separated us from God. We were blinded and lost in our trespasses and sins. We were headed in a direction away from God for all eternity, but God saw our desperation and intervened to rescue us from eternal separation from him. He sent his one and only Son to take the death penalty for us. He died in our place and rose from the dead so we could have life, abundant and eternal.

As we look to the cross, we find the very author of life calling out to us, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?” John 11:25 NIV

We are reminded “He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.” 2 Peter 3:9 NIV

Out of our desperation, lost and in need of direction, we can look and call out, while there is still time, to Jesus Christ, the only one who can deliver us. He “... richly blesses all who call on him, for ‘Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.’” Romans 10:12b,13 NIV

This I Believe!



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WHAT WE BELIEVE

The Bible and Its Authority

a) We believe in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as verbally inspired by God and inerrant in the original writings, and that they are the supreme and final authority in faith and conduct.

The Eternal Godhead

b) We believe in one God, eternally existing in three persons: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Man and His Need

c) We believe that man was created in the image of God; that through sin man incurred both spiritual and physical death. Consequently, man is totally depraved, alienated from God, under his righteous anger, and in need of the new birth.

Jesus Christ and His Work

d) We believe that Jesus Christ was begotten by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary and is true God and true man.

e) We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, as a representative and substitutionary sacrifice, died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that all who believe in him are justified on the ground of his shed blood.

f) We believe in the resurrection of the crucified body of our Lord Jesus Christ, in his ascension into heaven, his present life there for us as High Priest and Advocate and in his personal return.

Salvation for Sinners

g) We believe that by the grace of God, all who in repentance and faith receive the Lord Jesus Christ are born again by the Holy Spirit and thereby become children of God. Such are sealed unto the day of redemption. Nevertheless, the believer is commanded to be filled with the Spirit, moment by moment.

The Future

h) We believe in the bodily resurrection of the just and the unjust, in the everlasting blessedness of the saved, and in the everlasting conscious punishment of the lost.

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