

WRITINGS OF LESTER ROLOFF

by Lester Roloff

A collection of theological writings, sermons, and essays by Lester Roloff, compiled for study and devotional reading.

8 Chapters

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00.00. Roloff, Lester - Library

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01.00. Dr. Law and Dr. Grace

Dr. Law and Dr. Grace by Evangelist Lester Roloff Lester Leo Roloff (1914 - 1982) was a fundamentalist Baptist preacher, storyteller, and author.

Roloff is known for:

The youth homes he established for juvenile delinquents and the strict discipline practiced there, which many critics regard as child abuse. Roloff waged numerous battles with Texas state authorities over his disciplinary practices.

His advocacy of a strict all-natural diet and a rejection of processed foods, as expressed in his 1955 pamphlet Food, Fasting and Faith.

His radio program "The Family Altar", aired on numerous radio stations to this day, decades after his death.

01.01. Dr Law And Dr Grace

"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." Titus 2:11-14

If I could use the Empire State Building for my pulpit and somebody would build for me a public address system that would reach around the world so that I could have nearly three billion people for my audience and God would grant me the wisdom or sufficient interpreters to speak every language and dialect and I could only bring one message, it would be this message of "Dr. Law and Dr. Grace," the greatest doctors that ever lived. Satan has done a good job confusing the people about the plan of salvation. Salvation is not a foot race between man and the devil, but it is the gift of God through the Lord Jesus Christ.

Let's make just a brief visit now to these two doctors-Dr. Law and Dr. Grace- the most unusual doctors the world has ever known, in the first place, because they have never lost a case and never made a charge. They are unusual in that they never have a consultation with any other doctor. They are unusual because they never recommend an external treatment. They are unusual because they never ask the patient for his advice or about any signs or symptoms in his case. They speak with authority. They are unusual in the fact that though they have recorded one hundred percent success with every patient, most people have refused to go to them for help.

Now let us come to the Scripture. Romans 5:13, "For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law." (Romans 5:20-21) "Moreover the law entered, that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord." Romans 7:1-25, beginning at verse 5, "For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sin, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death. But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter. What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet. But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead. For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died." (Romans 7:5-9) That's the death we need to die as a sinner.

"And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death. For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me. Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good. Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful. For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am

carnal, sold under sin. For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh), dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not." (Romans 7:10-18)

"O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin." (Romans 7:24-25)

Then in Romans 8:1-39, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness." (Romans 8:1-10)

"Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified. But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is therefore Christ the minister of sin? God forbid. For if I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor. For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me. I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain." (Galatians 2:16-21)

"For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith. And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them. Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." (Galatians 3:10-13)

"But the Scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe. But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus." (Galatians 3:22-26)

Ephesians 2:8-10 , "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." The greatest message in the Bible and the theme of the whole Bible is grace. Now grace is the free and unmerited favor of God and there is an unbreakable relationship between law and grace. With that in mind, let me be the sinner because all have sinned and come short of the glory of God- "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way"(Isaiah 53:6) "there is none that doeth good, no, not one." (Isaiah 53:3) "There is none righteous, no, not one." (Romans 3:10)

Therefore, I know I'm having some serious internal trouble and so I head for Dr. Law and Dr. Law is always in his office and ready to see the sinner. The secretary told me that he was waiting for me. I stepped inside his office and started to relate my signs and symptoms to which he said, "I will not need your help," to which I said, "Do you think you can find out what is wrong with me?" and he said, "No, sir, I don't have to think-I KNOW what is wrong with you-you have heart trouble. You're just like all the rest of my patients." My old flesh rebelled and it didn't make sense to me that every one of his patients would have the same disease. But after all, dear friend, the law doesn't make sense to the sinner because "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." So the flesh gets ready to argue the issue and I say, "Dr. Law, you just don't understand. I'm having trouble with my hands. I spend a lot of time dealing a deck of cards and I've even used them to fight with. My hands are giving me trouble." And Dr. Law said, "No, it's your heart."

I said, "Doc, I'm going to have to argue with you-you may be a doctor, but still you don't understand me. I'm having trouble with my eyes. It's nothing for me to sit two or three hours in one night and watch Hollywood and another hour reading magazines and newspapers and my eyes are never satisfied so I must be having eye trouble." The old doctor said, "No, my friend, it's heart trouble-just plain heart trouble."

I said, "Dr. Law, be reasonable about this thing. I'm having trouble with my tongue. It says things that are sharp and ugly and even smutty jokes have come unrehearsed and unplanned and I believe there is something rotten about my tongue. Please examine my tongue." Dr. Law says, "No, it's heart trouble." By this time, my rebellion had mounted and I tried to tell Dr. Law it was my ears that would listen to ungodly gossip. It was my feet that would dance and carry me to places I ought not to go to which he answered, "You have a bad case of heart trouble." Once more, in desperation, I said, "Dr. Law, surely there is something wrong with my taste. I've even cultivated a like for intoxicating beverage and even dope and there must be some way you can help my taste." And Dr. Law said, "That will be taken care of when your heart is fixed." In rebellion and desperation I said, "Dr. Law, I'm going to another doctor," to which he said, "The woods are full of them, but you'll never get well until your heart is made right." I said to Dr. Law, "Would you recommend any other doctor for a consultation?" He said, "There is only one doctor I would recommend and if you won't listen to me, you'll never go to him and I'll never recommend another." So I beat it down the street and knock on Dr. Religion's door and it seems like he's a real scout, he's a regular fellow, and he said, "Come on in here, Lester Roloff, I'm glad to see you. I've been up to see old Dr. Law." To which Dr. Religion said, "Oh, he's ancient-he's an antique. Modern folks don't go to him. He hasn't had the proper training. He doesn't know anything about

the latest modes of medicine."

Well, that sounded good to me and I said, "I don't like him myself. Dr. Religion, would you just kind of run over me and see what's wrong?" He said, "Sure!" After his examination, he said, "Why, there's nothing seriously wrong with you. I recommend that you start going to church." And I said, "Which one?" "Oh", he said, "just any of them will be all right." So the next Sunday, I was in church and the next-but I didn't get any better. I went back to Dr. Religion and I said, "Dr. Religion, I don't believe I'm any better." He said, "Well, did you start going to church?" I said, "Sure. I've been going every Sunday." Then he said, "Did you join and get baptized?" "Why", I said "no." He said, "Do that-that will make you feel better." I said, "I'll sure do it and get my wife to also." So I went down to the church and joined it and got baptized, but I didn't feel any better for very long and I went back to Dr. Religion and I said, "Dr. Religion, there's something wrong-I'm not really any better." "Well," he said, "are you really working at it? Take a job in the church and start helping others." And so I did. But I got weary in the struggle and somebody recommended a couple of brothers who were doctors-Dr. Be Good and Dr. Do Good-and I went to them, but to no avail. There was no certainty and no assurance of salvation. And then somebody recommended Dr. Hope So. After which I went to Dr. Think So and neither one of them was able to help me and now-weary, tired exhausted, in despair and at the end of self-I decided I'd go back to Dr. Law.

Dr. Law was waiting for me- the same stern, obstinate old doctor-with the same diagnosis, "It's your heart," to which I said, "What do you recommend?" He said, "Only one thing will do and that's an operation. Your heart will have to come out and a new one put in." I said, "Dr. Law, when will you operate?" And he said, "I don't operate." To which I said, "You mean I'm going to have to die even though you know what's wrong with me?" "I didn't say," returned Dr. Law, "that you had to die. So far as I'm concerned, you've got to die-I only make the diagnosis. But if you really want to live, I'll tell you what to do." And so this trembling, perspiring sinner looked into the face of this unrelenting doctor and said, "Please help me!" and he took me by the hand and led me across the hall and knocked on an office door and a handsome, loving, smiling doctor came to the door and Dr. Law said, "Dr. Grace, this is Lester Roloff, and he's got the same trouble all my other patients that I've brought to you have had. He's coming t you for an operation." By that time, Dr. Law had slipped away and gone back into his office and left me standing alone in the presence of Dr. Grace and fear and trembling, the questions began to come.

First, "Dr. Grace, will you let Dr. Law or some other doctor help you operate?" And he said, "No, I've never had any help." I said, "Dr. Grace, have you some good nurses?" He said, "No sir. I've never had a nurse-I do it all." I said, "Dr. Grace, will you give me a good anesthetic and put me into a deep sleep?" He said, "No, sir. I never give anesthetics because I want you to know what I did for you so you can tell the world about it." I said, "Dr. Grace, will you let me call my wife and let her come and stand by me?" And Dr. Grace smiled and said, "No, son, this is a personal matter just between me and you. You can tell her after it's all over."

I said, "Dr. Grace, I'm scared," and he said, as he placed his big hand on my trembling shoulder, "You don't have to be afraid-I've never lost a case. This will be a successful operation." I said, "Dr. Grace, what about the charges and the expense of this tremendous operation?" He said, "It's already paid for." I said, "Who paid for it?" He said, "A Friend of yours." "Oh," I said, "I'd like to meet Him." He said, "After the operation, I'll let you meet Him, I'll introduce you to Him."

I said, "Dr. Grace, is it true that you are going to take my old heart out and put in a new one?" He said, "Yes." I said, "Where are you going to get the new heart?" He said, "You'll find out after the operation." And so just by faith, I lay down on the operating table and the great surgeon, Dr. Grace, took the knife and sliced open my heart section and out came the blackest heart with the most terrible odor-oh, it was so sickening! And for the first time, I realized that Dr. Law was right-it was heart trouble. In a moment, Dr. Grace had thrown that old heart away and brought a new one-so pure and clean-and put it in and closed the incision, not even leaving a scar. I felt the flow of new life, color came to my spiritual cheeks and my tongue began to say, "Now I feel better-fact is, I feel wonderful." In a moment, with a smile on my face and tears of gratitude coursing down my cheeks, I said, "Dr. Grace, when shall I come back for the check-up?" He said, "Son, no check-up will be necessary, the operation is a success and this is permanent."

I said, "What do you recommend?" He said, "Just take some good exercise each day." And I said, "Do you have any particular exercises?" To which he said, "Yes, kneeling and even raising your hands and praising God and at times, especially in privacy, stretch out on your face. Take some good walks through the community, knocking on doors. Exercise your vocal chords in praise."

I started out at the door and something inside said, "Go back." I said, "Dr. Grace, you told me you'd introduce me to the Friend who paid my bill," and he said, "I thought you'd come back." And stepping through a door came the loveliest Friend I've ever met. When He raised His hands, I saw nail prints. On His brow were thorn scars. When His lovely robe fell apart, I saw the spear print in His side. Dr. Grace said, "Jesus, I want you to meet Lester Roloff." And as I looked at that scar in His side, I said, "Dr. Grace, I now understand where my new heart came from. He gave me His." And I fell on my face and said, "It's time to start my exercises." After a season of praise and thanksgiving and adoring the One who died for me, I walked joyfully and victoriously down the sidewalk of life, but was reminded once again to go back to the old doctor that I first hated. When I walked inside, he met me with a smile. I extended my hand and his big strong hand gripped mine and I said, "Thank you, Dr. Law, for telling me what was wrong with me." I was amazed that Dr. Law looked so handsome and seemed so different and I had sweet fellowship with him and I'll always love him for leading me to Dr. Grace.

Sinner friend, I can now recommend these two great doctors. Dr. Law will show you where you're wrong and Dr. Grace will make you right. Commit your case to Dr. Law and Dr. Grace, dismiss all other hopes of being saved and come God's way.

01.02. Poem

Here's a poem the Lord gave me.

I've tried my best to run the race, But darkness was all that I saw, The world led me a merry chase
And I ran from Dr. Law.

Religion failed to meet my need, My life was just one black lie.

Sin caused my heart to daily bleed, Dr. Law said, "You must die." The flesh cried for another way.

Dr. Law said, "There is none." The world said, "You'll see a better day."

Old Dr. Law said, "You're done." To medicine I went 'til my money I spent, The psychiatrist even
examined my head. But I would not repent-neither relent, And again Dr. Law said, "You're dead."

I became weary and walked in despair Even though I tried to do my part. The darkness of night
was everywhere, Dr. Law said, "You need a new heart."

I replied, "It's my feet that lead me astray, My hands make me do what I do."

After Dr. Law let me have my say, He replied, "Without a new heart, you're through." But I trudged
on down the rebellious road, I thought I needed reformation.

Heavier daily became my load, Again Dr. Law said, "A major operation." My heart would not do-I
knew this was true, It was plain I had lost the race.

Dr. Law said, "It's sin, you'll never win Until you go to Dr. Grace." So I counted the cost if my soul
should be lost, My soul cried, "What must be done?"

There stood Dr. Grace with a smile on his face Saying, "It's not DO-it's DONE." For Christ on the
cross suffered our loss Saying, "Come through Me, I am the Door."

I cried with loud voice, "I make Thee my choice."

He said, "Go and sin no more." So I praise His sweet Name-He took all my blame, For of sin
there's not left even a trace Since that day I saw blessed Dr. Law And he led me to Dr. Grace. So
the war is over-Now I'm walking in clover Honeydew is all over my soul.

He lifted my load-I'm on the glory road Since Dr. Law and Dr. Grace made me whole. So sinner,
please bow-come to Jesus now- He'll save you from eternal hell, He'll take your case and even
your place Saying, "Now all is well!"

Now friend, if you really want to be saved, down in your heart cry out to the Lord, "God be merciful
to me, a sinner, and save me. Wash me in the blood of Jesus. Come into my heart. In Jesus'
Name, Amen."

02.00. How to Get Rich

How to Get Rich

by

Evangelist Lester Roloff Lester Leo Roloff (1914 - 1982) was a fundamentalist Baptist preacher, storyteller, and author.

Roloff is known for:

The youth homes he established for juvenile delinquents and the strict discipline practiced there, which many critics regard as child abuse. Roloff waged numerous battles with Texas state authorities over his disciplinary practices.

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02.01. How To Get Rich

There are two things that the human family seems to want above all others - one is recognition and the other is money. And, of course, money brings recognition with the world.

There are about two hundred references in the Bible to the poor. "But", you'd say, "I thought you were going to talk about how to get rich?" Really, I am. I read this morning in Daniel 2:28, "There is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets." Daniel 2:30, "But as for me, this secret is not revealed to me for any wisdom that I have more than any living."

In Luke 16:10 God tells us, "He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much. If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?"

That introduces the heart of the message, and that is riches. I believe that everybody can be as rich as they want to be and as they need to be. There have been a lot of books, sermons, messages, lectures, and all sorts of advice given on how to get rich, but there's only one Book that speaks with authority about true riches, and that's the Bible. And lest and until we have the right attitude toward the Word of God and toward poor people, we'll never be rich.

For instance, being rich financially never helped a man to success, but, oh, read the stories of how most of our great men came out of deep poverty. Paul says in 2 Corinthians 8:1-2, "Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia; how that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality." They came from rags to robes because of their liberality.

For the Christian, true riches are a commitment and a trust from the Lord. Now let us notice the importance God puts on the word "poor". When Jesus brought His great Sermon on the Mount, which is the foundation of Christian living and the kind of future that we have to look forward to, He said, "Blessed are the poor in spirit. . ." Matthew 5:3.

The wise man says in Proverbs 13:7, "There is that maketh himself rich, yet hath nothing: there is that maketh himself poor, yet hath great riches." Proverbs 11:24-25. "There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty. The liberal soul shall be made fat: and he that watereth shall be watered also himself." Proverbs 11:28, "He that trusteth in his riches shall fall: but the righteous shall flourish as a branch."

One of the secrets of Job's deliverance was that he cared for and shared with the poor when he had it and God brought him through and made him twice as rich as he was before his trouble began. Job 29:12, "Because I delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none to help him. The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me: and I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy." Job 29:16, "I was a father to the poor: and the cause which I knew not I searched out." Job 30:25, "Did not I weep for him that was in trouble? Was not my soul grieved for the poor?"

Psalms 41:1-3, "Blessed is he that considereth the poor: the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble. The Lord will preserve him, and keep him alive; and he shall be blessed upon the earth: and thou wilt not deliver him unto the will of his enemies. The Lord will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing: thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness."

Notice the promise of God in Isaiah 58:6-12. My, what tremendous promises, and yet, He said we are to bring the poor that are cast out to our house, we are to cover the naked. Then the promises begin in verse 8, the fulfillment of which will make us rich. If you want to be happy, you must have mercy on the poor. Proverbs 14:31, "He that oppressteth the poor reproacheth his Maker." Proverbs 19:17, "He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the Lord; and that which he hath given will He pay him again." Think of floating a loan to the richest person that ever lived!

Proverbs 28:27, "He that giveth unto the poor shall not lack." That's a promise without limited proportions. "Shall not lack" - that means lack anything. When the disciples came back after a successful evangelistic soul winning journey, Jesus said, "Lacked ye anything?" and they said "Nothing." (Luke 22:35)

"The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger: but they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing." (Psalms 34:10) And surely that's what David meant when he said, "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want." (Psalms 23:1) Most of us live in a state of constant want, and yet never become satisfied because we want what we do not need. Psalms 112:9, "He that dispersed, he hath given to the poor; his righteousness for ever; his horn shall be exalted with honour."

One of the proofs of Jesus' Messiahship that he sent back to John, while he was in doubt in prison, was to tell him that the poor have the Gospel preached unto them, Matthew 11:5. Jesus said when we make a feast, the first person we're to call is the poor. Jesus said, "Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor." (Luke 14:21)

The right kind of poverty makes many rich, 2 Corinthians 6:10. Jesus told the rich man to sell all and give to the poor, Matthew 19:21. The first sermon that Jesus ever preached, He took for his text, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me; because He hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor." (Luke 4:18)

When Zacchaeus was converted and walked with Jesus and had Jesus as his guest in his home, he committed himself to giving half of his goods to the poor and Jesus did not restrain him. (Luke 19:2-10) Deuteronomy 15:11, says "For the poor shall never cease out of the land; therefore I command thee, saying, Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to the needy, in thy land." Jesus said, "The poor ye have with you always." (Matthew 26:11; Mark 14:7; John 12:8)

The greatest illustration on giving that Jesus used was as He stood by the treasury and watched the amounts and the spirits and made note of the balance. He commended a poor woman who cast in two mites which was all that she had. I've often wished that I could have visited this dear sister the next thirty or sixty days to see just what the blessings of God were upon her life.

I've given you some great verses in the Bible that have to do with the poor. God's greatest blessings are upon those who show the proper respect for the poor and the needy. Jesus rebukes and condemns covetousness. The rich man whose land brought forth plentifully refused to

consider the poor and that night he had his encounter with the undertaker. Churches become poor if they become rich and care not for the poor. God ordained, according to His Word, that the church was His Salvation Army, Red Cross and Community Chest.

A friend said to me, "You live like a king." And yet, we are the children of the King. Jesus promised that we'd have a hundred-fold here and because of sweet Christian friends, I can certainly testify that where I have one home, I have a hundred waiting to receive me into their Christian arms of hospitality. Where I have one car, I have a hundred waiting at nearly any airport to drive me to the place of service.

When God called me to preach, I was sick in more ways than one, but His faithfulness and His blessings have made me rich. A statement just came to me - No man can be richer than he is liberal. "The blessings of the Lord, it maketh rich, and He addeth no sorrow with it." Proverbs 10:22. Therefore you can be just as rich as your ability to receive the blessings of the Lord.

2 Corinthians 8:9, tells us "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich." This is the price of real riches. Jesus, the Maker, the Creator, with angelic choirs all about Him, no sin in Him or on Him or around Him, laid aside His robes of splendor and was wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid on the breast of a peasant mother in a simple manger in Bethlehem.

He lived in poverty, He was despised and rejected, refused by His own, had no place to lay His head, prayed alone and walked alone, condemned to die, and His only crime was love. No lawyer would defend Him and no convert would testify for Him at his trial. He was nailed to a rugged Roman cross between two thieves and finally laid in a borrowed tomb.

Oh, the price of our riches! But thank God, we've not just become Queen for a Day or King for a Day, but FOREVER because through His poverty we've been made rich. You may ask me how rich I am. I'm an heir to God and a joint-heir with Jesus Christ. All that my heavenly Father has and is, I'm an heir to. Praise His wonderful Name!

I have all that I need here and heaven hereafter! How much richer could anybody want to be?

03.00. I Would Like To Have Been There

I Would Like To Have Been There by Evangelist Lester Roloff Lester Leo Roloff (1914 - 1982) was a fundamentalist Baptist preacher, storyteller, and author.

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His radio program "The Family Altar", aired on numerous radio stations to this day, decades after his death.

03.01. I Would Like To Have Been There

How would you like to have lived when Jesus lived? People say, "I believe if I could have lived and have seen Him, and if I could have seen those miracles He performed, I believe I could have been a better Christian." The testimony of the Word is against that, because most of the people who lived then turned back on Him. The closer He got to the old rugged cross, the thinner became His crowd. Religion sure turned back on Him. Fast! In fact, religion built that old rugged cross. Religion never has been a friend of God. They saw a lot of things, but they still didn't believe. Jesus marveled because of their unbelief. In a number of instances, Jesus said, "Follow me and I will make you fishers of men." He said, "If any man will come after me..." which means that we do have the privilege of following Jesus.

I'm not going to be critical of people who travel so much, but I wish I had the money that folks have spent, going to where Jesus used to be. Jesus didn't say, "I will that they be with me where I have been." He said "I will that they be with me where I am." That's present tense. When you are where Jesus is, things are going on. There's not a monotonous moment about it. I'll promise you this, that Jesus wants us to be where He is right now. I believe that by faith and in the Word of God and through the Spirit, I can be where He was spiritually. I can re-live some of those blessed experiences in this message.

One of the first places I would like to have been with Him, as strange as it may seem, I would like to have gone into Bethlehem with Mary and Joseph. When they arrived in Bethlehem, the Bible said there was no room for them in the inn. If it hadn't been for God in Heaven, they couldn't have even found a manger. A lot of times we feel sorry for Mary going to the manger. Let me tell you something. That's where God planned for her to go. She found the right place. I've heard people say, "It looks to me like God could have fixed them a hospital." Yes, He could have. I have enough faith to believe that He could have dropped a golden hospital down, with all the lights of Glory to brighten up the delivery room. He could have sent a thousand angels down as nurses. He could have sent a Heavenly doctor right down out of Heaven, but He didn't. He didn't have to have it. He could let Jesus be born right there in Bethlehem's manger and all of them be in perfect health. That's the bigness of God.

I would like to have seen the shepherds out on the hills as they heard the heavenly choir singing. One shepherd said, "Have you ever heard anything like that?" I would like to have been there when the wise men said, "Say, look at that star! We'd better follow that star." And that star led them to Jesus. There were some things going on that night, but the world didn't know it. The world don't even know it tonight and it's been 2,000 years since Jesus was born. That's one mother who sent out no announcements, but heaven sent out some announcements! God said to the angels, "Go down and sing to that bunch of shepherds and tell them something great has happened. Behold, today there is born in the city of David a saviour, who is Christ the Lord." The shepherds left their sheep and said, "We'd better go and see this child." The wise men got an announcement. The morning star gave them their announcement. It led them to Christ. The greatest night the

world has ever known was the night that that little baby was laid in the arms of that sweet peasant mother. God came down and manifested Himself in flesh. "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God and the Word became flesh and dwelt among us."

I would like to have been with Him when He was a little boy. Aren't the little twelve-year old boys today in a lot of trouble? Yet Christ was so different. At the age of twelve He was sitting with the scribes, the lawyers, the doctors, the writers, and He really got involved in discussing great matters with them. I would like to have been there when those old boys began to prick up their ears. I can hear one of them asking, "Whose kid is that?" "Where did that lad come from?" They didn't know it, but that was God talking. Think about it. God was twelve years old, as far as His physical body was concerned, yet He had them all flabbergasted. They didn't know that He was God's Son, the One Who made the sun and the moon and the stars. He was the Messiah.

I wouldn't want to swap my state for anybody's, or any other time because I've already gotten saved, but I'm not satisfied. The Lord knows. I get troubled in my soul. I was thinking today, as I walked where Jesus walked, and with Him, how much He did in three years and how little I've done in thirty-eight years. A lot of my ministry has been man-made. It's just been working with human hands. Wood, hay and stubble. But that which I do by nothing but pure faith in Jesus Christ, is going to last. The devil may hinder it, and the rest of us may fight it, but we'll never in this world defeat what God is doing. Jesus never did start across the lake that He didn't make it across. He never did start one thing that He didn't finish. In Bethlehem's manger He started the work of eternal redemption for our souls and on the cross He said "It is finished!" We have a finished salvation. When Jesus entered His public ministry, I would like to have been there when He walked up to John and said, "I'm ready to be baptized now." John said, "I have need to be baptized of Thee, and comest Thou to me?" He felt that Jesus should baptize him. John had not been baptized in water but He had received the heavenly baptism. Jesus said, "It becometh us to fulfill all righteousness." Then Jesus walked off in the Jordan. What a beautiful sight. He didn't get out there in that water to be saved. He didn't have anything to be saved from. He wasn't being baptized in order to join some church. Jesus is the Head of the church. The main thing that happened that day was that the Holy Spirit, like a dove, came down upon Jesus. Until that day, when He was about thirty years old, He had never performed one miracle. But He was just as much God before He was baptized as He was after He was baptized. Jesus Christ subjected Himself willingly to the work of the Holy Spirit, just like you and I ought after we are saved and baptized. And just as much, in a figure, as you and I can do nothing for God and cannot live a miraculous life until we get saved and baptized, even so Jesus subjected Himself to the work of the Holy Spirit. When the Holy Spirit came down as a dove, He didn't come down as a vulture, He came down as a sweet dove, as a mourning dove. We'll never mourn and groan and weep over a lost world until the Dove comes down. The Holy Spirit protects His children. People say, "It's getting so bad, I don't believe I'm going to make it." You can make it if you have the Dove in you. When Jesus walked out of the baptistry, I would like to have made a little trip with Him. He met the devil out in the wilderness and there was a battle fought right there. As far as I'm concerned, that's the Battle of Armageddon, spiritually, that proved to me that I can also have victory over the devil. If Jesus whipped the devil, he is still whipped. If Jesus whipped him then and Jesus is in my heart now, then Jesus can whip him right now. And that was before Jesus was crucified, before He was risen from the dead and before He had been in the intercessory office. If Jesus, the virgin born son

of God, could lick the devil with the Word of God then, He can do it in me now. That's the only hope we have of making it.

Let me stop at another place. I would like to have been with Jesus when He went to the land of Gadara. There was a man that the world had declared hopeless and I guess more people had prayed for him to die than to live. I don't know what kept the people from killing him, except that God didn't permit them to. He had bruises and cuts and marks on his body. He was a crazy man, running loose in the tombs. He was a dead man, spiritually.

Jesus cast the devils out of him because He didn't want the devil to possess a man who needed to be free. You people who are possessed with alcohol and cigarettes and dope, He wants to set you free. He put some clothes on him and gave him his right mind, made him whole and sent him back as a home missionary. I would like to have been there when that took place. When Jesus got in the boat to go back, the Gadarene demoniac, who is now healed and in his right mind, safe and saved and blessed, did exactly what everyone of us ought to want to do. He said, "Lord, suffer me to be with you." But Jesus said, "Go show what great things I've done for you. You've shown off a lot of times, but I want you to go show what I've done for you."

I'd like to have gone home with that fellow, wouldn't you? I see him walking straight, a big old smile flooding his face, and the glory of God in his soul. He walked up on the porch and his wife and children really got a surprise. "Honey, I'm glad to be home. Open up. I won't hurt you anymore. I've got to tell you about the man I met called Jesus. I wish you could have met him too, but I can introduce you to Him by remote control. I have Him living in here now." Can you just see him going in and giving his wife a great big old loving hug and tears of compassion rolling across those old scars and the little children coming out from under the bed saying, "Daddy, hug us like that!" I would like to have been there. That's what Jesus does for people. What happens to these drunks when they go home after they get saved? You talk about a reunion. They go and get a job. The little children are glad to see Daddy come home. It's an exciting time. Do you realize that it's not too late for you to do right, or get right. You'll never be able to live right until you get right. That's just the righteousness of God, which is the Lord Jesus Christ.

I would like to have been there when a lot of things happened, but one more time I would like to visit with Jesus. This is the Pike's Peak of my experience with Him. Even though I don't deserve to, when Jesus prayed in Gethsemane, I would like to have heard Him groan under the load of sin of the whole world, saying, "Father, if it be thy will, let this cup pass from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done." I would like to have been there on that dark night when He prayed, and then as He went up Golgotha's hill. There weren't many people going who loved Him, but if I could have been living then and God would have given me the courage and the grace, I would like to have been along in that crowd. I would like to have seen the very experience that it took to save a wicked sinner like me. I believe I could have imagined the depths of sin better, if I could have seen how deep those old roots of my sin had gone and how much Jesus Christ had to suffer, bleed and die, in order to redeem me. I would like to have seen His rugged wonderful sweet precious compassionate tear-stained, blood soaked face when He died for my sins on Calvary. I wouldn't have wanted to be there like Simon Peter or Judas Iscariot, or some of the rest of them who turned back. That's the reason I'm not saying that I just wanted to be there unless God had given me grace to stand with Him. But, oh, what an experience. I can see and hear those old hammers as

they began to drive those nails through His blessed hands, the greatest hands of mercy that ever lifted souls from sin. Those hands that broke the bread that fed fifteen or twenty thousand and made no charge. Those hands that reached over and put them down on heads of little children. Those hands, dear friends, that had laid themselves on that no-man's land of lepers, and they went down the road healed. Those hands and those feet that walked in mercy when they were too tired to walk.

I would like to have been there when those nails were driven through, but I would not have wanted to leave before the third day. I would like to have been sitting around the fire that cool morning that some people call Easter, when those brave soldiers, sixteen strong with swords and staves and spears, and well prepared to take care of the lowly Nazarene, should anybody come and try to get Him out of the grave. There wasn't one of those Roman soldiers who came out there in order to see Him get out of the grave. They came out there to keep Him in the grave. They didn't have any idea He would rise under the steam and power of the blood of the everlasting covenant. Had they known that, they wouldn't have volunteered to serve. They would have been scared. They were superstitious men. They were out there because they were getting paid for guarding the tomb. I don't think they were very afraid of that little bunch of Christians. They had thinned down to nearly nothing. But they were in for some surprise and shock on the third day. I would like to have been there about daybreak when one of those brave sixteen soldiers looked over and raised his eyebrows and said, "Am I seeing things?" But somehow his hand didn't go toward the sword. The Roman seal, which represented all of the power in the world at that time, just cracked open. God's eternal Son stepped out of the grave and these sixteen men fell back like dead men.

There were some great experiences in the life of Jesus, but I'm going to close the message by saying I would like to be here when He comes again. Of all the experiences, you think of just sitting here and in the twinkle of an eye, we're gone. Think of us flitting through the air, singing "Glory to God, He's here!" That will be the greatest power lift of all times. This is what we've been waiting for. No more sin and no more sorrow, no more blind folks, no more cemeteries. We're on our way Home. There never was a generation that lived so close to the coming of the Lord as right now. I ask you one question. Are you ready? Have you trusted Him as your Saviour? Jesus is willing and able and mighty to save, if you will put your trust in Him. He has a lot of things in store for those of us who love Him. I would like to have been there with Jesus during His lifetime, but I'm going to be there when the saints go marching in. Are you?

If you are without Christ, I invite you to trust Him today.

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