

From the Dunghill to the Palace September 2000

Turn to 1 Samuel 2:1-10: *And Hannah prayed, and said, My heart rejoiceth in the LORD, mine horn is exalted in the LORD: my mouth is enlarged over mine enemies; because I rejoice in thy salvation. There is none holy as the LORD: for there is none beside thee: neither is there any rock like our God. Talk no more so exceeding proudly; let not arrogancy come out of your mouth: for the LORD is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed. The bows of the mighty men are broken, and they that stumbled are girded with strength. They that were full have hired out themselves for bread; and they that were hungry ceased: so that the barren hath born seven; and she that hath many children is waxed feeble. The LORD killeth, and maketh alive: he bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up. The LORD maketh poor, and maketh rich: he bringeth low, and lifteth up. He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory: for the pillars of the earth are the LORD'S, and he hath set the world upon them. He will keep the feet of his saints, and the wicked shall be silent in darkness; for by strength shall no man prevail. The adversaries of the LORD shall be broken to pieces; out of heaven shall he thunder upon them: the LORD shall judge the ends of the earth; and he shall give strength unto his king, and exalt the horn of his anointed.*

Now, let us pray. Dear Father, we pray in Jesus' name for the ears and hearts of those present this morning. We pray, Lord Jesus, for those as they look back in life and where they came from, they see nothing of privilege; but I pray in Jesus, this morning, that the Holy Spirit might speak and encourage their heart. Exalt the grace of God. Save souls we pray. Revive the hearts of our people. Shed light on dark things in life. For Jesus' sake, Amen.

The verse that I want to tune in especially is a portion of verse 8: . . . *lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory* . . . Out at camp the other night, one of our fine young ladies came to me and asked me, "Preacher, would you preach a message to those who have grown up without any spiritual encouragement whatsoever?" This message is a response to that request. "From the Dunghill to the Palace." I thought about the Scriptures. Where could I find an illustration in the Scriptures for absolutely no spiritual encouragement at all? I could not think of a better verse than this verse. 1 Samuel 2:8: . . . *lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory* . . . The place — the dunghill. The dunghill is an emblem of the deepest poverty, desertion, and dishonor that you could think of — the garbage dump, the place of the offensive, vial, and dirty. There at the dunghill sat a company, beggars, dependent upon what folks threw away that their life was held together. There they sat to beg alms, and there they scratched around looking for something edible at the dunghill to keep them alive. There is no lower place that I can think of. God comes to you and your heritage. I do not think that you could quite call your heritage as low as the verses that I am using this morning. You may have come from a home where your dad was an alcoholic, a drunkard. Your mother was immoral. All that you heard was profanity, swearing, fighting, no love, no prayer, no Sunday School, no Bible reading, no example. You might have come from a home of incest and perversion and nothing noble, nothing to challenge your heart toward Heaven and God. You say, "That is where I came from." I have got some good news for you. With that in mind, the elevation, the Scriptures say: . . . *lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory* . . . The Lord in His grace lifted the beggar up to associate with royalty and the select in society and to a place of honor. That is the grace of God. Now, your situation might shed some light upon your particular background today. There was a man named Asaph in Psalm 73. He said: . . . *my steps had well nigh slipped. For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.* (Then he tells about his inner turmoil with his thoughts.) *When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me; Until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end.* God oftentimes gives answers to those dark places of life in the house of God. Light shines from the sanctuary. God has designed it so. It shines not only from the sanctuary, but it shines from the Scriptures. Isaiah 29: . . . *shall the work say of him that made it, He made me not?* You may be from a dark place, so you say, "There is no God that will allow such circumstances to arise in my heart and life." The Scriptures rebukes them: . . . *shall the work say of him that made it, He made me not?* You may be in the dunghill, but you cannot deny

God. Then it goes to the second person who might take this attitude: . . . *shall the thing framed say of him that framed it, He had no understanding? "God did not know what He was doing when He made me. God must have lost everything when He made me. How could a God, a Holy God, a God of all wisdom, make me in a place like I am?"*

NUMBER ONE, SIN MADE THE DUNGHILL, NOT GOD. If you have missed that, then you have missed the whole heart of the message. Sin made the dunghill. There were no dunghills in Eden. There was no alcohol. There was no immorality. There was no profanity. There was no atheism. There was no perversion. There was no deformity. You name it. Nothing of that was inside the gates of a place called the Garden of Eden where God saw everything that He made and said that it was very good. God did not make the dunghill. You say, "Well, what about the passage of Scripture where God says: . . . *visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me?*" Well, I say yes and no. Does God visit the iniquity of the fathers unto the children? Yes and no. If a man comes in, he gets his paycheck. He has a family, and he takes his paycheck out and spends it on booze at night. His children do not have groceries. The children are automatically associated with his poverty. That is part of life. You cannot escape that. But, to say that God punishes children for their father's sin, God does not punish a sinner's children for the sinner's sins unless they fall or they tread the steps of their father. A man may be wicked and go out and have his family in the car and turn the car over and kill his entire family. Yes, the family dies with a man who was reckless at the wheel. That just happens to be a law. But, to say that God punishes somebody else for someone else's sin is not the God of the Scriptures and is a misunderstanding of what Exodus 20 is talking about. This is not Satan's world; God is sovereign. Now, Satan is the god of this world that men and women follow, but Satan does not own this world. God is sovereign. Satan is a created being under the control of a sovereign God. When I read Job 1 and Satan goes to heaven to accuse Job to God, he says: *Hast not thou made an hedge about him . . .* "You have put a fence around him, and you will not let me get into his front yard. You tear the fence down, and I will make him curse you to your face. You are saying that you are sovereign, and I cannot touch him unless you allow me to do so." You must remember that Satan is not an all-powerful being. He is a powerful being, but he is not all-powerful. There is One Who is all-powerful, and His name is Jehovah God. Satan is under His control.

NUMBER TWO, SIN IS A PERMITTED THING UNDER THE LIMITATIONS OF A SOVEREIGN GOD. You say, "You mean to tell me that God allows sin?" Yes sir. If I said that God did not allow sin, there would not be any God. You see sin everywhere. There is a verse that deals with that in Psalm 76. When you begin to deal with matters like this, you are in the realm of faith. . . . *the just shall live by his faith.* Psalm 76:10: *Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain.* I do not understand the verses that I am talking about this morning, but the Bible declares them. God is saying that He will not allow anything to happen on this great planet earth that will not ultimately glorify God. What will not glorify God that the sovereign, holy God will not allow to happen? You had better get a hold of that. You say, "Why does He allow it to happen?" Well, that happens to be Somebody's prerogative that is higher than I am and wiser than I am and holier than I am and all-kindness, and all-holy, and all-loving. He has said that. I cannot understand it, but the Bible declares it. There is a God Who has determined that nothing will transpire on the face of God's earth, but He will make it sometime, somewhere to praise Him. What will not praise Him, He will not allow. God is sovereign. This sovereign God is at work in your life. It began before you were born. What kind of God is this? It is not a god of Mohammadism that said, "I will take these to heaven, and I care not. I will take these to hell, and I care not." That is not the God of the Bible. The God of the Bible is not some capricious individual. The God of the Bible is all-holy. He cannot do wrong. He is not only all-holy, but He is all-wise. He has never made a mistake. He never has to repent anything that He ever thought. He is all-wise. Not only that, He is all-powerful. He can do anything in the world that He wants to. Watch now, but He cannot do wrong. His power is governed by His wisdom and His holiness. He is all-loving. God is love, and God is love whether you love Him or not. That does not change God at all. God is love. He is all present. He is everywhere on the face of this universe. He is equally present in every spot. . . . *whither shall I flee from thy presence?* You cannot escape His presence.

NUMBER THREE, THIS SOVEREIGN GOD AND HIS CHARACTER IS AT WORK IN YOUR

LIFE. The Bible declares that God is no respecter of persons. God does not operate because He respects a man's riches or respects a man's color of His skin or respects a man's position or respects a man's social status. God is not influenced, and God is not affected by man. He is no respecter of persons. He will not be that in the judgment. He is not doing that in life. You stand on your own two feet before God. His wisdom. If we are saved, He placed us in the body of Christ where it pleased Him. 1 Corinthians 12. There are a lot of people who do not like where they are in the body of Christ and are trying to get somewhere else. *But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.* We have got a movement that wants all the parts of the body to be all tongue. I want to tell you, the body is sure not all tongue. Maybe in some lives, it is predominant. The body is not all tongue. He set us in the body of Christ where it pleased Him. Now, I transfer that also over to the matter of Psalm 139. He in His sovereignty and His wisdom (I did not have any part to do with it. You did not have any part to do with it.) chose when you would be born where you would be born, chose your parentage, chose your mental capabilities in life, chose your stature in life. A sovereign, holy, all-wise, all-loving, all-powerful, all-present God selected all of these things and determines all of these things. He did that Himself. I did not do it. Psalm 139. The first six verses deal with the omnipresence of God. "Where can I go from Him?" Now, down at verse 14, it deals with God's wisdom. Psalm 139:14-18: *I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: (I am fearfully made in Adam. I am wonderfully made in Christ.) marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well. My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them.* (He wrote my members in His book.) *How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them! If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand: when I awake, I am still with thee.* Young and old alike, God made you. He put you where He wanted you. He brought you onto the scene of life at the time of His own choosing. I did not choose my parents. I did not choose my race. I did not choose my mentality. I did not choose my possibilities. God did that. What kind of God is that? All-holy. All-loving. All-kind. All-powerful. All-wise. Omnipresent. There is nothing wrong with God. Did God make a mistake when He made me like I am? Did God make a mistake when He gave me my parents? Did God make a mistake when He gave me a deformed body? Did God make a mistake when He gave me a retarded mind or a retarded child? Did God make a mistake when He allowed me to be born on a particular continent? No, God never made a mistake. There are no accidents with God. Nobody is an accident. You say, "Well, we did not plan to have this one." You might not have planned to have them, but God wrote that person in His book before you ever were born, before you were ever conceived. There are no people on the face of God's earth that are accidents. You cannot slip up on God and say, "Oh, I did not count on that." God knows what is going to happen at the end of this world just as much as He knew at the beginning of the world because God lives now. There is no yesterday or tomorrow; it is all today with Him. He knows the end from the beginning. In Psalm 139, David talks about how God made him. God made you.

Turn to the book of Esther. Her race was going to be destroyed, and she was in the palace. Her uncle urged her to go and make a petition to the king. He sent for her to go in. He told her: *For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place; but thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed: and who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?* He is saying, "Listen, Esther. Do you understand that God allowed you to be born and brought you to the kingdom for such a time as this? He put you in that place." Listen to me, child of God, God brought you onto the scene of earth's action. He brought you on the time of His own choosing. He expects you to live for God now. Now, you back up and look in the mirror. "You mean God made this — what I am looking at? You mean to tell me that God placed me in this dunghill that I am living in? You mean to tell me that God gave me this deformed and afflicted body? Do you mean that God gave me this mind that is not like other people's minds?" God said that He did. Now, remember, He is not dealing with unfallen material. He is dealing with sinful material. I say this respectfully, but God is doing the best that He can with what He has to work with. Now, I do not know whether that is theologically correct. The thought that I am simply saying is that God is not working on perfect material. He is dealing with fallen material. Let's go a little further. God's

ways are not our ways. I read in Isaiah 55:8-9: *For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.* God is saying, "Now, my ways are not like yours, and mine are so far above yours." Now, let me just name some things. God probably placed you in a dark place in order for you to shine so your loved ones would get saved. You are the only Christian that has ever been born in your family. You are saved. Now, why did God allow you to be born in a dark place? You do not walk down the street of Lakeland at noonday with a flashlight in your hand. Somebody will lock you up. A light is for a dark place. I like to think about an illustration — now, I do not know all about it, but I do not think that Brother Jenkins came from a home where there was spiritual light running out of every one of the windows. I think he is the first one in his family that got saved. He got saved one day only a block away from here on the corner. Some of our folks went over there and led him to Christ. Since he has gotten saved, some twenty-eight to thirty members of his family have gotten saved. They were not Sunday School boys and girls. They did not come from the elite of society. They were sinners, and they were doing what sinners do naturally. God places you in a dark place to shine so your loved ones will get saved. Praise God. He put you in a dark place because He wants to reach your loved ones that need the Lord Jesus. That makes sense.

NUMBER FOUR, GOD KNEW THAT ONLY THE STRAIGHTNESS OF THE PLACE WOULD MAKE YOU SEEK THE LORD. In Hosea, it talks about a wild woman. Her name was Gomer. Gomer played the harlot. Hosea 2:5-7: *For their mother hath played the harlot: she that conceived them hath done shamefully: for she said, I will go after my lovers, that give me my bread and my water, my wool and my flax, mine oil and my drink. Therefore, behold, I will hedge up thy way with thorns . . .* (God said, "I will send sharp affliction.") *and make a wall, (blinding perplexities) that she shall not find her paths. (utter failure) And she shall follow after her lovers, but she shall not overtake them; and she shall seek them, but shall not find them: (bitter disappointment) then shall she say, I will go and return to my first husband; for then was it better with me than now.* God said, "I will fence up a way -- sharp affliction and a wall. I will do this." Why? God has to deal severely with some folks. If He does not, they will never even think about Heaven and hell and eternity. Who knows, but God let you be born there. Otherwise, you might have been born in a palace and died and gone to hell. God has a purpose. You might have been born where you never saw your daddy draw one sober breath. If it had not been for that, you would have been born somewhere, and you would have died a drunkard. But, God let you see that thing, and it turned you to sobriety by watching it day in and day out. You might have been born in a home where your mother was immoral, and it was immorality that drove you to purity. God in His love to you allowed that. Why? In order for your preservation from terrible sin. Again, God's ways. He may take the dunghill as a stepping stone of fertilizer to make you grow. I read in Genesis 41:52. Joseph is down in Egypt, and there he suffered sharp afflictions. When he called his son Ephraim, he said: *For God hath caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction.* He said that it became a stepping stone for him to grow. If it were not for humanism in the public schools, do you know what I would say? I would say, "Down with the Christian schools." You say, "Are you crazy?" No sir, you put them in the public schools and let the public schools run up one side and down the other because that will make them strong. Let the public schools laugh at them. Let them jeer at them. They do not get any of that in the Christian schools. Let them call them, "Holy Joes." It will make them want to carry their Bible. It will make them want to get on their knees and live for God. I assure you that will separate the wheat from the tares. That will separate those who mean business from those who do not mean business. Persecutions always help the saints of God. If it were not for twelve years of humanism, I would say put the Christian boys and girls in the public schools and let the public schools go after them. God put you in a difficult place because that is the thing that will drive you to holiness and purity and bring out the best in you and not the worst in you. God has a purpose.

NUMBER FIVE, GODLINESS MAY BLOOM ANYWHERE. It is our response to the situation. In 2 Kings 22 and 2 Chronicles 34, there is a little boy named Josiah. Josiah's daddy was ungodly. Josiah's granddaddy was the most wicked king of all kings, Manasseh. How wicked, how ungodly were his daddy and his granddaddy! He had no emblem of purity. He had no living illustration. He had no godly heritage. He had no instruction in righteousness. Idolatry was everywhere -- perversion, immorality, godlessness. There, this little boy was born. The Scripture says: *Josiah was eight years old when he began to reign, and he reigned in*

Jerusalem one and thirty years. And he did that which was right in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the ways of David his father, and declined neither to the right hand, nor to the left. For in the eighth year of his reign, while he was yet young, he began to seek after the God of David his father . . . And, boy, he cracked down on sin. He used his place where he was not as a stumbling block but as a stepping stone as a war on sin. Nobody ever went to war on sin like Josiah. He closed up the Sodomites' houses. He knocked down all of the idols. He really went to war. He opened the doors of the temple again and rebuilt the house of God. He had a tender heart toward the Word of God. Do you understand that if you came from a place where you had no spiritual privileges, you would have a more tender heart toward the Word of God than somebody who sat in the house of God and heard it and heard it and heard it and did not do anything about it? This little boy had a heart that could respond to truth because he had never heard truth. How wonderful when the heart for the first time hears the Word of God and springs up to it because it is not hardened by rejection of truth! This young fellow became a stepping stone instead of a stumbling block. He knew the bitterness of sin, and he really made war on it. Turn to Ezekiel 18. Godliness is a personal matter. In Ezekiel's day, they were quoting this passage in the book of Ezra, and they ran it in the ground. They were excusing themselves. You cannot excuse yourself for anything mom and dad did. You cannot excuse yourself on the basis that you are in the wrong crowd. Godliness is a personal matter. It is non-transferable. You cannot get it from somebody. Moms and dads cannot give it. They may set an example, but they cannot give it to you. In Ezekiel 18, God said: *The word of the LORD came unto me again, saying, What mean ye, that ye use this proverb concerning the land of Israel, saying, The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge?* (He said that the young people are saying, "Well, my mom and dad left God out of their lives and God just chastened us because of our fathers and mothers. They bore it all on us." God said, "When I get through, you will not say that anymore.") *As I live, saith the Lord GOD, ye shall not have occasion any more to use this proverb in Israel. Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die. But if a man be just, and do that which is lawful and right,* (Then He began to name all the positive and negative things that the person did or did not do.) Verse 9: *Hath walked in my statutes, and hath kept my judgments, to deal truly; he is just, he shall surely live, saith the Lord GOD. If he beget a son that is a robber, a shedder of blood, and that doeth the like to any one of these things, And that doeth not any of those duties,* (He names the sins that the person might do.) Verse 13: *Hath given forth upon usury, and hath taken increase: shall he then live? he shall not live: he hath done all these abominations; he shall surely die; his blood shall be upon him.* (What about his son?) Now, lo, if he beget a son, that seeth all his father's sins which he hath done, and considereth, and doeth not such like, *That hath not eaten upon the mountains, neither hath lifted up his eyes to the idols . . .* It goes on to tell about his life. Verse 17: *. . . hath walked in my statutes; he shall not die for the iniquity of his father, he shall surely live. As for his father, because he cruelly oppressed, spoiled his brother by violence, and did that which is not good among his people, lo, even he shall die in his iniquity.* God said, "Godliness is a personal matter." A man may live for God, and his son go to the devil, and the grandson live for God, and his great-grandson goes to the devil. Godliness is a personal matter. God is saying in His Word that godliness can bloom anywhere. A flower can bloom in the dunghill. A flower can bloom in the desert. There are flowers that only bloom in the dark. God in His Word is assuring us that godliness may bloom anywhere.

NUMBER SIX, PRIVILEGE DOES NOT GROW SAINTS. If it were true that privilege grew saints, second generation Christians would be the strongest Christians on the face of God's earth. That is not true. Oftentimes, mom and dad are pioneers, and they go all out for God. Their children come along and become settled. They do not want to fight. They do not want to take a stand. What happens? They back off. It is not privilege that grows saints; it is a personal decision that makes a child into a saint of God. Some say, "If only I had so many privileges . . ." If you had privileges, you probably would have been lost. You have to leave that in the hands of God -- why He gives to some and why He does not give to others. Privilege misused brings greater judgment. If you are a man, woman, boy, or girl of great privilege, I want to tell you that God expects more out of you. You cannot take privilege and say, "I am not going to get involved." If God has given you privilege, you have to get involved or pay the consequences. *But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be*

much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more. You are envious of somebody who may have a lot of privileges. God expects more of them. They may not do what God expects of them, and they will answer for it at the Judgment Seat of Christ. If they are unsaved, they will answer for it at the Great White Throne Judgment. Did you understand that? The more privilege a man is given by God, God expects more from him than He does of those to whom He has not given privilege; but to those He has given little privilege, God gives greater rewards if you excel, because it costs you more to get there. You will receive greater judgment if you abuse privilege; you will receive greater rewards if you do not have privileges and you take what little you have. God is just in all of His doings. I will remind you about this thing called privilege. Serving God under most adverse circumstances brings a greater reward.

NUMBER SEVEN, CHOOSE YOUR OWN EXAMPLE. Turn back to 2 Chronicles 34. Here is Josiah. His daddy was wicked. His granddaddy was the most wicked man in the Old Testament. He had no example from which to pattern his life. What would he do? No illustration of godliness. Well, he had to turn around. He could not look forward. He had to look back. Everybody here today can take a look back through history. You may not have a living illustration inside the walls of your home. You may not have a living illustration in your community, but there is somebody somewhere that you can pattern your life after and say, "I am going to follow his example." That is what he did. His daddy was wicked. His granddaddy was wicked. He chose David. He had to go back many years, and he selected David. He was his father. Of course, he was his father as far as geneology is concerned but not his immediate father. David was simply somebody in Josiah's heritage. He chose David to pattern his life after. *And he did that which was right in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the ways of David his father, and declined neither to the right hand, nor to the left.* You can take where you live, and it is dark, and it is bad; and you can use it as a stumbling block or a stepping stone. You can say, "Well, everything is against me," or you can dare to be different. If you dare to be different, the grace of God will take you from the dunghill and set you among princes. That is what the Scripture says. It all depends upon your response to your environment and where God has placed you. You must choose your own example. There are those who grow up in godly homes and have godly parents, but they do not choose their parents as an example to follow. They turn to the rock stars and decide, "I am going to pattern my life after a wicked rock star," and they choose their example. A child from an ungodly home likewise can turn his eyes away from his mother and dad which could not be an example, and he says, "I am going to choose my example, and I am going to choose somebody that is living for God and make them my example." The godly-home child can choose to live ungodly, or the ungodly-home child can choose to live godly. It is not the home. It is your decision out of the position that God has placed you in. You have to choose. You cannot blame, "My dad . . ." No, you cannot do that. God will hold dad for his influence. God will hold mom for her influence. It is your response.

Now, let me close with this. Turn back to 1 Samuel 2: *He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory . . .* My last thought is that God has a special promise to nobodies who will respond to His grace. I am going to give an illustration from a book that I read. I think this girl is still alive today. The book is a good book entitled *Dorie, the Girl Nobody Loved*. Let me just read some excerpts from her book. If you want to say that anybody was really from a dunghill, then you would say that she was just about that. I am quoting, "I stood waiting for my mom to love me, but she pushed me away. 'What do you want?' she barked. 'Would you hug me?' I asked timidly. 'You get out of here,' she barked back. That is all I ever knew of my mom. I was only six. I remember nothing was bright in the darkness of that dingy apartment. My stomach growled with hunger. I learned only people with money could have food. One day, mother took us to an orphanage. It was as if she had dropped off a package and never remembered to come back and pick it up. At my first meal, I did not eat. They took away my chair. A matron soon came along with a long thin paddle and gave me a beating I will never forget. Several months after my thirteenth birthday, I had to leave the orphanage. We were taken to a home to learn to adjust to the world. We were initiated. 'If you do not mind me, you get this.' The woman known as 'Granny' warned us as she slapped us across the face with her bare hand. We were not permitted to eat at the table. We were expected to survive on leftovers. One day, Granny told us to get out and find our

mother and tell her that she wanted some money. In the dingy restaurant was our mother writing an order. She publicly disowned us. We stood before her shivering, but she had shown no pity for our plight. Granny, with a great big stick, beat me angrily, swearing at me for not bringing money. Then she shook me violently, grabbed my throat to choke me. We went to live in another home. Often, I was afraid to go home knowing I probably would be whipped, so I would walk the dark alley near the house and sleep on the cold concrete. Often, I tried to doctor my bleeding nose or touch up my black eye to be presentable. I lied about my bruises. I was afraid that if the truth became known, the beatings would become more severe. I was gripped by fear. I had to survive. I had to attend court. The only purpose was to charge my mother with child neglect. 'Is this your daughter?' the judge asked my mother. After a long silence, she said, 'Yes, I suppose, but I'd have gotten rid of her before she was born if I could have.' Her rejection of me was total and final. Darkness engulfed me. Hurt ripped through me as I tried to review my childhood looking for something that I had done wrong. I could find nothing." Later on, she found her dad and had established a good relationship. She had gotten saved in the meantime. She tried to talk to him about the Lord, and he would not listen. Finally, God called her to the mission field. When she accepted God's call to go to New Guinea as a missionary, she went to tell her dad. He was ill and dying. When she told him, he said, "If that is what you plan to do, don't unpack your suitcase. From this moment on, you are not my daughter. I never want to see you again." "He was the only person in the world who ever loved me. He had rejected me deliberately, irrevocably. That was the last time I saw my father." When they published the obituary, her name was not in the obituary. Then, she goes on to say, "Those who are born of good stock face the temptation of taking pride in their physical lineage. The result is they do not see how desperately they need the grace of God. The Jews knew that their father was Abraham, and they rejected the Messiah. How much better are they like the woman of Samaria who as a half-breed would have claimed no human merit but clung solely to Christ and His sacrificial work on the cross. The kingdom of heaven is populated with the downcast to help the unwanted. Those of us who cannot boast of our earthly lineage are special targets of God's love. As David wrote, *A father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widows, is God in his holy habitation.*" Then many years later, she ran across some grandparents that she did not even know existed. "Throughout my lifetime, I scarcely thought about having grandparents, and because of my mother's hatred for me, I had always suspected that someday a sordid story about my origin would come to light. Now, for the first time, I realize that I did have family roots." She found them in the cemetery. "I did at one time have grandparents, although they died long before I was born. How I wished I could have met them; for all of my ugly past, I was part of a family line. Tears flooded my eyes. My children came to stand beside me. Darlene took my right hand. Bernie [her husband] took my left. Then I heard the voice of God, the voice that had whispered to me during those many years of loneliness and hard heartache, 'Dorie, your end is going to be so much better than your beginning.' We turned to go back to the car. My vision was blurred. My emotions were churning. As we drove away, my thoughts shifted from the memories of my childhood to God's guidance in my life. Surely His grace is seen most clearly against the background of rejection and hopelessness. God had displayed His love to me in a hundred different ways. Yes, there was my mother, the orphanage, and my foster home; yet Christ had accepted me and elevated me to be an heir of God and a joint-heir with Jesus Christ. He gave me a godly husband and two priceless children. Then he gave me the privilege of going half way around the world to help stone age people hear the Gospel. Finally, he let me be a pastor's wife and tell others in America that God loves nobodies and can make them into somebodies for His name sake." He did all that for a girl nobody loved. . . . *and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory:* If you are a nobody, I want to tell you that you are somebody if you come and you will accept God's grace and respond to God's grace. He will save you, make you a child of the King, and make you sit in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. If you sit in your despondency in unbelief, then you will die at the dunghill, but you do not have to.