

The PARDON

A young man who lived in one of the western states had never done anything against the law, but one day while playing a game of cards he lost his temper. Picking up a sharp knife from the table, in a fit of blind anger he stabbed his opponent to death. He was arrested, tried, and sentenced to die.

Because of the good life he had previously lived, his relatives and friends got up a petition for him. It seemed as though everyone in town wanted to sign it. Before long, other towns and villages had heard about it, and people all over the state were eager to sign the petition.

At last the large load of petitions was taken to the governor, who happened to be a Christian. Tears came to his eyes as he looked at the large volume of petitions. He decided to pardon the young man.

He wrote out a pardon and put it in his pocket; then, dressed in the garb of a clergyman, he made his way to the prison.

As the governor approached the death cell the young man sprang to the bars. "Get out of here", he yelled. "I don't want to see you. I have had seven of your kind come and see me already. I had enough religion at home."

"But," interrupted the governor, "wait a minute young man. I have something for you, I want to talk to you about your freedom. Let me talk to you".

In hot anger, the young man said: "I heard enough about freedom from sin, and if you don't get out right now, I'll call the guard and have you thrown out". "But, young man," continued the governor, "I have good news for you-the very best. Won't you let me tell you about it?"

This time, with a red face, the young man yelled at the top of his lungs: "You heard what I said, and if you don't leave immediately, I will call the warden. "Very well," replied the governor, and with a heavy and sad heart he turned and left.

A little while later, the warden approached. "Well, young man," he said, "I see you have had a visit from the governor."

"What!" the young man said, "Was that man dressed in the garb of a clergyman the governor?" "He was," replied the warden, "and he had a pardon in his pocket for you, but you would not listen to him."

The young man asked for pen and paper, sat down and wrote: "Dear Governor: I owe you an apology. I am sorry for the way I treated you. . ." and so on.

The governor received the letter, turned it over, and wrote on the back, "No longer interested in this case."

The day came for the young man to die. “Is there anything you want to say before you die?” he was asked. “Yes,” he answered, “tell the young men in America that I am not dying for the crime I committed, I am not dying because I am a murderer. The governor pardoned me. I could have lived. Tell them,” he continued, “that I am dying because I did not accept the governor’s pardon.”

If you are lost, it will not be because of your sins – it will be because you have not accepted the pardon God offers you through His Son. For if you refuse Jesus Christ, what can you do? You are turning down your only hope of salvation

The Gospel of John 3:18 says: “Whoever believes in Him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God’s one and only Son.”

That is the only reason you are condemned.

You are not condemned of what you do or did. You will never die because you are a murderer, drunkard, thief, liar, or adulterer, because God can forgive murderers, drunkards, thieves, liars or adulterers; but there is one sin that God will not forgive, and that is the rejection of His Son.

You are not condemned because you are not religious or because you do not join a church. You will be condemned because you refuse God’s offer of mercy. “...but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God’s one and only Son.” There is no other reason. If you are lost, it will be because you **will** not be saved. If you refuse to receive Jesus Christ, if you turn down God’s pardon, there is no hope for you.

All that matters therefore, is your relationship to Jesus Christ. What then, are you going to do with Him?

Oh, the joy of knowing Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior! There is nothing like it. In the letter to the Romans, the Apostle Paul says: “Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.” (Romans 8:1).

All the success in the world cannot compare to it. Your friends can never mean so much. Even loved ones disappoint. Money brings it burdens, and fame its bitterness. But He, Jesus Christ, satisfies! He is never a disappointment. To walk with Him is the sweetest thing on earth. To know all is well, that no black cloud of sin hides His face.

What God is asking of you is simply that you accept His Son as your Savior. And if you do, a new life of peace in your heart will unfold. “Choose you this day whom you will serve” (Joshua 24:15).

Do it NOW, tomorrow might be too late!