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### THEME SONG

#### *He Whispers Sweet Peace to Me*

*Sometimes when misgivings darken the day,*

*And faith's light I cannot see;  
I ask my dear Lord to brighten the way,  
He whispers sweet peace to me.*

*I could not go on without Him I know,  
The world would o'erwhelm my soul;  
His Word is a lamp and brightens the way,  
It points to the heav'nly goal.*

*He speaks thru His Word, assurance He gives,  
I'm His and I know He's mine;  
And safe in the fold my soul He will keep,  
I'll rest in His love divine.*

#### **Refrain:**

*He whispers sweet peace to me,  
He whispers sweet peace to me,  
And thru His blest word  
He strengthens my soul,  
He whispers sweet peace to me.*

**WORDS:** Will M. Ramsey (w. 1932)

**MUSIC:** Will M. Ramsey (w. 1932)



### Compassion for our Family

He was tired of always playing second fiddle to his older brother. Just because he happened to be born first, his brother seemed to get everything: the best inheritance, the respect of their father. It just wasn't fair, the younger son decided. But he had a plan. He went to his father and asked for his share of the inheritance. Being the second son, it wasn't as much as his older brother would get, but at least he could get away and have a life of his own. He could do what he wanted.

Even though the request had to have broken his father's heart, he was given his share of the inheritance and took off. It was great! He had money to throw parties, and everybody wanted to be his friend. He felt so important, and he had done it on his own! Life was great!

Just as easily as he had gained the money, he lost the money. When it was gone, so were all those friends he had made. He couldn't give parties, and he wasn't invited to any. He suddenly found himself in dire straits. What was he to do? He had not apprenticed to learn a trade, and he was in a land where no one knew his heritage. The only job he could find was to hire out to feed some pigs. Pigs! The ultimate insult for a Jew.

He finally came to his senses and realized just how good it had been at home. Even the servants were taken care of better than what was happening to him. So he made a change and returned to his father's house. He realized he had done wrong and was going home to admit it to his father and ask to be one of his servants.

His father saw him coming home, even when he was a long distance from the house. It was almost as if his father had been waiting for him. His father had compassion on him and ran to meet him and hugged him. Even as the son was trying to apologize and admit his wrongs, the father was calling for a robe, a ring, and

sandals for his feet. What a beautiful picture of repentance and forgiveness!

This is a spiritual picture of God welcoming home sinners who have realized they have done wrong, want to make a change, and come before the Father with humility. He welcomes them and wants them to once again be part of the family.

Every day we mess up. It may not be to the extent of leaving friends and family and going to a far country to party away our lives; but it could be a rude word, a snide comment, a cold look, or even unintentionally leaving the impression we don't care about one of our family. How many of our brothers have left the family to find something that gives more meaning to their lives?

There will be a time when they realize the values of this world are very pale in comparison to the values found in Christ. When they start that road back home, will we welcome them as if we had been looking for them to return? Or will we say in our hearts, they got what they deserved?

Let us remember how God has had compassion for us, enough that He even sent His own Son to die in our place. Let us treat one another with compassion and see how we can encourage and uplift one another.

Lorna Smith, Lubbock, TX



### Tender Mercy

In Luke 6:36 Jesus says, "Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful."

God's first description of himself is in Exodus 34. It is a list of his own characteristics. It begins, "The LORD the LORD, the **compassionate** and gracious God." The list of characteristics is quoted eight more times in the OT. When we get to the NT, Jesus often showed **compassion** to both individuals and crowds. **Compassion** is defined as the feeling that arises when you are confronted with another's suffering and feel motivated to relieve that suffering. More than sympathy, **compassion** is a word that calls for action. **Compassion** was prevalent in Jesus' life. It is to be part of our lives.

Ray Boltz is one of my favorite Christian artists. At one of his concerts, there was a 3-year-old boy who looked up and saw the image of a hungry child on one of the video screens. He asked his mother why the little boy was hungry. When he was told that the little boy's parents had no money to buy food, he took a dollar bill from his pocket and asked how many children it would

feed. His mother told him the dollar would provide ten meals. He immediately asked, "what if I give all I have?" His response of **compassion** challenges all of us, and from that response, Ray Boltz wrote the following song, "What If I Give All?"

### *What If I Give All?*

*He heard the preacher say  
A single dime can feed  
A hungry boy or girl  
With nothing to eat  
So he pulled a dollar  
From the pocket of his jeans  
And he asked his mama  
How many will this feed?  
She just smiled  
And when she told him ten  
He reached back again*

*What if I give all I have?  
What will that gift do?  
My child, a gift like that  
Could change the world  
It could feed a multitude  
He didn't close his eyes  
Or turn away  
I can see him standing tall  
He saw the need  
And I can hear him say  
What if I give all?*

*Three birthday dollars  
Could have bought a special toy  
But he reminds me  
Of another little boy  
Who gave to Jesus  
A gift of fish and bread  
I wonder if he said*

*What if I give all I have?  
What will that gift do?  
My child, a gift like that  
Could change the world  
It could feed a multitude  
He didn't close his eyes  
Or turn away  
I can see him standing tall  
He saw the need  
And I can hear him say  
What if I give all?*

*And long ago a Father and a Son  
Saw the children lost in sin  
Can you see the tears  
In the Father's eyes  
As Jesus says to him*

*What if I gave all I have?  
What will that gift do?*

*My Son, that gift  
Will change the world  
It will free the multitudes*

*What if I give all I have?  
What will that gift do?  
My child a gift like that  
Could change the world  
It could feed a multitude  
We cannot close our eyes  
And turn away  
When we hear His Spirit call  
We see the need  
Now let Him hear us say  
What if I give all?  
What if I give all?*

Submitted by Sally Shank, Edmond, OK

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## **Imperfections**

Do you ever feel imperfect? Perhaps “inadequate” would be a better word. Do you ever feel like what you are capable of doing for God and/or for the church is too little to amount to anything?

Consider these people in the Bible:

**Moses** had a speech impediment and felt inadequate to lead the children of Israel. *“Then Moses said to the Lord, ‘O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither before nor since You have spoken to Your servant; but I am slow of speech and slow of tongue.’”* (Exodus 4:10)

Have you ever felt you couldn’t possibly teach a class or speak to a group? Many of us can identify with Moses’ feelings of inadequacy. But God’s answer to him was, *“Who has made man’s mouth? Or who makes the mute, the deaf, the seeing, or the blind? Have not I, the Lord? Now therefore, go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall say.”* (Exodus 4:11-12) God is able to make up for our inadequacies if we will step out in faith and allow Him to use us in His service.

**David** was only a boy in 1 Samuel 17 when he went up against the Philistine giant, Goliath. The odds were stacked against him, and it looked like he was inadequate. Goliath certainly thought so in 1 Samuel 17:42-43, *“...when the Philistine looked about and saw David, he disdained him; for he was but a youth, ruddy and good-looking. So the Philistines said to David, ‘Am I a dog, that you come to me with sticks?’”* The Bible says he cursed David by his gods and said, *“I will give your flesh to the birds of the air and the beasts of the field!”* David’s confidence was not in himself but in God, and the great giant was slain that day by young David.

Later in his life, David committed adultery in 2 Samuel 11 and even resorted to murder in 2 Samuel 11:14-15. It appeared he had such tremendous character flaws that he would be of no further use to God, yet he was described in Acts 13:22, *“... ‘I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after My own heart, who will do all My will.’”* Because of David’s penitence and his willingness to follow God, he was a useful servant for God. Do you think the sins you have committed are too bad for God to use you? Think again.

When Jesus was arrested in the garden, the apostles abandoned Him. Peter did follow him at a distance, but even he denied Jesus three times before the night was over (Matthew 26:69-75). It looked like the little band of Jesus’ followers would be inadequate for the task that lay before them. However, once they saw the resurrected Jesus, they were set back on course. (John 20:24-29). A few short years later, they had taught the gospel to thousands and had presided over the infancy of the Lord’s church throughout the then known world. The history of their work and their writings left a clear record for us to follow today over 2,000 years after their abandonment of Jesus seemed like their ultimate failure.

Paul, then known as Saul, persecuted the church in general and Christians individually as indicated in Acts 9:1-2. Though his life was a consuming fire of zeal for Christ and His church for the rest of his life, he always regretted his early persecution of the church. Late in his life, he described himself as the chief of sinners (1 Timothy 1:15).

All these people had flaws, imperfections, and inadequacies, so why do we know anything about them in the first place? Shouldn’t they have been relegated to anonymity and someone else found to do the job? On the contrary, they were all useful to God despite their imperfections. How could that be?

A story is told of a water bearer in India who had two large pots, one hung on each end of a pole which he carried across his neck. One of the pots had a crack in it, while the other pot was perfect and always delivered a full portion of water at the end of the long walk from the stream to the master’s house. The cracked pot always arrived only half full.

For two full years, this went on daily with the bearer delivering only one and a half pots full of water in his master’s house. Of course, the perfect pot was proud of its accomplishments, perfect to the end for which it was made. But the poor cracked pot was ashamed of its own

imperfection. It was miserable because it was able to accomplish only half of what it had been made to do.

After two years of what it perceived to be a bitter failure, the cracked pot spoke to the water bearer one day by the stream. "I am ashamed of myself, and I want to apologize to you."

"Why?" asked the bearer. "What are you ashamed of?"

"I have been able, for these past two years, to deliver only half my load because this crack in my side causes water to leak out all the way back to your master's house. Because of my flaws, you have to do all of this work, and you don't get full value from your efforts," the pot said.

The water bearer said compassionately, "As we return to the master's house, I want you to notice the beautiful flowers along the path." Indeed, as they went up the hill, the cracked pot took notice of the beautiful flowers by the path; this cheered it some. But at the end of the trail, it still felt bad because it had leaked out half its load once more; and so again the pot apologized to the bearer for its failure.

The bearer said to the pot, "Did you notice that there were flowers only on your side of the path but not on the



other pot's side? That's because I have always known about your flaw, and I took advantage of it. I planted flowers seeds on your side of the path, and every day while we walk back from the stream, you've watered them. For two years, I

have been able to pick these beautiful flowers to decorate my master's table. Without you being just the way you are, he would not have this beauty to grace his house."

As this story illustrates, each of us has unique flaws. We are all cracked pots, but if we will allow it, the Lord will use our flaws to further His kingdom.

In God's great economy, nothing goes to waste. Don't be afraid of your flaws. Acknowledge them, and you too can be the cause of beauty. Know that in our weakness, we find our strength.

Like the water bearer, God has always known about our imperfections, and He uses us even so. Just like Moses, David, the apostles, and a host of others mentioned in the Bible, we all have our imperfections. Like David, may our confidence be not in ourselves but in God's ability to use us...just the way we are...to His glory!

*My grace is sufficient for you,*

*for My strength is made perfect in weakness...*

*2 Corinthians 12:9*

*Evelyn Waite, Rolla, MO*

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"I wish for you..."

Comfort on difficult days,

Rainbows to follow the clouds,

Laughter to kiss your lips,

Sunsets to warm your heart,

Gentle hugs when spirits sag,

Friendships to brighten your being,

Beauty for your eyes to see,

Confidence for when you doubt,

Faith so that you can believe,

Courage to know yourself,

Patience to accept the truth,

And love to complete your life.

God Bless You!

I asked the Lord to bless you

To guide you and protect you

As you go along your way.

His love is always with you

His promises are true,

No matter what the tribulation,

You know He will see us through.

So when the road you're traveling on

Seems difficult at best,

Give your problems to the Lord,

And God will do the rest.

*Author Unknown*

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*Sunrise* is a monthly newsletter written and/or assembled by members of the Rolla Church of Christ. Sunrise is printed and distributed (primarily via email) to individuals and congregations around the country. All previous issues can be accessed by going to <http://www.seekgrowserveandlove.org>. Click on the Resources tab, then on Sunrise Newsletter. You will find the current issue plus all previous issues.

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