

SECOND PRESS

SECOND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH – THOUGHTS TO PONDER

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As we begin the New Year, how nice it would be to have no worries. As children of God, we are not guaranteed an easy life, but we are guaranteed a heavenly Father to walk with us through our trials and give us His peace.

You may have heard or sung the Christian Hymn with Words and Music by Civilla and Walter Martin --- God Will Take Care of You --- published in 1904. If one writes a hymn they can reasonably expect that people of all faith levels will sing it. I'm sure when they wrote this particular hymn Civilla and Martin had no idea the impact it would have some 40 plus years later on one man by the name of JC.

"Be not dismayed whate'er betide,
God will take care of you;
Beneath His wings of love abide,
God will take care of you.

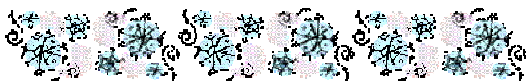
God will take care of you,
Through every day, over all the way;
He will take care of you,
God will take care of you."

JC was a businessman who started from humble beginnings. His father was a Baptist Minister in the early 19th century and instilled a quality of life and respect for the word of God in him. JC built his business around the "Golden Rule" and then he fell on hard times during the Great Depression.

With his situation desperate, JC sought the Lord and in a church service the organist started playing, "God Will Take Care Of You." That was a defining moment for JC and with his whole world crashing in on him God used this hymn to show JC the revelation of His strength. JC left that service a new man --- God had showed up and touched his heart and soul. From that time forward JC no longer worried about his situation and left it in the hands of God.

You and I probably had no idea that this was James Cash Penney. He owned the Golden Rule stores that went on to become the largest retail organization in America at the time. His chain of stores totaled more than 1,500. Today we just call it JC Penney's.

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The space shuttle program had a creative way to boost the shuttle --- the two very large external fuel tanks needed to separate properly

from the shuttle to propel it to places it had never been before. The shuttle needed the boost of the fuel in the tanks to release it from the constraints holding it near this planet so it could soar into space.

A Scottish preacher named John McNeill liked to tell about an eagle that had been captured when it was quite young. The farmer who snared the bird put a restraint on it so it couldn't fly, and then he turned it loose to roam the barnyard. It wasn't long till the eagle began to act like the chickens, scratching and pecking at the ground. This bird that once soared high in the air seemed satisfied to live the barnyard life of a chicken.

One day the farmer received a visit from a good friend who came down from the mountains where the eagles live. Seeing the eagle, the friend said to the farmer, "What a shame to keep that bird hobbled here in your barnyard! Why don't you let it go?" The farmer agreed, so they cut off the restraint. But the eagle continued to wander around, scratching and pecking as before.

The farmer's friend picked it up and set it on a high stone wall. For the first time in months, the eagle saw the grand expanse of blue sky and the glowing sun. Then it spread its wings and with a leap soared off into a tremendous spiral flight, up - up and away. At last it was acting like an eagle again.

Like the space shuttle and the eagle, if I'm going to be free to soar and do what Jesus intended for my life, I have to make a break from the constraints that are holding me back. The eagle had the barnyard constraining his life and the shuttle needed a boost and separation from the external fuel tanks to soar.

The thoughts of "new beginnings" mark the start of a new year. This is a good time to separate ourselves from all that keeps us from serving Christ and being a good representative of Him.

Also it is a good time to start surrounding ourselves with all that will boost us to soar with happiness in Christ.

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