



Written by Osten Aune

It's an Unwonderful Life

"It's an Unwonderful Life" is a parody of the 1946 Christmas classic, Frank Capra's "It's a Wonderful Life" with James Stewart and Donna Reed.

Join our Bailey as he struggles with problems and contemplates suicide. Bailey meets his guardian angel and they travel back into the past and travel into the future of "what could happen."

The twist this time is their startling conclusion that the world would be better off without Bailey! What a predicament; will Bailey jump or not jump from the bridge into the icy waters below? Join Bailey on his Christmas Eve roller coaster of a ride of Faith or Fear. Christian-fiction written by Osten Aune.

Though "It's an Unwonderful Life" is Christian-Fiction this story is not a story written for young children. If this were a movie I would give it a PG-13 rating.

Written by Osten Aune

1st draft September 12, 2007

November 1, 2007

June 7, 2008

July 11, 2008

It is Christmas Eve. Bailey and his wife Mary have been arguing, mostly over money – or at least the lack of it. Not having money at Christmas sucks! Mary wanted to go to the mall and “just look” at all of the Christmas and holiday decorations. Bailey didn’t want to “just look” when he knew he didn’t have any money to buy anything. “What’s the point in looking when you can’t buy anything?” Bailey grumbled.

Out of coaxing from Mary, and a sense of guilt, and obligation, Bailey agreed to go with the family, as Mary would chime, “*it’s that time of year for us all to be together.*” It almost made Bailey cringe to hear anyone in such a blissful and cheerful mood. Bailey puffed but begrudgingly went along. Bailey was so discouraged he didn’t want to move. Sometimes Bailey was so discouraged he couldn’t move....

All of the holiday traffic and crowds were getting on Bailey’s nerves. Just finding a parking place pissed Bailey off! Bailey looked enviously at all of the shiny cars parked in the parking lot; all of the cars seemed to be so much better than his old car.

Bailey felt like Scrooge, “Bah-Humbug!” Bailey didn’t want to “just look” for presents that he knew he couldn’t possibly afford to buy. For Bailey this was depressing! Bailey looked enviously at all of the happy families walking along in the mall. “All of the other families looked sooooo-happy. They should be happy, he thought; they are all carrying packages and presents. All of these people had presents to place under their tree. All of these “brats” are going to get plenty of toys while his kids weren’t getting squat. Bailey wished he could trade places with all these happy, successful, perfect people. Bailey silently thought, “*I’m so angry and despise myself; why can’t I be somebody else.*” Mary had stretched their dollars to the limit. Mary had purchased nice presents for everyone, but Bailey felt that none of the presents

were good enough. Bailey knew what he was getting for Christmas – “*lumps of coal*” – foreclosure, eviction....

Bailey had never been greedy, envious, or jealous before. Bailey had never been really selfish, self-centered, or had wanted conspicuous wealth, but now he really resented what other people had and everyone had more than he did; and Bailey really resented what Bailey didn't have! Bailey was blinded and could not see what he had; Mary and the kids. Somehow all of Bailey's thoughts all turned to what Bailey didn't have. Bailey could only see what he didn't have - and his discontent was poisoning him, eating him up alive. Bailey's mind had become so cloudy and contaminated he could no longer think like the old, kind, and loving Bailey; the Bailey that Mary and the kids loved and desperately wanted back. This depression of Bailey's held on, - held on tight, and would not let go. It would take a miracle....

Bailey felt like he was living a nightmare; all of Bailey's dreams have been crushed... *'Dreams never come true, but nightmares always do.'*

For Bailey living with depression was like living in two separate parallel worlds at the same time. Bailey was walking with his family through the crowded mall, but at the same time he was all-alone, far, far away. Bailey was detached from his family; Bailey really wasn't there with them. Bailey felt alienated from everyone; including his family. Bailey felt so alienated it was like he was from another planet; he could not relate to any of the joy, which surrounded him during Christmas. Mary and the kids have noticed his cold distance from the family. Mary has tried numerous times to break the coldness, to break the ice. Mary was trying everything she knew how to connect, to get through to Bailey. Mary knew that circumstances were hard for Bailey; that he blamed himself for all of their misfortune.

Mary loved Bailey; they were childhood sweethearts and have been married for years! She knew that as long as they were together that they would make it through! Bailey and Mary had gone through tough times before. Mary had faith that they would get through their present hardships. But - that was the crux of the problem; *“their problem.”* It was a problem that the whole family had to go through; not just Bailey. It was hard for everyone! Somehow, Bailey’s keeping everything to himself was not protecting or helping his family; it was only distancing him from his family, and ultimately it was hurting them. But Bailey would not let anyone in. Bailey would not let anyone in into his *“hurt little world.”* Bailey would not let anyone help. Somehow Bailey felt that he was alone and that he HAD to face all of their problems by himself! The only problem was that Bailey was too weak to face all of his problems alone but somehow Bailey was too arrogant to recognize it! Bailey was overwhelmed and could not cope. Bailey kept rejecting any support that he received from Mary, from family, or friends. All of their encouraging words were all discounted! He dismissed it all as disingenuous that it couldn’t possibly be true because it was *“all his fault”* and he deserved it. Bailey mistakenly saw all of their support as pity. Where could Bailey find the hope, faith, and strength he needed to carry on? Where? Where?

Mary worried and Mary prayed for Bailey to get some relief from their worldly problems, which were crushing in on them. Mary was worried about the well-being of the whole family; not just the loss of a house. Mary figured that there wasn’t much she could do about the past but she had made up her mind that she was going to enjoy the Christmas season; she was going to make sure that the kids enjoyed Christmas even though they didn’t have much money. Mary was going to do the best of what she could, with what she had, right now! Mary was not going to be chained to the past. Mary felt that Christmas was much more than just eggnog and presents. Though they have had misfortune; Bailey being sick and

all, but Mary also felt blessed, really and truly blessed, that they still had much to be thankful for. If only Bailey could get out of his depths....

Later after the mall, they left – empty-handed. Now Mary wanted to go and look at all of the Christmas lights on all of the houses in some of the nicest neighborhoods. Bailey drove up and down the streets as his wife and kids gawked at the millions and jillions of lights on all of the beautiful homes, all the beautiful homes....

There was no relief for Bailey. He was about to lose his home from lack of money, defaulting on the mortgage loan and here he was looking at some of the finest most beautiful homes in town! So unfair. If only he hadn't gotten hurt, been out of work, and hadn't racked all kinds of impossible hospital bills. Home... *'Home is a place you lose.'*

And then while he was suppose to be recuperating at home from his surgery, the bills kept coming in. How are you suppose to *"feel better"* when all of your bills keep piling up, Bailey wondered? All of his problems were so out of his hands; so out of his control.

Bailey's nerves were raw and on edge; Bailey was irritable. Then it got even more unbearable for Bailey; there were Christmas Carolers singing Christmas carols:

We wish you a merry Christmas

We wish you a merry Christmas

We wish you a merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

'We wish you a merry Christmas' kept swirling in Bailey's head giving him a headache. The happiness and joy, which surrounded him, only made him to feel worse; even more depressed. *'Merry*

Christmas’ was making him sick. Bailey thought he would scream if he heard another *‘Merry Christmas.’*

Bailey has tried self-help but found that self-help is no help at all! Bailey in contempt hummed to himself:

*“If you’re depressed and you know it – clap your hands
If you’re depressed and you know it – clap your hands”*

As inadequate as his little song was that is exactly how inadequate, futile, and helpless Bailey felt. Bailey could not dig himself out of the hole he was buried in. Bailey is pissed-off! Here he is about to lose his house and here he is looking at some of the most beautifully decorated homes in town. Oh how happy all of these privileged people must be, Bailey would think to himself. “Why do these rich people deserve so much? And why do I deserve so little? So damn little. So unfair....”

Finally the ordeal was over; they made it back home. That is they made it back to the home they were about to be evicted from. This would be their last Christmas in this house Bailey reasoned. Bailey felt that if it weren’t for bad luck he had no luck at all. Again Bailey was reminded that all he was getting for Christmas was *“lumps of coal”* – eviction! Bailey wanted to cry. Bailey wanted to die....

Things at the house calmed down a bit but Bailey was restless, very restless. He felt like he had a chip on his shoulder, Bailey was mad, – mad at the world, the world was against him, and the world was winning. Bailey felt like he was the world’s piñata and that his life was dangling on a string and the world kept beating him repeatedly again and again with a stick! But Bailey wasn’t looking for another fight with Mary. Bailey didn’t want to hurt Mary any more than he already had, she didn’t deserve it, and after all, it was Christmas Eve.

Bailey didn't want to break the peace and tranquility, the Christmas spirit of Mary and the kids, because actually even with all that has happened, they seemed happy; really happy, just like nothing was happening or changing. "Ignorance is Bliss," he muttered to himself.

Bailey makes a poor excuse to go to store to get some beer. He has some beer in the refrigerator; he's just looking for an excuse to get out. He has a headache. Maybe he just needs some fresh air? Maybe???

Bluntly Bailey tells Mary, "I'm going out."

Mary looks up at Bailey with big, brown, sorrowful eyes. Somehow Baileys' going out on Christmas Eve by himself, now, really hurts her. She doesn't want Bailey to leave on Christmas Eve.

The weather is starting to get bad, but most importantly she really needs and wants Bailey to stay at home; she needs him. Mary doesn't want to start another argument either; her eyes really do all of the talking, and she just says, "I love you. Be careful," Such sweet simple words. Bailey almost hesitates, he almost changes his mind, but temptation calls and then Bailey nods and sheepishly walks out the front door to the car.



Boy-howdy, the weather really is starting to get bad; he figures he can beat the oncoming storm and be back home before it gets too bad.

Bailey gets in the car, turns the ignition, but the car doesn't want to start; "Damn!" He thinks again of all of the beautiful shiny cars in the mall parking lot and then he thinks of his "Damn Car!" Then the car starts, "I take it back... good car, just get me to the beer store."

The streets are deserted for its Christmas Eve. Bailey looks at the snowflakes as they pass by the headlights of his car. Bailey feels like he is being tossed on the waves of the sea. The wind is really blowing, a storm is coming....

Bailey gets to the beer store right before closing. "I'm glad you were open," Bailey quipped. Then Bailey noticed that the clerk was in the process of closing. Bailey felt a little guilty, "Sorry for making you work on Christmas Eve."

The clerk just smiled, "I just can't wait to get home to my wife and family."

Bailey buys the beer that he just had to have. The clerk seems impatient and trying to hurry home and then he adds, "Merry Christmas."

Bailey stammers back "M-Merry Christmas to you." Bailey couldn't believe that these words actually came out of his mouth!

All of a sudden Bailey has a jolt of being homesick, Bailey is anxious and wishes he hadn't left. Bailey wishes he was back home with Mary. Bailey felt guilty for leaving his family on Christmas Eve, while here is this poor clerk having to work on

Christmas Eve; wishing he were home for Christmas with his family!

Bailey leaves the store, gets in the car, turns the ignition, and the “Damn Car” doesn’t start! “Damn Car!” Finally after some coaxing the car starts, “good car.”



Bailey started to head for home. The weather was worsening; the snow was really starting to come down. Bailey felt low. Bailey was overwhelmed with anxiety. Bailey was filled with dread. Bailey's head started to hurt. Bailey turned on the car radio....

Mary had tuned in Christmas carols earlier; "Silent Night" was playing on the radio. It was a perfect night for "Silent Night" the snow was coming down and the road was deserted; it was a beautiful Christmas picture. But somehow Bailey's mind was fixated on all of the shiny cars he had seen in the mall parking lot; "beautiful shiny cars" – not like his old car that was trouble starting! "Silent Night" is playing gently on the radio. But Bailey is singing out loud his old favorite Janis Joplin lament of a song:

*O Lord won't you buy me a Mercedes Benz,
My friends all drive Porches'
I must make amends.
It's been hard all my lifetime
No help from my friends
Well O Lord won't you buy me a Mercedes Benz*

To say the least, Bailey is not in the Christmas spirit! Bailey isn't really paying any attention to where he is going. Bailey is familiar with the road; he has been down this road many times before. The snow is really coming down; it's hard to see. Bailey's head is hurting.

All of a sudden Bailey feels disoriented, "Where am I," he wondered? His mind drifted off again... *Well O Lord won't you buy me a Mercedes - - -*

SLIP! – SLIDE! – WHAM! The car comes to an abrupt stop. Bailey flies forward and hits his head. Bailey has hit something in the road, some kind of debris covered in the snow. Bailey just looks out the windshield; “What Happened?”

Bailey slowly gets out of the car to check for damage. Bailey walks around the car but he can't find any damage. Bailey is puzzled; he knows he hit something! Bailey gets back in the car, turns the ignition, and the car doesn't start. No surprise there! Bailey tries and tries but the “Damn Car,” he can't get the “Damn Car” to start. Bailey just sits behind the wheel, kind of dazed; his head hurts, he has a blasting headache. Bailey sinks his head on the steering wheel and closes his eyes. Bailey doesn't know what he is going to do next.

Bailey just sits there and looks out the windshield at all of the snow coming down, starting to pile up on the windshield. Soon Bailey would not be able to see out of the windshield. Bailey could feel the snow, closing in upon him. Bailey feels trapped in more ways than one. Bailey could feel the world closing in upon him. Bailey knew that he has to get out of the car and face the *'cold cruel world.'* Bailey slowly realizes that the roads are empty, for it was Christmas Eve, Bailey started to worry that he would have to walk the rest of the way home, in the cold wet snow. Bailey now regretted his decision to go get beer; his plan wasn't working out – again! Bailey tries to call Mary on his cell phone, but the cell phone was dead too, “Damn! Double Damn...!”

Bailey knew that by the time he would get home now, that Mary was going to kill him. And where was he going to find the money to have his car towed on Christmas Eve? “Damn! Damn! Damn!” The snow was really coming down now, the wind was really blowing; visibility was near impossible. Bailey started to walk home. Bailey is still disoriented; he had hit his head when the car came to a stop. “Which way is home anyway?” Bailey looked

around and got his bearings. Bailey started walking home, he figured that he had no choice, he knew he couldn't just stay there; he would freeze. Bailey figured he would start walking home and hoped to catch a ride.

The only sound that Bailey could hear was the crunch, crunch, crunch of his frozen footsteps in the snow. Bailey walks down the road and approaches a bridge going over a running river. Bailey looked down at the icy river. The river looked scary and treacherous. He thought for a flicker of a second that if anyone fell in, they would be dead – quick!

The bridge wasn't a very long bridge – at least when you were driving over it. When you were driving you barely even noticed the bridge or the water down below. The bridge is much longer than Bailey thought; it's especially longer when your walking in the freezing cold, he reasoned.

The bridge is covered with fresh snow. There are no tire tracks in the snow; no traffic, no cars, no ride, no way, no hope, for it's Christmas Eve, everyone is at home warm with their families; everyone but Bailey.

Bailey stops in about the middle of the bridge. Bailey looks deeper at the cold dark water below. Bailey is filled with dread. Bailey thinks of all of the awful circumstances, which are quickly closing in all around him. Bankruptcy, foreclosure, bills... *“lumps of coal....”*

Bailey looks at all of his mounting problems; he is overwhelmed. That little flicker, that little thought that Bailey wanted to deny was back – Bailey wished he were dead! Things are so bad Bailey wishes that he had never been born!

Bailey contemplates suicide because of all of his insurmountable problems: car wreck, hospital bills, lost his job, unemployment, bankruptcy, Bailey was losing their home, bills were unpaid, all of which is causing family strife. Bailey's problems are great; his resources are nonexistent, life has beaten him down, Bailey is filled with pain and disappointment. Life has chewed him up and spit him out.

Bailey's life is shattered; Bailey is in dismay, confused; beyond the point of helplessness and hopelessness. Bailey feels like he has no one to turn to for help.

Bailey just stands there in the middle of the bridge, looking down at the dark waters below. Snow is starting to cover his cap and jacket. Bailey just shakes his head. Bailey has lost all hope and is now composed to surrender to suicide to end the pain of despair. And it seems to be his only way out; the best way out. If he dies his wife will receive his life insurance! The only problem is for his wife to collect the money; he must make his suicide look like an accident.

Bailey tried to reason things out to be rational with his disarranged mind. "An accident, I must make it look like an accident. Mary and the kids will be better off without me... I wish I were dead... I wish I had never been born!"

Now Bailey is looking over the ice-covered river below from the bridge above. To jump or not to jump; that is the question? It's freezing outside. Sleet and snow are stinging his face as he stands looking at the icy river below. His hands are frozen, his nose is frozen, he is frozen from head to toe. If he jumps into the icy waters he knows he couldn't last long. Maybe if he were lucky the fall would break his neck... Jump or not to jump...?

THEN out of nowhere, wouldn't you know it, much to Bailey's great surprise there is a funny looking, kind, older looking gentleman dressed in old fashioned style clothes, just standing there smiling at him.

"Thinking about jumping?" he asks. "You could catch your death of cold!"

Bailey almost jumps out of his skin he is so startled. Bailey jumps back and slips on the icy snow. Bailey is so startled that he slips and almost falls over the railing of the bridge. Bailey catches himself and clutches on tightly to the rail, that was too close Bailey thought to himself looking down at the cold water below. Then Bailey indignantly asked, "Where in Hades did you come from? You scared the daylights out of me; I almost fell..."

This little fellow looked at Bailey and seemed to enjoy and be amused at Bailey's sad predicament and circumstances. Bailey was quite startled, but at the same time, this little fellow didn't seem to be very intimidating or threatening; he looked harmless. Bailey just looked at him for a minute with his mouth wide open. This little man looked dapper with a turned-up mustache, tweed vested suit, wore a old fashioned hat pulled over his white little bald head, and had a warm scarf wrapped around his neck. This little fellow was kind of roly-poly with old world charm. This little fellow looked like your long-lost favorite uncle.

"I was sent to help you to make a decision. I was sent to help you to make a difficult choice.*"

"You mean about jumping?"

"Yes."

"Are you some kind of guardian angel?"

“You can call me that if you wish.*

Well, what are you going to do? Jump or not jump?”

“I don’t know what I want to do. I wish I had never been born.”

“Never been born, hungh.”

“Yes, I wish I had never been born. I despise myself and my life so much I wish I had never been born! If I hadn’t been born my wife would have married someone good; someone successful and rich.

“Successful and rich... is that all?”

“My children would have grown up with everything they wanted. No second hand, run down used stuff. *No lumps of coal.* My kids deserve the best! Everything that I could never give them.”

“Things. Stuff. No problem.”

“All I’m doing is hurting the people I love. If I had never been born, the world would be much better off. If I had never been born the world would have never missed me. The world would be a better place if I had never been born.”

“Are you sure?”

Sadly enough Bailey was convinced, “I’m sure.”

“Watch out what you ask for Mr. Bailey. Well I tell ya what Mr. Bailey, tonight is your night. Tonight will be a night you will never forget! Let’s just see Mr. Bailey, what would the world be like if you had never been born.”

In just an instance, in just a flash, Bailey was covered in a thick fog; he couldn't see his hands outstretched before him. He heard the man's kindly voice, "Well Mr. Bailey, let's see what the world would be like if you had never been born."

"Hey, wait a minute, where am I?"

"You're in a thick, thick fog, Mr. Bailey."

"Hey who are you anyway?"

"You already said who I am didn't you?"

"Yes. No. I mean what is your name?"

"You can call me Lawrence, that will suffice."

"Well where am I Lawrence?"

"You are in a fog, Mr. Bailey."

"I know. You already said that."

"You are stuck in the "middle," "sitting on the fence" as it were. You are in the middle of making a decision remember – to jump or not to jump!"

Bailey looked down, "I wish I had never been born," Bailey sighed.

"You keep saying that! Why do you keep saying that?"

Bailey paused for a moment. Everything was closing in on him. Life again was overwhelming him; troubles and bills were piling up, Bailey started to cry. Not just cry, but the anguished cry of desperation, suffering, and pain. Bailey cried! Bailey wept! Again Bailey sighed, “I wish I had never been born.”

“Well Mr. Bailey when did you first ever wish that you had never been born?”

Bailey thought a moment to himself, “When I was a kid, when I was in school, I was always picked on. I wore braces. I was always made fun of. The kids made fun of my looks. They teased me because of my clothes. I was never any good at sports. I never got picked. I was never very smart; all the kids would call me dumb.”

“I wish I had never been born.”

The fog miraculously surrounded Bailey again.

“Where am I?”

“In a fog!!!”

Kindly Lawrence asked, “When was the next time you wished you had never been born?”

Bailey again thought for a moment. And then his lips began to tremble as he remembered his painful experience from the past.

“High school.” “I wish I had never been born in high school. That was a terrible time. I was lanky and looked funny, my voice was changing, I talked funny, and I had pimples all over my face. The kids they always made fun of me. Girls never liked me. I never had a date. Everyone else was popular and happy; I was always alone. “I wish I had never been born.”

Again Bailey was enveloped in a fog.

“Do you know where you are Bailey?”

“In a fog,” he whispered.

“Where?”

“In a fog,” Bailey replied louder. “In a fog....”

“And why are you in a fog?”

“I’m here to make a decision. Jump or not to jump.”

“Have you made a decision yet?”

“No. Not yet.”

“OK then when was the next time you wish that you had never been born?”

Again Bailey is surrounded by the thick fog.

“It’s hard to think in this darkness. It’s hard to think in this fog!”

“Well Mr. Bailey, Jump or not?”

Bailey was trembling. Bailey was confused, “I don’t know... I just wish that I had never been born....”

“OK Mr. Bailey I’m starting to see a pattern here. I think I can help you.* Go on Mr. Bailey when was the next time you wish you hadn’t been born?”

The fog seemed like clouds swirling around, spinning – spinning out of control; just like his life.

“I don’t know. Maybe when I met my wife.”

“Your wife?”

“But Bailey, you love your wife and your wife loves you!”

“It doesn’t really matter. She used too; not now. How could she love me now? Not after all that we have had to go through.”

“Every marriage has its’ ups and downs.”

“Not like ours. Ours was mostly downs. Our last few years have been TERRIBLE! I got hurt in a car accident; totaled the car. Went to the hospital. Now I have a million medical bills that insurance won’t pay. I still need more treatments but I can’t afford to go. Even worse my wife and kids need to go to the doctor too, but we don’t have any money. I’m afraid to answer the phone because of bill collectors. Every time the phone rings my blood pressure soars out of control. My nerves are shot, my temper is short, my temper hits the ceiling now, and so does my poor wife! Well, at least soon I won’t be getting anymore harassing phone calls.”

“Well that’s good news.”

“Not really. The phone is being turned off Thursday. If I had never been born my wife would have married somebody else. Someone successful and rich; someone not such a failure as me.”

“She could have married someone who had a good job and made good money. She deserves a roof over her head. She could have married someone who didn’t lose the house. She deserves to live in a fine big house. I not talking about conspicuous wealth but at least some kind of financial stability, with plenty of life and health insurance, you know, security, somebody with money in the bank;

not me in bankruptcy. I am such a loser... such a complete failure in life... a failure in everything I've ever done....”

With Bailey's new way of tilted thinking he minimized everything that was good in his life and over emphasized everything that was bad in his life. This was an understatement! Bailey's depression was always with him; it was like an obsessive soundtrack playing and replaying continuously in the background of a movie. The tempo of the soundtrack had many variations and themes; sometimes playing fast and loud and sometimes playing soft and low, but always playing subtly in the background of Bailey's mind. Bailey had rationalized and had convinced himself that Mary and the kids would be better off without him.

“I wish I had never been born!”

The dark dense fog again began to surround Bailey. The fog was stifling; the fog was choking him, making him sick.

“I wish I had never been born.”

“Well, Mr. Bailey, Jump or not to jump – what is your decision?”

“I don't know. I'm scared. There's something holding me back.”

Lawrence seemed a little agitated, shaking his head, “Something holding you back, hmmm. Well Mr. Bailey, when was the next time you wished that you were never born?”

This time the thought came to him a little more quickly,

“When my kids were born.”

“When your kids were born??? But Mr. Bailey you love your children and your children love you dearly.”

“I know, but it really doesn’t matter. They’re great kids. They deserve the best; not hand-me-downs, not charity! “I’m ashamed to look them in the eye; I am such a failure. Mary would have married someone rich and successful, they would have children. And EVERYTHING they wanted they would have. They wouldn’t have to do without like my poor kids; my kids deserve better. “I wish I had never been born.”

Again right on cue the sickening fog crept up over Bailey. Somehow the fog and the confusion kept getting worse!

“Get me out of this fog! I can’t think in this fog! Lawrence....”

“Well Mr. Bailey, I told you that tonight would be an extraordinary night. Let’s look, let’s go together and see what the world would be like if you had never been born.”

In a strange whisk the fog was gone; they were immediately transported back to Bailey’s childhood. Bailey couldn’t believe his eyes. There he was, looking at his little-Bailey-self and there he was, little-Bailey in school. It was just as Bailey had imagined it, just as bad as Bailey had imagined it. True to his words little-Bailey was being picked on by the other kids; they were teasing him and calling him names. Bailey was alone; he didn’t get picked to play with his classmates in their games. Bailey watched as he-himself, his little-self with his head hung down, feelings hurt, shuffled off alone.

There were tears swelling up in Bailey’s eyes, “I wish I had never been born,” he sighed.

Immediately he was back in the fog.

“Oh no! Not again!”

Lawrence chimed in, “We’re Baaack!”

Bailey felt absolute utter hopelessness; he was back in this awful fog.

“Well Mr. Bailey jump or not to jump? Which is it?”

“I don’t know. I’m afraid. Something is holding me back.”

Mr. Bailey, “There is nothing holding you back!”*

“Yes there is. I can feel it!”

Immediately Bailey was again whisked away. This time they were at Bailey’s old high school. There were parties after the football game. Bailey was not a jock. Bailey was not invited. Bailey was all alone – again. Just about the only time kids would talk to Bailey was to make fun of him. Young Bailey, pimple-faced Bailey walked away with his tail dragging behind him, alone, and again deeply hurt.

Bailey watched as pimple-face Bailey walked off. Bailey shook his head. “How pitiful. I wish I had never been born.”

Immediately again Bailey was back in the fog, but this time he was not so surprised; Bailey was starting to get used to the fog. The fog was detestable, but the fog was getting to be familiar.

“Well Mr. Bailey, have you made your decision?”

“NO!” came back a quick staunch reply. “I’m not sure.”

“Why Mr. Bailey, What is taking you so long?”

“I just don’t know. I’m afraid and there is something, something holding me back.”

Lawrence frowned disapprovingly, “There is nothing, nothing holding you back Mr. Bailey, make a decision. Please, I don’t have all night” *

“Hey! Don’t rush me!”

“I’m not trying to rush you Mr. Bailey, I’m trying to help you.*”

“There is just something stopping me... holding me back... I can feel it!”

“Well Mr. Bailey, You’re going to get what you asked for! Let us see what the future may hold if you were never born!”

Immediately Bailey found himself in front of a great big beautiful house – a dream house, the house he and Mary had always dreamed of. There were several shiny new cars parked in the driveway. Bailey saw Mary walking out the front door of the house with a tall handsome man; her could-be-husband. Prince too-Charming opened the car door; Mary looked like a fairytale princess stepping into her enchanted carriage. They departed off into the sunset in their prestigious shiny new car. How could Bailey compete with that?

Then the kids walked out and each of them had their very own brand new shiny car. Now what is weird is that Bailey’s kids are not nearly old enough to drive; John is 10 and Amy is 7. It didn’t make any sense but here are two little kids driving their very own shiny cars. Cars, which were much better than any car Bailey, had ever owned. Bailey thought of his own car, “piece of junk.” – *“lump of coal.”*

Everyone had their own shiny car. How could he possibly be missed? Bailey couldn't provide for his family like this no matter how much he loved them. His family Bailey thought would be so much better off without him; they had a beautiful dream house and they each had their very own shiny car. There was no comparison to what this could-be-husband could provide and the meager little bit that Bailey could provide for his family, even though he loved them very much. Bailey envied this other family, the family that used to be his and wished, "I had never been born."

This time Bailey practically expected to be back in the fog. Bailey even started to believe that he deserved to be in the fog. This thick fog of depression and despair; this fog was becoming more familiar. Bailey started to believe that he belonged there, buried in the fog.

"Well Mr. Bailey, You've seen what your life would be like if you had never been born. What did you see?"

Downcast, Bailey cried, "I saw that my family would be much, much better off without me, I'll never be missed. If I die, and make it look like an accident, Mary will receive my life insurance money. It's not a whole lot, but enough to start over, keep the house, enough to get her through."

"Well. Mr. Bailey you may have already have made up your mind. What are you going to do? Jump or not jump?"

The fog had always been bad, but now the fog, the wind, and the storm was at its' peak. Bailey could hardly see; Bailey was in confusion and darkness. **BAILEY HAD NOW LOST ALL HOPE!**

“Mr. Bailey, this is extraordinary, unprecedented! I can’t believe what we have seen! You have nothing to offer. Your wife and kids would be better off if you had never been born! The world would be a better place if you had never been born. Unprecedented!”*

Softly Lawrence put his hand on Bailey’s shoulder and whispered, “What are you going to do?”

“I don’t know. What do you think I should do?”

“You know what you should do! Do what is best for your family. If you love your family you’ll be willing to make this little sacrifice for them. Think of your family!”*

“What should I do?”

“I can’t tell you to do anything! I can’t make you do anything. I can only suggest. I’m only here to help.”*

Bailey was all alone, except for Lawrence, but even with Lawrence’s presence, Bailey felt all alone. Lawrence was not being of much help. Lawrence seemed to make things worse. Bailey wondered what he had done to deserve such an inept guardian angel as Lawrence. Bailey cried tears and pain that enveloped from the very depths of his heart and soul. Bailey had now lost all hope. His problems were so overwhelming he knew that he would never have the resources to overcome – all was lost; Bailey was lost! Was there no way out? Was there no way out at all? Bailey just kept muttering, “Hopeless, it’s just hopeless, impossible, hopeless. I give up. Hopeless.”

“Mr. Bailey, make your choice!”

“I don’t know what to do. Something... something is holding me back!”

“Mr. Bailey, there is nothing is holding you back....”*

Lawrence continued talking to Bailey, trying to persuade Bailey but Bailey had stopped listening to Lawrence. Bailey just tuned Lawrence out. Bailey does not know what to do. Everything seemed against him. At the depth of his desperation, Bailey’s mind seemed to go blank. Bailey just sat their softly sobbing. After a long while he stammered, “*Please God, help me... .*”

Hymn # 186 Alleluia verse 1:” Alleluia”

THEN immediately and amazingly enough the clouds of fog began to spin. The fog actually began to lift. In the darkness there was a *Light*. Everything seemed to happen in a mega-split second, but at the same time everything was happening in slow-motion and Bailey is in the middle of it all!

THEN the wind, Oh my the wind. The wind blew all of the clouds and fog away; not just away but out of existence. The wind was ferocious blowing over the mountains and on all the earth. The wind was like no other wind Bailey had ever seen or felt. The wind was mighty and all-powerful. But at the same time the wind was not destructive. Is there such a thing as a gentle hurricane? Bailey embraced the wind; it was like his sins were being blown away. Bailey felt renewed! The wind was blowing over Bailey. Bailey could feel the full force of the wind, but strange enough the wind was not blowing Bailey off of his feet. The wind was not blowing Bailey away. As strong as the wind was; the wind didn’t hurt. Amazing! Slowly the winds began to dissipate. The winds ceased.

Hymn # 186 Alleluia verse 2: “He’s My Savior”

THEN the ground began to shake like an earthquake. The whole world seemed to be shaking. The ground beneath Bailey’s feet was shaking, but somehow Bailey wasn’t slipping, or tripping, or falling down. All of the ground around Bailey’s feet was like sinking sand. Somehow Bailey’s legs were steady; on solid ground. Bailey’s feet didn’t slip! Bailey didn’t fall! Though the ground beneath Bailey’s feet was trembling, it was like Bailey was standing on a *Rock*; standing on a firm foundation. Something seemed to be holding Bailey up. The noise was deafening but at the same time it sounded wonderful to his ears. He had never heard anything like this chorus before. Then the earthquake and the roaring noise slowly stopped. Amazing.

Hymn # 186 Alleluia verse 3: “I Will Praise Him”

THEN there was something more frightening, more spectacular, something totally different, something even more baffling – FIRE! Bailey was swept up in burning flames of fire. The fire was all around him. The fire was beautiful and intoxicating. Bailey was in awe, but somehow Bailey was not swallowed up in dreadful fear – How could this be? Bailey could feel the full extent of the fire, but yet at the same time Bailey was not scorched or burned. Bailey was not consumed by the fire. How? Impossible! Amazing!

Never in Bailey’s imagination could he have imagined what he was now seeing! No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no one could imagine THIS! Bailey could not believe it even though he was looking straight at it!

THEN finally, the flames and the fire died down. Bailey felt like he almost needed to pinch himself to make sure it wasn't all a dream. Bailey felt like he needed to pinch himself to see if he was even still alive.

THEN Bailey had a dreadful thought, had he jumped into the icy waters below, was he dead, had he died, where was he? Was he in...?

THEN came an astounding silence... the hush of all creation.



Bailey felt that the whole world had stopped moving; indeed the whole universe, the whole crown of creation had momentarily stopped moving. The birds in the sky, the stars in the heavens; they all stopped. This was an incredibly intimidating moment... Bailey could feel his blood rushing to his head and coursing through his body, Bailey was so stunned he could hardly breathe, Bailey could feel each and every heavy-fast-heartbeat; Bailey was scared to death.

THEN Bailey heard a reassuring voice, thunder out of nowhere, “Bailey, Bailey, what are you doing here?”

Amazing. Even though the voice was like thunder the voice was like a soft whisper, the voice was beautiful as church bells ringing,

“Bailey, what are you doing here in this cloud, this fog, what are you doing in Adullam, this cave of depression?”

Bailey meekly replied, “I don’t know. But *here-I-am.*”

Hymn # 186 Alleluia verse 1: “Alleluia”

THEN quite out of nowhere another funny, cordial, nice looking man appeared. The little man was also well dressed in old style clothes just like Lawrence. They looked like they could have been brothers. This fellow didn’t look quite as dapper as Lawrence though. This fellow had a unassuming, relaxed, comfortable, lived-in look.

The man looked at Bailey and said, “I thought you were never going to get around to asking God for help. What on earth, what in *this world* took you so long?”

Bailey was quite taken back. Bailey was shaken, about to collapse. After all that Bailey had just seen and gone through, Bailey was just about ready for anything. Bailey was exasperated, what would happen next? Bailey was afraid and not afraid all at the same time. It didn't make sense but now Bailey had some courage, new found strength, hope....

“Who are you?” Bailey asked.

The little man, though he was small in stature, he spoke with great authority; this little man spoke like he was ten feet tall!

“Do Not Fear, Bailey, I AM here for you!”

“You finally **A**sks God for help and **HERE-I-AM**.
You **S**eeked me out and Here-**I**-AM.
You finally **K**nocked at the door and **HERE-I-AM**.”

“Do Not Fear, Bailey – Love Never Fails!”

Hymn # 186 Alleluia verse 1: “Alleluia”
Hymn # Sing Hallelujah to the Lord

Bailey cried out, “I’ve never heard anything so beautiful in my life! What was that? (*Hymn # 186 Alleluia verse 1: “Alleluia”*)

“I believe you’ll find out Bailey. Are you searching for something? Are you looking for something? Is something missing?”

Clarence spoke with such authority that Bailey was really scared now, “Are you GOD?”

The little fellow laughed and replied, “That’s a Mighty Big WORD! Let’s just say I’m a little helper.

“Are you an angel? You sure don’t look like an angel!”

“You ask so many questions! And how do you know what an angel looks like anyway? O’ yeah, don’t judge a book by its’ cover.”

“Well then, I mean, what is your name, what should I call you?”

“I tell you what... from tradition you can call me Clarence.”

“You mean every time a bell rings an angel receives its’ wings?”

Clarence just smiled and gave no reply to this question.

Bailey is quite confused now, “Is Lawrence your brother or something?”

Lawrence answered, “Why of course, Yes!”*

Clarence glared at Lawrence. Clarence was clearly agitated.

“You are only telling Bailey half-truths, you are deceiving Bailey!”

“I thought Lawrence was sent here to help me!”

“No, Lawrence was sent here to keep you in the dark. Lawrence wanted to keep you in a fog of confusion. Lawrence wanted to literally push you over the edge. Lawrence was “temptation” he was only encouraging you to make bad decisions and choices. Lawrence is not capable of telling the whole truth; only half-truths. Lawrence was not here to help you; he was here to deceive you!”

“Yes, we were once brothers, but no more. Lawrence is a fallen brother; a brother of the darkness, lies, and deception.”

“You mean the...?”

“Yes.” Lawrence was only here to mislead you and to keep you from the *truth* and the *way*. Lawrence never did show you the whole picture, Lawrence never told you the whole story about what would happen if you had never been born!”

“But, he looked so nice.”

“Don’t be fooled by a false prophets; a wolf in sheep’s clothing. Don’t judge a book by its cover – Remember!!! Lawrence was always deceiving you. He was never helping you; he was always serving the dark one.”

“Bailey would you like me to show you the whole story of what the world would have been like if you had never been born? Would you like to see the gaps and holes that Lawrence left out?”

“I’m afraid to face the truth.”

“Don’t worry Bailey, *the Truth shall set you free....*”

Bailey was trembling, weak in the knees. Bailey didn’t really want to, but now he had courage. “Will you go with me?”

“*ALWAYS!*”



THEN in a gentle way of being whisked away, Bailey was whisked away, but this time it was not frightening. Oh my gosh, Bailey is right back where Lawrence had brought him at school...

“This is supposed to make me feel better?”

“Not really.”

“Well then what’s the point?”

“Watch. You’ll see.”

All of a sudden, there they were. There was his little-Bailey-self with his childhood best friend, Bob. Wow, Bailey hadn’t seen or thought of Bob in years; Bailey had let their relationship dwindle. It was good to see his old buddy, his old best friend Bob, but then Bailey looked and realized that the kids were teasing Bob unmercifully, the same way that they used to tease him!

This really made Bailey feel bad. Bailey shook his head, “Poor little guy.” Bailey used to stick up for Bob. Bob was the only person lower on the social scale than Bailey himself. Bailey and Bob were both low on the food-chain and were often attacked by the circling sharks.

You see Bailey, you weren’t always alone. Bob was with you throughout your childhood. Bob was your best friend! But now Bob feels the full brunt of the teasing. Bob feels all-alone, for you were never there for him! You were never there to stick up for him. You were never there for Bob because you had never been born!

Bob had been Bailey’s only real friend throughout elementary school and high school. Now Bob was truly all alone; Bob didn’t have the comfort of Bailey’s friendship. Bob now was just chum –

fed to the sharks. Everything and more that Bailey suffered, Bob was now suffering alone.

“Oh No! Dear God, NO!” Watching the abuse Bob received was just about the most sinking feeling Bailey had ever had. Now again in slow-motion, but at the same time, “TIME,” flew by. The years passed by, all for Bailey to see. Bailey watched as every excruciating moment went by. Bailey watched as his best friend Bob was abused repeatedly and repeatedly unmercifully by his classmates, with no one to turn to, for he, Bailey had never been born!

All Bailey could do is watch as his best friend was verbally beaten. These childish verbal attacks were invisible, they did not leave bruises or scars on Bob that people could see. Bob’s bruises were on the inside, deep scars on his very heart and soul. Bob looked fine on the outside, but on the inside, Bob was scarred; Bob is hurting bad on the inside. And Bailey couldn’t do anything; he wasn’t there, for Bailey had never been born.

“This is awful! Make it stop!”

“It doesn’t stop; it just gets worse!”

”How could it – possibly get worse?”

As soon as Bailey had spoken he could have bitten his tongue for he knew that things could always be worse.

“Watch.”

Bailey couldn’t believe that he had dredged up so much from the past; so much extra baggage. Bailey couldn’t believe that he was reliving the past. Bailey no longer thought like a child... all of this

teasing and bullying had been forgiven and forgotten... *forgiven and forgotten*. But now....

But now Bailey is looking at Bob's old house. School hasn't started yet. Bob goes into the garage, picks up a bag, and heads off to school. All of a sudden Bailey turns pale and feels sick. Bailey wants to throw-up. Bailey knows what's in the bag. Bailey and Bob would sometimes fantasize what they would like to do to other students who had picked on them, how they would like to pay back their classmates back for their teasing, bullying, and cruelty. Bailey knew what was in the bag – a GUN!

“Oh No! Please God, Not This! Not Bob!”

If you were there you could have stopped him, you could have stopped it from ever happening! You could have Bailey, but you were never there. You weren't even born – remember?”

Bailey snapped, he couldn't tolerate it anymore... he desperately ran and tried to help Bob but was pulled away. Bailey in vain tried to stop Bob. But then all of a sudden Bailey was pulled away and swept up, time and years were flying by. In just the blink of an eye it was years later. And again they were right in front of the beautiful house with the shiny cars parked in the driveway; the same picture-perfect castle of a dream house where Lawrence had brought him before with a the beautiful shiny cars parked out front.

There was Mary and the children, married to a successful, important, wealthy, to-good-of-a-looking could-be-husband.

“They all look so happy,” Bailey thought.

“Do they look happy,” asked Clarence? Are you judging from outward appearances again?

“What now, you can read my mind?”

“God always knows your thoughts and needs, even before you do.”
Bailey looked intently at his family, “What’s wrong then?”

“Well Bailey, things do look good on the outside. Remember even Lawrence looked good from the outside, remember, ‘don’t judge a book by its’ cover.’”

“I remember.”

“Your wife Mary has married a wealthy, successful person, true, but is she happy? Mary is not living a *fairytale-princess* of a life; she is not living *happily-ever-after*. After living together they finally got married. They have both been unhappily married previously before; this marriage is a weak one also. The so perfect looking husband often works late, or at least that is the excuse he gives. He has had many affairs. Mary pretends that they don’t happen. She even makes up excuses for him. She tries to rid the pain by drinking. She drinks a lot now. By the time the kids usually get home from school she is already passed out. She and her husband fight and quarrel all of the time, but they are very cautious not to give the neighbors and co-workers a bad impression; they are very pretentious, they always want to give a good impression; they care much about what other people think.”

“But somehow they don’t seem to care about what their children see, think, and feel. They fight and yell in front of the children unmercifully all of the time. They are distant from each other and every day Mary becomes more distant to her children from her drinking stupor.”

“Your son John, drinks every weekend with friends, and even sometimes before school, and sometimes even during school. He

takes a few drugs, mostly pot. He doesn't take many hard drugs – yet! John is falling in with a bad crowd; John gets into trouble.”

“John has no real father, just this unloving step-father who doesn't really care; he is more interested in golf, clients, career, and money, than in John. Many children have wonderful, kind, loving parents, guardians, or step-parents; but not this one! John has no one to confide in; no one to look up to.

John will be arrested numerous times for drunk driving. Finally he will get drunk and drive and accidentally kill a little girl on a bicycle. Strangely enough the law will never find him or catch him. Unfortunately alcohol, drugs, and guilt will always follow him. Just think if you had been there none of this would have happened.”

Bailey sat there numb. Somehow as the story was being told, Bailey anticipated and knew what would happen next.

“All of this happened all because, you had never been born. You were never there to make the difference!”

Again time was rushing forward and backwards all at the same time. Talk about not knowing if you're coming or going. Finally the whirling stopped and there at the house Bailey's daughter Amy was getting into her car.

“Where is she going?” Bailey wondered.

“Amy is going to meet another one of her boyfriends. Another rendezvous. From the constant fighting at the house Amy doesn't like to spend much time at home. And Amy doesn't like the “looks” that her new stepfather keeps giving her and some of his suggestive comments when her mother is nowhere around. Amy

doesn't think much of herself; no self-esteem. She doesn't think she is pretty or popular."

"But she has found out that through sex, she could be very much so desirable and popular with some of the fellows in school. "She believes that sex has power. She mistakenly believes that sex is love. She can get most everything she wants from sex. She likes to tease. It's easy now to; she doesn't even have to like the boy much...."

This was more than Bailey could bear. "No God! Please No!"

"This is nothing – it gets worse."

"How can it possibly get worse?"

Oh No! Bailey could have bitten his tongue. He had said it again. As soon as those words left Baileys mouth he knew that things were about to get worse for Amy and it was all his fault, all because he wasn't there!

"Amy has children, by accident of course, out of wedlock. She is more interested in her boyfriends than in her children. Eventually through neglect and abuse the children will be taken away. Unfortunately these children will spend years in foster homes. Amy eventually will get sick from her promiscuity. Later her life gets completely out of control; she develops HIV...."

"OK! OK! I get the picture. I should have been there! What do I do now?"

"Well. Mr. Bailey, here's a question that Lawrence never asked you, 'What do you have to live for? What do you have to live for Mr. Bailey?'"

Bailey just looked down on the ground and sobbed,
“My wife and my kids?”

“What Mr. Bailey, I couldn’t hear you, say it again, louder please.”
“My wife and my kids?” Bailey answered louder and almost defiantly.

“Well yes Mr. Bailey! You failed to remember that your family is treasure most precious! Mr. Bailey, your wife and kids, your family received every material thing that they wanted! But they never received the love and attention they needed; the love and attention that only you could give them!”

“Mr. Bailey, the most important things in life are NOT things! The most important things in life are our relationships with God and with one another!”

“And Mr. Bailey, about your house. Is your house more important than your family? You act like it is. If you had killed yourself would your house miss you? Would your house cry and mourn for you? Would your house even know if you were gone?”

“You make a decision Mr. Bailey. Stop running away from your problems. Remember, jump or not to jump. Have you made up your mind? Have you calculated the cost? This is up to you... God gives you freedom of choice. The choice is up to you. Which is your choice, jump or not jump?”

Suddenly everything started rushing in on Bailey... the wind, ...the earthquake, ...the fire....

Bailey thought quietly for a moment but his decision, his choice had already been made. Bailey had already made up his mind.

“I WILL JUMP,” said Bailey with tears running down his face.

●

“WHAT!” Lawrence yelled! Lawrence was caught by surprise. Lawrence was in shock. Lawrence started to look very smug, and content. Lawrence smiled and rubbed his hands together; he looked like the fat cat that just ate the canary. Clarence on the other hand had a straight poker face. Clarence didn’t blink an eye. Clarence didn’t look surprised at all; like he had known the answer the whole time.

“I WILL JUMP!

But I will jump into the arms of God!” cried Bailey!

“I am so thankful that God heard my cry for help, I am so grateful that God gave me a second chance. This second chance, this opportunity must be a *Gift from God*. Clarence, I am so sorry for all of my mistakes.”

“This *Gift* son, is God’s *Grace* to you; His love for you and for everyone!”

“And Clarence... I did nothing to deserve this second chance.”

“God is a God of many second chances, my boy. You know, God put you on this good earth for a reason; God put you on this earth for a purpose! There are some things on this earth that you and only you can do! Now *that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them, son.*”

“Clarence, I am so glad you were here to stop me from making a terrible mistake! I knew that there was something holding me back!”

“That was God speaking to you... calling you to him. God is always calling you, speaking to you Bailey. All you need to do is listen!

Amen, Amen, Amen

“There it is again, that beautiful sound. What is that, Clarence?”

“That is the angels rejoicing in heaven; For there is more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner, one lost sheep, one lost coin, one lost son who repents and is found than over ninety-nine righteous people who did not need to repent!” *(Luke 15)*

*Love lifted me!
Love lifted me!
When nothing else could help,
Love lifted me.*

What do you want to do now?” Clarence asked.

Bailey paused and then took a deep breath, “Clarence I really want to go home. I really want to hug my wife and kids and tell them how much I love them. I want to tell them not to fear. That we will get through this TOGETHER. With God willing, with God’s help we will get through this TOGETHER. You know Clarence... my problems look so much smaller now. Thank you for being with me. Thank you for telling me the *Truth!*”

“My pleasure, boy. It’s what I am called to do; it’s in my job description.” They both laughed.

Lawrence came up to say, “Well Bailey, it has been a pleasure, I’m sure. I will wait for a more opportune time to talk to you again.”

And with that Lawrence turned his back and disappeared in a fog and was gone.

“Will he be back?” Bailey asked.

“I’m afraid he will be back often.”

“What can I do?”

“Be PREPARED!

And, there is a *Good Book* that I would like to recommend!

And don’t be a stranger anymore on Sunday’s.

Come to My House.”

“I won’t be a stranger, I promise. I’ve given myself to God.”

“I’ll be looking for you!”

”Thank you!”

“Don’t thank me! Thank God!”

“THANKS BE TO GOD. AMEN!”



“Bailey, go back and get your car and start over.”

“I hit something in the road, Clarence. The car won’t start!”

“Trust in God and lean not on you’re your own understanding, Bailey. Trust me. Go back to your car and start over. Trust Me, have a little Faith... Believe! ... Trust Me.”

And with those words Clarence started to fade and to disappear from sight. Bailey cried out, “Don’t leave now! I never really had a chance to thank you.”

But somehow, from somewhere-nowhere Bailey could hear Clarence’s last words, “*TRUST ME.*” These words kept ringing in Bailey’s ear,
“*T-r-u-s-t M-e.*”

Bailey just stood there quietly. Then Bailey softly repeated the words that Clarence had last told him, “*Trust Me.*”

Bailey looked around. There he was – standing in the middle of the bridge. Bailey looked down at the water below and immediately jumped back. The wind had died down. Soft snow was falling down. This time Bailey recognized it as a beautiful Christmas Eve picture. Bailey was overwhelmed with emotion with all that had taken place. Bailey had doubts if it had really happened; had it all been a dream? Then Bailey fell to the ground on bended knee; he looked up to the heavens and humbly gave thanks; “Thank you, thank you, dear Lord....”

Somehow Bailey felt better – like the weight of the whole world had been lifted off of his shoulders, like someone else was helping him to carry his burdens when the burdens were too heavy for him to carry. Bailey knew where his new-found strength, hope, and faith had come from; Bailey gave thanks again and again. All of Bailey’s anxiety and worry had disappeared. His problems hadn’t disappeared but the worry was gone. “Why worry when you can pray,” ran through his mind.

Then Bailey popped up; Bailey had an irresistible urge to get back home. Bailey couldn’t wait to get back to the car and to get home to his family.

Bailey walked back to the car as fast as he could. And again Bailey walked around the car looking for damage to the car but couldn't find any. Then Bailey stepped inside the car and got behind the wheel, closed his eyes and whispered, "please." Bailey turned the ignition and immediately the car started right up! Bailey sighed a sigh of relief, "Good Car."

"I could have sworn that I ran into something," Bailey thought to himself. "What did I hit in the middle of the road? Why did the car stop? Why wouldn't the car start earlier?" Bailey just shook his head in bewilderment. "Amazing! Amazing! Thank God...."

"Silent Night" was playing again on the radio; this time Bailey felt blessed. Bailey headed straight for home; he didn't know what time it was, he didn't know how long he had been gone. Hours? And then he even thought for a second, "days," "years?"

When he got back home he was glad to be home. He gave thanks. He went in the front door and everything looked normal; just like he had left it. Mary stepped out from another room, Bailey was scared for a moment; how long had he been gone? Bailey was afraid that he had pulled a "Rip Van Winkle." Then Mary broke the silence, "I'm glad you're back."

Bailey just melted into her arms and hugged her like he was never going to let her go.

Mary was surprised by Bailey's actions, "Is everything all right?" she asked. Mary and Bailey hadn't hugged in a long time. Intimacy and closeness had been a casualty of their arguing.

"Amazingly, everything is fine now."

Later Bailey attempted to explain to Mary all that had happened while he was gone, all of his adventures: The car stopping, the

bridge, the water, Lawrence, *the Wind, the Earthquake, the FIRE, the deafening Silence*; none much of it made sense to Mary. Bailey told Mary about Clarence, seeing his old friend Bob, the kids driving shiny cars.... None of it made much sense to Mary except for the part where he got hit on the head. Bailey assured Mary that everything was going to be all right. Not that there wouldn't be bumps in the road and hard times ahead, but that they would be just fine; they would get through their obstacles together! "Amazing, Amazing."

As Bailey was trying to explain his experiences, his cell phone rang.

"I thought you said your cell phone was dead?"

"It was!"

Bailey wondered who of earth could be calling him at this time on Christmas Eve. "Hello."

Much to Bailey surprise it was Bob at the other end of the line. Bob, his old school classmate and treasured friend. Bailey could not believe that Bob was on the phone. They had lost touch with each other as adults for years.

"Bailey," Bob said, "I heard about your situation from a mutual friend of ours. In the building where I work we are looking for someone with just your credentials; I've already spoken to my boss. He wants you to come in after the Christmas holidays for an interview; you're a shoe-in with your good reputation, and qualifications, and my recommendation!"

"This is unbelievable! Bob, how can I thank you for all that you have done. This is great news, the best Christmas present ever! Amazing, Amazing!"

“Hey, old buddy, you did a lot for me when we were kids. I have never forgotten your kindness. You sacrificed a lot for me, you stepped in and took my place, and took a lot of abuse, and hits, and hard knocks so I wouldn’t have to. I’m very thankful for all that you did for me!” There was a quiver in Bob’s voice.

Bailey was overjoyed with Bob’s good news. Bailey finally saw a light at the end of the tunnel; and this time it wasn’t a train coming to wreck his life.

“You said you heard about me from a mutual friend of ours; who?”

There was a long pause and then came Bob’s reply, “Clarence,” was Bob’s reply, “Clarence.”

“Clarence?”

“Yes, Clarence, I met that little fellow just tonight! O’ and Lawrence says, ‘Hello.’”

Bailey could not believe his ears, “Clarence!”

Then Bailey shivered, ‘Lawrence.’

“You to Bob! You met Clarence just tonight, too?”

Bailey just shook his head and smiled, “Amazing, Amazing....”

Bailey and Bob talked a little longer. They made plans to get together after Christmas.

“Merry Christmas!”

“Merry Christmas!”

Bailey hung up the phone and just looked at Mary.

“Amazing. You will never believe this.”

Bailey and Mary just held each other in their arms. Words at this time were totally inadequate. Then Bailey asked Mary, “Let’s all go to church Sunday.”

Mary left Bailey’s embrace to get a better look at him. “You mean I don’t have to drag you with me and the kids Sunday?”

“No, you won’t have to drag me. I have a promise to keep.”

Mary smiled and checked for bumps on Bailey’s head.

“You must’ve gotten hit on the head tonight!”

They both just smiled and embraced each other. Then out of the silence Bailey said, “We’re blessed.”

“We’ve always been blessed darling,” was Mary’s reply,

“We’ve always been blessed; are you just now realizing that?”

“Yes.... ...Do you believe in miracles at Christmas?”

“Yes... Actually, I believe that miracles can happen every day; especially today.

Just then John and Amy came into the room. They were both half asleep. They both fell into their parent’s laps.

“What are the two of you doing up so late?”

“We heard daddy home, came their soft reply.

Bailey just wrapped his arms around his family and embraced them tightly. He had been given a great gift this Christmas... the gift of faith, hope, and the greatest of these, love. Bailey realized that his family was great treasure indeed; Bailey had found what he had lost – his faith and his family.

Then the grandfather clock in the hall started to chime.
Bailey listened to each reverberation of the ringing...
bong – bong – bong

“Every time a bell rings an angels gets its wings,” whispered Amy.

Bailey thought of Clarence. They all smiled. Bailey looked at the time. It was midnight. It was a new dawn, a new day, a new beginning. It was Christmas morning.

“Merry Christmas.”

“Merry Christmas.”

“Merry Christmas to all, and to all a good night.”

The End
New Beginning
God Bless
Amazing

Temptation is always a lie that looks good at first!
Temptation is Satan encouraging us to make wrong decisions and choices.
(*) The devil is not capable of telling the truth; only lies and deception!

Amazing Grace.

John Newton.

Arr. by E. O. Excell.

1. A - maz - ing grace! how sweet the sound That saved a wretch like me! I
 2. 'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, And grace my fears re - lieved; How
 3. Thro' man - y dang - ers, toils and snares, I have al - read - y come; 'Tis
 4. The Lord has prom - ised good to me His word my hope se - cures; He
 5. And when this flesh and heart shall fail, And mor - tal life shall cease; I
 6. When we've been there ten thou - sand years, Bright shin - ing as the sun, We've

once was lost, but now am found—Was blind, but now I see.
 pre - cious did that grace ap - pear, The hour I first be - lieved!
 grace has brought me safe thus far, And grace will lead me home.
 will my shield and por - tion be, As long as life en - dures.
 shall pos - sess with - in the veil, A life of joy and peace.
 no less days to sing God's praise Than when we first be - gun.

Amazing Grace

*Jingle Jingle with church bell bongs
A Christmas stylized Amazing Grace*

Amazing grace! *(bong) Jingle Jingle* How sweet the sound *(bong) Jingle Jingle*
that saved a wretch like me! *Jingle Jingle*
I once was lost, but now am found, *Jingle Jingle*
was blind, but now I see. *Jingle Jingle - Jingle Jingle*

‘Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, *Jingle Jingle*
and grace my fears relieved; *Jingle Jingle*
how precious did that grace appear, *Jingle Jingle*
the hour I first believed. *Jingle Jingle - Jingle Jingle*

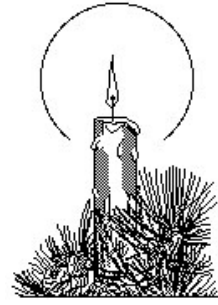
Through many dangers, toils, and snares, *Jingle Jingle*
I have already come; *Jingle Jingle*
‘Tis grace has brought me safe this far *Jingle Jingle*
and grace will lead me home. *Jingle Jingle - Jingle Jingle*

The Lord has promised good to me, *Jingle Jingle*
His word my hope secures; *Jingle Jingle*
He will my shield and portion be, *Jingle Jingle*
as long as life endures. *Jingle Jingle - Jingle Jingle*

When we’ve been there ten thousand years, *Jingle Jingle*
bright shining as the sun, *Jingle Jingle*
we’ve got no less days to sing God’s praise *Jingle Jingle*
than when we’d first begun. *Jingle Jingle - Jingle Jingle*

Silent Night

1. Silent night, holy night,
all is calm, all is bright
round yon virgin
mother and child.
Holy infant, so tender and mild,
sleep in heavenly peace,
sleep in heavenly peace.
2. Silent night, holy night,
shepherds quake at the sight;
glories stream from heaven afar,
heavenly hosts sing Alleluia!
Christ the Savior is born,
Christ the Savior is born!
3. Silent night, holy night,
Son of God, love's pure light;
radiant beams from thy holy face
with the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth,
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth.
4. Silent night, holy night,
wondrous star, lend thy light;
with the angels let us sing,
Alleluia to our King;
Christ the Savior is born,
Christ the Savior is born!



Closing
Audience sings
Silent Night
with candlelight
holders.

Be joyful always,
pray continuously,
give thanks in all circumstances,
for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.
1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

It's an Unwonderful Life
Written by Osten Aune

Everything I have achieved,
God has given me.
Isaiah 26:12

© 2007, 2008 Bible Basics...
It's An Unwonderful Life
Written by Osten Aune

Mercedes Benz"

Song Lyrics: "Mercedes Benz"

Recorded by: "Janis Joplin"

Written by: (Janis Joplin,
Michael McClure, Bob Neuwirth)

Album: "Pearl" - 1971

Oh Lord, won't you buy me a Mercedes Benz?
My friends all drive Porsches, I must make amends.
Worked hard all my lifetime, no help from my friends,
So Lord, won't you buy me a Mercedes Benz?

Oh Lord, won't you buy me a color TV?
Dialing For Dollars is trying to find me.
I wait for delivery each day until three,
So oh Lord, won't you buy me a color TV?

Oh Lord, won't you buy me a night on the town?
I'm counting on you, Lord, please don't let me down.
Prove that you love me and buy the next round,
Oh Lord, won't you buy me a night on the town?

Everybody!
Oh Lord, won't you buy me a Mercedes Benz?
My friends all drive Porsches, I must make amends,
Worked hard all my lifetime, no help from my friends,
So oh Lord, won't you buy me a Mercedes Benz?

That's it!

Cont. Misc.