

It's Always Safe to Trust in God

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This is a story about the men who used to go down into the earth in mines to dig minerals and coal. One morning while the pitmen were at work in an English mine, they heard a noise louder than the loudest thunder. In a moment every lamp was out, and all was dark. The men worked by lamps; there was not a spark of daylight there.

"A crush! a crush!" cried the men, by which they meant that a portion of the mine had caved in; and men and boys threw down their tools and ran.

It was Monday morning. The men gathered at the mouth of the pit, and counted their number. Five were missing, and among them one little trapper, Robert Lester! People above heard the noise, and rushed to the pit's mouth. The workmen were taken up. Oh, the agony of the wives and mothers of those who were left behind! Brave men went back to their rescue. They lighted their lamps, and reached the crush. There was nothing but a heap of ruins! "Were the poor fellows instantly killed, or are they hemmed in to die of starvation?" they wondered. It was a dreadful thought.

The men called and shouted, but there was no answer. Up went pickaxes and shovels to clear the way. It was a great labor, and a great risk. The news of the accident brought help from far and near. Men flocked from all quarters to offer their services. How they worked!

Toward night they hear something. Stop! Hark! Listen; It is not a voice, but a tapping. It can just be heard. Clink, clink, clink, clink, clink, five times and then a stop. What does it mean? One man guesses. There are five missing, and the five clinks show all men alive, and waiting for deliverance. A shout of joy goes up in and above the pit.

Among the foremost of the rescuers is the father of little Robert. Night and day he never leaves the mine, and hardly quits work. "You'll kill yourself, Lester," says a fellow workman. "Go take a little rest, and trust the work to us."

"No, no, Tom," cries the poor father; "I promised Robert's mother we would come up together; and so we will if it pleases God," he says, wiping tears from his rough cheek; and he hews away with his whole might.

Meanwhile, how did it fare with the poor prisoners? They were frightened like the rest by that awful noise. Little Robert left his door and ran to the men, who well knew what it meant. Waiting till everything was quiet, they went forward to examine the passageway Robert had left. It was blocked. They tried another; that was blocked. Oh, fearful thought, they were buried alive!

The men went back to the boy. "I want to go home! Please, do let me go home!" said little Robert.

"Yes, yes, as soon as we find a way out, my little man," said Truman in a kind yet husky voice.

The air grew close and suffocating, and they took their oil cans and feed bags to one of the galleries where it was better.

Two of the men, Truman and Logan, were Christians. "Well, James, what shall we do next?" asked Truman.

"There is but one thing we can do," said Logan. "God says, 'Call upon Me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me!'"

They told the boys of their danger. "But we must keep up a stout heart," said these believing men; "and the way to do so is to put our trust in God more than in man. He heard Jonah cry to Him from inside the whale, and He can hear us from the bottom of a coal pit. Let us pray to Him!"

They all knelt down. Poor little Robert cried bitterly. But as the good pitmen prayed, first one and then the other, their hearts grew lighter, and even the little trapper dried his tears.

When it was time for dinner, they ate sparingly, in order to make the food they had last three days, for it might be fully that time before they could be dug out. Meanwhile what would they do for water! A trickling noise was heard. Water! water! Yes, it was water dripping from the rock! "It seems," said Logan, "as if this water was sent on purpose to put us in mind that God won't forsake us; for don't you know the Good Book says: 'When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, . . . I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them?'"

Pretty soon the men got their pickaxes; but what a hopeless task it seemed to cut through the terrible mass of earth and stones to daylight! Their hearts beat with hope and joy when they first heard the sound of their friends working on the other side. It was then that they made the clink, clink with their pickaxes, five times, which was heard, and so encouraged those who were working to rescue them.

Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and no rescue! What dark and dreadful days! Worse than all, the sounds beyond did not appear to draw nearer, and yet prayer and songs of praise might have been heard in that dismal cavern. By Thursday morning their food was gone, and by night their oil gave out. "Our food is gone, our light is gone, but our God is not gone," said Truman. "He says, 'I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.' Can you trust Him still, mates?"

"Yes, I can," said his pious comrade. "Let us try to sing that blessed hymn

"The soul that on Jesus doth lean for repose, . . . I'll never, no never, no never forsake!" They tried to sing, but their strength soon gave out.

As for little Robert, he was so weak that he could not sit up. His mind wandered; he spoke about the sun and the grass as if he saw them.

Friday came. Five days, and the men outside knew there was not a moment to lose. They were too anxious even to speak. It was only work, work, work, for dear life. For hours they had heard no signals. Were their poor comrades dead? Suddenly the wall was pierced; feeble voices were heard. "Truman, are you there?" the leader called.

"Yes, all here."

"All living?"

"Yes, thank God, all living."

"All living! all living!" shouted the men, and the shout went up to the top of the pit. When Robert's father heard that his little son was alive, the good news was too much for him, and he fell down unconscious.

One hour more, and the rescuers reached their comrades. Who can describe the meeting, or the joy and gratitude of wives, mothers, and friends, as one and another workman was brought to light?

What a cheer rent the air as Mr. Lester appeared with Robert in his arms! Safe! Safe! God be praised! Surely God had delivered those who had called upon Him, and trusted Him to care for them.