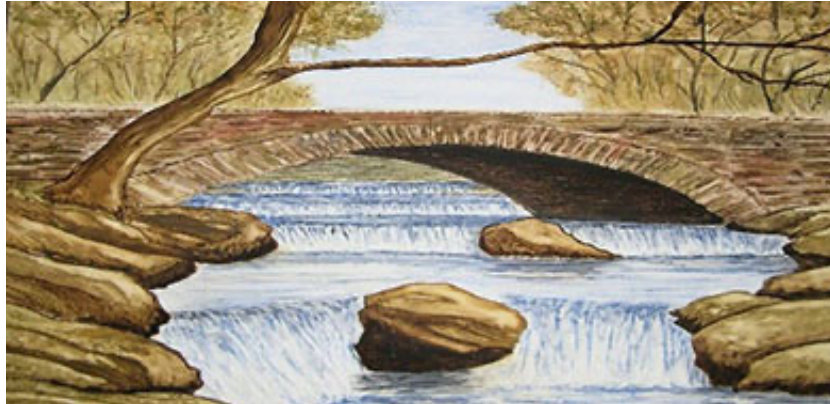


# THAT'S WATER UNDER THE BRIDGE

By Gerald Cumby



WHAT DOES "THAT'S WATER UNDER THE BRIDGE" MEAN?

Water under the bridge refers to past events, especially fights or disagreements, that are forgiven, forgotten, or otherwise no longer considered important.

I have stood on a bridge and watched the water current take a tree branch or large leaf from one side of the bridge to the other...and it keeps on moving with the flow, never to return again. When I think of the many times I held on to disappointing outcomes, I realize I could have and should have forgotten those areas and experiences in my life where there were no "do-overs" or 2nd chances. I had let those experiences take up valuable time and serious thought...yielding me nothing in return. It was like seeing the experiences and lessons learned being carried downstream where there was no chance of retrieving those valuable tools and insights that would have made it so much easier for me to meet the future challenges ahead.

As an 82 year old son, husband, father, grandfather, and great-grandfather, I have heard and experienced valuable insights from watching and listening to the life challenging stories of other travelers in the journey of life.

I love my life...however, my life has not been a bed of roses. Like most red-blooded Americans, I have had many positive and negative experiences in life. Physically, I have had a plethora of ailments,

surgeries, and life-threatening challenges. This is not the time to recount those life-changing events. However, those challenges sure helped me think twice about living life trying to make every day count for good. We have events in our life that have challenged our daily living to the core. Those challenges and the way we handled them have helped us realize that we have only a short time on earth to make our lives count in a positive way...Hopefully, leaving a Legacy of Faith for our family.

As we think of those things in our life where we might not ever have the chance for a "do-over", I have to be true to myself...and others, realizing that there are some things in life that have flowed down the river that I should have retrieved and still should try to eradicate or make amends before my time on earth is gone. Those are things that I should rectify, reduce regrets, and mend some broken relationships. Careless Christian living is not a trait in which God is satisfied. If God is not satisfied, I should not be satisfied. God frees us to live life to the fullest; however, the past can make it difficult to overcome the consequences of a life where wrong choices were made. We adjust, but some of the effects from poor choices are never fully fixed and repaired in our lifetime. We have been forgiven; we even forgive ourselves; but, our past raises its ugly head when we least expect it.

In the Word of God, the only Gentile author of the Word, Luke, tells the story of Zacchaeus, a tax collector, and his encounter with Jesus, the Messiah. Luke 19:1-10, "*Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through. <sup>2</sup> A man was there by the name of Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was wealthy. <sup>3</sup> He wanted to see who Jesus was, but because he was short he could not see over the crowd. <sup>4</sup> So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree to see him, since Jesus was coming that way. <sup>5</sup> When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today." <sup>6</sup> So he came down at once and welcomed him gladly. <sup>7</sup> All the people saw this and began to mutter, "He has gone to be the guest of a sinner." <sup>8</sup> But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, "Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount." <sup>9</sup> Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. <sup>10</sup> For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost."*

Jesus did not say to him, "You don't have to go back. You don't have to face your past. That's water under the bridge. This is all about grace,

right? So, you can just move on. "No, Jesus said, "Today salvation...the real thing...what the Bible is talking about...what I came to accomplish, has come to this house. Therefore, get going man. Your day has come. You understand what it means to give inwardly (with your heart) in lieu of giving only to be seen (outwardly)" (Scripture Paraphrased).

Glib slogans like "That's water under the bridge," "I've moved on," or misquoting the Bible with "Forgetting what lies behind . . ." do not make it right to just move on without righting a wrong. Yes, the amazing grace Jesus has given us is for our choosing. Jesus even said to Paul, "My grace is sufficient for you." Grace is available and awarded to the repentant heart. However, real repentance, filled with a wonderful sense of Jesus, has the courage to go back and make wrongs right again in honest, humble, creative ways.

John prepared the way for Jesus by stressing in his preaching, "Bear fruits in keeping with repentance" (Luke 3:8). Paul preached that ". . . they should repent and turn to God, performing deeds in keeping with their repentance" (Acts 26:20). The latter passage is especially significant because Paul is summarizing his message to the world. It has been said, "Practical repentance is gospel follow-through." It is carrying the message of Christ to the world in lieu of holding on to God's gift of salvation and hoarding it for oneself.

Water under the bridge can be a peaceful and calm current flowing down the river of life. It doesn't have to be a torrid current with stormy and flooding overflow around the edges of the river. Only when we do everything, we can to right the wrongs in our life will we experience the freedom Jesus can bring. A conscience finally freed from guilt is the power of salvation.

Micah 6:8 ESV , *"He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?"*

