

## God's Grace

There once was a man named George Thomas, preacher in a small Texas town. One Sunday morning he came to the Church building carrying a rusty, bent, old bird cage, and set it by the pulpit. Eyebrows were raised and, as if in response, the Preacher began to speak. . .

"I was walking through town yesterday when I saw a young boy coming toward me swinging this bird cage. On the bottom of the cage were three little wild birds, shivering with cold and fright.

I stopped the lad and asked, "What do you have there, son?"

"Just some old birds," came the reply.

"What are you going to do with them?" I asked.

"Take 'em home and have fun with 'em," he answered.

"I'm gonna tease 'em and pull out their feathers to make 'em fight. I'm gonna have a real good time."

"But you'll get tired of those birds sooner or later. What will you do then?"

"Oh, I got some cats," said the little boy.

"They like birds. I'll take 'em to them."

The preacher was silent for a moment.

"How much do you want for those birds, son?"

"Huh? Why, you don't want them birds, mister.

They're just plain old field birds. They don't sing. They ain't even pretty!"

"How much?" the preacher asked again.

The boy sized up the preacher as if he were crazy and said, "\$10?"

The preacher reached in his pocket and took out a ten dollar bill. He placed it in the boy's hand. In a flash, the boy was gone. The preacher picked up the cage and gently carried it to the end of the alley where there was a tree and a grassy spot.

Setting the cage down, he opened the door, and by softly tapping the bars persuaded the birds out, setting them free.

Well, that explained the empty bird cage on the pulpit, and then the preacher began to tell this story:

One day Satan and Jesus were having a conversation.

Satan had just come from the Garden of Eden, and he was gloating and boasting.

"Yes, sir, I just caught a world full of people down there. Set me a trap, used bait I knew they couldn't resist. Got 'em all!"

"What are you going to do with them?" Jesus asked.

Satan replied, "Oh, I'm gonna have fun! I'm gonna teach

them how to hate and abuse each other, how to drink and smoke and curse. I'm gonna teach them how to invent guns and bombs and kill each other. I'm really gonna have fun!"

"And what will you do when you are done with them?" Jesus asked.

"Oh, I'll kill 'em," Satan glared proudly.

"How much do you want for them?" Jesus asked.

"Oh, you don't want those people. They ain't no good. Why, you'll take them and they'll just hate you. They'll spit on you, curse you and kill you. You don't want those people!!"

"How much? He asked again.

Satan looked at Jesus and sneered, "All your blood, tears and your life."

Jesus said, "DONE!" Then He paid the price.

The preacher picked up the cage and walked from the pulpit.