Haven't You Heard?

Louis Delcourt was a young French soldier during the First World War who overstayed his leave and, fearing disgrace, he decided to desert. He persuaded his mother to lock him up in the attic of their house and there she hid him and fed him for twenty-one years.

But in August 1937 his mother died. There was no chance now of his retaining his incognito and remaining in hiding. So, pale and haggard, he staggered along to the nearest gendarmerie [i.e, a military or paramilitary force that handles law enforcement duties among the civilian population], where he gave himself up.

The gendarme [military officer] looked at him in utter incredulity and asked him, "Where have you been that you have not heard?"

"Haven't heard what?" asked Louis.

"That a law of amnesty for all deserters was past years ago," replied the gendarme. *

Delcourt had been living as a prisoner of his sin when he could have been set free years before.

Jesus said, "Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin" (John 8:34). That is bad news for us, "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23), and "the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23).

But haven't you heard? Jesus paid the price for our sins so that we can be set free. The price was His life: He shed His blood as payment for our sins.

"But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8).

The Apostle Peter wrote to Christians reminding them of the price that was paid for their redemption: "Knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Peter 1:18-19).

God will forgive and give eternal life to those who place their faith and trust in Jesus (Acts 16:30-31), turn from their sins in repentance (Acts 17:30-31), confess Jesus before men (Romans 10:9-10), and are baptized (immersed) into Christ for the forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:38). He will continue to

cleanse from sin and prepare for an eternal home those who continue to walk in the light of His Word (1 John 1:7-9).

The bad news is that sin enslaves and condemns. But the Good News (the Gospel) is that Jesus paid the price for our sins so that we can be set free!

“Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed” (John 8:36).

-- David A. Sargent

* Information gleaned from John Stott, *The Living Church*, p.158-159, as quoted in illustrations of forgiveness in www.accessinspiration.org.