

FAITH^{AND}VICTORY

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Church of God Servant

Unto Him shall the
gathering of the
people be.

God Is
Love

YE SHINE AS
LIGHTS IN
THE WORLD.

JESUS
SAVES

The night cometh,
when no man
can work.

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Trial of Your Faith

Excerpt of message delivered by Bro. Ed Wilson 8/13/89
transcribed and submitted by Bro. Nelson Doolittle.

I Peter 1:7. "That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:" Have your trials taught you anything? Some people need to have enough trials to teach them to give up the world. We've changed our perspective and headed a different direction now. Every trial that the Lord ever allows to come your way has an end! This is real important! Every Christian trial has an end to it. When you get into a battle the devil will make it look to you like, "This is destruction; this is hopeless; there is no way out of this and you cannot succeed in this thing you are facing." Let me say it a third time. There is an end to every trial you and I will ever face. If we are faithful to serve and follow the Lord through it, He'll bring

us out on the other side. There will come a time when you'll look back on it and it's not a trial anymore. You're delivered from it. You're free of it and you've got the joy and blessing out of it.

The only way there is to grow in the Lord is to endure tribulation and trials. It's "more precious than gold that perisheth." Growing in the Lord is not done with the understanding or with the emotions. It is done by going through trials and winning the victory;—actually being patient and faithful all the way through it.

I remember the time when my daughter had warts on her feet. What a trial it was! The devil came and told us if we didn't do something for this child it was going to always be this way. "It will get worse and you'll go to jail." But there came a time when the Lord healed her. It's not a trial anymore. We're delivered from it. We are free from it. There will come a time when you will be free from your trial!

Trials are like mountains. You climb uphill for a ways, then there will come a time when you peak out and go down the other side. When you get in a trial, don't let the devil tell you it's going to be any other way. There will come a time when you will have the gold, the silver and the blessing in the thing. Every trial is that way. Waiting on the Lord is that way.

I remember when my mother died. In my heart and in my emotions I felt like "this is one that's not that way. This one there will never be an end to." Well, a trial of that sort is like climbing a steep mountain, then finding a pla-

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teau up there where things gradually level off a little bit. Grief gets more bearable with the passing of time, although it is always there, but there will come a time when that is all swallowed up in victory. I'll get to see her again. That's the Christian's hope. That's what we are pressing to. We are pressing to a crown, an "inheritance incorruptible and undefiled that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you."

If my trial produced no benefits, then that would be an inheritance that fades away. It would be a hope I have that gradually gets less and less, and weaker and weaker, and finally it's gone. The scripture promised us that the expectation of the righteous shall not be cut off. Now the key word there is "the expectation of the righteous." It's possible to go through terrible disappointments in life and gain very little from it because we didn't put the Lord first.

This works for the Lord's people. It is important for you and I, if we want these things to be true to us, that we make sure we put the Lord first in our lives. I hope this is an encouragement to you. Every trial has an end. If you'll be faithful, there will come a time when you see out the other side of it. Job had about as hard a trial as I ever read of any man having. There came a time, though, when he was out on the other side

of it. The Lord delivered him. The Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of every trial that there is; "out of temptation" the scripture says.

I don't know how it is with you. When I started out to serve the Lord, the Lord blessed me and my experience of salvation was precious to me. I enjoyed what He gave me there at the altar. But I have found out that that alone is not what carries us on in our experience with the Lord. I have had to pray at times when it felt like my prayer didn't go any higher than my head. I prayed when I didn't feel like it, when people discouraged me from praying, when it looked to me like the circumstances that I'm praying about are hopeless, and what I'm praying for can't work out. It seemed like the devil rode on my shoulder and told me, "there is no hope for you to go on anymore."

James 5:7 says, "The husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain." There is a blessing in being faithful. Be faithful when you feel like it and when you don't, in the good times and in the bad. With resolute determination set heaven as your goal. Let nothing distract you from reaching that place. You'll be able to have a faith that's valuable,—tried in fire, that's precious, and it will be effective to bless our soul.

A HIGH CALLING

By Bro. Ben Goltry

I would like to share a burden that God has placed on my heart. This burden concerns the high calling of young mothers, more specifically homemakers, and their need for praise and encouragement. I pray that this will be an encouragement to each one.

Proverbs 31:28 says, "Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her." There is a great need to openly praise faithful homemakers that are giving so much to their families. This praise helps to bring fulfillment to their work. It lets them know the wonderful job they are doing, and reinforces how valuable they are. Proverbs 31:10 says, "Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies." Truly these godly homemakers are highly valued in God's eyes.

Homemakers have a full-time job, and much more! They have so many duties, all vitally important to the success of the Christian home.

Homemakers, especially young mothers, are on call twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, all year. Sometimes they may work through the night, then discover that it is morning and time to start all over again.

As a husband I must say that at times going to work has been an escape, of sorts. All the while my wife is at home working. Brethren, the Lord would have us to remember to be there for our wives, even after a hard day at work. We must keep in mind that our wives have also been working hard. We should be supportive and helpful to them when we come home from work. I say this first to myself.

The young mothers/homemakers also need the support of the older saints in the church. Titus 2:4-5 says, "That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their

own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed." I can say from talking with my wife, that the younger sisters appreciate the wisdom and advice of the older sisters when given in love.

Homemakers face a lot of pressure from the world. In today's society, there is a thought that, unless a mother is in the workforce, she is not working or successful. I would like to counter that thought and say the truth is, a truly successful mother is one that is in her God-

given work of keeping the home. Proverbs 31:27 says, "She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness."

I am so thankful for homemakers, especially my wife, who willingly accept the role God has given them—a role that is so very important, especially in today's society. I want all the mothers and homemakers to know that you are very important. Be encouraged and realize that the place that God has given you is truly a blessed and high calling.

In My Father's House

By Sis. Lisa Kelly

"In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." John 14:2-3.

This passage of scripture has been a favorite to many, bringing great comfort and hope to believers. It has inspired many songs, including "Mansion Over the Hilltop," "Just Build My Mansion Next Door To Jesus," and "In My Father's House Are Many Mansions." Our hymnal also includes songs in this vein, such as the beloved "Beautiful," the chorus of which says, "Beautiful mansion bright, gather us there." The wording here in scripture has puzzled me—how can a house have mansions inside itself? I remember my grandfather, Cecil Carver, explaining that the word "mansions" meant dwellings or abodes, but still the picture has not been plain in my mind until just recently. I took the time to "study up" about this and was greatly encouraged with what I learned. My sources were commentaries, my Bible dictionary and the different translations of the Bible available to us today. I hope you will be blessed with these notes.

The study of words is fascinating to me. I enjoy learning the "why" of the words we use. My family, especially my father, always was very particular about using the right word. The dictionary in our house was kept right beside the kitchen table! We would usually take the time to look a word up that might be in question during our conversations. So, to get started on this word "mansion," I consulted my old friend The Dictionary first. Of course we all know the

first definition in use today is "a large, stately house." But the archaic or ancient usage, that was at one time common, is "a dwelling, abode." The root of the word is "men-" which signifies "to remain." This root is in these words: manor, mansion, immanent, permanent, remain. The different translations of scripture use other words instead of "mansions" here; some are: abiding places, dwellings, resting places, rooms, abodes.

We know Jesus is speaking of Heaven in this passage; God's home, the eternal dwelling place also of His people. It is referred to as a house, not a tent or a tabernacle that can be folded away, but a durable dwelling, lasting perpetually, as II Corinthians 5:1 says, "eternal in the heavens." Matthew Henry writes that we live here as if in an inn, there we will have a settle-ment, a "city with foundations," a fixed life in a permanent house. Here we have no continuing or permanent city (Hebrews 13:14) but we seek one to come. Abraham lived as a temporary resident in tents, looking forward to God's eternal city that had foundations or permanence (Hebrews 11:9-10.) In the beloved Psalm 23, David declares, "I will dwell in the House of the Lord for ever." Solomon expressed it like this in Ecclesiastes 12:5, "man goeth to his long home."

Jesus also seems to allude to the temple there in Jerusalem, which was called the House of God. God was supposed to "dwell" in the temple, and He called it "My house." In the precincts of the temple were a great number of chambers, or rooms. In fact, there were three stories of chambers around the temple. "In my Father's house are many abiding places, resting

(Continued on page 12.)

FAITH AND VICTORY 16 PAGE HOLINESS MONTHLY



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This publication teaches salvation from all sin, sanctification for believers, unity and oneness for which Jesus prayed as recorded in John 17:21, and manifested by the apostles and believers after Pentecost. By God's grace we teach, preach, and practice the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ—the same gospel that Peter, John, and Paul preached, taught, and practiced, including divine healing for the body. James 5:14-15.

Its motto: Have faith in God. Its object: The glory of God and the salvation of men; the restoration and promulgation of the whole truth to the people in this "evening time" as it was in the morning Church of the first century; the unification of all true believers in one body by the love of God. Its standard: Separation from sin and entire devotion to the service and will of God. Its characteristics: No discipline but the Bible, no bond of union but the love of God, and no test of fellowship but the indwelling Spirit of Christ.

Through the Free Literature Fund thousands of gospel tracts are published and sent out free of charge as the Lord supplies. Cooperation of our readers is solicited, and will be appreciated in any way as the Bible and the Holy Spirit teach you to do or stir your heart. "Freely ye have received, freely give." Read Ex. 25:2; I Chron. 29:9; II Cor. 9:7; and Luke 6:38.

Freewill offerings sent in to the work will be thankfully received as from the Lord. Checks and money orders should be made payable to Faith Publishing House. All donations are tax deductible.

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There was a report a few years ago of a 12" by 9" oil painting of a red rose by Martin Johnson Heade. It was purchased from an estate sale by a woman in Wisconsin a number of years earlier for \$10.00. In those intervening years, it hung on the wall of her home and she did not realize who the artist was, nor the value of the painting. She eventually took it to a gallery for minor repairs and cleaning. The director of the gallery became interested in the small work of art and while closely examining it noticed the signature "M. J. Heade" on the lower right corner. Photographs were taken of the painting and sent to Sotheby's auction house in New York. The favorable response indicated it was very likely authentic. When the lady returned to pick up her painting, she was informed of the potential value of the work of art. The painting was then sent to Sotheby's who in turn sent it to a Heade authority in Boston for identification. Upon examination, it was determined to indeed be authentic. It was estimated to be worth between \$50,000 and \$90,000. Records indicate that it sold for \$48,000 in May 2003.

In 2000, a bargain hunter purchased a 15 1/4" by 24" oil painting at a rummage sale for \$29.00. It was also an authentic work of art by Martin J. Heade. It was later sold at Christie's auction house in New York for \$882,500.

It would be easy for one to think, "Wow, I would like to find one of those paintings." Think of what one could do with all of that money. Actually that kind of money could ease the financial burden some of us carry, but the chances of finding one are somewhat limited. While we are dreaming a little bit here, let us consider some other possibilities. What if it was a painting you owned and you didn't realize the true value of it? If that be the case, it might be hanging on the wall of your house being somewhat appreciated or it might be in the closet, under the bed, in the attic or in the garage somewhere getting scratched up and dirty. To carry this thought a little further, what if an unscrupulous character came along and quietly recognized the value of the work of art and offered you \$29.00 for it? Maybe he would even pretend to be generous and offer \$30.00 for it.

If you sold it and then later found out that it was a valuable work of art, you would be a very disappointed person.

Perhaps it would not be harmful to dream occasionally of some such discovery, but let us come back to reality. You and I are in possession of something far more valuable than an authentic Martin Johnson Heade oil painting and I am convinced that some of us are not really aware of the value of this possession. In fact, the way some people are treating their possession, it is quite evident they are oblivious to its worth. It would be nice if someone could drop them a hint, but it is hard to make them understand. An unscrupulous character is offering them mere peanuts for their tremendously valuable possession and they are selling it. What a horrible mistake! Jesus realizes the value of this possession and was willing to be flogged, mocked, tortured and put to an agonizing death to purchase it, but when many people are told about His sacrifice the message goes in one ear and right out the other. They callously think, "What does His problem have to do with me?"

There are reports, perhaps legendary, that the emperor, Charlemagne, had his finger on the words that explained the value of this possession, but I'm not sure he fathomed the true meaning of them until it was too late. He requested that upon his death, which occurred January 28, 814, his body be interred at the Palace Chapel in Aachen, Germany, near the Belgian border. He was to be seated upright in his marble throne chair with his crown on his head. He was to be attired in his royal garments, with his scepter in one hand and a book in his lap. After nearly 200 years had elapsed, in the year 1000, the German emperor, Otto III visited this chapel and had the crypt opened to inspect the remains of Charlemagne. It was said that his crown was tilted on the skeleton head, the scepter was laying at his feet, his garments were moth-eaten and his body disfigured. Lying on his skeletal lap was the book he requested—the book of the gospels—and one bony finger pointed to Matthew 16:26, "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" One report indicates that the crown was taken from his head when the crypt was opened and given to the Pope, Sylvester II. Then, on Christmas day of that same year, that very crown was used by the Pope to crown

"Saint" István, King of Hungary. In 1165, Frederick Barbarossa visited Charlemagne's crypt and took his marble throne chair to be used for coronation ceremonies. The skeleton was claimed by the church and made "holy relics." Some of the bones were kept for display purposes and others were kept in a shrine.

Our soul is our most valuable possession. The things that we accumulate in this life may be enjoyed for only a short time then they will be taken from us, however, our soul goes on living eternally. The lack of understanding that people have about eternity may contribute to the way they carelessly handle their soul and the cheap value they place on their most precious possession. This mortal existence is only a speck of time in relation to the everlasting realm of eternity. The sacrifice Jesus made for our salvation should give us a clue about the value of our soul.

"And Satan answered the LORD, and said, Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life." Job 2:4. Satan operates with the idea that man will give everything for this earthly life and he would like to convince you with this same erroneous concept—focus everything on the temporal. This concept is wrong because it ignores the value of the everlasting soul that God has placed in man's hand. When one clearly recognizes this value he begins to perceive everything in life differently—his focus is shifted from the temporal to the eternal. Pleasing God, the Creator and rightful owner of our soul, becomes the central goal in life. Earthly possessions and even mortal life itself does not compare with the value God places on our precious, eternal soul. It would be wise for us to be enlightened about this aspect of our soul before Satan can take possession of it and forever separate us from our Creator.

II Corinthians 5:11 says, "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men;..." If all of us had a better understanding of what it means to be lost then we would put more effort into trying to help others understand their perilous condition. There would also be more "fear and trembling" experienced in the decisions and choices people make in life because the consequences of disobeying God are so serious. For a soul to be lost in the flames of torment forever is more than the human mind can comprehend, yet this will be the awful reality for every soul that leaves this world without finding remission for their sins.

In this life there is an interacting relationship between godly sorrow and an awareness of the priceless value of one's soul—when one increases it also awakens the other. This is a valuable work accomplished by the Holy Spirit that brings conviction to the heart of the lost and motivates them to begin taking steps that lead to repentance. This awareness of a soul's value does not instill pride in the heart but rather brings humility because it reveals the need man has of God. It is part of the awakening that takes place in the heart of those who are in a dead state of sin and causes them to call on God for mercy. When they are willing to meet the conditions for salvation, God will grant forgiveness and cause their hearts to suddenly experience newness of life. The old chains of sin and bondage are broken loose and the heart of the sinner is made light and free. Jesus said "...joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth,..." Luke 15:7. Knowing what causes the angels in heaven to rejoice should help us to likewise have a better appreciation for the value of the soul.

If we could have a conversation with either those in the presence of the Lord or with those cast out of His presence, they would both tell us

how valuable our soul is, what a glorious opportunity we have to be saved and how we should be taking advantage of Jesus' offer of redemption. The rich man was certainly trying to send someone back from the dead to warn his brothers not to come to the place of torment where he was. (Luke 16:27-31.) Every soul that passes from this mortal life into eternity is suddenly made acutely aware of how valuable their soul is, but then grace is no longer offered to the sinner—the fate of the lost is forever sealed. "...behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." II Corinthians 6:2.

The priceless jewel that has been entrusted in our hands should be carefully and prayerfully cared for. Our Savior made a plan whereby we can be preserved from the evil influences that are abounding in this world. I John 5:18 says, "...but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not." When we place our whole life in the hands of God and do His will then we can be assured our soul will receive the finest care and we will have treasure laid up "...where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:"



Correction: In the third paragraph on page six of the April, 2006, *Faith and Victory* an error was made in the editorial that may have given the impression that the angel of the Lord rolled the stone away from the tomb of Jesus after the women arrived. This was not intended for the Scriptures indicate Jesus' resurrection had already taken place and He was out of the tomb before they arrived. The second sentence of that paragraph should have read, "Upon their arrival, the angel of the Lord had rolled the stone away from the door and sat upon it."

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Sis. Raleah Murphey, who has been a devoted worker at Faith Publishing House since June 1992, felt it was needful to make a change to give more time to homeschool her two children and assist her husband who is currently pursuing a State Representative position. Her last day at the Print Shop was April 12. She, along with her two sons, Jaród and Jarél, will be greatly missed. The boys often accompanied her to work and quietly played while she was proof-reading, paging up books and tracts or the *Beautiful Way* papers, fulfilling book and tract orders, drawing up masking sheets for exposing plates on the *Faith and Victory* and *Bible Lessons* or doing some of the other various tasks around the shop. She has been a careful, dependable, efficient worker that handled her tasks with professionalism. When something thoughtful was done for her she was always quick to express her thankfulness, often with a card or thank-you note. Raleah and the boys have a very warm place in the hearts of all the workers at the Print Shop. We trust the Lord will richly reward her for the valuable services she has performed through these many years and protect and guide them in the days and years to come.

—Bro. Willie E. Murphey
wemurphey@yahoo.com

PRAYER REQUESTS

OK—Remember Sis. Velda Wisner in prayer. She has a serious affliction that is causing her much discomfort and is interfering with her ability to sleep at night.

OK—Recently Sis. Frances Murphey fell off the front porch of her home. Thankfully, she did not seem to break any bones but she has been having pain in her left shoulder as a result of the fall. Your prayers for her would be appreciated.

MEETING DATES

Oklahoma State (Guthrie, OK)—May 26-June 4
Holly Hill, SC (Camp Meeting)—May 28-June 4
Tulsa, OK (Camp Meeting)—June 11-18
Jefferson, OR (Camp Meeting)—June 16-25
Green Bank, WV (Camp Meeting)—June 16-22
Wichita, KS (Sisters' Retreat)—June 23-24
Fresno, CA (Camp Meeting)—July 2-9
General Southern (Loranger, LA)—July 2-9
National (Monark Springs, MO)—July 21-30
Myrtle, MO (Camp Meeting)—August 4-9
California State (Pacoima, CA)—August 18-27
Spooner, WI (Tent Meeting)—August 23-27

MEETING NOTICES

OKLAHOMA STATE CAMP MEETING

The annual Oklahoma State Camp Meeting of the Church of God will be held May 26-June 4, at the campground located east off of Sooner Road on Lake View Road. This is a little over four-tenths of a mile south of the intersection of South Division and Sooner Road.

As is customary, the first service will be held Friday evening, May 26, at 7:30, with three services daily thereafter. Early morning prayer services and youth meetings will be held as announced.

An invitation to attend is extended to everyone. Your presence will be appreciated. Provisions will be made for those attending.

The meeting will be operated by freewill offerings. If you would like to make a contribution, you may do so by sending it directly to the state treasurer, Sis. Brenda Wilkins, 1023 E. Prairie Grove Rd., Guthrie, OK 73044.

For further information, contact the pastor, Bro. Stanley Dickson, (405) 260-8822.

HOLLY HILL, SC, CAMP MEETING

The Holly Hill, SC congregation would like to extend a cordial invitation to our 2006 camp meeting beginning on May 28 and ending on June 4. Meals will be served daily, and accommodations will be made for as many as is possible. If you are coming, please call Sis. Beverly Pratt at (803) 496-3057 or Sis. Cheryl Smith at (803) 492-7975 as soon as is conveniently possible, so we can plan accordingly. If you are coming and would like to stay off the grounds in a motel, there are several motels (Holiday Inn, Super 8, Country Inns & Suites, etc.) in the Santee, SC area, which is approximately 16 miles from the chapel. Sis. Beverly

and Sis. Cheryl can provide you with phone numbers and information on outside accommodations. If you cannot come, please be in prayer for us that God will send us what we need and that He will bless every service.

In Christ's love,

—The Holly Hill Congregation

JEFFERSON, OR, CAMP MEETING

Everyone is invited to attend the annual camp meeting in Jefferson, OR. The meeting will start the Friday evening of June 16th and end on Sunday morning, June 25th. Service times will be at 10:30 a.m. and 7:30 p.m. and a 2:00 p.m. service on the first weekend and last Saturday. For accommodations or directions, you can reach Bro. Bob Wilson at (541) 327-3621 or Bro. Clifford Smith at (503) 581-4575. Your presence would be a great encouragement to the saints here in Oregon.

GREEN BANK, WV, CAMP MEETING

The annual Green Bank Camp Meeting is scheduled to begin on Friday evening, June 16 and continue through Thursday evening June 22, Lord willing.

Services will be held daily at 11:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. Two meals will be served daily, with breakfast at 9:00 a.m. and the noon meal immediately following morning service. There are no afternoon services scheduled.

All are welcome to attend this meeting. Dorm spaces are available for the young people, as well as rooms and private homes for others. Please bring your own bedding and towels. Come prepared for cool weather. You may want to bring a heater or fan as we have unpredictable weather in June. It would be good if you could call ahead so we can better arrange accommodations. Please provide as much of the following information as possible: name and phone number, date of arrival and departure, number of adults and children in party. However, if you decide to suddenly drop by, you will be welcome. Accommodations will be provided.

The campground is located off Route 28 and 92 in Arbovale. Signs will be posted to direct you to the grounds. Camper hook-ups are also available.

For further information, call Bro. Mike Carpenter at (304) 456-3250 or Bro. Jim White at (304) 456-4192.

Come praying that the Holy Spirit will have full reign in this meeting.

WICHITA, KS, SISTERS' RETREAT

The 2006 Sisters' Retreat will be convening, Lord willing, at the Church of God chapel in Wichita, KS (2509 North Grove Street) on June 23-24, 2006.

The theme for 2006 is "Becoming a Woman of Excellence." There will be all day services with different sessions beginning at 8:00 a.m.

Accommodations will be provided at the chapel and in homes. However, for those who prefer a hotel, eight rooms are on hold at the Kansas Inn. To make a reservation, call (316) 269-9999. The toll free number is (877) 269-9899 or go online at www.thekansasinn.com

Dinner on Friday will be at the Hometown Buffet. You will need to bring \$10.00 to cover this cost.

Come praying that the Lord will bless these services. The meeting will be run by freewill offerings.

For further information, contact Sis. Mary McDonald (865) 977-6997 or Sis. Carrie Porter (865) 984-2348. Those who wish to send an offering may send it to: Church of God, 322 Lindsay St., Alcoa, TN 37701. For directions to the Wichita chapel, contact Sis. Shirley Knight at (316) 682-2474 or (316) 683-0006.

GENERAL SOUTHERN CAMP MEETING

Lord willing, this meeting will begin Sunday, July 2, with services daily through July 9. Come for a blessing and please support this meeting in your prayers.

There is a dormitory for the sisters and one for the brothers. Please bring sheets and linens, if possible. Power and water hookups are provided for those with campers. Meals will be served and expenses met by freewill offerings.

From Loranger, go two miles south and about three and one-half miles east on Hwy. 40.

For those traveling I-55, the grounds are about 10 miles east of the Tickfaw exit (take Hwy. 442 which runs into Hwy. 40).

For more information, contact Bro. Carlos Doolittle at (985) 878-8122. The chapel phone is (985) 878-2788.

NATIONAL CAMP MEETING MONARK SPRINGS, MO

The National Camp Meeting of the Church of God will be held, Lord willing, at Neosho (Monark Springs), MO, July 21-30, 2006. All are cordially invited to come and bring others to enjoy the blessings we are expecting from the Lord.

The Monark Springs campground is located approximately five miles east of Neosho, MO. It is one mile east and 3/4 mile south of the intersection of Highways 86 and 59.

If you travel to Neosho by bus, you may telephone the campground, (417) 472-6427, or Bro. Mike Hightower, (417) 451-3636, for transportation.

The camp meeting is conducted on a freewill offering basis. There is no charge for meals or lodging on the campgrounds. You are welcome to come and enjoy the meeting. We are confident God will supply every need. Meals will be served in the dining hall. Dormitory space and trailer spots are available on a first-come basis. Family units are also available.

The business managers are Randel Bradley (see address and telephone number below), and Mike Hightower, 13974 Newt Dr., Neosho, MO 64850. Phone, (417) 451-3636.

Instructions For Making Dormitory Reservations

Call DeLoris Bradley (620-226-3390). If not at home, please leave a message on the answering machine, or e-mail <rdbradley@ckt.net> I will call or e-mail to confirm.

Please provide the following information so I can accommodate each one better:

Name and phone number

Date of arrival

Date of departure

Number of adults and children in party

Things to keep in mind:

Bring your own bedding, if possible.

If you leave after the weekend be sure to let me know, even if you are returning the next weekend.

No young people or children are to stay alone in cabins or family units.

After Wednesday the rooms start clearing out, so you might want to keep that in mind.

We have a boys' and a girls' dorm—if your child is staying in one of these, we ask that you feel the responsibility of staying also for at least one night.

There is a mens' dorm, ladies' dorm and a ladies' dorm for the handicapped.

We want everyone to come and enjoy the fellowship of kindred hearts while we worship the Lord together.

Come praying that the Holy Spirit will have full reign in all that we, as a group, do, from the dorms to the kitchen, and in cleaning and

keeping our grounds orderly. Parents or guardians, please keep your children in services with you. I believe God would be pleased if we observe these things and will meet with us under the tabernacle in a greater way.

Love and prayers,

—DeLoris and Randel Bradley

1540 2000 Rd.

Bartlett, KS 67332

CALIFORNIA STATE CAMP MEETING

The California State Camp Meeting will be held this year from August 18, 2006 to August 27, 2006 at the campgrounds located at 12312 Osborne Place, Pacoima, CA 91331. The first service will begin 7:30 p.m. Friday, August 18th, with three services daily thereafter. For more information, please contact either the Sunset Guest Home at (818) 899-2022, Bro. Paul Phillips at (661) 251-6956, or Bro. Herbert Clay at (818) 897-1396.

SPECIAL NOTICES

Junction City, KY, Chapel Building Project

In the late 1960's, Brother and Sister Mart Samons and others began a gospel work in the Danville/Junction City, Kentucky area. Tent meetings held there gathered a harvest of souls, who rejoiced in the clear gospel truth and came out of various denominations.

Bro. Mart found an old building in Junction City and remodeled it for a place of worship. The structure, an old African Methodist Episcopal chapel from the post-Civil War era, had seen better days. A tree was growing right where the altar should be, and the high ceiling and windows had to be replaced. Bro. Mart and Sis. Verna paneled the walls, installed a drop ceiling, carpeted the floor, and put in two heating stoves.

When Dan and I felt the Lord call us in 1992 to move to the Danville area to help out in the work here, we found the quaint old building needing yet more improvement. We were able to build on a foyer and restrooms, install central heating, and replace the curtains. Dan and Bro. Ed Johnston raised the floor level inside the sanctuary 12 inches to meet the height of the new addition. A few cosmetic changes made the place quite comfortable, although we can still hear the scratching of the many birds who nest

in the attic, and an occasional squirrel finds its way into the sanctuary on a Sunday morning. We are certain that skunks, cats or other animals regularly inhabit the space under the floor! Wasps and bumblebees make their way into many a service, humming merrily while we sing our praises. Quite regularly, a ceiling tile collapses under the weight of the birds' nest debris, and there are several leaky areas.

Now, 13 years later, we find another change inevitable. The building is deteriorating under the new floor, and the old structure is pulling away from the new. Didn't Jesus say something about sewing new fabric to old? It just doesn't make a stable product!

The congregation, of which attendance size averages just under 20 people, has agreed that we must build a new structure, for putting any more improvements into a building that is clearly uninhabitable, except for the furry and flying creatures, is simply wasting finances.

We have been cleared by the planning and zoning commission to rebuild on the existing property. As we begin this monumental task, we ask for your prayers, and if the Lord impresses you, any financial or labor contribution will be sincerely appreciated and definitely used to the glory of God. We will let the saints know when there will be general workdays. A group of consecrated workers could accomplish a great deal, and you would receive a real blessing. All are welcome!

Our trust is in the Lord. We are challenged that the Lord still has a work in this area. We continually feel the spirits of those who labored here in years past being a way-mark to us as we endeavor to labor as faithfully as they did.

You may send any contributions to: Church of God, in care of Dan Gellenbeck, 2900 KY Hwy. 1273, Stanford, KY 40484.

they kept watch over their flocks as recorded in Luke 2:8-14. The verse that inspired me most was the 11th verse. "For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."

In Matthew 1:21 he tells us "And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins." The angel told Mary, "...that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." Luke 1:35. "He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end." Luke 1:32-33. "And Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord, And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour." Luke 1:46-47. The prophet Isaiah had a good vision of this when he said, "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace *there shall be no end...*" Isaiah 9:6-7.

Paul became a changed man when that great light from heaven appeared unto him and when he heard His voice and knew who He was. Then he became obedient and said, "...Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?..." Light from heaven had come into his soul. Now it is said he preached the faith which he once destroyed. That is what the Lord wants to do for all of us "...and shall set us in the way of his steps." Psalm 85:13. "And from Jesus Christ, *who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth.* Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him *be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.*" Revelation 1:5-6. This describes what the angel was announcing to the shepherds. When He loves us and washes us from our sins in His own blood then we can say like Paul, "...old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." II Corinthians 5:17. Then it is written, "...he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear, In holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life." Luke 1:74-75.



LETTERS FROM OUR READERS

OK—Dear Bro. Willie and Sis. Neta: Greetings to you in the name of Jesus our Savior. I have been thinking of late a lot about the announcement of the angel to the shepherds as

The poet has said, "Mighty to save and mighty to keep, Grace like the ocean, boundless and deep;" The poet has said again, "We go not to heaven, salvation to know, But Jesus came down to make whiter than snow; He'll wait not death's coming assistance to lend, But save you just now, and to worlds without end."

Your brother in Christ, —T. V. McMillian
— — — — —

LA—Dear Family of God: Greetings to all in Jesus' name. "And I will bring...through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried:..." Zechariah 13:9. "Behold, I have refined thee...I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction." Isaiah 48:10.

I do want to thank those of you who have carried me on your heart and prayed so fervently for me. I do appreciate the cards with messages of encouragement, many times right when I needed it. Also, thanks for the phone calls and to you who brought food to us.

I am yet in a battle, I need your continued prayers. The Lord is permitting me to have some use of my hands. I can do some things for myself. I can hold my Bible and read again. Praise the Lord! I can write, which I could not do for several months.

We are looking to the Lord for healing. I have chosen to trust in Jesus. I am trying to allow Him to work out His purpose.

Your sister in Christ, —Dorall Forbes
— — — — —

MO—Dear Bro. Willie and Sis. Neta: We recently read the Bible story about the rich young ruler that came to Jesus and asked what he must do to inherit eternal life. The Lord at first told him to keep the commandments, and his response was that he had kept them from his youth. Then the Lord told him that One thing was lacking and he must sell what he had, give it to the poor and follow Christ. That "one" thing was all that it would take but that was also the one thing that he wouldn't give up.

What is our "one" thing? It could be riches just like this young man. Maybe it is jealousy, bitterness or anger. Perhaps it is pride, social status or approval of men. Is there "one" thing that we just won't turn over to the Lord? Then that thing will keep us out of heaven. Oh, may we search our hearts and ask the Lord Jesus what our "one" thing is that is keeping us from receiving the fullness of the blessings of the Lord. But let us not be like this young man—he

went away sorrowful because he was not willing to surrender his "one" thing to the Lord. Let us say, "Yes, Lord. Whatever it takes, I will give it to You."

"One" thing seems so little. If Jesus had told him to give up twenty different things then that would seem like it was asking too much, but it shouldn't be hard to give up just "one" thing. However, this young man was not willing to give it up and as far as we know never did make it into the kingdom of Heaven.

May the Lord help us to turn loose of our "one" thing and let ourselves be filled with Him.

Keep pressing on! —Sis. Anita Adams
— — — — —

OK—Dear Bro. Willie Murphey and wife: I am doing pretty well so far. Thanks for all of your prayers. I am still praying for every one I can. The Lord is so good to me. The 23rd Psalm says He is my Shepherd I shall not want.

I think about all the meetings that are going on. I love to read your letters. Please keep me in the saint's prayers.

Your sister in Christ, —Mary O. Jones



Lucille Johnson was born to Felix and Fannie Taylor on January 23, 1932 and passed to her eternal reward April 8, 2006. She was the second daughter and the fourth child out of eleven. She was educated in the Grayson Public Schools before moving to Oklahoma City and attending Douglass High School. Lucille was an exceptional and committed student, especially in Algebra, where she earned double A's as a result of her aptitude in the subject.

At an early age, with her older sister, Annie Bell, Lucille learned about God and began a lifetime of loving and serving her Savior. Sister Lucille, as she was called, wholeheartedly em-

braced a lifestyle of commitment and holiness. She was a gifted woman of faith, knew the power of effectual prayer and was called upon by many for counsel and encouragement. Her ability to carry burdens and pray them through has had a great impact on many lives.

In 1947, she met Leo Johnson at a church revival in Hoffman, OK. Shortly thereafter, a courtship blossomed and she was united in marriage to the love of her life on April 2, 1950. Mama and Daddy celebrated their 56th Wedding Anniversary just six days prior to her passing. Their fervent love for one another was always evident. She affectionately called him "Honey" and "Sweetie Pie," and he fondly referred to her as his "Lovey-Dovey" or "Sweet Lulett." To the end, they remained committed to each other and their relationship.

After their marriage, they lived a short time in Oklahoma before moving to Kansas, where they spent several years. In 1959, with a family of six, they moved to Okmulgee, OK. While in Okmulgee, the family grew from six to eleven and the house on Smith Street became a haven for neighborhood children. Everyone was welcomed, however, no one was exempt from training and instruction from "Mrs. Johnson."

As a mother, she was devoted to her family. Her desire was that her children would be a benefit to society. She encouraged education, and as a result, all of her children attended college. Yet more importantly, the emphasis of her life was in encouraging everyone to give their hearts to God and make Jesus Christ their Savior and Lord and she labored to that end. While the family was young, she instilled the benefit of a family altar and family devotions. She created an atmosphere of spiritual training and instruction that has followed her children into adulthood. Through life and at her passing, her main objective was to bring glory to God and lead others to salvation.

In 1983, Brother and Sister Johnson felt a call to move to Muskogee, OK in an effort to help establish a church ministry there. She worked faithfully in the ministry for many years. God having given her a great love for people, she always felt that her most effective ministry was one-on-one and more in personal settings than public. She had a ministry of compassion and it affected the lives of all who knew her.

Mom heartily enjoyed people, good singing, chicken and flowers. It was evident that she knew no strangers and everyone was a part of

her "family." Where there was no blood relation, there was a relationship of the heart. She was known by these "family members" as Mama Lucille, Aunt Lucille or Granny; and they were known as my girl, my boy, pooh, or little dear. Her siblings and close friends knew her as "Cille." And everyone knew her as a woman with a Godly heritage. The impact on the lives she touched will be felt eternally.

Mrs. Johnson was preceded in death by her parents, two sisters, two brothers and a son, Gerard. She leaves to cherish her memory: her beloved husband, Leo Johnson; five daughters, Carol (Carlos) Arriaga, Linda Montgomery, Shirley Johnson, Beverly (Tracy) Anderson and Donna (Norman) Simpson; five sons, Roy (Cynthia) Johnson, Myron Johnson, Dale (Shimika) Johnson, Darrell (Kimberly) Johnson and Chauncy (Crystal) Johnson; also left to share in her heritage, 31 grandchildren; 18 great-grandchildren; her brothers, Frankie, Felix Jr., C. L. Taylor (Mitchell), Carl and Andrew Taylor; two sisters, Clara Phillips and Sally Benton; along with a host of relatives, saints and friends.

Memorial services were officiated by Bro. Charles Lowe, Bro. Darrell Johnson and others. Burial followed at Memorial Park Cemetery, Muskogee, OK.



In My Father's House

(Continued from Page 3.)

places, abodes." There is an accommodation for each particular saint, an apartment for each one, a distinct, permanent dwelling just for you!

Now let's turn our attention to the words "my Father's house." We know the temple had porches and courts, but so did the houses of the people in those ancient eastern lands. Examining a house of that time, we find it could have a porch, which was the passage beneath the house front leading from the street to the courtyard inside. Open to the sky, the porch was closed at the street by a large folding gate. This gate had a small door in it sized for single persons to pass through. It was kept by a porter or gatekeeper. We immediately think of Psalm 84:10, "I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness."

The courtyard could have an awning drawn from one wall to the other to supply shelter from

the heat of the day. Also to provide refreshing shade and renewed air, palm and olive trees grew here. Again we think of Psalms, "But I am like a green olive tree in the house of God:..." Psalm 52:8. And "Those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God." Psalm 92:13. Again, as at the temple, little chambers surrounding the courtyard, piled up on one another. The roofs of the lower rooms made a terrace for the upper rooms.

Jesus said, "I go to prepare a place for you." It is such a joy to be able to have your own room! (My teenage daughter is looking forward to the day when she will not have to share her room with her two younger siblings!) Jesus wants us to have our own special place in His Father's house. He advises us to lay up for ourselves treasures in Heaven. Let's take His advice and send Him beautiful things to decorate our room in the eternal house of our Father in Heaven.



Obedience

By Sis. Charlotte Huskey

"Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord." Colossians 3:20.

Obedience is the foundation stone on which a person keeps a relationship with Christ. Therefore it is very important that children learn to obey. God says in I Samuel 15:22-23 "...to obey is better than sacrifice,...For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness (*insubordination*) is as iniquity and idolatry...." There is a great blessing in obedience but rebellion and stubbornness brings a curse.

Obedience is the first commandment with promise. (Ephesians 6:2.) When a child learns true submission to parents he or she is more likely to submit to God. The goal of every Christian parent is to train each child to let Christ be Lord of their lives. However, a great part of obedience is learned through example. All the care, love, prayers, training, and biblical devotions have little effect on children whose parents are not submissive to Christ and other authorities in their lives. Knowing to do good does not guarantee right conduct. The rewards are given for doing. Training is the easy part, but living in submission to the authorities that Christ has placed in our lives can be challenging. However, it makes obedience attractive to children.

Even parents who are obedient to God will find it hard to bring some children into submission because they are not people pleasers but naturally selfish or just freedom lovers. Sometimes, however, children are insubordinate because parents in reality are encouraging disobedience while trying to get the child to obey. This is very stressful to both parent and child. Here are three principles that, if followed consistently, may reduce stress and increase willful submission.

Principle one: When a child is spoken to in a way that requires an answer or action, always, always, always expect an immediate and complete response. Children often disobey because they have conveniently not heard or they habitually ignore mother's voice. Sometimes, however, they may not have understood what is expected. Every child should respond politely when spoken to by an authority, then clear instructions can be given.

The mother or father who first coaxes, then threatens and finally punishes a little or bargains, is fostering stubbornness and encouraging disobedience. Their hope for compliance is great, but the will to enforce it is weak. Is this laziness or being merciful? Mercy could not be so cruel as to encourage habits of rebellion that will cause the child trouble all his life. And how is it that a child will obey the third time but not the first?

When parents consistently require first-time obedience the child knows when he will be punished. When parents repeat, bargain and threaten to get obedience, the child is kept in continual confusion. Consequences are no longer tied to disobedience, but to the mood and whim of the parent. This is very undermining, because children often believe God has the same characteristic as their parent. Are our eternal rewards dependent on our obedience or on God's mood when we die? Who wants their child to believe God rewards according to His good or bad days? They will, if we require first-time obedience one day and fourth-time obedience another day.

Bribing can also encourage disobedience. Bribing is different from goal incentives. Goal incentives help children take responsibility for their obedience. Children should be rewarded for obedience, but should not be obedient just to gain a reward. There is a difference. Children who have been bribed to obey tend to be self-oriented and manipulate others. They seek rewards and serve others only when there is something in it for them. A child should obey in obedience to God and not for personal gain. Bribing is training the child to have unrighteous characteristics.

Principle two: Never give a command unless you intend for it to be obeyed. The perfect way to train a child to be disobedient is to give instructions that you will not enforce. Before speaking, consider carefully what you are requiring. Is it possible? Is it appropriate? Is it pertinent for the situation? Then give the command and see that it is obeyed. When the child is concentrating on other things, give a time-related warning. Sometimes allow a little discussion for good understanding but don't let yourself be caught negotiating in conflict.

Children love negotiating in conflict. Choose your commands well, then hold to them. Total obedience produces joy. Half obedience leaves both child and parent frustrated. If we negotiate the standard when the child objects, there is no true surrender, only an agreed upon suspension of conflict. Without a complete surrender, there will always be a member ready to wage war.

A child's willingness to accept total submission to his authority is the first step to freedom or self-rule (which is the desire of most every child.) The child must first surrender his will for his parent's desires. Then he can surrender his will for God's will as directed by the parent. When this is mastered, he or she is able to have certain freedoms.

Misuse of compassion is another way parents foster disobedience. "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil." Ecclesiastes 8:11. Be watchful and alert to little deeds that seem innocent and correct them even in very small children. Inappropriate behavior should be stopped when it first appears, before it takes root in the heart. Tolerance of behavior such as repeated disobedience, deceit, disrespect for authority, stealing

in the home, shirking responsibility, etc. fosters criminal characteristics. Repeated spankings are better than any jail term.

Principle three: Be sure your command is clearly understood. Require eye contact if possible. Then require a verbal response. "Yes, Mom," or "Yes, Sir." Some children also need to be touched while listening to instructions. It is good to have instructions repeated back to you. Routine requirements also make obedience easier for any child. Older children do well to have written instructions.

Children should obey immediately, completely, without challenge and without complaint. Is this possible? Yes. God has never given a command that He does not give strength to obey. Please note that following the command for children to "obey in everything" the parents are warned to "...provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged." Colossians 3:21. Coaxing, threatening, bargaining, bribing, negotiating in conflict, misuse of compassion or mercy and parental inconsistencies will surely provoke children and it could easily cause them to be discouraged.

Children want parental approval. Their feeling of acceptance and approval is directly related to the standard of behavior required by their parent. This is especially true in without-challenge obedience. A child who meets these high standards of obedience receives approval not only from his or her parents, but from society. This approval makes obedience attractive to the child.

Don't allow yourself to think that some children will not obey. I have heard parents say, "I cannot get John to obey." You are sinning when you do this. Take him by the hand and force his hands to do whatever you have commanded. This isn't hard when the child is one or two years old, but after years of inconsistent training you will have some problems. Don't give up. Older children, in whom unrighteousness has been fostered through ignorance or neglect may have developed bad habits that will take time and patience to break. "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." James 4:7.

Disobedience is sin just as devil worship, witchcraft, stealing, murder, etc. (I Samuel 15:23.) Allowing disobedience in your children is also sin. Repent for allowing your child to ignore your commands or shirk their responsi-

bilities. The child's soul is in your hands, don't allow yourself to train him or her to be disobedient (ungodly).

If you have not been enforcing your commands, ask God for more strength—then require a higher standard. Be consistent, give clear requirements and stand your ground when they are challenged (and they will be). God will help you to turn uncooperative teenagers into self-motivated obedient ones.

Are you completely obedient to Christ? Have you found peace in being submissive to the authorities in your life? Unless you have, that spirit of rebellion (which you may not realize exists) will surely effect your children. Your children may conform to your wishes and show outward obedience just as you attend church and conform to its standards. But are you submissive in your heart? Don't expect your children to be truly submissive to you unless you are totally consecrated to God.

"Draw Me Close to Thee"

By Sis. Olive Davenport

In the early morning hours, the Lord brought the song, "Draw Me Close to Thee," so we began to meditate on it. Verse one was very appealing.

*"I would be nearer, my Savior,
Where I can hear thy voice
Falling in tenderest whispers,
Making my heart rejoice.
Draw Me Close to Thee."*

Now who would not enjoy hearing the Lord whispering tenderly to them? You must be close to a person if you are going to hear a whisper.

The Lord was faithful to remind me of one of His ways in drawing us close to Him. He has many ways. Usually in our daily devotion we would read from the original *Streams in the Desert* Book One. On this morning we had no idea what the topic would be—but the Lord is faithful. The scripture was, "...the wind was contrary." Matthew 14:24.

It was explained so clearly that through our temptations, bereavements, and trials we are drawn closer to the Lord. They may seem bitter, but it causes us to pray more earnestly, compelling us to take a strong hold on His promises and humbly submitting to His will.

Through our earnestness, we began to draw nigh to God and He drew nigh to us. (James 4:8.) We became still enough to feel His Divine presence and soon we were close enough to hear His voice in tender whispers—through the comfort of His Word in Scripture, song or by the voice of His Holy Spirit. How Blessed!

Do I still want to be drawn nearer to God and hear His tender whispers? By His grace we can still sing,

*"Draw Me Close to Thee,
Keep me dear Savior so near thy side
Draw me Close to thee."*

*For the law made nothing perfect,
but the bringing in of a better hope did; by
the which we draw nigh unto God.*

Hebrews 7:19.

Bible Lessons



*"Beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord,
we are CHANGED . . ."* II Cor. 3:18

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5/06

Are You On the Smoking or Non-Smoking Flight?

Scratch! Scratch! I sat up and looked at my pillow.

Who did that? Nobody is in here but me.

I got up from my bunk and walked around the 6' x 8' cell called "The Hole" in the Miami, Florida Federal Prison. I looked out the small door window. Nothing! Silence.

When I layed back down on my bunk, I heard a voice speak to my soul and I knew it was God. In a flash, I saw scenes from my life that I would like to forget. Times when I had lied and cheated, and times when I had been lied to, cheated on and robbed. I remembered shooting at someone. Pain, fear and the hopeless, lonesome feeling on night streets, doing and dealing drugs, police raids and arrests, selfish friends and broken dreams, a life of misery, that's all I had. I felt so wicked, sad and hollow. My soul was in a deeper pit than "The Hole" I was confined in.

Tears of grief, remorse and shame began to roll down and dampen my pillow. Why had I survived? Why was I living? I knew God had been there, even when I had rejected Him so many times. Right then, March 3, 1994, 9:00 p.m., my soul began to cry out to God for mercy. He heard me call from the sinful pit I was in. He reached down and lifted my soul out of confusion, trouble, wickedness and despair.

After that night of godly sorrow that led me to repentance, I confessed my sins, and I was changed. I was determined to leave my old ways behind, and become a new man in Christ Jesus. "Therefore if any man *be* in Christ, *he* is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." II Corinthians 5:17.

When I was able to get a Bible, I read it like a thirsty man seeking water. I wanted to learn all I could about my Lord who had spared my life, and given me new hope, meaning to life and a reason to live.

God has blessed my soul with so much more peace, love, joy and contentment than I have ever known. Praise God! I am free from the devil's chains of destruction and have been learning to walk in the Light of God's Word ever since.

Once a prisoner of the devil, now, by the grace of God, I am a workman for the King of kings, our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." II Timothy 2:15.

With fellow inmates, I began an evening Bible study. Through the prayer of faith, I have seen men saved, healed and changed. Praise God! There is power in the blood of Jesus!

The Lord has done many miracles in my life. On January 27, 2005, I was released from prison. The Lord restored my marriage to my faithful, Christian wife. I have a wonderful family of nine grown children and several precious grandchildren. I attend worship services with the caring family of God.

I know why God spared my life. I am to serve Him. I want to point other souls to salvation through the blood of Jesus Christ.

Someday we are all going to leave this world. There are only two flights out of here: smoking or non-smoking. Which one are you on?

—Bro. Jackie Hebreem Riley

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