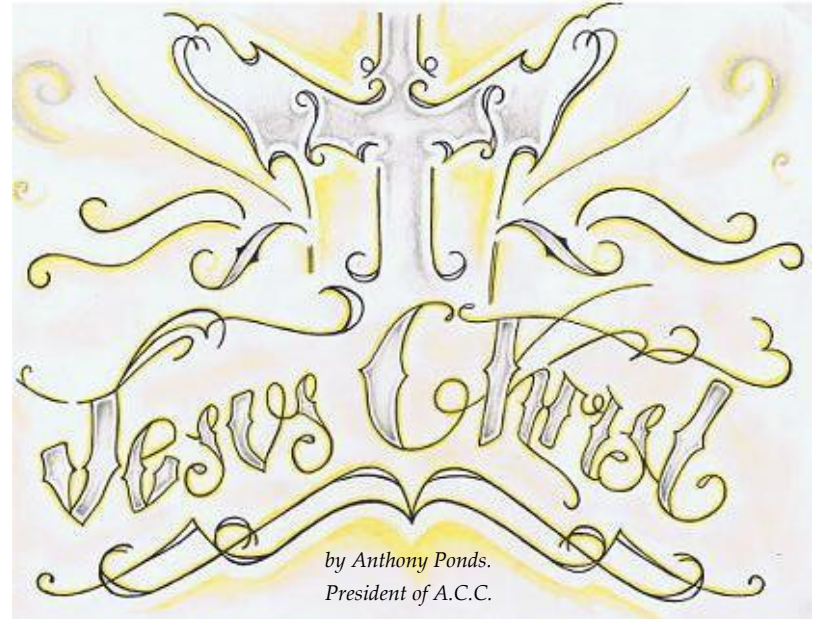




*"For nothing will be impossible with God."
Luke 1:37*

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*by Anthony Ponds.
President of A.C.C.*

Unifying the body of Christ in order to most glorify God and inspire others to accept the saving and satisfying love of Jesus Christ.

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Letter from the Editor

We have been so blessed to experience some incredible moments here at The Cupbearer Café this month, and Inspiration Ministries has made strides in our effort to start the jail ministry here in DeKalb County. All glory goes to God, our Father, the Author and Finisher of our faith, because He is so worthy to be praised. We appreciate your prayers as this faith journey continues each month. We pray that you experience the faithfulness of God with us as He continues to build this ministry from the ground up.

I recently had an interesting experience when we hosted a band, Redemption Calling. During intermission I found myself in front of the microphone and felt



lead to sing a song titled *He Knows My Name*. I followed with the song *The Reason Why We Sing*. It was the first time I have sang in a long time. In fact, I think it was my first time singing in front of people since I was on the praise team at Liberty CI last year.

I am a worshipper; I love to sing, jump, and dance to honor Christ. I learned how to be a true worshipper while incarcerated, and I haven't forgotten. I learned those songs behind the walls, and I carry them and the love of Christ in my

heart everyday. Worshiping with song can be overwhelming at times because it helps me realize the love of God that He has so graciously poured on my life. I encourage you to be a true worshipper of the living God in whatever way the Holy Spirit leads you. Worship the Lord Jesus Christ in prayer, song, or the reading of your Word, but most importantly worship Him by letting the Christ inside you reign supreme as an ambassador of His love, grace, and mercy.

During my stay at Liberty, I became pen pals with Dan Evans, a brother in Tallahassee who did some time a few years prior. Dan and I shared what the Lord was doing in our hearts for the last eight months of my sentence. Through his faithfulness to the call of his life, Dan and I have now become friends and fellow workmen in the cause for Christ. I am proud to publish *Because He Lives* for our July newsletter. Our Ambassadors for Christ in Chains have written some pieces to inspire your heart, and we are thrilled to include our first Spanish article. Find a brother or sister in which to share the newsletter.

Inspiration Ministries is committed to unifying the body of Christ, and we are excited about the move of the Holy Spirit inside and outside the prison walls. We need each other to fulfill the call of God to spread the Gospel to all nations.

Join us in being inspired as ever in Jesus name,

Andrew L. Foster

Inspiration Ministries INC, Director
The Cupbearer Café, Owner

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INSPIRATION tracts

Writing for Inspiration Ministries

It is awesome to receive mail about what the Lord is doing in the lives of so many. God is inspiring men and women in prisons and on this side of the wall to forfeit the things of this world and pledge obedience to the One who deserves all the glory from our lives.

The most amazing part is that often our inspiration comes from the Word of God. No matter how many times we have read the Bible, it is the Holy Spirit who speaks to our hearts and teaches us to be like Christ. We pray that these tracts, testimonies, and other spiritual nuggets will inspire you as they have us.

Please feel free to write or email us as you diligently seek God's face to share your heart and what the Lord is teaching you through His Word. I guarantee the Lord will use it to inspire others.

G.P.S.

Prince Cody, Liberty CI, FL F

Have you ever had a G.P.S. in your car? Isn't it great to have a constant helper-voice reminding you where to go. It reminds you where to turn and if you follow all of the directions given, you will arrive at your destination (even though following directions can be hard for us men).

When you buy a new G.P.S. unit, you receive an instruction book. Do you know that as Christians God has given us all an internal G.P.S.; however, unlike the G.P.S. in your car which stands for Global Position Satellite, the G.P.S. God has given us stands for "God's Provided Savior" (Jesus). God has also provided you an instruction book, the Bible. Just like the G.P.S. voice in your car, you have the Holy Spirit, who tells you when to turn, and if you choose not to listen, we can end up in the wrong destination.

I guess you can say God patented the G.P.S. before time began. Remember when that voice said you were going the wrong way, and you didn't listen and ended up on a dead end street (prison). We all have different roads to our own destination, but when we listen to that internal G.P.S., the road always ends at the right destination. So pick up your cross and follow your internal and eternal G.P.S. If you do, God says, "... I will never leave you nor forsake you." If you don't have this G.P.S., ask someone who does, and they can tell you how to get your very own **FREE** G.P.S. and instruction manual. In this God-given instruction book, Jesus told people to follow Him many times, for He is the only way! This means there will be opportunities to follow another way or direction, but trust and listen closely to our Lord, for He is the only way that leads us down the road to eternal life.

Because He Lives

by Dan Evans
Tallahassee, Florida



Glory to God, great things He has done! I give all the praise to Him for He has made me glad! What a journey this has been to where I'm at today, you have to go back and view the progression and observe the sovereign, mighty hand of God in every aspect of the events of my life. Romans 8:28 says, "And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose." Come and see how this verse played out in my life.

I was born in Ohio, the sixth in a family of eight. I had five brothers and two sisters. My mom and dad are both still alive and together (over 55 years of marriage). My dad is not a Christian and his absence in my life had an effect on me spiritually, emotionally, and psychologically. My dad was always working and not home to teach, share, or spend time with me. That did not lead me to become part of a gang or hang with the wrong crowd, thanks to the love and guidance of my mother, but it did contribute to an attitude and mindset of having to do things on my own and learn things on my own. There was no one I could turn to when I had questions about the changes that were happening in my life (puberty, sexual desires, etc.)

I was raised in church, graduated from a Christian school, went to a Christian college for a year, and had that spiritual element present in my life, but I still just kind of roamed and walked aimlessly in life while putting on the façade that I had it all together. I'm so thankful that God is in control, even when it may seem to us that either we have it under control or things are out of control. Both ends of that spectrum happened in my life. First, I went through the "I have things under control" phase.

I attended a Christian college on an academic scholarship straight out of high school and met a girl there my freshman year. We eventually would become engaged, and we had a long-distance relationship because I did not come back to college the next year. I joined the Air Force when I was 20 and ended up stationed at Homestead AFB in 1991. The next year Hurricane Andrew came through and blew me out of that area. It's a good thing too because I might have just stayed down there. I loved the fact that you could play outdoor sports, especially basketball and softball, year-round. Being from Ohio, I didn't have that. I was relocated to Moody AFB in Valdosta, Georgia. This would be significant because this is where I would meet my future bride, Sarah, even though I was engaged to another when I first met her.

The base didn't have room for us because of the influx of so many soldiers to their compound. They had to build the barracks for us to live in, so in the meantime, I stayed in the Holiday Inn for about four months. Well, I knew I had to find a church so I prayed and asked the Holy Spirit to lead me, guide me, and show me where He would want me to go. I got up that Sunday morning and went driving, not knowing where I was going. As I was passing this one church, the Holy Spirit told me that this was the church He wanted me to attend. I thought better of it! I made a rash judgment call based on sight and not faith. I saw the sign for the church, Open Bible Baptist Church, the name didn't get me but the name of the pastor did! Underneath the name of the church was the name of the pastor, Carroll Joye. I immediately thought, "This church has a female pastor, and I will not attend a church with a female pastor, it's not biblical!" So, I ignored and quenched the Spirit and I kept driving down the road and attended the very next church I saw. Oh well for man's wisdom! That was the worst Sunday morning service I have ever attended in my life! Not because there was anything wrong with the church or their service, but because God was whipping me the entire service!

I went back to my room and repented of my sin and told the Lord that I would not do that again! The next Sunday, I went to Open Bible Baptist Church as the Lord directed me, and found out Carroll Joye was a God-fearing man that would play a huge part in my spiritual growth. This is also the church where Sarah and I first met. She found out I was engaged, and the girl I was engaged to went to the same college as Sarah, and Sarah knew her and did not like her! Sarah thought she was a stuck-up snob and automatically made the assumption that I was the same way! We first met when Sarah was home on Christmas break and by the time Sarah made it home for Spring Break, I had broken off my engagement. Not because of her, but because of Romans 8:28 and the Holy Spirit doing His thing! Sometimes, we don't have a clue!

When the time came for my four-year commitment to be over and the decision had to be made to re-sign or get out, Sarah had graduated from college and found herself a job teaching 2nd grade in Tallahassee, Florida. We were seriously dating at the time and discussing marriage, and I knew she was not a "military wife", so I made the decision to get out of the Air Force. I moved to Tallahassee and ended up working at the school Sarah was at and we got married in December of 1995. I started off as an assistant teacher and was coaching basketball and football, as well. I eventually became assistant principal of the elementary school, while still teaching some high school classes. Remember when I talked about not having that guidance from a father concerning certain issues young boys and young men face, well, those desires were still stirring deep inside of me. Sarah and I had been married for about four years at this time. I had begun a friendship with a girl who had recently lost her father and she took a liking to me. Sarah and I were struggling in some areas of our marriage at the time and I was in need of affirmation. This girl thought I could hang the moon and that did something inside of me. I was and still am

very wrong to have ever crossed that line and have any sort of physical and emotional relationship with anyone besides my wife. This started that second phase called, “Out of control”, even though in my mind, I still had things very much in control. Oh, how very wrong I was!

I had allowed myself to be deceived into thinking that no one would find out and the devil was just sitting there laughing at me as he watched, what he thought was, my destruction. The Bible says that prides comes before a fall and a haughty spirit before destruction. It also says not to be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man sows that he will also reap. The detectives from the sheriff’s office came to my house one summer night in the year 2000 and said that they had something to talk to me about and they needed me down at the station. I was a principal at this time, and we just had an incident earlier in the week concerning a student bringing in a homemade bomb to school, so I thought it was in regards to that. I was totally blind to what was happening, but God was working all things together. Sarah and I were in bed watching television at the time, so I went back to the room and saw the look of fear on her face. I told her not to worry, these officers probably had official business to talk to me about and that I would be right back and I would call her when I left. Little did I know that it would be the last time I would see my wife’s face as a free man for eight years.

The detectives made small talk on the ride over to the sheriff’s office and then my mind started analyzing the situation. I started asking questions about the incident at school that I thought we were going to talk about and they were dodging my questions. That raised a red flag in my mind. About five minutes before we arrived, the thought finally hit me that this whole episode could be related to what I had been doing. There’s no way anybody knows unless she said something and she promised me she wouldn’t. Once we made it into the interrogation room and they presented this story, I knew what time it was. But, you know what? The Holy Spirit was working. My flesh says, “It’s your word against hers, they have no proof”, but the Holy Spirit was saying, “Come home, Daniel, it’s time to stop lying.” I knew I could weave a story and they would believe me, but I also knew that if I didn’t repent right then and there and stop running, I would never come back.

So after they told me her side of the story, I told them I would tell them the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. I waived my right to have an attorney present because I knew that if I had one, I would lie. The Holy Spirit was convicting and I didn’t need anyone else to tell them what really happened. So I confessed and I felt relief and a peace sweep over me. I knew that I was going to face some hard times, but I also knew that the Lord was with me. That first night in the holding cell, God and I did some business. I knew I had lost everything! My wife, my job, the home we were building, respect of friends and peers, all was gone; but I told the Lord that if I had to go the rest of the way with it being just Him and me, I was willing. That’s all the Lord ever wants, that personal relationship where it’s just Him and you, nothing else. We don’t ever need anything else besides Jesus!

But once I came to that point in my life where I truly repented and surrendered, that’s when God could do His work. He began restoring. The very next day, first thing in the morning, I hear my name called for a visit. I was hiding out in my cell because I knew I had been on the news and I didn’t want anyone knowing I was there. So I’m thinking, who is here to see me? Well, I go up and see that it’s Sarah. I asked her what she was doing here and she asked me if it was true. I said, “Is what true?” She said what they are saying on the TV. I told her not to believe everything, but that yes, I did do something terribly wrong. She asked me why I didn’t wait for a lawyer, and I told her it was because I knew if I waited to talk to a lawyer, I would weave a lie and what if I get off and they let me go, would I truly have gotten away with it? No. God knew, and I told her if I didn’t stop this right now, it would only get worse.

During the midst of our visit, Sarah said something to me that has stuck with me and will never leave. She said, “I forgave you as soon as you left the house. I didn’t know what you had done, but I knew it was bad. When we got married, I not only made a vow to you, but I made a vow to God. We said, “for better or for worse”, and this is just the “worse” part.” When she said that, my heart flooded with joy and peace at what God was doing! I knew I was going to be alright. God was showing me His power, His sovereignty, and His love.

Twelve years later and we’re still together! God has done so many other miracles, signs, and wonders in our lives and as He provides opportunities to share those, I will. I am learning that my ways are not His ways. Can I get an amen? God continues to meet our every need. God is good, all the time; and all the time, God is good! He will bless abundantly and restore appropriately all that He wants to those who have a broken spirit and humble heart and obey His commands. He is faithful! All this has nothing to do with my merit, but everything to do with His mercy and grace!

We have faith to believe that God will restore all that has been destroyed and eaten away. God gave us these verses: Joel 2:25 “I will restore to you the years that the swarming locust has eaten” and Jeremiah 32:27 “Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh; is there anything too hard for me?” We trust that God will continue to restore the years that were taken from us! He has already blessed above and beyond what we have asked or thought!

May God truly bless you. Never forget the many blessings He has given you and remember to thank Him daily for His goodness and mercy. May God continue to bless you and keep you according to His mercy and grace.

Dan, Sarah, and their children, Jackson and Peyton, currently live in Tallahassee and attend Faith Community Baptist Church. Dan works for time for JC Web Solutions, and also volunteers time with Care Tallahassee, a transitional house for those who are coming out of incarceration. Dan’s desire is to return to prison as a minister to let the men know that God loves them and His plan for their lives.

Our Failures are Not Final

by John Kuhle

What is sin?

All sin is failure to meet God's requirements, and we are equally guilty (Romans 3:23). And while there are many ways to transgress, be assured that the condition of a person's heart will determine how they feel about it. The Bible says: Fools make a mock at sin (Proverbs 14:9), but sin is no laughing matter. It is an ever-present enemy of righteousness that reveals itself in one of two ways: by not doing what God has commanded, we quench the Spirit (1 Thess. 5:19), and by doing what He has forbidden, we grieve the Spirit (Eph. 4:30). When a Christian sins, it harms his relationship with God, making reconciliation necessary. Thankfully the Bible is clear about the process for doing it. Before we read what the Scripture tells us about restoring the fallen, let us revisit the lives of three mighty brothers that were fully devoted to God, yet fell into sin:

- Moses was groomed for ministry in the most powerful home in the entire world, and he abused his power by committing first-degree murder (Ex. 2:12).
- David was the beloved king of Israel who seduced his friend's wife, then plotted his murder to cover it up, and a man after God's heart (2 Samuel 11).
- Peter was the public braggart who cursed & denied knowing Jesus to a young girl right after boasting he would be willing to die for Him (Luke 22:33-62).

I am sure we cannot help but feel that we should just kill them and let them burn in Hell forever. But God, who is excellent in loving kindness (Psalm 36:7), and rich in mercy (Ephesians 2:4), provided exactly the opposite and David was fully aware of this when He repented and prayed: *Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving kindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions* (Psalm 51:1). My friend, if that is true, then those who consistently consign backslidden but repentant ministers of the Gospel to a future devoid of service to Jesus are dreadfully mistaken.

God dealing with us backsliders

A backslider is a Christian who "slides back" into sin. It is usually so gradual one hardly sees it when it does happen. Then WHAM, we up to old ways, and we then find ourselves in prison saying, "I don't have to go to church because there are too many hypocrites in the prison church and I don't like the Chaplain." They don't take (Hebrews 10:25) as a command from God. But if they belong to God, they will love Him and His church. If God deals with us according to what we deserve, we might as well grab the greased pole leading to Hell because we are all doomed (Romans 6:23). Instead, our precious Savior gives us a promise: *Return ye backsliding children and I will heal your backsliding* (Jeremiah 3:22). But how does God heal those who have gone back to the old life that is so disgustingly vile? To begin with, He promised to forgive and cleanse every person from every sin they will admit to committing (1 John 1:9). Next, He

sends forth His faithful servants into the ministry of reconciliation (2 Cor. 5:18), to bring the lost and the backslidden back into full fellowship and restoration: *Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such a one in the spirit of meekness; consider thyself, lest thou also be tempted* (Galatians 6:1). God's intention is not merely forgiveness. It is also full restoration to ministry and blessing that was temporarily forfeited while living in sin. For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance (Romans 11:29).

Pastors, preachers, evangelists, hear this word from God. There aren't any scripture references of a person who sincerely repented that God didn't forgive and restore. Not one. Therefore, if God forgives, cleanses and restores all who repent, how can we (who are also vile sinners) refuse to do the same?

Failures are not final

I thank God failure isn't final. If it was, there would be no Jewish nation (Moses), and there would be no Jesus Christ (David), and there would be no church (Peter). Did you begin years ago following Jesus only to be led back into a life of sin and crime? Perhaps you were in the ministry or called to ministry but you turned your back only to land in prison. Praise the Lord, you weren't arrested; you were rescued so you could read this message and re-commit yourself to Jesus and begin again. Regardless of what the legalists have fed you, Jesus allows U-turns, so turn away from sin now and turn to Jesus. He is waiting for you, prodigal son, with arms wide open saying, "Please come home my son."

Please pray with me in repentance and receive full restoration: *Heavenly Father, I have sinned against you, and I am sorry. Please forgive me and fully restore me to usefulness for You as You promised in Your Word. Thank you for hearing and answering my prayer. In Jesus name, Amen.*

Love

James Summers, A.C.C., Bay CF, FL

The more I *love*, the bigger the impact it will have on my life.

Love to me is more important than facts, more precious than the past, and more special than education, money, failure or success.

Love is the difference between listening and hearing God's voice.

Love allows us to think outside the box and face any fears that may cast doubt on its capabilities.

Love understands forgiveness and is close friends with patience.

Without a doubt, love is persistent and finds no fault.

Love, love, love is what we all must do, appreciate, practice and preach.

When we love we express Christ & allow others to understand who He really is

Breaking Down Walls

Unifying the Body of Christ

"I was in prison, and you came to me" Matthew 25:36c

Though I am thankful everyday for the opportunity to be out here serving the Lord, I have to admit, Brothers and Sisters, that I miss being around folks who are desperate for God. I miss the inmate praise bands that lead us in worship, the conversations on the recreation yards, and the evening Bible studies and prayer circles before count time. Maybe I am the only person who feels that way after five years behind those walls, but I cannot help but thank God for the time I had to be with people whose sole concern was to find their ultimate satisfaction in Jesus Christ because they did not have anything else.

Desperation is not always such a bad thing; it always makes you react. You can choose to be both anxious and worrisome, or it can make you rely more heavily than ever on our Heavenly Father. I remember many days in the dayroom at 5:30AM after chow crying out to God, "I can't keep feeling this way. Please, tell me what you want me to do." There finally came that time when He said, "Just trust me." Out of my desperation, I clung to Jesus like I had never before in my life. And I am still holding on tight.

The letters we receive out here inspire me. Everyday I look at the wall with the pictures of our Ambassadors for Christ in the café and smile because I see Anthony, Christopher, Chino, Colelle, Storm, Skyler, Poet, Corey, and Gonzo who I count as some of my best friends and fellow workers in the cause of Christ. I am thankful for Maryanne who wrote from Florida and included the names of twenty other women. We appreciate that, and we want you all to know that you are being prayed for out here. Start seeking now the face of God, make His desires yours, and desperately fasten your will to the Father's.

God opened my eyes the last couple years I was in prison to see that it was a place He was allowing to spread His Gospel. Realistically, there are not many people inside those walls who haven't heard the Good News of Jesus Christ. The reality, however, is that many reject the message. Let me challenge you. The power of God and the change that only Jesus Christ can bring in your lives is the example and witness those men and women around you need. Too often we deny the power of God by living contrary to what we are confessing. Then, we find that people are so busy watching what you do that they don't really care what you have to say. Right or wrong, it is the truth.

Be an ambassador for Christ inside those walls. Be a fisher of men in the name of Jesus. Be inspired knowing that we are in this together, and your challenges are not too far from ours out here as we try to improve our fellowship, discipleship, and evangelism. Be in prayer for us as we are you, and always know that we love you in the name of Jesus Christ.

--A.F.

Extraordinary

Jeremy Coronel, Avon Park Work Camp, FL

And it came to pass, that, as they went in the way, a certain man said unto Him, Lord, I will follow you wherever you go. And Jesus said unto him, foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head. Luke 9:57-58

Although we may feel we are ready to serve Christ, are we truly aware of the commitment, dedication, and sacrifice that it requires? Following Jesus is not just something we do, it is who we become. It is not just a lifestyle, it becomes life itself. In this scripture, Jesus gives us a puzzling riddle about foxes and birds. One of the ideas He is trying to teach us is that serving Him is not always a life of comfort or ease. First of all, we are called to live extraordinary lives and make decisions that are contrary to the flesh and the world's point of view. We are called to love our enemies and bless those who persecute us. We are called to turn the other cheek when offended or even struck. We are called to make a lifelong commitment of marriage with one woman, staying completely faithful, even in thought. We are called to overcome the fleshly desires that can erupt within us naturally. We are called not to conform to the ways of the world, but to transform our minds by the teachings of a book written over thousands of years.

Being a follower of Jesus Christ is not an easy, comfortable way of life, but extremely rewarding. Jesus even teaches us that we will be persecuted and hated by men because of our commitment to following Him. So by being a Christian our safety, freedom, and our very lives can be jeopardized. The world looks at us and says, "You're crazy," or "you're a fool." Eat, drink, and be merry is their philosophy. Live as if there is no tomorrow. I have been told Christianity is a crutch for a weak mind. I say it takes a real man to meet up to the demands of Christ-like living and be able to say I can't, but He can.

Workers Needed

Lowell Davis, A.C.C., Bay CF, FL

(37) Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few." (38) Ask "the Lord" of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field. Matthew 9:37-38

Jesus was explaining that there is much work to do in ushering souls into the kingdom, and we need all the help we can get. The problem is that the act of gathering takes actual work and requires discipline upon the part of the gatherer. We must pray that the Father sends obedient, disciplined workers into the world. Also, we need to pray, "God – allow us the strength and wisdom to be a doer of the Word and not simply a hearer of the Word." Remember that when there is work to be done, we must begin right at home, "Lord what must I do?"

From Behind the Walls

From the A.C.C. to You!

A word to describe my daily experiences behind these walls is “WAR”. I am attacked by unbelievers and believers alike, and the scrutiny can sometimes be overwhelming. People constantly test me with questions and scenarios to see how I will react and then accuse me of not being a Christian because I did not perform in the manner they expected. Sounds a lot like a man named Jesus.

However, I rejoice in all these things knowing that in my own small way I share in the sufferings of Christ in that God would see fit in His mercy and grace to grant me the honor to partake in the glory of His Son. The word says that if we suffer with Him, we will also be glorified in Him (Romans 8:17). These experiences have taught me to seek the peace, joy, and refuge that only comes from standing on the promises of God through faith. I continually stand on Romans 8:28, “And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.”

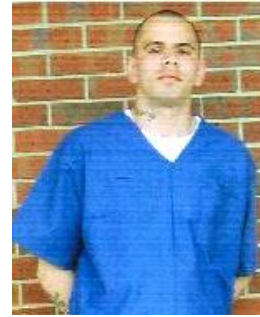
Everything we go through, every joy and sorrow, God uses for our good. I am encouraged daily that God promises never to leave me nor forsake me. I thank Him today that He causes me to be victorious through Christ, and I know that my Redeemer lives! Therefore, I fight the good fight of faith, knowing that my suffering is shared by all my brothers and sisters around the world. Lets rejoice through our testing knowing that the Lord doesn't believe in wasted pain!

I often struggle with obedience to the authority I'm surrounded by. It's difficult to remember that these men and women were established by God and that my obedience to them is a direct reflection of my submissions to God. I am amazed by how the Lord supplies the grace I require to deal with all situations. He never ceases to amaze me, just when I think I've had enough, His still small voice reassures me that I got an extra mile. The fact is that God is faithful even when I'm faithless (2 Tim. 2:13).

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with all spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ” (Ephesians 1:3). I am aware of the implications of this verse while I am in a place where everything I can do or possess is so limited. The Lord reassures me that in Him all needs are abundantly supplied; every time I am unsatisfied or have a lack due to my imprisonment, the Word has an answer for my situation. God says yes and amen! Why would I not gladly serve such a God who is great in mercy and grace?

May you be blessed and remember who you are and whose you are!

Rigdel De Lardilles, Vice President, A.C.C.



TIGHTEN UP!

by James Summers, A.C.C.

When I look at my fellow inmates, I often think about our loved ones suffering from the consequences of a decision we made. I see the pain that lies ahead for all of us if we fail to realize the importance of our present and future decisions. We must **tighten up!**

Brother and Sisters, I see potential being misused, mistreated, and overlooked without regard to what it's costing the ones who matter most in life. I see this time extending opportunities to you, and you're still choosing to allow your past to victimize your future. I see you clearly looking in the wrong direction, focusing on pointless deterrents that are keeping you from reaching your full potential. I see you carelessly handling the decisions you are faced with now, worrying about everything except what is important.

I see the love you have for being turned into hatred towards a system that is squeezing the life out of you and your loved ones. I see a dorm full of grown men displaying anger towards the circumstances and situations they are faced with instead of accepting responsibility for their actions and using this time to rebuild and restructure their lives. I see your loved ones pulling you from the outside while you are throwing it all away from the inside. I see men who haven't even been released, and they have already started their next bid.

I see men who would rather carry pain and poke fun at others than face the king-sized problems in life. I see men who are not only afraid of being themselves, but who are afraid of admitting they need help. I see men who care more about pointless conversation than they do about meaningful change. I see men who have been through a lot in life, and who still have a lot more to go through before it's all said and done.

Above all, I see hope in you; in your eyes I see the strength it takes to change when you're looking at pictures of your loved ones, or when you're talking to them on the phone. Brothers and Sisters, I want you to know that God has a plan for your future that is far better than your past. Don't worry about the things you can't change, but be determined to change for the rest of your life. Make a commitment to yourself and to Jesus to be the man God created you to be. Please don't keep walking around empty and broken when you were created to be full of life. Remember that you have a Heavenly Father who wants to guide you safely home. God doesn't waste pain, so don't you. **Tighten up!**



Rest

by Anthony V. Ponds, President, A.C.C.

“It is very good!” God said as He gazed upon a completed formation of His beautiful creation, which is fearfully and wonderfully made. Suddenly, He breathed a breath of life into his nostrils and the man gasped, becoming a living being. Behold, man!

Now, imagine this! This creation – man, you, me, him – sits up and feels the breeze of a cool evening with spurts of mist brushing against his arms, legs, back and face. He’s communicating with God, observing the spectacular view of plants, animals, birds, stars, insects, rivers and springs. He begins to feel out his existence and contemplates his place in the big scheme of things. Then suddenly, God places this man in the Garden of Eden, an oasis of breath taking beauty, and a sheer display of divine design. He whispers to this man, “cultivate and keep it.” This ignites within the man a dignified position and enhances his natural capacity to represent the image of God – the image in which he’s been created.

After a few more instructions deep within a personal interaction and fellowship, God decided, “It is not good for man to be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him.” This same man, who in a magnificent display of God’s image, stood in leadership as the beasts, the birds, and every living creature stood at bay as he named and identified them, was then put into a deep sleep. From his side the union of relationship and marriage was born. The institution of God was established on Earth as it is in Heaven, and her name is woman. And there was evening and morning, the sixth day.

Now, imagine it is man’s first morning day after these divine events. His first sunrise inspires his Godly design worship his creator. It’s amazing to picture Adam watching the sunrise on his first official day when this is God’s seventh day in which He rested from all his works. The first full day of the human experience was to rest in God’s rest. It’s amazing that God created us to begin afresh in His rest, and God wants us to begin our relationship in His rest.

How does this *rest* translate into our day? When we start a relationship with God, our spiritual life in Christ starts in God’s rest, which translates into our:

- *Peace with God
- *Adoption as sons
- *Abiding in Christ
- *Reconciliation to God
- *Grafted to the vine
- *Redemption of our souls

The moment we began our relationship with God in His rest was day one. And we now are in Christ where our rest in the Lord is daily even unto glory. Amen!



La Ley del Camion de la Basura

by Wilson Gonzalez, A.C.C.
Ministerio de Inspiracion

Esta era una de esas mañanas cuando piensas que te has levantado con el pie izquierdo y que todo va a salir mal, pues mi auto ese día amaneció dañado y por mas que batalle con el, no logre arrancarlo. Entonces me vi en la necesidad de tomar un taxi para ir a mi trabajo. Mientras íbamos de camino a mi oficina y a una buena velocidad, salí

como de la nada un carro, el cual se nos vino encima. El conductor del taxi en el cual yo iba, con gran habilidad maniobro el auto y así evito el impacto con el otro carro. Pero para nuestra sorpresa el conductor del otro auto asomo so cabeza por la ventanilla de su carro para maldecirnos y tirar majaderías.

Yo todavía recuperandome del susto, pude apreciar lo injusto que había sido el conductor del otro carro y como si fuera poco el taxista me acabo de encolerizar con su reacción pues de una forma extremadamente amistosa y cortés le sonreía y saludaba con la mano al conductor del otro carro.

Yo, en medio de mi furia y confusión le dije al conductor de mi taxi; ¿Como pueda usted sonreír y saludar a ese tipo, si fue el quien casi nos mata? El chofer con una paz interna y una voz pausada me conto lo que ahora yo llamo “La Ley del Camion de la Basura.” El me dijo: ve usted aquel camion de la basura? Si, le dije; y eso que tiene que ver? El me respondió: Pues así como es el camion de basura, existen también muchas personas que van por la vida llenos de basura, frustraciones, rabia, dolor y decepción.

Cuando la basura se va acumulando, necesitan encontrar un lugar donde vaciarlas y si usted las dejara seguramente le vaciaran sus basuras, sus rabies, y frustraciones en tu patio (vida) (Prov 25:11).

Así que cuando alguien decide a vaciar su basura en mí, no lo tomo personal, tan solo sonrío y saludo, le deo todo el bien del mundo y sigo mi camino (Prover 15:15). Hagalo usted también y le agradara haberlo echo, se lo garantizo! Apartir de ese día aprendí, cuantas veces he permitido me arrojen su basura las personas que me rodean y yo enojado las he recojido y esparcido en otra gente en mi casa, en mi trabajo y hasta en la calle.

Hermano Cristiano recuerde: (Prov 15:1) y (Prov 16:11). Lo que Dios nos dice en su Santa Palabra son palabras puras para ser aplicadas en todos y cada una de las situaciones en nuestros días. En este mundo donde el enemigo decide a reinar debemos de aferrarnos a las promesas del Señor (Juan 10:10).

The Long Way Around

by Terrance Barnes

Giving all glory and praise to our Heavenly Father above for His mercy and grace, this is the story of my life which has drawn me back to our Creator of Heaven and Earth. Thanks be to God!

I grew up in a single parent household with my mother, Sandra Johnson. My father, William Barnes, didn't come around. I must say that we all were led the right way growing up going to church. The first 13 years of my life was wonderful while being raised up in my grandmother's house with my mother. I was being taught how to take responsibility by doing chores, which were intended to help keep me out of trouble. I was a very talented young man in sports. I was always taught by my mother and grandma that your education is the key, so I attended school receiving good grades and being obedient.

Then it all happened! I was not being fulfilled by everything my grandma was showing me. I was realizing it was all for the good, but I started feeling as if things were becoming harder, and I wasn't able to stay focused. Others things started to catch my attention, things that looked more fun or worthwhile.

Then I started hanging out with some boys from the neighborhood who I thought were very cool. They were portraying an image that I wanted to emulate. At the age of sixteen I became a product of my environment and bad choices. I was selling drugs, smoking marijuana, and hanging out with my peers. I went on portraying an image which was not me. I went to the streets finding myself a comfort zone, doing whatever I wanted.

I got my first taste of incarceration because I was driving without a license. By the grace of God, the officer never searched the car, and I had drugs and a gun with me. I went to the JDC (Juvenile Detention Center) in Marion County. My mother kept me in her prayers. I was incarcerated for twenty one days, and it was in that time that I started reading God's word. I understood that my priorities were messed up. I was involved in drugs, guns, and crime. I was trapped in my comfort zone of portraying an image so I could fit in. The Word didn't sink in.

Later, selling drugs turned in armed robbery, and I soon was facing a first degree felony punishable by life. My mother came to see me, and she always encouraged me to pray, read my bible, and talk with God. I began opening my Bible again, building my relationship with God. I was incarcerated for four months before I went to court. The day before I went to court, my public defender came to see me with my mom. By the mercy of God they brought good news with them. I plead guilty to the reduced charge, and was sentenced as a juvenile considering my background. Praise God! I went to a level six program at Eckerd youth camp for six to eight months. I was blessed once again, and it was an eye opener to realize that God was drawing me to Him, wanting me to be a witness of His grace and mercy.

I've been incarcerated on two conspiracy charges this time around. I realize

that as I have prayed for a change in my life, God is going to hold up His end of the bargain. He is going to love me and correct me time and time again I wasn't serving Him; I didn't love Him; my life spoke volumes the lack of satisfaction in my life. I was sentenced to one hundred and twenty months in the Department of Corrections. I must admit I've found peace, rest, and have set God at the head of my life. I've been walking faithfully with God for two years now, and I am no longer looking for things that deter my walk with God. I understand now that God is very patient with us. God is knocking on the doors of our hearts, and I encourage you to just open up. We often try our own way, but it is only in Christ that we are fulfilled and taste and life that is sweeter than honey. God Bless!

The "Final Recall"

Frankie Cuevas, Liberty CI, FL

The sirens started blaring away
one bright sunny day,
no one could anticipate
the confusion coming their way.

When the officers started counting
much to their surprise,
many inmates were missing;
they could not believe their eyes.

For the Lord had come that night,
the rapture had taken place;
now many men were pardoned
by God's amazing grace!

For this was the "final" recall
and it even made the news,
they searched and counted everywhere,
but only found *empty* blues!

Amen!

1st Thessalonians 4:16-18