

INSPIRATION ministries
138 East 7th Street
Auburn, Indiana 46706

"For we have become partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance firm until the end." **Hebrews 3:14**

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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



The unmerited favor of God is something that we can never grasp fully, but we should understand that the same grace that abounded in our lives in 2012 is going to be needed all the more as we enter a New Year. There is a spirit of revival rumbling in our midst. Can 2013 bring a movement that hasn't been seen since the seventies when the long-haired rebelled hippies surrendered their lives to the

Lord? This was a time when churches were being started in houses and cafés with no concern for the scoffers. In fact, the reckless abandon that was lived outside of Christ transformed these men and women into "Jesus Freaks" before the eyes of the world.

God has called us to be a generation that once again seeks His face. Let us cast down the idolatries of the world to become a peculiar people prepared for the wonders and miracles of God. This is going to start with our focus on the Word of God and the leading of the Holy Spirit. The author of Hebrews stresses the idea of *holding fast*. Hold fast, Saints, to our assurance, our hope in Christ, and our confession in the Lord Jesus Christ as our total satisfaction and provision for salvation. We are in this together. We must be in prayer for one another, our nation, and our authorities in power. We must be prepared, like our forerunners, to stare in the face of scoffers and confess Jesus as the coming Christ and King.

Last night during the turn of the New Year, brothers and sisters were gathered here at The Cupbearer Café in unified prayer for the coming year and the move of the Holy Spirit. The Lord pressed upon my heart that as the Lord transforms the church in this day and age, the power of God is going to be revealed through those who are being saved. I understood that to mean that there are men and women who are going to come to know the Lord Jesus Christ this year that will make an immediate impact for the Kingdom of God. The Holy Spirit also made it clear that there are many in the process of "being saved." The Holy Spirit is going to transfer that knowledge of salvation deep within the hearts of the Saints to inspire them like never before.

My Brethren behind the walls, our prisons are going to be flooded by the wave of the Holy Spirit. You are in a position to make an eternal impact in the lives of every inmate and officer that crosses your path. Hold fast to your confession and watch as the Gospel penetrates hearts and becomes the power of God to those who are being saved. Gates are going to open this year and communities will be transformed by the word of your testimony and the blood of the Lamb.

Today is the day of salvation; the time is now. Hold fast to the word that was preached to us and let us not perish like those who passed away in the wilderness without entering into the rest we have in Christ Jesus.

INSPIRATION Writing for Inspiration Ministries

Praise God for mail about what the Lord is doing in the lives of so many. God is inspiring people on both sides of the wall to forfeit 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 write as you diligently seek God's face to share what the Lord is teaching you through His Word. I guarantee the Lord will use it to inspire others.

The Time Is Now!

by Rigdel De Lardilles, ACC

For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires. 2 Timothy 4:3

The terms sin, repentance, hell, and salvation are not popular. People don't like to hear about their sin, their need of repentance, their need of salvation, or their possibility of eternal damnation. However, Jesus talked a lot more about Hell than Heaven. Truth is I need somebody to tell me to tighten up, as a buddy of mine likes to say. The Bible says that an open rebuke is better than a hidden love. I know people love me when they tell me the truth, not what I want to hear. Don't be surprised if people don't listen, but whatever you do don't let that discourage you from speaking the truth in love. It is our responsibility to God and the world to speak what the Lord says, whether they like it or not.

Rest Assured

by James Summers, ACC

If the truth be told, sometimes we find ourselves questioning God concerning our circumstances. We also seek guidance during uncertain moments that may seem overwhelming. In those times of pressure, we often do what we feel is best and other times we do what *we* want to do. However, what I have realized is the only time everything has ever fell into place was when I turned my situation completely over to the will of God and trusted Him to do just as His Word promises. As a child of God, I encourage you to *lean not on your own understanding, but in all your ways acknowledge Him and He will make all your paths straight* (Proverbs 3:5-6). There is no mistaking God's grace; it seeks to give life, so you don't ever have to be confused, but rather you can have assurance and peace of mind.

El Espíritu Santo Sigue en Movimiento

by Wilson González, ACC Inspiración Ministerio

Recuerdan la canción que dice: “En el principio el Espíritu de Dios, se movía sobre las aguas...//, pero ahora se está moviendo dentro de me corazón...// Ese Espíritu que se movía en el mundo desde la creación fue el mismo que se movía a través de Moisés, usándolo para realizar señales y milagros ante el pueblo de Israel, ese Espíritu también se movía a través de Josué para convertirlo en un varón esforzado y valiente que repartió la tierra prometida a Israel, ese Espíritu fue el que convirtió a un ejército de 300 hombres que la mano de Gedeón derroto a miles, ese Espíritu fue el que dio las fuerzas a Sampson para derrotar por sí solo el ejército de los Filisteos ese Espíritu era el que daba al Rey David las victorias y que lo hacía también cantor y gozar al ver la gracia y misericordia – recorrida de Dios por su pueblo, él decía, “Si el Espíritu de Dios se mueve en mí yo danzo como David...// yo danzo, yo canto yo bailo como David...” y que de el sabio Salomón que fue usado por el Espíritu de Dios para ser el Rey más grande de Israel a quien dio no solo sabiduría sino que además riquezas.

El Espíritu se movió en Elías e Eliseo para hacer grandes milagros, se movió en Nehemías para levantar los muros de Jerusalén, se movió en Ester para que ella salvara a toda una nación.

The Stench of a Dead Man

by Artrellus Jones

The old man is dead; I witnessed his last breath myself. I attended the funeral, and I've read his eulogy. His tomb stone said, "Here lies the most rotten, wicked, evil man; good riddance, for his destiny was surely hell." It has been years since the old man has been laid to rest and the thoughts of him I've tried to suppress, but every day I am being haunted by this evil old man. His vile scent still lingers; the stench of a dead man.

I strive to proceed on with my life in spite of every dark corner that wrecks this foul smell. Death leaves vague images of the old man that looks exactly like me, but how can it be? Why won't he rest in peace? I desire to be set free without the stench of death surrounding me. Every time I lie, there is that smell. Every time I lust, there is that smell. Every time I do the very thing I don't want to do, there is that smell; the smell from hell that's disgusting to the taste. It sticks like paste and it does not matter how much I regret it, it still infiltrates. What I hate, I so reluctantly embrace. How can I live with this dead man tied to my soul, that's grown on me like a fungus, that's eating at my very soul? Death was not part of God's original plan for man, for my nature is dual. I am bound by two distinct laws, in which one consists of life and the other consists of death. The more I bathe in the aroma of life, which is Christ, I realize the stench of death subsides and vanishes. The only way I can obtain merit is through God's Holy Spirit, which purges and cleanses me completely from the heinous stench of death.

The Day that Never Came

As December 21st approached, I wondered how many people were counting on the end of the world. I am not talking of those who understood or believed in the Mayan fable, but even Christians whose weary souls were prepared for an eternal rest in Heaven. I have to admit the opportunity sounds appealing. Even the Apostle Paul says, “I am hardpressed from both directions, having the desire to depart and be with Christ, for that is very much better, yet to remain on in the flesh is more necessary for your sake” (Philippians 1:23-24).

Brethren, the life in Christ is pressing and messy. We look to an eternal hope that stays our fears and provides a peace beyond understanding, but the daily grind can become overwhelming. I will be the first one to admit that it is easier to live a quiet, peaceable life without interference from others. It is easier to look to the result of our faith while ignoring the progress of it. However, we have received a higher calling that must become a prevalent reminder to our renewed minds. To be with Christ would be very much better; none would argue with that, but for the sake of those being saved, we must remain as diligent as ever in the spreading of the Gospel. For the progress and joy of our faith and that of others, we must count it all joy in the midst of tribulation, suffering, and persecution. For the furtherance of the Gospel, our hearts must be directed towards those who do not know Christ. If our faith journey was complete, we would already be in that much better place. We remain for such a time as this.

So we press on. I deal with the thorn(s) in my flesh daily. I find brothers to hold me accountable. I confess my secret, shameful sins to others and receive prayer. I invite the interference of others into my life, and Christ uses it all to strengthen me for the tasks at hand as director of this ministry. I've got three men living with me right now who I didn't know last month who have given their lives to the Lord. These men are looking for jobs and volunteering in the community because of their gratefulness for a salvation they can now treasure. For the sake of their progress and joy in the faith, I am pleased to remain here in the flesh so that the grace of God may abound.

Inspiration covets your prayers as the Lord continues to open doors for His ministry. This month we are combining The Cupbearer Café to an additional 3,000 square feet to form the Inspiration Center. With a bigger stage and more seating, Inspiration will be hosting concerts and worship services with more space to accommodate the increase in attendance. Our ministry groups will enjoy more space along with the opportunity to be downtown in the middle of all the action in the community. Our desire is for the cross of Christ to be a beacon of light in Auburn. Let's make it happen together and watch the Lord have His way.

Inspired by Christ for a New Year!

Andrew L. Foster

Inspiration Ministries INC, Director
The Cupbearer Café, Owner

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Breaking Down Walls

Unifying the Body of Christ

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

BUILDING EACH OTHER UP

by Dan Evans

So then we pursue the things which make for peace and the building up of one another...

*Now we who are strong ought to bear the weaknesses of those without strength and not just please ourselves. **Romans 14:19 & 15:1***



God wants us to glorify Him in everything we say and do in this life. One of the ways we can do this is to edify, encourage, and build each other up. Why is it hard to find something "good" to say about someone? If we have our eyes on God and His love and what He has done for us, then we will have no problem encouraging and lifting up someone. As believers, we need to look at what actions we can take to contribute to the growth of the body of Christ. That body can consist of the people of the church, your Bible study group, your prayer circle, or the guy lying in the bunk next to you, above you, or below you.

So, what makes a church (the body of Christ) grow? Here are three things. First, **create a loving and welcoming environment.** Romans 14:13. The word *judge* in this verse is the Greek word, *krino*, which means "to separate, put asunder, to pick out, select, choose." How many times do we look at people sideways if they just don't act, talk, or believe like us? They come to the chapel or your prayer circle searching for love, looking for Jesus in somebody, and all you do is ignore them or look down on them because you know what they are about. But answer me this: where would any of us be without Christ? We don't choose who comes to Christ. God is not willing that **ANY** should perish! You want to see the church grow? Then love like Jesus loved and be welcoming.

Next, **you have to invite people to come.** You can't expect everyone to come to Christ all by themselves; most have to be asked! Something key to remember is to build a relationship first. Get to know the person and let them get to know you a little; they will be more receptive when you ask about their salvation. Look at Romans 15:7. The word *accept* in that verse means the same in both places. It's the Greek word, *proslambano*, which means "to take to, to take in addition, to take to one's self, to take as one's companion, to take by the hand in order to lead aside, to take or receive into one's home, with the collateral idea of kindness, to receive." That's hard to do sometimes because that's not natural. Do you expect me to accept this guy who I know is straight-up doing wrong? You're right, it can't be natural; it needs to be supernatural because

Christ accepted us to the glory of God! How do you think Jesus was able to go and sit and eat with the publicans, tax-collectors, and sinners of His day? He definitely didn't lower His standards to be "accepted" by the people.

Third, **you have to be relevant to the needs of people.** In Romans 15:8-9 we see that Jesus came for the Jews and the Gentiles. He knew the needs and He met them. Paul even talks about being all things to all people (1 Cor. 9:19-23). The first way we can be relevant is to be real with people. They have to see that you are the same no matter where you are, Jesus was. We also must have the eyes of Jesus and see what the need is and meet that need by the grace of God.

So, what will stop a church from growing? The number one thing is **conflict** within the church. If we go back to Romans 14 and start reading in verse 13 to the end of the chapter we will see that the New Testament church had conflicts with diet, days, and drink. What is your conflict? We all have conflict at one time or another. Just remember when those conflicts do come within the body of Christ that people are watching. The Bible says to be at peace with one another as much as lies within you. Don't be a stumbling block to the weaker brothers and always remember those who are seeking Christ. Do they see Jesus in you?

In closing, let us commit to building each other up and not tearing each other down. Let's recognize the value of each person. Each individual that crosses your path crosses it for a reason; God put them there! They have value; we have value; value the life God has made. And finally, let's keep our focus on what is really important. Don't allow conflict to arise over the petty stuff. Jesus did not allow anything to distract Him from His purpose. We must do the same.

Dan is a resident of Tallahassee, FL and volunteers with Care Tallahassee, a transitional house for those who are coming out of prison. God has answered Dan's prayers and he has recently started ministering inside the prison walls.

Obedient Hearts

by Don Chaffin

Righteous slaves to truth divine, in God's hands we walk each day.

Unfettered from the path of sin, death no longer rules our way.

Though corruption was our path, there was nothing but our shame.

The cross became our way of hope; it led to faith and grace we can claim!

Earnest peace within mans reach, truths have been placed before our eyes.

The very heart of righteousness, it's now become our earnest prize.

And as we benefit from grace, God's mercy leads to holiness.

Boldly praise is on our lips, in worship that our souls profess!

When you were slaves to sin, you were free from the control of righteousness. What benefit did you reap at that time from the things you are now ashamed of? Those things result in death! But now that you have been set free from sin and you become slaves to God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life. Godly hope and unfettered faith always leads to holiness (Romans 6:20-22).

From Behind the Walls

The A.C.C. to You!



We Have a Choice to Make!

This is love. This is hate. We all have a choice to make.

by Anthony Ponds, ACC President

As I sit here listening to a Tenth Avenue North song, a thought dawned on me from one of their lines in the song, “This is love, this is hate, and we all have a choice to make.” This line made me think of how many non-choices we make in the decision between these two. This is love on one hand; this is hate on the other. Now, we definitely do not want to choose to hate; however, to take the route of love may be too difficult or uncomfortable. So, we believe that if we just do not make a selection we can’t commit the unthinkable act of hatred, nor do we sacrifice or risk our comfort. So, in the end “all is well that ends well.”

Little do we know that a non-choice is a choice in and of itself. The Holy Spirit united James’ and John’s words to say it best, “If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, and one of you says to them, “Go in peace, be warmed and filled,” without giving the things needed for the body, what good is that?” (James 2:15-16) and John emphasizes, “But if anyone has the world’s goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God’s love abide in him?” (1 John 3:17).

Do you see? A non-choice is actually a choice against Him. If you do not choose love, that is hate because clearly His Word says rhetorically, “How does God’s love abide in us?” It doesn’t and the absence of love is disdain and hatred. I don’t believe this verse is just addressing giving things to people. But on a deeper level, genuine love toward one another (1 John 3:11-24), as Paul said, “... but in humility count others more significant than yourselves” (Philippians 2:3b).

So just as when we are graced with the ability not to hate someone who has wronged us when we think they deserve it which is an act of love, why don’t we just choose to love whether it’s uncomfortable or difficult. And may it be true in our heart, that we can joyfully deny ourselves. Remember, John urges us, “Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth” (1 John 3:18).

We Once Were, but Now We Are!

Do you know what’s interesting to me? Experiencing an individual analyze me while he is communicating with me, knowing that he has the impression that this life I now live is who I have been my entire life, as if I have no idea what it’s like to be a sinner. Boy, are those guys sadly mistaken!

This is one of the most gracious aspects of this relationship with Christ; an understanding of the heartbeat of the world while having a new regenerated heartbeat. Why is there an understanding? It is because it once beat in my own chest. As Ephesians 2:1-3 says, “As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of this air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us live among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath” (NIV). Because I was once defined as this, whether people know it or not, I sometimes become like a vagabond in my heart, wandering the desert with the guy who once was. Whether it is moments, days, or even weeks, this makes the soul thirsty.

Again, this is the gracious aspect of our relationship because if you read on in v. 4-10, God interjects with, “But because of His great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions – it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us within the Heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages, He might show the incomparable riches of His grace, expressed in His kindness to us in Christ Jesus. For it is by grace you have been saved though faith – and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so no one can boast. For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do” (NIV).

This reminder is a breath of fresh air, a brisk swig of water to quench a thirsty soul. And in this, I hope men will understand that we know the troubles of the soul. We know what it’s like to be Godless. But, just as He loved us enough to rescue us, He will do the same for anyone who will call on His holy name.

Following Jesus

The Call to Discipleship

by John Kuhle, ACC

Let’s read (Luke 9:57-62) and see what Jesus tells us: *And it came to pass, that, as they went in the way, a certain man said unto Him, Lord, I will follow Thee whither so ever Thou goest. And Jesus said unto him, foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath no where to lay His head. And Jesus said unto another, follow Me. But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. Jesus said unto him, let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the Kingdom of God. And another also said, Lord, I will follow Thee; but let me first go bid them fare well, which are at home at my house. And Jesus said unto him, no man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the Kingdom of God.*

There are three things that we can look to in this message the Holy Spirit gave me, and they are:

- THE CALL
- THE COST
- THE REWARDS

Two simple yet challenging words fell from Jesus' lips as He traveled throughout Israel: *Follow Me*. Today His call still reverberates with the same life-changing possibilities it posed to first-century seekers. Yet following Jesus isn't easy, comfortable, or convenient. When the press of daily life overshadows our commitment, consider what the scriptures teach about discipleship.

***THE CALL** - A higher purpose: Peter left fishing to catch men for the Kingdom (Matthew 4:18-20). A transformed life: Matthew chose righteousness over his corrupt job (Matthew 9:9). An intimate connection: Jesus' followers are called into a close relationship of love with Him (John 14:20-23). The Lord must have priority over everyone else.

***THE COST** - Self denial: Imitating Christ, a disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow Jesus (Luke 9:23). Relationships: The Lord must have priority over everyone else (Luke 14:26). Possessions: All ownership belongs under Christ's authority (Luke 14:33). Sacrifice: Because Jesus knew the heart of a rich young man, He could see what held first place in his affections. To help the man gain eternal riches, Jesus asked him to sacrifice what he valued most (Matthew 19:21-24). Persecution: Because the world persecuted Christ it will also mistreat His followers (Matthew 10:24-28).

***THE REWARDS** - Eternal security: The believer has salvation permanently (Luke 9:24-25; John 10:28-30; 1 John 5:11-13). Earthly returns: Anyone who has left possessions or relationships for Christ's sake will receive a hundred times as much in this life (Mark 10:28-31). Eternal rewards: Disciples are promised not only eternal life, but also privileges and rewards in the Kingdom (Mark 10:30; Luke 22:28-30). Greater insight: Those who follow Jesus are given deeper understanding of His words (Matthew 13:10-12, 16-17). Divine direction: Christ personally directs His sheep, you know His voice and follow Him (Jn 10:3-4,27).

Questions?

1. Are pleasures or important tasks competing with the Lord for first place in your life?
2. What changes can you make this week that will facilitate a closer walk with Christ?
3. Does the cost of discipleship keep you from committing to the Lord?

If you need a commitment to follow Jesus, please take this time to pray with me: *Our Lord God, I want a deep commitment with You. I choose to take up my cross daily and follow You with my whole being and put You first as it says in Matthew 6:33. I forsake all to follow Your leading in my life. I will go all the way with You, Jesus, and bring glory to Your name, Jesus. Amen!*

Jesus: Blessed it, Broke it, and Gave

by Lowell Davis, ACC



When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight. Luke 24:30-31

There are so many revelations in the story of Jesus Christ revealing Himself after His resurrection in Luke 24. For the purpose of brevity, we will start at verse 13, where it speaks of the two, that after seeing the tomb empty and hearing the story, they then traveled to Emmaus. It was approximately a two hour trip upon which Jesus drew near and went with them. The scripture says that they did not recognize Him, as Jesus asked, "What are you discussing as you walk?" They told the story of what the Chief priests had done to Jesus and how their women had amazed them with the disappearance and vision of angels who said, "He is alive." Then beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, He explained the whole Bible and His story within the two hour trip (The whole Bible – "Old and New"). When they approached Emmaus, Jesus acted as though He would continue on His way, but they urged Him to stay with them. When we are exposed to truths and wisdom, we either reject them or are drawn to them. Though the truth drew them, they still had no idea who was delivering the knowledge of wisdom and salvation.

The next sequence of events are a shadow or proto-type of how Jesus wanted to teach us, not only salvation (eternal life), but everyday secrets to life's challenges (here and now). The scripture says He took the Bread of life, and did three things: gave thanks, broke it, and then gave it to them. This is the platform from which all blessings flow – within thankfulness – and only then can God direct our focus. Only in a state of brokenness can we understand the need for something greater than our own abilities. It is then and only then that God can give us His Spirit to overcome death, the grave, and every storm that arises. It is at this point, as it was with the two travelers, that our spiritual eyes are opened and we recognize who the risen Lord Jesus Christ truly is. Then the scripture says He disappeared from their physical sight, but was engraved into their souls through their spiritual eyes. They then were pregnant with the "Way, Truth, and Life" and returned to Jerusalem at once to find the disciples and confirm that He is risen! God will always use two *simple* travelers to confound the wise. Everyday people like you and I confirm God's victory to confound the wise. God is no respecter of persons, but He is faithful to those who are willing to be about our Father's business. We are all blessed and beautifully broken. We must never forget to give freely what we have been so freely given. To our Father be all the Glory!

Bound

by Larry Edwards

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; He hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted... to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound. Luke 4:18(a), Isaiah 61:1(b)

Have you ever been “heartbroken?” If you’re anything like me, your heart has been broken often. Have you ever felt “captive?” Sure you have. We all at some point have said, “My hands are tied,” or felt “tied down.” We’ve all been shackled, imprisoned, or bound by finances, emotions, circumstances, or just life in general. What if I told you that you never have to feel that way again?

As I write this, I sit in confinement, in the jail *within* the jail! But I’m as free as a bird. I mount up with wings like eagles every day. I “glory in tribulations,” knowing that “the trying of (my) faith worketh patience” and that “. . . all things work together for the good to them that love God.” I thank Him for all this precious free time to spend in prayer, fasting, Bible study, and service to Him.

All my life I’ve been bound by something – poverty, poor role models, drugs, fear, hatred, depression, prison – the list goes on and on. But I finally decided that if I was going to be bound by something, it would be something worthwhile. So I became a servant of Christ, bound by love to Him and His will. And a bond of love is no bond at all.

Jesus said, “I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life,” and “Ye shall know the Truth and the Truth shall make you free.” The Son of God also said, “If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.” It is in gratitude that we bind ourselves to Him, proclaiming, “I love my Master. . . I will not go out.” In Acts, when the Roman captain asked Paul whether he were a Roman and Paul verified that he was, the captain responded, “With a great sum obtained I this freedom.” Our freedom was bought at a “great sum” too; the greatest, most costly, most valuable price that ever was or will be paid for anything. It was purchased by the life and precious blood of the Lamb of God, who gave Himself to redeem us from our bondage to sin and death, who is now enthroned at the right hand of God, having all authority in Heaven and Earth, who said, “In the world you shall have tribulations, *but be of good cheer*, for I have overcome the world.”

You don’t have to be in bondage to drugs. You don’t have to be in bondage of fear, hatred, depression, or even circumstances beyond your control. You don’t ever have to be brokenhearted again. You can make the joy of the Lord your strength, and the Holy Spirit your comforter. You can accept the free offer of the Son of the Most High to redeem you from your bondage. If you have not accepted Christ as your Savior and Redeemer, if you have not made Him Lord of your life, I urge you to do so today. He will break all your chains, loose all of your bonds, cast off all your cords, and make you to fly free for eternity.

Believe Again

by Robert Miller, ACC

And Jesus said unto the centurion, Go thy way; & as thou has believed, so be it done unto thee. And his servant was healed in the selfsame hour. Matthew 8:13

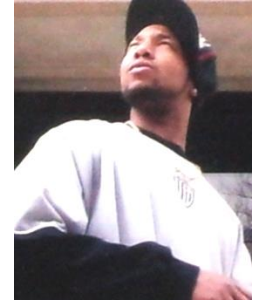
I will admit that I used to approach prayer with a wishful attitude. To define it plainly, I would doubt and deny His power to do what I would request. I said I believed but I would base my petitions on logic. I thought, “God can handle this, and I’m going to wait on that until better circumstances.” I only believed Him for what I perceived Him to be and not for who He really is.

How many of us honestly pray with expectation in our hearts? Most of the time we will pray about something for maybe a month and if we receive no answer we abandon the effort. For me, it was here that the Spirit of God revealed to me that with God, it’s not that I’m waiting on the answer; the answer is waiting on me. This centurion from the above passage came to Jesus on behalf of His sick servant to request healing. Our Lord agreed to come, but the centurion knew Jewish custom and how to come into his home was considered defilement amongst the Jews. So by faith he prayed Jesus would only speak the word and trusted it to be done in the manner of authority He held Himself.

What I’m getting at is this: it was that same hour that the servant was healed. The centurion’s request was granted though he himself did not witness it performed, yet he did not waver. I imagine when he saw his servant they rejoiced in the manifestation of the miracle but he had already counted it done. We get so caught up doctrinally with walking by faith and not by sight that we think that this is God’s only mode of operation. No, He only requires faith first. Even if He doesn’t, you still believe He can. Faith precedes sight, not dismissing it.

Throughout scripture, it is taught to ask and we shall receive (Matt 21:22), that we know we have our request because we keep His commandments (1 John 3:22), if anything be asked in Jesus’ name He will do it (John 14:14), and believe that you receive them and you shall have them (Mark 11:24). We serve a God (the God) that cannot lie and has never been unfaithful to His promises. He has obligated Himself to their fulfillment. The problem is we have become lukewarm and systematic with more dependence on income as a source of happiness than God, forgetting that the supernatural is natural to God. I’m not advocating a sensual faith or mysticism, I’m promoting truth and that truth is when I pray for something in the faith, God responds to it and requires that it is done as He promised, regardless of its physical manifestation, in His realm where time does not govern my petition or request. It’s granted, even if it takes a week, month, or year for me to process it. What only lies between it and I now is patience.

Hebrews 10:36, “For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise.”



It Is Not About Me

by Jeremy Baraona

I first gave my life to our Lord Jesus when I was 17 years old. At the time I did not understand what that all entailed. I spent the next 20 years of my life playing the role of Jonah. Twenty years spent doing one thing can be considered a career. You might say then that I made a career out of running away from God.

Certainly I wanted the Lord's blessing in my life, finances, achievements, and relationships. Yet I didn't want to let go of the carnal things that gave me a false sense of security. My own selfish pride would not let me surrender to God. I could not grasp this concept – what it meant, much less how to do so.

For the past 12 years I have played church and searched blindly for that peace that surpasses all understanding. My first time in prison from 2000 to 2006 came and went. This was followed by a brief stint of freedom for a year and a half until I violated probation in 2008. I am currently into the fourth year of my second time in prison. I went through the motions. I went to services, volunteered, prayed, fellowshiped, read the Word, and did daily devotions. I gleaned valuable and extensive information through all this, yet that one piece of the puzzle to make it possible to understand the bigger picture was still missing.

Here at Quincy Annex, Chaplain Padgett preaches a concise and vital message: God loves you! I cannot count the times I have heard that message to only have it fall on deaf ears, to have the eyes of my heart closed. On Saturday, October 27th the Lord finally gave me that missing puzzle piece. Something clicked. The Lord opened my eyes and ears; something I have heard repeatedly, innumerable, and unceasingly finally made sense. God loves you!

Incidentally, it is not about me. It is about Him. Not my obedience, not my devoutness, not my words, and not my actions. It is simply because of God's love for me; "We love Him, because He first loved us" (1 John 4:19). My prayers being answered are a result of God's love; nothing more, nothing less. This love is relative because it is not exclusive to any one individual, but to all who believe on His Son. God's love is available to every person. Unfortunately, only those that believe (accept) His love reap the blessings.

Although words and actions of praise and obedience do not alone merit our salvation, they can express our gratitude for God's love and the patience He displays toward us via the numerous chances He allots us, gratitude for His grace and mercy; appreciation for salvation through the death and resurrection of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. But the key factor is to believe, to truly accept that God does really love us. God implores us to believe that He loves us. It is expressed as a commandment in 1 John 3:23. Once we truly believe, our perspective is transformed. One can draw a parallel to that of a person who has 2-dimensional vision and then suddenly begins to see in 3-dimensions.

First I need to thank the Lord for making Inspiration Ministries a possibility and to Andrew Foster and Jaimie Kessler for putting their dream into a reality. I also have to thank the inmates that have fueled this ministry with their involvement. I personally want to thank Carla Boggs for her nugget of wisdom

on which to meditate. That was the impetus behind the topic of this article. In Carla's article titled "Choosing God" the message emphasized was *just be*. For the past month I have been trying to wrap my understanding around those words, "just be." I can now see clearly what you meant, Carla.

Jacob also went along a similar path when he wrestled with the Lord for His blessing. I too, like Carla and Jacob, wanted the Lord's blessing. My pride told me I had to earn it. My ego said, "In my strength be done." I believed I had to earn God's love to show Him I was worthy. That self-deception hindered my walk with the Lord. Thank you, Carla Boggs, for your two life-changing words, "just be." I have two words for you, Carla: "just is." Because God's love is precisely that: *it just is*. It is not because of what I merit, but because I am His creation fearfully and wonderfully made. So I am now working to allow myself to let go of selfish ideals and *just be* a vessel for my Lord and Savior, Jesus. God's love, by His very nature, *just is* and is understood as I surrender myself knowing that it is all about Him.

What Good is...God is Good

by Richard Pullings

What good is... a graduation to someone who can't read
What good is... instruction when the hearer does not heed
What good is... a reaper when no one planted a seed
What good is... planting a yard of grass to three yards of weeds
What good is... recognizing the cut but allowing it to bleed
What good is... turning to a friend in your time of need

God is good and your spirit He wants to feed
God is good and true in your time of need
God is good and He is waiting on you to follow His lead
God is good and supplies our needs according to His riches and glory
God is good and the rest of this can be any one of our stories

I am at a "sweet camp" in the eyes of any inmate. I figured there isn't anything sweet about prison. Then one day while sitting in a Life Basic Changes class the guard came to the door, called my name, and said, "Go to your dorm, you are on the 'Blue Bird' today." "What?" Oh well, I'm getting transferred; it can't be that bad. They told me the camp I was going to is sweet; it was like Sodom and Gomorrah: party central, do what you want.

That's when I realized that what I want is Jesus. He gave me two scriptures, "Behold, I send an angel before you to keep you in the way and to bring you into the place which I have prepared" (Exodus 23:20) and "Who is he who speaks it and it comes to pass, when the Lord has not commanded it?" (Lamentations 3:37). I realize God allowed the move so I could see other camps; I appreciate what the Lord is doing for me as I sit back at my first camp understanding what good is. God is good, all the time, and all the time, God is good!

Man Did I Mess Things Up

By Darrell Mikler

My name is Darrell Mikler by birth, but I traded it in for 188836. I have been doing time for a while now and when I look back at my life, I hear, “Man did I mess things up.” I also hear things like, “You should kill yourself,” or, “Why are you living? Nobody loves you and nobody cares.” I wrote because of the testimonies in the Inspiration Newsletter, which give me the reason why I am still alive. Some may feel they have been through a lot; even I have been guilty of thinking no one has gone through the things I’ve gone through. When I read 1 Corinthians 10:13 and John 15:16-27, I understand that it is not about me at all.

No matter what we go through, God is in control and has been since before the creation of our time. Surely, growing up we had dreams, we set goals, made plans, and set out to become important in everyone’s eyes. How many times have you heard, “I was lost and God found me,” or, “I was raised in church.” I am now learning that my problems come when I get in God’s way. From a young boy, Satan began developing a criminal mind within me, using girls as early as 2nd grade. By 5th grade I had a real girlfriend and didn’t know what I was supposed to do with her, but older boys knew so I learned from them. I learned other things as well, developing my mind.

I had become very popular in my city and in a few other places. The popularity I had built was from having children with different women everywhere I went. After the music game got old for me, I got into faster money – the dope game. In my mind I was dangerous and didn’t realize that it was God’s hand around me. Soon after money began flowing in, I began to use more than I sold. My life began to change; I lost my beautiful wife, Annie, and every single one of my kids. I became very important after that, just like I wanted, but not how I preferred to get it. The state of Florida called me a very important product because I have a natural life sentence for having sex with a minor. I am more important to DOC than others in prison because they may get out before they are dead. People who knew me would say I had a good life. But what do I say? Satan gave me everything to continue in darkness, to miss what my Creator had in store for me. God has comforted me so many times and given me people like Dan Evans and his family to show me light.

My darkest hour came when I was truly put to the test for serving God. I claim the Lord Jesus Christ as my Savior, my All in All, so surely I was tested. My life was coming back together and I felt good; then God picked me up and moved me. Each time there was more on my plate. My faith is not what it should be after all the near-death experiences I’ve had in my life. I know I am chosen and God has a plan for me if I can only sit long enough in faith to hear Him speak. I need your prayers because I am hurting; even now I am writing in tears.

Our decisions determine the outcome of our lives. God loves us, and He gave us the power to choose; no other creation has this. We are predestined in His will to be sons of God. That is pretty important, isn’t it? I had good parents; my dad was a bishop and my mother was an evangelist. Both of them ate and fed from

the Word of God. My dad died July 7, 2010 and my mom on October 7, 2012; they are both home with our Lord. Why do I feel alone? I think it is because my mom passed while I was on this road. I haven’t heard from my family. I lost all my property and am now housed at DeSoto Annex far away from home and I can’t get a visit for another 6 months. I wonder if this is God’s plan or if I’m being punished again.

I wrote the state to see how I could get put to sleep, but no answer. No one takes that seriously, but God showed me everything that “I” did, that “I” built; I realized that out of everything “I” did, “I” wasn’t praying or seeking the kingdom of Heaven like I should, so I am still getting in God’s way. My mom told me a long time ago that I would never serve God completely until I experienced being poor. I said that could never happen because at that time my money tank was on “full.” When will one truly give it all to God? When will we let God do what He does? When will I stop making a mess out of God’s work? Each time I fall in the mud, God reaches down, picks me up, and holds me with all that mud on me, saying, “I love you, Darrell.”

When my mom passed, I stopped taking my high blood pressure medication. I was hoping I would die. When I got to DeSoto they called me to the clinic to see how I was doing. They did some blood work and other tests. I went to see the doctor for the results and she said, “Darrell, you are one of the healthiest guys on this compound. I am going to take you off your blood pressure medication because your blood work is beautiful; any questions?” I had to tell her what I did and what I was hoping; then I told her about God and why I was feeling like that. She confirmed and told me that God is the real doctor and she’s only His servant, but it is good to believe. Tears fell from my eyes and I said, “Thank you; I can’t do anything without Him.” She said, “There is only one set of footprints in the sand; go and let God carry you on.” That night I got a letter from the Evans family and a couple days later the newsletter from Inspiration came. God showed me I have more brothers and sisters that love me than I can ever count. Trust in God our Savior and have faith; He is willing only if we let Him. We will always have someone to talk to if we only stop making a mess out of God’s work.

Not in Word – But Power

by Rigdel De Lardilles, ACC

For our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction; just as you know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake. 1 Thessalonians 1:5

The word used here for power (*dunamis*) is where our word “dynamite” derives from. Paul gives a compelling argument to believers of why we live unto the Lord. The reason is others. Since we serve a living God, we should also manifest His life in everything we do – an explosive life, a dynamic life – and in this is the evidence or proof that we belong to Christ, mainly that it is His life, not ours. Be inspired to serve Him and others in all you do.

THE LANGUAGE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

by Christopher Bachmann, ACC



During our last time together, we learned the Holy Spirit loves to communicate. He likewise loves it when we speak and pray in **His** language. This is possible because He provides us with a language that no one but God understands. “For one who speaks in an unknown tongue speaks not to men, but to God, for no one understands him...” (1 Corinthians 14:2).

Now, before you feed your doubts, think about this. He provided all of us with a language; the Spanish have theirs, the German have theirs, the French have theirs, the English have theirs, etc. It’s really quite simple. The God who created us and gave us our language simply has one of His own. This is important because it is the Holy Spirit who changes you. We do not change ourselves; it is our experiences with Him that create the difference in our conduct, our behavior, and even the words that flow from our mouth. So praise God for every encounter you have that sweeps you towards God’s presence!

I’ll never forget the first time I spoke in the Holy Spirit’s language. It was October 30, 1987. I was 6 months old in the Lord. I had just arrived at Butler C.I. to serve a 17 year prison sentence. After orientation I was released to the rec. yard. I didn’t feel like walking, so I sat on the slab underneath the pavilion and began reading my Bible. Within minutes, an inmate walked up and said, “Have you received the gift of the Holy Ghost since you believed?” “I’ve never heard of such a thing,” I responded. “Well, the Lord sent me to baptize you in His Spirit.” “If the Lord has sent you to give me something, then I want all that He has for me,” I replied. He instructed me to stand and praise God; I did as instructed. He then put his hand upon me and immediately I began speaking in a language I had neither heard nor spoken before. I knew from the moment of conception that I had received a supernatural gift from God. It was like I was speaking directly to God in His own language.

Since then, I have searched and discovered many qualities of this “unknown tongue” that are rewarding and apply to different situations. For example, when the Holy Spirit came on the day of Pentecost, He provided a language that was unknown only to those who were speaking it! Others around them understood because the Holy Spirit was providing an opportunity for the Gospel to be heard in other languages. “The multitude came together, and were astonished, because everyone heard them speaking in his own language. They all marveled and said to one another, ‘Are not all these Galileans? How is it that we hear, each in our own language in which we were born?’” (Acts 2:6-8). Yet, Peter and the others who were speaking did not understand what they were saying. This was **not** the gift of “unknown tongues,” but rather the Holy Spirit using another (known) language to confirm His presence among them.

You see, an “unknown tongue” is just that: unknown. It is not an earthly language. In fact, the Apostle Paul spoke in tongues and clearly made a distinction between the two. “If I can speak in the tongues of men (our earthly language) and even tongues of angels (a Heavenly language)...” (1 Corinthians 13:1). If anyone recognized and understood the benefits associated with speaking in an unknown tongue or Heavenly language, it would be Paul. Here’s what the Holy Spirit revealed to him (1 Corinthians 14). Tongues are spoken to God (v. 2); tongues enable one to speak in God’s language (v. 2-4); tongues edify and build up the speaker (v. 4); the human spirit of the speaker is the thing edified by tongues (v. 4-5; 14-15); tongues are a great personal blessing (v. 18); tongues are a sign to unbelievers (v. 21-22); and lastly, he instructed the church **not** to forbid or hinder anyone from speaking in an unknown tongue (v. 39)! Tongues are a gift from the Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:7-11).

Paul wasn’t the only one who acknowledged the benefits of speaking in an unknown tongue. Brother Jude knew also, and adds an extra benefit, “Beloved, build yourselves up on your most holy **faith**, praying **in** the Holy Spirit” (Jude 20). This is essential because our victories depend on our faith.

This was so important to the early church that they expected all believers to receive it and saw to it that they got it (see Acts 1:2-5; 2:1-39; 8:12-18; 10:34-47; 11:1-17; 19:1-6). The Holy Spirit hasn’t changed – remember He is the same yesterday, today, and forever (Heb. 13:8) – but our understanding has! According to Scripture, the gifts and calling of God are irrevocable (Romans 11:29). God does not change His mind as if He made a mistake. The gifts He lavished upon the early church are the same gifts He longs to give us today. If you desire His gift, simply ask in faith (Luke 11:9-13), and you too can experience the supernatural phenomenon of speaking in the language of the Holy Spirit. God Bless!

Life Changing Grace

James Summers, ACC

Today I had a young man ask me what I thought his purpose is. Without hesitating I said, “To serve the Lord.” Sure I know that sounds like just another typical answer, but oh so true. Most people are so busy looking for some far out, watered down, complicated answer that the obvious answer is often overlooked.

I feel that once we accept the Lord into our hearts and let Him lead us, He will place us in the position to understand **His** will for our lives. He **will** teach us to **fully** depend on Him and enable us to be an extension of His love; that is by all means “life changing.”

Why do you think almost all testimonies have the same foundation? Because the truth is, most search for all kinds of different worldly ways to fill the void that we never understand until Jesus takes His proper place in our hearts. So I encourage you to not get tied up in second guessing your true purpose or trying to fill a void that can only be filled by one thing, which is the love of Christ and the Gospel that has an everlasting affect on sinners’ lives.