



Christian Ambassadors, Inc.

My Brother's Keeper

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GROWING on the WORD

A scripture study

The Word of God is the source of light, truth, and power, for those who seek it's meaning and apply it to their life. Jesus Christ is the word made flesh, and we seek to follow him.

John 8:12 (NIV) - "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

Each issue of "My Brother's Keeper" features a WORD study. This issue's Word Study is from Roy W. Roberts, an inmate at Idaho Department of Corrections, Boise, Idaho.

What Is The Desire Of Your Heart?

By Roy W. Roberts

Psalm 37:1-4 (KJV) *Fret not thyself because of evildoers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity. For they shall soon*

be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb. Trust in the LORD, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed. Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.

God will give us the desires of our heart. Okay, what does our heart desire? Right off the top of my head I can think of a lot of things I desire, starting with a Gold Seal! But then there are a lot of other things I could name, such as: a car, a house, a boat, a pickup, money, etc. The list could go on. But, are we looking at temporal things or eternal things?

First of all, lets look at mankind in general. Most men and women today put their hope, trust, and heart into what they can see, touch, or imagine in their mind. I say this, because the material things are what they desire. They desire new things they see in advertisements, items they can touch, fondle and admire. They even desire things that haven't been made yet, but promise to make life easier when invented.

Mankind has become entirely infatuated with the things of this world. These things include money, cars, houses, boats, education, and over self-indulgence of them all.

Now, on the other hand, lets look at some of the desires that God has for our lives.

God desires Obedience.

I Peter 1:13-16 (KJV) - *Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.*

This is a commandment that came from God to the Israelites (See Leviticus 20:7). As followers of God we must also take heed to this commandment. To be holy means to be separated from the world. If we look like the world, act like the world, talk like the world, walk like the world, and dress like the world, we are the world!

We must be obedient to the Word of God and be holy. Paul, writing to the Corinthians says,

II Corinthians 2:9 (KJV) - *For to this end also did I write, that I might know the proof of you, whether ye be obedient in all things.*

What is Paul saying here? Can we shirk our duty and be disobedient if we want to be holy? "Well Lord, I know you want me to witness to the man who is on his death bed, but I'll do it tomorrow."

Wrong! What if he dies in the night and his only hope of salvation was you? We must be obedient in all things and at all times. This is God's desire for us.

We must also be obedient to the faith. What faith? Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Why?

Romans 1:5 (KJV) - *By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name.*

If we do not have faith in Jesus, nor the name of Jesus, then our faith is in vain.

Acts 4:12 (KJV) - *Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.*

The name of Jesus is above every name;

Ephesians 1:21 (KJV) - *Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come:*

The name of Jesus is the key to life! **Colossians 3:17** puts it this way,

And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.

If we do not have faith in Jesus or His name, then we have no faith in God. We can't be thankful or grateful, because all is vanity; and all our works will be vain.

God desires we have a broken heart and a contrite spirit.

Turning to the Book of Psalm, David gives us another jewel to hold on to.

Psalm 34:18 (KJV) - *The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken*

heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.

This is just a short verse, but oh what a gem! How can we please God when our heart is high and lifted up with pride and haughtiness? If we are so self-centered that there is no room for brokenness, then how can God use us? How can we please Him? How can we be saved? He can't and neither can we! David said it all after his confession with Bathsheba:

Psalm 51:17 (KJV) - *The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.*

We must meet God on His terms, not ours.

God desires we have faithfulness.

Matthew 24:45-47 (KJV) - *Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. Verily I say unto you, that he shall make him ruler over all his goods.*

If we are God's children then we are stewards of what He has given us. We are stewards of our faith, stewards of our actions, stewards of our speech, and stewards of how we act around the people of the world. Paul states,

I Corinthians 4:2 (KJV) - *Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.*

What is this? We can't be a steward without being faithful? How does that grab you? I believe that says it all! If we can't be faithful, we can't be stewards; if we can't be stewards, we can't be saved, because we have no faith in God. Oh, but look at this:

Galatians 3:9 (KJV) - *So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham.*

If we are faithful, we will be blessed as Abraham was blessed. In the book of Hebrews, Paul states,

Hebrews 11:6 (KJV) - *But without faith it is impossible to please him [God]: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.*

And, in **Hebrews 11:8** -

By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. [emphasis mine]

Do you see how these items all intertwine with each other? To please God, and to have His desires, you can't have one without the other. To be obedient, you must not only have faith, but to come to faith, you must have a broken spirit and a broken and contrite heart. This is only the tip of the iceberg that God desires for us. Lets look at some more.

God desires we have the mind of Christ.

Philippians 2:5-8 (KJV) - *Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.*

See, it all boils down to this; no matter what we desire, if it is not what God desires, it is not doing us

any good anyway. We must be obedient to what God desires for us.

God desires we have a sound mind.

II Timothy 1:7 (KJV) - For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

If we are without God, if we are not faithful or obedient, we do not possess a sound mind. God desires for His people to have a sound mind. If you have fear in your life, and you are a Christian, then take a scanner check on your life. Repent and come back to a sound mind and obedience to God.

God desires we have love.

This is a big one. Jesus said,

Matthew 22:37-40 (KJV) - Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

Again we see that Jesus desires for us to love God and our neighbors as ourselves. Who is our neighbor? The man in the next bunk, the guy on the yard no one likes, the man who is in here on a despicable crime, whoever you come in contact with; this is your neighbor.

Jesus says,

John 13:34 (KJV) - A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.

Jesus can work with and through love; but, when there is hatred or stubbornness, or pride, or resentment in someone's life, that acts as a plug and God cannot move as freely as He

wishes, because we have hindered Him.

Pauls says it this way,

I Corinthians 13:13 (KJV) - And now abideth faith, hope, charity [love], these three; but the greatest of these is charity [love].

You see it doesn't matter how much faith or hope we have, if we don't have love we have nothing. Why? Because as John says,

I John 4:8 (KJV) - He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.

You see, if we don't know or have love, we do not know or have God in us. Proverbs tells us,

Proverbs 10:12 (KJV) - Hatred stirreth up strifes: but love covereth all sins.

In other words, without love we are very miserable, wretched and poor, because we don't know Christ as our Savior.

These are just some of God's desires for our lives. Our desires should be the same as God's desires for us. Then we will receive the desires of our hearts. So in all actuality, what should our desires be? Should they be temporal or eternal, spiritual or carnal?

I know that after studying and looking into this subject of our heart's desires, I'm changing mine. It might take a while, but I want what God wants. That is what truly counts. You see, if I can put God's desires in my heart, then I can please Him wholly. Then and only then can I truly receive the desires of my heart. I'm learning that God's desires are first and foremost in my life. Above all, my heart's desire is to please Him. To do that, I must have His desires in place of mine.

Jesus tells us the way it should be in Matthew,

Matthew 6:33 (KJV) - But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

In other words, God knows what we want, but unless we put God first, they are nothing. If we don't have God in our lives we are dead men. So brothers and sisters, lets get it right and seek God's desires for our heart. Amen.

There are many more references on God's desire for our lives. I have a few more listed here, if you want to look them up and see for yourselves.

Enjoy your studies,
your brother Roy.

Hope; I John 3:2-3; I Peter 1:18-21; Hebrews 11:1;

Pure Heart; Matthew 5:8; I Timothy 1:5; 2 Timothy 2:22

The Fruit of the Spirit; Galatians 5:22-26

Heavenly Armour; Ephesians 6:10-18

Thankful Spirit; I Thessalonians 5:16-23

Humbleness; 2 Chronicles 7:14

Watch; Luke 12:37



***A Chain Of Witnesses
Cry Out,
Come and See Jesus!***

By Sharon K. Griffiee

John 1:26-30 (Amplified Bible) – *John answered them, I [only] baptize in (with) water. Among you there stands One Whom you do not recognize and with whom you are not acquainted and of whom you know nothing. [Malachi. 3:1.]*

It is He Who, coming after me, is preferred before me, the string of whose sandal I am not worthy to unloose. These things occurred in Bethany (Bethabara) across the Jordan [at the Jordan crossing], where John was then baptizing.

The next day John saw Jesus coming to him and said, Look! There is the Lamb of God, Who takes away the sin of the world! [Exod. 12:3; Isa. 53:7.] This is He of Whom I said, after me comes a Man who has priority over me [Who takes rank above me] because He was before me and existed before I did.

The thing I love and respect about John the Baptist, the forerunner to Jesus, is that there was absolutely no jealousy in him. He was totally selfless. As soon as Jesus emerged on the scene, John began to encourage his disciples to leave him and follow Jesus. That, my friends, is a truly humble man, a man of strength and character. But that is the nature of true Christianity. It is following Jesus, devoting ourselves to Him; treading in His steps.

John did an excellent job. He had prepared his disciples well. His testimony was heartfelt, bold, and unwavering; come one, come all, just

“Come and see” Jesus! The personal testimonies about Jesus began to spread. It started when John pointed Andrew to Christ.

And what did Andrew do, but to go and find his brother Simon and tell him, “We have found the Messiah” (that is, the Christ), John 1:41. Wow! The good news traveled quickly. It couldn't be held back. That's the way it is with personal evangelism, it creates a chain of witnesses as one person tells another one. It is no different with us. Just as it was with the early disciples, those who know the Savior, have the burning desire to tell others. We have the opportunity to continue the chain of witnesses.

We must not forget the valuable lessons we can learn from studying the behavior of the early disciples. It is beneficial for us to go back in time, to reflect on an incident when the Savior walked the earth. While Jesus was traveling north to Galilee He found Philip and said to him, “Follow me” (John 1:43). We don't know how much personal preparation Philip might have experienced, but one thing is certain; Philip trusted Jesus and was ready to follow Him. In fact, he was so ready; he couldn't keep the good news to himself. He proved his faithfulness to Jesus by seeking to share his faith with his friend Nathanael.

John 1:45 (NIV) – *Philip found Nathanael and told him, “We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.”*

However, when Philip told Nathanael he had found the long promised Messiah, in Jesus, the man from Nazareth, he was met with opposition. Nathanael's prejudices began to show.

John 1:46 (NIV) – *“Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?” Nathanael asked.*

There was no way that Nathanael was going to believe that the Chosen One would come from an undistinguished place like Nazareth. It was no secret that amongst the towns and villages, there was plenty of jealousy and rivalry going on. Nathanael's human blindness would not allow Him to see any greatness in a local boy, who grew up so close to home.

Philip once again proved his faithfulness to Jesus, by the wise response he made. Rather than spending a lot of time arguing with Nathanael, he simply said,

“Come and see!”

If the truth is to be known, not many people have been argued into becoming a Christian. Arguing our points to the Nth degree may actually do more harm than good. Why? Knowledge alone is not enough. The Apostle Paul gives us a clear picture of what knowledge alone can do. First, let us go to the Amplified Bible:

1 Corinthians 8:1b (Amplified Bible) – *Yet [mere] knowledge causes people to be puffed up (to bear themselves loftily and be proud), but love (affection and goodwill and benevolence) edifies and builds up and encourages one to grow [to his full stature].*

Knowing where all the juicy scripture passages are to be found just doesn't cut it, if our response is not tempered with the love of God. As we go to the New International Version, it simply says,

I Corinthians 8:1b-3 (NIV) – Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up. The man who thinks he knows something does not yet know, as he ought to know. But the man who loves God is known by God.

Loving God and being known by God is the key to winning those who are genuinely seeking. Clever arguments will not touch a man's heart. Arguments do not go down into the core, the very center of a man's heart where it counts, where it can take root. Make no mistake, anyone who is genuinely seeking Christ, will see through the fine-sounding arguments (See: Colossians 2:4-5, NIV).

It is the cross and the simple love of Christ that captures a man's heart, that encourages him to grow to his full stature. In a recent letter an inmate who has experienced hell on earth, like so many others behind bars, shared his heartfelt gratitude to the Savior of the world,

"I thank God for letting me know that He was always there, all I had to do was to open the door [of my heart] and accept Him. Thank you, Jesus!"

Yes! Thank you, Jesus! We need only to open the door of our heart to satisfy our deepest longing. As we open our heart, we find one by one, the spiritual treasures we have been missing. It is in the person of Christ Jesus where all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden (See: Colossians 2:3).

If there is to be any argument about whether anything good can come from Nazareth, the best argument is to say to people,

"Come and See!"

Because the disciple Philip knew and loved Jesus personally, he enjoyed the freedom to invite his friend

Nathanael to "come and see" Jesus for himself.

When Nathanael came to Jesus, he was in for a shock! He discovered that Jesus already knew all about him.

John 1:47-50 (NIV) – When Jesus saw Nathanael approaching, he said of him, "Here is a true Israelite, in whom there is nothing false."

"How do you know me?" Nathanael asked. Jesus answered, "I saw you while you were still under the fig tree before Philip called you."

Then Nathanael declared, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God; you are the King of Israel."

Jesus said, "You believe because I told you I saw you under the fig tree. You shall see greater things than that."

When Jesus revealed to Nathanael, where he had been and what he had been doing, that was enough to convince him, to touch him to the very core. He knew that Jesus was indeed the Son of God, the King of Israel. Nathanael's experience was similar to the Samaritan woman at the well,

John 4:29 (KJV) – Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?

The Apostle Paul continued the chain of witnesses throughout his life, even while he was in prison. The spread of the gospel of Jesus Christ was top priority for him, regardless of his imprisonment. His call for prayers reflected his desire to tell others about Jesus.

Ephesians 6:19-20 (NIV) – Pray also for me, that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am

an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should.

As we enter into the New Year of 2007, new opportunities will arise to share the good news. Jesus reveals that those who are sincerely seeking will hear the message.

Mark 4:9 (NIV) – Then Jesus said, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear."

Will you seize the opportunities? Be a part of the fearless chain of witnesses that cry out, "**Come and See Jesus!**"



Sharing the Good News

"We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God..."

II Corinthians 5:20-21

**From: Jonathan Faggins,
Northern State Prison
Newark, New Jersey**

Dear Sharon and Alan Griffie, I am writing to you because I want to thank you very much for sending me your newsletter. It has been helpful and a blessing. I have been getting it for three years and I enjoyed every issue.

I am writing to tell you to take my name off of your mailing list, not

because I don't want it anymore, but because I am getting released in two weeks and I don't want you to waste stamps sending me something I won't receive. As of now I don't know where I will live when I get out, probably a homeless shelter until I can get a job and start paying rent.

I ask that you keep me in your prayers, because I do not want to return to prison. I know without God's help I will not make it on the outside. I accepted Jesus Christ as my personal Lord and Savior and I have repented for my past sins.

Again I want to thank you for your newsletters. It was the best mail I was getting. God Bless you all. Love your brother in Christ, Jonathan.

**From: David Todeschini,
Former Inmate, Merrick, NY**

Dear Sharon and Alan, I know it has been a while, but I have been very busy with my own ministry. There are lost souls out there looking for the truth, and I have to commend you on a tireless effort doing the Lord's work. We deal in both truth and reality here, and the Bible says that in the last days, people will "*willingly be ignorant*" (**II Peter 3**). Dear friends, truer words were never written or spoken. Evil is all around us, and Satan is thrashing around in the bushes because he knows his time is very short.

I continue to read your newsletters, and if there is one thing I truly miss about being "inside", it is the true Christian fellowship one can only find under such adverse conditions.

Genesis 50:20 is my strength, because my dear friends, even though people will plot evil against those who God calls His children, in the end ALL things work together for good for them that love Him

(**Romans 8:28**). Once you know in your heart that this life is NOT all there is, there is NOTHING that people can do to intimidate you or shake your faith - but getting to that point requires some doing. And God knows what He's doing. He takes care of His own.

I am happy I could be a part of your ministry with the articles and letters from me that you have published. Yes, the harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. I encourage those who are reading this newsletter to NOT keep it to yourself. Spread it around amongst your friends, AND your "enemies". You will be surprised what God's Word can do. All you have to do is allow yourself to become a vessel of His peace. God-speed, Brother David Todeschini.

**From: Granville, Irby,
Tyger River Correctional,
Enoree, South Carolina**

Dear Sharon, Greetings to you and Alan in the precious name of Jesus. I was transferred to Tyger River for nine weeks. The program is called S.P.I.C.E, which means, Self Paced In Class Education. It also teaches us physical, spiritual, and vocational life skills, so when we get out we can fit in [to society]. God has brought me this far, He has a plan for me, and what ever it is I'm all His.

Sharon I want you to know that you and Alan have been my spiritual mentors. Thank you both for all you have done for all who want to live for Christ. And, I want you to know that no matter where I go, I will keep in touch with you. Never in my life have I met people who show so much love of Christ to others, even when you never met us face to face. But, yet you took the time and responded

to me. I no longer feel like I'm in this world alone.

Christ has shown me, through you and Alan, that God does care about His children. Thank you and God Bless you and all that you do for others. I will always keep you in my prayers. I will let you know what's happening with me, but until then, I will keep studying and living for God.

Psalm 90:12 (NIV) – "Teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain a heart of wisdom."

In Christ's Love, Granville

**From: Jeff Lane,
California Colony State Prison,
San Luis Obispo, California**

Dear Sister Sharon K. Griffie, First and foremost, I want to send my utmost respect to you in full, to your husband, brother Alan, and to everyone in Christian Ambassadors.

You really know how to shoot that "Word" to folks. It's like, you've been there, done that. You know the things us convicts have gone through to become convicts, and you also see how we strive to become more like Jesus. Just by the way you sling the "Word" to people tells me you know the "Game". And I glorify our Lord and Savior for giving you the knowledge, wisdom and understanding to put it out there for us, so people like me can grasp hold of it. And, to really let it sink in and take root in our hearts, minds, body and soul.

I can truly say through the things you shot me, and the testimonies of the brothers and sisters, that you just helped the Lord to water my source, to grow deeper within my soul of my root in Jesus Christ. I have looked

into my life real hard. And, like you said, He gave me a choice to choose. I'm going to give thanks and praise to Jesus Christ the rest of my Christian life. I can't be no half-stepper no more. It's got to be all the way with me. I can't afford to play with my life, let alone my salvation any longer.

I'd like to continue to stay on your mailing list when I get out, and find a good church to go to; live the life the Bible tells me to live. God Bless you continually. Your brother in Christ, Jeffrey.

**From: Gary Waskul,
Avenal State Prison
Avenal, California**

Dear Sharon K., and everyone at Christian Ambassadors, Thank you so much for putting me on your mailing list. Your stuff is great. Your doctrine is right on and I respect highly what you do for us who are in prison.

I have a great relationship with our Lord. Jesus saved me - He saved my life when I was in the hospital. The doctors and nurses couldn't stabilize me for surgery. They were going to do surgery, even though my blood was full of poison and my pancreas and gall bladder were filling my blood with bile and other bad stuff.

I remember being awakened by a nurse with forms to sign for the surgery. Even though I couldn't be stabilized they scheduled me for surgery anyway, because they couldn't just let me die.

After the nurse left the room, I prayed to the Father for help. Being in prison, my family had no idea that anything was going on, or that I was even in the hospital. My prayers were for God to save my life. I told Him

that I was too young to die, that I wanted to be around for long enough to make a huge difference.

After praying I found myself engulfed in a light that was so bright I couldn't keep my eyes open. My eyes began to water, and then tears started streaming out like a river. I felt the presence of God with me, and an [indescribable] sense of peace. I then passed out.

The next thing I knew, I was awakened with the nurses poking me for blood and to check my vitals. My blood work and vitals were all at

perfect levels. I wasn't in any pain. I

was completely healed 100%. A true miracle!

My vitals and blood are still perfect 1½ years later. The doctors are amazed. I'm a living testimony that God is alive and well. I'm now shooting for living at least 120 years. ☺ I have so much work to do for God the Father, Jesus Christ His Son, and the Holy Spirit. I'll get out of prison in 2012. I have great plans in Christ. I truly love God. I have changed from my own "Saul" to "Paul". God Bless you all, always in His Hands, Brother Gary Waskul.

My Alabaster Box

by Larry A. Thompson

*“There came unto Him a woman having an alabaster box of very precious ointment, and poured it on His Head, as He sat at meat.”
(Matthew 26:7)*

In my alabaster box are not ointments with sweet smelling scents, but rather, my hopes; my dreams; and my praises which I pray are acceptable unto my King.

In my alabaster box I've hidden the richest and deepest desires of my heart; storing them away in a place that He alone is worthy to look; keeping them safely away from the grasps of my own selfishness; insuring that they will be protected from any, and all, who would dare to abuse them, or diminish their true value.

In my alabaster box are all the prayers that I've yet to utter, patiently waiting to pass through my lips; all the songs of hope that I long to sing are blending their sweet harmonies together, biding their time; all of my love is restored, restlessly awaiting to be redistributed by the hand of The Father.

In my alabaster box you'll find this truth; *“Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.”
(John 15:13 - KJV)*

That's what He has done for us; that's the love that is kept in my alabaster box.

In my alabaster box are the gifts of Peace, Joy, and the Love that I long to share with you. Won't you please join me, as I open my alabaster box?

My Alabaster Box, © Larry A. Thompson 2006

***A Memory and A Hope;
A Prayer and A Promise***

By Pastor Sheilah Rollins
Mercy Today Ministries
Canon City, Colorado

Psalm 126 (New American Standard Bible) – 1. *When the LORD brought the captive ones of Zion, we were like those who dream.*
2. *Then our mouth was filled with laughter, and our tongue with joyful shouting; then they said among the nations, "The LORD has done great things for them."*
3. *The LORD has done great things for us; we are glad.*
4. *Restore our captivity, O LORD, as the streams in the South.*
5. *Those who sow in tears shall reap with joyful shouting.* **6.** *He who goes to and fro weeping, carrying his bag of seed, shall indeed come again with a shout of joy, bringing his sheaves with him.*

Psalm 126 is a shining message of hope that God is able to deliver and restore. He has done it before and can do it again. "When the Lord brought back the captives..." This memory of Divine rescue and hope fulfilled in verse 1 can be an exciting possibility for anyone who has been, or is now a prisoner. It can bless your family with renewed hope for the mercy and provision of God in the life of your loved one. In the historical sense, this passage reflects the joyous memory of release from slavery in Egypt, with Moses; or the return home to Jerusalem for the Jewish captives of Babylon. In the present century, these words are a signpost of hope to all in prison today, as well as to their families who live in their own prisons of grief.

"We were like dreamers..." verse 1 continues. These captives had given up their dreams long ago. The harsh realities of prison experience did not permit dreaming of the "what ifs". Divine miracles, or even the possibility of miracles, had long since been put away. Like the Israelite captives, many today live in this state of reality: "If GOD is alive, He doesn't think of me." Do you think this way?

But the miracle DID happen for the Israelites! The forgotten dream DID come into reality! "Our mouth was filled with laughter!" verse 2 states. "Our tongue with shouts of joy!" Amazing! God IS alive! He IS my deliverer! THEY DOUBTED JUST LIKE YOU DO, YET GOD HEARD!

In the time period of the conquest of Israel and in this region when captives were taken as slaves, they NEVER returned home! Therefore verse 3 states that everyone knew it was the LORD who helped them, who rescued them. HE only does great things; GREAT THINGS! Yes, we are glad! No one else could ever do such things!

Sometimes you and I need a great miracle like this in our lives. We know that only the Lord can help us. And so with this great history of God's rescue, verses 4-6 can be your prayer as you reflect upon the memory just described. This prayer can be at the heart of each prisoner, or each family still waiting for something to happen; for some longed-for dream to become reality.

Verse 4 begins the prayer [paraphrased], "Restore to us the years we were lost in captivity Oh God, as stream beds in the South." This refers to the desert dry creek beds before rainy season. Without rain, streambeds revert to nothing but sand. When the rainy season arrives,

torrents of water pour into all the dry places and life is renewed. Is this your dry season?

In Psalm 68:4 there is a reference to the Lord who, "rides through our deserts." This is a glorious picture of hope that the LORD Himself is WITH US in our desert TODAY!

We can pray for the glorious time of Restoration! Verse 4 speaks of water in the desert. This is the Spirit's provision of restoration, of joy and new life! God does this in the natural all over the globe. He is able to flood our lives with deliverance and destiny, with hope and with health. Yes, even into your dry ground!

English preacher, Charles Spurgeon, writes of verses 4-6 in Psalm 126 about the 'waiters', the 'workers', the 'weepers', and the 'winners'. Each of us can identify these roles in our own lives. In a sense we are all 'waiters' because everyone has experienced dry times in life. Vast numbers of people today live in captivity to pain, sickness, and poverty. Our nation holds millions of men and women in prison. Prison families at home suffer their own loss and years of waiting. So here in verse 4 is a prayer of hearts for release and restoration. As the old song goes: "It's me, it's me, O God, standing in the need of prayer."

God promises to hear and answer prayer. "Those who sow in tears shall reap with shouts of joy." (verse 5). Perhaps you are a 'worker', sowing seeds of mercy; or planting the Word of God in prisons, 'weeping' for the lost. Maybe you are a mother or father sowing hope into a hopeless situation. Are you sowing your faith in God and His mighty love into lives that have rejected Him? If you are doing so, then verse 6 describes you

who go 'to and fro' weeping and carrying the precious bag of seed! You will surely return with joy! Do you see that the continuous watering of tears upon God's promises [your seed] will result in a SURE HARVEST?

The scene is like a plowed field. The Sower goes up and down the rows, making sure there is seed in each row, PRAYING FOR A BLESSED HARVEST; perhaps even weeping with sorrow, as the very seed he plants may have been the ONLY WORD OF GOD this family had to live on! Yes, many times in trusting the Lord, we weep as we sow.

In his earthly life Jesus was a 'weeper'. Remember his tears over the lost of Jerusalem, "*O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, ...How I longed to gather you like a mother hen gathers her little ones...but you would not.*" Jesus wanted to comfort broken people. He wept over their pain, their losses and suffering. He wept over his friend Lazarus. He understands broken hearts, including yours. Isaiah says, "*He was oppressed and afflicted,*" just as your loved one in prison is oppressed and afflicted.

You are a 'waiter', a 'worker' and a 'weeper'. Will you also be a 'winner' in Jesus? Verse 6 promises we SHALL bring in the sheaves; we SHALL be 'winners' of the harvest. We will come home again to ZION, to Heaven, but this time filled with JOY!

Choose now to believe the promises of God; to trust Him even through your pain. The time of JOY WILL COME! Are you convinced? Some doubt God's power or His Will to change their painful circumstance.

Healing impossible? If this is your thought, consider this; God's Word is LIVING WORD. In the sense of SEED, each word is a container of

unseen life with all its glorious possibilities. Just as God has given us the reality of seedtime and harvest time in this life, His Word contains even greater yield because it is alive with His Spirit. Jesus said, "*My words are Spirit and Life.*" John 6:63b. Therefore, let us be confident in sowing His seed; His words of promise, hope, destiny, into whatever soil He has given. Sow and weep, and TRUST GOD FOR THE HARVEST.

Remember as you sow, that it is Jesus within you, by His Spirit who sows, weeps, plants, and waits.

Jesus was a "*Man of Sorrows...acquainted with grief*", as Isaiah 53:3 tells us. Jesus is ever living "*to make intercession*" [pray] for us. [Hebrews 7:25b] He will be working your fields with you, and will bring in the harvest for which you pray.

God's peace be with you. You are in my prayers.

Blessings, Pastor Sheilah



Seeking And Craving

By Anthony E. McAfee Sr.

People, all people, spend their entire lives seeking and craving something.

Some seek and crave wealth, mansions, cars, land, jewels, antiques, and things.

Others seek and crave any and everything that they think will enhance their physical and mental attributes, such as: running/jogging, working out, eating this and not that, reading certain kinds of books, listening to all types of self-help tapes and videos, and joining different types of clubs, cults, religions.

Me, well I am no different, because there is one attribute of this blessed life that I seek and crave with my entire being. And I thank God above, because this attribute fills every area of my life with the sweet essence of His Agape Love; for it is His love that makes me a complete Man of God.

I only seek and crave to serve, obey, praise, and worship God with all that is within me, and to abound in His love toward others for all of eternity.

(I John 4:9-12; I Thessalonians 3:12)

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