



Christian Ambassadors, Inc.

My Brother's Keeper

Volume 13, Number 2, April-June, 2008

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 Sharon K. Griffiee, Co-founder of CA and Director of Spiritual Growth Ministries.

A Divine Call – Lazarus Come Forth!

By Sharon K. Griffiee

What does the account of the raising of a dead man 2000 years ago have to do with us? Unless, of course, it contains something of eternal value; **which it does!** Within the story of Lazarus is a timeless gem. It centers,

not so much on what Jesus did, but what Jesus does!

During Jesus’ public ministry he became very close to Mary and Martha and their brother Lazarus. When Lazarus became gravely ill the sisters sent a message to Jesus saying, “Lord, the one you love is sick.”

Upon hearing this news, the disciples seemed amazed that Jesus didn’t drop everything and hurry off to Lazarus’ bedside. Instead, He handled the news with calmness. Jesus never allowed Himself to be pressured by others into a hasty response. When He took action, it was on His own initiative, in His own good time. He stayed where he was for two more days before He set out with the twelve disciples for Bethany.

When they arrived, Lazarus was dead and had already been buried. But, from the moment the messenger came to him, Jesus seems to have taken it for granted that Lazarus would be raised by the power of God. Upon their arrival, Martha immediately rushed out to meet Jesus.

John 11:21-28 (KJV) - *Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee. Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again. Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the*

resurrection at the last day. Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this? She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world. And when she had so said, she went her way, and called Mary her sister secretly, saying, The Master is come, and calleth for thee.

John 11:32-44 (KJV) - *Then when Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw him, she fell down at his feet, saying unto him, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled And said, Where have ye laid him? They said unto him, Lord, come and see. Jesus wept. Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him! And some of them said, Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died? Jesus therefore again groaning in himself cometh to the grave. It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it. Jesus said, Take ye away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto him, Lord, by this time he stin-keth: for he hath been dead four days. Jesus saith unto her, “Said I*

not unto thee, that, if thou wouldst believe, thou shouldst see the glory of God?" Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, "Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me." And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth." And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go.

Although Lazarus was dead to this world and to his sisters and friends for those four days, his spirit lived somewhere. Otherwise his coming forth would have been a new creation. But, this was not the case. The Lazarus who came forth from the cave (tomb) was the very same brother Mary and Martha had loved and who was a dear friend of Jesus. Lazarus' body had died, but his spirit had not stopped existing. When the spirit and the body were reunited, Lazarus' body came alive and came forth to live out his natural life.

This incident is a living testimony that spiritual life goes on after physical death. It is interesting to note that the Sadducees of Jesus day refused to believe in life after death. Though the Pharisees and a majority of the Jews did believe.

Although Lazarus had been *raised* from the dead, he was still subject to a natural, physical death. He had not been *resurrected* in the sense that Jesus would be resurrected a short time later. His spirit had simply been restored to his mortal body. Lazarus had no power within himself to raise himself from the dead. But, **Praise**

God, his spirit had the ability to hear and to obey the divine call of Jesus; "**Lazarus come forth!**"

On the other hand, when Jesus came forth, He did so of himself. He said;

John 10:17b-18 (KJV) – "... I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father."

Jesus is the only one strong enough to go into the house of death and bind the master of the house and liberate those held prisoner. Jesus said;

Matthew 12:28-29 (KJV) - But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you. Or else how can one enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man? and then he will spoil his house. (see also, Col. 2:15)

The raising of Lazarus is thought by many people to be the greatest miracle performed by Jesus during his earthly ministry. The miracle was intensified by the long delay of Jesus' arrival. Lazarus had been dead for four days. His body had begun to decay and stink.

Think about what Jesus had to deal with. Upon His arrival He found the mourners in deep sorrow. They had entered into the first phase of deep mourning, which generally lasted about seven days. Typically the first three days were spent doing nothing but weeping. It was a popular held belief that the soul and the body were finally separated after three days, with no hope of resuscitation. Jesus showed his respect to the gathered mourners by comforting them. As Scripture states, **Jesus Wept!** (John 11:35) He was touched by their tender feelings, knowing they were un-

aware of what He was about to do; turn their sorrow into joy.

The raising of Lazarus was a miracle that surpassed any possibility of rational explanation. One thing is certain. The event forced a decision on the bystanders; to *believe* or to *disbelieve*.

No wonder **Jesus groaned in the spirit** when He met the mourners. Every ounce of His being was consumed with the seriousness of the present circumstances, as well as the immediate future. His earthly ministry was coming to an end and the people were not yet convinced. This was it! He needed to convince the people who had assembled at the cave, that the Father had sent him. **It was crucial that He show God's glory** to the entire world through the final events of His ministry; a ministry which was swiftly headed toward the cross. As Jesus purposefully stated to His disciples upon hearing the news of Lazarus' illness;

John 11:4 (KJV) - This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.

It is one thing to believe that Jesus has the power to raise us up on the last day. Mary and Martha both believed that. But it is something else to believe that Jesus has the power to **call forth the higher self**, which is buried within each of us.

When Jesus called, "**Lazarus come forth,**" this was symbolic of the gospel call to all of us; by which our dead souls may be brought out of the grave of sin. When the stone is taken away, and our prejudices are removed, the way is prepared for the Word of God to enter our hearts. Jesus demonstrated through the raising of Lazarus, that His power to bring life has no limits. That

same power is available to us now!

John 11:40 (KJV) – “Said I not unto thee, that, **if thou wouldst believe, thou shouldst see the glory of God?**” [emphasis mine]



Are You Ready To Meet God?

By Eva Fry
Valley Center, California

II Corinthians 5:10 (NIV) - *For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.*

Are you ready to meet God? This thought came to me with great impact. It was as if God was talking directly to me. Upon serious reflection I came to the realization that I was not prepared. If I died tomorrow, I would have to go dragging and kicking my feet, yelling, “I’m not ready!”

There is so much I still need to do and so many changes I need to make. When it is my time to go, I want to be ready. I want to go in peace. I want to go satisfied that I did my best. I want to know I accomplished the things I knew were important; but more importantly, I want to know I accomplished the

things God sent me here to do. When I get on the other side, it will be too late.

I seriously contemplated what would make me ready to meet God. These are the questions I have asked myself since, and the things I am working on.

1 Are all of my relationships complete? Do my husband, children, and loved ones know I really love them? Do I say and show I love them enough? Do I care enough for them and understand them enough? Do I help them enough? Am I kind enough to them? Do I make them know how important they are to me? Do I spend enough time with them? When I die, would my family feel at peace with how they feel toward me, or would I leave them yearning for something I didn’t give them? Would I leave behind family members with empty spaces in their hearts that I could have filled?

2 Would I leave any unfinished business behind? Have I really forgiven all those I needed to forgive? Am I holding any grudges? Have I made peace with those I needed to make peace with?

3 Have I asked forgiveness of those I hurt? When I leave will there be those who will have ill will toward me, because I didn’t fix the things I should have fixed?

4 Did I reach my own potential? Did I try everything I could and put a serious effort into the things

I felt inspired to do? Would I feel satisfied and fulfilled with the life I would leave behind?

5 Did I care for others, as I should have? Would I be happy with the service I gave to others or would I regret that I could have done more?

6 More importantly, was I pure and clean and filled with God’s loving Spirit? Could I stand before the Lord blameless because I obeyed His commandments, asked forgiveness when I needed to and made up for mistakes? Did I really know my Father-in-Heaven and my Savior Jesus Christ? Was I like them?

7 Did I share His wonderful Gospel with my brothers and sisters? Did I do what the Savior asked, “Feed my sheep?” When I pass over, will there be those thanking me for what I did for them, or will I pass alone?

I am so thankful for the inspiration, “Are You Ready to Meet God?” We tend to forget that one day we will pass on and it could be today or tomorrow. I am trying to prepare myself for that event so it will be Glorious, not one I will regret or be ashamed of.



***Whenever You Fall,
Just Get Back Up***

By Merissa Lee Kelley
Newport News, Virginia

Writing this poem was a "pep talk" to myself. It's very important to remember that when you fall...there is a difference in the way God "deals" with you about it and the way the enemy "attacks" you about it. God sent the Holy Spirit to counsel and comfort us. But He also convicts us when we are behaving wrong. The convicting power of the Holy Spirit is not negative or condemning. It is a sense of urgency...a "quickening" in your spirit that is placed there to get your attention. Sort of like a "red flag" waving, ***"Get off the track, Danger ahead...A train is headed your way!"***

We are so blessed that the Holy Spirit hears the "train whistle" long before we do...and consistently urges us to mend our ways. It's crucial to heed the wisdom that the Holy Spirit is trying to impart...it will keep us balanced. It's when we tune Him out that our balance gets shaky and we're more apt to fall.

However, the tactic the enemy uses is completely opposite. His weapons are condemnation, regrets and guilt...and he can wield them like a sledgehammer. His purpose is to get you so mired down in feeling like a failure when you fall...that you will not have the strength to get back up. He can literally try to place a "spirit of heaviness" on you that weights you down. He delights when people "throw in the towel" so to speak...so he can gloat, mission accomplished.

We need to be as determined to succeed in our mission, as he is trying to get us to fail. Feelings are fickle, subject to change, based on the emotional state you are in at the moment. They aren't based on fact and "feel

ing" like a failure doesn't mean you *are* a failure. Remember, we are more than conquerors through Christ Jesus! Put on the "garment of praise" that drives away the "spirit of heaviness" and keep on stepping!

Whenever You Fall...Just Get Back Up

By – Merissa Lee Kelly

Sometimes I feel like such a failure...cause I fall down everyday
I start each morning with good intentions...then get lost along the way
And then the guilt comes pressing in...to add it's dismal view
Shining a spotlight on what I've done or what I didn't do

Repent and get back on my feet is the only way to go
But it really seems in that regard...I'm moving awfully slow
Heart and mind in separate corners and neither wants to bend
My "flesh" is pushing retaliation...while my spirit seeks to mend

Two steps forward and three steps back...what kind of dance is that?
It feels more like a boxing round and I'm thrown to the mat
So here I am...at odds with me...which gives my head a spin
Cause a double-minded team of one...is a team that will not win

Condemnation rears it's head and although I'm well aware
That it's a weapon formed against me...I still feel such despair
And here I go again, dear Lord, falling on my face
Counting all my numerous flaws...instead of seeking grace

This position is not strategic...it's a bitter, wretched cup
No matter how many times you fall...you've got to get back up
Staying down is not an option, if you do...the race is lost
Giving up before you finish...just isn't worth the cost

Day by day...step by step...He journeys by your side
Everyday His mercy is new, to strengthen and to guide
You're not a failure when you fall...you fail when you believe
The lies the enemy conjures up...for his goal is to deceive

The depth of God's love perfectly matches each step you'll ever take
So don't get negative towards yourself...if you happen to make a mistake
Just get back up and keep your focus on the plan God has for you
His hand is always reaching down to help you start anew.

"No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us." Romans 8:37 (NIV)

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: David K.
Collins Correctional
Collins, New York**

Dear Sharon, Greetings in the mighty and matchless name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, our soon coming King.

My time here is coming to an end. Glory be to God. I am appreciative of you and your ministry for the rich and powerful words from heaven that you deposited into my life. I bless God for and pray that God will continue to bless and prosper you in every area of your life.

Thank you and God Bless. Servant of the most High, David.

**From: Robert C.
High Desert State Prison
Susanville, California**

Dear Sharon and Alan, I want to apprise you of my new address and thank you for “My Brother's Keeper. For years I have been struggling, but since receiving “My Brother's Keeper”, I find that my faith in God grows stronger each and every day. Thank you. You and Alan are in my prayers. Sincerely, Robert

**From: Anthony H.
New Folsom Correctional
Represa, California**

Dear Sister Griffee, May God render his most profound blessings upon you and your ministry. I received your “heartfelt” response letter and spiritual documents and I was very touched. Praise God!

As you should remember I am a “novice” Christian and I desperately wish to give my allegiance to Jesus. I am filled with gratitude that Jesus has shone mercy on my soul and redeemed me from hell and damnation based on His sacrificial offering on Calvary's hill. I personally believe that sometimes profound blessings can be manifest through suffering.

Anyway Sister Sharon, thank God for your beautiful ministry that will help lost sheep find their way! (Psalm 23). Sincerely, Anthony.

**From: Bette L.
Southern Nevada Correctional
Jean, Nevada**

Dear Christian Ambassadors, Alan and Sharon, I am so blessed to get your mailing each month. It is so uplifting to me.

I put God in my life eight years ago. And He has shown me so many things that are good. I have prayed and asked Him to open my eyes and ears. Since that day I see people differently. I thank God each day I stay away from a lot of the traps that Satan sets up. I just walk away from them. It makes him mad.

I have changed for the better! I thank God each day now before I get out of bed. I ask God to put his angels around me...and to help me walk so I don't fall. I feel God's love so much! When I pray I ask God to bless you all. Keep up the good work. God

blesses us in small ways and big. Sister Bette.

**From: Chris D.
Buckingham Correctional
Dillwyn, Virginia**

Dear Sharon, Praise God! He is worthy! If it was not for God's loving gift of His Son Jesus Christ, I would be condemned. But God is more loving and forgiving than my mind can ever comprehend. All I can do sometimes is just cry when He reveals how deep His love goes.

The entire reason that I decided to write is because of your last [Spiritual Growth] lesson, “Our Destiny - To Be Like Jesus”. Sharon you would never imagine how God used you to speak to me through that lesson! Thank you so much for your dedication to study, serve, and be used by the Holy Spirit. Because I want to assure you that God has definitely used you and He is with you.

As I sit here I can't believe myself how incredibly perfect the timing and your message has been to me this day. Thank you again Sharon. Please continue to be passionate to serve the Lord with all you got. We need you Sharon. Please pray for me to endure and resist temptation. Thank you my sister in Christ. God Bless you, Chris.

**From: Robbie M.
Perry Correctional Institute
Pelzer, South Carolina**

Dear Alan and Sharon, I want to let ya'll know that my love, blessings and prayers are with ya'll at all times. And I want to thank ya'll for the [spiritual growth] letter that I get every month.

As for the cancer, they say they got it all! So keep my family and me in your prayers.

I wanted to let ya'll know that "My Brother's Keeper" helps me out a lot! I want you and Alan to know that ya'll help me out with a lot of things.

So ya'll take care and may God Bless ya'll. My love and blessings are with ya'll. Your friend, Robbie.

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From: Mark D.
Fishkill Correctional Facility
Beacon, New York

Dear brothers and sisters, All I can say is wow! 2008 and I'm still alive and telling everyone about God's great love. I rang in the New Year at the emergency room. Now just a few days later I get my divine food from above, your newsletter [My Brother's Keeper].

When the Lord works in your life you will receive great and rich blessings. I have to say though, the devil has attacked. But because of your newsletter, I can stand on the solid rock! God has worked in my life greatly over the years to get me to this point. And I thank my Savior and all of you for the prayers.

Recently I read **Proverbs 15:21 (KJV)** - "Folly is joy to him that is destitute of wisdom: but a man of understanding walketh uprightly."

In my own words, "A man that walks in the world is on a loosing battle field, but a man who walks the way of the Lord is in victory." That's where I'm at now, victory bound! In our loving Savior's name, Mark.

=====
From: Joe H.
Territorial Correctional
Canon City, Colorado

Dear Sharon and Alan, I remember back, how things would be going well and I would start to believe "I" could manage my life just fine, that I didn't need the Lord's guidance or counsel. And in time I'd be back at square one.

It took awhile to completely surrender my life to Him. It was a very hard thing to do. One of the most difficult things I've ever done, in fact.

But, now? Wow! What a difference it's made. A complete 180. I can't imagine a life without **Jesus!**

It's hard at times though. I've had to turn away from friends - friends I've had for 10 or 15 years, because of the path they walk. I can no longer go there. They walk in darkness. It tugs at my heart to see them like that, but I must turn away and continue my own way now. My future is so bright, I gotta wear shades! Love, your brother Joe.

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***Ephesians 4:1-3 (NIV)** As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received.*

Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.



He Was My Friend

By Larry Thompson
 Sterling Correctional
 Sterling, Colorado

He's gone now, and there's only one thing that I wouldn't do to share just one more minute with him; I would never trade away my faith, or my heavenly inheritance for that moment; no matter how deeply hurt I am by his passing, without even saying goodbye.

I'll see you again in the next life; that one that is eternal...and I pray that when we meet there, you'll still recognize me when I wrap my arms around you and tell you that I love you, and I've missed you more than words can say.

I'm so very, very sorry that he's no longer here to accept my calls; I'm sorry that we didn't get to share that final embrace that brothers should be allowed. I'm sorry that this world will be a lonelier place without him; but, I will never ever forget that he is loved, and that he was more than just my brother, he was my friend.

Sleep in peace, my brother. I'll see you when God calls me home.

In Loving Memory Of:
 Mr. Lloyd Douglas Range
 My Beloved Brother
 December 17th, 2007



The Works of Jesus

By Louis McCray
Mid-State Correctional
Marcy, New York

- He created the world in the beginning.
- He commanded the sun to give light over the day and the moon to rule over the night.
- He gave the breath of life over His creation.
- He became flesh.
- He went around showing and telling what life in His Kingdom would be like.
- He brought hope to those who were hopeless and surrounded by darkness.
- He gave sinners forgiveness. He gave freedom to the captives. He gave joy to the sorrowful and He gave life to the dead at heart.
- He healed the sick and gave sight to the blind.
- He fed the hungry and cleansed the lepers.
- He raised the dead and He stilled the storm.
- He gave water.
- He welcomed little children that others chased away.
- He was a friend to those who had no friends.
- He is a living example of a man with compassion and love.
- He is humble, wonderful, awesome, exciting and glorious.
- He keeps His promises.

- He gave us the Ten Commandments.

And above all, Jesus Christ died for our sins, teaching us that life would come through death; a glorious new life of joy that would never end. ***The Works of Jesus shall never end!***



***When I Say,
I Am A Christian***

By David Kinlock
Collins Correctional
Collins, New York

When I say... "I am a Christian" - I'm not shouting, "I'm clean living." I'm whispering, "I was lost, now I am found and forgiven by God's Grace."

When I say... "I am a Christian" - I don't speak of this with pride. I'm confessing that I stumble, and need Christ to be my guide, so I won't continue to fumble.

When I say... "I am a Christian" - I'm not trying to be strong. I'm professing that I am weak, and I need His strength to carry on.

When I say... "I am a Christian" - I'm not bragging of success. I'm admitting that I have failed, and need God to clean my mess.

When I say... "I am a Christian" - I'm not claiming to be perfect. My flaws are far too visible, but God believes I am worth it!

When I say... "I am a Christian" - I still feel the sting of pain. I have my share of heartaches, so I call upon His name.

When I say... "I am a Christian" - I'm not saying that I am holier than thou. I'm just a simple sinner, who received God's good Grace, somehow.

When I say... "I am a Christian" - I'm not backbiting or bearing false witness against my brother in Christ. I am constantly lifting him up in prayer and encouraging him; telling him to hold on to God's unchanging hand, and that God loves him.

When I say... "I am a Christian" - I'm not professing the word love as an expression. I'm showing and walking in the love of Christ daily, giving glory to God. And when I see my brother in Christ, I don't see a color or a race, I see the image of Christ in him. I see God's anointing and His glory on my brother.

When I say... "I am a Christian" - I am not living any kind of ungodly lifestyle, cursing, swearing or entertaining in any ungodly conversation, or even things that do not glorify God. I am refraining from all ungodliness, because the Bible says: ***II Corinthians 5:17 (KJV) - "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."***

In Conclusion - When I say... "I am a Christian" - I am telling you that I have given over my heart, mind, body and soul to God. I'm telling you that I was shackled by a heavy burden, beneath a load of guilt and shame; but then the hand of Jesus touched me and now I'm no longer the same.

Can you really and truly say today, that Jesus touched you and now you are no longer the same?



A Poem Of Praise

By Gary H. Fugate, Limon Correctional
Limon, Colorado

*I look into God's loving eyes,
Everyday when I rise;
I look into God's loving eyes!*

*You can see them when you read His Word;
The greatest love story I have ever heard!*

*God showed His love for us;
The blood of His Son spilled in the dust!*

*He gave His Son for us all;
That we may hear His loving call!*

*Come home dear children, come home;
You no longer need to roam!*

*For Salvation has been won;
In the name of Jesus, my beloved Son!*

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Vision Statement - Christian Ambassadors exists to bring the ministry of Jesus Christ into the lives of people, demonstrating how the gospel teachings can help a person live a more abundant life, filled with joy, hope, and purpose.

If you, any member of your family, or a friend, are imprisoned, wanting to find new hope, purpose, and direction in life, please contact us at Christian Ambassadors. Our website can be visited at: <http://www.christian-ambassadors.org>.