

FREE LIFE NEWS

POINTING THE WAY TO LIFE IN CHRIST

1 Cor. 5: 17-21

The Change

by E. J. Turk Ft. Stockton, TX

He moves mountains without their knowing it..... Job 9:5

“They must be crazy! They said to just believe in Jesus and He’ll save me! How can they say that, they don’t know anything about me? I mean, look at me, if they knew half the stuff I’ve done they’d never tell me that!” The alley he called home was cold and dark, and smelled of rotting fish and vomit. He raised the collar of his jacket to ward off the chill of the autumn evening.

“Maybe I’ll get me a bottle and get me some sleep.” He felt the crisp new ten in his pocket. He’d conned it out of a woman up the street with that ministry set up under the bridge. He must’ve conned it out of her, who in their right mind would give a drunk like him ten bucks? She’d given it to him right after they’d fed him, . . . so you can eat tomorrow,” she’d said.

The people under the bridge had reminded him that tomorrow was Thanksgiving, and to be sure and come for supper. They said they were bringing turkey and dressing and plenty of pumpkin pie. He smiled at the memories thanksgiving brought to mind, was there a Thanksgiving every year? He hadn’t eaten a turkey dinner since he was a kid!

“Ha! They said to come back tomorrow for dinner! Like I’d blow this cash on food if they were gonna feed me!” Strangely he felt a tinge of guilt for what he’d just said. “Huh, where’s that comin’ from?”

His face suddenly contorted with an-

ger, he almost jumped to his feet as he spat, “Who are they to judge me!” But as quickly as he’d said it he realized that they hadn’t judged him at all. As a matter of fact they had given him a new jacket and knit cap. They had even given him a fresh pair of new socks right after they had washed his feet! What was that all about he wondered?

He looked around the alley and noticed his breath condensing in the cold night air then ran his hands over the thick quilting of his new jacket. He felt something in one of the jacket’s pockets, a small book. Holding it toward the streetlight he could it’s gilded edge and knew it was a Bible. The alley was too dark for him to read it so he got up and went to the sidewalk outside the alley where streetlamps hummed overhead. Inside the front cover he found the hand written words, “*when you need more than something to eat,* First Street Church Street Ministries.”

As he turned to go back to his spot in the alley, he heard faint laughter then singing, it came from the direction of the bridge. Looking that way he saw that the ministry’s lamps were still burning bright. He looked at the Bible then down to his jacket then toward the bridge again. “I didn’t even say thanks,” he mumbled.

“What was in that food! What do I care if they want to give their stuff away?” What the heck was going on he wondered, he never cared before? As long as he had a bottle and a place to lie down that’s all he’d cared about. He’d lied, cheated, and stolen to get it most of his life, why all of a sudden was he now having a bout of conscience? He looked toward the bridge

again. He patted his pocket feeling the ten then looked down the street where he knew of a liquor store a few blocks away.

He looked at the penned words in his Bible again, “I wonder what they mean by that?” The people had told him there was a hope greater than anything he’s ever dreamed of, and that it could be his. They said Jesus was the answer, and that no matter what he’d done in his life Jesus would forgive him and give him that hope if he’s only believe. “Do they really believe that stuff?” He tried to act as if he didn’t care but deep down he wanted it to be true, he wanted to believe.

He looked back toward the liquor store again and then to his alley. The singing from the bridge seemed to grow louder, and to him, more joyous. He looked their way again. “I wonder why they do it?”

He remembered someone had asked them that very question while they were washing his feet. “We meet a physical need to awaken a spiritual need,” one of them had said.

“Do I have a spiritual need?” he wondered. Suddenly something dark gripped his heart in an icy embrace. . . or was it all of a sudden? No, this was an old acquaintance, his constant companion for as long as he could remember. He’d denied it many times thinking he could somehow make it go away; he’d drown it with liquor, buried it in lies, but nothing he did really worked. The best he could hope to do was to numb it for awhile. Pain. Loneliness. Hopelessness.

The Change, cont.

. These were constant shadows over his life, and he did all he could to keep the despair they felt at bay.

He looked toward the dark hole he'd crawled out of only moments before, then looked toward the bridge again. The agonizing ache tore at his heart. "Is this a spiritual need?" he wondered, "my tormented life?" he remembered something one of the men with the ministry had said ". . . In the end it's our hope to turn hearts toward God that they might realize a fulfillment that goes far beyond mere possessions. . . " He didn't understand what they had meant at the time; he'd looked at all the things they were offering with such longing. The food, the money, the clean warm clothes. Many nights he'd cried himself to sleep thinking if only he had done those things his life would be so much better. But here he was in possession of those things feeling as broken and as lost as ever.

"They said to just believe in Jesus and He'll save me." As he looked toward the warm glow of the ministry's camp his vision blurred. "Those people. . ." he swallowed hard against his surging emotions, ". . . They really cared." A tear tumbled down his cheek and splattered on the sidewalk. More tears began to fall as the sounds of his broken heart filled his ears. Placing one foot in front of the other he left a trail of tears as he slowly traipsed down the sidewalk.

* * *

"Look Tom," Dave whispered "one of them is coming back."

Tom put down his guitar and watched as a man wearing one of the donated jackets came into the light of the camp. Feeling a stirring in his heart, Tom whispered a quick prayer.

As the man came into the light everyone could see his tear streaked face. He timidly looked to the man who had told him that Jesus loved him, and through thick emotion he told Tom, "I didn't even say thank you." He mumbled something else but his heart was so heavy Tom couldn't make out his words.

Tom put his hands on the man's shoulder and softly said, "Your coming back is

thanks enough." It was more than the man could bear. Slowly he lowered himself to his knees and began sobbing again, and everyone in the camp rushed to him and consoled him as much as they could.

"My heart hurts so bad," the man cried., "I feel so alone and hopeless. I didn't realize how much pain I was in until you showed me all this. . . this . . . love! How can you love me?"

Dave knelt next to the man, "We love you because we were just like you when Jesus loved us. We love you because Jesus loves you."

The man met Dave's eyes, "I'm a bad man and have done many terrible things in my life. But I'm tired of livin' like that. I'm tired!" he sobbed. "If there's hope for me, and if Jesus 'll have me, I'd like to meet Him. What do need to do to meet Jesus?"

Someone whispered Hallelujah and Tom smiled at the man. "Just what you're doing now," said Tom. "Would you like to pray with me? Jesus is waiting. As soon as you open your heart to Him you'll meet Him." the man nodded. Several minutes later Tom, Dave, and everyone with the ministry welcomed and embraced their new brother in Christ.

The next day Tom spoke in front of a small crowd gathered under the bridge. "This is why we do it. This is why we chose to spend Thanksgiving out here—to see God move and change lives. Ladies and gentlemen, it is my pleasure to introduce to you the newest member of First Street Church Street Ministries. Give a warm welcome to Steve!" Tom stepped aside and clapped while Steve smiled and waved. Whistles and applause rose from the small gathering on ministry workers and homeless people.

Steve looked up gathering his thoughts then looked to the crowd. Smiling he said, "Yesterday if you'd've asked me what was I thankful for I would've laughed in your face and growled. 'NOTHING'! But today . . ." tears brimmed in his eyes as he forced himself to continue, ". . . today I want you to know there's more to life than pain. I didn't think that though, not until I experienced firsthand what it was like to live without it. We're not meant to have that emptiness. . . That hole in us that

drives us to do what ever we can to fill it. We're meant to know love. We're meant to know Jesus.

"For the first time in my life I don't hurt inside, and for those of you who are still hurtin' I'm telling' you, there is hope. I know because I found it. I found it in Jesus. If He can change me, trust me, He can change you too.

"Do I have anything to be thankful for? Yes! I have everything to be thankful for! Jesus has forgiven me for my wretched past. He has healed me and cleansed me, and lives right here." Tapping the front of his jacket, Steve looked each person in the eyes. As tears of joy streamed down his face he shouted, "I've come through a long sold night. But today is a brand-new day, and to me it's beautiful!"

More clapping and cheers rose up as Steve looked at Tom and shrugged. Tom smiled and embraced him, "You did well my friend, very well."

As the small gathering sat down to enjoy their thanksgiving meal, Steve looked around at all the love that was being shared with those who could never repay it. "We don't deserve it." Steve thought.

But a small voice whispered through his heart, "It's yours for the taking my child. It's yours because I love you."

In awe of this presence within him, Steve whispered heartfelt praises and smiled. He'd found what he'd been looking for all his life. He'd found hope. He'd found acceptance. He'd found relief. Finally, he realized, he was home.

You turned my wailing into dancing; you removed my sackcloth and clothed me with joy, that my heart can sing to you and not be silent. O LORD my God, I will give you

thanks forever.
Psalm 30:11,12



"Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we

ANGER

HOW TO DEAL WITH IT

Anger is an emotion that we all experience, some of us more than others. I suppose that many of you are reading this article may be experiencing anger in your own lives, or someone may be angry at you.

Both the Old Testament (old covenant) and the New Testament (new Covenant) have a lot to say about anger.

The Bible doesn't say not to be angry, but it tell us a lot about how to deal with anger. A good example is how God Himself dealt with anger. Psalms 145:8 says, " The Lord is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love." I Psalms 30 David says of our Lord in verse 5 " For His anger lasts only for a moment but his favor lasts a lifetime." Proverbs 15:18 says: " A hot tempered man stirs up dissension but a patient man calms a quarrel."

Our Lord showed me just how patient He was with me about anger on April 2, 2008. I was on my way to work early that morning. I was praying while driving (with my eyes open) and I was praying to the Lord about anger. The Lord took me back in my mind to my teenage years, I was not a Christian yet and was very angry in those years. I was with my buddies, we were driving around town drinking beer and we drove by a tent revival. I persuaded the driver to stop. I got out of the car and threw all our empty beer bottles at the revival tent.

I jumped back into the car and we drove off. I had never done anything in my life so disrespectful and until that April morning I never fully under-

stood why I did what I did, though I had thought about that incident several times in my life especially after I became born again. That morning the Lord showed me. It wasn't a verbal voice but it was like He said, " Fred, the reason you threw those bottles was because you were angry at Me. You were angry at Me for things that you went through that a fallen world had caused. But Fred, I loved through all those angry and fearful days. All that time I was walking with you and loving you through all that stuff. I had a plan for you that you can see now. That plan was for you to become My child and to give you life so I can live My life in
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 and through you."

That's the Lord Jesus' plan for all of us. That's God's will for all of us. Jesus said, in John 6:40 " for my Fathers will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in Him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up in the last day." You may be angry at Jesus today because of the things that you are going through. I know from my own personal experience that Jesus is loving you through all this "stuff" we go through in this fallen world. Paul said in Ephesians 4:31-32 " Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you."

There's only one way these verses can be lived out in our lives and that is through the love of Jesus living in and through you and I
 My prayer for you today is, if you don't
 know Jesus, you will come to know
 Him and if you know Him, walk in
 His Spirit.



Fred, Free Life

Team Member.

Jesus Christ Has Always Been Our Lord

Most of us have heard many well-meaning preachers and teachers tell us to “make Jesus the Lord of your life.” But can you and I really make Jesus anything? Hardly. If we stop a moment, Jesus already is who He is – Lord, Savior, Master, Brother, Redeemer, the Lamb, etc. We’re really just in the process of catching up to realizing who He *already* is. Fortunately, the Holy Spirit is good at getting us ‘caught up’ since He is the teacher of all that’s true: “However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come” (John 16:13).

Stop and think a moment. When we get into the mode of “making things happen” isn’t that where we get into trouble? We lean on our own understanding, our own ways and our own plans. And what usually happens? The whole thing just blows up in our face. So, if we get caught up into trying to make Jesus Lord or anything else, doesn’t it look like something which is going to be fruitless and frustrating before we even begin?

Now, I’m not saying we shouldn’t follow Him, honor Him or speak of Him as Lord. Instead, the benefit is to listen to the Holy Spirit. He will teach you and me that He *already is* Lord. This revelation begins when we realize that we used to be slaves of sin, but now it’s no longer our master because of the grace of God through the cross of Christ: “... knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him [Jesus], that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin” (Romans 6:6).

This frees us to have Christ as our master: “And masters, treat your slaves in the same way. Do not threaten them, since you know that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no favoritism with him.” (Ephesians 6:9). As a saved person, we’ve been released from the yoke of sin to take on the yoke of Christ (Matthew 11:28-30) where He walks beside us as our Savior and brother, not some cruel slave master looking for an excuse to beat us.

But, how do we know we’ve accepted the truth that Jesus is our Lord? We know when we find ourselves submitting to Him for *His* service under *His* direction. Paul explains taking Christ’s yoke upon us like this: “but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.” (Romans 6:13b). This attitude of submission we are called to have is the same attitude He had as He served His Father on earth (John 6:38; Philipians 2:5).

Continues on page 11

CELEBRATION

With this edition of the Free Life News we are starting the 8th year of publication.

We never could have lasted this long had it not been for our many friends across the Country, who, after reading their copy of the newsletter passed it along to someone else to read, and they passed in on or mailed it to someone, to expand the mailing list.

We have had many people write in over the years saying they “found” a newsletter in a trash can, picked it up, and prayed to receive Christ into their hearts after reading the testimonies of faith, or an inmate sweeping it across the yard to the front of his dorm, so he could pick it up and read it, or from someone in solitary confinement who received a newsletter and read it over and over for months which lead him to pray to receive life in Christ.

If it wasn’t for our many friends who took the time to write out their testimonies of faith, devotionals, and Bible studies, we would have nothing to send.

It is encouraging to us when we get letters each quarter from the Chaplains in a Florida Prison who thank us and tell us they use it to teach in the classes for new Christians.

To those of you who contribute financially each month to help defray the cost of publishing this paper, we say Thank You and may God bless you for your generous giving heart of love.

And to those of you who send in donations, although incarcerated, we can’t begin to tell you how deeply you touch our hearts. May God bless you in abundance. You are the reason we continue on. Thank you!

It is through all the generous donations we receive, that many lives have been and will continue to be changed.

2 Cor. 9:7-15

As the Lord leads we will continue on. If you have not sent in anything to be published, please do so. A testimony, poetry, devotional, art work or a note of Praise to our Lord.

May the Lord bless you all for standing with us all these years, and know that we, at Free Life love you all very much.

Mack & Mitzi, Heather, Phyllis, Dorinda, Eddie, Rodney & Kathie, Fred & Sally, Glenn, John, Ron, Wade, Steve and our many contributors, we are all ministers of reconciliation, pointing the way to life in Christ.



TO GOD BE THE GLORY FOR
THE GREAT THINGS HE HAS
DONE

Jesus Has The Wheel

A Personal Testimony

Long before the song “Jesus Take the Wheel” came out I had a personal, very real experience of how Jesus does take the wheel. It was August 1989 and I was returning from Temple, Texas, where I had gone to visit my 14-month-old daughter for what was probably going to be the last time. I knew I was on my way to prison—a dark truth about my life had just emerged.

Many of us have heard the saying, “I’m at the end of my rope.” I was long past that. My rope had already slipped from my grasp and I was fastly plummeting to the black abyss below, physically and spiritually.

Driving back to Mesquite on I-635, my eyes flooded and blinded with tears, the highway and passing cars were a blur. I closed my eyes for what seemed like endless moments; my desire was to crash and die. For most of my life I had longed for it to end. Slowly I pressed the accelerator, easing past the speed limit.

I guess it was my soul desperately crying from within that made me say, “God, I don’t know if You are real, but I have no one else to turn to. If You can do something with me. . .”

I didn’t ask God to do something for me—I didn’t want God to simply get me out of a hot spot. I hated my life, hated everything about me. I wanted something more. I didn’t want to strike a one-time deal; I wanted and needed a lifetime change. I didn’t want God to do something

for me; I wanted Him to do something with me.

I turned my radio on and Carmen was singing and preaching in his song. What power! What anointing! speaking of the victorious Christ! God was definitely talking to me. The peace. The calm. The warmth in my spirit. Not a feeling. A Presence. Words cannot describe it. Everything that I had been seeking throughout my lonely life, a need for a father’s guidance, the comfort of living arms wrapped around me, the sense that I meant something to someone, were all captured perfectly and instantly in that moment. Oh what cleansing waters the flood brought!

I now know that in those ensuing moments while my eyes were closed, Jesus had to have had the wheel in His hand. It’s why the song “Jesus Take the Wheel” has a tangible meaning for me. And I know in my current circumstances He still has the wheel and is steering me into the right direction.

God heard my cry on that August day and was faithful, for He indeed did something with me! He gave me more than change; He gave me new life. He filled my hurting heart with joy. He broke lifelong bondages. He set me free! I will praise Him Forever.

We all can have confidence in Christ at those times we are overwhelmed, at times when we feel we are at the end of our rope, at those times when our vision becomes blurred by trials, that He most assuredly has the wheel and will safely steer us homeward.

Kenneth Lee—Huntsville, TX

Let us rejoice in this

“ I’m in Prison, but inside I feel free”

Dearest friends, Hello,

My name is Jerry Love and I am an inmate at the Federal Prison Camp in Marion, IL.

I found a Free Life News and I went to my bunk and read it. And I liked it so much that I wanted to write and tell you how the Lord Jesus is working in my life.

Out in the world I was totally hooked on Meth, I was hateful, deceitful, and all I knew was evil. It’s no mistake that I ended up in Prison. But since I have been in Prison, I have turned my life over to the Lord Jesus Christ and it’s the best move that I ever made!

There is peace inside of me today, and I never want to lose it. Satan worked real hard to destroy my life, but through Jesus Christ I am saved.

Yes, I am in Prison but inside I feel free! The hateful, deceitful, selfish person that Satan had control over is no more! Sometimes it takes something major to happen in our lives for us to hear God speak to us.

On that note, I will end this letter by saying keep up the good work and may the Lord bless and keep you all!

Your Brother in Christ Jesus,
Jerry Love

Thank you, Jerry for the encouragement to us in your letter. We are thankful that you are at peace in the Lord Jesus Christ. May He continue to direct your path, and use you to lead others to faith in Christ.

God bless you,

The Wonder of God in His Creations

By Jeannie Thompson

Max and His Busy Agenda

It's so true that dogs have owners and cats have a "staff." Max needed a staff because he had a very busy agenda!

Max first appeared in our neighborhood on Halloween night, 1998. It was almost 9 p.m. when my friend Gayle started to turn off the porch light. Then she saw three teenage boys chasing some kind of animal into her yard.

She opened the door just as the object of their chase, a black cat, ran up the porch steps and landed, shaking, at her feet. When the boys saw Gayle, they ran on down the street. "You poor thing," she said, picking up the cat. "This is no night for you to be out on the town."

She noticed that the cat had no collar; so, after giving him some milk, she fixed a soft bed for him in the garage, where he'd be safe for the night. Since Gayle already had two cats of her own, she asked Sheila Powell, a mutual friend of ours, if she knew anyone who might be in the market for a beautiful black cat.

Sheila remembered I had mentioned wanting a cat, so she called me the next morning to see if I was still interested. I was. In a few hours, after a quick trip to a pet shop, I picked up "Max" and took him home to become my pet. He was still a young cat, probably not more than a year old, and he had already been de-clawed.

Later that day, when I took my new pet to a veterinarian, I learned that Max had also been neutered. What had happened since those two procedures to turn him into a street cat?

Max had no serious health problems, but he did have an overactive "curiosity gland". When Dr. Andrews set him down on the floor of the examining room, Max immediately started opening all the cabinet doors within paws-reach! Evidently, there was no cure for this disease because he kept opening and rearranging my cabinets at home at regular intervals!

Since Max had been de-clawed, I thought it best to make him an inside cat. That night, I took him into my bedroom and shut the door to get him used to sleep-

ing in my room. That's when I learned that Max had his own agenda! He lay on my bed for a few minutes, then started walking around the perimeter of the room, stepping from table to desk to dresser to bed, etc., and repeating the process for most of the night. Needless to say, neither of us got much sleep.

After a two-night trial period (and I do mean "trial" period for both of us), I knew I'd have to come up with a better plan. The third night, I again shut the door to my room, but Max was on one side of the door, and I was on the other! This solution worked well for both of us.

For the most part, I really enjoyed being on Max's staff. He was not a "lap cat", unless it was completely his idea, but he was affectionate in his own way. He was also lots of fun and loved to play with anyone who enjoyed cat games.

There was one problem: Max was a large cat and very aggressive, so playtime with him could suddenly become dangerous. We had to remember to calm things down before Max got out of control.

The next year, Max and I moved into a house I would be renting from my son, Doug. The house was very attractive and just the right size for a widow and her cat. The move went exceptionally well, except for one thing: It was the middle of July in Texas, and we were in the midst of a heat wave with three-digit temperatures.

A few days after Max and I moved in, our air conditioner went out. The air conditioning company had to order the part needed for our unit, and it was three days before the part came in and they could install it.

Using ceiling fans helped me to get through those three days, but I could see that the heat was really taking its toll on Max. I tried to keep him comfortable, but on the last day, I thought I was going to lose him. A few hours before the repair men arrived, I found Max lying prostrate on the floor, and could tell he was suffering from heat exhaustion.

I placed a floor fan near him and started bathing him with cool water, praying and crying all the time I was doing this. Soon he revived and was well on his way to recovery by the time the air conditioner was operating again.

We had a small backyard, enclosed by an attractive black wrought iron fence – very nice for me, but not for Max. The fence was not a solid structure, so Max still could not stay outside without supervision, and he seemed to crave his freedom more

than ever. He was growing more and more aggressive, and it was now too dangerous to keep him as an inside pet.

Dr. Andrews said there was nothing we could do; that at heart, Max had probably remained an outside cat.

I called one of my friends, who had always enjoyed Max. She had one cat of her own that was also de-clawed. There was a cat door, which opened into her backyard, and the yard was surrounded by a solid wood fence. I explained the situation, and she was happy to take Max.

It was very hard telling Max goodbye; I loved this willful cat. However, I knew God had graciously provided this solution for us. I was also sure Max could still become a happy, well-adjusted inside-outside cat... *and he has!*

God *always* knows what's best for us, and if we are His children through faith in Jesus Christ, our joy and peace come from living according to His will. God must always be the "initiator", and we must always be the willing "responders".

What an example we have in Jesus! Throughout His ministry on earth, His response to His Father was always:

"I have come to do Your will, O God."
(Hebrews 10:7)

Just before His arrest and crucifixion, Jesus prayed:

"My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from Me. Yet not as I will, but as You will."
(Matthew 26:39)

Whatever God calls us to do, no matter how important or insignificant the call might seem to us, it is always for our good and His glory!



“PUT OFF—PUT ON”

by Anthony Wooten, Huntsville, TX

“How blessed it is to write unto thee of the Most Amazing Grace in deed accomplished in Christ on Calvary.”

I am working on a Walk of Repentance Study, and a question was posed to first list ten things we as children of God are to “Put Off” and then list ten things we are to “Put On” from **Col. 3: 1-17**.

1 Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. 2 Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. 3 For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ, who is your^[a] life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

5 Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. 6 Because of these, the wrath of God is coming.^[b] 7 You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. 8 But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. 9 Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices 10 and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. 11 Here there is no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all.

12 Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. 13 Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. 14 And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

15 Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. 16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude

in your hearts to God. 17 And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

The next question posed is “What bad habits have you over come? From the “Put Off” list, and what good habits have you acquired or are walking in?”

A Christian, for going on 18 years, and to think , I have never considered such questions to be essential to the Christian way.

In serious consideration of the given text, and in complete honesty with the Word. I have not truly “Put Off” any of these lusts of the flesh, for to even look on a woman with lust, then I have already committed fornication with her in my heart.

To hate a brother is equal to murder, but God thunders from heaven “Thou Shall Not Kill.” Read a ‘good’ book and you can see the bad thoughts of the author intermingled with the good thoughts, though we cheer in agreement by continuing to read the book. For we also identify with the thought patters of good verses evil.

And sometimes it is hard for us to identify with what is right and what is wrong in the Spirit of God, because “All we like sheep have gone astray.”

To even consider having “Put On” the good habits in the sight of God without having “Put Off” the old man can hardly be in genuine sincerity. Therefore, I find myself in a state of being in which Paul declared, “O’ Wretched man that I am Who shall rescue (deliver, save) me from this body of death? **I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.**

HIS LOVE ENDURES

FOREVER



There is room at the Cross
for YOU!

Rejoice in the Lord al-
ways.

I will say it again:
Rejoice!

Let your gentleness be
evident to all. The Lord is
near.

Do not be anxious about
anything, but in every-
thing, by prayer and pe-
tition, with thanksgiv-
ing, present your re-
quests to God.

And the peace of God,
which transcends all un-
derstanding, will guard
your hearts and your
minds in Christ Jesus

Phil. 4:4-7

“Therefore, if any man be in Christ he is a new creation.” 2 Cor.5:17

“I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength.” Phil. 4:13

“Whosoever will may come”.
Rev.22:17

“For by grace are you saved through faith, and that not of yourself; it is a gift of God, not of works lest any man should boast.” Eph. 2:8,9

“Now is the accepted time.” 2 Cor.6:2

“In my Father’s house are many man-
sions, I go to prepare a place for you.”
John 14:2

THE BLESSED

Part III

An Exposition of the Beatitudes of Christ

By E.J. Turk

*Blessed are the meek,
For they shall inherit the earth.* Matt 5:5

Jesus said, “Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.”

And for their meekness Jesus said they’ll receive a great reward, they’ll inherit the earth! Okay, well, what does that mean? What does it mean to be meek? In some dictionaries the English word meek is defined as one who is humble and submissive. And the Greek word translated as “meek” in the verse is used three other times in the New Testament translated as “gentle”, twice as descriptive of Jesus. So Jesus was meek. But this still doesn’t really give us a vivid grasp on what it means to be meek.

Most scholars agree the Jesus had Psalm 37:10 and 11 in mind when He spoke his third beatitude. In those verses meek is used in contrast to the wicked, where the wicked will suffer loss while the meek experience great gain. The idea being that ordinarily the meek suffered while the wicked prospered. The Hebrew word translated meek in this verse, the only time it is translated so, is mostly translated as words such as afflicted, poor, needy, oppressed. Now we’re getting a better picture of what Jesus meant by “meek”: someone who endures hardship, the emphasis being endures. Well, how is one blessed by enduring great hardship, or better yet, why are they enduring hardship?

As was pointed out before, Psalm 37:10 and 11 point out contrast, the meek are obviously not the wicked. No, they’re godly. And they’re suffering because they’re godly. And they endure because they’re godly. Their hearts are set on God and His mercy. Their hope does not rest in this world and their comfort does not come from this world. They can endure great difficulty because they know this world and it’s desires are passing away, and that God will one day deliver them from this wicked world. The meek are ones who only hope in God. And as a result the cares of this world so not trouble them.

Imagine you’re on a sinking ship and everybody on that ship is frantically dumping cargo overboard and pumping out the flooding water at the same time these same passengers are gouging holes into the ship’s hull causing it to sink faster. Now here you are, doing nothing, because you know it’s pointless, casually observing everyone else while you pray to God.

They see you doing nothing and become furious with you, perhaps even trying to force you into accompanying them in their futile efforts. You tell them, “Look, the ship is going to sink, there’s nothing you can do to stop it. As a matter of fact, you’re causing it. We’re in the middle of the sea and everyone is going to drown. But let me tell you, hope is not lost. There is a God who loves you, who is willing to save your soul so that it is not also lost along with this doomed ship.”

These people may see the logic in your words or they may refuse to accept what you say because they love their ship. And if they love their ship and see that you don’t, they may decide you don’t deserve to be on their ship, and in the midst of the chaos forget about their ship and persecute you instead.

Do you have that kind of faith, or would you be trying to dump buckets of water overboard with the rest of them? That’s the kind of faith the meek that Jesus spoke of have, an observable faith that testifies of the reality of God and His presence in their lives. That same faith attracts the attention of the world along with either their acceptance of it or their wrath against it. To be meek means to be a witness for Christ no matter the consequences.

So how are they blessed? Jesus said they’ll inherit the earth, but who wants a sinking ship? On closer examination it can be seen that the blessing is two fold. Remember, the meek can endure great hardship because of the hope and assurance that comes from God.

Going back to the sinking ship illustration, in the Bible there are recorded two instances of sinking ships where a meek one was present who had so much confidence in God that they actually slept while seemingly the world was falling apart all around them. Their names are Jonah and Jesus. Then there was another meek one who, after enduring great hardship, penned these words: “I have learned to be content

whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want... “because. “.... I can do everything through Him who gives me strength.” (Philippians 4: 11-13)

His name was Paul, and he was content no matter where he was or what his situation. His sole purpose for living was to be a witness for Christ. It didn’t matter where he was, he would be doing exactly what he was called to do. His mission was the same everywhere he went because he was doing what he loved, serving Christ.

His perspective was radically different from that of the world. He knew that trusting in God, to be meek, meant freedom. It didn’t matter where he was, whether in prison or in peril, because his hope did not rest in this world. Where ever he found himself he found opportunity to serve his Lord as a witness to the world. It is in that sense that he had indeed inherited the earth because wherever he was on the earth he was free to serve his God no matter the consequences. He would not be silent even in the face of adversity because his hope was secure, his hope was in God.

And finally, the ultimate blessing for the meek. For those who humbly submit themselves to Christ’s service, who courageously put their hope and trust in God, and cast off the cares of this world, these meek, these heroes for Christ, these are the ones who will inherit the kingdom to come, God’s kingdom, the new heavens and the new earth. This is their ultimate reward. This is what God promised. To be meek means to trust God and believe in His promises, because the meek know their God is faithful.

Won’t you join ranks with such as these, and secure your place in this world and the world to come? These are the meek. These are the blessed. Their world is waiting. Won’t you join them?

***Blessed are the meek, for they
shall inherit the earth***

“PRAISING HIS NAME”

(A letter to the Free Life Team)

Ken (Sonny) Narron—Tenn. Colony, TX

“I have to testify to the Glory of God!

Praise our Holy God. Our God Is able; our God is willing, our God is powerful. I testify to this, My Father hears me when I call unto Him!

When you have a need or desire, when you pray put it in line with God’s Word and you will receive it. What Satan meant to be bad, My God has made it good. *Luke 1:37—Nothing is impossible with God.*

I praise His Name, that’s the Fathers love, that’s his Grace. That’s his Truth. I am in complete awe.

God is ready to answer when he hears your voice. He is not asleep, deaf, or on vacation. He hears you when you call. God can turn any situation around. All you have to do is lean totally on his arms. What is all the fuss about? The truth is.... my God is alive.

God has given me Parole, I will be home in April 2009. A new man in Christ.

I have to do my Father’s will, and work with y’all. He will open doors for me at Palo Pinto County Jail. My # one will and work is my Fathers’ Gospel. I am ready for the journey ahead.

Praising His name is just a way of life for me now, my new life in Christ. I wanted to write to ‘My God Family’ (The Free Life Team) and let you know how God has answered my prayers. I testify to God’s Word. It is true and alive.”

We met Sonny at the County Jail and ministered the Word of God to him for about six months. We saw a change in him each time we had a service, as he testified and shared what the Lord was doing in his life. We are looking forward to the Sheriff approval, probably about six months after he is released, when Sonny can come back into the Jail, this time as a minister of the Gospel Thanks for sharing your love of the Lord with us, we look forward to Serving Him with you.

(Mack & Mitzi)

Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will direct your path. Pro. 3: 5-6



Pray One for Another

For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding. And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, being strengthened with all power according to

his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and joyfully giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light. For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness, and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

Col.1:9-14

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, It does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects , always trusts ,always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails.

1 Cor. 13: 4-8



And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. Romans 8:28

GOD IS LOVE

Therefore, I urge you, brothers in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will. Romans 12: 1-2

A LIFE GONE WRONG

Trouble seems to come my way	Jail seemed to be my life
No matter what I do	Spent many times for assault
My teen age years had problems	On people that I love
Good luck didn't see me through	I said it was not my fault
Married at a young age	I wonder where my life will go
With a baby on the way	I think I've done nothing wrong
Troubles seem to come again	My life has to really change
Peace seemed far away	Where will my peace come from

Name —Unwanted

Divorce was the outcome
My home was torn apart
Anger was a problem
But this was just the start

I read a copy of your newsletter
and wanted to tell you a small
part of my story

I got married once again
Trouble again to me
We had so many problems
More anger than we could see

We raised two boys and a girl
It was so hard on us
My life was full of trials
It seemed there was no trust

I began to be more angry
We started fighting all the time
May anger turned to abuse
No peace could I find

My wife passed away
My anger got worse
I could not think of a future
My fate is lost in the course

He will keep you strong to
the end, so that you will be
blameless on the day of our
Lord Jesus Christ. God, who
has called you into fellowship
with his son Jesus Christ our
Lord, is faithful.
1 Cor. 1: 8-9

Dear Unwanted,,

I know you *feel* that you are unwanted but I want to tell you that is not true. You are wanted!

God wants you, He loves you, and has a plan for you. He had you on His mind even before the foundation of the world. He saw you in your Mother's womb. He made you. He loves you and has already forgiven you. He did that when He sent Jesus to die on the Cross for your sins and mine. Jesus Christ took away your sins that day 2000 years ago, to make you clean so you could receive His resurrected life.

Although you could not feel peace, He was there, when you were in trouble He was there, all through the trials, he was there, even in Jail He is there.

God wants you, he has always wanted you, Jesus said to come unto Him and He would give you rest. Jesus is the Good Shepherd, He left the ninety-nine to go and look for the one lost sheep, that is you! Will you let Jesus find you?

The way has been made for you to follow to find the peace you are so desperately looking for, Jesus said "I am the way, the truth and the life, no one comes to the Father except by Me." Won't you come to him today? He is waiting and has been waiting for you to just call out to him. He will answer you.

I want to direct you back to page 3 to read how God stopped Fred's anger problem, and the prayer to receive Jesus into your heart and life.

We at Free Life want desperately to help you, we have members of our team who will write to encourage you and to help you in your walk in the Lord. Please, please, please write and tell us your name and address so we can minister to your lonely heart.

In His love,

Mitzi and the Free Life Team.

Con't from page 4

Jesus Christ has Always Been Our Lord

Unlike the sacrifices of the Old Covenant, we are unique sacrifices in the New Covenant. We are living sacrifices belonging entirely to Jesus: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service." (Romans 12:1). Where our reason for service is found in the preceding verse: "For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen." (Romans 11:36).

In spite of the testimony of Scripture, only when we let God do the teaching, can we see what is true. And the reality is that Jesus Christ is Lord whether we understand or accept Him as Lord or not, whether one is lost or saved. He doesn't demonstrate His Lordship through punishment, but through the power to give the gift of eternal life to all who believe upon Him:

"And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. *For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.* He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." (John 3:14-18).

Jesus is our life because we are saved by His life: "For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life." (Romans 5:10). Furthermore, we are living tabernacles/temples of God because the Spirit now dwells in us: "Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?" (1 Corinthians 6:19).

Now, don't let anyone be deceived or discouraged. The chaos in our lives and in this world doesn't prove that Jesus isn't Lord. It's just proof of man's hardheartedness against the Father's testimony about His Son through the Spirit (1 John 5:9-13). Encourage each other with the truth of the Living Christ.

The next time you struggle in spiritual matters, don't get down on yourself and begin to make promises to God or give up on Him. Instead renew your mind by letting the attitude of Christ refresh your heart and spirit that you may get your focus back upon Him:

"Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those

on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Philippians 2:5-11).

Continue standing in Jesus against the cares and circumstances of this world. This will counter the flesh's attempts to crowd out the joy of Christ in you. Continue to share the risen Christ as He directs your path.

Your friend in Jesus, Bud

Why did Jesus fold His napkin?

The Gospel of John (20:7) tells us that the napkin, which was placed over the face of Jesus, was not just thrown aside like the grave clothes.

The Bible takes an entire verse to tell us that the napkin was neatly folded, and was placed at the head of that stony coffin.

Early Sunday morning, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and found that the stone had been rolled away from the entrance.

She ran and found Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved. She said, 'They have taken the Lord's body out of the tomb, and I don't know where they have put him!'

Peter and the other disciple ran to the tomb to see. The other disciple outran Peter and got there first. He stooped and looked in and saw the linen cloth lying there, but he didn't go in.

Then Simon Peter arrived and went inside. He also noticed the linen wrappings lying there, while the cloth that had covered Jesus' head was folded up and lying to the side.

Is that important? Absolutely!

Is it really significant? Yes!

In order to understand the significance of the folded napkin, you have to understand a little bit about Hebrew tradition of that day. The folded napkin had to do with the Master and Servant, and every Jewish boy knew this tradition.

When the servant set the dinner table for the master, he made sure that it was exactly the way the master wanted it.

The table was furnished perfectly, and then the servant would wait, just out of sight, until the master had finished eating, and the servant would not dare touch that table, until the master was finished.

Now if the master were done eating, he would rise from the table, wipe his fingers, his mouth, and clean his beard, and would wad up that napkin and toss it onto the table.

The servant would then know to clear the table. For in those days, the wadded napkin meant, 'I'm done'.

But if the master got up from the table, and folded his napkin, and laid it beside his plate, the servant would not dare touch the table,

because..... The folded napkin meant, 'I'm coming back!'

He IS coming back!!!

POINTING THE WAY TO LIFE IN CHRIST
1 Cor. 5: 17-21

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THE TELEPHONE RANG



It was Sunday afternoon when the telephone rang. What a blessing that call turned out to be. It was a dear friend.

We met Jonathon via the **Free Life News** about four years ago when our nephew showed him a copy of the newsletter. Later Jonathon was moved to another facility in Wisconsin, where he asked for the FLN to be sent, and helped in getting it into many hands. We corresponded for about 3 1/2 years.

Jonathon was released after ten years of incarceration in May of 2007. He called then, but for some reason our calls just didn't connect. But when we spoke on Sunday afternoon it was like talking to someone I've known forever.

We laughed and cried and encouraged each other in the Lord, just sharing the faithfulness of Jesus in our lives.

He shared with me that he will be involved in Prison Ministry in Del Rio, TX where he lives.

It truly was a blessing to hear Jonathon's voice after all these years,

and to know God has continued to use him in spreading the Good News of Jesus' Love and Forgiveness.

Thanks for the call, Jon, we love you in Jesus Christ. You blessed our hearts.

Mack & Mitzi

