

FISHERS OF MEN

"And he said unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." - Matthew 4:19

Volume 16 – Issue 7
September 2007

Fishers of Men Ministries
Jesus Loves You!

A Newsletter For and By Saints of Christ in Prison

While Reclining



"So that's a wrap here at Madison Square Garden where the Indiana Pacers have just defeated the new York Knicks 107-102 to advance to the Eastern Conference Finals against Orlando. Let's go down to the floor with Ahmad Rashad."

"Thanks Marv, we're here with Reggie Miller. Reggie, you all played a great game. Did you think you could come in here and win today in New York?" "First Marv, I would like to thank Jesus Christ, to Him goes all the credit. We couldn't have won without the talents from above."

"Whoa.." Brian said from his position in his aqua-green recliner as he watched the post game. It took him by surprise. Such a bold statement on national TV, after a big game. It was the first thing Reggie Miller said out of his mouth. The real astonishment is that those words came from a public sports figure.

As a Christian, Brian knew the difficulty of maintaining a good walk with the Lord. I mean if you profess it then you should live it. So Brian knew it was rather bold of Reggie Miller to profess his faith in Christ on National TV. He could imagine how that statement would endure foremost on people's minds, especially Reggie Miller's friends. In the world of sports, there is much rumored drug use, and corruptive behavior. So Brian imagined that just the first time Reggie would use profanity, lose control, someone would remind him, "Hey, aren't you a Christian?" Of course, as Christians know that though saved, we continue to live in imperfect sinful bodies. Salvation doesn't mean we won't ever sin again, Brian thought.

As Brian continued to relax in his recliner, he had given himself up to his thoughts. The TV was still on and the ice was melting and diluting his Coke, but Brian was lost in thought. You see, Brian was saved, but he preferred just keeping it to himself mostly. I mean if he were to just go out and tell everyone what would his friends think? He could never drink a beer again or tell a salacious story to his buddies. Of course, he would be constantly reminded by them that he told them he was a Christian and of course, a non-believer would then use Brian's weakness as an excuse to blasphemy Christianity and God. The typical non-Christian response is, "That's why I don't become a Christian. It's too hard to give all that up. I mean if I can't be a perfect Christian, why be one at all. Notice they seldom say they don't believe in God? This is important, as there are many non-Christians who could be Christians if they understood a little more about being one. Of course, every Christian should strive to be the like Christ and live a life without sinning, and yes, it is difficult. But because we can't do some thing perfect, does that keep us from doing it?

Brian was deliberating whether or not he should profess his belief and that he was a Christian. He thought about all of the sports stars who had made bold public professions. There was David Robinson, Mark Price, Jerry Rice, Evander Holyfield and now Reggie Miller. He also thought about the many after-game prayers and pre-game prayers he'd been witnessing recently on TV. He even recalled two baseball stars who had prayed with some fans before their major league baseball games. Brian did not believe that all of this praying and professing was merely for show. The mere statement of thanking Jesus for a win or a safe game sends a lot of pressure the star's way.



Brian imagined what it must have been like to confess faith in Christ during or immediately after the life of Christ. In certain cities, you would have been stoned to death and at the very least outcast. So Brian thought that in today's world, it is less dangerous physically. He thought isn't confessing showing your love for God and doesn't Romans 10:9 tell us to confess with our mouth that Christ is Lord?

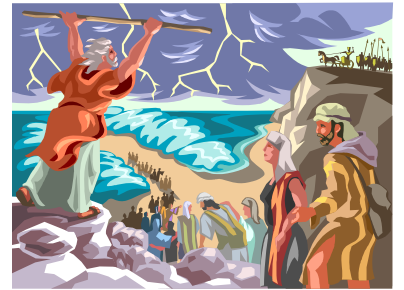
Brian knew that he loved God in his heart; he knew he wanted to do right and he knew that there indeed was peace in giving your life to God. So maybe it was time he stopped hiding his belief and started living it. Through the profession of this faith, he would receive conviction...conviction from his friends and from himself. So perhaps it was indeed for the better to profess his faith as he had seen so many do.

The point is this. If you are a Christian and someone asks you don't deny it or shy away from the question. Even if you aren't the best example of one, you're still one of God's saved. You don't owe persecutors of your faith an accounting of your sins; you confessed those to the Lord. If the question is sincere in their inquiry, then that opens the door for witnessing to them. Let them know they don't have to be perfect to become saved. Remember Christ didn't live and die for the perfect, he lived and dies for the sinner and will be resurrected a second time for those who believe in Him and confess they are sinners. Once we confess our sins, and profess our faith, then we can work on our Christian lives.

Like Reggie Miller and thousands of others, Brian will take a big step by professing his faith in Jesus Christ to his friends. But it's a step he'll live eternally to never regret. *Your Brother Mark*

The Exile of the Lost, but Not Forgotten Readings: Deuteronomy 6 and Psalms 107

We all can compare the exile of God's people coming out of Egypt to ourselves. We ignore God's call; we fulfill the lust of our own eyes and flesh, and separate ourselves from God. Only when we are overwhelmed, do we call out to God for Him to save us and to bring us out of our "Egypt" and bring us to the land He has set up for us.



Personally, it has significant to me because it was my actions and rebellion that lead me to prison. But it took God's calling and my submitting in order for God to lead me out of my "Egypt" (Prison). It is always our sinfulness and disobedience that brings us to this place. With all of our complaining, whining and not having the patience to wait on God, we put ourselves in this position.

It isn't until we fully submit to God does He bring us to the Promised Land. In that submission we must let the old ways and "old man" die and let the new generation take over. God told Moses, because of his rebellion he could not enter into the land (Num. 20:12). He (God) waited for the old generation to pass and bring in the new. We see this in the New Testament as Jesus said, (John 3:3) "Verily, Verily, I say unto Him, except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." So did God let the old pass to let the new take over.

With the new man taking over, God will lead us to do great things that we are not capable of doing on our own. Be submissive to His will. The Lord tells us in His Word, "I will bring to completion the work I started in you." (Phil 1:6) The Lord wants to bring us to Himself and bless us greatly.

So, we must confess our sins and repent of our sins as were told to do. We must come to God, and let Him be the head of our life. If we do, He will bring us out of Egypt and take us on our journey to the Promised Land. This journey will, if we are submissive to Him, help us to grown and mature in Him. Giving us a better relationship and a better servanthood to Him will be the end result. For this life we live, we live for Christ because we are bought with a price. The ultimate price! All praise and Glory be to God!

Your Brother Anthony

Answered Prayer: In His Perfect Timing



As Christians we all pray whether it be fore health, finances or whatever is heavy on our hearts and we ask god to help us. But our Father already knows the things we have need of before we ask Him (Matthew 6:8).

So if He knows what we need before we even do, why then when we do pray about it why do we not see a manifestation of it soon afterwards? I know the answers were in His word and found that it must be in His timing that He answers our prayers and we should be anxious for nothing. (Phil. 4:6)

For many years I steadfastly prayed the same requests to God...I needed a break with my case and I needed to be closer to my family. Then through a minister on TV, I heard what I was doing wrong...My prayers were about me and not about what God wanted for my life. So, I changed the way I prayed and the entire way I thought about prayer. I focused on if He could use me or my case in some way to help others. There because a new spark in my heart to become a law clerk and aid other people and have been ever since. But also after almost 25 years the Supreme Court decided to hear my case again. Many of you know how hard it is to get that court to grant review.

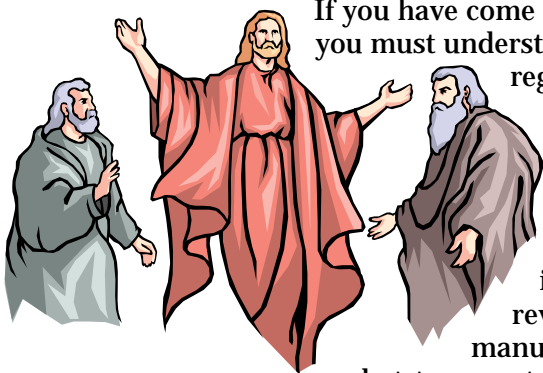
But that wasn't enough for God; He blessed me again through prayer after 20 years of denials about a transfer closer to home. When I made the change in my prayer life to concentrate not on myself, but about the needs of

my family, He answered that with an approval. And now, here I sit as close to home as I can be without actually being out, awaiting a September or October decision from the court about whether to hear my issues.

So for those of you waiting to receive the answers to your prayers, I'm here to tell you, don't give up hope. He answers prayers. I got news of my transfer on the same day as my wedding anniversary, I call that perfect timing! I needed to learn how to pray Luke 11:1; and once I did, I started receiving those answers.

Love in Christ, Phil

Many Are the Plans in A Mans Heart, But It Is the Lord's Purpose That Prevails.



If you have come to a place in your life where you really desire to be used by God, then you must understand one power truth. The very experiences that you have resented or regretted most in life, the ones that you want to hide and forget are the experiences that God wants to use to help others.

For God to use our painful experiences we must be willing to share them. We have to stop trying to cover them up, and we must be honest and admit our faults, failures and fears. God has not left us in the dark to wonder and guess about life's purpose. He has clearly revealed his purpose for our lives through the Bible. It is our owner's manual, explaining why we are alive, how life works, what to avoid, and what to expect for the future. The Bible explains what no self-help or philosophy book could ever know.

What do you think the church is for? Being a part of a healthy church is essential to living a healthy life because it will help you to understand how God designed his church specifically to help us fulfill the five purposes that he has for our lives.

God created the church to meet our five deepest needs. A Purpose to live for; People to live with; Principles to live by; A Profession to live out; and Power to live on.

One Truth that I have found for myself is that God is real. No matter what you are going through right now, God is Real! He longs to do real things in our lives. It's easy for People to worship God when things are going great in their lives; When He has provided food, friends, family, health and happiness, but circumstances are not always pleasant in our lives. So how do we worship God then? What do we do when God seems millions of miles away?

I have learned that the deepest level of worship is praising God in spite of pain, thanking God during trials, trusting God when tempted, surrendering while suffering and loving him when he seems distant. When God seems distant, we may sometimes feel that He is angry with us or is disciplining us for some sin. In fact, sin does disconnect us from intimate fellowship with God, we grieve God's spirit and quench our fellowship with Him by disobedience, conflict with others, business, friendship with the world, and other sins.

Sometimes this feeling of abandonment from God has nothing to do with sin. It is a test of our faith, one we all must face. Will you continue to love, trust, obey and worship God, even when you have no sense of His presence or visible evidence of His work in your life?

One of the common mistakes people make today in trying to worship is seeking an experience with God rather than seeking God. They look for a feeling and if it happens, they often conclude that they have worshiped. It's true that God wants us to sense His presence. He is more concerned that we trust Him than that we feel Him. Faith, not feelings pleases God. During times of spiritual dryness, we must patiently rely on the promises of God, not our emotions, and realize that God is taking us to a deeper level of maturity, because a relationship based on emotions is shallow.



No matter what I go through. No matter how far away God seems, I am reminded of Job. In a single day he lost everything, his family, his business, his health and everything he owned. For thirty-seven chapters, God said nothing. And there will be other times like this that will stretch our faith the most, times when life falls apart and God is nowhere to be found.

So how do you praise God when you don't understand what's going on in your life and God is silent? How do you stay connected to God during a crisis without communication? How do you keep your eyes on Jesus when they are full of tears?

Well, just like Job, even when our lives fall apart and God is silent, we have to find things we can praise God for regardless of the circumstances and how we might feel. Hang on to God's unchanging character. Remind

yourself what you know to be true about God. He is good. He loves us. He is with us. He knows what we are going through. He cares and he has a good plan for our lives.

Never doubt in the dark what God has revealed to you in the light. Don't be troubled by trouble, circumstances cannot change the character of God. God's grace is still in full force. He is still for you, even when you don't feel it. In the absence of conforming circumstances, Job held on to God's word. He said, "I have not departed from the commands of His lips, I have treasured the words of His mouth more than my daily bread." This trust in God's word caused Job to remain faithful even though nothing made sense. His faith was strong in the midst of pain.

When we feel abandoned by God yet continue to trust Him in spite of our feelings, we worship Him in the deepest way. If God never did anything else for us, we have to remember what God has already done. He deserves our continual praise for the rest of our lives because of what Jesus did on the cross. He died for us! This is the greatest reason for worship. Unfortunately, we forget the cruel details of the agonizing sacrifice He made on our behalf. Familiarity breeds complacency. Even before the crucifixion, the Son of God was stripped naked, beaten until almost unrecognizable, whipped, scorned and mocked, crowned with thorns and spit on, abused and ridiculed by heartless men, and treated worse than an animal. Then nearly unconscious from a loss of blood, He was forced to drag His cross up a hill and was nailed to it, and left to die the slow, excruciating torture of death by crucifixion.



As Jesus took all of mankind's sins and guilt on Himself. God looked away from that ugly sight and Jesus cried out in total desperation, "My God, My God? Why have you forsaken me?" Jesus could have saved himself, but then He could not have saved us. Not even my words can describe the darkness of that moment. Why did God allow and endure such ghastly, evil treatment? Why? So that we could be spared from eternity in hell and so we could share in His glory forever!

The Bible says Christ was without sin, but for our sake God made Him share our sin in order that in union with Him we might share the righteousness of God. Jesus gave up everything so that we could have everything. He died so that we could live forever. That alone is worthy of our continual thanks and praise! Never again should we wonder what our purpose in life is. Never again should we wonder what we have to be thankful for.

And always remember no matter what we go through, God never leaves us, even when God seems distant, His word has promised that He will never leave us, nor will he forsake us. Hebrews 13:5.

Remember Me in Your Prayers. Larry



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Love in Christ, Momm

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