SOUND THE TRUMPET IN PRAYER

**And if you go to war in your land against the enemy that opresseth you, then ye shall blow an alarm with the trumpets; and ye shall be remembered before the Lord your God, and ye shall be saved from your enemies (Numbers 10:9).**

To Be Fit For The Kingdom

What makes one fit for the Kingdom of God? Scripture tells us that our righteousness is as filthy rags (see Isaiah 64:6). So how do we measure up? With our human thinking this would be impossible. We could never achieve what we think we would need to in order to be right in God’s eyes. This is one of the reasons humanism is so appealing to many. Humanism allows us to make excuses for our behavior, and make our own rules instead of allowing God’s mercy, love, and power to work in our lives, which can be the very thing that move us towards righteousness as the goodness of God brings us to repentance. But humanism allows for rules that appeal to our flesh, and don’t involve God or change. Humanistic thinking is fear based, and does not allow for faith or love towards God or others, but gives a false sense of power, accomplishment, self-righteousness, and pride. Pride and shame then can dictate lives, which allows a wavering (up and down) in mood and behavior “sometimes known as bipolar mood disorder”. This allows destructive patterns of behavior to continue. Also, when a belief (stronghold) exists that one’s ways cannot be changed due to one’s humanity; it does not matter how many times this thinking results in a bad outcome. The individual bound by this thinking, which seems right to them (at least in their own eyes) regardless of the outcome, the behavior will continue. These are man’s ways, (humanism’s ways) that lead to destruction because they are not the way to life.

Consider the mindset of the drug addict. The drug addict has erected a god for themselves, created by human means, to ease their suffering. But this god is not a good master. It leads to destruction of body, soul, and spirit. Unfortunately, there are some who come to the living God, and still carry with them the drug addict mentality with self-destructive behavior sabotaging what could be their success in many areas. A heroin addict will take their problems to this drug, and hide like the proverbial ostrich; hiding her head in the sand, while destruction goes on around them. This is not a good solution to the problems that remain when the drug wears off. They do this to escape, but in reality they are caught in a trap because they keep looking back, and cannot forgive the past. Therefore, the past is always influencing the future. Feelings of unworthiness, and lack of faith that things can ever be different keep them in this cycle. Also, the law of the harvest that says we will reap what we sow can be hard to live with. However, with God all things are possible. And God can bring good out of the worst situations. God can live in our past, present, and future, but He does not operate in our past. He is a future God, who is drawn to disaster, but only so He can repair it. When things are brought up that were or should be buried, it is similar to digging up a rotting corpse.

Jesus said, **“No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God” (Luke 9:62).** This scripture was used in the context of those who had other things they had to take care of before following Jesus. One wanted to go back to bury his father, and Jesus replied, “let the dead bury their dead”. Another wanted to go back to bid farewell to their friends. Jesus did not mean that we should not take the time to grieve over those we lost. He was making reference to not living in the past. And there are some friends you will no longer be able to associate with if you want to walk with Jesus. Sometimes we must walk forward and never look back. We must begin to do the best we can where we are at, and with what we have.

Jesus spoke a well known parable about certain men who were given talents. He was likening the parable to an illustration of the Kingdom of Heaven. And of how a man traveling to a far county left a certain amount of talents (money) to three of his servants. To one he gave five, to another he gave two, and to yet another one. The first two invested what they had, and were rewarded with more as a result of their faithfulness. The servant who was given only one hid it in the earth because he thought his master to be a hard and unfair man. Why did he think this? Was it because he felt the master had dealt unfairly with others or blamed the things that had previously happened in his life on his master? The Bible does not tell us any of his reasons for his mistrust (other than his fear). It may be that the reason he was given only one talent is because he had not yet proven himself to be trustworthy. Therefore he was given one talent. Perhaps he was jealous of the other two servants, who he felt were given more than him. Maybe he was comparing what the others were given with what he was given? Whatever the case, the servant who buried his talent instead of doing something with it was found dissatisfactory for the Kingdom of God. We cannot despise the day of small things. If we will make use of whatever God has given us, and work with it to the best of our ability, we can see what we have been given profit ourselves and others. This is work fit for the Kingdom. BMLR

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Inmates, family members, and those who are interested can now access the monthly newsletter. Please visit **http://www.inspirationalwordsforinmatesandtheirfamilies.yolasite.com/** .The site is still under construction, and will soon have all copies of the newsletter since the column **Words from Behind the Wall** was started in 2007.

WORDS FROM BEHIND THE WALL

Michael Marshal paroled this past December after serving 22 years. He submitted many encouraging articles over the past few years. Well wishes go out to him, and let’s keep him in prayer, as he re-enters society, with the hope that he will find steady employment, the right people to associate with, and a good church to attend. Thank you for caring enough to pray for these important needs

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BE SUBJECTIVE

God is in control of everything, and for reasons unknown to man He appoints certain people into higher positions to serve His purpose. It may seem odd that certain evil people can gain favor, but leadership demands great responsibility. If they choose to use it in a negative way, then judgment would be their down fall. Most of the time our own rebelling is the cause for harsher ruling; we should always do our part and rely on God to take care of any unjust authorities. Many good Christians fear taking on the role leaving it open for anybody to take. A tyrant can’t do a thing if the position was never available. Good leaders take care of God’s people, and need their support. Pharaoh is said to have been serving God’s purpose. Jesus tells us to pay Ceaser what is due Ceaser. Even the bad forms of government work in His plan not only to teach us, but to set events in motion. As representatives of the Lord, it’s our job to obey local laws, and pay taxes because we are under them as we are under God. So follow the chain of command (Romans 13:1-7).

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TESTIFY OF HIS GLORY

When you speak to others about God, it’s alright if you are unable to do so as a great speaker or well educated person. We are not seeking to win people over by our own talents, which only fail. But by telling the truth, and speaking from a heart filled with the Spirit, we work best to testify of His works. God does things in our lives for His glory, and helps us along when we realize that fact. Focusing on the skills of a person leaves room for mistakes. The Lord’s power produces the results He wants anyway, and we must honor that and praise Him as we are (I Corinthians 2:1-5).

 **William Moctezuma**

THE SITUATION

“God is love”, according to I John 4:8, and He has love for us all. This is real, believe it or not, but we have to ask ourselves; do we love God back? I say this because in I John 8:32 we read, “And you shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free”. So here it is for us, if only we are free with Him. God tells us in John 10:26, “But you do not believe because you are not of my sheep, as I said to you”. So just by believing we must understand that God will show us His love, and as we grow closer to Him our eyes will open to the marvelous things. Until we actually accept God’s love, we will keep going in the same pattern receiving the same punishment for sin. God’s love provides the plan and way of redemption for sinful man. Remember, it was God’s love that sent Jesus Christ to the cross! That is everlasting love. This year is nourished with God’s love, and mercy, so let it start with God’s love, and your love with God. So we don’t remain forever lost for this is the situation. Amen **Patrick Douglas**

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BECOMING A BETTER LEADER

*“Only be thou strong and very courageous”*

My choices of five things required to be a greater leader, which one would consider worthwhile, is that you be all that you can be. Number one, Competence---discern your dominant gifts. Channel your energies into where you’re most likely to succeed humbly acknowledge your limitations, and help equip others to fill them. To do that you must first be secure in your own identity. Are you? Number two, Courage---God’s leaders aren’t necessarily the smartest, most creative people on the team, or even the first to identify an opportunity. No, they’re just the ones with the courage to step out and to go first. That’s why God told Joshua, “be thou strong and very courageous”. Number three, Clarity---Uncertain times require clear directions. The vision may come at once, but the steps are revealed over time. Don’t allow your lack of answers to leave you paralyzed; be clear about your goal, even though you’re not certain as to the details. Number four, Coaching---You may be better than most, but without a coach you will never be as good as you could be. Elisha needed Elijah. Timothy needed Paul. If you’re hoping to learn everything from personal experience, good luck---you’ll have to outlive Methuselah. Number five, Character---You can lead without character, but you can’t be a leader worth following. Character provides the moral authority necessary to bring together the people, and resources needed to fulfill God’s plan for your life. Your talent has the potential to take you places where your character can’t sustain you. That thought ought to humble you, and keep you on your knees.

 **Brandy Holmes**

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**Inmates, please submit your inspirational thoughts for Words from Behind the Wall to Beth Marie Rexford, C/O International Christian Fellowship, 9146 Lincoln Ave, Brookfield IL 60513. Office Phone: 708-387-9009. Thank you.**