SOUND THE TRUMPET IN PRAYER

**And if you go to war in your land against the enemy that oppresseth 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).**

God Deserves Righteousness

Where would this world be without the grace of God? The grace of God can be seen everywhere. There is much tragedy, and most is manmade. Some is just a result of living in a fallen world. Through it all, it is the grace of God that carries us through. The grace of God is extended to all; even those who have no recognition of it. While salvation is a gift that God has given through great and unimaginable sacrifice, we need grace to make it down that straight and narrow path to eternal life. We cannot benefit from a gift we never receive. Many are called, but few take the necessary steps to accept, know, and choose our Lord. The Spirit of God draws, but forces no one to come and eat of the bread of life or to learn His ways, and become a part of His kingdom. Grace alone cannot save us. Without righteousness, no man shall see God. While our righteousness is as filthy rags, it is the change of heart in the inner man that hungers and thirsts after righteousness. God sees the condition of our hearts. When the thoughts and intents of our hearts are righteous, grace will overrule our human faults. Grace will enable us know and become like the Lord Jesus Christ regardless of our failures. Grace is the activating force that enables us to rise above sin and the lowly things of this world.

Scripture tells us *“that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord (Romans 5:21).* The word “reign” in the above scripture literally means to rule. Grace rules or is in effect where righteousness is present. The Bible tells us that Abraham’s faith in God was counted as righteousness. Faith is required to please God, and to receive anything from Him. When we willfully sin, our disobedience “presumptuous sin” demonstrates a lack of faith in God. If we believed His word was true, we would not deliberately disobey Him. We would understand that there is a consequence for doing so. With a desire for righteousness in our heart, we want to follow God’s word. When we struggle, stumble or even fall; grace will be there to pick us up. The grace of God will rule where righteousness, faith, and love abound.

Faith is righteousness. That is why we see this scripture in the book of Revelation: *“But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death” (Revelation 21:8).* Faith gets its energy from love (see Galatians 5:22), and the Bible tells us that love is more powerful than death. Faith overcomes a multitude of sin when it is energized by love. Jesus said, *“If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love” (John 15:10).* We achieve righteousness through a sincere, heartfelt, and unconditional love for God. God’s grace can transcend situations that may seem eternally hopeless to us. This is because God sees the heart of man, and we cannot. If we believe that God gave us His all? If we believe He stepped down off His throne in heaven to manifest Himself in flesh and die for us? We should not want to embrace the filthy things that require death.

The writer used the word (ag-ah’-pay) in John 15:10 for the word “love” in the original Greek. Agape is a word used to describe God’s love. We do not have the ability to give agape love without the grace of God working in our lives. It is literally God’s love. This is how some are able to forgive the unforgivable. It is through God’s love and grace that people can somehow live through excruciating loss, and can still maintain a level of peace in their lives. It is through faith and love that we are able to demonstrate righteousness, and walk that straight and narrow path that leads to life. After all that God has done for us, why would we not want to live the lives He had intended for us? Even if we have to live with consequences of our actions, and things are not as we would like or as they could have been; we can still benefit from the grace of God. Let’s give God the honor He deserves. We can when we believe that God deserves righteousness for salvation. BME

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WORDS FROM BEHIND THE WALL

GOOD HABITS

The people around us greatly influence our character to the point we begin to speak, and even act like them. Peers pick up the good and bad, which is normal, but if you are trying to improve and become better, then there is only one who you should be spending time with. Philippians 4:9 tells us to make what we learn a habit. Paul constantly practiced, and preached what he gained from his relationship with the Lord. This is why any of us can have an open line to Him. So hang out, speak with, and study His way to receive the best habits.

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AS MEN

In I Timothy chapter 3, we read what it takes to be a great leader. Found in verse 2, are traits that are not easy, but at the same time not hard to build a strong character. These are the features needed for providing children with someone to look up to, and for a wife to feel protected. Verse 6 extends this message, showing that leadership starts in the household, and develops us into better men. Jesus walked as if everyone He encountered were family. And the better job we do in becoming good leaders in this world, the better we are accepted as preachers. **William Moctezuma**

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MAKE ALLOWANCE

“Make allowance for each other’s faults” (Colossians 3:13).

When it comes to forgiving, you can’t say it better than Tim Stafford did; “I would rather be cheated a hundred times than develop a heart of stone”. The Bible says, “Make allowance for each other’s faults, and forgive anyone who offends you.” You don’t get to choose who you will forgive. Love is a commandment, and forgiveness is an act of obedience. He has given us this commandment: Whoever loves God must also love his brother (see I John 4:21). You can’t be closer to God than you are to people you love least. God sets the bar high because grudges are like cancer, and forgiveness is the laser that removes them. Bitterness chains us to the past, destroys families, divides friendships, and sours relationships. Forgiveness is the key that unlocks the handcuffs of hate. Take your hurt feelings to God and say, “Point out anything that offends me” (see Psalm 139:24). It takes courage, but that’s the kind of prayer He answers. It gets easier as you grow in Christ; in the meantime, you have to work at it. As a child of God, His Spirit lives inside you. You’re no longer a slave to sin (see Romans 6:14). God knows it’s hard to forgive deep seated hurts, but He will give you grace to do it. To “make allowance” means to take a charitable view, and consider extenuating circumstances. People, as in you and I, can change and grow over time. So don’t insist on clinging to a limited, outdated view of them. Try to see others as they are today. Most people are doing their best, as am I, based on the knowledge and understanding I have now, so just give everyone a break!

**Brandy Holmes**

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KNOWING GOD’S WORD

If you were to die today, and God would ask you; “Why should I let you into heaven”? What would you say? Everyone gives different answers, (even us Christians). Like, “I’ve followed all the Ten Commandments” or “I go to church every Sunday”. The answer is crystal clear from God’s word. John 3:16 says, “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son, that who so ever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life”. Also, all of us have made promises that we haven’t kept. It might have been that circumstances played a part in making it impossible for us to fulfill them, or it may be that people changed their minds about keeping them. Not one of us can honestly say that they’ve kept every promise they’ve made, but there’s only one who can rightfully and truthfully say that He has fulfilled all of the promises He has made. That would be our good and gracious God. God has the power and authority to keep His word. And in case you didn’t know it, every promise. The Scriptures speaks, has been, is being, or will be fulfilled. It is impossible for God to break any promise, and if He did, He wouldn’t be God any longer, would He? **Charles Moctezuma**

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HEAVENLY

Hey parent, I hope we are all paying attention to the noise in our lives, and in our children’s lives. We and our children are being robotically engineered through Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, emails, phone calls, and computer games. When do we have time to be the voice in the heads of our children? Don’t let Silicon Valley raise your children or dictate every part of your life. Shut off everything at least 2 hours a day! No movies, no Xbox, no games! Take your kids for rides in the car, and talk to them! I know this is as hard as kicking oxycodone, but it will help you find out who your kids are, and remind you of who you are! We as parents need to step up to the plate. If you don’t, who will? Our kids are turning criminal, gangbangers, and all! I Manual Malave, see it every day, new brothers coming in on the new. You see more Black and Latino than any other race! This is the reason we need to holler at our kids. Cause if you don’t, they will end up down here at Pontiac Segregation doing hard time with these “Bugs”. So what I am trying to say is, please don’t forget that at one time we were all kids!

*In loving memory of our kids, who lost their lives because we did not have any time for them***.**

**Manual Malave**

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**FROM THE DESK OF THE EDITOR**

Greetings, I am hoping as I finish this month’s letter that all who read it are encouraging themselves in the Lord, and finding the peace that surpasses all understanding. Please remember that, no matter where you find yourself, the Lord Jesus Christ is always available to you. Without this hope, where would we be, and where will we go one day. Even the thief on the cross found himself in paradise when He knew who Jesus was. Happy Birthday to all with January, February, and March Birthdays! You are always thought of. And as always, Inmates, thank you for supporting Words from Behind the Wall.  **Beth Marie Evans**

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