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).**

A New Way of Thinking

The way we think leads to the way we act. Jesus said, “Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks”. Our thoughts become words; then our words become actions. We must arrest thoughts we know to be against God’s word before they become negative words or actions. We need to know God’s word if we are to have it to compare our thoughts to. Some thoughts are obviously bad, but others may be more subtle. There are thoughts that are connected to our human emotions. These are mindsets that were produced in childhood, and have been there all our lives. They may be the result of harsh words or abuse. We may have become accustomed to mindsets that produce feelings of shame and unworthiness. These are the most damaging of all. They affect the way we think about God, others, and ourselves. Shame and unworthiness lead to hopelessness and self destructive behavior, which includes drug and alcohol use, poor financial decisions, and other decisions that negatively affect one’s life.

Shame resulting from abuse also leads to rebellion against authority. This results in disobedience to common laws, a mindset that one is above the law (pride), destructive behavior, and again alcohol and drug use. Bottom line, it is a result of anger towards God. Since God created us, a mindset is formed where God is blamed for all of our imperfections. This mindset can be generational, and one that has been carried most or all of one’s life. To overcome, necessary steps must be taken towards becoming perfected in Christ by living according to His principles. Shame will prevent us from believing we can overcome, and from admitting, even to ourselves, that we need to change. Shame can cause pride. Pride/shame prevents us from admitting we need God to help us change; herein is the mindset of humanism. We believe we can be our own god. And this will get us in a lot of trouble. It is written, **“When pride cometh, then cometh shame: but with the lowly is wisdom”** (Proverbs 11:2). Shame/pride has many looking out from its behind iron bars, never able to admit that their choices and actions are the reason they are there.

The good news is that there is a way to overcome the negative effects of shame in our lives. We can change the way that we think. We can choose to take responsibility for our thoughts, actions, and lives. We can be free from destructive mindsets by the transformation and renewing of our minds. We do not have to live in eternal condemnation when we choose to retrain our thinking according to the mind of the One who can make all things new. We can reprogram our minds; not according to life’s circumstances, but according to the Word of God. **“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God”** (John 1:1). John was referring to Jesus, who is the light of the world. When we line up our thinking with the Word, it might not seem good to us all the time, but if we push forward to a “new way of thinking”, walking continually in faith, there will be no condemnation, regardless of past mistakes and choices. This is true no matter how bad those mistakes and choices are perceived to be. The Word tells us, **“Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon”** (Isaiah 55:7). We can be free from a life of shame and condemnation if we will choose a new way of thinking. BME

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WORDS FROM BEHIND THE WALL

TIME FOR SELF IMPROVEMENT

Isaiah 40:31 tells us that “Those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength”. This fact is so nice to hear since so many of us have something bringing us down. By the power of God, we shall out run trouble, and be able to move on, even after getting beat up by the world. Even though we are free of sin; thanks to Jesus’ sacrifice. Job 17:9 fills us in on another useful bit of knowledge to continue on a right path so our faith would grow stronger. Not only are we given the strength to endure, but also to better ourselves.

**William Moctezuma**

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MY GRATITUDE

I have a friend named John Montalvo. He saw a mean look on my face. He asked me if I had received bad news. I told him that I was mad because I didn’t receive any mail. He told me that I should be happy that I get mail because there are people who don’t get anything, and that’s when I realized I didn’t need more things to be thankful for, I just need to be more thankful. That is when I also realized that I needed to change my behavior, and it began with me letting Jesus change my heart. It’s time for us to learn from Christ, and make Him known. It’s time to let our spirit reflect the heart of God, and His wisdom. He knows the way, so we should follow His laws. We might have a lot of temptation on our personal road with Jesus, but in order to master our problems with temptation; we must run to God, and let Him master us. First we need to stop living in the shadows of yesterday, and walk in the light of today so we can have hope for tomorrow. God doesn’t love us because of who we are, but because of who He is. He gives us warnings to protect, and preserve us because true wisdom begins and ends with God. He sends us out to bring others in. He comforts us so we can comfort others. God is always in control behind the scenes. His purpose for today’s events won’t be seen until tomorrow. So be ready, and serve God by sharing His word with others. Love the person who sends you things more than the things they send. If you focus on Christ, you be able to see your life more clearly. Also, when you confess your sins to God, you are agreeing with Him on what you did wrong. Just remember in the midst of every trial, God is on our side. When you’ve been rescued by Him, you will want to show what He has done for you, and rescue others. Let your life tell the story of Christ’s love and mercy to the people around you. When you feel down, recharge your spiritual battery because you need to stay plugged in to the source of power. **Charles Moctezuma**

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DEPEND ON GOD! (Jacob was left alone” Genesis 32:24)

Like Jacob, I know how it feels to be “left alone”. When a loved one dies, or a friend leaves, or you walk through the fire of separation and divorce, no matter how “spiritual” we are, it still hurts! Emotional pain is to the soul what physical pain is to the body; it tells you something is wrong. It tells you that you need God to guide you through the challenges and upheavals of realigning your life to cope with what has happened. And the struggle doesn’t begin in earnest while you’re surrounded by people, it starts when you’ve been left alone. My Mother, Brenda Marcel George Bruce, passed on to heaven. I’ve been down this walk. There is no quick relief. You have to allow yourself to go through the grieving process in stages. Because if you don’t, you won’t have the grace to embrace it, express it, grieve it, release it, and go on to become stronger. Jesus said, “You will weep and mourn…but eventually your grief will turn to joy…and no one will take it away” (John 16:20-22 NIV). The fact is I can survive without others, but I can’t survive without God. That’s why He sometimes strips away everything that makes us dependent on people. He sends individuals into our lives to help us build our faith, and develop our character. When they’re gone, we are left with the assurance that God is in control. The loss of loved ones, like my grandparents, daughter, father, mother, and best friend develops my spiritual muscle, tests my resilience; shows me the scope of God’s power. When Moses died and Joshua was left in charge, God told him, “As I was with Moses, so will I be with thee” (Joshua 1:5). That’s something Joshua would never have learned while Moses was in the picture. It’s a lesson we can’t learn while we are looking to other humans for all our answers. In Mark 4:39, when Jesus ordered the winds and the waves to be quiet, the Bible says, “everything was calm”. In the midst of the storm, I’ve asked Him to come and stand in the bow of my boat (the center of my cell), and speak peace to what was upsetting me. And He is working on me through Antoinette, a dear friend to me, and my sister in Christ. **I dedicate this to my mother:**

**Ms. Brenda M. G. Bruce. I love you so much, and will miss you even more. Brandy Holmes**

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IN JESUS NAME---PRESS ON

Public humiliation is a hard blow. Pride is a snare to the soul, and shame a stronghold. Life in prison offers little privacy. When “humbling” circumstances come our way, it is rarely a private experience. Mockers watch: visits stop, funds get cutoff, a good job assignment is lost, Christian character is challenged by disciplinary or rumors gone wild. In such a close community as prison, there is nowhere to run or hide. Do we allow pride or shame to reign in our heart as Lord and Christ Jesus? There is power, strength, and wisdom to be obtained by pressing forward, for those who endure to the end (Matthew 24:12-13, Ecclesiastes 9:11). And we are not of those who draw back (Hebrews 10:39). I John 2:19 says, those who go out from us, they were not of us, for if they had been of us, they would have stayed with us. Like Christ, we, for the joy set before us, endure our cross. What joy is set before you? Ask God to show you, and expect to hear from Him. He is for you, not against you. He is fully aware of our sinful ways that we war against. He is our high priest. Our imperfections did not stop Him from reaching His goal, don’t let them stop you. Despise the shame, and in Jesus name---press on! I speak from experience. It happened to Jesus, so don’t’ let it stop you when those that sang your praises turn, and mock and despise you. I did not give up, but endured it. Disregarding the shame and mocking. I will share in His glory as I shared in the suffering. No one wants to share in the suffering, but it is the right of passage for those that want to have what those who endure to the end will receive. I see the glory of the Lord coming, a light at the end of this long tunnel. I had no hand to hold, no shoulder to lean on, but God’s. There will be no boasting for any; except the declaration of knowing Him in the power of His resurrection. And the fellowship of His suffering, being conformed to His death. Although we die daily, we do not suffer to the point of bloodshed striving against sin. Forsake the pride and despise the shame. All you forsake will be rendered back to you in this day and age, and in that to come (Mark 10:29-30). **Joyce Turner**

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Drugs, dope, alcohol, and smoke was the game. Making money was my thing. Now it’s time for a change. Prison life and death it taught, which was my fault. For I blame no one, but me. As I was blind, but now I can see, that it is no life for me. For I have caused pain and destruction. I was infested with corruption. All this and more, lower than dirt to all the people I hurt, as I was nothing then, and still nothing now. I am asking God to mend me somehow. Forgive me for what I’ve done, for hurting you and the son. Plant me again and help me grow into a better man you know. Take away the sorrow as I pray for tomorrow. Take away the filth and all my guilt. I have turned to hate, causing my life to be in this shape. Hold me up on this journey that I take to correct my mistakes. As I walk with my head up high. Save my life before I die. **Calvin Green**

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REFLECTIONS

Facing the mirror, it took a lot more than looking at my reflection to see things clearer…Yeah; I didn’t like what I saw. It appeared to be the devil smiling, looking back at me (ha ha). He came to steal and deceive, but I will not be a fool and believe. I’ve got to change my direction and make sure I’m walking in the light, and not the wrong intersection.

**Emanuel Fair**

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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.**