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WHAT WILL GET IN YOUR WAY?

“One day as He was teaching, Pharisees and teachers of the law, who had come from every village of Galilee and from Judea and Jerusalem, were sitting there. And the power of the Lord was present for Him to heal the sick. Some men came carrying a paralytic on a mat and tried to take him into the house to lay him before Jesus. When they could not find a way to do this because of the crowd, they went up on the roof and lowered him on his mat through the tiles into the middle of the crowd, right in front of Jesus. When Jesus saw their faith, He said, ‘Friend, your sins are forgiven.’”

Luke 5:17-20

What an awesome example of faith this was!!! Put yourself in the paralytic’s situation. You want to see Jesus, but there is a huge crowd in front of the house and there is no way for you to get to Him. Would you break through someone else’s roof in order to see Jesus? This man did. He wanted to see Jesus so bad that, in Mark 2:2-5, it says that they made an opening in the roof. That must have taken so much faith and courage to do, but the lesson that I learn from that paralytic is that nothing should get in my way to Jesus. There was no obstacle that was going to prevent him from being lowered right in front of Jesus. He could have waited outside until Jesus finished and then tried to get His attention. Or maybe he could have yelled at Him from a distance, but that was not good enough for him. He could have done what many people do and use his obstacle as an excuse, but he chose not to. He wanted a direct contact with Jesus Christ. He wanted to be right in front of Him because he wanted to be healed. I am sure that it must have been extremely inconvenient to get through the roof, but he thought it was worth it. As disciples of Jesus, we also need a direct contact with Him. Nothing short of intimacy with Jesus will get the results that we need in our Christian walk. Allowing our sin to keep us at a distance from Jesus will prevent us from enjoying the blessings and promises of God. We need to come close to Him in full repentance and be healed.

Are we able to do this alone? No. The paralytic could not have done it alone. We also are weak in our flesh, but God provides the strength to overcome any obstacles. One of the ways in which God provides help is through our brethren. The paralytic needed four men (Mark 2:3), but God has blessed us with many more. That man could not have gone through the roof by himself. He needed help from his friends and their strong arms. In the same way, we can help each other to persevere and finish the race, not letting anything get in our way. Notice that in verse 20 it says, *“When Jesus saw their faith...”* What they did for the paralytic was considered by Jesus as an act of faith. Our faith will not only benefit us, but also those around us who need our help and support. Your faith is a blessing to me and it helps me to persevere. We need each other’s strong arms, for they are in many ways the very arms of God, since we are part of His Body. From this example, I can understand why God didn’t place us in the world as isolated disciples. But, instead He placed us in His Church to have a purpose and to be interdependent. How far will you go to provide for the needs of the sick, especially in our congregation? Galatians 6:1-2 teaches us that another way to carry each other’s burdens, and therefore fulfill the law of Christ (which is love), is to gently restore one another spiritually when we are struggling with sin. Praise God for the faith of our brothers and sisters.

The faith of the paralytic got him more than he even wanted from God. He wanted physical healing, but the first thing that Jesus blessed him with was spiritual healing. I am sure Jesus could see that he was a paralytic and that he went through much trouble to get to Him in order to be physically healed, but Jesus could also see the paralysis of his soul in sin. That was the paralytic’s greatest need. In Jesus’ mind, the healing of his soul was more important than the healing of his body, but as we keep on reading, Jesus also healed him physically. Trust Him, for He is able to do more than we ask or imagine (Ephesians 3:20).

The paralytic was saved by faith and his faith was shown by what he did. In the same way, let us show our faith in God by not letting anything get in our way. I thank God for the faith of so many of our brethren that have shown incredible faith and perseverance through their illnesses and difficulties. Their love for God and the Church motivates me to keep on running the race and not give up. The paralytic’s friends would not have gone through the trouble of making an opening through a roof, carrying him over, and lowering him to the feet of Jesus unless he had a great desire to see Jesus. As our desire to do the will of God increases, His help and strength will overflow into our lives as well. *“Consider Him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.”*

Hebrews 12:3

Love,

Charlie Gómez

“Let your Light so shine...” Matthew 5:16

LOVE ONE ANOTHER

“This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down His life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers.” 1 John 3:16

If I know the love of God and have some sort of relationship with God, it will be apparent in the way I treat my brothers and sisters. The times that I have been selfish loudly demonstrate the state of my spirituality. When I don't love you, I'm letting you know that I need love. Like Jesus encouraged us in Matthew 5:43-48: *“Don't just love those that love you, but prove your love of God by loving those who don't love you.”* To do this, I must have the attitude of Christ: He unselfishly gave up His life to do good for us! I need to continually renew my mind so that this attitude may be present at all times! This is difficult!

At the core of a selfish, unloving heart is lack of communication with God and therefore with His brothers. If there is any communication in this state, it will reflect the hatred and sin in that person's heart. Since our mouths speak what is in the heart, we need to make sure that our hearts are where our treasure is---> hopefully for you, *in heaven* (Matthew 6:19-21).

God's love is unconditional. Do you know that He loves unbelievers as much as He loves you? Do you know that He loves you even when you are deceived in your sin? Remember, His love is *unconditional!* He loves you whether you are heaven bound or hell bound. It is the salvation from hell that is conditional upon your faith in Christ. This is why we are saved by grace, **THROUGH FAITH**, in Jesus (Ephesians 2:8-9). Our love needs to reflect that godly love ----> loving perfectly, as our heavenly Father loves. This is to be perfect in love: to look to be givers of goodness in our relationships, not takers.

By Pedro Gelabert

“The Lord added to their number...” Acts 2:47 Baptisms

DATE	NAME	TOWN
04/02/03	Chris Wood.....	Pittsburgh
04/02/03	Angela Alvarado.....	Riverhead
04/09/03	Christopher Munna.....	Smithtown
04/13/03	Ryan Senn.....	Centereach
04/16/03	Jeffrey Asselta	Rocky Point

“They first gave themselves to the Lord...” 2 Corinthians 8:5

Weekly Budget: \$ 6,000

DATE	ATTENDANCE	CONTRIBUTION
04/06/03	329	\$ 6,798
04/13/03	292	\$ 6,865
04/20/03	361	\$ 5,895
04/27/03	306	\$ 5,797

Can You Handle It?

It seems that there are endless books written on the topic of “Does Jesus Care?” or “Why do Bad Things Happen to Good People?” These are questions that we’ve all asked at one time or another in our own lives, especially in the midst of trouble. What argument can we prepare in response to questions like these? How do we handle such faith destroying ideas when they nag at our very soul? I have a wonderful lesson on tape by a sister named Carole Biggs. She addresses this topic, “Does Jesus Care?” I have listened to this lesson many times and it never fails to strengthen me in my walk and I’d like to share a few thoughts from this lesson with you.

She uses the story of John the Baptist in Luke 7:18-28. We know that John was someone very special to our Lord. Yet, although John served God with all of his heart and with all of his soul, what happened to him? He ended up in prison. This Scripture account tells of how John sent two of his disciples to Jesus to ask Him, “*Are you the one who was to come, or should we expect someone else?*” Can you imagine how John must have been feeling? It is cold and dark in his cell and he is wondering if he’s ever getting out. He is probably starting to wonder, “Is this all real? Is this all worth going through? **Jesus, do you care!?**” Jesus replied to the messengers, “*Go back and report to John what you have seen and heard: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the Good News is preached to the poor. BLESSED IS THE MAN WHO DOES NOT FALL AWAY ON ACCOUNT OF ME.*” **Not a word about John getting out of prison!** What a startling response from our loving Lord. Where is the promise of deliverance? Yet sisters, herein lays the solution to handling these seemingly difficult questions...renewal of the mind required!

I believe Jesus is saying, “Blessed is the man who will not fall away regardless of what I do.” Jesus is saying to John, to you and to me, “**Can you handle My will, My way. Can you handle My timing, can you just live your life for My glory and not become embittered by My will and by the way I do things, or because you can’t explain it all?** We all know that John did get out of prison...straight from prison to Heaven! This is how it was then, for John, and this is how it is now, for us. The truth is that Jesus didn’t come to bail us out, or to right every wrong, or to settle every issue, or to take away every trial that we have (2 Corinthians 12:7-10). He came to give God glory and that’s our job, too. To give God glory in any situation we find ourselves. This is an essential conviction of the renewed mind.

Jesus cares deeply for us. He will never forsake us; neither will He ever abandon us (Hebrews 13:5). He will make us sufficient to go through any trial we face; we can “handle it” (2 Corinthians 12:10) through Him. And that is enough. We must constantly remind ourselves of these things. We must engrave these new convictions on the tablets of our minds. They must be readily available when Satan attacks our hearts. Praise God, we have a Shepherd when we walk through the darkest valley. Take God at His Word. Commit Scriptures, like Psalm 23, to memory and use them as a defense against such questions and the doubts that they imply.

We must consider what James said in James 1:2-4. God looks at us as eternal beings and allows our faith to be tested for our benefit. We can’t explain it all because we get so caught up in our physical lives; we only look at the here and now. We forget that this world is not our home; we are only pilgrims here (1 Peter 2:11 KJV). God said, in John 16:33, “*in this world you WILL have trouble,*” and He also reminds us in Psalm 103:2-5 to “*forget not all His benefits!*”

The answer to the question, “Does Jesus Care?” is YES! There is no doubt—the cross answers that question loud and clear! When faced with difficulties and uncertainties, let us hang on to this truth and ask ourselves this question instead, “No matter where life takes us, CAN WE HANDLE IT for His glory?”

Submitted by Carolyn Shlesinger

“For the building up of the Body...”

Ephesians 4:12

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- 📖 We will not meet for Wednesday night class on May 7th (Long Island) and May 28rd (City) 2003.
- 📖 If you would like to order a cassette tape of a past sermon or seminar, please see Rob Dixon.
- 📖 If you would like to send a Church bulletin or a Bible study to an interested relative/friend on a regular basis, please contact our brother Jack Peisel.
- 📖 All announcements and address/telephone changes should be submitted to Derek Peterson.

MISSIONARY SUPPORT

- ✚ Good News Stand.....Sayville, New York
- ✚ Paolo Di Luca.....Italy
- ✚ Apologetics PressInternational
- ✚ We Care Ministries.....West Monroe, Louisiana
- ✚ Ron Clayton.....India

“Your faith toward God has gone forth...”

1 Thessalonians 1:8

COMMUNITY BIBLE CLASS MINISTRIES

Long Island Ministry.....(Wednesday 7:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.).....Robert Carr.....(631) 348-7322
New York Institute of Technology Chapel, Carleton Avenue, Central Islip, NY

City Ministry.....(Wednesday 7:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.).....Pedro Gelabert(646) 226-2361
Plattdeutsche Restaurant, 1132 Hempstead Turnpike, Franklin Square, NY

UPCOMING KINGDOM EVENTS

For anyone wanting to use his/her vacation in a fruitful way, take a vacation to help bring souls to Jesus. :) Join a “We Care Ministry” soul winning team and help bring people to the Lord. Learn the techniques of the “We Care Ministry” team leaders: Larry West, Bob Danklefsen, and Joe Barker. Room and board will be provided. If you have any questions or need more information, please contact Bob Carr.

We Care Campaign Itinerary

2003	Location
May 16 - 18	Holland, MI (Seminar only)
May 23 - 25	Palmdale, CA (Seminar only)
June 19 - 29	Laurel, MD
July 24 - Aug 3	Houston, TX
September 4 - 14	Wenatchee, WA