

VOICE OF CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

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PUTTING THE WILL OF GOD ON DISPLAY “Guilt Free and Forgiven”

Jesus got what I deserved so that I could get what He deserved! You have seen in this study that lives of intimacy should lead us to do God’s will on earth as it is in heaven. We also have seen how our minds should be the gate keepers of the miraculous and must be renewed if we are to see reality from God’s perspective. We have seen how revelation must be put into action, and that miracles are tutors and opportunities to change the way we live from that point on.

Now I want to pause and talk about the common obstacles people come up against as they seek to live in the supernatural with renewed minds. I heard a story of a European family who wanted to move to the United States. They worked hard and saved enough money to take a ship across the Atlantic. They also saved as much as they could to buy cheese and crackers, provisions they could eat as a family in the small ship’s cabin they would occupy. They boarded the ship and days and weeks went by. The family huddled in their cabin eating their meager provisions, all the while listening to the footsteps and laughter of people in the hallways on their way to eat in the banquet room. On the last night of their long sea journey the captain announced they would make landfall in the United States the next day. The father decided to celebrate by taking the family to the banquet room where everyone else on the ship had been eating for three weeks. He approached the captain and asked how much the meal cost. The captain looked at him in surprise and said, “You mean you haven’t been eating there? Those meals were included in the price of the fare.”

I’ve related this story to you in order to say that I strongly believe that many Christians eat cheese and crackers, in spiritual terms, when our “fare” bought us a full banquet. When I say a “full banquet” I’m not talking about financial wealth, although God destroyed the power of poverty at the Cross. I’m talking about salvation in it’s fullness which translates into the forgiveness of sin. I have discovered that too often Christians live under the influence of yesterday’s failures, blemishes and mistakes. No faith! When we do, we depart from heaven’s reality and take up earth’s reality which involves the accepting of sin’s guilt penalty. By doing so we depart from the normal Christian lifestyle and live under the influence of a lie. Needless to say, this lie halts the renewing of our minds and keeps us from living in the “everyday miraculous” that should be normal for every born again believer.

All of the above brings me to ask the question, why do God’s children receive God’s forgiveness but constantly live under the shadow of their failures? It is my belief that many Christians are willing to live under the guilt and shame of bad decisions from yesterday because they think it helps them walk in humility. What I find disturbing is that this so called humility causes them to get down in the mouth and dwell on their shortcomings. Pastor Bill Johnston

calls this “internalizing” your guilt. He also teaches that this internalizing of guilt causes a person to focus on their character problems, which in turn causes more guilt and condemnation. I agree with this one hundred percent! Almost every time people will then feed these thoughts of guilt and shame with their unrenewed mind, and the power of agreement then comes into play and their problem is multiplied in size. The damage done to those believer’s emotions and thought life is horrendous. Then there are other people who similarly resist forgiveness because they don’t want to be prideful. It seems that remembering makes them feel good, but it’s actually a subtle form of pride. Some Christians moan and groan, “I’m not worthy.” Of course, we’re not worthy! It’s time we get over it and live the Christian life anyway. Living under yesterday’s condemnation doesn’t make us more humble. If anything, it keeps us focused on ourselves instead of on the Lord.

All of the above causes us to reach the point that we must find the root of this disorder. Why? Because as long as Christians operate under guilt and condemnation they will not see reality from God’s perspective. As I see it, the root of men operating in “earth’s reality” is based on the fact that there were two trees in the Garden of Eden that challenged the course of the entire human race—the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil and the Tree of Life. These same two “trees” continue to challenge us. When we become Christians these challenges do not end—they may increase. Many times we will have to choose between the fruit of these trees. It is between them that lies the focal point of heaven’s reality or earth’s reality, between the Kingdom of Heaven or the Kingdom of this present evil age. The Tree of Knowledge and the Tree of Life are symbolic of two spiritual lineages or “family trees.” The Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, is a history of two lineages. Understanding these lineages can help us to understand the most common errors besetting the entire human race, including those that have continually misled the Church. It’s important that we understand that satan did not tempt Eve with the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge just because of the Lord’s prohibition. He tempted her with it because the source of his power was rooted in that tree. That source of power is the causing of man to view all things based on the knowledge of good and evil or from earth’s reality.

In next month’s lesson we will look at how the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil is a powerful Biblical model of the Law. I will be teaching on the subject, “THE POWER OF SIN IS THE LAW.” Until then, may God bless and keep each of you.

Gene R. Brown, Associate Pastor

DEAR CHURCH,

Hello Everyone, Wow! This missionary has been so blessed by our Lord. I know I am the most blessed woman alive! God has just blessed me more than I can ever imagine. We have had the power of His presence in all of our services thus far in South Africa. Many testimonies have been shared about the evidence of His presence. People are being saved, healed, and set free from the powers of darkness. Glory! He is an awesome God surrounding us with His love. I can not thank Him enough for all He has done for me.

On the 4th of May after a ladies meeting, a friend of ours, Jill, took us to her cottage in beautiful Rosetta. It is in the mountains where the weather is much cooler and is a little over an hour and a half drive from Durban. The scenery was beautiful on the way. The only way it could

have been better to me would have been to have my mother with me so she could enjoy it also.

When we arrived and unpacked, I looked out my window of my room and was beholding a vision the Lord had given me a few days before. I had shared the vision with Ms. Mary and Ralf. I began to cry as I looked in the natural at what God had shown me in the Spirit a few days earlier. In the vision, I saw myself following a man with long white hair wearing a long biblical time robe, walking through very tall grass. He was carrying a rod. I followed him to a body of water and on the way I saw jackals laying down in the grass. When we came to the water we stopped and began to pray. The water began to come up into the grass we were standing on and the jackals arose. I asked the Lord what He was showing me and He told me to read Isaiah 35 again. I knew then He was showing me more of what He showed me through the vision in January of 2005.

Briefly, to refresh your memory, in January of 2005, I saw a vision of myself riding a white horse in the desert on a black paved highway into an old ghost town. I had no idea what it meant but the Lord told me to read Isaiah 35. It talks about the desert rose blooming, the water flowing in the desert, telling the people not to fear, and then the blind eyes opening, lame walking, and deaf hearing. I knew God was talking to me but I did not understand. In May 2005, Susan and I took Mamma to San Francisco for a gift. We went to Yosemite and ordered by God followed His directions to the desert to the place He has shown me in the vision. The name of the place was Randburg, Ca. It was discovered by 3 men, 2 of which were from Randburg, South Africa. They named it this because the gold was the same color and quality as SA. In 2007, I came to South Africa for the first time. God had quite a plan for me. The first place I preached was Randburg, South Africa, in a jail. I was here for 6 weeks. Everywhere Ms. Mary and I went the water of the Spirit flowed. It was an awesome time. One other thing, the woman God used to put me with Ms. Mary was Rose, when the men were out of funds in California and about to lose their claim a woman named Rose gave the money to save it, and in SA a lady named Rose was fasting and praying when the Lord showed me the first vision in Jan. 2005, asking the Lord to send someone to teach their church of the Holy Spirit which is where we had our last three services in SA in 2007. I was prophesied to in 2006, before all of this came about, and the prophet told me he saw a five petaled white desert rose that was very important to the ministry call on my life. You can see that three of the petals had been revealed before this trip. God told me before I left He was going to reveal things to me.

Now back to Rosetta, South Africa. The welcome sign to Rosetta says, "Welcome to Rosetta, the Rose of the Midlands." Yes, I cried when I saw this and the scene from my window in my room. I walked down to the tall grass and followed it to the water. I just prayed in the Spirit asking the Lord to tell me what He wanted me to know. On Saturday, I wanted to walk back through the reeds and rushes to the water. Another missionary named Keith and his wife Gill had also come to stay in Rosetta. They wanted to walk with us. He had polio when he was a child so he walks with a cane. He led the way. Yes, he has white hair and the cane, so I cried with Holy Ghost chill bumps on the way to the water. My prayer was, "Father what are You showing me?" I do not have the full revelation yet, but it has sure been a faith builder to see in the Spirit, read it in the Word, and be taken in the natural to see it with my eyes. My faith just grows stronger and my trust deeper. Oh, how I love Jesus because He first loved me. He is truly the best Friend I ever had. He is always there wherever I am; leading me into a deeper walk and revelation of Himself. Well, here is another petal of that desert rose. I know my Father will continue to reveal the rest of the story to me as I trust and follow His lead.

We came to Empangeni on Wednesday, arriving just in time to go to a ladies meeting. We spoke at another ladies meeting on Thursday. We had a good time sharing with the ladies. Many were touched by the power of His love. After the meeting we went to the mall with Charles to get some things for dinner. I bought a couple of DVDs from the Christian Book Store that I had enjoyed watching at Charles' house. They have praise music playing with some of my favorite songs to pictures and video of African wildlife and scenery. I know my grandchildren will enjoy them.

Friday morning early, 5:50 AM, we left to go on a safari. Maureen, Charles' wife, packed us a nice picnic and we left to pick up Allen, an elder in Charles' church, to come along with us. We had a wonderful day. The scenery is beautiful on the way as we drove through Zululand. The animals are not fenced so you must keep your eyes open at all times. When we arrived at the park and went through the gate, we saw wart hogs. Some of them are huge. We had a huge male elephant walking down the road toward us. He has authority, so we had to go in reverse until he decided to go his way away from the road. Next, was a lioness in the area where we were going to have our picnic. The ranger told us it was seven lions about 30 minutes earlier. Needless to say, we changed the location of our picnic. We saw every species we wanted to see but a leopard. The big 5 in Africa are lion, elephant, water buffalo, rhinoceros, and leopard. We saw all of them but the leopard. We also saw zebra, impala, giraffe, many different birds, very rare black rhinoceros, and many others. We were very blessed because many people who have been living here for many years have never seen lions, black rhinos or elephants. How awesome is our God. He blessed us with this wonderful gift, a safari that did not cost us anything and sighting most of the wildlife. I have some wonderful pictures.

Today, we had breakfast at the harbor. We watched the ships while we had our meal and enjoyed the view. Charles took me down to the coastline to take some pictures. This afternoon I went to a baby shower with Maureen for one of the young ladies at the church. I had a nice time and saw an African Baby Shower. The expectant mother is dressed in very special attire for the shower. When she came out, I laughed so hard. She had on a t-shirt that was tied up at the breast; her big belly was painted with a smiley face in red, green, and blue paint, a nappy (diaper made from a blanket) over her jeans, and her earrings were pacifiers hanging from silver loops. The custom is she must guess who the gift is from and what it is before she can open it. If she guesses wrong, she must suck a bottle with juice in it, suck a big pacifier of candy, and take a bite of chocolate that has been melted with peanuts and served from a baby diaper made to look like a bowl. It was a lot of fun.

Tomorrow is Mother's Day. We will be preaching here in Empangeni and then return to Durban for the rest of our stay in South Africa. I want to say Happy Mother's Day to all of you and I miss you all very much. I am sending you all a big hug and kiss via the Holy Spirit until I get home to give you one. God bless you all abundantly above all you can ask or think.

Your Missionary, Bess Graham

(Bess will be back home this week, and may be at church on Sunday, May 30th)

CONTINUE TO PRAY FOR OUR PASTOR AND HIS FAMILY. HE IS RECOVERING WELL FROM HIS SURGERY AND EXPECTED TO BE BACK SOON.

THE ROMAN ROAD

A Study By Mike Woods

The most quoted scripture in the Bible is John 3:16, **“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”** In my opinion, this statement embodies the heart of God and the hope of every person that trusts in Jesus. We have believed and therefore we hope in the eternal life promised in God’s Word. But there is more to this message. God’s love today is not just shed abroad over the believers. He loves all people equally—saved and lost. It is only by His great unconditional love that any have the opportunity to be saved; so His love is ever present and His grace is lavishly spread over His creation.

God uses us to share that message of love, grace and hope. Do you remember when you were saved? There was a message and there was an unction of the spirit within you to move forward into God. You could not buy it or earn it. Salvation is a free gift—that’s where grace comes in. And it is for everyone—that’s where love comes in. Now that you are saved, you have an opportunity to share your testimony and His message to others. It is a message of your heart, but most of the scriptures can come from the Book of Romans, which is why it is called the “Roman Road.”

Romans 3:23, **“For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.”** It doesn’t do any good to argue with a person that feels self-righteous or justified. Only present the case that the only way to know God is to accept His Son, Jesus. No one is exempt from sin, and no one has the glory of God without following the path that leads to salvation through Jesus. Eternal life is for those that know Jesus.

Romans 6:23, **“For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ, our Lord.”** In our lost condition, we may have felt alive. But we were eternally lost and doomed without Jesus. Now we have life and our life should be filled with the joy and peace of God. God is not the author of confusion or sin. He brings life, in this life and the one to come. Without Jesus, we are eternally dead—physically and spiritually.

Romans 5:8, **“But God commendeth his love toward us in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”** We know that Jesus came as a babe in a manger, and became the Savior of the world. He became our sacrifice, once for all. He bore our sickness, disease and sorrows—but He also took our sins upon Himself. We can stand before our Heavenly Father and declare ourselves worthy, not because of anything at all that we have done, but because of everything that Jesus has done. His blood makes us worthy to stand in God’s presence.

Romans 10:13, **“For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”** Are you a “whosoever?” He did not single out a particular group or race. All that will can call upon His name. It is not God’s intent that any should perish, but that all should be saved (2 Peter 3:9). He has cast a broad net of grace; yet, many are so involved in the world system that they don’t want to be gathered in.

Romans 10:9, **“That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.”** This is not just an idle statement. It is a promise from the Creator of the Universe. He has decreed that all may be saved, and this is how—just believe in His Son. If God had said pay one million dollars or perform some great feat, then we all would literally kill ourselves to accomplish it.

Why? Because it would be a badge of honor to the world—"I'm special. Look at what I've done. Bestow honor upon me for my accomplishment. I am one of perhaps one million total that has been successful at this feat. The rest of humanity are all losers." This is what the Word says about that, **"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God—Not of works, lest any man should boast."** (Ephesians 2:8-9)

God did not create losers. Every part of His creation is designed to win, to be successful, to overcome the enemy, and to enjoy life. Accepting Jesus as Lord and Savior is only the beginning of a life filled with the joy and peace of God. As Jesus presented Himself as a sacrifice for our sins, we now present ourselves to be used of Him in service to His body, the Church. In Romans 12:1-2 we read, **"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."** We can now know the will of God. To do so, we must commit ourselves to His service. That commitment is a life long presentation of ourselves to God. Many fear this level of commitment because they love their lives in the world. God never intended to place us into bondage to His service—rather He gives us a burden of service and then He carries it for us. What He desires is to see our willingness to commit, and then He blesses us for taking those steps in faith. As we grow in our level of responsibility, He will increase our capacity to serve Him. He never places more than we can bear, but He also challenges us to be more than we ever thought we could be. That's because He knows us better than we know ourselves.

You may know someone that needs this message—lost or saved. We all need to be reminded of where we came from and the love of our Heavenly Father. Blessed be His Holy and Righteous Name!!!

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**BLESS THE LORD,
O' MY SOUL!!!**