



Christian Fellowship Prison Newsletter

January 2025

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Bonifay, FL

The goodness of God has always been there to protect me even though I didn't realize it for most of my life. Things started happening to me when I was pursuing lust and I blamed God and even denied Him. I was 370 pounds and had a blood pressure that was over twice the normal BP. The normal is about 70/100. Mine was 200/214 when I first got arrested, the nurses and doctor said they were surprised that I was still alive. Things happened and I ended up in suicide watch. While I was in the suicide watch cell, Jesus revealed Himself to me. Jesus spoke to me in what I thought was an audible voice, but the other guy in the cell didn't seem to hear Him. He told me that He loves me and He is always with me. He confirmed His relationship with me by referring to me as His son. When He spoke to me, I felt an indescribable peace. Since then, I've re-dedicated my life to the Lord and want to learn more about Him. I know now that God wants to use me for His kingdom, that's why He didn't allow me to die with the BP that I had. **R.H.**

Love's conquest

I stood upon the shore, and saw the rocks
Resist the onslaughts of the mighty sea,
And when I thought how all the countless shocks they had withstood through an eternity,
I said, to wear away this solid main
The ceaseless efforts of the waves are vain.

But when I thought how they the rocks had rent,

And saw the sand and shingles at my feet
(Poor passive remnants of resistance spent)
Tumbled and tossed where they the waters meet,
Then saw ancient landmarks beneath the waves,
And knew the waters held the stones their slaves.

I saw the mighty works the water wrought
By patient softness and unceasing flow;
How they the proudest promontory brought
Unto their feet, and massy hills laid low;
How the soft drops the adamant wall
Conquered at last, and brought it to its fall.

And then I knew that hard resisting sin
Should yield at last to love's soft ceaseless roll
Coming and going, ever flowing in
Upon the proud rocks of the human soul;
That all resistance should be spent and past,
And every heart yield unto it at last.

L.R.

Texarkana, TX

My name is Derek Bailey and I am from Omaha, Nebraska. Currently, I am 41 years old and an inmate at FCI Texarkana. I came to the Lord in 2019. All my life I've been a believer in Jesus, except I still lived my life in sin. In 2019 I struggled with meth and pornography on a daily basis. In my heart, I wanted to change, but I was powerless. I'll never forget my plea to God to save

me from destruction. I told God that I needed His help, I would commit my life to Him if He would help me. My lust for drugs and pornography was still there, but I felt as if I had control back over my thoughts. I started reading my Bible, soaking in the words like a dry sponge in water. I joined a church, singing and praying daily. Slowly, I stopped using drugs. Slowly I stopped thinking about pornography. My cravings changed from simple things to craving God. I was being filled with His Spirit, allowing it room in my heart. I felt as if I now had a direct contact to God.

In early summer 2020 I lost interest in the church I was attending. The message was slowly turning to money. Need more, donate more, etc. I told God my thoughts, I didn't want to attend that church anymore. It didn't feel like home. So I asked him to direct me to a church. He saw it for me. After visiting three or four, I found one that felt bright, inviting, with smiles everywhere. I felt God pushing me ahead, saying "Here, go son, this is for you." I started to look forward to Sunday services. I started getting involved with church groups and volunteer groups at church, and at this point I had been around a year of no drugs. I needed to celebrate!

In August 2020 the church had a huge summer baptism event at an outdoor amphitheater with music, food trucks, and several messages from all the pastors from the main church and several of the local sister churches. The Lord had helped me as I asked. It was my turn to keep my end of the deal. On a warm August Sunday afternoon, I died to my old self, and arose out of my chilly steel tub baptized into God's family. From

that point on, my life puzzle of broken pieces was being put together, with previous legal troubles, hanging around me. With prison being inevitable, I still didn't quit on God. I got an apartment, job, and a new car all on my own. Making deposits and down payment I earned with my own hands. It felt great. I built my credit up, had credit cards that I paid on time and furnished my place in a few short months. I thank God for all of it, because without Him it wouldn't have been possible. In May 2023, my legal troubles ended with a prison sentence. I lost everything: apartment, car-repoed, defaulted credit cards, you name it. But I remembered the Lord giveth it and the Lord taketh away. But it's OK, because my faith hasn't been rattled. I still pray to God, thanking Him, telling Him I trust him. **D.B.**

Crawfordville, Florida

When I was young, (before I knew of God's Trinity), from birth to around the age of 16, I grew up going to a Baptist Church because that's just the way it was on both my mom and dad's side of the family. I never got to know God, His son, Jesus, or the Holy Spirit. I had just heard of them from hearing the pastor preach, the choir singing, Sunday school, and talking with my family. But all that went in one ear and out the other. I was only there as a child because they wanted me to be, not because I wanted and needed to be. So around 16 years of age, I stopped going to church and put my Bible away. That's when I thought my life of sinning began. Long story short, I broke all the 10 Commandments and close to all the rest of them by the time I was 41 years old and far away from God.

So at the age of 41, I'm sitting in a jail once again for like the 30th time. For the first time ever, I am facing three life sentences, and like most

people who don't have God in their lives, I turned to Him when I was in trouble. But this time was truly different. For the first time in my life, I literally cried out to God in the life of sin I realized that I was born into. I told God right then and there that I fully surrendered myself to Him, including my will. I said God, please take the wheel. I'm so tired of all these wrecks I call living. I want to ride with you for the rest of my life. That is how, and when I placed my life with all my faith in my father God, His son, Jesus Christ, and His Holy Spirit. I was baptized when I was 10 years old at Greater Union Baptist Church in Pensacola, Florida in the month of February 1990 about two weeks after my birthday, and three weeks after my dad killed my mother and took his own life. Since I have accepted God and Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior, I've wondered if that baptism covered me and I've come to the conclusion that yes it most certainly did because looking back on my life I know that for a fact, God and His son Jesus Christ have always been there for me. I am currently incarcerated until January 2031. I'm housed at Wakulla Correctional Inst. where I attend TUMI (The Urban Ministry Institute) trying to earn my certification industry and six college credits toward my degree in Christian ministry. I also attend chapel services on Thursday, Saturday and Sunday every week. I used to mentor on Fridays in the chapel, but due to the increasing course work associated with TUMI I don't anymore. But I continue to mentor around the compound when I feel God leading me to do so. I also started attending the prayer and share sessions that meet every Saturday at 10:45 AM in the chapel about two months ago. When I leave prison, I plan to find a good church that's firmly rooted in God's Word and to serve His will, and

purpose for me when and wherever. This is my testimony, may all the glory, honor, and praise be to our Father, His son, Jesus Christ, and His Holy Spirit. **J. M.**

Standing at The Portal

Frances R. Havergal

1. Standing at the portal of the opening year,
words of comfort meet us hushing every fear,
spoken through the silence by God's loving voice,
tender, strong and faithful, making us rejoice.

Refrain:

Onward, then, and fear not,
children of the day,
for God's word shall never, never pass away.

2. "I, your God, am with you: do not be afraid;
I will help and strengthen; do not be dismayed,
for I will uphold you with my own right hand;
you are called and chosen in my sight to stand."

3. God will not forsake us and will never fail;
God's eternal covenant ever will prevail.
Resting on this promise, what have we to fear?
God is all-sufficient for the coming year.

Send your testimony letters to:

Christian Fellowship

Prison Ministries

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