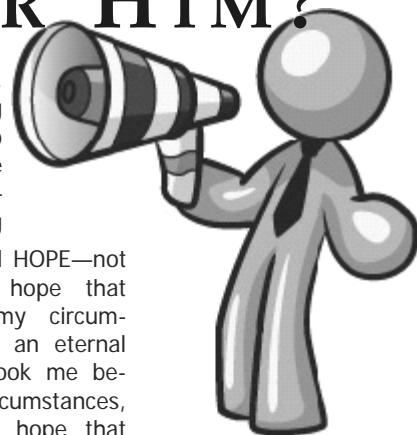


THE REDTHREAD

CAN YOU HEAR HIM?



THE GIFT OF SALVATION

Acknowledge to yourself and to God that you have sinned (Romans 3:23).

In sorrow for your sins, turn from them to God and ask His forgiveness (Isaiah 55:7).

By faith receive the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior, believing that He died in your place on the cross (John 3:16).

BETWEEN TIMES

'HEARING GOD' BIBLE STUDY

GOD'S VOICE—1
Revelation 1:10-15

GOD'S VOICE—2
1 Kings 19:1-14

GOD'S VOICE—3
John 10:1-16

GOD'S VOICE—4
Matthew 17:1-8

GOD'S VOICE—5
Luke 9:20-27

MY HEARING—1
Ezekiel 33:30-33

MY HEARING—2
Matthew 7:24-27

MY HEARING—3
Luke 8:11-15

MY HEARING—4
James 1:22-25

MY HEARING—5
Revelation 22:17-21

WHY & HOW

THE RED THREAD exists to be an encouragement to the men and women currently separated from family and friends in correctional institutions. It is published on 2nd and 4th Wednesdays by **Crimson House Ministries** at 1616 North Robberson, Springfield, Missouri, 65803. Please send all correspondence to that address. Subscription information is available online at: <http://readingroom.crimsonhouseministries.org/>

The prison doors slammed behind me. Tears streaked down my face. In that moment, my mind flooded with numerous thoughts and images, which soon turned into feelings of hopelessness and despair. Loneliness had her arms wrapped around me, squeezing me tightly. It was then that something began to stir within me. A still, small voice, distant yet familiar, said, "I will never leave you, nor forsake you." The voice repeated this message over and over.

However, the TV coverage, the newspaper reports, and the people they quoted, all claimed I was the "devil" and were glad I would die behind bars. In that moment, I became a "nobody"—someone to be forgotten and forsaken. Then again, that voice inside me kept saying, "I will never leave you, nor forsake you."

At my lowest point, my only friends were shame, guilt, and misery. I knew they were not good for me, but I could not seem to shake them. They tormented me day and night, screaming, "Look what you have done!"

"No one loves you anymore!"

"Your friends have gone and forsaken you!"

"Do you really think people can love you after all you have done?"

Day after day, these "friends" continually invaded my mind. Cutting through the barrage of negativity and clouds of depression, there echoed the silent whisper, "I will never leave you, nor forsake you."

As I read my Bible, the still, small voice grew louder and clearer. The truths of God began to unfold right before my eyes, and I realized all those voices were Satan's lies. As I gained new insight into the mind of Christ, a new freedom was revealed to me—the freedom that is in Christ Jesus.

"Then Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in Him, 'If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free'" (John 8:31, 32 NRSV).

Once the truth of Christ's words became a

part of me, something began to grow inside of me—something

It was called HOPE—not an earthly hope that dwelt on my circumstances, but an eternal hope that took me beyond my circumstances, the kind of hope that enables me to look with faithful eyes, believing what cannot be seen is what will be, or already is. That still, small voice gave me the power to scream from the mountaintops of the world, "He will never leave me, nor forsake me!"

invisible and intangible.

It became clear to me that Jesus walks with me, and even goes before me. Never would I have to fear anything, or anyone blocking my path. Now repentant, I realized Christ never intended for me to live with the pain of guilt, shame, fear or worry. He desires for me to nail those feelings to His cross, like He did with all my sins. For it is only in Christ that freedom—true freedom—can become a reality. No matter where I am, or what my circumstances are, "...All things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are

called according to his purpose" (Romans 8:28). God has a purpose for all of us. I believe my purpose is to be a writer for Him and spread His message of hope to a world where "hope" seems to be a foreign word. I believe that if God can bless me behind bars, no situation is too complex for Him to fix or too dark for Him to shine His light of hope.

You must welcome Him into your life and ever let Him go. Deny yourself, open your heart, and you will find God. He's always there when the world is against you and all your friends abandon you. Listen closely, and you will hear Jesus saying, "I will never leave you, nor forsake you." Can you hear Him?

--Dan Towery, Inmate
Whiteville, TN

PASTOR'S DEVOTION

It came through a spiritual gift granted a member of our congregation: "Know Me, know Me, know Me was His plea to Pastor John." Why does it seem that my first thought is one of reproof rather than encouragement? Why do I feel like there is always something more I can be doing rather than truly enjoy the rest He has given me? To his beloved Philippians Paul writes, "That I may know him..." (3:10) and yet that was some twenty years¹ after seeing things that eyes hath not seen, and hearing words that ears cannot receive. What more could Paul do? And if Paul needed to "do more" just where does that leave me?

Choosing versus Doing Again and again I must be reminded that it's not a matter of *doing* but of *choosing*, as Jesus instructed Martha and illustrated in her sister, "Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her" (Luke 10:42). *Chosen* means to pick out; choose; to pick or choose out for one's self; choosing one out of many, as the Lord did in selecting His apostles. In context this choice was not in the general sense of choosing *good* in opposite of *bad*; rather, it was choosing the better. It was 'choosing one that is best out of many' that

spoke to my spirit. I thought my devotions were going well, as far as *choosing* to have them, but it is so much more than that. Once devotions were chosen out of the many other things that could be done, and the discipline established, what then did I choose as *best* within that discipline? Had it degenerated into Martha's practice of being "cumbered about" by being distracted in my devotional service? Had I had become over-occupied with the work of my devotion by being more *active* in covering all the prayer bases and Bible reading, rather than *contemplative* in the rest by being with Him in that devotion?

(Continued on page 2)

¹ Philippians was written in 63 AD; 2 Corinthians was penned in 57 AD where Paul speaks of an encounter with the third heaven fourteen years before (12:4).



LET'S HEAR FROM YOU...

THE QUIZ THAT MATTERS

You don't actually have to take the quiz. Just read it straight through, and you'll get the point that it wants to make.

1. Name the five wealthiest people in the world.
2. Name the last five Heisman trophy winners.
3. Name the last five winners of the Miss America contest.
4. Name ten people who have won the Nobel or Pulitzer prizes.
5. Name the last half-dozen Academy Award winners for best actor or actress.
6. Name the last decade's worth of World Series winners.



How did you do? The point is, none of us remember the headlines of yesterday. These are no second-rate achievers. They are the best in their fields. But the applause dies. Trophies tarnish. Achievements are forgotten. Accolades and certificates are buried with their owners.

Here is another quiz. See how you do on this one.

1. List a few teachers who aided your journey through school.
2. Name three friends who have helped you through a difficult time.
3. Name five people who have taught you something worthwhile.
4. Think of a few people who have made you feel appreciated and special.
5. Think of five people you enjoy spending time with.
6. Name half a dozen heroes whose stories have inspired you.

Easier? The lesson: the people who make a difference in your life are not the ones with the most credentials, the most money, or the most awards. They are the ones that care.

Let us also be reminded of the One who was with us from the very beginning, who will never leave or forsake us (John 14:18; Hebrews 13:5); the One who, regardless of what we are or might have done, loves us (Romans 5:8; 1 John 4:7-11); the One that always wants our company even when others might not (Matthew 11:28); the One who looks at our heart when others don't (1 Samuel 16:7; Luke 24:38); the One who will love us forever (Romans 8:35-39). Let us pass on to others what Jesus Christ has done in our life.

—J. D. Enquist
Monroe, WA

PASTOR'S DEVOTION

(Continued from page 1)

A Rest that Knows In *Rules of Engagement*, Derek Prince writes his reflections on Isaiah 6:1-3, "What has always impressed me is what they did with their wings: with two they cover their faces with two they covered their feet and with two they flew. I interpret covering the face and feet as the humility of worship, and flying as service. I believe in thanking God and praising him out loud—even dancing, clapping, singing. But there comes a time when I will put my wings over my face and my wings over my feet in humble worship and listen to hear what God says" (page 71).

Correspondingly Bob Sorge, in *Secrets of the Secret Place*, pens, "What could be more energizing in the course of a busy day than to stop and gaze upon the glory of his enthroned majesty? Look at the effect this glorious employment has upon the living creatures in heaven's throne room: 'the four living creatures, each having six wings, were full of eyes around and within. And they do not rest day or night, saying: holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!' (Revelation 4:8). How is it that they do not rest? Are they never tired? No, they do not weary of gazing upon the beauty of the Lord for they are living in the place of eternal rejuvenation. Instead of tiring from their service to God, they are actually energized and made alive by it" (pages 153, 154).

I remember being visited by a minister once. He came in our house, sat upright on the edge of the sofa, looked at his watch more times than I can recall, "visited" with us, and left nearly thirty minutes to the second after conferring with his time piece one final time. Indeed, it constituted a pastoral visit—we talked but I couldn't be sure he heard anything I said. Truthfully, it made me feel more like a statistic than a person. There certainly was no rest in our time together.

Then the question: Have I now done the same to the Lord? Hustled into His 'room', sat down as if I was ready to stand up, spent more time talking than listening, and when my preset time was achieved check it off as another task completed while thinking of what needed to be done next. Where is the rest in that?

Oh, but to enter into His presence, rest by reclining at His table and then choosing the best dish of the meal—the Master's Word in fellowship. That is my portion, "My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever" (Psalms 73:26). It is this fellowship of His Word that lets me know Him and has its root in the one thing "that shall not be taken away" (Luke 10:42).



HAND IN HAND

I have a friend who always hears
Each prayer that I may pray
And walks in silence with me
Each step along life's way.

He never fails to comfort me
When things don't turn out right,
And I can always count on Him
In day or darkest night.

His hand is always there in mine
To guide me lest I stray,
To pick me up if I should fall
And help me find my way.

He quiets every aching,
Every sorrow in my breast,
He takes each fear and hurt away
And tells me what is best.

And every day that dawns for me
Is just the way He planned,
Down life's path together
With Jesus, hand in hand.

—Billy Ray Anderson, Inmate
Raleigh, NC

We love hearing from you and so do our readers. Please send your articles, poems, praise reports, testimonies, etc..., to **The Red Thread, Crimson House Ministries, 1616 N Robberson, Springfield, MO, 65803.**



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