

THE REDTHREAD

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).

PASTOR'S DEVOTION

Luke 11:9-10 KJV, "And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened."

There are two Greek words for "ask"—*aieto* and *erotao*. The difference between the two is that *aieto* suggests the attitude of a suppliant, the petition of one who is lesser in position than he to whom the petition is made; e.g., in the case of men in asking something from God; whereas, *erotao* more frequently suggests that

the petitioner is on a footing of equality or familiarity with the person whom he requests (Vines). When the Scripture speaks of men asking of God the word is *aieto*, but when Jesus speaks of Him asking the Father the word is *erotao*. It is interesting to note that the Pharisee desired (*erotao*) Jesus to eat with him, denoting a real inferior understanding he had of Christ by making them on equal footing.

When we ask the Father in Jesus name we know our place: He is the King of kings and we are His subjects. We approach with confidence

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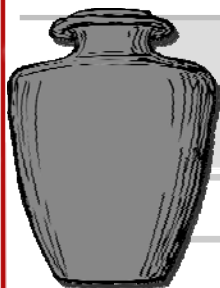
BETWEEN TIMES

BEING LIKE JESUS
BIBLE STUDY
PHILIPPIANS 2:1-13

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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 Roberson, Springfield, Missouri, 65803. Please send all correspondence to that address. Subscription information is available online at: <http://readingroom.crimsonhouseministries.org/>



JUST DO IT

"God made me. I made the mess, and He is the only One who can fix it."

At the wedding in Galilee 2,000 years ago, Mary, Jesus' mother, told the servants, "...Whatsoever he saith...do it" (John 2:5). Jesus told them to get some water. It sounded strange. What they needed was wine, not water. *What is He doing?* they must have wondered. But Mary knew He was more than just her son. He was the Son of God.

"Just do it," says the mother of my Lord. When I knew Jesus Christ of Nazareth, I know what he can do. I knew He can turn water into wine. It's a good enough reason to do whatever He says.

"Just do it"—it sounds simple. The problem is that behind my "will" hides a "won't." I won't do it because I want it my way. I won't do it because I don't feel like it. "There is a way that seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death" (Proverbs 14:12 NKJV).

"Just do it" is a popular slogan used today to sell tennis shoes. It tells people it's okay to do what feels good. The way that seems right offers many options and few sacrifices. It provides attractive solutions that don't require any moral restraints. Jesus' way is a narrow road. "I am the way, the truth, and the life..."

(John 14:6), He told His disciples. It requires discipline and self-sacrifice. It provides eternal benefits, not just temporary ones. Can I give up what I want and do what God wants?

A jury convicted me of robbery. That's what they say I'm in prison for, but the real reason I'm in prison is because I did what I wanted. My heart was hardened to God's voice, and I did it my way. I found out the hard way that doing things my way has sad consequences.

Doing this His way brings rewards. But I don't have to find everything out the hard way. I can just do it His way. I can trust Him. He knows what's best.

How can I become what God wants me to be? How can I learn to trust Him after doing things my way for so long? Can I do what He says when it seems impossible?

God made me. I made the mess, and He is the only One who can fix it. "...I am the Almighty..." the Lord told Abraham (Genesis 17:1). He tells me that today, and He tells me to obey Him because He is God. Do I need a better reason? The benefits of obedience are worth it. Who else can meet my every need?

True freedom doesn't come from doing what I want. That's an illusion. True freedom

comes from obedience. God wants what is best for me. He wants to help me overcome the evil in my life. He gives me the freedom to step out in front of the car, but I don't have to get hit to realize how foolish it is.

God doesn't force me to obey Him. He gave Adam and Eve the choice to obey His command: "...of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat..." (Genesis 2:17 NKJV). God still gives me the choices; and when I make the wrong ones, they can cause me to get off course. Like a pilot in uncharted territory, I need to know how to get where I'm going. Following the course of obedience He has mapped out will help me reach my destiny. "In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths" (Proverbs 3:6 NKJV).

God tells me in the Bible what he expects from me. For example, in 1 Thessalonians it says, "Rejoice always, pray without ceasing," and "in everything give thanks" (5:16-18 NKJV).

Three simple commands, but they sound strange to me. How do I rejoice in prison? Do I stay on my knees all day? Should I be thankful when I'm lonely and missing my loved ones?

We all face the pain of prison in some way. But we are not alone in our struggles. "For it is God

who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure" (Philippians 2:13 NKJV).

God helps me to want to obey Him and then gives me the power to do what He wants. He can change my desires; He can take my weaknesses and failures and show me His strength. But I have to do what He says.

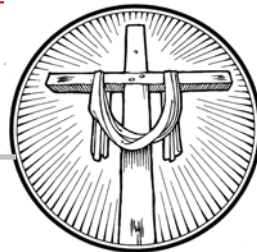
Rejoicing, praying, and giving thanks in the hard times goes against my instincts. But when I make a conscious decision to do what God says, I see people differently, my bad circumstances turn into opportunities, my perspective on life changes, and I find it easier to be joyful and thankful. I spend more time on my knees communicating with Him. It may not change my predicament, but it changes me. It brings me closer to Him where I become more sensitive to my sins and I see how short I fall.

"Just do it"—get the water. It may sound strange like a lot of things God tells me. No matter how hard I try, I still sin. But God is helping me every day to become the obedient child that He wants me to be.

--Roy Borges, Inmate
ChIPLEY, FL

LET'S HEAR FROM YOU...

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.*



THY WILL BE DONE

The battles fought within my mind,
The horror of what's left behind,
Though I can't change a single thing,
I finally see what life can bring.

The only out of the mess I'm in
Is to change the way that I have been.
It's not too much, what I must do
To walk the road that leads to you.

With broken heart, and soul in need,
My eyes were closed, afraid to see.
But what you gave upon that hill
Showed me the way to do God's will.

—Bryon Morrison, Inmate,
West Chester, PA

HIS LOVE

*His love is like an ocean,
Or a calm and peaceful sea.
His love dates from creation;
It envelops you and me.
We can never overtake it;
We can never use it up.
It is boundless; it is endless;
And it overflows our cup.*

— Billy Ray Anderson, Inmate
Raleigh, North Carolina



THE CROSS

Twas man so helplessly lost in sin,
Who need a Savior to dwell within.
To Bridge the gap that he could not fill
That remained so wide and deeper still.

Though he tried, every attempt would have failed,
Until he looked upon the cross and the hands that were nailed.
He didn't understand what had taken place,
Was it the dying of one man, or the redemption of the race?

Then a voice began to speak from off of the cross,
Saying Look upon me, for all is not lost.

Through anger and hatred, corruption and pride,
He saw hope from the One who was crucified.
When he started to feel the burden he bore
he realized that Christ came to even the score.

As he began to believe on the Lamb that was slain,
He had nothing to lose, and everything to gain.

So he fell to his knees asking the Father to please,
Forgive him of his sins and to meet all of his needs.

As the tears began to flow he began to see,
The reason why the Son of God died for you and me.

As he rose up from off the ground,
Something took place in his heart,
Without making a sound.

A new man arose—changed and forgiven,
To proclaim God's word to all that are living.
Thank you Jesus for going to the cross
To seek and save all who are lost.

— Gary Larsen, Pastor
Birch Tree, Missouri

PASTOR'S DEVOTION

(Continued from page 1)

knowing that He loves us and that He desires to hear us ask. Yet, more than ask—He desires for us to seek; yet, more than seek as He desires us to knock.

While much has been said in relation to ask, seek, and knock the point of the Word is that prayers are the avenue of our refuge in Him. Asking for a personal desire; seeking for what may be lost; knocking for what may be closed before you all have their answers through prayer.

However there is a stipulation to the three petitions cited—ask, seek, knock—you must ask it (aieto) of your Father by first becoming a son or daughter. "But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God" (John 1:12 ESV). And as

His child, "... if his son asks him [natural father] for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him!" (Matthew 7:9-11 ESV).



Prayer Focus

Ask today and receive; seek today and it will be found; knock today so it can be opened — in Jesus Name.



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