

# the TIE THAT BINDS

Volume 3, Issue 3

April 2008

## Jailhouse Rock by Pastor Doug Jordan

Acts 16:16-40

Think of it. Paul and Silas were wrongfully accused. They were beaten within an inch of their lives and then they were thrown into a dark, dank prison cell. As they sat with their legs in the stocks I'm sure their muscles cramped and every breath reminded them of their cracked ribs and bruised kidneys. I imagine the blood was still flowing freely down their backs since their wounds had not been treated so they were weak and growing weaker. Then as the cold began to seep into their bones they must have listened to the rats that always plague places like that, scurry across the floor in the dark. But instead of cursing their guards and groaning about their treatment, like the rest of the prison population, these two began to pray out loud. Understand that these were prayers of praise to God, like, "God You are so good to us! Thank You God for Your great faithfulness!" Not, "Lord get us out of here!" Can you imagine praying like that in a situation like that? Probably not, because the truth is, so many of our prayers are only selfish petitions with no praise on our lips. All we do is tell God how bad things are. And if this is all we pray then it is no wonder that many times we feel worse after we pray than when we began. So often our prayer life is just one long pity party where we remind ourselves of how hard life is, so it just reinforces our fears, grief, and sorrow. Prayer is only complete and meaningful when it includes PRAISE to God. Remember when Jesus gave His followers a prayer "template" to follow it BEGAN and ENDED with praise. Jesus said, we should begin by saying something like: "Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name! Thy will be done on earth as it

is in heaven!" He said it should end with saying something like, "For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever..."

Paul and Silas followed Jesus' teaching because in spite of the situation their prayers were filled with praise. And as they did this, as they praised God, He did the same thing He did for King David. He "...put a new song" in their mouths... "a song of praise to God." (Psalm 40:3) These two began to sing, not sad songs but joyful songs, songs of praise and in this way they turned their dank, dark cell into a sanctuary! How could they do this? How were they able to sing songs of praise under those circumstances?

We must note that these two were mature enough to know that when a Christian is in the center of God's will, he or she is never UNDER the circumstances. We have a loving Heavenly Father Who is sovereign OVER every circumstance of life - the good and the bad. These two had enough confidence in God to know that He was still in control and that He could and would use even this painful, dark situation for their good and His glory. Charles Haddon Spurgeon once said, "*It is easy to sing when we can read the notes by daylight; but the skillful singer is he who can sing when there is not a ray of light to read by. Songs in the night come only from God; they are not in the power of men.*" Paul expressed this same confidence in God once again, later in his life as he was imprisoned in Rome. He wrote young Timothy and said that even in the midst of that time of suffering, "*I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.*" (2 Timothy 1:12) Paul believed that God's sovereign power and

knowledge was absolute. He also had faith that God's love for Him was infinite and unconditional. These beliefs enabled Paul and Silas to "see" things even in the dark that others don't. This week I came across a sermon preached on this text years ago. It referred to this principle by saying that Paul and Barnabas had "SEEING HEARTS." In other words, they looked at their situation not just through PHYSICAL eyes, but through the "eyes" of their hearts, which is a way of saying they looked at their beating and imprisonment through the eyes of faith. In other words, these two missionaries didn't let their circumstance choose their attitude. No, they made a conscious choice to trust God, to praise God, and to have faith in God no matter how bad things appeared to be. If we are to "sing" in those times when we feel imprisoned by hardship, we must make the same choice.

Victor Frankl was a prisoner in a Nazi concentration camp during World War II, and as such was well-acquainted with suffering and deprivation. He saw life at its worst. Over the years, he observed that some of his fellow prisoners survived the horrors of prison camp while others did not and he became curious as to why this was so. In his book, *Man's Search for Meaning*, Frankl shared the conclusion he came to after carefully studying his fellow captives. He wrote, "*Everything can be taken from men but one thing: the last of human freedoms - the ability to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances.*" Frankl was right in his deduction, for **attitude really is a choice**. It is a conscious decision. How about you? Can you sing songs of praise in the night to the God who has it all under control?



A Newsletter Published  
Exclusively for the  
**Ladies of  
Lighthouse  
Baptist Church**

### Inside this issue:

- God Is In the Church Nursery 2
- What to Look for in a Life's Mate 2
- The Story Behind the Song *His Eye Is On the Sparrow* 3
- God Is For Me 3
- Ethel Waters 3
- 10 Reasons to Go to Church 4
- "Hope Is All We Got" 4

## God Is In the Church Nursery *by Tony Kummer of Ministry-to-Children.com*

Where is God on Sunday morning? Of course, God is everywhere. We know that God is enthroned in the praises of his people. (Psalm 22:3) When we gather to worship – God is with us.

We know that God is there when we pray. Jesus said, “For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.” (Matthew 18:20) When we pray – God is with us.

We know that God is there when his Word is read,

preached, loved and obeyed. The Lord says, “I will hasten my word to perform it.” (Jeremiah 1:12) When the Bible speaks – God is with us.

We know that God is everywhere. “Can a man hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the LORD. Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the LORD.” (Jeremiah 23:24) “The eyes of the LORD are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.” (Proverbs 15:3) No matter where we go – God is with us.

But did you know that God is also in the church nursery? “And he [Jesus] took a child and set him in the midst of them, and when he had taken him in his arms, he said to them, “Whoever shall receive one of such children in my name receiveth me, and whosoever shall receive me, receiveth not me, but him that sent me.” (Mark 9:36-37) When you welcome a child in the name of Jesus you welcome Jesus himself. When we minister to children – God is with us.

If you wonder why so many people are blessed by serving in

the church nursery. Now you know – God is there.



**THINK ABOUT THIS:** There are **30** days in a month. There are **17** church services in the month. And **1** time a month is all we ask for your service in the nursery. Won't you please help us?

## What To Look For In a Life's Mate

When you believe that God has brought a certain person into your life, there should be things that characterize that person if you intend to spend the rest of your life with him.

### **DOES NOT LIVE FOR MONEY**

*“Labour not to be rich: cease from thine own wisdom.”*  
Proverbs 23:4

Money is not to be a goal. The person who lives to make it, and out of that learns to love it, is a person who does not use it properly.

### **IS FAITHFUL**

*“Confidence in an unfaithful man in time of trouble is like a broken tooth, and a foot out of joint.”*  
Proverbs 25:19

You want to marry someone who is faithful. If not, you will be married to someone who is like a broken tooth. A broken tooth is just a tiny thing, but it affects all the body.

### **IS UNDER GOD'S CONTROL**

*“He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down, and without walls.”*  
Proverbs 25:28

Any person who behaves in an uncontrolled manner does this because he has not submitted

himself to God. We need to submit our lives to the control of the Spirit of the living God.

### **IS NOT A TALEBEARER**

*“Where no wood is, there the fire goeth out: so where there is no talebearer, the strife ceaseth.”*  
Proverbs 26:20

Most people need to be more concerned about having peace than telling everything they know. You want to spend the rest of your life with someone who knows when not to speak. There is something special about a person who could speak about a matter and hurt someone but refuses to do it.

### **LIVES LIFE BY THE DAY**

*“Boast not thyself of tomorrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth.”*  
Proverbs 27:1

The person who learns to live life one day at a time is a person who realizes he does not have a day to waste. When you find someone who knows and loves the Lord, spends time with Christ, is grateful to God for life, and is thankful to God for the circumstances brought into his life that cause him to see how precious each day is, you are in good company.

### **IS BOLD FOR CHRIST**

*“The wicked flee when no man pursueth: but the righteous are bold as a lion.”*

Proverbs 28:1

He is bold for Christ, not a cowardly, casual Christian. Everyone knows that he has taken his stand for God.

### **WAS CORRECTED AS A CHILD**

*“Correct thy son, and he shall give thee rest; yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul.”*

Proverbs 29:17

When a child knows that God gave him parents to rear him and give him back to God, he will desire to spend his life with someone who hopes to have little children to give back to God as well.

### **KNOWS GOD MUST CHANGE HIS LIFE**

*“There is a generation that curseth their father, and doth not bless their mother. There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness. There is a generation, O how lofty are their eyes! And their eyelids are lifted up. There is a generation whose teeth are as swords, and their jaw teeth as knives, to devour the poor from off the earth, and the needy from among men.”*

Proverbs 30:11-14  
You want to spend your life with someone who knows on a daily basis that he needs God to transform his life.

### **CHILDREN WILL SAY BLESSED**

*“Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her.”*

Proverbs 31:28

The person you want to spend the rest of your life with is the kind of person that children will be glad to rise up and call blessed.

Look for the biblical character in an individual that will cause him to become a parent that is devoted to God and to his children.



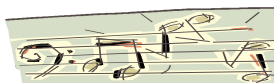
## The Story Behind "His Eye Is On the Sparrow" Song

Early in the spring of 1905, my husband and I were sojourning in Elmira, New York. We contracted a deep friendship for a couple by the name of Mr. and Mrs. Doolittle - true saints of God. Mrs. Doolittle had been bedridden for nigh twenty years. Her husband was an incurable cripple who had to propel himself to and from his business in a wheel chair. Despite their afflictions, they lived happy Christian lives, bringing

inspiration and comfort to all who knew them. One day while we were visiting with the Doolittle's, my husband commented on their bright hopefulness and asked them for the secret of it. Mrs. Doolittle's reply was simple: "His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He watches me." The beauty of this simple expression of boundless faith gripped the hearts and fired the imagination of Dr. Martin and me. The

hymn "His Eye Is on the Sparrow" was the outcome of that experience. The next day I mailed the poem to Charles Gabriel, who supplied the music. Singer Ethel Waters so loved this song that she used its name as the title for her autobiography.

By Civilla Martin



## His Eye Is on the Sparrow

Why should I feel discouraged,  
 why should the shadows come,  
 Why should my heart be lonely,  
 and long for heaven and home,  
 When Jesus is my portion?  
 My constant friend is He:  
 His eye is on the sparrow,  
 and I know He watches me;  
 His eye is on the sparrow,  
 and I know He watches me.  
 I sing because I'm happy,  
 I sing because I'm free,  
 For His eye is on the sparrow,

And I know He watches me.  
 "Let not your heart be troubled,"  
 His tender word I hear,  
 And resting on His goodness,  
 I lose my doubts and fears;  
 Though by the path He leadeth,  
 but one step I may see;  
 His eye is on the sparrow,  
 and I know He watches me;  
 His eye is on the sparrow,  
 and I know He watches me.  
 Whenever I am tempted,  
 whenever clouds arise,  
 When songs give place to sighing,  
 when hope within me dies,  
 I draw the closer to Him,  
 from care He sets me free;  
 His eye is on the sparrow,  
 and I know He watches me;  
 His eye is on the sparrow,  
 and I know He watches me.

## God is For Me By Glynis Pollak

It's not difficult to become discouraged these days. The world is waxing worse and worse in sin, while our country is becoming more and more anti-Christian. Liberal judges continue to legislate from the bench, while the upcoming presidential election offers little-to-no hope for even a status quo in the area of Biblically based moral laws and Christians principles in government. Then there are the never-ending personal and family problems and trials! As my dad used to say "If it's not one thing it's another!"

The best thing for a discouraged heart is the Word of God. Even though we may feel too downtrodden to read it, the Bible is a powerful antidote for discouragement, loneliness and sadness. Scripture lifts us up and reminds

us just how important and precious we are to our Heavenly Father. For instance, Psalm 56:9 says "God is for me." Think about that for a minute: God is for YOU - wow! If God - the powerful Creator, the loving Saviour, the King of Kings - is for you, then you're gonna make it! Isaiah 41:18 tells us that God "will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water." Is there anything too hard for God? (see Jeremiah 32:17)

It's so amazing that the Holy Spirit continually gives us just the right verse that's needed for the current trial we are enduring. He'll also remind us of verses we've read or memorized in the past, and those scriptures aid us in our time of need. It's also true that the Bible

becomes even more comforting when we read it after a time of prayer.

God is for you, my friend. The Lord has promised to never leave you nor forsake you (Hebrews 13:5). Circumstances and situations can get us down, but when we realize that God is for us, our strength is renewed, we can make it through another day, and we can trust Him with our future.



## Ethel Waters

Ethel Waters was born in Chester, Pennsylvania to a thirteen year old mother who had been raped. She was raised in a violent, impoverished home in the early 1900's. She said of her difficult childhood: "When my mother looked at me she was reminded of the worst day in her life and therefore hated me. I never was a child. I never was coddled, or liked, or understood by my family." Ethel was eventually adopted by her grandmother and introduced to the

Bible as a teenager. Gifted with a unique and beautiful voice, Ethel became a notable African-American singer. She was singing the 'blues' in the 1920's and recorded such songs as *Stormy Weather* and *Am I Blue?* "from the depths of the private hell in which I was being crushed and suffocated." One day she came across the verse in Psalm 56 (the one Glynis wrote about in the above article) that said, "**This I know; God is for me.**" Ethel had been abandoned

and wronged by her family, a husband, and employers. But now God was on her side and she realized He had carried her through her hard times. Shortly after taking hold of this verse of scripture she heard the song *His Eye Is On The Sparrow*. This became her signature song and she sang it all over the country. Billy Graham had her sing it in his crusades in the seventies. Later she wrote her autobiography using this song as the title.

## 10 Reasons For Going To Church

Teddy Roosevelt offered his reasons for going to church in **Ladies' Home Journal** in 1917

1. In this actual world a churchless community is on the rapid downgrade.

2. Church work and church attendance mean the cultivation of the habit of feeling some responsibility for others and the sense of braced moral strength which prevents a relaxation of one's own moral fiber.

3. There are enough holidays for most of us which can quite properly be devoted to pure holiday making. Sundays differ from other holidays, in the fact that there are fifty-two of them every year. On Sunday, go to church.

4. Yes, I know all the excuses. I know that one can worship the Creator and dedicate oneself to good living in a grove of trees, or by a running brook, or in one's own house, just as well as in the church. But I also know as a matter of cold fact the average man does not thus worship or thus dedicate himself. If he stays away from church he does not spend time in good works or in lofty meditation.

5. He may not hear a good sermon in church. But unless he is very unfortunate he will hear a sermon by a good man who, with his good wife, is engaged all the week long in a series of important tasks for making hard life a little easier.

6. He will listen to and take part in reading some beautiful passages from the Bible.

7. He will probably take part in singing some good hymns.

8. He will meet, nod, or speak to good, quiet neighbors. He will come away feeling a little more charitably toward all the world.

9. I advocate a man's joining in church works for the sake of showing his faith by his works.

10. The man who does not in some way connect himself with some active working church, misses many opportunities for helping his neighbors, and therefore, incidentally, for helping himself.

THEODORE ROOSEVELT WAS THE TWENTY-SIXTH PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

## The Tie That Binds

### "Hope is All We Got"

Acts 11:29 says that in response to Agabus' prophecy of a severe famine, brand new Christian believers in Antioch took up an offering to send to the church in Jerusalem. Down through the ages, maturing Christians have been known for this same practice of selfless, generous giving of their money, their time, and their talents. This is because when we grow spiritually we become like God, Who loved so much that He gave and Who is the source of every good and perfect gift. In an issue of *Discipleship Journal* there is a powerful story about a Christian gentleman named Jamie Winship, who lives in Bagdad and teaches English in an effort to both help struggling Iraqi businessman and also to share the love of Christ.

While passing through a checkpoint one day an American MP saw his North Carolina drivers license and asked if he was in the ministry. Winship asked, "Why do you ask?" And the soldier said, "Why else would you live here?" In other words, the only motive this soldier could think of for a man to bring his family to Iraq would be to minister as a Christian and to give to those needy, hurting people. The MP went on to tell how much he missed his parents in Missouri and how he longed for the fried chicken dinners they enjoyed at the local Baptist church. Winship said, "Don't worry. You'll be there again soon!" The MP replied, "I hope so, but hope is all we got here."

Later, as he was thinking of the missiles that frequently flew overhead and of the car bombs that almost constantly exploded near his English school, Winship prayed and asked God to show him how he could make a difference in that dark, death-shrouded land. As he prayed God reminded him of the words of that MP, "Hope is all we got here." Winship realized that God was calling him to give hope to the Iraqi people, the hope that is found in Jesus Christ. So Winship decided to begin by giving hope to the toughest student in his English school, a former Major in the Iraqi army named Mahmud, a loyal Baathist who constantly interrupted class by criticizing the Bush administration and that of every American president as far back as Harry Truman. In short, Mahmud was a very bitter man, a difficult man to relate to as an American, but Winship reached out to him anyway. One day after one of his typical tirades, Winship said, "Mahmud, I want you to know how much I like having you in class, and I want to tell you that I spent several hours praying for you last night." This act of prayerful giving stunned Mahmud and this led to his opening up to Winship. The more Winship gave, the more Mahmud's defenses were lowered and one day he shared his grief at the fact that he and his wife had been unable to have children. Winship promised to pray about that as well and from that day on Mahmud referred to Winship as "brother"—a high compliment in that culture.

God answered Winship's prayers by making it possible for him to set up an appointment for Mahmud and his wife to visit an American fertility specialist who was practicing in nearby Jordan. This caused their friendship to deepen even more. Instead of spending class time criticizing American presidents, Mahmud began to use it to steer every discussion to God. One time he pointedly asked Winship to tell the class about the hope he had in Jesus Christ and he did. For thirty minutes Winship shared his Christian testimony. Afterwards a businessman in class invited Winship to come and teach his company's 150 students. Winship agreed and asked, "What kind of English do they need?" "It's not English they need," he said. "They need hope. Come and give them hope." One day Winship invited Mahmud and his wife to his home for dinner and afterwards as they enjoyed dark Iraqi tea Mahmud described his life as an officer under Saddam Hussein: "My soldiers were starving. Each night on television our president would say how great everything was, but I knew it was a lie. When the American army came, I could not ask my men to fight. It told them to go home and hope that this all would end in Iraqi freedom."

At Mahmud's request Winship prayed for the future of Iraq and then Mahmud agreed to study the New Testament with his new friend. Now understand, Winship was recognized as a follower of Jesus because he GAVE. This Christian answered God's call and did all he could to GIVE what those people need most: HOPE—the HOPE that is found in Jesus. GIVING this hope marked him as a follower of Jesus.

What about you? Are you the kind of compassionate GIVER at work or in your neighborhood? One that sets you apart such that your Christian faith shows? Have you strived to grow spiritually such that you are known as a Christian?

**"But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear." 1 Pet. 3:15**

# Give Hope