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THE OVERFLOW

The first thing we have to do is apologize for the incorrect Scripture reference given in the last newsletter. It should have referred to Joshua 3:4 instead of Joshua 1:5. Sorry 'bout that! Now, if you'll just read on a little further, in verse five it says: "And Joshua said unto the people, Sanctify yourselves: for tomorrow the Lord will do wonders among you." This passage is clear when we consider that to sanctify means to set apart. Here the people were to sanctify themselves by washing their clothes and their bodies to be in readiness to see the great miracles that were to take place the next day - the holding back of the waters of the Jordan and the drying up of the river bed for the whole time of the passing or a whole day. I really thank Jesus for setting us free from these rituals. If God were to wait for some people to take a bath before He did any miracles, we would never see any! And--don't think for a minute that you have to wait until you clean up your act before you can come to God for the miracle of salvation. We could never make it on our own righteousness anyway. It's only by faith in what the Lord Jesus did for us that we can come to God.

But, just in case you've been absent from the scene for awhile, God hasn't changed. He still cannot tolerate sin. It's a hindrance to the Kingdom and has no place there. If we want to see God move, we are called to holy living and I don't mean we should develop holier-than-thou attitudes either. God cannot do wonders among us until we get rid of the sinful conditions that exist in the body of Christ. Sin is an obstacle in a Christian's life.

Come to think of it, some of God's people do everything possible in the energy of the flesh to sidestep obstacles. When they are sick, they complain. When they are confronted with discouraging circumstances, they are ready to quit. When they are hassled, they go all to pieces. Why? Because they choose the easy way and overlook the fact that God has told each believer to "endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ." (II Tim. 2:3)

Those who are in Christ need not sidestep responsibility. We don't need to go around obstacles. We have a mighty God, one who "is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think." So, how do we plunge ahead in spite of those obstacles? God said, "According to the power which worketh in us." We don't need to fret and worry when the whole world falls apart around us or when things don't go quite the way we planned. We have a mighty Christ at work in us who wants to work it out.

It may be at this moment you are distressed, discouraged or even going into a state of depression. Look to Jesus who promises to lead and direct you according to His unerring will. Cast your burden upon the Lord. He will not fail you for He cannot fail. We are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. We don't ever have to sidestep obstacles. We can keep pressing forward toward the mark for the prize. But, remember, no one ever won a prize for failing to enter the race or by dropping out before they reached the finish line.

So, why not help the Shepherd who is fighting for you. Don't help the wolf who is biting you by trying to remain neutral. If you aren't willing to go all the way with Jesus, you might as well renounce Him now and go all out to follow Satan. The lukewarm Christian is another hindrance to the cause of Christ. God hates lukewarmness, which is nothing more than neutrality. One who says he is a Christian and doesn't show any evidence of a transformed life is a stumbling block. Show me a person who remains neutral and I'll show you a person with a backbone like a wet noodle. There is no place for wishy-washy Christians in the body of Christ. To say that you are a Christian and not live wholeheartedly for him really helps the devil's routine.

When one becomes a Christian, Jesus has the right to reign. Have you made Him Lord and not just Saviour? Such a decision is worthwhile for five reasons. First, it simplifies things. It puts the management where it belongs - in God's hands. As long as a believer attempts to run his own show, he ends up in frustration and failure. He makes mistakes and brings a lot of unnecessary trouble upon himself. Secondly, a deep commitment brings a unified life. All of your desires are blended into one concern, fulfilling the divine will of God. Thirdly, the surrendered life purifies life. Because he wants to please the Lord, the believer allows the Holy Spirit to reveal things to Him that dishonor the Lord. He trusts in God's strength for deliverance from all that hinders his growth and keeps him from a fruitful life.

The Christian life is not just another self-improvement plan, but it is a complete transformation. There is something else, too. The surrendered life amplifies life. Before conversion, we lived for ourselves. But after conversion, we should live so as to exalt Jesus. The self-life is a narrow experience. The surrendered life gives beauty and enjoyment to living.

Finally, the surrendered life glorifies life, for it makes the Christian a blessing wherever he goes. This is the way it should be. Read I Peter 2:9. Is this true in your life? Are you showing forth the praises of God? If there is any doubt about whether or not you have forsaken the ways of the world, it could be because of a disease of your heart known as "unyieldedness". You are guilty of being lukewarm and neutral and God is disturbed.

Have you made a profession of Christ but allowed other things to crowd Him into the background? Are you intent on making money and put that ahead of the Lord? Don't shortchange yourself. Put Christ first. Let Jesus have priority in your life and enjoy everything He purchased for you at Calvary.

PROGRESS REPORT: We are learning to wait on the Lord for so many things. We are still seeking His direction in selecting a vice-president. We are still lacking funds and people to manage the Book Store even though it is ready for occupancy. The library will be ready to move in to as soon as the carpet is down. We weren't sure what was happening when our insurance was cancelled in December. But, after checking around we got insurance for about half the cost we were paying with better coverage and an encouraging word that it won't be as expensive to insure the gymnasium, swimming pool and sleeping rooms as we had thought. Praise the Lord for giving us His help with these things.

We can always use more paneling, insulation, suspended ceiling materials, carpeting, people and funds to keep us moving ahead. Remember these needs when you pray, won't you please? We also want to thank the family who offered a good home to Samuel, the mice chaplain. For awhile there we thought we might have a cat burglar. We knew there wasn't such a thing as a rapture of the cats because the litter box and food were missing too. Alas, Samuel is probably happier as a family pet. He sure wasn't a threat to the mice population and he could have profited from our weight-watchers class. Too many donuts, I suppose.

Speaking of our weight watchers class, it got off the ground on Monday, January 17th and now has thirteen gals who are trusting the Lord to help them with this problem. We are agreeing together and expecting great things since we declared war on fat and have already had some victories. We are overcomers, not overeaters. It's obedience, not obesity. Sacrifice, not satisfy. Our slogan is "Your will will work if you work your will." This principle can be applied to many areas of life. Giving God control is half the battle. He will do the rest. Isn't that good news?

We thank the Lord that our lease agreement on the building has been officially signed, giving us the signal that God wants us to move ahead. New doors are opening every day and we are thankful for these opportunities. In March we will be going to Chicago to appear on Channel 38, doing a live interview and special music type of program (March 4). In April, we have been invited to Waupun State Prison to do a worship service. As long as God keeps opening doors, we plan to keep going through them.



JULIAN THREET pictured with brother in Christ Geno Beck.

Personal Testimony of Julian Threet

I was born in the year of 1952 on the 4th day of November, in a car outside of Cook County Hospital, in the city of Chicago, sometime after midnight. It seemed that from that day on, for nineteen years, everything else was as unnatural as being born in a car.

As I was growing up, I never hung around with people my own age. I was always with older men and women. I felt they were into more than what people my age rank were into and I felt I could learn more. And besides, I was accepted, and I dug it. I learned how to become a ghetto survivor. In other words, whatever it took to survive in the Black Ghetto of Chicago, I took it or was trying to take it. My pride was playing with people's minds, hustling every thing I could get. I not only learned the art and tricks of being a hustler but I was a thief and a robber. The only thing that mattered to me was ME, not even getting caught. Getting caught was part of ghetto life, and I did many times. "Rehabilitate" was not the word for some of the institutions I went to. The authorities were like the evil task masters that Pharaoh had set over the Children of Israel. I found out that NO ONE can be rehabilitated by "heat". I came out twice the devil I went in. One time I was on a two week leave and I went around my old stamping grounds. I had been locked up about 7 months and found my partners rapping a new language. They were saying stuff like "kill the pigs" and talking about liberation. And I, like them, were tired of taking ghetto treatment and wanted a change. When my two weeks were up, I took back with me a red book, called "Quotations of Chairman Mou" which was given to me by a comrad. I studied that book daily until I got out. When I got out I was given the nick name "Huey P. Newton of 53rd Street". Revolution was in my veins. My bitter foe was this political system. By the way, Huey P. Newton is the co-founder of the Black Panther party. I never dreamed I would one day become a party member. After that I got involved in a murder, and a deal over some stolen guns. My partners did not want to take a chance on me. So they put an S.O.S. on me which is "Shoot On Sight". When I found out, I right away conned two more of my partners into believing they too had an S.O.S. on them. So we run it down to one of my partners' father, and he drove us to Rockford, IL. and there it was that I became a member of the Black Panther party. Many things I learned in the party, like the proper way to organize and prepare people for an armed struggle. I have been in three attempted police raids, each one of them I was ready to commit revolutionary suicide. But each time they were prevented.

Well later I became very unhappy with myself, and I was tired. I had met a young lady, and for the first time, I took note that women were more than dogs. But I only took note, because I found there was a force in me stronger than I was, that when I tried to make life happy for us, I'd always blow it and make things worse. After awhile I began to think to myself, there must be more to life than this. I would look out the window down the strip, seeing all the dead empty lives walk the street trying to make the best of what they had left to live for, living only to make themselves happy. I knew that wasn't living, they were dead and I was dead. And we were in the land of the living dead. Well one day I was going over on the North side with some brothers, when two white fellows walked up to us and asked if we knew Jesus. Well I was the first to speak up and say, Yes. I had in the back of my mind, "what a way to get some money". So I said, "Yes, I know Jesus", getting ready to rap my Jesus line down to them. Then they asked me if I was "born again" and filled with the Holy Spirit. Well that question threw my rap a mile backward. I did not know about this born again and spirit stuff. So one of the Brothers said to me that "God has a plan for your life". So after that I kept running into them and they would come down to the headquarters to see me, with that same rap, "God has a plan for your life".

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TESTIMONY - Cont'd

Well I was not sure that this Jesus they talked about could be trusted. I had prayed to Him before and got no help. Even though I prayed to Him, I had no desire to turn from my sins. And I could not see God in the ghetto. All I could see was police brutality and the oppressed black communities being robbed by the capitalist, indecent housing, and brothers and sisters being railroaded to prison just for being ghetto survivors. And besides, becoming a Christian would mean becoming counter-revolutionary. But deep within I wanted the freedom these Christians talked of. One night I had a strange thing happen to me. I had a vision where the Lord was showing me the way to freedom. Now I knew I would one day, if I lived long enough, be on trial for murder and probably be charged with stolen guns and also for breaking parole. But when I had this strange vision where the Lord was showing me the way to freedom by trusting Him, this got next to me in a very personal way. It had given me a new hope. And besides, I knew this vision was nothing I could dream up in my head. There were too many communist ideas planted there. So one night I prayed. I got on my knees and I said, "Look, I know I've been a mess up all my life. And I'm sorry. But if you can get me out of this messed up life I'm in, I'll serve you all the days of my life". That prayer was the beginning of a new life for me. I knew my prayer was heard. After that I read in the Bible something that spoke to my heart. Jesus was talking to Peter and his brother. He said, "Come ye, follow after me and I will make you fishers of men". And they forsook their nets and followed. And I heard, just like Peter and his brother did, and I forsook everything and followed. And the Lord did just what He said in the vision He would do. He led me back to Chicago to turn myself in, only to find out I had NO charges on me. Praise the Lord.

I have become sure of this one thing, there is nothing too hard for God, and what He did that day was only a little thing compared to my life now. This took place five years ago and I can say without fear, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature, old things are passed away and Behold, all things are become new (II Cor. 5:17)".

Just want to remind you that Dale Martin will resume his Bible Study at the Cup every Thursday night at 7:00 p.m. starting February 3, 1977. Don't know what the subject will be. Only the Holy Spirit knows for sure and we don't know if He has given Dale a clue yet or not. But, you can be sure of one thing, you'll be enriched if you attend.

Pray for warm weather to come soon. In the meantime, stay near the fire - God's fire! You know what happens when you move a burning log away from the fire - it goes out!

Love in Christ, Dave and Pat Fogderud, Directors

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