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IMPRISONED TOO 

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IMPRISONED TOO

INTRODUCTION

I entitled this book “Imprisoned to, too, 2” on purpose. First reason being this is the second installment of my other book entitled “Have You Imprisoned the Holy Spirit? *A practical guide to releasing the Spirit of God through your life*” which talks mostly about how the Body of Christ acts as a reservoir retaining the Holy Spirit instead of releasing Him through their vessel (being) like a channel touching the world around them.

As one grows in their walk with God revelation and understanding increases—revelation of His Word as well as understanding of just how little of it we actually know and are truly applying in our daily lives. As the Apostle James says “But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was” (James 1:22-24). I like this rendering, ‘what kind of man he was,’ because the Word of God is a spiritual mirror that not only reflects what kind of man *we can become* **in** Christ, but it also reveals the kind of man we currently are; for it is “a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart” (Hebrews 4:12b). Nothing is hidden from God or His Word.

Many of us do not like to see that hiding ‘man’. We like to think of ourselves as something we usually are not. The clarity of truth the Word of God brings often stings; it has a way of shining its light into areas we would rather keep hidden away. I put it this way to a friend once (it actually came by revelation as we were talking about life in general and the difficulties we face), I said to him “Scripture teaches that the Holy Spirit (God) is a fire from the loins upward and from the loins downward (Ezekiel 1:27 KJV). As we draw closer to Him in our every day walk with Him, that fire causes the dross in us to surface (the sinfulness we have hidden away) like that of the refiners fire to either silver or gold (the dross is the impurities within). We are then faced with a choice, either we face the sin He’s revealing and deal with it (repent), or we draw back away from Him and let it settle back in.”

This dross represents the second ‘to’ of the title. The sinfulness it speaks of is the strongholds that have been built up in our lives, or any root(s) of bitterness that have developed before we came to Christ (or, even since we’ve come to Him; more on that later). A stronghold is anything the devil can use to keep someone anchored to—difficult to break free of, or from—like pornography, gambling, even gossip (which is one of the seven things God says He hates [Proverbs 6:16-19]). A root of bitterness is like a weed in your lawn, just snipping at it from the surface only gets rid of it temporarily; if the root remains the ugliness of that weed will grow (surface) again. An example of a root of bitterness would be resentment; it may begin as a blemish or a slight irritation, but if it is left alone it will grow—not only outwardly, but inwardly, until a root develops deep within the psyche. It then becomes a controlling force that is incorporated into one’s personality: these are things we have become imprisoned ‘to’, and if we are imprisoned, then the Spirit of God is imprisoned as well.

I always like to use the illustration of a computer’s hard drive compared to a newborn child. At manufacture its hard drive is completely clean of any type of programming, so are the spirit and soul of a child—entirely innocent of worldly influence. In a perfect scenario the parents of that child have the responsibility of ‘programming’ their child with morals, views, and understanding of life (perspective), plus the faith they espouse (what they believe about God—whether He is or not, and if the Holy Bible is true). The trouble is we do not live in a perfect world that provides this type of scenario. All too often the home-life is fragmented; single mothers (or fathers) left to raise their children alone, or both parents work full-time jobs and have little or no influence on their children—so the world-system is left with the job of etching their flavor of training (which has evolved to a ‘political-correctness’ that tries to refrain from offending anyone). Even worse the parents themselves are corrupted to the point of removing their child’s innocence through abuse or simply strong opinions and personalities that leave no room for God in their lives.

This latter picture is the ‘too’ part of the title. We all fall within one or more of these categories of influences; so we *too* find ourselves imprisoned in one area or another to something that needs to be worked out of our lives in order to become the whole person (nothing missing, nothing broken) Jesus gave His life for.

The Lord and I have walked together for just over 38 years (at the time of this writing). Through ‘feeding’ on a variety of ministry-gifts (first being Kenneth Copeland [my father in the faith], Joyce Meyer and many others) I have learned a great deal about the things we will be talking about in the following pages. The world has increased in darkness so much that, as Isaiah prophesied they now call evil good and good evil (5:20)! He further declared that the Light of God has arisen on us, the Church (His Body), and that they (the world) will come to the brightness of our rising (60:1-3). In order for God’s glory to shine brightly on and through us we have got to rid ourselves of these imprisonments so He is seen on and in us, separated from the world in attitude, behavior, and lifestyle.

God said through Paul “what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: ‘I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they shall be My people.’ Therefore ‘come out from among them and be separate, says The Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you.’ ‘I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters, says The Lord Almighty.’ Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God” (2 Corinthians 6:16-7:1). Thank God I’m *not* speaking of becoming perfect (never doing anything wrong). If that were the case none of us would ever qualify for God’s service. In God’s economy He looks on the heart. He’s looking for “loyalty” to Him (2Chronicles 16:9a).

Grace is God’s empowerment granted to us according to what Jesus did, and not what we have (or have not) done. The Word of God is full of His power to keep us free from sin. John said it like this “My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous” (1Jn 2:1). In other words, the things John wrote contain the power of God (grace) that enables one to resist sin. Peter said it this way “Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, as His divine power has given to us all things that *pertain* to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption *that is* in the world through lust” (2Pe 1:2-4, underline mine). ML

IMPRISONED 2

As the second volume of the “Imprisoned” series let’s pick up where we left off in the first book, but first we’ll recap some of the things we talked about before. By definition a prison is a place where someone is held captive. In the first book we spoke of imprisoning the Holy Spirit by various means and methods. He can be held captive in the following ways:

- Religious Traditions; God moves through prayer to spark revival. Miracles and other interventions occur and men decide to camp there turning it into a denomination, accepting (and teaching that) their way is the only way God will do anything for anybody.
- Ignorance; lack of knowledge and understanding can cripple the move of the Spirit. He works together with us as our Helper, if we are not doing or expecting anything then He has nothing to ‘help’ in. – Prison bar!
- Division and discord has fragmented the Body of Christ so much that we look like an individual who’s been hit by a freight train! Body parts everywhere—all holding the attitude that they’re the totality of the Body.
- Hardness of heart. Brother Hagin used to say these folk would receive the water of the Word he was speaking to them like water running off of a duck’s back. In other words, he would preach it and they would resist it.
- Laziness and unwillingness is a weight to the Body of Christ because the effort necessary to change her thinking and views on the things of God takes work (sometimes spiritual surgery!).
- Willful disobedience is a killer since the one captive by it has chosen to be. Their attitude is “I don’t care what the Bible says, I believe...” and so have chosen to remain ignorant (un-teachable). – Prison bar!
- Unbelief is closely related to willful disobedience, but its source could simply be the captive has simply never heard; “How can one believe without a preacher?” (ML paraphrase of Romans 10:14).

- Keeping a tender conscience is paramount to remaining free of imprisonment. It speaks of having an open mind and willingness to be taught—whether it comes through a human vessel or straight from the Holy Spirit.
- Our love walk is vastly important as well since God is love; every step out of love is a step out of fellowship with God. There is no freedom outside of Him!
- Ichabod (the glory has departed) was a banner I saw in a vision to be hung over the entryway of the Church here in America. My mission and prayer is that this ministry and these books are used by God to turn that indictment around!
- Seeker friendliness has converted church services to a Sunday morning coffee-shop experience (where’s the Wi-Fi™?) that waters down the conviction of sin to the point that ‘there is no sin, just a problem (or condition)’ that people struggle with. [As of this writing (summer, 2015) there has developed a new doctrine that says the grace of God is such that there is no need for repentance, since all sins—both future and past—have already been forgiven (I’ll address, briefly, the grace of God in the next section).

The Judgment Seat of Christ will be according to the standard of His Word, not that of popular preachers. In other words, our lives will be measured by the revelation of His Book (the Bible), not some preacher’s rendition of it. “All Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness” (2Tim. 3:16, underline mine). Forgiveness is available for all sin, but we still have to come to the Throne of Grace to receive it. “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us” (1Jn 1:8-10). *That* portion of “doctrine, reproof, correction (and), instruction” is still in the Book! Furthermore, Jesus is still our Advocate (Lawyer) with the Father (Judge) (1Jn 2:1)—if we have no

need to repent, what would we need a Lawyer for? This kind of atmosphere will never help anybody. – Prison bar!

- Esteeming the anointing, in my estimation, is where the line is drawn: either the Holy Spirit is respected and welcomed, or He's viewed as an undesired guest (even nuisance). To esteem the anointing speaks of a reverential godly fear and desire for the Holy Ghost to manifest; it's a value-system that recognizes the pricelessness of His Presence.
- Repentance and hunger are the first steps toward renewal. I call it a renewal because the Church—the Body of Christ—originated with the Holy Spirit as her central source of everything she did; true direction and understanding comes only by and through Him!
- Prayer is the primary connector to receive this true direction and understanding. There's a saying "Much prayer, much power; little prayer, little power."
- Unifying, which is the complete opposite of division, should be one of the top prayer priorities. Jesus informed us of the power of agreement, and warned us against division. The former brings about Heaven's intervention, the latter destroys, rendering ineffective (see Matthew 18:18-20).
- Keep it simple was a lesson taught while in Bible school. Religion formulates all kinds of 'hoops' people have to jump through to pacify their debt to God leaving out faith in what Jesus already did for us. The gospel message is so simple people find it hard to accept—but it is true!
- The last words of "Have You Imprisoned the Holy Spirit" express my heart for revival—the glory of the Lord covering the whole earth! God never intended for planet earth to suffer from the oppressiveness of sin's rebellion to Him. "For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected *it* in hope; because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now" (Rom 8:19-22).

A WORD ABOUT THE GRACE OF GOD

The Greek language is far more descriptive, per each word, than that of our American English. For instance, one word in Greek to be fully understood would take five or more of our English words to grasp its fullness, or depth. That's why there are so many translations of the Bible—each with a little bit different slant in their presentation of the Word of God, but the overall message is the same—it's still God's Word. Thank God for the Lockman Foundation and Zondervan Publishing House who brought us their Amplified rendition (Classic Edition) of the Holy Bible. It does just that, it amplifies the Word of God, bringing out fuller meaning of His Holy Word!

For instance the King James Bible renders John 3:16 like so:

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16 KJV).

The Amplified Bible (Classic Edition), however, renders it this way:

“For God so greatly loved and dearly prized the world that He [*even*] gave up His only begotten (unique) Son, so that whoever believes in (trusts in, clings to, relies on) Him shall not perish (come to destruction, be lost) but have eternal (everlasting) life” (John 3:16 AMPC).

That is simply one of many examples I could give of how the original text of the Word of God says so much more than just the black and white of our favorite translation.

Let me insert here the difference between ‘translations’ of the Bible and paraphrases. A translation is a *scholarly rendition* of the original language (Old Testament—Hebrew, New Testament—Greek); it is a direct translation from one language to another. A paraphrase is a rendering of a translated version and put into common language by a man—not a direct ‘language conversion’. For instance, say someone took the King James Version and decided to put what it says in their own way—that would be a paraphrase, not a translation. There is nothing wrong with reading paraphrases; they make *good supplements*, but not for a steady diet!

Let's continue:

The Dark Ages

The Dark Ages was a point in Church history where the Word of God was kept locked away from the laity (common man—parishioners) and taught that only the clergy could understand it. Therefore its message for the people could only come through these 'special men'. The progression led to unborn-again men heading up the church institution, and that led to the bondage of the Dark Ages (dark because the Light of God's Word was kept hidden away—Holy Scripture was reduced to human-reasoning instead of revelation received through fellowship with the Holy Spirit, Who authored the Book!). God, however, always has a way of escape! Martin Luther came on the scene with the revelation "the just shall live by faith" (Romans 1:17), and The Reformation was born.

Twentieth Century Revivalists

Fast forwarding to the the twentieth century; revival fires burst out everywhere! The one I particularly enjoy studying about is the AZUSA street revival, which gave birth to many different denominations. [I spoke in my other book how most of these became a prison-bar to the move of the Holy Spirit because church leadership adopted the idea that their ways of doing things were the standard. They set up camp (remained un-teachable regarding God and anything 'new' He wanted to do in their midst) and rejected other 'camps' (denominations) as wrong—even 'of the devil'.]

Unfortunately, this unwillingness to accept God's direction coming through others started quenching the Spirit (which resulted in no manifestations [gifts] of the Spirit, and diminished the Light of His Word), and reduced evangelistic preaching to the fear of hell. People were told God was mad at them for their sinfulness. Repentance was viewed as turning from their sinful ways to the God of Judgment (more on true repentance in a bit). So, God, once again, had to rise up some preachers/teachers that would emphasize His goodness to counter it. Oral Roberts was one of them, Kenneth E. Hagin was another.

These men were used by God to bring out the *unmerited favor* side of grace. Kenneth E. Hagin particularly had such a hunger for the Word of God, and a desire

to understand all of its hidden meanings. He would dissect it with tools like Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible and discovered these deeper truths the King James Version simply lacked in portraying. [I only single-out brother Hagin because it was his school, RHEMA Bible Training Center that I attended and graduated from. There are many other men and women of God who could be referenced here.] One truth expounded is that of the grace of God in scriptures like Romans 1:5 "Through Him we have received grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith among all nations for His name."

The Greek word translated 'grace' here is the word *charis* (Strong's number G5485); and it means: "From G5463; *graciousness* (as *gratifying*), of manner or act (abstract or concrete; literal, figurative or spiritual; especially the divine influence upon the heart, and its reflection in the life; including *gratitude*): - acceptable, benefit, favour, gift, grace (-ious), joy liberality, pleasure, thank (-s, -worthy)" (Strong, 1890). The first part of this verse in the Amplified Bible Classic Edition is rendered this way, "It is through Him that we have received grace (God's unmerited favor)." So, great emphasis was placed on God's goodness and His unmerited favor in the messages of these men (and women) of God. God proved their validity by stretching forth His hand to heal. That part of Church history is known as the 'healing revival'.

I'm being extremely sketchy with these historical facts for two reasons: 1) I'm NOT a historian of any sort; 2) I'm simply trying to depict the pattern of how we get in a ditch with the doctrines of God. One man of God said "Sometimes we have to get in an opposite ditch to pull people up from the ditch they are in. But, once we bring them up to the middle of the road, we should join them there." In other words, don't stay in the ditch we are in, but travel the middle of the road with God (which, by the way, is quite narrow [Matt. 7:13-14]).

Charismatic Renewal

The message of these men, that God is a good God and He wants only the best for His children, gained great popularity and exploded in the Charismatic Renewal of the 1980's. [First, the 1960's saw the emphasis of the Person of Jesus. Then, the 1980's, the Person of the Holy Spirit: the baptism of the Holy Spirit, the gifts of the Spirit, and speaking in other tongues. – Prophetically I'm announcing that **it's**

the Father's time! He spoke that word to me over ten years ago. This is the last of the last of human history; and the Father God is going to have the last word! It will be the culmination of every move of God, from Adam to *right now!* That is what was meant in Haggai 2:9a “‘The glory of this latter temple shall be greater than the former,’ says the LORD of hosts.” [I talked about this in the first book.]

Never forget this truth: when God is truly involved in something it will have evidences found in Scripture, particularly in the ministry of Jesus. The last verse of Mark's gospel account puts it this way “And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with *them* and confirming the word through the accompanying signs. Amen” (Mar 16:20). Remember, in the King James versions of the Bible when a word is italicized it was added by the translators with the intent to bring clarity. It was not in the original text. So, taking the word ‘them’ out of this verse it would read “the Lord working with and confirming the word through the accompanying signs.” As the Word was preached, the Lord watched over it to perform it (Jer. 1:12). In other words, He validated what was being proclaimed about Him, and what He did through Jesus.

In plain speech, if God is saying something, Jesus will be exalted as Lord (Who He is, what He has done, and what He is doing now): “Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the *spirit* of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world” (1Jn 4:1-3, underline mine for emphasis). [See also, 1Corin. 12:3.]

In addition to the content of the message; if God is truly behind what is being said He will back His Word with accompanying signs; “‘Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know” (Acts 2:22, underline mine). “Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away. For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward, how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard *Him*, God also

bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will?” (Heb 2:1-4, underline mine). The point I’m making here is the writer of Hebrews is talking about a message spoken (“the things we have heard”). He calls it the message of “salvation” which had been spoken by the Lord Jesus and then by those who heard Him; and that God bore witness to that message “with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit.”

That is the pattern of Scripture, and must be the pattern we are to follow and expect when we preach the Gospel message. We serve a Living God Who *never changes!* “For I *am* the LORD, I do not change” (Mal 3:6a). “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning” (Jas 1:17, underline mine for emphasis). “Jesus Christ *is* the same yesterday, today, and forever” (Heb 13:8).

This is forever our standard to discern if God is involved in something or not –

- Is Jesus being exalted as Lord? (Philippians 2:9)
- Are lives being affected for/by the Glory of God? (Luke 7:22)

Jesus came to destroy the works of the devil (1John 3:8). “How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him” (Acts 10:38, underline mine). These are the parameters we are to use to judge whether or not God is involved in what is going on.

Graces’ Ditch

As with all great truths God restores to the Body of Christ we end up in a ditch with it, and it becomes a **prison bar** that quenches the Spirit of God. Now it’s being taught that God’s grace is such that we no longer have to repent of sin, since all sins—past, present and future—are already forgiven. Let this statement sink deep: forgiveness of sin is *available* to all; but, just like everything God provides, we still have to possess it! Such possession comes through the act of repentance. True repentance means to *turn away from*; but it also means to *change the way we think*. Turn away from our sin—stop doing it, leave it behind us, and go to the Throne of Grace “that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need”

(Hebrews 4:16b, underline mine for emphasis). God's grace gives us the ability to walk free of sin.

The Apostle John said it this way: "My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (1Jn 2:1, underline mine for emphasis). It wasn't simply a directive to *not* sin, but an announcement that the power (ability) to keep from sinning was contained in the writing—the letter he wrote (and, subsequently reading it allows one to tap in to that power/ability).

Paul wrote to the Romans about sin and the role grace plays: "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous. Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more, so that as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?" (Rom 5:19-6:2).

Sin has an allure, for sure, and that appeal is strong against the flesh which wants to cave in to sin's desire to control it; but, God's grace—His ability (power—might—surpassing strength)—is available to anyone who will humble themselves and come before His throne of grace to find help in their time of need. This is where God's grace abounds over sin's draw, and makes the one who comes to Him for help to become 'more than a conqueror' in Christ (Romans 8:37)!

Empowerment Against or License to Sin?

During the early years of the Church's existence there was much turmoil and confusion for the new believers regarding this new Spirit-life they were to now live. They had been Born Again and knew something had taken place in their hearts, but their outward appearance and life seemed to be the same. A religious form came about known as Gnosticism. Its name comes from the Greek word Gnostic, which means 'to know'. Its foundational belief-system was that everything had to be explainable and understood (in other words the brain had to be able to know what was going on). This brought about great confusion. Some even capitalized on this confusion and taught that in order to actually be saved men

had to be circumcised. The addresses to these confusions has become The New Testament.

The book of Galatians was actually a letter Paul wrote to the church in Galatia to address such error. “O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed among you as crucified? This only I want to learn from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?—Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh?” (Gal 3:1-3). You see, there was a group going around teaching that to be truly saved one had to be circumcised and fulfill the demands of the Law of Moses. These ‘teachers’ were called Judaizers. This is why Paul wrote “are you now being made perfect by the flesh?” A Mike Leach rendition would be: ‘Once you became Born-Again (begun in the Spirit) are you now perfected (growing-up in Christ) by adding the deeds of the Law (becoming circumcised)?’

The Law of Moses (Old Testament) listed a bunch of rules and regulations that had to be followed (or, adhered to). One of which was every male had to be circumcised. So these Judaizers took it upon themselves to follow Paul around and teach the new converts that the men had to be circumcised in order to be truly saved. [Writing to the church at Corinth about those trials, Paul called these Judaizers a ‘thorn in the flesh’ – more on that next.] To address the error of this teaching Paul wrote: “For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but a new creation” (Gal 6:15). Mike Leach rendering: ‘It’s not doing the works of the Law (becoming circumcised) that saves you, but becoming a New Creature in Christ’. “Therefore, if anyone *is* in Christ, *he is* a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new” (2Cor. 5:17).

Paul further addressed the issue of becoming circumcised in his letter to the church at Rome: “For circumcision is indeed profitable if you keep the law; but if you are a breaker of the law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision. Therefore, if an uncircumcised man keeps the righteous requirements of the law, will not his uncircumcision be counted as circumcision? And will not the physically uncircumcised, if he fulfills the law, judge you who, *even with your written code* and circumcision, *are* a transgressor of the law? For he is not a Jew who *is one* outwardly, nor *is* circumcision that which *is* outward in the flesh; but *he is* a Jew

who *is one* inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, **in the Spirit**, not in the letter; whose praise *is* not from men but from God” (Rom 2:25-29, underline and bold mine for emphasis).

Rightly Divide the Word of Truth

Now, don't get tripped-up with the first portion “For circumcision is indeed profitable if you keep the law.” Don't ever fragment the Word of God to try and make it say something it doesn't. That's how religions are born; somebody isolates a Scripture and builds an entire doctrine around it. Paul wrote to Timothy, “Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (2Ti 2:15). If the Word of God needs to be rightly divided (discerned), then it can be wrongly divided—right? We are to interpret the Word of God (Scripture) by what has been said in other portions of Scripture; or, simply put, we are to interpret Scripture *by* Scripture. Jesus gave us that example in the wilderness temptation. He resisted the devil with “It is written”. The devil caught on to that and came back with Scripture—yes, the devil knows what the Bible says! It's not the ‘Black-and-White’ words in the Book that causes him to flee; it's the Child-of-God, who is submitted to God, speaking those words—in faith (absolute confidence and trust)—resisting him that causes him to ‘run as in terror’ (that's what ‘flee’ means).

Let me inject something here: the ‘Black-and-White’ words in the Bible are called Logos in Greek. There is no life in those words. That's why approaching the Word of God with a religious mind-set causes confusion—there's no Light (revelation). Messages where Logos words are spoken only cut and divide. Jesus said the words He spoke were spirit and life (see John 6:63). Those Words, in the Greek, are called Rhema. Hearing those Words causes faith to come, and speaking them causes mountains to move! Rhema Words will unite, heal and result in wholeness!

When Satan retorted back to Jesus with a misinterpretation of Psalm 91, “If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, ‘He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in *their* hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone’” (Mat 4:6), Jesus responded, “On the other hand, it is written also, ‘You shall not tempt, test thoroughly, or try exceedingly the Lord your God’” (Matt. 4:7 AMPC). Do you see what He did? He interpreted Scripture *by* other Scripture. In other words, He looked at the whole picture. He knew the

Word of God said “Thou shall not tempt the Lord thy God” (which is found in Deuteronomy 6:16), and judged that casting Himself down, trusting the angels to take care of Him, was testing (tempting) God to fulfill His Word. FAITH DOES NOT TEST—IT TRUST’S!

Now, getting back to those Gnostic Judaizers; Jesus said “Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill” (Mat 5:17, underline mine for emphasis). Did you get that?? Jesus didn’t come to destroy the Law, He came to fulfill it! He was the only One Who could! God knew it would be impossible for fallen-man to measure-up to all those rules and regulations. He designed it that way so we would have to depend on Him. Mankind was *never* intended to be independent of God. We were created to be spiritually connected *to* Him. The Fall caused us to be unplugged from God (Who is Light) and plugged into Satan (who is darkness). That’s what is meant by “And you *He made alive*, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience” (Eph 2:1-2, underline and italics mine for emphasis). John said it this way, “We know [*positively*] that we are of God, and the whole world [*around us*] is under the power of the evil one” (1Jn 5:19 AMPC). The New King James Version renders that last portion “under the sway of the wicked one.” In other words there are two camps, one is influenced by God, and the other is influenced by the devil (the wicked one).

That’s why we have to be Born-again! To change the source of our influence; to disconnect from the spiritual source of darkness and reconnect to the spiritual source of Light. Paul wrote about the Law as being our tutor (school-teacher); “Therefore the law was our tutor *to bring us* to Christ, that we might be justified by faith” (Gal 3:24). Jesus fulfilled the Law, and the New Birth places us IN HIM—“Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated *us* into the kingdom of his dear Son” (Col 1:13). This translation brought us out of one kingdom (the kingdom of darkness) and placed us into the other (the Kingdom of Light). Paul, writing to the church at Corinth, said it this way, “For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body” (1Cor 12:13). This ‘baptism’ placed us IN Christ, thereby making us members of His Body—Jesus is the Head.

This Bodily placement was accomplished by the Spirit of God, Who is also known as the Spirit of Grace (Hebrews 10:29). Paul called the Gospel message he preached “the gospel of the grace of God” (Acts 20:24). Continuing in his letter to the Ephesian church Paul wrote, “But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised *us* up together, and made *us* sit together in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast” (Eph 2:4-9). Did you catch that?? All of the activity accomplished in our New-Birth: becoming New Creatures in Christ (see 2Cor 5:17, Gal 6:15, and Romans 2:25-29), being translated from the kingdom of darkness into the Kingdom of Light (Col 1:13), being raised up together and caused to sit together in the Heavenly places in Christ Jesus (plus a myriad of other things—read the Bible and find out!) were all accomplished by the grace of God!

Paul’s Thorn

Paul, speaking of his apostleship and the works of God accomplished through him, said “But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God *which was* with me” (1Co 15:10). He said it was the grace of God that labored abundantly (did all the works—from miracles and healings, to the message he preached that converted them to God). In his second letter to the Corinthians he listed a bunch of things he suffered because of preaching the Gospel:

- Stripes (whippings) “above measure”
- Prison “frequently”
- Deaths
- Beaten with rods
- Stoned (in those days it was unto death)
- Shipwrecked “a night and a day in the deep”
- Journeys “often”
- Perils

- Of waters
- Of robbers
- His own countrymen
- Gentiles
- In the city
- In the wilderness
- In the sea
- (and) among false brethren
- Weariness and toil
- Sleeplessness
- Hunger and thirst
- Fasting
- Cold and nakedness
- Deep concern for all the churches

This list came from 2Cor. 11:23-28. He continued “In Damascus the governor, under Aretas the king, was guarding the city of the Damascenes with a garrison, desiring to arrest me; but I was let down in a basket through a window in the wall, and escaped from his hands” (2Cor. 11:32-33). [I enumerated all that to bring out the revelation of grace he received from Jesus personally.]

All of these trials Paul listed he calls a thorn in the flesh: “And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure” (2Cor. 12:7). In short, Jesus had told Paul that he would suffer many things (see Acts 9:16). Now as he was listing the things he had suffered, he cited the source of his troubles: “a messenger of Satan (sent) to buffet me.” When he went to the Lord regarding these trials, and requested relief, the Lord told him “My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness” (v. 9). Did you get that?? Jesus called His grace **His strength**.

Here’s the illustration the Lord gave me regarding His response to Paul. First, I’d like to dispute what religion has said about this discourse. Religion tells us that God told Paul “No, you’re going to have to put up with these struggles, trials, and disruptions you’ve been facing – it’s your cross to bear!” Maybe some of you have

heard similar responses to your situation from the religious leaders you have approached about your troubles. I have really good news for you! Jesus has NOT left us in the hands of the devil to tolerate his junk – sickness, disease, poverty, and lack. All that junk is under the curse and Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the Law (Gal. 3:13)!

The Same Name, the Same Blood, and the Same Word

“For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil” (1Jn 3:8b, italics and underline mine). So, why would God **allow** the things He *has* given us the victory over? [Now for the revelation (you thought I had forgotten, didn’t you?)] A mechanic goes into a garage full of tools: a hoist, air compressor, and every wrench, and screw driver imaginable – plus, all the parts needed to complete whatever job he’s faced with. Who is responsible to take care of the car that needs fixing? THE MECHANIC of course! He’s got everything he needs to get the job done; he simply has to use what is available to him. *THAT’S GRACE!* God has provided everything we could ever need to take care of whatever situation the devil and his bunch could ever throw at us! Jesus was telling Paul “My grace is sufficient for you” son; use My Name, plead My Blood, take up the sharp two edged sword of My Word and get the situation taken care of.

Remember, friend, Paul lived through the things he wrote about. We have his letters and we can learn from the revelations he received from the Lord that got him through to the victory. I entitled this portion “The same Name, the same Blood, and the same Word” because that phrase came to me by revelation of the Lord. He spoke that to me one afternoon. I knew exactly what He meant [when the Lord speaks revelatory words to me, I always know what He means by them – for they are Light (or illumination) and trailing behind the ‘word’ comes the meaning (or intention for the ‘word’), sometimes the ‘light’ will grow (or get brighter), but the revelation will be there]: new victories will come by the same Source that previous victories came by – the same Name, Blood, and Word will *always* work!

I must mention here that I’m not talking about something like a computer program: the same commands will get the same responses. God’s Word is NOT some natural entity that can be flung about as a command to get our carnal desires to manifest. What I am saying is – once one has developed an intimate relationship with the

Lord – our faith in Him will always see us through to victory! That’s what 1Jn. 5:4 is talking about (“For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith”); it’s all connected. An intimate relationship with Him will cause us to walk in the knowing of what we need to do in whatever situation. All of what we have been talking about is **grace**. Perhaps the best way I can say it is: any activity in our lives that has God all over it is a work of grace.

Two More Examples of Grace

“For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for you Gentiles—if indeed you have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which was given to me for you, how that by revelation He made known to me the mystery (as I have briefly written already, by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ)” (Eph. 3:1-4, underline mine). The word dispensation here can also be translated stewardship. Paul had a stewardship from God (we could call it his assignment) to preach and teach the revelations he had received from the Lord. Those revelations came *by* the grace of God *and* he wrote his letters telling of them by the grace of God. We could say it this way: Paul was anointed by God to speak about the mysteries (revelations) he had received from the Lord. Grace is the anointing to carry out whatever assignment one has received of the Lord.

But, the grace in/on his life also transferred to his readers through the words he wrote as they read them; “by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ” (v.4b). Did you get that? The messages he wrote also contained the grace (anointing) to illuminate the readers that they may be partakers of the understanding he had of the mystery. Have you noticed almost every letter (epistle) written to the Church begins with “Grace...to you.” If you’ve picked up that Grace comes into one’s life by reading the Word of God the same way faith comes, then you’re on the track of revelation available to the entire Body of Christ!

Peter makes it plain in his second epistle by stating, “Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, as His divine power has given to us all things that *pertain* to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, by which have been given to

us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption *that is* in the world through lust” (2Pet. 1:2-4). – WOW! – God’s Word, by His grace, brings us to a place of partaking of His divine nature!! Let me ask you this: do you think God is ever sick? Is He ever worried? How about broke (impoverished)? So we can live our lives just like He does by putting His Word (exceedingly great and precious promises) to work in our lives! And, it’s all made available to us by His grace! – “Grace and truth came through Jesus Christ” (the Word made flesh, Jn. 1:17, 14).

The other revelation I’d like to point out here is Paul said he wrote what he wrote by (through) the grace of God. “For I say, *through the grace given to me*” (Rm. 12:3a). So, let’s sum this all up. Paul said he was an apostle by the grace of God; he received the revelations he got by the grace of God; he communicated them to others by the grace of God, and the ‘hearers’ (or readers) received understanding through that same grace. The greatest mandate I have from Heaven (one could call it my grace impartation) is to bring understanding to the body of Christ regarding God’s involvement in our lives to show the world He’s alive and well and wants to be involved in their lives. He’s looking for us to cooperate with Him regarding that message. Or, I like to say it this way: He’s looking for us to co-operate with Him. He’s at work all of the time, but He needs for us to work together with Him so He can manifest His goodness to the world by healing the sick, raising the dead, casting out devils and everything else Jesus commissioned us to do.

Our lack of cooperating with what the Lord wants to accomplish has been a prison bar that has kept Him locked behind for far too long! That’s the reason He’s moving on me to write these things. Remember, Jesus could do no mighty works in His hometown because of their unbelief (see Mark 6:1-6). Psalm 78:41 says God was limited by the Israelites testing Him with their unbelief in the wilderness. So, don’t sit there reading this and get all upset with the things the Lord is giving me to write about to straighten out what has imprisoned Him over the years! Things are wrapping up and He desires to crown us with His glory so He can utter the words “Well done” to each and every one of us!

On to the next “to” of our discussion. I realize this portion could go on for many volumes. I will simply get the ball rolling along these lines and trust the Holy

Spirit to continue the discussion each of us will personally have with Him to accomplish this task of releasing Him from the prison we've put Him behind.

IMPRISONED TO

In this section we will spend the bulk of the intention for this book. My revelation of imprisoning the Holy Spirit seems to grow daily (meaning, He's constantly pointing out things: situations, attitudes, and the like that imprison Him). That being said, the Lord is urging me to address this 'imprisonment' to free each of us, and to free Him to accomplish what He wants/needs to do these last days before His return.

Men Pleasers

Paul, writing to the Galatian church, said "For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ" (Gal. 1:10). Before we can understand the thought here we have to go back and look at Paul's background a little bit.

When it comes to revelation in Scripture one has to keep in mind that the Bible is *not* meant to be a history book—but, rather a Book of His story. Like looking for precious gems among other substances, digging to find them and illumination from the Holy Spirit is required to see some things! In other words, some things are simply gleaned while looking for something else—like nuggets of Truth that manifest while looking into something else. The following fits within this category.

It is evident that Paul was a young man during the time Jesus walked the shores of Galilee (quite possibly very young). He wrote in this same letter to the Galatians that God had "separated me from my mother's womb and called *me* through His grace, to reveal His Son in me" (Gal. 1:15b & 16a). If you look at those words and couple them with the thought David wrote about God, "Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. And in Your book they all were written, The days fashioned for me, When *as yet there were* none of them" (Psa. 139:16, underline mine); then look at what the Lord said to Jeremiah, "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; Before you were born I sanctified you; I ordained you a prophet to the nations" (Jer. 1:5). Now corral this all together with what Paul wrote in Ephesians 2:10 "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good

works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them” (Eph. 2:10, underline mine).

Before you go running off with this, talking about ‘predestination’, read the Amplified rendition: “For we are God’s [*own*] handiwork (His workmanship), recreated in Christ Jesus, [*born anew*] that we may do those good works which God predestined (planned beforehand) for us [*taking paths which He prepared ahead of time*], that we should walk in them [*living the good life which He prearranged and made ready for us to live*]” (Eph. 2:10, underline mine). Simply put, God planned a wondrously blessed life for everyone to live. He mapped out this life with paths for us to take. BUT—in *His sovereignty*—He designed man with a will (a chooser) to walk out His plan for each of our lives. The choice is ours to follow and obey Him, or not. Obedience reaps the blessing, rebellion reaps the curse. The entire Bible is filled with accounts of this truth. Before we stray too far from the point I’m making at this time, I’ll simply direct you to Brother Copeland’s teachings on The BLESSING of the Lord (visit kcm.org for these resources).

Getting back to our point, God has a plan for everybody’s life—gifts and callings—and it’s a blessed life! With that thought in mind, Paul had the calling of God on him ‘from his mother’s womb’ (in other words, his entire life). As he took the paths laid out in front of him he wound up at the feet of Gamaliel (he studied to become a Pharisee under him). How do I know this? Paul said so himself in Acts 22, “I am indeed a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, taught according to the strictness of our fathers’ law, and was zealous toward God as you all are today” (Acts 22:3).

Who is this Gamaliel? Look back to Acts 5, verse 34 “Then one in the council stood up, a Pharisee named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law held in respect by all the people, and commanded them to put the apostles outside for a little while.” This portion of Scripture is speaking of the time when there were great manifestations of God, “Also a multitude gathered from the surrounding cities to Jerusalem, bringing sick people and those who were tormented by unclean spirits, and they were all healed” (Acts 5:16, underscore mine), and the religious leaders did not like what was happening at the hands of the Apostles. [The devil never likes when

God undoes the bondages he puts people in!] So, they threw the Apostles in prison to try and stop them from preaching in the Name of Jesus (verses 17 & 18).

>>>> Read this statement with great care and resolve!: When anyone decides to follow after God, and what He has planned for their lives, there is *nothing* the devil can do to stop it! Keep that in mind when things don't *look* like they are working out, and it seems like the devil has won. <<<<

“But at night an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors and brought them out, and said, ‘Go, stand in the temple and speak to the people all the words of this life.’”(Acts 5:19-20). [Angels are ministering spirits sent by God to help us walk out our ‘prearranged paths’ (see Hebrews 1:14)]. So, they did just that; they stood in the temple “teaching the people” (v. 25). “Then the captain went with the officers and brought them without violence, for they feared the people, lest they [the leaders] should be stoned” (Acts 5:26, underline and brackets mine). [Remember what we’re talking about, “Men Pleasers”? People who are men pleasers will always be afraid of what other people think, so they’ll do things to keep from making waves!] When confronted with their blatant disregard of the religious leaders and commanded to not teach anymore in the Name of Jesus (v. 28), Peter responded “We ought to obey God rather than men” (v. 29).

“When they heard *this*, they were furious and plotted to kill them. Then one in the council stood up, a Pharisee named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law held in respect by all the people, and commanded them to put the apostles outside for a little while” (Acts 5:33-34). Now, we’re back up to speed with who Gamaliel is. This is the same man Paul trained to be a Pharisee under. Yes, Paul was a Pharisee! Listing his religious qualifications to the Philippians, Paul wrote “circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, *of* the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee” (Phil. 3:5). Don’t stop reading there, though. Paul further stated, regarding these ‘man-made’ qualifications, “But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is

from the law, but that which *is* through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith” (Phil. 3:7-9).

Paul was an apostle whose primary message was the gospel of grace. This last statement of Philippians 3:9, “not having my own righteousness, which *is* from the law, but that which *is* through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith,” reveal that true righteousness comes through faith in Christ. The Law was only a tutor intended to bring mankind to this righteousness. “But before faith came, we were kept under guard by the law, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed. Therefore the law was our tutor *to bring us* to Christ, that we might be justified by faith” (Gal 3:23-24, underline mine). The Law was a code of rules that had to be obeyed in order to be in right-standing (righteous) with God—works! But the gospel of grace states “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast” (Eph 2:8-9, underline mine).

I called the qualifications Paul listed in Philippians 3 ‘man-made’ because any time God instructs us (we sometimes call it revelation) regarding something we have a tendency to get rigid with it; or, we take it to some extreme and make it ‘our doctrine’ which it then becomes ‘man-made’. We slap a label on it, form committees, and if we’re not careful a ‘religion’ is born. Jesus warned the religious leaders about this, He said that their traditions had made the Word of God of no effect (see Mark 7:13)! This activity is known as pride. Somebody thinks they have the corner on something, so they treat it as the standard for everyone. If you don’t comply with their standard then you’re judged as wrong. A ‘**pleaser of men**’ won’t want that label, so they don’t stand up for what they know is right.

Paul was ‘in’ with the religious leaders of his time. He was a student of this highly respected leader, Gamaliel; he spent his days persecuting the Church, dragging believers off in chains to be imprisoned or killed. Was it simply his zeal for God that drove him to do such things? Or, was he trying to climb the pharisaical ladder? I haven’t found in his writings (yet) the answer to those questions, but I know how men work to succeed. Perhaps the calling on his life drove him to such extremes. All I know is the time came when he humbled himself to the point that he wrote “Yes, furthermore, I count everything as loss compared to the possession of the priceless privilege (the overwhelming preciousness, the surpassing worth, and supreme advantage) of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord and of progressively

becoming more deeply and intimately acquainted with Him [*of perceiving and recognizing and understanding Him more fully and clearly*]. For His sake I have lost everything and consider it all to be mere rubbish (refuse, dregs), in order that I may win (gain) Christ (the Anointed One), ... [*For my determined purpose is*] that I may know Him [*that I may progressively become more deeply and intimately acquainted with Him, perceiving and recognizing and understanding the wonders of His Person more strongly and more clearly*], and that I may in that same way come to know the power outflowing from His resurrection [*which it exerts over believers*], and that I may so share His sufferings as to be continually transformed [*in spirit into His likeness even*] to His death, [*in the hope*] ... I do not consider, brethren, that I have captured and made it my own [*yet*]; but one thing I do [*it is my one aspiration*]: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the [*supreme and heavenly*] prize to which God in Christ Jesus is calling us upward” (Phil. 3:8, 10, 13-14 AMPC).

Persecution will either weaken your stance for the Gospel—causing you to shrink back from obeying God and fulfilling your preordained path (which also imprisons the Holy Spirit)—or, it will strengthen your resolve to press forward in God, pleasing Him and not anyone else—including yourself!

How Do You Like Your Harvest?

Walking with God is a journey; it’s a life-long traveling toward our “upward call in Christ Jesus” (see Philippians 3:14). Early in my walk with Him the Lord spoke this word to me: “Our walk together will be like the entire removal of sand from one beach to another; only, it won’t be done with steam-shovels, hand tools, or even using a spoon. But, it will be done one grain of sand at a time.” That was a rhema-word for me, although I completely ignored it for many years (most of my spiritual life, sad to say). This ‘word’ spoke of the transformation I needed to undergo from being flesh-ruled to spirit-ruled (which is the general journey everyone has to take in their walk with God). It’s the whole walk of faith everyone has to learn. Being ‘flesh-ruled’ is a prison-bar for the Holy Spirit.

I like the way Joyce Meyers puts it. She references Genesis 8:22, “While the earth remains, Seedtime and harvest, Cold and heat, Winter and summer, And day and night Shall not cease.” Only, when she says it, she emphasizes it this way: ‘seed—

TIME—and harvest’. You see, although the full capacity of a tree—including its fruit we enjoy eating—is present when it is planted, it has to undergo the process of growth. We all understand that. You plant the seed, water it, and let it go through its process of maturing so we can enjoy its fruit. Jesus even referenced this process this way, “And He said, ‘The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground, and should sleep by night and rise by day, and the seed should sprout and grow, he himself does not know how. For the earth yields crops by itself: first the blade, then the head, after that the full grain in the head”” (Mark 4:26-28, underline mine).

The curse of being too analytical has plagued me my entire life. This has been a prison bar in me that has hindered the work of God and the move of His Spirit, preventing Him from flowing freely through me. I’ve always been one who not only desires to know the what (and who, if applicable), but I like to know the *how*. In other words, I would be guilty of digging up the seed to see *that* it is growing, *how* it is growing, *why* it is growing, and so forth. The Kingdom of God does not work that way! It works *behind the scenes*! That’s why it all hinges on faith. We have to believe what God said whether we see it or not.

2Corinthians 4:18 says it this way, “while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen *are* temporary, but the things which are not seen *are* eternal.” The Word of God is seed (1Peter 1:23). Furthermore, the promises of God—that cause us to be partakers of His divine nature (which cause us to escape the corruption *that is* in the world through lust (2Peter 1:4))—are the subject-matter (content) of that seed. We plant it by hearing it (Romans 8:17), we water it by meditating it (Philippians 4:8), and it grows by the increase that is from God (see 1Corinthians 3:6-7 and Colossians 2:19). Seed—Time—Harvest.

I titled this section ‘How Do You Like Your Harvest?’ because the ‘quick-fix’ mentality we have developed in these last twenty (or so) years has become another bar to the Spirit’s prison. Joyce Meyer calls it “Drive-through Break-through.” We all want to pull up to some ‘blessing-window’ somewhere and have someone put a blessing on us, without even getting out of our car, and then go our way. So, if we aren’t instantly healed (or, delivered) we throw up our hands and say ‘Well, I guess it isn’t God’s will to heal me.’ Not realizing that healing (or, deliverance), more

often than not, is a process—a harvest that grows. The tendency then is to let go of our faith—which is vital to receiving anything from God—and remain unchanged (or, in a worse condition than we started with); and that, my friend, has established a prison-bar for the Holy Spirit!

This revelation has finally dawned on me. I somehow had the underlying attitude that I was exempt from the waiting period—the TIME factor. Many years have gone by, and in retrospect I've come to admit and acknowledge my impatience. I have noticed a pattern that I keep repeating the same mistakes, and it brings about no change in my life! [It is said that the definition of insanity is doing the same things over and over expecting different results!] Hence, the question 'How Do You Like Your Harvest' came up in my heart. Harvest meaning the results of my faith (fruit) in my life. A true life of faith will bear fruit. If you (I) don't like the fruit you're (I'm) partaking of, then change what you're (I'm) doing. There's another cliché saying: 'You want a change, you've got to make a change.'

Another way to put that is, if we don't like what is going on in our lives then we have to do things differently. But, remember, things aren't going to change overnight. To expect them to is nothing but erecting a prison bar that imprisons the Holy Spirit! Which, I might clarify at this point, actually imprisons ourselves! That's why I called this section of the book "Imprisoned To"; but, it could also relate to the next part: "Imprisoned Too", which addresses the fact we all have developed prison bars in each of our lives.

ANOTHER "TO" BEFORE MOVING ON

Lest we make the assumption that certain things which haven't been included do not qualify as imprisonment, let me make brief mention of the following:

- Alcoholism – excessive drinking of alcohol
- Pornography – sexual literature (including photos)
- Lying – simply not telling the truth
- Cheating – rule breaking, unfaithful

The list could go on, but I think we get the picture. All of these practices lead to imprisoning the Holy Spirit, and ourselves! When we're involved in activities that result in a prison we literally feel trapped and cannot advance forward. This is a

pitiful state of being! One who is in this state has little to no joy. They constantly make excuse to not be involved in most activities – like staying home from church, or family events. I experienced a degree of this imprisonment. I think, perhaps, that’s why the Lord has given this message to me: 1) to help me be free, and 2) to bring freedom to others.

I have good news to share. This one Scriptural Truth has been foundational to releasing me from imprisonment! “Giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light. He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins” (Col. 1:12-14 underline mine). I took my training in the Laws of faith (hear the Word of God, believe it in your heart and say it with your mouth), grabbed hold of the ‘horns of the altar’ (simply meaning to have a resolve to not let go!), and PRESSED toward the prize of the upward call of God! Sometimes it’s a ‘teeth-gritting’, never quitting, ‘blood-sweat-and-tears’, pressing that’s required, but the Word works!!

It takes discipline. Sometimes it means turning off the television. Sometimes it means letting some ‘friends’ go their (unbelieving) way [Scripture teaches of the influence others have on us]. Sometimes it’s times alone with just you and God (I suggest reading the Word, listening to up building preaching [I personally recommend the Victory Channel® <https://www.govictory.com>], praying in the Spirit (other tongues)). These all speak of hard work; Hebrews chapters 3 and 4 talk about laboring to enter God’s rest (that’s where true peace and wholeness is found).

God is pouring out His Spirit in these last days. But, He needs channels to flow through – not reservoirs that keep Him to ourselves! Think about this: if all there was for any of us to accomplish in the Kingdom of God was to get Born-Again, we’d immediately be raptured upon our conversion. Besides, how did we get Born-Again? We heard the message of salvation. Jesus gave us ALL The Great Commission before ascending into Heaven: (read the combined rendition the Lord gave me here: <https://www.cspub.org/ourgreatcommission>). It begins with “All authority has been given to Me” and continues with “Go therefore.” [It would do

us all a tremendous amount of good to read the Bible – particularly the New Testament Epistles – as personal instruction(s).]

IMPRISONED TOO

This ‘too’ speaks of the ‘also’ part of imprisonment we all develop into. I say ‘we’ because the sin-nature that has passed on to all of man-kind ensures we’ll end up being influenced by darkness unto an imprisonment of some kind. Businessmen strive for position – that oftentimes costs them their family (divorce, adultery, kids becoming messed-up in some way – which, in turn, imprisons them); parents imposing a career path on a child (one that they may or may not have chosen); teachers speaking discouraging words to a student (the student ends up believing it and gets caught on the ‘hamster-wheel’ that leads nowhere). These are a few scenarios that the human race has been subject to since the Fall of Man.

Let me speak an encouraging word here: I’m certainly NOT talking about becoming so perfect that now God can finally use us for ministering His power through us. If that were the case none of us would ever measure up! – He looks on the heart. “For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of *those* whose heart *is* loyal to Him” (2Chr. 16:9a). [Ephesians 3:14 speaks of becoming a “perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. But, that “perfection” is speaking of maturity.]

The before mentioned items one could be imprisoned to (or, by) touches all of our lives – either by involvement, or association. They can be strongholds in one’s life and make it seem like there is no way out! This book is not to simply point out these things, leaving no hope of resolve. Jesus paid the price for total freedom – spirit, soul, and body. When Isaiah was looking ahead to the cross he said “His visage was marred more than any man, And His form more than the sons of men” (52:14b). Many have taken that to represent Jesus’ body from the scourging; that certainly was part of it, but consider this: “He (God the Father) made Him (Jesus, the Son) who knew no sin *to be* sin for us” (2Cor. 5:21a). Jesus never sinned, but God made Him sin (take on the sin-nature—He became sin) in our place.

The wages of sin is death (Rom. 6:23). Death is not just stopping to be alive; it’s everything that comes from the realm of death: sickness (all forms – arthritis, cancer, paralysis, and the list goes on), fear, and torment, everything that came into

the world through Adam's transgression. Another way to put it is "the curse of the Law." Everything listed in Deuteronomy 28:15-68 came on Jesus while hanging on the cross! That's why He didn't even look human; His body was contorted and badgered from the weight and consequence of becoming sin. Continue reading on into chapter 53 of Isaiah and you'll find "He is despised and rejected by men" (v.3), "He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows" (v.4), "He *was* wounded for our transgressions, *He was* bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace *was* upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed" (v.5), "the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all" (v.6). The list goes on for six more verses. Jesus went through all of that (not to mention going into hell itself) on our behalf!

Healing for our bodies, deliverance for our minds, everything that pertains to life and godliness was purchased for us through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. His Selfless act redeemed us from the curse of the Law! The prison doors have been opened – "come out and live a life worth living as My free gift to you." I just heard the Lord say that inside me! Refusal to receive this lavish gift is nothing short of imprisonment!

Limiting the Almighty—Prison Bar!

"Yes, again and again they tempted God, And limited the Holy One of Israel" (Psa. 78:41). Speaking of Jesus ministering in His own home-town Mark records: "Now He could do no mighty work there" (6:5a). Wait a minute you might say, I thought Jesus had the anointing of God (the Spirit) without measure (Jn. 3:34)! He did, but He was limited by their unbelief. God will never make anybody receive His blessing – force it on them. What was (and is) the cure? "Then He went about the villages in a circuit, teaching" (Mark 6:6b). Scripture says "So then faith *comes* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17). Time and time again, throughout the Gospels, we read Jesus saying to those who received healing, deliverance, or whatever desired result from God: "your faith has _____."

Lack of faith is a prison bar to the Holy Spirit. The Israelites wandered through the desert for forty years because they didn't mix faith with the message God spoke to them through Moses. "Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it. For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them; but the word which they heard did not profit

them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it” (Heb 4:1-2 underline mine). Did you catch that? The instructions (message) God spoke to the Jews through Moses was called the “gospel.” And, that Word didn’t profit them because they didn’t mix it with faith. Another way to say that is they didn’t believe what the man of God told them, so they wouldn’t act on it (faith is not just a belief, but an act – ‘if one is not incited to act, they don’t have faith’ is how the Lord said it to me once). This ‘unbelief’ results in imprisonment. How is one freed from this predicament? Listen to anointed preaching of the Word, and act on what you hear (the ‘hearing’ is of the heart, not the head).

A Testimony

I have known for many, many years it is the Lord’s will to prosper me and that I be in health (3Jn.2). Brother Hagin always spoke of the promises of God “don’t fall on you like ripe cherries falling off of a tree.” In other words: just because you get revelation of something, hear anointed preaching of something, and you think “yeah, that belongs to me!” doesn’t mean it’s simply going to start happening in your life. [I might lose some here!] THERE’S LABOR INVOLVED TO ENTER INTO HIS REST (the Promised Land to the Jews, answered prayer to us).

The most important component to faith working in your and my life is the inner-image must change. We have to ‘see’ ourselves with what we’re believing for. If, for instance, we get a revelation from God regarding our healing (or, financial blessing), we have to meditate that promise until we see ourselves with it. Bible meditation is to mutter (speak) to ourselves over and over – that’s what God instructed Joshua to do: “This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success” (Jos. 1:8). A litter bit later, when facing a battle over possessing Jericho, the Lord told Joshua: “See! I have given Jericho into your hand” (6:2a). Joshua had to ‘see’ it before he walked it out.

This “seeing” has to be labored for – this is the rest we all have to enter into before we ‘possess’ what God has already given us! Did you know the original Scriptures were not written with punctuation? – Here’s a little side note that goes right along with our discussion: Ephesians 6, speaking of our spiritual warfare, instructs:

“Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand” (Eph. 6:13). Paul continues the instruction in verse 14: “Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness” (Eph. 6:14). These punctuations were added at the discretion of the translators thinking they could help clarify what was being said. Well, if they can add them, then I can take some out to portray the revelation God gave me. Remember, I said there is a labor to enter into His rest. Let’s combine the end of verse thirteen with the beginning of verse fourteen: “having done all to stand, stand therefore”! Do you see it? There’s a work to be done in order to ‘stand.’ This ‘standing’ we’re speaking of here is an immovability regardless of the trial!

Well, as I stated earlier, sometimes revelation from God ‘feels like’ “boy, this is going to happen” – so, we (I) wait, and wait, and wait. Nothing happens! Why? Because we (I) have a part to play. The promise has to be possessed, which might take a lot of re-programming of our thinking, and how we see ourselves. It’s been said, ‘the Lord got the Israelites out of Egypt, but then He had to get the Egypt out of them.’

The testimony? I was brought up with such a poverty-mentality that despite how much revelation God poured out on me regarding prosperity I barely made it from paycheck to paycheck. My mother-in-law gave me the book by Brother Copeland “The Blessing of the Lord” several years ago. I have read it, and read it, and read it since then nine times through (some parts more than that). I made a pact with myself and God (He calls it a covenant) that I would walk in what I was reading about! – It’s starting to happen! – I’ll not give details, but I will say I no longer live paycheck to paycheck! What happened? My inner-image has changed (and is still enlarging!).

You might be reading this and think to yourself “I wish I could give to missions, go here, or there, but I just can’t see it happening.” If you really mean it, go to God with that ‘dream’ and ask Him to help you make whatever changes you need to make so that can happen. [You know, not being able to ‘see’ that happening is a prison – for you, and for the Spirit of God Who wants to flow through you to touch humanity!] The Lord will lead you; perhaps He’ll instruct you to read a certain book, like “The Blessing of the Lord”, or a friend will invite you to a conference

that ends up turning your life right side-up. One thing He does for me – a lot! – is I'll fire up the Victory Channel® and the speaker will say exactly what I need to hear that unravels the mystery I'm facing.

Our Purpose—In Conclusion

What I'm about to write about is so precious to me; I almost don't want to talk about it! Perhaps the very worst part of my childhood—not really having much of a relationship with my father—has resulted in the greatest catapult to my walk with the Lord. Psalm 91 is my absolute favorite portion of Scripture: “He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High Shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty” (Psa. 91:1). [I've published an expository of this Psalm on my website called “An Invitation to Abide” <https://www.cspub.org/an-invitation-to-abide.html>.] My desire for a ‘fatherly-companionship’ drove me to develop my relationship with my Heavenly Father. I believe He desires for us all – all of humanity – to have a deep, intimate walk with Him! After all, He gave His Son for it. Not so we can develop denominations that ultimately divide His Body. But unite under the Banner of His Love for us.

When we come to realize that we simply are not going to agree on every little thing in the Bible, but make the determination “I'm going to put aside my difference of opinion to unite with my brothers and sisters in Christ” then – and only then – will God be able to fulfill the desire of His Heart: “I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy: And it shall come to pass, *that* whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Acts 2:17b-18, 21 KJV underline mine).

The prophets in the land are saying we've entered into the last Great Awakening before the return of the Lord. If you (or I) aren't ‘seeing’ it happening, then we must ask ourselves: “Am I holding the Lord back from manifesting Himself (being a prison for the Holy Spirit)?”

Read your Bible, read stuff on my site, listen to anointed preaching – go to church! Let's finish writing the Book of Acts! “Even so, come, Lord Jesus” (Revelation 22:20b).