



Compassion

2021 - Fourth Quarter

Lost and Found

It's a familiar story, and yet, it is as old as the gospel in which it can be found – a child of God wanders off and eventually becomes lost.

The younger son gathered together all that he had and traveled to a distant country (Lk. 15:13).

Bobby grew up in the church, surrounded by a family who loved him and wanted only the best for him as every Christian parent does. He attended Sunday school, followed by confirmation classes, and was confirmed shortly after becoming a teenager. After graduating from high school, Bobby continued to live at home and attend church with his family. His journey "to a distant country" began soon after he decided to move out of the house and strike out on his own.

There he wasted his wealth with reckless living. After he had spent everything, ...he began to be in need. (Lk. 15:13-14).

Not long after he left home, Bobby fell in with the "wrong crowd" and stopped showing up on Sundays to attend church with his family. He began partying regularly with his new friends and soon found himself addicted to drugs. He lost his job, his money ran out, and soon Bobby was willing to do just about anything to feed his addiction. Bobby's life continued spiraling out of control, and he eventually ended up in prison.

While he was still far away, his father saw him and was filled with compassion. He ran, hugged his son, and kissed him (Lk. 15:20).

After arriving at the prison where I serve, Bobby eventually found his way into my Bible study. As we studied the Scriptures together, the Holy Spirit began to fan into flame his smoldering faith, and Bobby soon discovered that while he had turned away from God, God had not turned away from him. Like the father in Jesus' parable, God had been waiting patiently for his wayward son to return.

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Redhawk Stands Guard

Redhawk was a native American whose son was hospitalized. While his son was in the hospital, Redhawk refused to leave his room, and he even ate and slept in his son's room. When the staff urged him to take a break outside of the room, he refused saying, "Evil spirits are after my son and I need to be here to protect him." When the staff told me about Redhawk, I went to visit him.

As we visited, Redhawk told me that he was a Christian. He and his son belonged to a little Christian group. Before each meeting, the members would walk around the lodge several times reading Bible verses and prayers to chase away the evil spirits who wished to destroy them. Then, while they gathered inside to study the Bible, three elders would sit in front of the building studying Bible stories. The three elders standing guard, he explained, represented the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

In their native culture, evil spirits were very real, and Redhawk needed to remain vigilant so that they wouldn't

wreck his son's life the way they had wrecked the lives of some of his relatives who had become heavy drinkers and lawbreakers. Redhawk believed that because of his son's illness, he was especially vulnerable to the evil spirits that ruined the lives of his relatives. Therefore, he would stay with his son, read the Bible to his son, and pray for him.

Together, we reviewed the saving love of Jesus for baptized sinners. As we talked about his death on the cross, his resurrection from the grave and the forgiveness of sins, I explained that these were powerful tools of faith to combat evil spirits. We talked more, and Redhawk gave me the privilege of hearing the Lord's Prayer in his native language. After visiting for some time, Redhawk asked me to stay in his son's room while he took care of some business. He was confident through our Christian talk and shared faith that I could also protect his son.

It was a special privilege to meet another Christian outside of our

regular circle of Believers. It reminded me that there are many other kinds of Christians who also worship God. Please remember to keep these fellow Christians in your prayers. To God be the glory!



by Chaplain
Kenneth Wenzel

*“Evil spirits
are after my
son and I need
to be here...”*



God, Help My Victims

At a recent prison Bible discussion group, I asked the guys to introduce themselves by telling their name, how they felt right at that moment, and who they've been praying for lately. When it was *Dan's* turn, he didn't have to think about it: with no hesitation, he said, "I'm praying for my victims."

I don't know what *Dan's* crimes are (I don't ask), but he is aware that his crimes weren't mere technicalities – whatever he did, it brought pain and loss to people. He has victims.

Dan's response woke me up. I need to ask: Who are *my* victims? When God says, "Thou shalt not..." he's not just creating picky rules and playing gotcha – he doesn't love rules, he loves people. And he doesn't want to see people he loves get hurt. "If anyone causes one of these little ones – those who believe in me – to stumble, it would be better for them to have a large millstone hung around

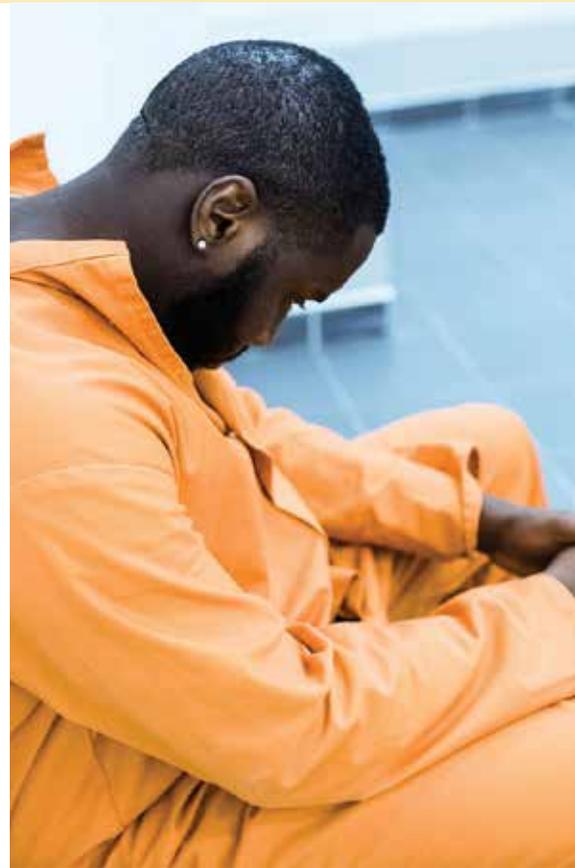
their neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea" (Matthew 18:6 NIV). My actions have an impact on people, and I don't always think about what that impact might be – but my Lord does.

Dan's response struck me in another way, too. He isn't hopelessly stuck in a state of shame for what he's done to people – he's forgiven, AND he's an advocate for those people, bringing those people and their hurt to his Lord. That's what God's grace does: Jesus frees me from condemnation, and he frees me to bring healing and love into this world of hurt.

I encourage all of us to join with *Dan*, and ask: Who are my victims? What healing do they need? What can I ask Jesus to do for them? What does Jesus want me to do for them?



by Chaplain
Philip Merten



"Quick, bring out the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let us eat and celebrate, because this son of mine was dead and is alive again. He was lost and is found." (Lk. 15:22-24).

Today, as *Bobby* serves out his time in prison, he is once again back in the Father's house, enjoying the blessings that God bestows upon His children. Each week, he faithfully attends Bible class and happily receives the Lord's Supper every month. Through these means of grace, the Holy Spirit continues to work in *Bobby's* heart, building up his faith and filling him with peace and joy.

But it was fitting to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again. He was lost and is found (Lk. 15:32).

For over 120 years, Institutional Ministries has been *shining the light of Jesus's love* on the *walled-in souls of our communities*. Throughout that time, God has given us countless reasons "to celebrate and be glad" over lost souls like *Bobby* whom He has found. To God be the glory!



by Chaplain
Joseph Radsek





Shining the light of Jesus' love
on the walled-in souls of our communities!

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OUR MISSION

*"To provide
direction, comfort,
and hope by shining
the light of Jesus'
love on the walled-in
souls of our
communities!"*



Special Gifts & Memorials 07/26/2021 to 12/02/2021

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Al & Annette Godwin's
50th Wedding Anniversary**
Mrs. Joyce Thompson
Many Blessings Received
Mrs. Janelle Peters
Jeannine Paul's 89th Birthday
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Mr. & Mrs. Paul Heyer
Our 60th Wedding Anniversary
Mr. & Mrs. Willard Mess

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My First Great
Granddaughter**
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Wayne Krueger
Ms. Kristin Krueger

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Mr. David A. Kapanke
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