



Compassion

Sharing hope...

2017 - Third Quarter

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Bible Study Chain



What's In A Name



Special Gifts & Memorials



NEWS

Want to learn more?
Check us out
on the web!

This year's Annual Meeting will be held on November 4th at St. Luke's in Watertown.

God, I Need \$200

In a Bible study about prayer last week, someone told me, "There are a lot of times I think I can't ask God for help because I know I'm doing something I shouldn't, and I figure he won't listen to me until I stop the sin." I was glad he raised that issue, because we needed to tackle the question: Is there a limit to God's grace, or can I come to him at any time, no matter what, and count on his love and kindness?

I cited the epistle of James where it says, "If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you" (1:5). And then I told this story about how I'd seen the truth of the phrase "God... gives generously without finding fault".

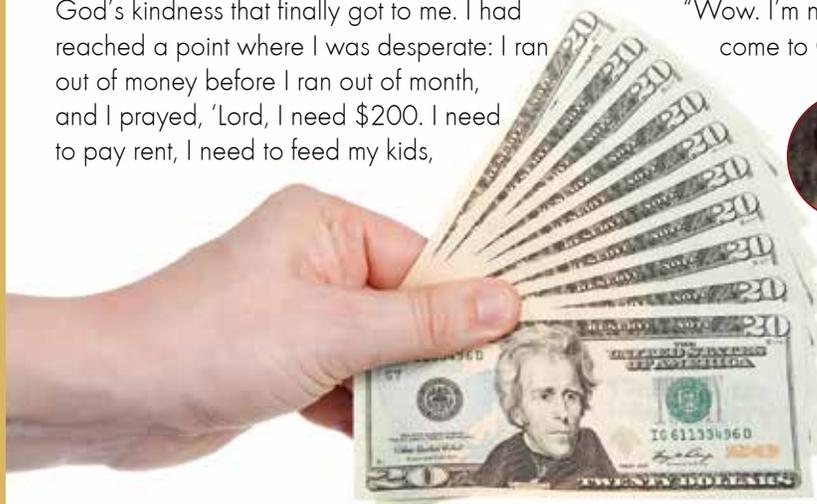
I was ministering at an inpatient addiction treatment facility, where I met a woman who had come in for her addiction to crack cocaine. Whenever she would come in, we would talk and pray together, and during one of those times she said, "You know, it was God's kindness that finally got to me. I had reached a point where I was desperate: I ran out of money before I ran out of month, and I prayed, 'Lord, I need \$200. I need to pay rent, I need to feed my kids,

and I'm not gonna lie to you, I'm gonna smoke up about \$20 worth. But please Lord, I need \$200!'"

"And you know what God did? He gave me the \$200! I got a check I wasn't expecting, and it was for \$200! And I used it to pay my rent, and I bought groceries and fed my kids; and I did spend about \$20 on dope, like I said I would. God knew I was gonna do that, I even told him I would. And he let me have the money anyway! I wouldn't have done that if I was God! And that's when it started getting to me: I'm being so bad to God, and he's being so good to me... I gotta get some help, this just can't go on. And here I am, getting clean."

I told that story to the Bible study group, and added the Apostle Paul's words from Romans: "God's kindness is intended to lead you to repentance" (2:4). He doesn't withhold kindness or turn his love off when we're messing up; just the opposite. And the man who'd brought up the issue said,

"Wow. I'm not going to hesitate to come to God for help anymore."



by Chaplain Philip Merten

“These
men are
of more
noble
character”

Bible Study Chain

Luke records for us in Acts chapter 17, that on the apostle Paul’s second missionary trip, they traveled to the city of Berea. After arriving, this is what Luke had to say about the Bereans: “Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true.”

By the grace of God, I have witnessed a similar attitude among the 10 inmates who come to my prison Bible study. They are always eager for an opportunity to discuss their faith-life (something they apparently don’t get an opportunity to do in other Bible study groups), and some of them have had their faith and life totally revived. Borrowing from the words of St. Luke, these men are “of more noble character” than the other inmates at the prison. We discuss how their Christian faith and actions are challenged as they attempt to live their faith by being kind, honest, talking decently and attending Bible study regularly. Sadly, this behavior is viewed as weakness in the prison, and brings them scorn and ridicule from the other inmates. As a result, they have learned firsthand how the support of their fellow believers is important as they strive to put their faith into action.

Since teaching this group that the Bible is the only source of divine truth, and that they should never blindly accept what is taught in any Bible class (including mine), these men have begun the practice of re-examining the study sheets on their own when they get back to their cells. What’s even more amazing is that this group (from all different units throughout the prison), have started using my lessons to set up their own *Bible study chain* back in their units. This Bible study chain with the other inmates caught me by surprise, but it reminds me of what Luke tells us happened in Berea. Because of the *Bible study chain* started by the Bereans, “many of the Jews believed, as did also a number of prominent Greek women and many Greek men.” I pray that the Holy Spirit would also work this same miracle of faith within this prison.

Praise be to God for all the ministry partners that he has given to Institutional Ministries, for with their help, *Bible study chains* like mine will continue to share the hope of Jesus Christ with those who need it most!



by Chaplain Kenneth Wenzel



What's In A Name

I was preparing a Bible study lesson for my visits at the jail, and never wanting to leave a blank space on the page, I looked for a poem or quote that I could add. The lesson was about walking into an unknown future, knowing all along that God is holding us close, regardless of what the future holds. As I surfed the internet in search of something appropriate to share, I stumbled upon some things written by one of my favorite Christian authors, Corrie Ten Boom.

The next day, I had copies of the Bible study ready to hand out as I made my visits at the jail. My first visit was with Sue, who typically held things pretty close to the vest, so when she began to open up and share a little bit about herself, I listened patiently and waited for an opportunity to transition into the lesson. She listened respectfully as we worked through the lesson together. As we talked about the new life that she would soon step into upon her release, she began telling me about the things that needed to change, as well as the things she hoped that wouldn't change (like her relationship with her boyfriend). When we looked at the quotes I had added to the lesson, Sue began to smile. "That's funny," she said, "my boyfriend's name is Corey." I smiled and agreed, it was kind of cool.

Later, that same afternoon in group, a second lady, Jo, was excited to share the news that she just had a great visit with her husband. Jo had recently started the paperwork for divorce proceedings, but now, she happily announced that they were going to hold off on the divorce, and try working more on their marriage. When we got to the quotes by Corrie Ten Boom at the end of our visit, she said, "That's interesting. My husband's name is Corey."

Now you can call it coincidence or providence, but twice in one day, God provided me with a special way to connect with these women. I believe it's just His way of letting me know that He is present in my preparations for sharing His story, and touching people's hearts with His encouraging Word. His "little coincidences" are pretty fun too! The very next day, I was visiting with a small group of women, and we began reading some of the prophecies of Isaiah concerning the coming messiah. As we read about the "the Root of Jesse" who would "stand as a banner for the peoples," one of the ladies immediately piped up and said, "My son's name is Jesse." "Ha," I thought to myself, "Here we go again."

What a great week of *sharing the hope of Jesus Christ with those who need it most!*

EVERY DAY
can be
WORRY-FREE
if you trust in
THE LORD

*"God is
holding us
close,
regardless
of what
the future
holds"*



by Chaplain Sarah Guenther



Sharing hope...
with those who need it most!

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OUR MISSION

*“To share God’s law
and the saving
Gospel of Jesus
Christ with all
individuals who
are or have been
institutionalized,
and their families.”*

Special Gifts & Memorials 5/2/2017 - 7/31/2017

IN CELEBRATION OF

Amelia Hauf
Ms. Julie DeNicola
Art’s Birthday
Mr. & Mrs. Art Peavy
Regaining their home after a fire
Mr. & Mrs. Steve A. Ahrens
65 Years of Marriage
Mr. & Mrs. Floyd Schwecke
Our 9 great grandkids
Mrs. Gail Maxwell
All of God’s Blessings
Rev. & Mrs. Robert Becker

IN HONOR OF

**Theodore Arthur
(new grandson)**
Rev. & Mrs. Arthur Koepsell
**Chris and Lena Joch’s
10th Anniversary**
Mr. & Mrs. Wayne Anderson
**Cindy Aldinger’s Service
to Institutional Ministries**
Mr. & Mrs. Carl Rudolph
**Cindy Aldinger’s
20 Years of Service**
Mr. & Mrs. David Strohschein
Cindy Aldinger’s Retirement
Mr. & Mrs. Franklin Gauger
Mr. Lloyd Hoeffner
Mrs. Laura Pimentel
Rev. & Mrs. Paul Burk
**Our dedicated
Pastors Adam and Hoff**
Mr. & Mrs. Donald Gebert
**Ed & Arlene Gnirk’s
62nd Wedding Anniversary**
Lynnette Hupman
June Kelm 80th Birthday
June Kelm
Pastor Ken Lenz 85th Birthday
June Kelm
Pastor Ken Lenz 85th Birthday
Mr. & Mrs. Rolf Aldinger

Mary Johanknecht
Ms. Gail Okeefe
Pastor Thomas Fischer
Mrs. Michel Stoller
Pastor Paul White
Mrs. Michel Stoller
**Pastor Steven and Jean
Stern’s 50th Wedding
Anniversary and Pastor’s
50 Years of Ministry**
Ms. Barbara Weihing

IN MEMORY OF

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Prof. & Mrs. Steven Westphal
Alton Marwitz
Mrs. Donna Marwitz
Arthur Duerr
Mrs. Dawn Meise
Carol Davidson
Mr. Daniel Davidson
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Mrs. Kathryn Weihing
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Martin Metzger
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Martin Weber
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Marvin Moldenhauer
Mr. Earl Moldenhauer
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Grandma)**
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Loved Ones
Ms. Ruth Lampe
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Terry Allen
Mrs. Connie Allen
Todd Krenek
Mr. & Mrs. Eric Krenek
Wally Voigt
Mr. & Mrs. Clifford Koeller
Mr. & Mrs. David Schwengel
Ms. Patricia Hill

IN THANKSGIVING FOR

All our Lord’s many Blessings
Mr. & Mrs. Anthony Gromacki
45 Years of Marriage
Mr. & Mrs. Clarence Jenkins
The Ascension of our Lord!
Mr. David Beyer Sr.
Our Savior’s Grace
Mr. David Beyer Sr.
**All the Blessings God has
showered on me!**
They are so very undeserved.
Mr. Alfred Bloedel
God’s Blessings
Mr. & Mrs. Gene Steinich
John Martin Steinke, PhD.
Mr. Paul Steinke
All of God’s Blessings
Mr. Keith Koch
Unlimited blessings
Mr. & Mrs. Michael Bingen
Raymond & Lois Cox
Rev. & Mrs. Raymond Cox
Institutional Ministries
Mrs. Rose Foote
Countless blessings
Ms. Sue Miller