

makes you free, you

Therefore if the Son



shall be free indeed.

VOICE OF FREEDOM

A MINISTRY OF
CEDAR VALLEY COMMUNITY CHURCH



PRISON MINISTRY GOOD NEWS LETTER

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DO YOU NEED A BREAKFAST WITH JESUS?

by Roger Montz

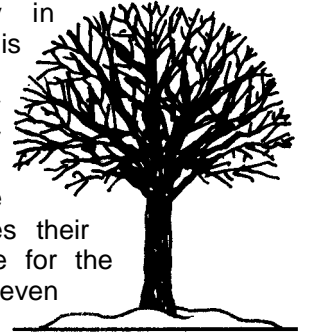
May God's grace, peace, and unmistakable love be with you. We give God our heavenly Father all the glory, honor and praise that in His only Son, Christ Jesus, we find and see all that God was, is, and is to come. We have just witnessed and celebrated the greatest promise that God has ever bestowed on us who are living in a fallen world filled with darkness. John 3:16 has come alive again in our hearts, and in a short season filled with joy and peace, we witnessed this promise: **"God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son Christ Jesus, that all who believe in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."** Christmas 2008 has passed, and the celebration of the greatest moment in the history of the universe was heralded in with songs, joy and great anticipation as the glory of God was again revealed to the world.

Have you ever been to a greatly anticipated football game between two old time rivals at the end of the football season? Did you wait all year for that game, and during that game did you yell and cheer your voice hoarse? With each play, with each quarter, did you live out what you had been waiting for? Now the game is over, your team won, but the next day becomes just another day. The game becomes a faint memory and you feel drained, empty. You gave your all during the game, and now it seems there is nothing else to cheer about.



I liken Christmas to a football game that we have waited for all year. Think of Christmas as the title for the greatest world championship game. We waited all year for the greatest game, two old time rivals playing each other for the biggest and most sought after trophy ever, the "Ruler of the World" trophy. Just to recap the game in case you missed it, God's team won! The game was not even close. The power of God overwhelmed the opponent, satan. God played His best by giving the greatest performance of all time. He gave His Son on the last play in the fourth quarter so that darkness could never claim victory. We yelled, we cheered, we sang all the holy songs and received God's precious gift, a Son born in Bethlehem, Savior of the world, the giver of eternal life in heaven. Game over . . . now what?

Many psychologists say that the greatest time for depression is January. Many people hoped all year for a better time or existence. They celebrated Christmas in December, but then feel empty in January. Why do some people feel empty in January? All some see is another year of the same old beat-down life, nothing new or exciting. Others look out over the scenery and see lifeless, barren trees. They feel the numbing cold that penetrates their hearts. And yet, they hope for the loving warmth of spring even though it seems too far away to be a reality.



You are not alone if you are experiencing a let-down and thinking that this past Christmas should have been better. You are not alone if your hope for a better year to come is smashed to smithereens by the grim reality of razor-wire fencing around another year of loneliness in your cell. You are not alone if you think you are worthless and locked away to be forgotten. I spent six Christmases in prison, and after each one, loneliness and the reality that I was going to be locked away for another year overshadowed and swallowed up the joy, hope and glory of Christmas.

I needed a breakfast with Jesus.

Are we any different than some of the people in the Bible? No. We read of Elijah, the prophet sent by God to spread God's word to His people in Israel. Elijah felt like he was the last remaining prophet to spread God's word (read 1 King 18: 22). He experienced the glory of God. Filled with joy, he yelled and cheered praises to God over the land. Elijah knew God was with him during the big game of good versus evil. Then something happened. He went into a downward tailspin, hope faded, life seemed worthless and he thought God was not around anymore. We read of Elijah's January depression in 1 Kings 19:4, **"But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a broom tree. And he prayed that he might die, and said, 'It is enough! Now, Lord, take my life, for I am no better than my fathers!'"**

Elijah needed a breakfast with Jesus.

Another example is Jonah. God called Jonah to bring the saving grace of God to the people of Nineveh. God wanted Jonah to yell and cheer, as God was to play against and defeat the darkness of evil. God wanted Jonah on His team just like God wants you on His team. God wanted the cheers, joy and hope of victory. But Jonah had a January let-down. Jonah knew that God was merciful, loving, full of grace and a giver of life. Jonah saw God as the same old, never-changing God and did not think life would change. Perhaps, Jonah thought God did not need him any more to cheer the game on. We read of Jonah's despair, **"So he prayed to the Lord, and said, 'Ah, Lord, was not this is what I said when I was still in my country?"**

Remember Ladies and Gentlemen:
invite others to your Christ-Living
Chapel Services and Special Events.

Mount Pleasant Men!
Worship with
Heart Surrender Ministry
Wednesday Evening
January 21; 6-7 p.m.
in the Chapel



Therefore I fled previously to Tarshish; for I know that You are as gracious and merciful god, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, One who relents from doing harm. Therefore now, O Lord, please take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live!" (Jonah 4)

**Jonah needed
a breakfast with Jesus.**

Are you wondering what a breakfast with Jesus would be like? Go back to the first breakfast with Jesus by the Sea of Tiberias. Read John chapter 21. God's word speaks differently to different people so that His glory may be revealed through a person's circumstance in life. Some scholars view the breakfast with Jesus simply as just another time Jesus revealed Himself to His disciples, who happened to be hanging around filled with joy and hope, ready to yell and cheer the Good News of salvation and ready to **sing the promise God proclaimed in John 3:16.** I believe that God gave me and maybe others, a different outlook about what happened that morning. I see the disciples as if they were with me right here and now in my circumstance of life.

The disciples walked with Jesus for a season, and they beheld His glory. The disciples were sent out to the cities and byways of the world to tell others that John 3:16 was being fulfilled, that the gift of Christmas was within finger-tips grasp. As long as they saw the quarterback of God's team on the field, they yelled, cheered and were pulled emotionally into the game, giving everything they had to the victorious King of Kings, Jesus. It seemed like they had waited their lifetime for this greatest game of all to be played. From their mother's womb, God knew them and had called them to be at that game as His cheerleaders, leading the world in new songs and praises to honor the gift God gave the world. Jesus came and fulfilled God's finest hour. Jesus was born to die on the cross of Calvary so that the same old days of living in darkness and hopelessness did not have to forever be a part of our lives.

The disciples walked with Jesus, saw Jesus, and then the season came when He was not physically with them anymore. The disciples may have wondered:

Our leader is no longer visible, no one can see Him, and if we cannot see Him, then how can we believe in the Christ, our miracle gift? Now, how can we go on anymore by ourselves? We might as well die to our new life in Christ and go back to fishing.

The after-the-game, let-down struck them. The cold, harsh winter, lifeless in their sight, brought on a despairing outlook. I believe Jesus knew that a great let-down was going to sweep over His disciples.

**Jesus knew that they would need
a breakfast with Him.**

The disciples needed a morning meal of Him so that they would gain the strength and energy to finish the rest of their days, never letting the Good News of Christ end. Jesus fixed breakfast and gave Peter his portion of the breakfast Bread of Life, and said in John 21:15-19: **If you love Me, feed My lambs. If you love me, feed My sheep. Follow Me!**

Do you need a breakfast with Jesus? Do you need to hear the reassuring words of Jesus saying to you, "If you love Me, never let the joy, hope, and the songs of praise fade out after your Christmas season. Lo, I am always with you."

In prison I, Roger, saw the glory of God revealed day after day. I walked with Jesus . . . I studied the life of Jesus . . . I got to know Jesus just as if He was humanly alive before my very eyes. I yelled and cheered and sang songs of praise about the title game that was played out in my past, May 1995. It was the day that God so loved Roger that He

gave Roger His only begotten Son, so that because Roger accepted His Son Christ Jesus as his Savior, Roger would not perish but have everlasting life. Now, I look forward throughout the year to the end of the year so that I can celebrate the beginning of my life with the gift of Christ in Christmas. But it seems like I am no different than the disciples. The celebration of the highlight of my Christian walk, God's Christmas gift of John 3:16, is now over again for 2008. Now, like some past Christmases, I look out my window and see only cold, bare, lifeless trees. The January coldness numbs my fingers wanting me to keep them in my pocket keeping them warm instead of reaching out to others. The coldness numbs my feet, wanting me to keep them under the heavy blanket of selfishness, instead of continuing to walk in Jesus' path.

Christmas is over. January is here. I need to smell the sweet fragrance of a breakfast with Jesus. I need to hear the loving words again, "Feed My lambs." I need to eat heartily from the nourishing Bread of Life to give me the energy and strength for the coming year.

**Yeah . . . I need a breakfast with Jesus.
How about you?**



If you are not on our mailing list and would like to be, or if for any reason you would like to be taken off, please send a note to:
Voice of Freedom, Cedar Valley Community Church, 3520 Ansborough Ave., Waterloo, IA 50701.



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