

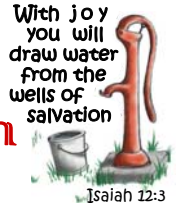
makes you free, you



shall be free indeed.

# Voice of Freedom

## A Ministry of Cedar Valley Community Church



Prison Ministry Good News Letter Volume 7, Issue 5 July 2009

### What's in your Lunchbox?

by Roger Montz

May the grace, love and peace of God our Father be with each of you as you journey forward in God's call for you to be a humble servant of our Lord and Savior Christ Jesus. When we decide to take a journey, we need to prepare several things. First, we must know where we are going. Second, we need to figure out what the journey will cost and if we have enough money. Third, we must prepare enough food to sustain our energy for the length of time planned for the journey. Many authors write about life itself being a journey through time, but do the three things I listed apply? I think not when considering the physical journey through life. First, we do not know the future so we never know where we will be at any given time. Second, we do not know where life will take us, so we cannot know if we can cover the cost. And third, if we were to be able to pack enough food to see us through to the end, the food would rot before we arrived at our destination.



But there is another journey through life in which all three of the above points certainly apply. We call it our Spiritual journey.

First, what are the possible destinations for your Spiritual journey? Jesus made it very clear in scripture that there are only two places for you to end up going, heaven or hell. So you know each of the final destinations, and there are only two routes to choose from.

Second, what will it cost you to get to either destination? **If your choice is heaven, you will not be able to keep love; you will give love away to others.** You will never be first; the joy of expressing compassion will place others ahead of you. The brilliance of the Christ-candle in your heart will dim your attraction to the hundreds of bright lights leading to worldly living. If your choice is hell, well, the cost will seem little but is horribly great. Your path will be lined with booths containing free samples of every conceivable worldly lust. Warning, the samples alone will give your heart a deadly jumpstart on the journey to hell. You will be able to keep every sample all to yourself and boast, "I did it my way."

Third, what food do you pack in your lunch box for your journey? If you choose a journey to hell, you will not be able to close your lunch box lid, and it will be heavy to carry. Heaped up inside will be all kinds of unhealthy junk food all laced with heart-attack frosting. Satan will hand out every flaming-hot, free sample, just to see which food becomes your addiction. Drugs, sex, money, selfishness, hate, greed, and misery are examples of satan's specialties. I have heard it said that an ounce of pure water can hold gallons of toxic waste material, so a quart of satan's brew should be enough to kill you when you reach the dead-end of your superhighway.

**If you choose a journey to heaven, your lunchbox should be much lighter. Jesus does not want you to pack your burdens.** Jesus said, "Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give

you rest." (Matthew 11:28 NAS) Forget about going to Hy-Vee for a loaf of Wonder bread for sandwiches! Instead, pack the strength and power of Jesus. He said in John 6, "I am the bread of life. (verse 35a) and, "Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give to you, for on Him the Father, God, has set His seal." (verse 27) Will water take up space? Not really. Jesus will make your thermos bottle overflow. Explaining about two kinds of water to the Samaritan woman, "Jesus answered and said to her, 'whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst; but the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life.'" (John 4:13-14 NKJ)

Ephesians 2: 8 NRSV



For by **GRACE** you have been saved through **FAITH ...** it is the gift of **GOD ...**

The food for your Spiritual life journey is the word of God. Pack the Holy Bible in your lunchbox. The word of God is an inexhaustible supply, so you will never starve. You will never get fat because the more you consume the more you will want to give away. An example of feeding others the word of God comes from Jesus in John 21:15-17.

Three times Jesus asked Peter if he really loved Him, and Jesus repeatedly told Peter to feed His sheep and lambs.

**The most important thing in ministry is loving Jesus, for all ministry flows from His love.** All who are on the spiritual journey to heaven should always be on alert for God's leading to be (1) fishermen [evangelists] of

lost souls encountered on the way through life, and (2) shepherds [ministers] to the flock [children of God] – shepherds to the lambs [immature Christians] foremost and also to the sheep [mature followers of Jesus].

**Jesus knows that all the horn-honking on the dead-end superhighway to hell is a distraction leading people away from the narrow but life-giving path of following Jesus into eternal life.** Jesus wants us to pour out the love He has poured into us. The reason why we need to serve others with His pure love is that earthly love often gets contaminated with self glory. When we store self glory inside our heart, we tend to say, "Look what I did in the name of Lord Jesus." By Jesus' love command, I repeat, "feed His lambs, feed His sheep," and the more you feed, the more God will supply.

Jesus is concerned about the cost of what we carry in our lunchboxes. If we are on the journey to hell, Jesus grieves and wants us to seek His help and a path to heaven. If we are on the journey to heaven, Jesus is concerned about the junk we try to smuggle through life inside our lunch boxes, even as we continue on the narrow journey to the Kingdom of Heaven.

Look at an account in the Gospel of Luke that is not all that different from now. In Luke 14:25 great multitudes followed Jesus seeking to be close to Him and wanting to be His disciples. Today 80% of Americans claim to be Christian (great multitudes seeking to be close to Jesus and wanting to be His

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disciples). Then we read that Jesus turned to that crowd, and just as His eyes are fixed on us right now, in essence asked the crowd as He asks us now what is in our lunch boxes and do we know the cost of each item?

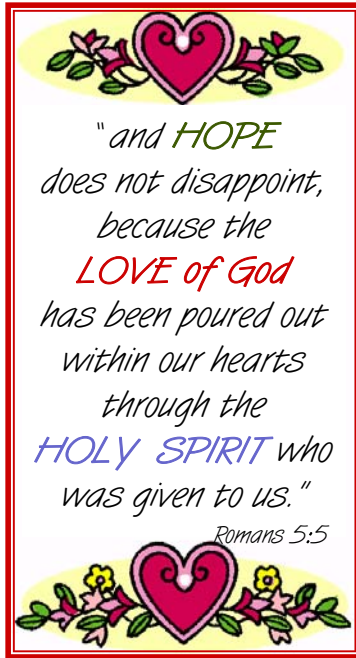
*"If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple. And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has enough to finish it; lest, after he has laid the foundation, and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish.'"* (Luke 14:26-30 KJV) Jesus is not meaning we are to hate anyone. The word hate in this verse means we are to love Jesus more than anyone else, to such a degree that the love for others would seem like we hate them. Our journey following Jesus as His disciples is wonderfully possible but comes with a cost, far more than mere abandonment of our material possessions. **Our cost is an unconditional surrender of our heart, our will, our mind, and our entire self for the sake of our Lord and Savior who sacrificed everything, even His life for everyone's sake.**

I believe that Jesus is asking us in Luke 14 to take careful thought of what we will be required to give up before we even begin the rugged path of obedience and servant hood.

Take a minute of your time and ponder in your heart the cost – will I safeguard no cherished sins, treasure no earthly possessions, or cling to no secret self-indulgences? Are you willing to pack your lunch box with your Bible with your commitment written on the title page stating, "I will serve You, Lord Jesus without any reservations."?

Although there is a cost for following Jesus, the rewards are high. **Hear this clearly: by the grace of God, salvation is free without cost to anyone who**

**accepts Christ Jesus, the Son of God, as Lord.** Any cost involved is our own personal cost to ourselves – our old, earth values that satan does not want us to give up. No longer will you desire to practice buying the pleasures of drugs, alcohol, sex, hate, anger or other earthly pleasures. Yes, the cost is high for those who cherish earthly things. No longer is your life in your hands. Your life is in the hands of God. Yes, the cost is high, but light to bear. No longer will you be motivated to practice traveling one step more into sin because someone says, "Way to go, your awesomeness." You will hear the words of Luke 17:10, "So likewise you, when you have done all those things which you are commanded, say, 'We are unprofitable servants. We have done what was our duty to do.'" Yes, the cost is high in earthly currency.



**Even though your lunchbox does not have so much as a single Twinkie, the word of God and His promises found in your Bible will sustain you on your journey following Jesus into eternity.** Old friends, who continue to practice packing their lunchboxes with junk, may desert you or satan may use them to tempt you. Be encouraged! For a season, you may be lonely or weary, but you can meet many new traveling companions on your Jesus-journey who will share a life with you that is founded on the word of God straight from the Holy Spirit's lunchbox. Remember, the riches of glory with our Lord are priceless!

- Roger -



**ICIW ladies, may the Lord bless and Keep you until we meet again Friday evening, August 28 in the Chapel.**

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Prison Ministry

