

THERE is Hope

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Contents

| | |
|--|-----|
| English Translation Introduction:..... | 4 |
| Introduction | 6 |
| (1) Does God have a purpose even in prison?..... | 9 |
| (2) Injustice & false accusation | 15 |
| (3) Lacking and Deprivation | 20 |
| (4) Loneliness and Lack of Acceptance | 24 |
| (5) Time of Hardship is Limited | 30 |
| (6) Reputation Restoration | 34 |
| (7) From Prison to Ministry..... | 36 |
| (8) Special Messages | 39 |
| (9) The Old Violin | 50 |
| (10) Wait Upon the Lord!..... | 56 |
| (11) "In your Anger, Do Not Sin" | 64 |
| (12) The Rotten Potatoes | 71 |
| (13) The Jailer | 86 |
| (14) Good Behavior | 93 |
| (15) Call for Repentance | 96 |
| Short story "The Great Trial" | 106 |
| Summary | 109 |

English Translation Introduction:

This book, “There is Hope” contains the gospel message through many truths regarding faith, grace, and change of life by emphasizing Bible based message of hope and forgiveness. It contains practical advice and promotes positive way of thinking, handling anger, regrets, forgiveness and many more. The book is full of quotes from the scriptures which I love,

I have used the NIV (New International Version) unless indicated otherwise.

I am grateful for the opportunity to translate “There is Hope” as my first book from Arabic into English. I am honored to serve our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ alongside many brothers and sisters in Egypt and other parts of the world bringing this message of hope to many.

I appreciate the author, brother Anwar Dawod and I am honored to extend his message of his book to many beyond the Arabic language readers. I appreciate his love for the Lord and his heart and passion to bring the “Blessed Hope” to many who may have been forgotten

There is Hope

but not by their wonderful Creator and Redeemer, Jesus Christ our Lord.

This book is an easy read and refreshing to the soul and mind, and it is good not just for inmates, the target audience but for all and specially those who are going through trials at this time in their life.

Many thanks to my precious wife and children for their encouragement and to the many encouraging friends.

To God be all the glory,

Samy

Introduction

As long as God is there, there is hope

As long as we live, there is hope

As long as we may change for the better, there is hope

As long as we learn our lessons from the past, there is hope

Dear reader,

I know you're probably living in circumstances that you never expected or ever hoped for. I know that you're in deep pain that would swallow you into deep fire if we haven't sent you such a message of hope. Only God our Creator can reach deep into our souls to extinguish such fire using His Word for our rescue as "He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak." Isaiah 40:29

For your encouragement I say that **we are not alone in our pain** as the enemy of our souls try to convince us otherwise making each one of us thinks he is the only one suffering on this earth. The reality is that many are going through similar circumstances as the Word of God

tells us, "The whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time." Romans 8:22 and "know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings." 1 Peter 5:9. But there is a difference between refusal of such pain or affliction and acceptance with Hope.

My dear,

You may feel the unfairness and your heart is filled with bitterness of lack of forgiveness towards those who did hurt you one way or another.

You may feel humiliated and of no value.

You may be burning with lacking of many physical and emotional and even lawful needs.

You may feel hopeless and see no way out.

You may feel guilty and regret many of your past.

You may want to make a decision to repent and return to the Lord.

You may be worried about your family members left behind as children, parents or other relatives dependent on you.

You may have fears of how you face society after the prison.

Introduction

Or you may be waiting in fear of a harsh sentence and scared of the unknown.

There is Hope even if you are in death row..yes,**There is Hope.**

There is Hope for everyone who is hurt and afflicted who comes to the great physician. This is the first step towards healing, coming to the Lord for no one knows how you're hurt and come in touch with your pain like God Himself. "He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds." Psalms 147:3.

This small book is a personal short message just for you. You may have never read a book all of your life, but this small book is simply written to bring you a message from God that may meet your deepest need.

(1)

Does God have a purpose even in prison?

In the gospel of Matthew chapter 14, we read how did the Lord Jesus miraculously fed five thousands of men plus women and children with five loaves of bread and two fish. The Lord's disciples themselves as close to Him as they were and as close to the events as they were distributing the loaves and the fish to the people while sitting in groups of fifties, the disciples did not understand fully who the Lord is even while they have been in His atmosphere of blessings. **"for they had not understood about the loaves; their hearts were hardened."**Mark 6:52, said the Bible. "Immediately Jesus made his disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him, while he dismissed the crowd." Mark 6:45, so He made them go, but not the crowd.

While the boat was in the midst of the sea, a strong wind and high waves hit the boat and it was about to drown and sink under the water. But while the disciples were deep in their fears, Jesus came to them walking on water and with a Word of His mouth He calmed the

(1) Does God have a purpose even in prison?

storm, and then they knew Him and "Worshipped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God." Matthew 14:33.

What I want to say is that when you had your freedom, you probably didn't have the chance to think of your relationship with the Lord, but He allowed you to be here in this prison, He wants to have time with you alone.

Maybe in better circumstances your heart would have been stricken by pride of riches. But in such difficult times the Lord has allowed you to be in for He wants you, for He longs to be in a relationship with you! Why not and He is "delighting in mankind." Proverbs 8:31, and "Says the Lord: "I will bring distress on them, that they may feel it(feel His distress)." Jeremiah 10:18 ESV.

There are hundreds or even thousands of people who knew the Lord in prisons. Their lives have changed and they thank the Lord for a brief time of imprisonments that set them free from prison of sin. **The fact is, there are truly free people who are in prison and others walking out of prison free yet prisoners of sin and Satan.** The Lord wants to set you free, not from this physical prison though He can but free from the bondage of Satan "So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed." John 8:36

The Lord may have brought you to this prison so He may have time alone with you away from the cares of this world. So, you may look back at your life and have a talk with Jesus and begin a new life of repentance and obtain eternal freedom before you go free from this earthly prison.

All God's plans for us are intended for good and blessings, He never wants us down like many psychologically unstable people we often encounter want. The Lord always always intends wants what's good for us even through hardships.

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." Jeremiah 29:11

Staying captive to Satan manifested in slavery to pornography, drugs, theft,..or whatever else it may be, even after being released from prison wouldn't guarantee keeping you out free for long. Going back to previous life of sin will bring you back to this place you hate.

Prison time is short no matter how long it takes! Years go by and the sentence will be served but eternal life sentence in hell is endless, as the Bible says:" And the

(1) Does God have a purpose even in prison?

smoke of their torment will rise for ever and ever. There will be no rest day or night." Revelation 14:11

Prison life hardship is limited no matter how hard and can not be compared to "the second death" Revelation 21:8 where the lake of fire and permanent stay with evildoers and demons.

You may be in shock of your surroundings and the kinds of people you never wished to meet, but do you know that the dwellers of hell are all evil and sinners like those and worse?

But, There is Hope. In the gospel of Luke and chapter 15 we read about the Prodigal Son who carelessly gave up the precious life at home and squandered his life, his money, his health and dignity but he wanted to stop going down this road of wastefulness.

When he returned, he found his father waiting for him and immediately accepting him just as he was even with the smell of pigs caught on him. The father did not blame the returning son or asked him why he did what he did, but took him in, kissed him, cleaned him, put on him new clothes and made a big celebration explaining "For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found." Luke 15:24.

This son who was lost faced difficulty at work even feeding pigs, lost his “friends” who cared only for themselves and started to be in need when the Lord caused a severe famine in that far away country where he was lost, God wanted him back. The son indeed went back and with the simplest words from his heart, the son enjoyed his Father’s heart, love, kisses and home.

You can pray this short prayer with me, from your heart:

Lord Jesus, thank you for you want me back to you in spite of my previous refusal of your invitation.

Thank you Lord for accepting me just as I am, sinner and not even acceptable by my own. I realize how offensive I come to you, Lord Jesus, thank you for giving me a new beginning, starting anew page replacing what I have spoiled.

Lord Jesus, thank you for repaying me for the years eaten up by locusts, that my life has still remnants to be redeemed. You can bless my coming years, so that even one year will be better than ten and one month will be better than a year compensating for what was lost.

Here I’m, your servant, a sinner, have mercy on me, I have sinned against you and resisted your calling but here I return and repent. I’m sorry for my sins,

(1) Does God have a purpose even in prison?

I have caused much trouble for myself and those around me and disturbed so many. I know you can give life to the dead and I'm dead by sins and transgressions.

I believe that your blood cleanse me from all my sins and inequities. I trust that your big and kind heart would accommodate a sinner like me!!

I repent now and leave behind words of curse, cursing and swearing and all forms of evil I've done. Not only wrongdoings that brought me to prison but all forms of sins in my life that I now repent and leave behind, sins that may not bring me to prison here on earth, but would condemn to hell eternally!

I know you're calling me now, oh Lord and I say yes, enough for me to stay away! I'm tired and in despair and can't keep on going on this road I'm in.

Come, oh Lord take control over my life, cleanse my heart and wash away my sins, restore my dignity and value, I need to know you.

I thought I lack many things, but it is knowing you is my real lacking..I kept you out of my life but now I realize I need you and want you, oh Lord.

Accept me, accept me, Lord and I will be yours, I know I'm not worthy, but by your grace I can hear you say: yes by grace you deserve to be mine and my beloved, amen!!

(2)

Injustice & false accusation

Here are few points on the subject of **Injustice**:

1. Definition of Injustice:

It is defined as “taking someone’s right away by force, unfairly”. “not returning someone’s right back, unfairly.”

And it is often that people are exposed to injustice as their physical and moral rights become violated specially seen by others who are unbiased or involved not just by the violated person’s own view point which can be skewed.

2. Results of Injustice:

It can be destructive to someone’s life. We read about Joseph who was falsely accused by Potiphar’s wife of violating her through sexual advancement, so the innocent man was charged as guilty while the guilty was seen innocent. Joseph was sent to prison for many years. He suffered a lot for this as the Bible says, “They bruised his feet with shackles, his neck was put in irons,” Psalms 105:18

(2) Injustice & false accusation

It is worth it for the innocent to control his responses for no matter how careful he may be, his uncontrollable interaction wouldn't be always wise but even foolish at times, "Extortion turns a wise person into a fool." Ecclesiastes 7:7

3. Prevalence of Injustice:

Because we live in a world that is under the control of the evil one- the prince of this world, all what is in it is build on injustice even the worldly wealth was called "unrighteous wealth" Luke 16:11 ESV. Because of the unrighteous distribution of wealth, those who deserve it may not have it and those who do not deserve it may do!

In The Word of God, the judgment of history is called "human court" 1 Corinthians 4:3, and since we live under human court, we admit that history has unjustly judged many people of great achievement while they are innocent!

4. The Truly Innocent:

The Lord lived perfectly on our earth 33 years and some months, yet He was met by injustice and human false accusations. During court proceedings, many false accusations were brought up (seven of them), here I mention some of them:

They claimed that "He opposes payment of taxes to Caesar" Luke 23:2 while He actually said the opposite,

"Then Jesus said to them, "Give back to Caesar what is Caesar's" Mark 12:17.

They accused Him of" subverting our nation" Luke 23:2, while He improved their condition.

They said to Pilate, "If he were not a criminal,..we would not have handed him over to you" John 18:30, while all what He did was good and righteous.

He was misquoted when they declared, "This fellow said, 'I am able to destroy the temple of God and rebuild it in three days.'" Matthew 26:61 while Jesus actually said, "(you) Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again." John 2:19 pointing to His resurrection.

Facing their false accusations, Jesus remained silent to Pilate's surprise, "He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth." Isaiah 53:7, that was because "he entrusted himself to him who judges justly." 1 Peter 2:23

By this, of course I do not mean that we don't defend ourselves or seek our rights, but after we try all what we can, we should wait upon the Lord's hand that never fails. He is mighty to restore justice or using evil for good "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called accord-

(2) Injustice & false accusation

ing to his purpose.”Romans 8:28 and ”Out of the eater, something to eat; out of the strong, something sweet.” Judges 14:14

For the person who suffers from oppression and injustice, let him know that yes the human court did not vindicate him but he shares the Lord Jesus in the kind of pain and suffering of injustice He has endured. Jesus feels your pain and able to lift you up and the time will come when the divine justice will prevail because our God is the God of redemption.

5. Our Stance from Injustice:

We shouldn't fret about injustice for God has the final word, He is sitting on the throne, He reigns and can vindicate the oppressed. He is stronger than the strong oppressors. ”If you see the poor oppressed in a district, and justice and rights denied, do not be surprised at such things; for one official is eyed by a higher one, and over them both are others higher still.”Ecclesiastes 5:8

Even if we are troubled and shaken inside, our deep seated peace built on our Lord Jesus Christ will stay. This peace He had experienced when He endured the hardest time in the flesh, He left us that peace when said ”Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you..” John 14:27 and He has the final word.

6. The Fruits of Injustice:

In this world, the fruits of a seed will be of the same

kind, the oppressors will be oppressed. "Anyone who does wrong will be repaid for their wrongs, and there is no favoritism." Colossians 3:25

7. The End of Injustice:

The total end of Injustice will only be achieved in eternity by the Lord's sovereign reign for He is just and will judge us by righteousness, so says the Bible, "God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them." Hebrews 6:10

But someone might ask, why then the Injustice and tears? Couldn't the Lord just stop injustice? Yes but but He doesn't prevent evil as we previously said, but by His sovereignty use evil for good for His children.

My Dear, expect to be vindicated by the Lord. When betrayed or injustice being done to you, when you can't defend yourself and can't even describe how much pain you experience, please know that God can change the World's order for you, He can do what seems impossible to bring you justice, vindication and satisfy you!

Behind the clouds, there is light

Next to Marah, there is a tree

After Marah, there is Elim

(Exodus 15:23-27)

(3)

Lacking and Deprivation

Every person on this earth lack or feels deprived of something one way or another. Everyone acknowledges that life doesn't give you everything. God in His wisdom allows His children to have some lacking in some areas of our life and some lacking are more merciful than others.

You may be deprived of some physical or emotional privileges, but this is not the end of the world, many out of the prison are deprived as well.

The Lord Jesus Himself as a man walked on this earth felt hunger needing food but He said, "Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'" Matthew 4:4

It is possible that you lack something and not feel deprived, just like the Shunammite woman who did not have a son and her husband was old. Elisha the prophet visited their home once, and was generously hosted in

her home frequently and she knew that God has made miracles at the hand of the prophet but she never complained to him of her lacking. When Elisha asked, "You have gone to all this trouble for us. Now what can be done for you?.." She replied, "I have a home among my own people." 2 Kings 4:13, she was filled and satisfied with her relationship with the Lord.

Habakkuk had many needs and lackings yet He was joyful in the Lord! Here is what he said, "Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines, though the olive crop fails and the fields produce no food, though there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will be joyful in God my Savior. The Sovereign Lord is my strength; he makes my feet like the feet of a deer, he enables me to tread on the heights." Habakkuk 3:17-19

Paul was in a prison, deprived from the freely moving or meet the brothers and friends, but he said, "I rejoiced greatly in the Lord" Philippians 4:10.

If you focus on what you lack, you will tire even more but if you put it aside and be filled with the Lord and your relationship with Him, you will feel no needs. The Lord will fill you at the deepest level with more than sufficient grace even more than the pain resulting from

(3) Lacking and Deprivation

lacking, "The Lord will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land... You will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters never fail." Isaiah 58:11

When we suffer deprivation, we either adapt or we seek wrong ways to be fulfilled which is not according to God's Will and will deepen in us lack of self respect, and may even lead to self despise!

There are many in life that can bring us happiness and not just what we focus on. Let's not see the cup half empty while you're flooded with what many others would wish to have. The simplest of these blessings are that you can breath normally with ease and comfort while many others breathe uncomfortably aided by artificial very expensive machines!

You may be deprived of having your wife and children around with you now, but God can fill this deep void. You may remember the prodigal son who lost everything, his family, home town, money, health and reputation and more but he never lost the love of his father, **There is Hope.**

Your Heavenly Father still loves you, so whatever your loss or deprivation may be, do not let your heart be troubled for your Heavenly Father will compensate you for all of your losses.

There is Hope

Yes There is Hope, for in His sovereignty, God has allowed the lacking and the associated distress in your life according to His wisdom, love and power. He will bring the compensation in the way, the amount and the time He see fit for you.

(4)

Loneliness and Lack of Acceptance

How deeply painful it is to feel lonely, facing life without a companion or support specially at the time of crisis.

The Lord Jesus was left alone in His pain even from His followers and disciples. The Bible clearly said that at the time of His arrest, "everyone deserted him and fled." Mark 14:50

He was even forsaken by heaven itself and to His cry, heaven was brass and the earth was iron (this in Arabic means no answer) so that one of Jesus's sentences on the cross was "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" Matthew 27:46

In His hurt, He (Jesus through prophecy) said: "I looked for sympathy, but there was none, for comforters, but I found none." Psalms 69:20

One of our Lord's aspects of pain of the cross is what was expressed in a gentle word of blame in the prophecy "My friends and companions avoid me because of my wounds; my neighbors stay far away." Psalms 38:11

May be it is true for you as well, you may have experienced abandonment by friends and companions because of your time of hurt by those who you thought will stand by you and support you. But put your trust in the Lord Who has known how it feels and will hold you up.

"I lie awake; I have become like a bird alone on a roof."
Psalms 102:7

This statement represented our Lord's many situations that He lived through alone, not just at the time of the cross when He was forsaken by heaven and earth. But in all His life in the flesh, no one understood Him, neither His followers nor His enemies who tried to trap Him and here are some situations for illustration:

Examples:

Jesus miraculously fed the multitude, thousands in the presence of His disciples, He warned them "Be careful,.. Be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees.", their minds went concerned for bread and the Lord rebuked them for that! (Matthew 16:6-16)

Peter who received a revelation from the Father about Jesus as the Christ the Son of the living God, very shortly after we find him saying telling Jesus that He shall never be crucified! (Matthew16:22)

(4) Loneliness and Lack of Acceptance

Even His own family and relatives "said, "He is out of his mind." Mark 3:21

Some of the hardest thing of being deprived and left alone is feeling unaccepted by family, friends and society, which can be deeply violent and destructive feeling!

Brother, do you feel lonely and no one understands you? The Lord has went through this, He understands and can get you out of your loneliness.

Do you feel different than all around you and that they are physically close but yet they're thousands of miles away?

Be strong and encouraged! There is someone who is so near to you, who knows the depth of your heart and thoughts, he understands you without you needing to explain! You don't need to explain your actions to him for he knows you well, your unspoken prayers and what you're ashamed to mention he knows, he feels all your pain!

Were you abandoned by your own? The compassionate Lord will not abandon you. "Can a woman forget her nursing child, that she should have no compassion on the son of her womb? Even these may forget, yet I will not forget you." Isaiah 49:15 ESV

Are you neglected and left alone? Here's God's promise in His Word "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you." Hebrews 13:5

Have you not been visited enough? Know that the Lord has commanded that you be visited and encouraged it that He even considers visiting you as visiting Him, the Lord Himself. He is tying Himself to you, He is unashamed of you and that is because of His love for you. "I was in prison and you came to visit me." Matthew 25:36

People may have not come to visit you enough, they are humans, limited and often unable to. But God's visit with you today is personal and awesome, just for you, and when you feel His presence, you will joyfully sing:

**Prisoners Of Hope, Arise, And See Your Lord Appear;
Lo! On The Wings Of Love He Flies, And Brings Redemption Near;**

**Redemption In His Blood He Calls You To Receive:
"Look Unto Me, The Pardoning God. Believe," He Cries,
"Believe!"**

Remember that God remembers a tiny ant in a dark hole, and He cares for you "But God will never forget the needy; the hope of the afflicted will never perish." Psalms 9:18

(4) Loneliness and Lack of Acceptance

There are some who are surrounded by a crowd of people and still feel lonely and others with no one around them and the Lord fills their lives abundantly.

There are some who live amongst their own and feel estranged and others in the midst of strangers and yet they feel amongst their own.

When you feel alone and no one to comfort you or listen to you, let the Lord fill that void, speak with and open your heart to Him, "The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit." Psalms 34:18

If all have left you and abandoned you, the Lord will not leave you and if all were ashamed of you, the Lord will not be ashamed of being your God. "Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them." Hebrews 11:16. He accepts you and welcomes you that you may say with Paul the apostle "no one came to my support, but everyone deserted me..but the Lord stood at my side and gave me strength." 2 Timothy 4:16-17 Paul even said "may it not be held against them", even finding them an excuse for leaving him. So, to avoid disappointment with our beloved ones who may have seemed abandoned and neglected us, let's try to find them an excuse.

It may be hard to trust your fellow inmates and find a good friend amongst them, but remember that they themselves feel lonely and need a friend. Be that friend to them, so don't wait for them to come to you, you go to them!

Pray that God may help you to communicate with others and you will overcome the feeling of loneliness. Ask Him to help them overcome their loneliness and you will be helping one another.

The healing remedy of loneliness is holding on to the Lord and fixing our eyes on Him for

He "is a friend who sticks closer than a brother".

Proverbs 18:24

"All to Jesus I surrender, all to Him I freely give.

I will ever love and trust Him, In His presence daily live.

I surrender all, I surrender all.

All to Thee, my blessed Savior, I surrender all."

(5)

Time of Hardship is Limited

Divine punishment for us is limited and it is best illustrated in the story of king David when he was permitted to be swayed by Satan to count the people of Israel. That triggered God's anger, so He asked David to choose one of three punitive outcomes; 3 years of famine, 3 months of running being pursued by his enemies or 3 days of an epidemic exposure. (1 Chronicles 21)

As harsh as it seems, we can be encouraged by observing God's mercy in that He allowed David to choose from three options and that God's choices are carefully designed and under His ultimate control and permission. Not only the kind of pain inflicted is designed and controlled but the amount of pain experienced so that Hardship be Limited by God's sovereignty.

In the book of Revelation, the angel said to the church of Smyrna "Do not be afraid of what you are about to suffer. I tell you, the devil will put some of you in prison to test you, and you will suffer persecution for ten days.."Revelation 2:10

Time of suffering is accurately calculated by God whether David's choice was 3 days, 3 months or 3 years. This should encourage us that hardship is limited just like in the Christian Arabic song words translated,

**“time of hardship is a limited time..
no matter how thick the dark and long it's night”.**

And another song,

**“how many times, my sole did your merciful Lord
save you from hardship
into blessings greater many folds”**

The disciples thought that the Lord was not aware or even care about about while in the ship in a high raging sea thinking that they will surely perish! The fact was the total opposite, though seemed late to them, the Lord came shortly before dawn at the right time and He wouldn't allow them to perish. (Matthew 14)

Some may think that prison is a nightmare and they will never wake up, wondering if life would be the same afterwards! Would relationships and social status be restored?

Knowing God's dealings, the answer is yes.

(5) Time of Hardship is Limited

When? When He sees that the purpose of this time is fulfilled. So let's avoid more trouble and respond to the divine work.

The enemy of our souls tries to make us think that it's impossible to get out of this trying time and that our pain is eternal. He wants us to think that our end is near and that we are lost, so we may fall into despair and hopelessness and never get out of this pit again!

It is known that Satan often fights us at the level of thoughts and if we give him enough time, he will try to control our mind. It is quite dangerous that Satan would take over and control our thoughts and mind!

But let's be encouraged by God's Word; "God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it." 1 Corinthians 10:13

From the book of Job, we may also find it encouraging to hear these words **"You will surely forget your trouble, recalling it only as waters gone by. Life will be brighter than noonday, and darkness will become like morning. You will be secure, because there is hope; you will look about you and take your rest in safety. You will lie down, with no one to make you afraid, and**

many will court your favor.” Job 11:16-19 This is one of the most encouraging phrases for a suffering person because the enemy of our souls will whisper in his ears that there is no way out and that he is going to if not already lost!

The fact is, the Lord is in the heart of the situation and that is clear in the testimony of the believers, believers of the Old Testament like Joseph and how God delivered him from all his difficulties. God still works in the lives of believers of recent history and there are many stories involving God’s children pointing out that “Our God is a God who saves; from the Sovereign Lord comes escape from death.” Psalms 68:20 “Therefore he is able to save completely” Hebrews 7:25

God can change our struggles into a great memorable testimonies that we may share with others not in bitterness but with songs of joy praising Him for His grace and mercies.

For this reason, no matter how long the prison sentence may be, it is limited and will soon end.

You can complete this time in peace if you enjoy a living relationship with God and when you’re out of this place, you will remember God’s favor with you.

(6)

Reputation Restoration

Peter denied that he knew Jesus three times while he was known as a leader amongst the disciples and “a mistake of the great is a great mistake”. It seems that what he did was very likely known to them and shook his status among the disciples. But because he did cry bitterly in repentance, the Lord took upon himself to restore Peter’s reputation and place among the disciples and their confidence in him.

After resurrection, Jesus sent the angelic message through the women “But go, tell his disciples and Peter, ‘He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.’” Mark 16:7. The Lord intended to lift Peter’s spirit, not only He did that but also appeared after resurrection specifically to Peter. “and that he appeared to Cephas, and then to the Twelve.” 1 Corinthians 15:5

The Lord also has restored the Samaritan woman’s dignity when he healed her and her view of herself. People of her town saw her as an adulterous woman when

she met with the Lord and He changed her from a sinful woman to a charismatic witness “Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Messiah?” John 4:29

When the Samaritan woman changed, her view of herself changed too and went witnessing to the same people she once feared their eye contact.

The need then my dear is that the Lord restore your dignity and respect in your own eyes first, then He will take care of your dignity and respect of in others’ eyes. This may take time but God is able to do. Your part is to show the true change in your life since **people don’t believe what they hear but see in someone’s life**. When they see the change in you, people will forget the past and forgive you. Beside, people are really busy and you’re not the center of their concerns as you might think.

Let me sincerely say that my dear brother, while you and God would see the new changed person you become, people may still see you as you were till God himself show them how new person you became. This is what happened with Saul of Tarsus, now Paul the apostle after his conversion and the new faith in Christ, “When he came to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples, but they were all afraid of him, not believing that he really was a disciple.” Acts 9:26

(7)

From Prison to Ministry

Is it possible that the Lord change a sinner's heart by repentance? Yes of course, moreover God can make him a minister too!

Most of the known ministers were once away from the Lord and have committed in their past many sins and transgressions. They may be different than your sins that lead you to the prison, but at the end it is all the same, "All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one." Romans 3:12

This is because of God's grace, in fact the more useful now is he who has lived more sinful and has experienced the saving grace more abundantly than others so he may serve amongst sinners, even murderers and adulterous without judging them, just like Saul who became the greatest minister for Christ.

You may ask, how can I minister while I'm in prison? You serve Him by the noticed change in your life amongst

others, with your quite demeanor, patience and thankfulness. Your life will be a loud sermon, a message about God's saving grace.

You can serve those around you and listen to them just like Joseph did in prison. Not only that he listened to the butler's and cup holder's problems but also to their dreams and noticed when they were troubled and worried (see Genesis 40:6). Joseph was not consumed with his own cares so he was able to care for the others. Joseph suffered his brothers' harshness and Potiphar's wife's false accusation but God healed him from bitterness and made his prison a lighter burden.

Paul served the Lord while in prison. He wrote great epistles while in chains such as Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and Philemon "But God's word is not chained."
2 Timothy 2:9

The prisoner minister, a story:

A person named Paul (translator couldn't verify) was arrested and sentenced to prison for forty years. While in prison, he returned to himself, decided to repent and then became an evangelist within his fellow prisoners and lead many of them to the Savior. Paul received many of the new prisoners with care and shared Christ one to one with many and served them all of the inmates he can reach calling for life of repentance. Many of his fel-

(7) From Prison to Ministry

low prisoners left prison after they have known the Lord through him, they went into prison “criminals” and left penitents!

Fifteen years into his sentence, this evangelist prisoner was pardoned to be released but he refused to accept the pardon telling the judge that he wouldn't be of use to the world outside the prison while he has found himself of benefit leading many prisoners to the Savior. He said he would be happy to finish his sentence with joy serving the inmates and finishing his mission inside the prison bars than being outside that door.

So, this minister was set free from the true (spiritual) prison before the physical prison pardon so he was pleased to stay and finish the work. True prison is not made of brick walls and doors of steel, but it's prison of souls locked in by sin.

Every believer is a minister where he is, sent by God to serve in that place and to fulfill his mission. God allowed Paul and Silas to be in prison to lead the prison guard to Christ.(Acts 16).

So we all should serve the Lord faithfully realizing that we are ambassadors of Christ and imploring on His behalf; “be reconciled to God” (2 Corinthians 5:20).

(8)

Special Messages

1. A message to believers in prison:

As a true believer God has allowed you to be in prison, know that He will use it to move you up in your spiritual walk with Him. Life is cleared and hindrances are removed by trials, so prison will be like a fire furnace for gold to become more pure and shiny and you may be in more depth in your relationship with the Lord and be His messenger to the people there. You can be a message of love peace and hope, be a blessing for many and win them for Christ. You would have never met them but there and they usually respond to one of them more than many visitor pastors or ministers. You live with them same circumstances, dress like them and eat same food and you feel what they feel and your message is not just an empty message.

Here we're reminded that our Lord Jesus in the flesh dwelled among us, tempted like us in everything except sin, so He understands and sympathize with our suffering.

**2. A message to someone concerned for his family:
Brother and sister,**

You may have left behind a spouse or children without income or a parent up in age who is in need for you. Be sure my dear, Elijah's God is still living, Who at the time of famine has sent Elijah bread and meat through ravens (1 kings 17). **God will use unexpected people to help you through this tough time.** If you have started a genuine relationship with God, pray for your family right now for **many prayers were released from behind bars and God had heard and answered them.** You probably have heard of "Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them." Acts 16:25, so you may have nothing to send your family but you can send them "help by your prayers" (2 Corinthians 1:11). And With God's help when your out and free again, **you'll compensate them much when you can but worrying now will not help but will increase your pain.** "With man this is impossible, but not with God; all things are possible with God." Mark 10:27

Ask God for your household, we know that God does not need us to tell Him for He knows and cares for His own children, but this will encourage you, ask the Lord for you children and all your family members, send them help by prayers and put them in the Lord's hands.

May be that you and your spouse are both in prison and you're so worried about your children Remember that ravens abandon their young intentionally and God cares for them, "Who provides food for the raven when its young cry out to God and wander about for lack of food?" Job 38:41

This is why Jesus said to his disciples: "Consider the ravens: They do not sow or reap, they have no store-room or barn; yet God feeds them. And how much more valuable you are than birds!" Luke 12:24

He who cares for the plants and for the birds will care for your children, they are His children even more than they are yours.

3. A message to you who couldn't say good bye to a loved one:

I know how hard it is to not be able to say good bye to your loved ones specially if a mom or dad or a child. Please know that if they can tell you, they don't blame you at all **for they understand that your hands are tied.** Besides, a believer who passes is already celebrating in heaven and he doesn't feel earthly things we do for him, he is by that time is out of the tent (the body) and in paradise. **And soon, the person whom you didn't say good bye to will be welcomed by you when the Lord return for death is not an eternal separation but we**

will certainly meet again. Pray that the Lord sends His consolation and comfort to your heart and pray that you accept such blessing. Family members comfort one another outside the prison, but for you while alone, God is “the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort” (2 Corinthians 1:3)

4. A message to you who could not attend an important social event like child’s wedding or birth:

There are many who sincerely and heartfelt share others in their joy from a distance. You can do that share the family’s joyful occasion from a distance! Your family misses you and understands and they’re aware of your reason, they don’t blame you. You regret and wish you’re there to share with their joy in person, but you can’t. It’s ok, encourage them to rejoice in the occasion for now even without you, **it will be greater joy for all of you when you get back home and you may have a second celebration then refreshing the occasion for you all.**

5. A message for an inmates with an illnesses:

Human beings are made of three; body, soul and mind. Your body may have been stricken by a disease, but **I hope you’re feeling wholesome and psychologically well and not disfigured by the life in prison “I’m darkened by the sun” Song of Songs 1:6. Trials are like the**

scorching sun that harden the clay and also can melt the ice! So, if you use the trials well, they will produce a solid and useful person of you just like Joseph who went through quite painful experience as a slave in Potiphar's house falsely accused by his master's wife of sexual advancement. As I have mentioned before it was hard on Joseph but it didn't damage his spirit, "Now Joseph was well built and handsome." Genesis 39:6. **Joseph was handsome and well built, but also favored, which is not downcast or depression and after his prison time, he came out strong and healthy person capable of running the affairs of a great nation like Egypt** and handling the problem of famine affecting not only Egypt but all people of the earth.

I also hope that you're healthy in your relationship with the Lord, for this relationship and the comfort within you will make bearable all external troubles. "When anxiety was great within me, your consolation brought me joy." Psalms 94:19

Please spend your time in bed while you're sick in prayers and lift your heart to the Lord and He will enable you to get through this painful time of illness. Here is a promise from the Word of God, "The Lord sustains them on their sickbed and restores them from their bed of illness." Psalms 41:3 NIV

Then then comes the question, can God heal the body from its diseases? Yes He can, He may use medicine and medications to bring your weakened body to complete healing for the time of illness is limited and not forever. Put your trust in the Lord that He may touch you and ask Him for healing. Know that many are praying fervently and with tears for the healing of many. They pray as if their own ailments and they pray for those in prison as if they are themselves are prisoners following the command "Continue to remember those in prison as if you were together with them in prison, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering." Hebrews 13:3

The answers to those prayers lifted daily on your behalf by name from those who know you or prayers of those who don't know you but pray for you collectively amongst all those who are ill or incarcerated, those answers to prayers will be yours if you are in prayers and fellowship with the Lord. **Only then, your prayers for yourself and others' prayers for you shall be answered.** Just like someone has sent somebody else credits of mobile phone calls, the receiver will not benefit of the credits if he doesn't turn on the phone and connect to the service.

Be assured! A time will come when you tell of your healing testimony, and even your time in prison will be

just a memory you will peacefully tell others about afterwards. Peace at the time of trial lessens of its burden, so may the Lord give you inner peace and touch your soul and your body. **It is known that a sound mind helps the body heal and psychological stress increases the burden of physical illnesses and prolong time of healing.** Be encouraged my dear, the Lord is with you, He will never leave you or forsake you, His presence is special at the time of trouble as per the blessed promise, "He will call on me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honor him." Psalms 91:15

In hopelessness and depression, thoughts or wishes of death under the burden of illness may cross your mind but this is not to act on, there is a mission for you to accomplish with your family and society out of the prison, God Willing. So please, take good care of your health and your body as you're entrusted by God to do. Your body and health are not your own but your family's too and for God's purpose in your life and He will compensate you for all what you have missed out and lost in the past. So, take care of your own body as the Word of God says "After all, no one ever hated their own body, but they feed and care for their body.." Ephesians 5:29

6. A message for someone awaiting the verdict:

The Word of God teaches us that "In the Lord's hand

(8) Special Messages

the king's heart is a stream of water that he channels toward all who please him." Proverbs 21:1 and **this is an assurance that our future is not in human hands.** God's Word also teaches that He wouldn't let anyone oppress His children, so don't be afraid that anyone will do that to you. "He allowed no one to oppress them; for their sake he rebuked kings:" Psalms 105:14

"The Lord works righteousness and justice for all the oppressed." Psalms 103:6, so He wouldn't let any oppression last, and if you have rights that have been violated, God will bring this out to light and you will be vindicated, "He will make your righteous reward shine like the dawn, your vindication like the noonday sun." Psalms 37:6

Even if you have the most skillful attorneys in your defense, it is the Lord who is defending you through them and He is the giver of all favors, giving you grace, and physical and psychological strength enough to accept whichever the verdict will be and He will give you favor in the eyes of the judge to be merciful to you, "God is punishing you less than you deserve." Job 11:6 GN

Please seek the Lord from all your heart to save you from sin first, and to save you through this trying time second.

7. A special message for an inmates in death row:

Life on earth is limited whether long or short and death is the same regardless of the causes but life after death is eternal. If you are losing life on earth, don't lose your eternity. Even Methuselah who lived the longest on earth, 969 years died finally after the flood, but eternal life is everlasting.

It is said of the penitent thief that he has stolen heaven when he believed in the Lord Jesus crucified next to him as the Lord and King, "Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom."" Luke 23:42

Now you have the opportunity to believe in Christ Who is at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven above all authority and principality and by this faith you will be better off than those living in worldly abundance and living long but ending in eternal damnation.

Happy ending is what matters, and if you believe you will have this happy ending. Eternity is long enough that you will forget the recklessness of your past and by faith all the sins of the distorted life will be erased. So even if you don't escape human courts, you will be pardoned in the divine court and if you're wondering how? I'll say that it is **the same grace accepted Zacchaeus and the penitent thief on the cross, same grace extended to**

many thieves, liars and murderers whom by faith and grace they became righteous and pure and will have eternal life in heaven, a testimony of God's wonderful grace. This will also be a testimony for those who will perish in eternal hell, those whose sins didn't cause them to perish but refusal of grace and faith in Jesus Christ and forgiveness of their committed sins!!

There are many wasted opportunities in your life, but here you have the last and most serious one, don't let it go to waste for if you accept Christ Jesus in this life, you will be saved by faith and guarantee eternal life in heaven. **You may have not won the chance to serve the Lord in this life and live for Him, but don't miss out that chance of receiving such precious salvation given to you freely.** This salvation given you free was with a great cost paid by our Lord Jesus and it's not by chance that you read these words at the last chapter of your life. He lead us to send you this message. Please let the Lord wright down the last few lines of your life's last chapter and it would be good here now and in eternity.

I realize that you may be dying of fear and worries everyday, but allow the Lord to change that and this chapter be rewritte, and you may receive His peace deep in your heart.

There is Hope

Peace even in death, death doesn't scare the believer for whom "to die is gain" Philippians 1:21

It's the assurance for the believer can be given you, for if you close your eyes here, you open them in heaven.

**"Do not be anxious about anything,
but in every situation, by prayer and petition,
with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.
And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding,
will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."
Philippians 4:6-7**

(9)

The Old Violin

In an auction hall selling old stuff the auctioneer raised an old beaten violin and with a loud voice “starting the auction calling for a dollar, two dollars, another caller, three dollars, any higher?” but no higher bid..suddenly walked up the stage an old man who held the violin, dusted it off and tightened its strings and played a beautiful sheet of music while the crowds were amazed and their hearts were captured and what a great surprise it was? Now the auctioneer held the violin again and loudly called again for any higher bid for such old violin? Now one thousand dollars the voice was loud,..any higher?..two thousand dollars any higher? Here three thousand dollars...congratulations..you win..while the crowds surprised and in disbeliefs.

What happened and how did the old rugged violin’s value change? How did it go up from just three dollars to three thousand dollars?

It is the hand of the master!

If you feel you can't live a holy life and that your sole being torn and wounded by sin and spiritual fatigue, and you through that you compared to the multitude wouldn't be of any value if sold in an auction..do not give up.

Do not loose hope in your God, the master will walk among the crowds, up the stage and pick you up! He will dust your life off and tighten your strings and play with your life the most beautiful piece of music in the song of salvation!

He will give meaning and value to your life and take you back to life of holiness for He is the source of holiness. Didn't He do that with Saul of Tarsus, Peter the apostle, the Samaritan woman and Augustine and many more?

Don't give up then,

"Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord." Psalms 27:14

Our Lord Jesus prayed for us "Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth."

John 17:17 He is asking the Heavenly Father to sanctify us by the truth. What is the truth? Jesus said about himself, "I am the way and the truth and the life."
John 14:6

So how does the Father sanctify us in Jesus? When He lives in us through the Holy Spirit.

What's your worth? How do you value yourself?

Imagine yourself in front of different mirrors, a concave mirror , a convex mirror, a broken mirror and unclean one. How would you see your reflection from each of these mirrors? And which image will be a reflection of who you really are? The truth is that each of the mirrors reflected a distorted untrue picture of you. So it is when we see our reflection through other people. It will be untrue picture tainted by their views, opinions and how much you care about us. That is why it's not how you're seen by others or even how you see yourself that matter but how God sees you.

In short, your value is in the One Who created you and loves you. Saint Augustine once said "You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you".

Also said Paul the apostle, "But we have this treasure (knowing God) in jars of clay (humanity) to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us."
2 Corinthians 4:7

Some think of their value on materialistic things like how they look or dress, others in intellectual things like

education and study and some in relation to others and impressing them. But the real value of life is measured by the relationship with the Lord and His presence in our lives reflected in different aspects of it.

Biblical Example:

How did the close people David see him ?

(David's father Jesse was approached by Samuel the prophet to anoint one of his children a king over Israel "So he asked Jesse, "Are these all the sons you have?")

David's father view of David was reflected in his words, "There is still the **youngest**," Jesse answered. "He is **tending the sheep**." 1 Samuel 16:11

"When Eliab, David's oldest brother, heard him speaking with the men, he burned with anger at him and asked, "Why have you come down here? And with whom did you leave those few sheep in the wilderness? I know how **conceited** you are and how **wicked your heart** is; you came down only to watch the battle."" 1 Samuel 17:28

We should stop comparing ourselves to others, we feel down and inferior when we compare our worst state with other's best.

If you want to know your worth, remember what the Lord says to you, "you are precious and honored in my sight, and.. I love you"Isaiah 43:4

Remember that the Lord of glory has come by himself in the flesh to redeem you for you're created into His image and He loves you. So how precious you're in His sight and how valuable!

Don't put yourself down, you're not without a price, the Lord has paid a huge price for your redemption and you're worth it to Him even if you see yourself otherwise.

How valuable this currency bill? A short story

A teacher wanted to give a lesson to her students in that your value would not decrease by an insult received from others. So she took a paper bill, crumbled it so badly and put it in her pocket then asked if anyone of them would like to have that bill to himself. All the students raised their hands wanting to have it. Then she put it under her feet in disrespect stepping on it with her shoes then asked the students if anyone still wants it? All said they do.

A lesson learned, the bill's value was not diminished by insults and so it is with a human value, it will not be diminished by what others do to you or by their opinions of you.

Our True Value:

1. it's in the blood paid for us, "For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed...but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect." 1 Peter 1:18-19 As valuable the blood paid for you, you are so valuable.
2. it's in the new creation in us, created for good works "For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do." Ephesians 2:10
3. it's in the Holy Spirit in us, for He is God Himself.

(10)

Wait Upon the Lord!

Let me start by telling you the story of two kinds of birds, and then ask you.

Which kind of bird are you?

Two birds in their cages, each is locked up on his own cage of same size, measures and shapes with food and water and similar conditions.

How did the two birds behave then?

The first bird started hitting the bars of the cage very hard with its wings thinking it will break them or that it will break through and escape from in-between the bars! The bird spilled its food and water and in anger and agitation hit its head in the cage's roof and fell in the ground loosing its strength. The poor bird kept doing the same over and over till it lost its power and became broken in spirit and wounded in its wings, so weakened and demoralized to the point that when the cage's door was opened for the bird to be set free, it couldn't even fly!!

There is Hope

The second bird however has also tried to get out a few times and when it couldn't, it remained calm, eating and drinking water and started singing, a sad song! When the cage's door was finally opened, the bird flew away happy and free singing a song of joy.

So what is your reaction, my friend when the Lord allows you to be in a cage? Cage of illness, poverty, pain, sadness, loneliness or injustice?

—> Would you act like the first bird? Grumbly complain for what God's wisdom allowed you to go through? Do you try to get out of such circumstances by any means, lawful or unlawful?

Do you refuse this painful situation that God has put you in and resist with all your power till you're depleted mentally, physically and spiritually? And when the issue is resolved, will you be damaged and hopeless unable to consider God's purpose in your life and His wise plan for you? Do you count it against God and neglect that He sees and knows your situation in details? "Our God is a God who saves; from the Sovereign Lord comes escape from death". Psalms 68:20.

God put limit to everything,"he gave the sea its boundary so the waters would not overstep his command." Proverbs 8:29

(10) Wait Upon the Lord!

—> Or would you rather bow your head in surrender to Him and accept in calmness and thanksgiving what He is doing in your life in spite of pain, sadness and struggles? Would you accept His allowed circumstances in your life and wait upon Him, trusting Him and entrust Him to your presence and future? Do you believe that the Lord does not make mistakes and that He wouldn't harm you no matter what the situation may be to you?

"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him."Romans 8:28

Would you trust that He reigns and is in control moving all events by which He is teaching and shaping you according to His will for His glory and your benefit?

It is one of the hardest lessons for us humans to learn how to do; stand still and wait!

We often fail in doing that, many of the heroes of the Bible failed as well like; Abraham, Joseph, David and others.

Times of waiting are slow and hard to bear, specially when needs and demands are imminent and we can't do anything about it but wait for a soon divine intervention! Usually this waiting is accompanied by worries

and anxiety when heaven's silence seems like ages and it's more painful for the believer being used to receive his answers through the Lord and he knowing that God holds the reigns! For this reason, the believer may utter words of blame to the Lord knowing that He can do all things with no efforts and that He knows the need and yet has not answered for a long long time!

“God walks slowly but He is never late, He is always on time”.

The Meaning of Waiting

It is to cling to the Lord and seek Him in all my different life's circumstances, holding on to Him and not any other human's intervention continuing to knock God's door and trust that it shall be opened.

Nature of Waiting

A believer's wait is not a passive, fatalistic wait for whatever the future may hold hoping it will be good with sense of helplessness. **But it's a positive wait during which the believer is patiently fighting well in prayers and working hard in other areas of Life. Life for the believer is not stopped at a situation in which he/she is waiting for the Lord! He/ she lives fully otherwise without failure or hopelessness.**

(10) Wait Upon the Lord!

In the meantime, the believer will continue relying on the Lord and trusting that he/ she is not forgotten by Him regardless of the hardships of life.

Hindrances of Waiting

1. People's failed promises:

In our fainted hearts, we sometimes put our trust in people as changeable and full of weaknesses as they are added to their inability and forgetfulness, and then we get disappointed.

Waiting for human help may lead to detriment even death, yet it seems natural tendency to depend on human arm which hinders our wait for the Lord alone. This leads to disappointment affirming what the Bible says; "Stop trusting in mere humans, who have but a breath in their nostrils. Why hold them in esteem?" Isaiah 2:22.

The invalid man on the pool of Bethesda waited a very long thirty eight years and was only healed by the Lord when admitted "Sir, "I have no one to help me into the pool when the water is stirred.." John 5:7. May we take the short, straight and direct path to the Lord Who will never let us down. In an Egyptian song, a verse says:

**If I seek someone else, I wait for too long
But if I just call You, You come for me fast and strong**

When God intervene, it may not necessarily look miraculously coming from heavens to save us, He may still use people to help. But one thing that God uses people to solve our problems, it's another thing that we wait for people and depend on them.

2. People's insults and discouragement:

Often times the surrounding believers' faith is not up to par with God's dealings and the trials you're going through so they go impatient and their words don't help us trusting the Lord! Take Job's wife as example who in his afflictions "said to him, "Are you still maintaining your integrity? Curse God and die!" Job 2:9

3. Our nature of worrying:

This nature makes us want to hold on the steering wheel, knowing that this will bring us and others much trouble. Yet we continue to take the wheel repeatedly as if we are wondering how can we standstill in such urgent and dangerous situation?

We forget that our Lord will be there even in "the fourth watch of the night" (Matthew 14:25 ESV). May we don't grow impatient and wait for the Lord as David said, "Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him;" Psalms 37:7

The Blessings of Waiting For the Lord

1. Strength is By The Lord,

If it wasn't for the Lord's help, the strongest believer would have failed facing the slightest of trials! But when we wait for the Lord, He sends aid for the journey, pulling on our hands and renewing our resolve then we fly like eagles as it is written, "but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint." Isaiah 40:31

2. Trust Will Not Disappoint:

No one will seek the Lord and be turned down, God bless those who bless His Name by trusting Him. "No one who hopes in you will ever be put to shame." Psalms 25:3 and "Then you will know that I am the Lord; those who hope in me will not be disappointed." Isaiah 49:23

3. Joy and Praise:

"I waited patiently for the Lord; he turned to me and heard my cry. He lifted me out of the slimy pit, out of the mud and mire; he set my feet on a rock and gave me a firm place to stand. He put a new song in my mouth, a hymn of praise to our God. Many will see and fear the Lord and put their trust in him." Psalms 40:1-3

The Lord is able to replace bitterness with songs of joy and praise so we may forget the difficult time of yoke and out of our hearts thanksgiving and words of praise will flow, so "weeping may stay for the night, but rejoicing comes in the morning." Psalms 30:5

4. Testimony to Encourage:

"..Many will see and fear the Lord and put their trust in him." Psalms 40:3

Many of those who are going through similar difficult circumstances waiting patiently for the Lord will see what He has done with you, will be encouraged and put their trust in Him. Our Lord who answers not as soon as we want Him to but on due time will not forget or neglect those He has chosen.

"You have heard of Job's perseverance and have seen what the Lord finally brought about. The Lord is full of compassion and mercy." James 5:11

**"I waited patiently for the Lord;
he turned to me and heard my cry."
Isaiah 40:1**

(11)

“In your Anger, Do Not Sin”
Ephesians 4:26

There is no one who doesn't get angry, it's a fact. Anger is a reaction that develops in response to a situation that is unexpected, oppositional, embarrassing or provocative. Actions and/ or words may result in and may lead to our regret later and these reactions may vary in severity depending on personalities and characters.

Of course we try to control our anger for its negative effects on ourselves and our relationship with others; family and friends and all around us. This may spoil and disfigure a beautiful relationship and ruin beautiful goals that may never be reached..all that because hurtful words exploded out of uncontrolled anger. How many families have been broken and friendships ruined because of unhealthy anger used by Satan so we may need months or years to heal a wound caused by one word out of anger!

When we're angry, we lose control and in that the Bible says, "Better a patient person than a warrior, one with self-control than one who takes a city. Proverbs 16:32.

The Bible, exhorts to not be angry and to exert self control, be slow to get angry, control anger and to be in command to avoid many problems.

Christ is our example, in His meekness and calmness; "He will not quarrel or cry out; no one will hear his voice in the streets." Matthew 12:19

We ought to be careful as the Bible said, "In your Anger, Do Not Sin" so we may not act wrongly. How fast we may fall into wrongful actions or words when we're angry?

If we get angry, we shouldn't stay angry for long so we may not give the devil a place to stay.

"In your anger do not sin": Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold." Ephesians 4:26-27. Do not hold on to your anger, "for anger resides in the lap of fools." Ecclesiastes 7:9

Let your day of anger is the same day of letting go of it, for kept anger is dangerous and will burst out with harm. Resolve conflicts rather quickly, with words mixed

(11) "In your Anger, Do Not Sin"

with love and gentleness so we may win over our brothers and sisters around us.

This is definitely a task that needs a special aid by the Lord, so let's be near Him, with our thoughts and desires be in His glory. So let's set that goal, His glory before us and do our best to avoid anger. "Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near." Philippians 4:5

The Lord is near, close to us and knows all of our life's details, He is soon coming and we will leave behind all what caused us hardships and injustice in this life.

Let's be slow to anger, "Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry," James 1:19 for "A person's wisdom yields patience; it is to one's glory to overlook an offense." Proverbs 19:11

A wise person put limits to his reactive behavior at the time of anger. "If the anger of the ruler rises against you, do not leave your place, for calmness will lay great offenses to rest." Ecclesiastes 10:4 ESV

So, it's better not to become angry and if you become angry, do not make decisions or take actions or leave your place.

Loss of balance during anger exposes you to many mistakes and much troubles.

Factors that may contribute to ease of anger:

1. Physical and Mental Fatigue

To interact with people soundly being respectful, flexible, and good listeners we need time and efforts and good level of energy. And because of the excessive busyness of life we are often exhausted, running on empty and unable to be smooth in our relationship with others.

2. Weak Spots

Some people get easily reactive even by trivial things. Due to repeated reactions and impatience, a weak spot is found through which the devil get through. But don't be discouraged, getting rid of such weak spot is hard but not impossible, you can do it. Acknowledge the weakness and its danger, practice patience and seek the Lord.

Moses went through this angry reactive behavior; "One day, after Moses had grown up, he went out to where his own people were and watched them at their hard labor. He saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his own people. Looking this way and that and seeing no one, he killed the Egyptian and hid him in the sand." Exodus 2:11-12

Many years later the Bible said about him, "Now Moses was a very humble (patient) man, more humble than anyone else on the face of the earth." Numbers 12:3

That was the result of fellowship with the Lord and training in the desert and other life's aspect as well.

3. Provocative Persons and Intricate Situations

Some people are provocative, disturbing and agitating and just interacting with them can be disturbing of calmness and peace. Those can provoke anger and requires calmness, patience, kindness and smooth response in words and energy we should only ask from the Lord. Sometimes we even need to resort to silence all together when provoked.

Mary did that twice, one time she remained silent when she was provoked by her sister Martha.

"Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!" Luke 10:40

And again she remained silent when she was blamed for pouring her perfume on Jesus's feet, "But one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, who was later to betray him, objected, "Why wasn't this perfume sold and the money given to the poor? It was worth a year's wages." John 12:4-5

In both situations, she was honored that the one who stood up defending her was the Lord Jesus Himself.

4. Disrespect and Loss of Rights

These are testing of anyone's patience and of his long suffering traits. A person who may not be very patient under other circumstances, when his dignity and rights are violated would be much more angry and threatening. But how wonderful is our perfect role model, the Lord Jesus Who "When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly." 1 Peter 2:23. May we follow His footsteps!

5. Misunderstanding and Quick Response

A quick angry reaction can be a response to misspoken words or misunderstanding and rather than listening well. So let's be quick to listen and be slow in our response.

"My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, James 1:19

How do we respond to an angry person?

We need wisdom from above to avoid escalation and we may consider the following;

- 1. Walk away or be silent** , for an angry person is unable to listen, reason or return on his/her position in his anger.

(11) "In your Anger, Do Not Sin"

Postponing argument and lifting prayers for that person will sooth his/her spirit.

2. **Find an excuse**, give him/ her the benefit of the doubt, for he may be under much pressure and it's not just one direct issue that triggered his anger. Don't hold him accountable for a word came out of anger that he will regret when later regret it. Don't believe that he will act on the decisions made when angry, he wouldn't carry out most of them when he returns to his senses.
3. **Avoid what triggers his anger**, because some inadvertent actions or words may trigger too much discomfort and anger for some. Let's be filled with wisdom, "the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere." James 3:17

What works for somebody may not work for another and what may be said to the one may not be suitable for the other. So let our words be wise and gentle.

**"A gentle answer turns away wrath,
but a harsh word stirs up anger."**

Proverbs 15:1

(12)

The Rotten Potatoes

The goal: is practice forgiveness and let go of debts when hurt and wounded.

A tale and a lesson:

A teacher once asked her students to bring a bag of potatoes and to write on each of the potatoes a name of one person they hate!!!

On the due date, the students brought in to class their bags, a student brought one potato in the bag, another brought two potatoes and three, four, five and so forth.

The teacher then asked that the students continue to carry their bags of potatoes everywhere they go for a whole week. The kids started to smell the foul odor coming out of their bags starting the second day. Of course those with more potatoes in their bags suffered the foul odor more intensely than those who have less!

By the end of the week, the kids were so glad that it was over!! The teacher then asked her students how

(12) The Rotten Potatoes

they felt and the experience during the whole week carrying around the bags of rotten potatoes. They told their frustrations and disappointment and struggle with the foul odor wherever they went, then the teacher explained the moral of the experiment and said that to carry bags of rotten potatoes is like carrying hatred in your hearts.

Hatred will spoil your heart and life and you will carry that everywhere you go. If you can't tolerate carrying around a bag of rotten potatoes for a week, can you imagine how it is carrying around hatred in your heart all of your life?

How beautiful that we live in the short life on earth with love and forgiveness for others and accepting them just as they are?

Forgive, what a beautiful word of command and teaching frequently given by our Lord Jesus, but it's one of the most difficult command given us. In fact, we find reasons not to forgive and we often hear ourselves saying "I will never forgive you" or "I will always remember what you did to me as long as I live",..etc

As long as we let anger take control, we will continue to suffer from the hurt, but once we start praying for those who did hurt us and forgive them, our pain will stop!

There is nobody who was never hurt by someone else at certain point by words or deeds, intentionally or unintentionally. And how much greater the hurt when caused by a person in a good relationship with? People we expect from them kindness like parents, friends, relatives or church members?! We may not even hurt by strangers we see on public places with no relationship or fellowship with, but we hurt from closer ones!

We all hurt somehow, all of us, believers and non believers alike, but the response to hurt will be varied being a believer or non believers, and even from one believer to another depending on spiritual status, depth of understanding the Word of God and relationship with the Lord.

Forgiveness is great when we need and obtain it, but it is much greater to give it and rid ourselves of the bitterness of lack of forgiveness.

Dear brother and sister,

- Are you hurt in your feeling or even physically hurt by others?
- Did anger, hate and enmity penetrate your mind and your heart? Are you filled with bitterness and desire to take revenge?
- Are you filled with lack of forgiveness?

The spirit of unforgiving will keep you locked up and that wouldn't hurt the one you don't forgive! It will hurt you, it will eat you up from within like cancer! You will be tied up with enmity and inner peace will depart from you.

How hard for human nature to forgive? It finds pleasure in hatred, revenge and resentment! That is why when Jesus spoke with His disciples about forgiveness, "The apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith!""
Luke 17:5

May the Lord convince us that forgiveness is greater than we can do ourselves. But when we humble ourselves before Him and ask Him to help, our hearts will accept and be filled with His forgiveness for us so through us He may extend forgiveness to others just as He forgave those who crucified Him.

Forgiveness does not mean forgetting, for when God said "I, even I, am he who blots out your transgressions, for my own sake, and remembers your sins no more." Isaiah 43:25, He doesn't mean forgetting because God does not forget, but means He does not hold our sins against us. So it is for us, we shouldn't hold others' sins against them.

Your forgiveness doesn't necessarily relieve the person wronged you from the consequences of his/her actions. God's principal "A man reaps what he sows." Galatians 6:7 still applies.

And when you "Do not take revenge" as the Bible says, it doesn't mean that the person wronged you shouldn't be disciplined or legally charged "for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord." Romans 12:19

Forgiveness does not equate weakness, for handling hurtful wrongdoing needs resilience and strength so whoever forgives is the strongest.

- ✓ By forgiving, I declare that I do not harbor bitterness.
- ✓ Forgiveness is the begging of healing from the wounds of the past.
- ✓ Forgiveness does not rejoice in wrongdoer's fall or hurt but finding opportunities to resist evil with good and help at the time of need which may turn the wrongdoer away from hatred and enmity for "in doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head." Romans 12:20
- ✓ Forgiveness does not make you have to give up your rights unwillingly for even the Lord Jesus when

slapped during the high priest questioning said to the official who slapped Him, "If I said something wrong,..testify as to what is wrong. But if I spoke the truth, why did you strike me?" John 18:23

How do we forgive others?

Next is a few practical steps to help us forgive others correctly:

- 1. Pray for** those who hurt you is the first step towards forgiveness. Pray in obedience to the Lord's command "pray for those who persecute you," Matthew 5:44. How we need to pray, for we're much weaker than we can forgive without divine help.
- 2. Consider understanding** some of the perpetrator's possible reasoning and circumstances!
- 3. Remember Christ's love and forgiveness for you.** Other's sins against us can't be a match to how deeply we have sinned against Christ. "Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you." Colossians 3:13
- 4. Trust and be fully aware that God reigns.**"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him" Romans 8:28

Say it in your heart what Joseph has told his brothers, "You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives" Genesis 50:20

5. Go and talk with the person who wronged you in genuine love with the purpose of winning him/her back.

Remember that you also may have wronged others and enjoyed their forgiveness.

You're not infallible! You may even have wronged others who forgave you without you even asking or they talked with you and now someone needs your forgiveness!

Be aware of the tomb of unforgiving:

Lack of forgiveness, someone once said is like a tomb in which we're rotten dead as Lazarus was, and we hear the Lord saying "take away the stone" John39:11, take away the hindrances of forgiveness. Admit that you're fatigued and be truthful with yourself and share that hurt with someone who may help you to get out of that tomb of unforgiving!

Locked himself in a prison!

Have you heard of the jailers in the prison of bitterness?

(12) The Rotten Potatoes

In the parable of the unmerciful servant, Jesus said "In anger his master handed him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed (just like what you did to others)." (Matthew 18:34) . The jailers of prison of unforgiving are a few, but they are very harsh!

The first jailer: is bitterness which hurts you and others, handing you over to the **second jailer, hatred** that whips your soul every time you hear the name of the unforgiven person and here comes the **third jailer, the spirit of revenge** telling you to take revenge, taking matters into your own hands then the **fourth jailer, depression**, hopelessness and/or self pity and you will be beaten to loneliness and isolation then comes **the fifth jailer, disease whipping you physically in your health** (increasing your risk of Diabetes, high blood pressure, joint pain, spastic colon, headache, stroke and paralysis, visual impairment, stomach ulcer, heart attack, cancer and low immunity,...all due to chronic state of anger and depressed mood). **All of this result from unforgiving, and you're the one in prison here and the strange thing is that other person is not in prison with you here! "**

This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother or sister from your heart."Matthew 18:35

This is a serious matter! God has granted us forgiveness and wants us to extend that to others so we may benefit and others too from that forgiveness. "Forgive, and you will be forgiven." Luke 6:37

Brother and sister, repent and turn away from your sins and forgive so you may enjoy God's forgiveness and be healed! God will release you from the hands of those harsh jailers and you will be set free from such prison of bitterness. You will enjoy a glorious life of freedom and you will be healthier spiritually, mentally and physically.

You can't reverse the hurt that happened: Do you want hurt those who did hurt you and do to them what they have done to you? Even this wouldn't reverse what happened!

You must forgive, for unforgiving will add to your hurt and will enable those who hurt you to continue hurting you and have control over you and your mind!

Rid yourself of anger, don't hide it or suppress it! For if you do, your anger will continue eating you from within. Seek God's forgiveness and grant forgiveness to others so you may be happier and healthier. The Bible commands that we rid ourselves of anger as soon as we can and not give the devil a chance to destroy our lives.

You may not be able to control how you feel but you can learn how you control your actions and behavior by God's mercy if you put all what bothers you before Him in prayers.

Remember:

To let go is to not repay the wrongdoer by yourself.

To let go is to decide to hate sin and not sinners.

To let go is that you may stay upset but not seeking revenge.

To let go is to surrender the issue to God trusting His justice.

How to forgive people for real evil they did hurting you at work so you may feel well and be healed of bitterness towards them? Remember that **the devil is the one who moved them against you, they are just tools in his hands. Just like an adult moving a child to do something harmful to another, the child's only fault is being a child and knows nothing better!**

So have compassion, find an excuse and pray for the person who did hurt you and you wouldn't have bitterness in you. Also remember that whatever happens to you is within God's authority and He is aware and able to make all things work together for good for those

who love Him and called according to His purpose. This is the testimony of many during their walk on the desert of this life.

For Discussion:

Question I:

True or false? Mark if the statement is true (T) or (F) false:

1. We have to forgive the offender even if it's repeated offense ()
2. Forgiveness means we forget what happened ()
3. Forgiveness doesn't mean not pointing out to the person's actions clarifying the perceived mistakes ()
4. Lack of forgiveness hurts the unforgiven offending person only ()
5. Lack of forgiveness is a sin ()
6. We should take revenge because the Bible says "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth" Matthew 5:38 ()
7. From this verse, "If your brother or sister sins against you, rebuke them; and if they repent, forgive them"

(12) The Rotten Potatoes

Luke 17:3, we understand that we forgive but not to deal with the person again if he/ she continues with same behavior ()

8. Lack of forgiveness affects us negative only psychologically, losing our peace but not spiritually in our relationship with the Lord; Matthew 5:23-24 ()
9. If I go to someone to point out to his fault and find out that I am actually the one at fault, I should apologize to him immediately ()
10. I should cut relationship and not even greet the person at fault ()
11. It may actually be of benefit to the person at fault when we bring it to his/ her attention ()
12. If someone commits an offense towards me, I'll wait for an opportunity to pay him back ()
13. Generally, people will learn how to show respect when we fight back as soon as they do us harm ()

Question II:

What is the difference between ending relationship (unforgivingly) and minimizing interaction (with forgiveness)?

And which of these two describes Abraham's decision to part company with Lot?

"So Abram said to Lot, "Let's not have any quarreling between you and me, or between your herders and mine, for we are close relatives. Is not the whole land before you? Let's part company. If you go to the left, I'll go to the right; if you go to the right, I'll go to the left."

Genesis 13:8-9

Question III:

Who am I? Isaac, Stephen or Joseph?

1. I was condemned to death by stoning, but I lifted my eyes up towards heaven and asked for forgiveness for those who stoned me. ()
2. My brothers' hearts were hardened like stone when they sold me cheap in spite of my love for them. But when they bowed before me, I forgave them and we had a fresh start. ()
3. I dug water wells and my enemies stopped them foiling them with dirt, but I showed them love and forgiveness, and my God rewarded me abundantly. ()

Positive Intervention:

- The best you can do to defeat the enemy is to ignore the enmity shown towards you and work on winning over the person.
- Lose a situation but not a person. It's a good principle in dealing with people.
- Without forgiveness you will not have friends.
- Find possible explanation for other's mistakes.
- Is there someone you would like to get rid of? God would love it when you get rid of an enemy by making that person a friend. Why don't you try that?

Try to do something kind to someone who wasn't nice to you. Remember that acts of kindness go full circle and back to where they started. That person may change and return your kindness back to you. If he doesn't, you have obeyed the Lord if nothing else.

"Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good." Romans 12:21

- Do you find it difficult to like someone in particular? Ask God to open your eyes to see some beautiful

qualities in that person. Try to know him/ her better, remembering that God loves every one.

**The greatest support,
God, please draw me nearer to you
so I may love and forgive just like you do**

Question IV:

Homework to do,

Read the story of Samson and his relationship with the Philistines as recorded in the book of Judges chapters 14-16 and find out the answer of this question, does revenge solve problems or make it more complicated?

(13)

The Jailer

The goal of this chapter is to recognize the causes of feeling guilty and how to deal with it

Better to confess; short story:

John and his sister Mary were spending their summer vacation at their grandma's farm. One beautiful morning while John is playing around with the hunting gun, he accidentally shot his grandma's favorite duck and killed her! He looked around, saw no one around, so he buried the duck and went on his way as if nothing happened.

After dinner, Mary asked John to wash the dishes, so he objected saying that they agreed that they alternate days and he just did his turn last night! Mary responded, "yes indeed, but I saw you killing the favorite duck and if you don't wash the dishes I'll tell my grandma what you did!"

This happened again and again for a whole week till John said to himself, "why don't I confess what I did to my grandma and be relieved from that fear and guilt?"

John then went to his grandma admitting his mistake and in response she hugged him and said, “John, I saw through my window all what happened and I’ve been hearing Mary’s threat to you every evening and I was wondering when would you come to me with a confession so I may forgive you and that you may be relieved?”

My beloved, for as long as we hide our sins deep in our hearts, the devil will continue humiliating and subjugating us. But if we confess our sins, we will be set free from the rule of Satan and sin and from guilt and this enemy of our souls will not have anything to hold against us ruining our life.

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.” 1 John 1:9

Guilt and Consciousness:

Think with me for few seconds,

Why do I feel bad when I make mistakes?

God has given us this conscience within so we may distinguish between right and wrong. That is why when we sin, we feel guilty and be warned, it’s a warning tool.

Often times however, we ignore that warning and lie to ourselves and “I haven’t done anything wrong”!

But this wrong because God has placed this consciousness in us, and if we continue to ignore God's voice in us through the conscience, He may stop talking to us.

Every time your conscience warns you of something wrong that you may do or say, ask yourself "does this action make God happy with me or does it make Him sad?" And seek the Bible's perspectives on that. Then you may ask the Lord to guide you so may do the right thing. Come to the Lord, pray and seek forgiveness, and leave that sin behind.

Feeling Guilty is a deep sense of shame of something being done, not being happy with oneself that can be so deep leading to disappointment and depression. This person with sense of guilt may blame himself, be angry at himself and even want to punish himself. This person realizes how society sees and judges him which may lead him to loose sense of confidence, freedom and will power.

Causes of Guilt:

1. Evil Consciousness that brings charges against the person all the time reminding him/ her that he is not worthy of coming near God due to sins.
2. False accusations that lead to the person's detriment.

3. Lack of self acceptance, being unhappy with own prayers, fellowship and spiritual status.
4. Repeated defeats falling into same sin which is a weak spot in the person's life.
5. Busyness with one's own affairs and turning away from the Lord

Kinds of Guilt:

- Natural Sense of Guilt, which leads to repentance. This leads to regret and desire to get rid of one's sins as it happened with Augustine and the apostle and with Peter the apostle who wept bitterly when after denied his Master.
- Exaggerated Sense of Guilt, which leads the person to believe that his sins are too great to be forgiven since he sinned against all moral and religious values he has learned.
- Subconscious Sense of Guilt, buried deep in the subconscious due to sins have been committed and forgotten. This kind of Guilt affects the person's behavior and may cause many mental and physical health problems. This is considered one of the most dangerous and unhealthy sense of Guilt.

- False Sense of Guilt, leading the person who lost a loved one through death, for instance thinking that it was his faulty life or lack of walk with the Lord that lead to that death as punishment for him. The fact can be simply that the person died because it's his time!

Healing of Guilt:

- Seek help from a wise person you trust and share with him your guilt, your feelings and allow him to guide you. This is the first step on the right path so you may understand what kind of guilt and if it is true or false kind of guilt!
- Be confident and be open for encouraging messages and interact with them, insisting that you change your negative image of yourself.
- Repent of your negative thoughts and bring your hurts and fears at Christ's feet. He alone will wash you, change your thoughts, cleanse you from shame and guilt and restore you. Trust in the work of the Holy Spirit Who will guide you, teach you and help you to grow spiritually.
- Trust in God's forgiveness and never doubt it again, He will compensate for what you have lost and repay

for the days of shame and guilt. Stop scolding yourself!

Commit to Memory:

**"If we confess our sins,
he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins
and purify us from all unrighteousness."**

1 John 1:9

For Discussion:

- ▶ Compare between Peter and Judas Iscariot and how each of them responded to their sense of guilt. (Read Matthew 26-27)
- ▶ Think of how guilt affects the person spiritually and psychologically!
- ▶ How would you advise someone blaming himself constantly and struggling with self rejection?
- ▶ God's grace and acceptance of us is the best cure of our shame and guilt. Have you experienced that?

Here is the greatest support, pray:

**Lord Jesus,
I come to you just as I am,
I am so sorry for all the evil I have done,
I accept your forgiveness .
Help me please, oh Lord.**

Amen

In summary,

We can't change the past! Thinking of the past and wishing it was different will not become a reality, dwelling in it is insanity!

Let go of the past, it will never change. Lessons learned is all you can bring for the present, so hand the past mistakes to the Lord and He can even bring something good out of them.

Confess to the Lord all your weaknesses and failings and you may receive mercies when it comes to consequences and discipline, but you will receive forgiveness for "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness." 1 John 1:9

If you have enjoyed God's forgiveness stop whipping yourself. Forgive yourself because constant self blame and lack of self forgiveness only bring you many mental illnesses.

**"I will leave there a humble and lowly people,
who will come to me for help."**

Zephaniah 3:12 GN

(14)

Good Behavior

Many of the inmates desire to rebel and challenge the prison authority and refuse the reality of imprisonments. This may be due to sense of unfairness, harshness, and sense of loss and despair!

This condition doubles their mental stress and locks them up in an emotional prison in addition to their physical one. To those, I would like to say that we can obtain the “good behavior” achievement that spare us many troubles if we do the following:

1. 1- Submission and Commitment: Get rid of the boiling anger, it's only good for you to accept the authority and calmly subject to its rules. Know that changing reality is not possible by violent reaction and rebellious attitude. Besides, God knows if you're innocent. He understands your motives and surroundings and He forgives you if you're admitting guilt and accepting your sentence as fair, trust in the Lord.

2. Kindness towards your fellow inmates: **Give them the benefit of the doubt just as you wish to be done to you. Be friendly and not harsh or violent, they may have other difficulties like you or even worse. This nice behavior may be unusual or less common in prisons but is definitely effective in bringing gentleness out of people around you. This behavior will also be noticed by the prison authorities!**

Joseph was a great blessing for those around him in prison.

"But the Lord was with Joseph and showed him steadfast love and gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison." Genesis 39:21 ESV

Also, Paul and Silas were a blessing to their prison guard.

"But Paul shouted, "Don't harm yourself! We are all here!"" Acts 16:28

3. Live in the moment: Do not live regretting past mistakes whether your fault or someone else's. Leave the past behind, enough is to learn from it. Also, do not burden yourself with cares of the future, but live your day in calmness, submitting your life and future

to the care of our kind and loving God. He has forgiven the many like the Samaritan Woman, Zacchaeus, the woman caught in adultery and the thief on the cross. He is a loving God shed His blood for us so we may be cleaned from our sins. If you live with such mindset, you will be in peace and enjoy quite spirit and peace and free yourself from the boiling anger within you.

4. Commit your circumstances to God to bring something good out of them: Not only that God bring you maturity and increased endurance but more blessings than human eye can see, blessings behind the veil. **There may have been a danger that was avoided by the Lord bringing you here to this prison! He may have brought you to protect you from certain harm out there, not for your hurt.**

(15)

Call for Repentance

”Let the wicked forsake their ways and the unrighteous their thoughts. Let them turn to the Lord, and he will have mercy on them, and to our God, for he will freely pardon.” Isaiah 55:7

”They tell how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead—Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath.” 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10

You may feel shame as a prisoner for the accusation and for being inmate.

You are not less than anyone else for all of us before our Lord are guilty and sinful.

The only difference is that you have committed a sin that human law penalizes for and hence you’re in a human prison. All inmates of same human prison wear the same uniform till they finish their sentence then be released.

We, who are not in human prison have sinned and broke the heavenly laws. We are charged and found guilty and deserve an eternal prison in hell! It applies to all of us for "All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one." Romans 3:12.

Before God, we all wear the same uniform, the shameful uniform of sin! But if we repent and hide in the blood of Jesus, He will forgive us and "cloth us with garments of salvation and array us in a robe of His righteousness" Isaiah 61:10

He will remove our sins, guilty and shame and cloth us grace and dignity, He "will repay you for the years the locusts have eaten." Joel 2:25,

For the years lived in sin.

God is the one who aids you to return from your sins and enable you to repent." So then, even to Gentiles God has granted repentance that leads to life." Acts 11:18

But a man's responsibility is to seek with sincere heart's desire to repent, then God comes to his aide. "Restore me, and I will return, because you are the Lord my God." Jeremiah 31:18

(15) Call for Repentance

Repentance is changing our mindset and direction of life towards God, by judging our own self and deeds and returning to God.

Repentance is not mere confession of sin, the Pharaoh did just that and said, "I have sinned against the Lord your God and against you." Exodus 10:16, but he never sincerely repented!

Repentance does not mean just regretting the mistake, "When Judas, who had betrayed him, saw that Jesus was condemned, he was seized with remorse and returned the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and the elders. "I have sinned," he said, "for I have betrayed innocent blood." Matthew 27:3-4, Judas Regretted but never repented.

So, true repentance is not just admitting guilt of sin or regretting mistakes, but is changing mindset and direction of life returning to Christ and trusting that He forgive all our past on the account of His perfect work on the cross for us.

It's not just one time repentance of the past and that set, its a continuous life of repentance.

Even true believers need to judge themselves and their deeds and ask the Lord's help to correct their paths.

Repentance requires leaving and renouncing of sin, hating sin and not just confession. "Whoever conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes them will obtain mercy." Proverbs 28:13 ESV

If you confess your sin and in heart intend to return to it, you deceive yourself not God. God can not be deceived!

Repentance is not a temporary emotional reaction or just feeling sad or guilty but it is a commitment to change in life at the deepest level for it is a conscious decision we make at the level of conscious will.

Repentance is not an attempt to leave sin or decrease the number of falling onto sin. These are attempts to repent, but repentance is returning to the Lord which leads to change from within. This will result in the conviction "in order that sin might be shown to be sin" Romans 13:7, and that sin is so evil in the sight of God. This also results in changes in the heart so we may leave the life of sin, and sin's persuasions become repulsive to the changed believer.

Repentance is not just admitting of guilt in a crime or sin to evade the painful and bitter consequences or fear of God's revenge while the desire to repeat the offense is still there.

(15) Call for Repentance

You may still have the pleasure of committing such sins or comfort and gladness with those who do such things. You may see such sin as fun or revenge of others who may get hurt in the process and what hold you back is only the fear of consequences or fear of God's punishment. Now, would you call refrain from evil for such reasons repentance, my friend?

Repentance means deep realization of the depravity of sin which stands against God's holiness of Whom the Bible says, "You who are of purer eyes than to see evil and cannot look at wrong" Habakkuk 1:13 ESV and a willful decision to return to God with confidence in His mercy and forgiveness in spite of how deep in sins I may be.

Repentance requires conviction that what I'm doing wrong is sin and needs to stop. The Lord will not rid me of something I'm not convinced that it's wrong and accepted as biblically wrong! Some may accept "white lies" as not lies and some don't see "crude joking" (Ephesians 5:4) as wrong and consider that a sense of humor, but its a sin! There are many more examples of what the Bible describes as hateful to the Lord, and understanding that will help us hate those things then we would change.

Repentance demands hating evil for if a person loves sin, the Lord will not find a way to set him free from it.

First step then is to realize your sinful state, to refuse your sin and stop it.

Even if you do not declare that refusal of sin verbally, God knows your heart and will help set you free from.

Repentance also means that we condemn sin just as God does, even if we don't see it as wicked and if it's accepted by society at large.

Joseph was living in a place soaked with sin and defile but he didn't accept sin and declared, "How then could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God?"
Genesis 39:9

Repentance is leaving all what stumbles. To live the life of repentance we may have to leave behind some people, places with memories or fields of temptation.

In the sermon on the mount, Jesus clearly commanded us to avoid stumbling blocks, so we may not allow what hinders our relationship with the Lord no matter how precious or dear to us that may be.

Not every refrain from sin is repentance, some may refrain from sin for fear of consequences, fear of punishment or because it's not available. This is not repentance at all.

Fields of Repentance:

We should repent of all kinds of sin.

Yes there may be different weaknesses for different people which require special attention, carefulness and alertness, **but we ought to remember that the ship doesn't need more than one hole to sink! It takes a sin or a slight weakness to weaken the believer spiritually, he doesn't need to fall into many sins to drown spiritually.**

Hence, we shouldn't put our guards down regarding sins and all hints of sin.

Repentance of life or life of repentance?

Repentance of life is the time of life when I returned to the Lord and started a relationship with God as my Heavenly Father.

Life of repentance is a way of life where I rid myself from sin so it wouldn't hinder my fellowship with my Heavenly Father.

Word of Advice:

Every time you fall into sin and come before the Lord, confess your sin and denounce it, you are taking a step in the road of repentance. The divine aide will be there in solidarity with your desire to live a holy life according to His Will and you will receive strength for victory over sin and for life of freedom from its bondage.

Repentance then is change in the direction of one's heart, mind and will.

Apology and Repentance are different things

Apology is admission of guilt and asking for forgiveness for possibly seeking to minimize the consequences he might reap due to the wrongdoing.

Repentance is admission of guilt with deep sense of depravity of sin with a strong desire to not go back to such wrongdoing and seeking forgiveness and resolving all the negative consequences and bitterness on the one whom was wronged against.

Pray, that God may grant you repentance.

"So then, even to Gentiles God has granted repentance that leads to life." Acts 11:18

Pray this prayers,

"bring me back that I may be restored, for you are the Lord my God." Jeremiah 31:18 ESV

Now return back with all of your heart regretting and confess all of your sins, one after the other,...not collectively. Pray with the tax collector who said,

"God, have mercy on me, a sinner." Luke 18:13

(15) Call for Repentance

Pray that you have a new beginning, a new life filled with the changing power of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Pray that the Lord may grant you to hate sin, for many who left sin being set free and became intolerant of even the hint of sin or its mention.

Pray that you be able to stay away from people who may hinder your repentance and want to draw you back. Pray that after you get out of prison, you may stay away from places where you practiced evil applying Jesus's command, "If your hand or your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it away." Matthew 18:8.

It is obvious here that we don't cut it off literally but as if your foot is cut off and you don't go to such places, so don't go so you wouldn't stumble.

Someone may ask, how can I be away from people I was obligated to live with constantly and for many years?

If you can't be away physically from same place, then at least separate yourself behavior wise! Talk with them less, interact less and don't fellowship with those persons.

Make the relationship more formal in nature and not friendship or fellowship.

There is Hope

Remember Psalms , chapter one "Blessed is the one who does not walk in step with the wicked or stand in the way that sinners take or sit in the company of mockers, but whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and who meditates on his law day and night. That person is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither— whatever they do prospers..." Psalms 1:1-3

"On the day the Lord gives you relief from your suffering and turmoil and from the harsh labor forced on you.." Isaiah 14:3

Short story

The Great Trial

The events of this known story occurred in 1988 when a criminal committed a heinous crime by bombing an aircraft in Scotland killing 270 passengers were on board. This criminal was arrested, tried in Scotland and sentenced to 27 years in prison. After four and a half years of his prison sentence, the Scottish court released him and handed him to his country of citizenship. In the report of his release, it said (paraphrased) "Though we are committed to the fair sentence, we the court have learned that this man is in his late stage of prostate cancer hence we have decided to release him for health reason according to the law". Then he continued saying, paraphrased "**justice has been served but mercy is possible and this criminal will stand before a great court not in this world, and there he will receive what he deserves totally**". He was talking about standing before God, the Judge of all the earth.

There was a lot of commotion and argument from the law and religious standpoint in many parts of the world due to the heinous crime involved.

We are not discussing this crime here, dear friend from the law or politics standpoint and though most people wouldn't commit crimes at such caliber of evil but all will stand as sinners in the last day of judgement before God, the ultimate supreme fair judge.

In the last book of the Bible, Revelation we read: **"Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it... And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened... The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. Anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire."** Revelation 20:11-12, 15

Divine justice demands our death because of our sins, "For the wages of sin is death" Romans 6:23, and we "all have sinned", but mercy is possible. "God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us." Romans 5:8

"For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God." 1 Peter 3:18

And just as it was decided by the Scottish court that "justice has been served but mercy is possible", so it is that our Lord Jesus Christ went to the cross and faced

Short story "The Great Trial"

the divine justice and died on our behalf and hence, mercy became possible. So only based on Christ's redemption God is presenting you with a pardon of your sins! All what you need to do is to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and confess your sins and ask for forgiveness. Would you, my dear accept the pardon given to you by God and be covered by the blood of Christ so you may not face Him as a judge in the last dat?

"In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent. For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to everyone by raising him from the dead ."Acts 17:30-31

Summary

Sentences to summarize the contents of the book as in chapters' order.

1. In your abundance, you did not draw near the Lord so he allowed you this difficult time because he wants you well spiritually and wants to straighten your path.
2. There is a God who defends and vindicate the oppressed. Believing in that will help you not letting yourself psychologically hurt or negatively affected in your characters and behavior.
3. Everyone on this earth is lacking something. God in his wisdom allows this to build our characters and to recognize our needs for him. We will always have voids only God can fill.
4. Many people feel lonely while surrounded by friends and family while others in a solitary confinement are accompanied by God's presence.
5. For every difficulty an end, it has to be. Keep that hope before you for every day that goes by will bring us closer to abundant place with no restrictions.

Summary

6. God defends us in the consciousness of others and restore the picture that was distorted when we come to him and be changed.
7. Can a wicked evil person be a minister? Yes, by God's Grace as evidenced by the stories of the Samaritan woman, the woman caught in adultery and Saul of Tarsus. All ministers have some sort of past that they are not proud of but they have changed by God's Grace.

May you become a new story of God's Grace.

8. There is Hope, say it to yourself, that what's coming is better and the time of repay for what's lost is coming. This will help you cope with lacking opportunity to be there for a family occasion or with current illness, being scared awaiting the verdict or even facing death!

Death is not the end, it's a bridge to a happy ending.

9. You are precious even if you and others don't see that, for you're created into God's image and redeemed with the most precious price paid (Christ's blood).

You are uniquely made that even your finger prints have no like from Adam to last human on earth!

10. The best thing you should do when you're angry is to do nothing! Any thing you say or do out of anger

would likely be wrong. The word of God tells us "If a ruler's anger rises against you, do not leave your post; calmness can lay great offenses to rest." Ecclesiastes 10:4

11. "Do not take revenge" Romans 12:19. This wouldn't get your rights back and would complicate your life. When you forgive and leave room for God to work, He will restore what you've lost and bring the offender the consequences he deserves.
Your lack of forgiveness is a prison, don't lock yourself up in such prison of bitterness.
12. Let go of the past, it will never change or be erased. We can only learn from it and if we have received God's forgiveness, we should forgive ourselves too.
13. God may have brought you here to prison for your protection! You may have been facing danger out there, even danger of your own making by rash or wrongdoing!
Look for the bright side of difficult circumstances.
14. Repentance is possible and available to all. God comes to aid him who takes a step in the direction of change to help with change of the heart; views, thoughts and tendencies so that the person may hate sins he was once enslaved to.

Summary

15. The truthful word of God tells us that God's Grace has changed the adulterous like the Samaritan woman, the thieves like Onesimus, the money lovers like Matthew and Zacchaeus the tax collectors and sinners like Paul and all those we will meet in heaven! God's grace can change you too no matter what your condition is.

I will leave you room that you may write down some thoughts that may have made a difference after reading this book.

Your life will change and will get shaped by the decisions you make,..this may lead you to a new beginning.

◆ **Sentences or thoughts touched me from this book,"
There is Hope":**

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◆ **Decisions I've made:**

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Amen