

# GRACE

## Great Good News!

June 2004

He has put a **NEW SONG** in my mouth...many will see and will trust the Lord (Psalms 40:3).

An excerpt from a book entitled *Speechless* (Zondervan Publishing, 1999) affirms a song put in my heart to which I try to write the lyrics through each of these newsletters! This book was written by Grammy-award winner Steven Curtis Chapman based on being “rendered speechless by God’s grace, silenced by the vastness of God’s supply to meet every need.” This book testifies of God dancing with joy over us, and never frowning upon us (see *Zephaniah 3:17*). Here is the excerpt:

*For the first time in my life I understood the lyrics and heard the music of the gospel...I heard the music that invited me to the dance of God’s grace...I had no doubt, then or since, that Jesus welcomed me into His heart. Only grace can turn our experience of salvation from a doctrine we profess into a song that fills our entire lives with the melody of heaven.*

These words well describe my heart to teach precious people that they are totally welcomed into Jesus’ heart! Many do not know this truth. I wonder now if this is because of our initial focus of “inviting Jesus into my heart?” I wonder if that initial focus subtly tempts us to see ourselves as in the center, and not Jesus? I wonder if that initial focus tempts us to see the responsibility of salvation is on us rather than on God in His grace? I see now that the Bible never refers to anyone “inviting Jesus into my heart” in the sense that the person initiates salvation. The Bible refers to people *receiving, believing, and calling upon* the Lord for salvation, but never as a result of their invitation to Jesus, and always as a result of God’s invitation to us!

There are ten times more verses in the Bible that refer to *me being in Christ* compared to *Christ being in me*. I passionately embrace the amazing truth that Christ lives in and through me, but I only embrace that truth because of the freedom I first received through the truth of being totally accepted (totally welcome) *in Christ*. I am growing to see that nothing I do, good or bad, affects my identity in Christ and my relationship with the Father. This frees me from the bondage of focusing on my performance, and frees me to focus on the precious life of Christ always lovingly active in me. When a person knows Christ as life, this will never be a *license to sin*, but will always be a *liberty to live!* Following are just a few of the many many Scriptures that testify of God’s gracious initiative to invite and to draw us into the very life and liberty of Christ Himself.

*Jesus said, No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him (John 6:44).*

*Jesus said, Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest (Matthew 11:28).*

*It pleased God who called me through His grace to reveal His Son in me (Galatians 1:15-16).*

*God has delivered us from the power of darkness and has transferred us into the kingdom of His dear Son (Colossians 1:13).*

*God made us accepted in His Beloved Son (Ephesians 1:6).*

*Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ (2 Corinthians 2:14).*

*But of God you are in Christ Jesus who became for us redemption (1 Corinthians 1:30).*

*I press on that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me (Philippians 3:12).*

The truth of being welcomed into the life of Christ is the foundational truth that leads to healing, hope, joy, life, purpose, and \_\_\_\_\_ (*fill in whatever need you have right now*). Here is a recent testimony of a new friend from discipling, “My circumstances have not changed, but I see the chains were of my mind. There is a song in my heart. It has been such a long journey. I know it is not over, but I think it is one of freedom. You pointed me to Jesus, and my freedom is in Him.”

#### GRACE NOTE

Discipling is not giving someone a song sheet so he or she can sing along. Discipling is teaching that God has put a new song in his or her heart.

*Two touching testimonies are on the back ⇨*

## SING JESUS

*I will SING of Your strength...I will SING of Your love. You are my fortress, my refuge in times of trouble (Psalm 59:16).*

Following is a testimony that is so simple yet so powerful (the paradox of the gospel☺!). It reminds me of Joy's testimony of her and her daddy crying together as he put on her uncomfortable and confining back brace each day for a few years when she was a little girl. And it reminds me of those times when Joy feels good enough to spontaneously sing softly under her breath. It is those times everything else in the world stands still for me as I try to focus on her singing, because I know I am witnessing a miracle...Jesus living through Joy reminding me of His glorious presence and healing.

[*Note: Joy has struggled this past month with a resistant strain of yeast in her body that built up during her long use of antibiotics. An anti-fungal medicine appears to be helping, with some side affects. Joy continues to heal slowly, with not much stamina yet.*]

Here is the testimony of a father (Warren Martin of Wilderness Ministries) and his little two-year old daughter who was being medically tested due to seizures. This father often sang *Jesus Loves Me* to her. I hope you enjoy this as much as I do.

"We walked into the lab yet one more time. She looked at the technician holding the needle and began to cry. The technician rolled his eyes, called for reinforcements, and three of them began closing in on us. The technician said I should let them handle this. I said, *No way! I will hold my daughter. Just give me a second.* They stopped their advance momentarily."

"I reminded my daughter that we had to do this so she could get better. I talked to her a minute. I tried so hard to explain it to her. How could she ever understand? Finally, I said, *Honey, we have to do this.* She looked at the technician and held out her little chubby arm. Then she turned away and looked at me. With tears in her eyes, she asked, *Sing Jesus?*"

"It was all I could do to hold myself together. I said, *Yes, dear. We'll sing Jesus.* We sang *Jesus Loves Me* as we cried together. Even the technician looked like he was about to cry. My little girl did not move once the whole time he was poking her."

"Afterwards, I was trying to figure out how she could understand. The Lord showed me that she didn't understand. She just trusted me. I said it had to be done, and she trusted me. She turned away from her pain, and had faith that her daddy knew what was best. My little girl taught me a profound lesson that day. She gave the greatest two-word sermon I have ever heard: *Sing Jesus?*"

"Are you in pain? Are you going through a difficult time in your life? Maybe you, and I, should take a moment to turn away from our pain, look to our Heavenly Father, and just *sing Jesus*. Maybe we need to trust Him and have faith that *Jesus loves me, this I know...we are weak, but He is strong. Yes, Jesus loves me!* Jesus desires to live through you and be your strength in those hard times."

Take a moment right now to [sing Jesus](#), not just about Jesus. Maybe just start my humming any tune that brings you some comfort. Jesus will live through you and be your strength as you as you realize Him to be the new song of your heart.

## CRY JESUS

*Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep (Romans 12:15).*

A friend sent me this testimony of a four year old little boy. My goodness what sermons little children preach! We can organize our knowledge all we want, but unless we become as a little child, we will miss the simplicity that is in Christ.

The little boy's elderly neighbor had just lost his wife. When the child saw the man cry, the little boy went over to the man's yard and climbed on top of the man's lap and just sat there. When the boy's mother asked him what he'd said to the neighbor, the little boy said, "Nothing. I just helped him cry."

I want to be a little boy with a compassion that identifies with others...not to have all the right answers...even this newsletter is not intended to convince others that I have right answers...this newsletter is written out of a compassion to share my pilgrimage and grappling with truths that I hope identifies with others. Oh how Jesus identified with, and for, me and you!

*GraceLife Conference - Simpsonville, SC*

*Hosted by Christ Life Ministries*

*Friday (6:30 pm-9:30 pm) July 9 and Saturday (9:00 am-5:00 pm) July 10*