

# GRACE

Great Good News!

September 2003

## The Purpose of this Newsletter

Here is a quote that helps describe why I do this newsletter: *The way to look at the Scriptures (in this newsletter) and understand the thoughts of God is to see in them (this newsletter) the face of love, shining through and through; not ideas, nor doctrines, but JESUS HIMSELF as the Life and sustaining PRESENCE of all of our Life.* – A. B. Simpson (1885)

You shall show me the path of life; in Your PRESENCE is fullness of joy. Psalm 16:11

I am growing to realize the PRESENCE OF CHRIST as the source of true hope and healing. His presence through people encouraging Joy to keep persevering...His presence healing a person's painful memories of abuse as a young child...His presence bringing hope to a single parent...His presence ministering safety to a person who has grown up in fear...His presence ministering through a young lady with an artificial leg serving with Joni & Friends...His presence ministering through another young lady who teaches karate. Following are just a few Scripture verses.

### FAITH – LIVING IN HIS PRESENCE

*I will fear no evil, for You are with me. Psalm 23:4*

*Come and let us walk in the light (presence) of the Lord. Isaiah 2:5*

*My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest. Exodus 33:14*

*He called you out of darkness into His marvelous light (His glorious presence). 1 Peter 2:9*

*I am the light of the world. He who follows Me (abides in My presence) shall not walk in darkness. John 8:12*

*As we behold...the glory (presence) of the Lord, we are being transformed into the same image (2 Corinthians 3:18).*

Does this sound too mystical? Too religious? Too deep? Too uncomfortable? That's indeed the temptation Satan as the tempter wants us to believe. Paul recognized this temptation when he *"feared, that how the serpent (Satan) deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ"* (2 Corinthians 11:3).

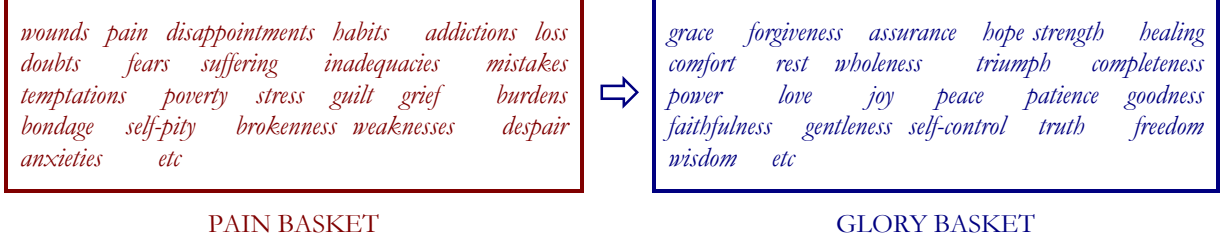
Once my young nephew Davis I were playing with a toy airplane, which soon got stuck high in a tree. We threw all kinds of balls to knock it down...to no avail. Davis then tried to climb the tree, but couldn't. So this six-foot tall little boy climbed the tree for Davis...and when I shook the plane free from the tree limb, you would have thought we had won an Olympic event! I really enjoyed being with him. On the way home, I was given a special prayer, "Lord, I pray Davis saw Jesus in me, even in the tree." A most simple, but most powerful prayer.

People say the presence of the king of England was never more royal than when he walked the war-torn streets of London in plain clothes. How much more glorious is Jesus, the King of Kings, as He walks the sin-torn streets of the world today through you and me!

### FAITH – LIVING IN THE PRESENT

*"The just shall live by faith" (Hebrews 10:38).* Faith is not a feeling you are required to stir up. Faith is not a static attendance to a set of theological beliefs. Faith is not something you get out and dust off when you want something from God. Faith is a way of living. Until it becomes a way of living, it will not be effective. Faith is obeying (responding to) the present-tense voice of the Father. Faith is not believing something; faith is believing Someone (the living Christ). [Jennifer Kennedy Dean, *Power Praying* (Mukilteo, WA: Wine Press Publishing, 1997), 74 (parentheses added by Gregg).]

An article by Scott Wolfe really ministered to me this month. Scott directs InYou Ministries in Spartanburg, SC, a ministry like Christ Life Ministries (see [www.InYou.org](http://www.InYou.org)). The topic is about two baskets that all Christians have. Following is my personalization of the truths in Scott's article that I am honored to share with you.



We all have two baskets...a Pain Basket and a Glory Basket. The contents of your Pain Basket are from events from the past and in the future, which can be either factual or imaginary. When you focus only on your Pain Basket, you lose the awareness of the PRESENCE OF CHRIST and you will feel overwhelmed and hopeless, full of self-pity and despair.

You can even lose the awareness of the PRESENCE OF CHRIST when you focus only on the Glory Basket. Scott notes that you can try to disguise your pains by wearing a mask of “faith” claiming everything is ok when it really isn’t, which only numbs the present pain only for a while. And in doing so, you actually create a false Glory Basket, with fruit that is self-made...lifeless, tasteless, and aroma-less. This type of fruit may appear good at first, but it really isn’t.

You cannot pour out your Pain Basket, but Jesus can fill your Glory Basket from your Pain Basket when you are willing to acknowledge your pains of the past and anxieties of the future, and entrust them all to HIS PRESENT PRESENCE. Victory (refer to the Glory Basket) does not occur by going back into your past to figure out what went wrong, so that you can now can figure out how to do right. And victory does not occur when you consume most of your present trying to obtain a false security (e.g., financial security) for the future.

Christ wants you to entrust your past pains into His healing presence and your future anxieties into His present provisions. Jesus did not say He is the Great I WAS or the Great I WILL BE...He said He is the Great I AM, meaning the “ever-present One” to meet your every present need.

So, your true Glory Basket is a Victory Basket filled with fruit of the life of Jesus, the Victor, which Galatians 5:22 calls the “fruit of the Spirit.” And it can be filled so abundantly that it nourishes not only you and but others around you.

**TRUTH IS FOR REAL LIFE, NOT THEORETICAL LIFE**

Around the time I was completing this newsletter, a car ran into my truck. Joy and I and the other driver are just fine, but my truck is damaged. I am soooooo grateful that no one got hurt. At the time, I became overwhelmed with traumatic emotions thinking about what could have happened to Joy. Similar to my truck, my emotions went into a tailspin...I was confronted in a profound way of my total dependence on Christ moment by moment. What little sleep I got that night, I cried myself to sleep yearning for the PRESENCE OF CHRIST and claiming the truth that HE is my life, even when I was perplexed and emotionally hard-pressed. I was tempted to want to go back and empty that part of my Pain Basket...to pretend it never happened. However, I was compelled to acknowledge the reality of the pain while placing my faith (not feelings) in the PRESENCE OF CHRIST. And He is so faithful to be ever present. My heart is to be empathetic toward hurting people, and to offer them true hope and healing. Through this situation, I experienced an emotional pain that only the PRESENCE OF CHRIST can heal, and I am now even more empathetic of the deep pains people can have and the healing for which they yearn.

*Note: Although Joy doesn't sleep consistently well yet and stays pretty tired most of the time, she continues to slowly progress. She is really enjoying physical therapy in Hendersomville by a special lady with a back condition similar to Joy's.*

Scott Wolfe well notes the transformation of the Pain Basket (PB) into the Glory Basket (GB) in 2 Corinthians 4:7-10: “But we have this treasure (GB) in earthen vessels (PB), that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us (GB). We are hard-pressed on every side (PB), yet not crushed (GB); we are perplexed (PB), but not in despair (GB); persecuted (PB), but not forsaken (GB); struck down (PB), but not destroyed (GB) – always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus Christ (PB), that the (present) life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body (GB).”

*Next GraceLife Conference October 24-25, 2003 Simpsonville, SC*