

Week of 2/05/06

We continue to thank the Lord for His faithfulness and goodness to this Ministry. Our “2nd Thief Family” continues to grow and many are joining with us via the **Online Bible Study** that is being taught by Larry Gusman. Not only are they participating in the Online Study, but there have been *two* separate groups requesting Larry lead a Bible study *in person*. When people take the time to see what God has revealed about Himself in His Word and discover **His love** for them it brings a **great joy and peace** that is found nowhere else.

Prison Fellowship Ministries has been in touch with us. We hope to sponsor at least twenty needy children in the Northern VA Area this upcoming Christmas. Pray about **your part** and what you can do to demonstrate the Love of God to these kids. We will revisit the details of this outreach as the Christmas Season draws closer. If you want more information now contact us at preacher@2ndthief.org and we will gladly provide it

WPER 89.9 FM has been a great encouragement to this Ministry. They have been making their listeners aware of the Online Bible Study. Our own Tony Gooden was out riding his motorcycle enjoying the life God has given him and he heard one of WPER’s announcements. They are a true blessing to the Christian Community in this area and I would urge you to tune them in and enjoy some **“positive, encouraging radio.”** They are a tremendous resource in providing information on upcoming Christian concerts and other events for this region of Virginia.

Speaking of Tony Gooden, we will be showcasing a poem he wrote entitled **“The Gift of Love”** in one of the upcoming “Bylines.” It is a heartfelt poem he wrote about the Lord that was published earlier in a book on a compilation of poems entitled “Cosmic Brownies.” He and his family are preparing to **adopt another child from China**. The administrative process will begin shortly and we will chronicle the developments here in an effort to assist those who might also be lead to adopt a child from overseas.

Friends of the Ministry continue to contact us to let us know how excited they are to join us at the upcoming events that are planned for this year. As always we appreciate the encouraging words and tangible support that enables us to continue sharing the **love, joy, peace and freedom that comes with a relationship with God through Jesus**.

A wonderful sister in the Lord who also is an investigator with a rural Sheriff’s Office here in VA contacted me last week. She was very excited to share how the Lord moved in a very tangible way in one of her cases. I will not go into too much detail as it is an active investigation. She related that she is investigating a **violent robbery** that occurred in her jurisdiction. Bodily injury was suffered by the victims in this incident. They also were threatened with further violence to their persons or death if they contacted the police.

Obviously they did report this incident to the authorities. While my Godly colleague was taking the report she had an opportunity to **encourage** one of the victims about staying strong in her faith in God. They were concerned about why this happened and about the additional threats. This investigator continued to encourage these subjects to stay strong in their **faith and trust** God to handle it. They would not consider it at first, but she persisted.

Cutting to the chase, a suspect was developed immediately that had a violent criminal history and was not known for cooperating with law enforcement. And in what can only be considered the **Hand of God**, this same hardened suspect made a spontaneous confession to a probation officer shortly thereafter. Again, this was totally out of character for the suspect. The case would not have been able to move forward without his confession. The investigator felt lead to encourage the victims to maintain their faith. Because of her powerful witness God was able to **intervene mightily** in the circumstances.

In 1 Timothy 1:8 we read, “**Do not be ashamed to testify about our Lord.**”

The beauty of this incident is that God was able to move in the circumstances because of the faith demonstrated at first by the investigator and then by the victims themselves. While we all may not run into victims of violent crimes on a daily basis we all run into people who need encouragement in the Lord.

In Hebrews 10:24-25 it states clearly, “**Let's see how inventive we can be in encouraging love and helping out, not avoiding worshiping together as some do but spurring each other on, especially as we see the big Day approaching.**” The Message

This investigator lived out this scripture and because of it she received the promise of God's intervention in the circumstances of her life.

Further down in chapter 10 of Hebrews starting at verse 35 we are gently reminded, “**Do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded. You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised. For in just a very little while, 'He who is coming will come and will not delay. But my righteous one will live by faith.'**” The Message

In the preceding incident we talked of the suspect that operated in fear of the law (in spite of his disobedience). Maybe he confessed knowing that “the law” was hot on his heels and he hoped to be rewarded with a more lenient sentence. Certainly had he had a love for God (and His children) he would not have committed a crime. We can take that same thought process and examine our own walk with the Lord.

“There are three reasons why men refraining from sinning: fear of punishment, hope of reward, and love of virtue. Although they aim at the same goal, namely to avoid sin, they are as different as a servant, a knight, and a king's son. Yet he who fears punishment has the beginning of virtue,

he who hopes for reward has still more, and he who truly loves it has it all. But if fear should develop into hope, and hope into love, the servant will be transformed into a knight, and the knight into a king's son." — Fulbert of Chartres

And like was mentioned earlier in Hebrews 10:24 it is the desire of this Ministry – to see **how inventive we can be in encouraging** (your) love for our Heavenly Father. With that in mind (and instead of you reading a few more pages) we have a treat for you this week. I am including a link to preview a short video (4 minutes and 14 seconds) entitled "Concrete Jesus" featuring the song "Give Me Jesus" performed by Fernando Ortega (we purchased a video we loved it so much). So get that cup of coffee (or green tea), sit back and let God's Love for you fill your heart.

Follow this link to preview "Concrete Jesus"

http://www.sermonspice.com/catalog/product_info.php?format_selected=wmv&length_selected=long&play=1&products_id=51

Godspeed.

Preacher

2ND THIEF™