



Comforting Hearts Ministries: *The Heart Warmer*

September 2011

What We Believe:

We Believe that God is real and personally involved in our lives. He hears and answers all our prayers.

We Believe that Jesus is a literal person that is alive today and coming back to earth. Also Jesus "The Christ" is God's Son and God Himself, 100% God and 100% man at the same time. Something only God can do or even understand.

We Believe that after Jesus ascended into Heaven He sent His Holy Spirit to be our comforter and lead us to a personal relationship with Himself.

We Believe that God is *One* in substance displayed in 3 distinct personalities: *The Father, The Son, and The Holy Spirit.*

We Believe that all sin is the same in the eyes of God. Additionally that the Bible makes no provision for levels of sin, it says that "...All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."

We Believe that salvation is *only* achieved through truly believing that Jesus died on the cross to pay for the ultimate consequences of our sins. Literally Hell, total separation from the love and comfort of God. And that when you pray the prayer of salvation it is not a "*magical spell*" but a conformation to God of your belief and acceptance of His Son, i.e.: "believe and be saved."

We Believe in the doctrine of Comfort. That God comforts us in all our distress so that we are responsible to bring to other hearts the same comfort we ourselves have received from God.

Can God Love Someone Like Me?

By Penny Mac Iver

This is a question that has come up a lot lately. So many of us feel we have messed up our lives with no way out, and no turning back. We have hurt those we love, although we never meant to. Some of us have lost our homes and families over wrong choices we've made. Some of us have never really been comfortable in our own skin, so to speak. We never really found the peace that so many people talk about. Our lives have always seemed out of kilter in some way, always feeling like we were a failure at what we did in our lives. Sometimes we think that even God cannot love or forgive us for the things we have done.

But God loves you in spite of who you are and what you have done. You have no secrets from Him. He knows everything in your past and in your future. He doesn't grade us or keep a record of wrongs; he doesn't expect us to be perfect because He knows we can't be. Never be ashamed of who you are. God is not ashamed of you. God made you unique. He knows every hair on your head, and every word you will speak before you speak it.

Never give up or consider yourself a loser because God defeated the grave and that means anything that we are going through is nothing to Him. On His team we are men and women who preserve through all trials and difficulties. We hold our heads high, and strive to be like our King. And if we slip and fall, we pick ourselves up and press on towards the prize of heaven!

One of my favorite songs is called, *The Warrior Is A Child*. The chorus goes like this..

They don't know that I go running home when I fall down
They don't know Who picks me up when no one is around
I drop my sword and cry for just a while 'cause deep inside this armor, the warrior is a child

Deep inside us, where all the pain lives, where we constantly tell ourselves we're no good and we don't matter to anyone, the place where we silently cry-- God is there. He is there to comfort us, there to hold us as we cry, there to show us that we matter. Embrace the fact that you matter and you are loved. You might not be able to feel God's touch, but He is there. Cry out to Him in your moments of deepest, darkest despair. He is only a prayer away.



The Fear of Forgiveness

by Rose Colón

“Forgive my husband?” my counselee exclaimed, “He doesn’t deserve to be forgiven!” Truly, this woman had been sinned against over and over again by her husband. In fact, he had been visiting prostitutes, viewing pornography, going to strip clubs and massage parlors the entire time they were married. When she came to Pure Life Ministries for help, I will never forget her face as she walked into my office. Beaten down and hardened by all the years of sin, she had no joy, no hope, and no light in her eyes. As she shared her story with me, my heart broke. I couldn’t hold back the tears hearing what this woman had suffered through for many years. She was at the end of her rope and desperately looking for help, not for her marriage but for herself. She knew she was in a terrible place spiritually but felt trapped, like there was no way out. I can recall her desperation as she asked, “What do I need to do to get my joy back?” As we began that first counseling session, she had acknowledged she had allowed a stronghold of bitterness to take control of her spirit. She was full of resentment and had a deep seated hatred towards her spouse for stomping on her heart the way he had over the past 20 years. In fact, prior to her husband enrolling in our Residential Program, he had been out of their home for 3 years at her request. “Where do we go from here?” I thought. I began to probe. One question did cause a spark, “Do you believe you have truly forgiven your husband?” Her outburst was certain and revealing, “He doesn’t deserve to be forgiven!” This issue of forgiveness brings many wives and many marriages to a major crossroads. A wife that has been on the receiving end of her husband’s sexual sin is afraid of taking this step. To forgive means to release and to release means to act as if it never happened, to become vulnerable again to someone who has hurt her over and over again. To make matters worse, many of the husbands who come through our residential counseling program demand forgiveness and mercy from their wives without appreciating all the hurt, pain and rejection their wives has had to endure while they were indulging in their sin. Little do these men know, this attitude reveals a lack of brokenness in their hearts for their sin, and makes it even more difficult for their wives. My response to my counselee was immediate, “Do any of us deserve to be forgiven, especially when we see what Jesus has done for us at the Cross?” Her head fell. I knew the Holy Spirit was at work. The fact is, Jesus was willing to be “vulnerable” for you and for me “when we were enemies (Romans 5:10),” willing to die a horrible death on the Cross. It was on the Cross that Jesus gave us a perfect picture of true agape love, a love that “suffers long and is kind,” a love that “does not seek its own,” a love that “bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things,” a love that “never fails” (1Corinthian 13:4-8).

The Fear of Forgiveness

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He asks us to love in this same way, to be willing to lay down at the foot of the Cross all of our hurts, pain, disappointments, rejections, griefs and sorrows - knowing that the One we are laying them down to has experienced all that we have faced. He asks us to surrender the fears that keep us from loving in this way. I remember this wife was quiet for about ten minutes as she pondered what Jesus had done for her. I prayed silently, "Lord help her" as I didn't know what else to do. After some time she lifted her head and said, "I know that I have been forgiven much by my Savior." Little did I know, in her time of silence, God was showing her the tremendous debt she owed Him and how He had wiped it all away in an instant. She knew she didn't deserve such mercy from such a loving Savior that had done no wrong. It was at that moment she had made a decision, "I will release this debt my husband owes me even though he doesn't deserve it. I know in my heart, it is the right thing to do." I sat there silently, praising the Lord for doing in her heart what only He could do. From that moment on, I could see, little by little, the light of God shining through her eyes. Her countenance began to change each time she visited her husband in our Residential Program. It was as if she literally went from darkness into light. A genuine joy radiated from her smile each time she came to visit her spouse. My heart was blessed to see God at work in her life and in her marriage. She had allowed herself to become a prisoner to fear of forgiveness, fear of letting her husband get off scot-free, fear of being hurt again. It had stolen her joy. It had stolen her peace. Yes, she had been sinned against, but the only way out of her prison of fear was to forgive, to give out what Christ had so freely given her. "For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind" (2 Timothy 1:7). At the end of her husband's program, God had done such a work in her heart, that she allowed her husband to move back home. I knew His work was real based on the fruit I was seeing in her life. It is clear to me today that it all began with her decision to surrender to forgiveness. Beloved, we don't realize what we forfeit in the Lord when we remain captive to unforgiveness. Many times we hold onto things because we believe a spouse, a parent, a children or a friend doesn't deserve to be forgiven. What I have seen in the years of counseling at PLM is that laying this down by surrendering to forgiveness opens up the way to true joy, peace and happiness. I encourage anyone struggling in this area to meditate over Isaiah 53, Psalm 22 and Psalm 103. Ponder Matthew 18:22-35, The Parable of the Unjust Servant. Ask the Holy Spirit to open your heart to the reality of what Christ did for you on the Cross. Seek Him for the grace to walk in that same mercy toward the one who sinned against you. I believe you will find again the "joy of your salvation." "For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls" (Hebrews 12:3).

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Sneeze

They walked in tandem, each of the ninety-two students filling into the already crowded auditorium. With their rich maroon gowns flowing and the traditional caps, they looked almost as grown up as they felt. Dads swallowed hard behind broad smiles, and Moms freely brushed away tears. This class would NOT pray during the commencements, not by choice, but because of a recent court ruling prohibiting it. The principal and several students were careful to stay within the guidelines allowed by the ruling. They gave inspirational and challenging speeches, but no one mentioned divine guidance and no one asked for blessings on the graduates or their families. The speeches were nice, but they were routine until the final speech received a standing ovation. A solitary student walked proudly to the microphone. He stood still and silent for just a moment, and then, it happened. All 92 students, every single one of them, suddenly SNEEZED !!!! The student on stage simply looked at the audience and said,

'GOD BLESS YOU'

And he walked off the stage...The audience exploded into applause. This graduating class had found a unique way to invoke God's blessing on their future with or without the court's approval. Isn't this a wonderful story? Pass it on to all your friends..... and..

GOD BLESS YOU!!!!



Corner Blog

By Rev. John C. Mac Iver

Dear Hearts,

As most of you know I struggle with depression and shame, I have been this way most of my life then recently A wise and dear friend told me that God had told him to tell me (if that makes sense) to take my eyes off of John C. Mac Iver and put my eyes on Jesus. Now at first I dismissed this as another well meaning Christian trying to solve my problems. But then I tried it. When I would think to myself I want to die, I would say, No I want to live for Jesus. This made me feel a little better.

As I came to believe it, my circumstances didn't change but my perspective did. God has been very present and good in my life over the past couple of months. My relationship with Him has been tremendous and yet Satan has wanted to have me back in the pit where I was. Hurricane Irene put a hole in my roof, and we praised the Lord, I broke the upstairs toilet, and we praised the Lord. Now I have been scheduled for a polygraph test this month. I am nervous but we all have to go through it so I will simply take the advice that my Dad gave me in: 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18: *Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.*

I'm sure a lot of my new perspective comes from a book I have been reading titled, "The Pursuit of God" by A. W. Tozer. And I think what I am getting out of it can be summed up in this quote from chapter 8 which reads: *Let the seeking man reach a place where life and lips join to say continually "Be thou exalted," and a thousand minor problems will be solved at once. His Christian life ceases to be the complicated thing it had been before and becomes the very essence of simplicity. By the exercise of his will he has set his course, and on that course he will stay as if guided by an automatic pilot. If blown off course for a moment by some adverse wind, he will surely return again as by a secret bent of the soul."*

Friends I know this seems simple but I can assure you, at least for now, it is changing me. Try it for yourself!

Well till next time, "Walk with the King today and be a blessing!"



DON'T KILL THE MESSENGER'S MESSAGE:
"YOU NEED TO FORGIVE YOURSELF!"

By: Dan Vanderboegh

"When are you going to forgive YOURSELF, so you can receive God's forgiveness?" This was the message I kept trying to kill ... to my own hurt.

Greek poet Homer, in his epic poem "The Iliad", told of a messenger who delivered a message from Troy to the authorities. The authorities did not like the message and then stoned the messenger to death for bringing such a message. Our Bible tells us about God sending His Son to deliver a message to the people of Israel. But the religious authorities did not like it and had Jesus nailed to the cross. Today we do not kill the messenger, but judge the message according to how we *like* or *dislike* the messenger. I'm just as guilty of that as the next man, but luckily I had one messenger that persisted in me getting the message. I was raised going to Sunday school and church every Sunday, even though my parents would only go for Christmas and Easter. They didn't need to know the Lord any better one would guess; us kids *did*. And so I had heard so many times about us forgiving others and God's forgiveness of our sins. I tried to live by the Golden Rule even when it seemed tough. In 1990 I came to prison for the first time. All through the legal proceedings I was in shock. I took full responsibility for what I did and pled guilty. I was told by my attorney and a probation officer that I would get two years probation as my sentence. But the judge gave me 5 – 10 years in prison, so I arrived at prison feeling the lowest I think I have ever been. I felt no hope for me. My wife and family had stood by me and tried to comfort me.

They had forgiven me and even my victim forgave me. I appreciated it but something seemed to be missing. They would remind me that if I had asked God for forgiveness, He would surely forgive me. I had already asked God for His forgiveness, but still something was missing. I got involved with the prison church, *Prison Fellowship*, Christian fellowship, Bible studies, and a prayer group. Each one of these reaffirmed what I already knew about God's forgiveness of our sins. But no matter how much I prayed to God, something was still missing and God seemed reluctant to show me what it was. I could not seem to get above the depressed state I was in. We had one member in our Christian community that seemed to be someone you should be able to turn to for God's word and comfort. Skippy was called a Bible thumper. He could quote just about any verse in the Bible, and loved talking to people about the Lord. But Skippy would leave his Bible and God in prison when he would be released. This was his fourth or fifth time in prison. Also, if you wanted something that was considered to be contraband, you would go see Skippy, listen to him preach about why you should *not* want what you are looking for, and then you waited for someone else to contact you with what you were looking for. So many of us did not want to be associated with Skippy. One day when I was especially feeling down, Skippy caught up with me on the back 40. He confronted me about how I looked so down and preached to me about God and His love for us. Not thinking too highly of the messenger, I let most of his words go in one ear and out the other. What he had to say had no importance to me and I already knew about God's forgiveness and believed it. But Skippy said something that no one else had said to me: "When are you going to forgive **YOURSELF** so you can accept God's forgiveness?" I did not want to think about what he told me but it kept haunting me. I kept coming up with excuses why I shouldn't pay any attention to him, but his words would not go away. When Skippy would see me he always made a point to ask me if I had forgiven myself yet. It got to the point where all I had to do was see him and I would automatically ask myself that question. God had sent Skippy to me with a message and no matter how badly I wanted to ignore the message, it still hung there waiting for me to act on it. I finally took it to the prison chaplain. He asked me if I loved myself. No – to be honest, I didn't even **LIKE** myself, because of what I had done. So he asked, "How can you love your neighbor if you don't love yourself? Don't you take any pride or honor in yourself?"

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GOD LIVES UNDER THE BED

I envy Kevin. My brother, Kevin, thinks God lives under his bed. At least that's what I heard him say one night. He was praying out loud in his dark bedroom, and I stopped to listen, 'Are you there, God?' he said. 'Where are you? Oh, I see. Under the bed...' I giggled softly and tiptoed off to my own room. Kevin's unique perspectives are often a source of amusement. But that night something else lingered long after the humor. I realized for the first time the very different world Kevin lives in. He was born 30 years ago, mentally disabled as a result of difficulties during labor. Apart from his size (he's 6-foot-2), there are few ways in which he is an adult. He reasons and communicates with the capabilities of a 7-year-old, and he always will. He will probably always believe that God lives under his bed, that Santa Claus is the one who fills the space under our tree every Christmas and that airplanes stay up in the sky because angels carry them. I remember wondering if Kevin realizes he is different. Is he ever dissatisfied with his monotonous life? Up before dawn each day, off to work at a workshop for the disabled, home to walk our cocker spaniel, return to eat his favorite macaroni-and-cheese for dinner, and later to bed. The only variation in the entire scheme is laundry, when he hovers excitedly over the washing machine like a mother with her newborn child. He does not seem dissatisfied. He lopes out to the bus every morning at 7:05, eager for a day of simple work. He wrings his hands excitedly while the water boils on the stove before dinner, and he stays up late twice a week to gather our dirty laundry for his next day's laundry chores. And Saturdays - oh, the bliss of Saturdays! That's the day my Dad takes Kevin to the airport to have a soft drink, watch the planes land, and speculate loudly on the destination of each passenger inside. 'That one's goin' to Chi-car-go!' Kevin shouts as he claps his hands. His anticipation is so great he can hardly sleep on Friday nights. And so goes his world of daily rituals and weekend field trips. He doesn't know what it means to be discontent. His life is simple. He will never know the entanglements of wealth of power, and he does not care what brand of clothing he wears or what kind of food he eats. His needs have always been met, and he never worries that one day they may not be. His hands are diligent. Kevin is never as happy as when he is working. When he unloads the dishwasher or vacuums the carpet, his heart is completely in it. He does not shrink from a job when it is begun, and he does not leave a job until it is finished. But when his tasks are done, Kevin knows how to relax. He is not obsessed with his work or the work of others. His heart is pure. He still believes everyone tells the truth, promises must be kept, and when you are wrong, you apologize instead of argue. Free from pride and unconcerned with appearances, Kevin is not afraid to cry when he is hurt, angry or sorry. He is always transparent, always sincere. And he trusts God. Not confined by intellectual reasoning, when he comes to Christ, he comes as a child. Kevin seems to know God - to really be friends with Him in a way that is difficult for an 'educated' person to grasp. God seems like his closest companion. In my moments of doubt and frustrations with my Christianity, I envy the security Kevin has in his simple faith. It is then that I am most willing to admit that he has some divine knowledge that rises above my mortal questions. It is then I realize that perhaps he is not the one with the handicap. I am. My obligations, my fear, my pride, my circumstances—they all become disabilities when I do not trust them to God's care. Who knows if Kevin comprehends things I can never learn? After all, he has spent his whole life in that kind of innocence, praying after dark and soaking up the goodness and love of God. And one day, when the mysteries of heaven are opened, and we are all amazed at how close God really is to our hearts, I'll realize that God heard the simple prayers of a boy who believed that God lived under his bed. Kevin won't be surprised at all!



SHALL WE HIRE A MONUMENT ENGRAVER TO GO TO ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY AND ADD THE MISSING WORDS? THIS IS A MESSAGE FROM AN APPALLED OBSERVER:

Today I went to visit the new World War II Memorial in Washington , DC . I got an unexpected history lesson. Because I'm a baby boomer, I was one of the youngest in the crowd. Most were the age of my parents, Veterans of 'the greatest war,' with their families. It was a beautiful day, and people were smiling and happy to be there. Hundreds of us milled around the memorial, reading the inspiring words of Eisenhower and Truman that are engraved there. On the Pacific side of the memorial, a group of us gathered to read the words President Roosevelt used to announce the attack on Pearl Harbor: 'Yesterday, December 7, 1941--a date which will live in infamy--the United States of America was suddenly and deliberately attacked.' One elderly woman read the words aloud: 'With confidence in our armed forces, with the abounding determination of our people, we will gain the inevitable triumph.' But as she read, she was suddenly turned angry. 'Wait a minute,' she said, 'they left out the end of the quote. They left out the most important part. Roosevelt ended the message with **'so help us God.'** Her husband said, 'You are probably right. We're not supposed to say things like that now.' 'I know I'm right,' she insisted. 'I remember the speech.' The two looked dismayed, shook their heads sadly and walked away. Listening to their conversation, I thought to myself, 'Well, it has been over 50 years; she's probably forgotten.' But she had not forgotten. **She was right..** I went home and pulled out the book my book club is reading --- 'Flags of Our Fathers' by James Bradley. It's all about the battle at Iwo Jima . I haven't gotten too far in the book. It's tough to read because it's a graphic description of the WWII battles in the Pacific. But right there it was on page 58. Roosevelt 's speech to the nation ends in **'so help us God.'** The people who edited out that part of the speech when they engraved it on the memorial could have fooled me. I was born after the war! But they couldn't fool the people who were there. Roosevelt 's words are engraved on their hearts.

Now I ask: **'WHO GAVE THEM THE RIGHT TO CHANGE THE WORDS OF HISTORY??????????'**

Send this around to your friends. People need to know before everyone forgets.

People today are trying to change the history of America by leaving God out of it, but the truth is, God has been a part of this nation, since the beginning. He still wants to be...and He always will be!

If not, May God Forgive You!



**DON'T KILL THE MESSENGER'S MESSAGE:
"YOU NEED TO FORGIVE YOURSELF!"**

Now how could I have any pride or honor? I felt I was the lowest thing on Earth. Then he sent me to all places, Genesis 4:3-4. Abel offered the Lord a fattened lamb without spot or blemish. Abel gave his best most precious lamb, one he could take pride and honor in as he gave it to God. Cain gave God some grain. It does not say it was the *best* grain of the crop especially selected to give to God. Maybe it was left over from last year's harvest. But it was not something that Cain or God could take pride in. If we are to sacrifice our self-will (ourselves) to God, what kind of sacrifice would we want to be? I choose to be one that I can be proud of and that means forgiving myself. I found that God had forgiven me for what I had done long ago when I asked him the first time. What He had **NOT** forgiven me of was my beating up on and not forgiving myself. That was what was missing all the time! Forgiving myself was not easy to do, but well worth while! I feel a lot better about myself and my relationship with God **now**! In 2008 I was asked to give a testimony to my *Keryx Group*. I was all set to give the one I usually use when God spoke to me again, "Share The OTHER one." I knew what He was talking about ... the one I just gave **you**, but I had only given it once before and I felt it was not well received. It was at a church we attended and I would call it a "feel good church" because the message very seldom convicted the prisoners. But I knew God wouldn't ask for it without purpose. Five of the 30-some men came up to me later saying that message was for THEM. The last one to tell me waited three days, then told me that he never cared for the messenger so he wasn't fully paying attention to the message. Then he asked me, "Can you help me forgive myself?" I did; he became my project for the next three months, until he left to go home.

[Acts 10:43](#)

*All the prophets testify about Him that everyone who believes in him receives **forgiveness** of sins through His name."*

Attention Bible Lovers

Heart Builders FREE Bible Correspondence course list:

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How Can I Become A Christian?

God loves you and has a great plan for your life:

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life”

John 3:16

Christ said”...I have come that they might have life, and how it to the full” John 10:10

Man is sinful and separated from God:

“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” Romans 3:23

Sin has a penalty which must be paid:

“For the wages of sin is Death...” Romans 6:23

“Just as a man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment” Hebrews 9:27

Jesus Christ has paid the penalty for your sin:

“But God demonstrated His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” Romans 5:8

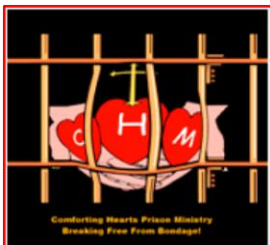
Salvation is a free gift:

“For it is by grace you have been saved, though faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast” Ephesians 2:8-9

You must receive Jesus Christ into your life:

“Yet to all who receive Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become the children of God.” John 1:12

Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the father except through me” John 14:6



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