

Community of Christ



WEAVE US TOGETHER

TESTIMONIES FROM A PEOPLE OF FAITH

Volume 14 – January through June 2011

Dearly Beloved,

Since you have been without an issue of your testimony journal for some time, in many ways this is a new start. It is my prayer that, as you read and study the testimonies included in this issue, you will come away with a renewal of your own faith in Jesus Christ and will encourage you to share your own.

Love and Blessings,
Tom Barrett, Compiler and Editor

FROM KATHY AMSINGER, ST. JAMES, MISSOURI

After a couple of very stressful months of dealing with my husband's injuries and his punishment of a traffic ticket which resulted in 40 hours of community work that I ended up having to do with him because he wasn't able to do the labor of yard work one normally would be required to do. With him having 7-8 broken ribs, we worked out a deal where I would supervise him to help with activities at the Veteran's Home where I was already trained to do the work. So, basically they got 80 hours of work from us which is not at all a complaint from me except that it put me behind in all my other church responsibilities. Thus, more stress. This week Jim finished the community work on Thursday and was released to return to work on Friday.

I thought to myself, FINALLY, I will have the time to prepare for presiding this Sunday and the sermon the following Sunday both at church and the Veteran's Home that week also. But then I got the call from my sister, Patti, that one of her members passed away and she needed help. We both try to help each other out with having small congregations. Anyway, the lady who passed away was a real go-getter. She was responsible for calling everyone and preparing the meals for funerals, baby showers, and the like and there really isn't anyone else to head that up because all the mourning people are closely related to her. So, I did what I usually do. I agreed to help in that way and then I sulked about getting more stressed out. Yes, waking up at 3am, unable to sleep and finally getting out of bed after 5 to make some good out of that wake time, I went in to vent and journal to God. After all, how inconvenient and untimely was her passing, duh!!!!

And the scripture from Matthew 6:34 reads "Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own" stared me right in the face. I figure Jesus was a very profound man and is a profound deity so his words of long ago surely must have some significance for me today. But how DO you get from stressing about something to the DO NOT WORRY part? So I did what I do and began to journal about it.

I voiced some of my worries and some of my regrets about the things I didn't get done but wanted to and then it came...the epiphany. It's about prioritizing and putting God first. Have you ever thought, "God, I'm sorry I just don't have time to spend with you today? There's too much on my plate!" Well, I suddenly realized what he was letting me know is that NOTHING IS SO IMPORTANT THAT IT TAKES PRECEDENCE OVER OUR TIME WITH GOD. And if it does, then we are the ones out of whack!

So I wrote it, "Oh God, nothing is so important that it takes precedence over my time with you." And then I highlighted it. "Oh God, nothing is so important that it takes precedence over my time with you." And then I repeated it on paper and out loud. (After all, nobody was home except me so I can scream it as loud as I want.) "Oh God, NOTHING is so important that it takes precedence over my time with YOU." And then I repeated it again, "Oh God, NOTHING is so important that it takes precedence over my time with YOU." And each time I did that, writing and voicing it into the air, the stress began to disappear.

Now, because I am older and I forget things, I have made a sign that is posted above the computer and it says, "NOTHING is so important that it takes precedence over my time with you, LORD." I liked making LORD larger than all the other words because he needs to be larger than anything else in our lives. And I want the universe to know how much I appreciate my LORD. And I want it stuck in my memory so I don't forget. And I know all will be OK, because God is first in my life and HE is larger than anything else...and his word is sure.



FROM MARYLOU EADS, CAMERON, MISSOURI

Grandpa's Story: The power of the spoken word can affect those around us either positively or negatively, and the effects of those words may haunt a person for years to come. An example of this principle working in someone's life would be the Grandfathers story. When my Mom was a small child a person representing the "church" had told Grandpa that he was unfit to raise his children based on the fact he was always working and unable to attend church. These words followed him for possibly 60 years. He, from that point on, wanted nothing to do with THE "church" (any church) or any representative of a church or God.

However, several years ago God started working in his family. His youngest brother joined the Assembly of God church and became a faithful follower. He also began praying for his older brother's salvation. Grandpa's only son joined the Baptist church about that time, and he too started praying.

Mom and I committed ourselves to a greater walk with the Lord, and not only did we pray, but we asked many of you to pray as well.

Then came other grandchildren, and even great grandchildren, came into the family of God praying for Grandpa's salvation.

About two years ago, the Mormon missionary Elders found his apartment. He let them in because "the boys were so nice" and he had fun kidding with them. However, they spent a lot of time telling him about Jesus and reading Scriptures to him. Then the Jehovah witnesses started knocking on his door and talking about the Lord. He enjoyed their visits and often said, "You know all these young men, they really enjoy visiting with me". Finally, the Bible Baptist church pastor and music minister started bringing him bulletins and sharing the love of the Lord.

A few months after all of this began, I ran over to the apartment to make sure he had taken his meds and the Mormon Elders were there. I ran in, did what needed to do, and excused myself saying, "I don't know what you all are up to, but I really feel like I don't want to interrupt, so carry on." As I stepped outside the spirit spoke that I would baptize my grandfather. The thought had truly never entered my mind till that moment. When mom got home I shared the experience with her and said, "I think you are supposed to approach him with baptism".

The next morning he was sharing about his visitors the night before and Mom said, "Dad you want to accept Christ so you can go to heaven". He said excitedly, "Oh I already did we did it last night when the boys were here. They started talking about it and it made sense, so we just got on our knees and did it right there." Mom was so excited she said, "Well, you should get baptized" and he eagerly accepted the invitation and the invitation for me to do it. When talking to him about his commitment. He said "You know, all those people were coming from all those different places and they talked about this Jesus. They all told the same story and you know it made sense that they must be right."

The next Sunday I led my 86 year old grandfather into the waters of baptism. This is a true testimony of the power of unity of the Spirit. When we lay down theology and just **BE** the body, just speak Jesus and let Him do the work.



FROM KAREN STACY, HARTSELLE, ALABAMA

CHERYL'S STORY

Many of you received an email following the Leadership Summit, asking you to pray for our friend, Cheryl, who was in desperate need. She felt she had gone as far in this life as she wanted to go. Today (November 23, 2010) is her 50th birthday and she feels hopeless.

Cheryl has had a very tough life and has suffered for over twenty years. She has continued to struggle hoping to find an answer to her issues but to no avail. Last week she received word that she had suffered mini strokes and that there were lesions on her brain. The doctor sent her home and set a future appointment to discuss her options. This news devastated her and thus began another spiral.

Mike and I diverted our trip home to Memphis, Tennessee, to see Cheryl, and praying all the way we would not be too late! We knew you all were praying with us and it is absolutely amazing to look back over the events of the day. God was so in control the whole day!

Around 3:00 we stopped to fill up with gas and get a bite to eat at an Arby's. After eating, I walked into the store portion of the shop and began looking at a table full of books on sale. Then I realized they were all Christian books! Remember we are at a Truck Stop! Not what I would

have expected! We picked up several small books that were very appropriate for a birthday gift, and then another one caught my attention, Prayers that Bring Healing by John Eckhardt.

I began reading this book and continued to read all the way to Memphis. There were so many things mentioned in the book that had been discussed at the Leadership Summit weekend. Do you remember the discussions about God having your back and dun Amis! We just looked at each other and laughed.

I had been reading for about an hour when I remembered that I can't read in the car! I get extremely car sick! There has never been an exception!

After stopping at a Walgreen's to pick up a birthday card and some ice cream, I finished the book ¼ mile from Cheryl's home. The last two pages basically told us that we had been prepared, anointed and endowed and that we needed to claim this gift and go forth believing this gift is active in our lives for the benefit of those we come in contact with. We prayed for 'fear' to be bound and asked God to bless our efforts as we pulled into her driveway.

As Cheryl stepped out on to her porch to greet us, she seemed pleased to see us but very confused. As soon as we got inside, she said, "Got a phone call one and one half hour ago... doctor said, no lesions." I said, "Fluke?" She said, "I guess so, they are just gone!"

Oh my goodness, the joy that filled that room! I looked her in the eye and said, "No, Cheryl, not a fluke, you have been blessed. This is only the beginning of your healing!" Her eyes were like that of a pleading five year old! She kept asking for us to tell her again! We were ping-pong off the walls praising God for His goodness!!!

We shared her birthday gifts with her and again realized how in control God was when she picked up her ice cream and exclaimed, "How did you know this is my favorite and that the shortbread settles my stomach". God even picked out the ice cream! The card Mike found was absolutely perfect, expressing that she was a one of a kind creation of God and that we were blessed to have her in our lives.

I reminded Cheryl of what was said when we administered to her one month prior. We told God that we would like to see an instant healing but if that was not His plan would he please enlighten her caregivers and send new ones into her life to help figure out what the problem is. About two weeks later a Home Health caregiver was assigned to her who is a Christian and she too began to pray for Cheryl. The following week she was diagnosed by a new doctor as having had mini strokes and lesions on her brain resulting in dead areas. To her this was the last straw! When I first heard, I was upset, and then realized that the diagnosis could be leading the doctors to an answer and thus help. When I pointed this out to her, she just beamed and pointed to her medication box that the health caregiver had prepared for her!

By the end of the evening, she asked for us to remind her of what she needed to do and asked for prayer once again. We again administered to her and the power of the Holy Spirit was there in abundance!

As we got in our car to leave she walked out with us, hugged us and said, "Thank you for coming to help me tonight, because tomorrow would have been too late."

Thank you God for answering prayer, for our friends that we can count on in times of need to support us and send petitions up to you on behalf of someone they don't even know. How blessed we are to be a part of this group.

P.S. I wanted to dance like David danced!!! She promised to come to the Spiritual Encounter weekend in January in Alabama hoping to meet many of her knew friends!

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REFLECTIONS ON THE SUMMIT WEEKEND

SUBMITTED BY BOB SLASOR, BRADENTON, FLORIDA

The Holy Spirit was present in multiple ministries among the body with a power beyond any I have experienced in our gatherings before. It was as if we passed from being safe and holding our own to being on the offensive with the Spirit. Called out of our safe places we are called to confront the hurts of the world with the healing and saving grace of God in spiritual power.

Derek called down that power. Heather Atkinson put voice to Spirit's pain for the needy. Often the voice of warning was raised that it is later then we think in the world's history. Zion from above is coming down. Zion on earth is coming into being. Righteous living cannot be put off any longer. Being accountable for choices and eliminating those things that are earthbound. Living in the spiritual principles is our stewardship.

Power, it's all about power. God's power being poured out on us for Zion's sake. Living in the confidence of the victory. Being surrounded by angels and protected from Satan by faith in the promises of God. Derek calling down power and those there with arms raised to receive it so they can live it.

Father God, I don't know what an Ezekiel blessing is but Gay prayed it on me. Oh that I could raise the dry bones of the lost and dead to spiritual living. Oh that your power in me can be released in blessing to others. God, I want to be disciplined. I want to live for ministry – in my own home included. Father God, help me interpret what happened in my own life over the weekend and how that translates into my living. I know you used me in ministry and I rejoice in that. There was a prophetic presence in me – dwelling in me. Was that just for the weekend? Has that spiritual gift been released in me now as abiding presence? Father, what do I need to know from the weekend, need to feel from the weekend? I pray for understanding. I pray to be taught from on high. I pray for your help in my living in discipline so that I do what I need to do, so you can do what you want to do in me.

Where do I go from here, O God? How do I move in the promise of your power? What do I need to do to understand the Ezekiel anointing so that I can minister in it? And what of my prophetic ministry? How can I intelligently use it as blessing to my congregation and others? And what of hearing your voice, of knowing what your will is? Help me develop a listening ear for your revelation. I need, I need, I need an intimacy with you, Jesus. I stand off, afraid to be "in you" and afraid to let you be "in me". I am with you what I am with Beth, distant, not by choice but by the nature of my personality or whatever. I don't want separation, I want intimacy. I want a love affair with you, Jesus but I just don't know how to go about allowing it to happen, or making it happen. How can I bring Ezekiel ministry if I cannot hear your voice?

And so my prayer is, gracious and loving God, you who have redeemed my soul and made me your own. I pray that the wall between us may be broken down and that I may be one with you, one with Jesus, as you God, are one with your Son. I don't know how to do it and I don't know how to help you do it in me. Can I be administered to by angels? Am I ready for that? What cleaning up of attitude and action do I need to do to make me ready? What do I need to eliminate from my life or change any attitude toward it? What do I need to add to my life in exchange for what I give up? I want to be alive in you, O God; filled with holy presence, not for my glory but for yours. And not for me but for those I'm called to touch. Jesus, I don't want to be a "hanging back disciple", afraid of the authorities whoever they are. I want to break the hold of Satan on the many he would destroy. I want to touch all you give me direction to touch.

O God, I have not been as faithful as I could have been because I have not sought out those who need ministry. I have not further developed my healing ministry by deepening my faith and nurturing your Spirit in me. For these and so much more I repent, O God. Cleanse me; empower me to whatever degree you can as I sincerely seek to live a more disciplined life.

Father God, I want the promises of the weekend to come alive in me. I want the power promised to be released in me. I want to use that power to bless others and call them to you in saving relationship. My promise, my signature on this new covenant is to be different. To be more disciplined in all phases of stewardship. I will study Ezekiel. I will live with Isaiah 61 and Luke 4, as I look around me for those they call me to touch. Father God, I come before you humbly, with love and belief. Fulfill your will in me, O God, I pray in Jesus name. Amen

SUBMITTED BY MIKE STACY, DECATUR, ALABAMA

God is SO Good – We have had some insights and testimony that we would like to share with all of you.

This may also have implications for your congregations and how you might want to share the Love of Jesus Christ with others, inviting them to your worship and evangelize others.

Several of us had attended the Leadership Summit at Camp Doniphan in November of 2010 and heard awesome teaching from several individuals. We listened to some of the testimonies taking place in Hearne, Texas, from Rick Rosser. We are not sure where our assumption came from, but had assumed that "Hearing the Prophetic and then going on Treasure Hunts" was something taking place throughout CCM. We decided that as a congregation, we would invite Rick and Lisa in to our congregation to teach on this type of ministry.

In preparation, Rick asked us as a congregation to read two books, "When Heaven Invades Earth" by Bill Johnson and "The Ultimate Treasure Hunt" by Kevin Dedmon.

In reading these two books, the congregation was preparing themselves for greater understanding of the ministry to which God is calling our congregation. Our minds have been opened to a vast amount of ministry, to which we were unaware. However, we do know that God has a purpose for each of us as individuals, and for each of us as communities to proclaim Jesus Christ and promote communities of Joy, Hope, Love and Peace.

We recognize that the world is in conflict, and it is not flesh and blood we battle against, but powers and principalities. God wants us as Ambassadors to share His Love (not our definition of love), but HIS LOVE with others.

We reasoned together and came to an understanding that God does speak to us individually. He provides within us the Holy Spirit that gives direction to our lives to live according to His purpose, because as our creator, He knows what is best for us. In this, He has even given us words to speak, we know them as “The Lord’s Prayer” – within this prayer He asks us to pray, “That His Kingdom Come on Earth, as it IS in Heaven.” He has told us, ”to bind on earth, what is bound in Heaven and to Loose on Earth what is loosed in Heaven.”

We also reasoned together that in this purpose He has for our lives is the calling to love one another, even as He has loved us. So if he speaks to us, and gives direction for our lives, He will give us words to speak to others; words of encouragement for the journey; as Rick calls them, “Nuggets of Gold”. There will be healing words, because God wants His Kingdom to reside here on earth in our lives. There is no illness in Heaven, he wishes for us to bind those things that afflict our minds and bodies by the power of His word. He paid the price for our sins, our pain, our grief, with the blood He shed, and when we claim Christ as our Savior, He covers us with that precious blood, so now we can stand before our Heavenly Father redeemed by Christ.

We reasoned together that God loves us beyond our comprehension, and He speaks words of encouragement to grow us to our purpose and His desire, so the words He would give us for others would also be words of encouragement, not words of criticism. We recognize that in our love we hold one another accountable, but to those that God sends us, whom we do not know, we would speak “Nuggets of Gold” with the intent that they would recognize the message they receive is from God, letting them know that God loves them and wants a relationship with them.

So in summary:

- God loves and speaks to us constantly

 - We need to tune our lives to His Holy Spirit

- God loves and speaks to all people

- God calls us to love one another

- God will speak to us, words for others to communicate His love for them through us

 - These words will be words of love and encouragement

- We need to seek out those to whom to communicate God’s love

We purchased these two books for the congregation and distributed them about 6 weeks prior to Rick and Lisa coming. Reading the two books generated a lot of discussion for the entire congregation. Some accepted and confirmed what one book was saying and had trouble with the other and vice versa. It was interesting to watch this interaction take place. It called into question many traditions we have practiced in our lives, however, most of the more interesting manifestations of the Holy Spirit found in these two books could be collaborated with testimony from the Restoration Scriptures as well as Restoration History.

Even before Rick and Lisa arrived, two of the congregants, Glen Barnes and Winnie Tepper, found themselves putting that which they had read into action: walking in Faith as the Holy Spirit rested on them with specific instructions to speak healing into the lives of two individuals.

Glen’s experience happened as he struggled with stepping out of his comfort zone and into the Faith walk to which God was calling Glen. He had been deep in conversational prayer with God about this “New” thing, when the Holy Spirit flooded Glen in a power he had not up to then experienced and told Glen to go to his neighbor who was struggling with a brain tumor and tell her that God wanted to heal her. Glen could not deny the Holy Spirit’s presence or impress, so he went to his knees in repentance asking for forgiveness that he might go on his journey for God clean of Body, Soul and Spirit. He went that evening to his neighbors and found them reading

spiritual books that he had recently read and also found them in a deep state of prayer and searching for a healing of the wife who had been diagnosed with the brain tumor. He boldly approached them and stated; “Your prayers have been heard, God wants to heal you.” Glen stated he had never been this bold before, but the Spirit had made it known to Glen, that he was to be an obedient vessel that God would take care of the healing. He placed his hands on her head and prayed a simple prayer, then left. His statement was that the uplift he experienced was like none he had ever felt. He KNEW he had been obedient to the Holy Spirit’s movement in his and his neighbor’s lives.

Glen has shared this testimony with our congregation and with others. A “NEW” thing is happening.

Winnie is another in our congregation who has wanted to stretch beyond her comfort zone as a witness for Jesus Christ. Being an Evangelist, she has read and studied much on many topics. She has participated in Emmaus walks as pilgrim and as a team member. Those who know her and her husband Bill know them to be anchors in Christ, but her admission is she wants to be bolder in her witness. After reading these two books, she found herself in a boutique with her daughter by marriage and her grand-daughter and overheard one of the clerks stating that she had to rest because her ankle was hurting terribly. She waited for the appropriate time, asking her daughter if she would assist when Winnie prayed for the young lady, to which she received a positive reply. She then approached this young lady, calling her by name, listening to her story of being injured years ago in another country and not receiving the appropriate medical treatment. She asked if she believed in Jesus Christ and the young lady replied “Yes.” Winnie knelt and placed her hands on the young ladies ankle and prayed. Again, it was a simple prayer, and Winnie was assured that the healing was in God’s hands, she was called to be the vessel.

A “NEW” thing is happening.

When Rick and Lisa Rosser arrived, we met on Friday evening for praise as well as teaching on practicing being prophetic as we speak to others. Rick taught on this, and then we practiced with several of the congregational members. We prayed and Rick had individuals stand before the congregation. We were to “think” or “image” what God would want to say to them. We used words or images that came to mind. Some felt as if this were “guessing” the words that God had for them. We reasoned together, that while occasionally prophetic words sometimes came without hesitation; this is not a common occurrence. We are not connected to the Holy Spirit in a way that would speak prophetically to each other as the Holy Spirit is willing to speak, so we must condition ourselves to listen to the Holy Spirit, and then speak words of gold – (encouragement) to one another. We have come to understand that the Holy Spirit wants to work with us continually in guiding our walk.

The special part of this was that some saw or “felt” words and others had feelings or pictures. When we would speak these words, (hesitantly at first) others would have those same words or images. We became excited as this was taken as confirmation of the words the Holy Spirit had for the individuals in front of us. After this confirming exercise in listening to the Holy Spirit and in faith speaking what we heard we were ready for additional teaching.

On Saturday morning we had another teaching session, and then began to prepare for what “The Ultimate Treasure Hunt” describes as “Treasure Hunting”. This caused excitement in some and hesitation in others. We again went into a practice period after prayer asking for “insights” into individuals within the community to whom God would send us to share “His” message. This is meant to be a time where we take the “Good News” into the lives of others on a personal basis as

well as prepare to pray healing into their lives, whether it is for spiritual, emotional, relationship, or physical healing.

So as we prayed together, we would receive names; William, James, and others. We would received clues; Red, Wall, Rose, Bicycle, Car Trouble, Relationships, One, Pharmacy, Leg, Arm, Hand, Parking Lot with yellow stripes, etc. We reasoned together, looking over the clues and considered where God would send us to find these treasures.

Then we were off to search for these treasures.

The testimonies are many concerning the actual Treasure Hunt, and I am greatly abbreviating what happened. On the first few stops we looked like an invading hoard as three cars pull up and everyone (12) came pouring out searching for the visible clues such as parking lot with yellow strips (easy), large number one (not so easy), red, then people. Rick took the lead in the initial contacts, "Excuse me, we are on a treasure hunt, and several clues seem to be in this area, do you mind if I ask you your name?" **James**, "That is one of our clues, we believe you might be the treasure we are searching for. God has given us some clues, do you have any pain, etc. Would you mind if we prayed for you?" No one we asked refused prayer. We went to a large service station and were asked by a young lady and her children if we were on a treasure hunt. We explained to her what we were doing, and she was very encouraged and liked THIS TYPE of treasure hunt.

We went to the Pilot Truck Stop and met and prayed for a couple pumping gas, Reed and Lou, and a man on the sidewalk named James, a husband and wife couple traveling from Ohio named Pat and Pat O'Leary and a young man named David.

It was encouraging to reach out in faith and offer prayer for these individuals and have willing acceptance of the prayers; this alone was a powerful testimony in faith. God was with us.

We then traveled to Wal-Mart where we determined some great Treasure Hunting can take place. There we met Jesse James, leaning over a buggy, using it as someone might use a walker, in the pharmacy aisle who eagerly accepted the invitation for prayer. There with about seven people standing around him, three of which were youth he was prayed for and when hands were laid on his back he stood bolt upright expressing he felt the Holy Spirit. On his shirt was the image of Christ's nail scarred hand. As we were leaving Wal-Mart we found a man named William sitting at a table collecting money for veterans. Prayer was offered and accepted.

An invitation was provided to all we met to come to worship with us; and material on the Community of Christ was provided.

Our congregation concluded this was an awesome way to invite and had none of the "Cold Call" issues; as we were commissioned and being sent out by the Holy Spirit to search for those to whom the Holy Spirit was sending us.

Our Congregation is in the midst of a Lenten Sunday night program, but plan after Easter is to go out at least twice a month using the approach we have learned.

We feel that this approach to Evangelism is an approach that any congregation or group of willing Saints can undertake to share the Love of Jesus Christ with others.

My apologies for being so late in sending this testimony out, but we have been engaged in the work of the Lord.

God Bless You All, Your Brother in Christ, Michael "Barnabas" of Issachar

DISCLAIMER

The testimonies shared in this journal are expressions of personal experiences and encounters with God. They do not necessarily represent the theology, beliefs, or practices of either CCM or the Community of Christ.

This issue of the journal is now complete and ready to go to those who need a reminder from time to time of God’s Grace and Love for each of His children. The next issue will be published at the end of December, 2011. Please send me your testimonies so others will be blessed. We have been counseled to “share the sacred story”. Make no mistake; your story is sacred.

Love, Peace, and Blessings,
Tom Barrett, Prayer Healing Ministries