



Lifeline

...a prayer letter from John and Jackie

September 5, 2000



Dear friends,

Jackie and I greet you again in the Wonderful Name of Jesus! As always, we are called to “*fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and finisher of faith... who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.*” Heb. 12:1,2

Getting past wrongs and hurts...

When Jesus was crucified, there was much abuse dumped on him. Accused, mocked, and betrayed... Sometimes I think the mental and emotional suffering of Jesus may have been as great or greater than His physical suffering. Jesus knew what to do with all that came against Him as He was being unjustly treated. He “*made no threats: but he trusted Himself and everything to Him who judges fairly.*” 2 Peter 2:23 Furthermore, He “*despised the shame*” (He scorned it, ignored it, didn't let it affect him), keeping His eyes on the joy that was set before Him.

The joy for Jesus was beyond the cross. There was no joy in the suffering and death, except to know He was obedient to His Father. But for Him there was the promise of the resurrection, and the finishing of His work on the earth. What joy was waiting for Him in heaven is beyond our understanding, but we know He has been highly exalted, and there He waits at the right hand of the Father until all His enemies are made a footstool for His feet.

There is life and hope and purpose for all of us beyond our times of trouble. The Lord has promised to shepherd us through the valley of the shadow of death. He even promises a banquet in the presence of our trouble! (Psalms 23) He says we will be freshly anointed, and our cup of life will overflow! (...with His goodness, of course.)

When we go through something unjust, and we keep our hearts clean toward God and man, there is a joy to anticipate. Someone once said, “For every death there is a resurrection”. You may be going through, or have gone through, the death of a dream or a relationship. It may seem unjust. Remember, God is not unjust. Don't waste time figuring things out – who was right, who was wrong, how can I prove the truth to others....? Reach out to grasp life again. There is life beyond this valley!

Most of us go through some form of injustice in our lives – if not about ourselves, then about those whom we love. This can be the most difficult thing to get through. Jesus led the way for us. He bore such things in Himself during the process of His crucifixion. The cross itself was an unjust action that declared Him to be a dangerous criminal, a false prophet.

What an attack against Him! What agony at being thought of as someone evil! Yet, He “*opened not His mouth...*”

What is even more amazing is that He could have called “twelve legions of angels” to His defense and things would have turned around really fast! But...then we would have remained in our lost condition. Instead, He laid down His life. He laid down His reputation. He laid down His right to be understood. He laid down His right to be right!

Perhaps you have had to lay down your right to be right. Perhaps you have dealt with misunderstanding, and there are some people you wish you could straighten out. Perhaps others have thought ill of you when you know it isn't true. If so, Jesus has gone ahead of you in these things. He has borne such hurt on your behalf, and in His atonement there is provision for complete deliverance from such hurt. Do what you can to be reconciled and to be at peace with those who have hurt you. (Matthew 5:24, Romans 12:18) Some things, however, will probably never get straightened out this side of heaven. In the mean time, forgive and offer up the sacrifice of thanksgiving. Look ahead in anticipation of joy. Ask Jesus to give you His anointing to get past accusation, failure and misunderstanding. Fix your eyes ahead and anticipate seeing the “goodness of the Lord in the land of the living”!

Jackie has been meditating on 1 Peter 5:7: “*Casting the whole of your care (all your anxieties, all your worries, all your concerns, once and for all) on Him, for HE cares for you affectionately and cares about you watchfully.*” (Amplified Bible). She realized that the word “casting” is a very strong word: it means to “THROW”. This is a very deliberate action, like a pitcher throwing a baseball. He takes aim, and with all his might hurls that ball into the strike zone.

Casting our cares on the Lord is not a passive thing. Take those cares and wad them up like a ball, spit on them like Jesus spit on the shame (He despised it, didn't He?) and aim that wad of cares right at God the catcher! He's just waiting for this. He can handle it! Throw that wad of cares and disappointments and hurts with all your might! Throw them with faith, and with praise for all that Jesus has done. ON HIM, it says. ON HIM! Because He carried them all on the cross!

Back to Ukraine the first week of October...

By God's grace, we will leave for Ukraine on October 6. It is perhaps our fifteenth trip (We've lost count) Every journey has been a miracle of His provision. Every trip is planned with the same expectation: Jehovah Jireh -- God will provide. Mostly He provides through friends of our ministry, so we thank you for praying for us and for giving as He leads

you to do so. *Please agree with us in prayer that the Lord will bring in the travel funds soon.* It is becoming harder to delay payment for airline tickets since the payment rules have changed. We need to pay for them in two weeks. Three other people are planning to accompany us: two men from Church Upon The Rock, and Marcia LaRock, our missionary friend in Holland who accompanied us to Ukraine in May.

Our time will be taken up with teaching in the Bible School and ministering in the churches. A third year program has been added this fall, largely a practical year. The third year students will be active in evangelism, church planting, and assisting the daughter churches during the school year. Three weeks of each month they will be doing practical ministry, and one week of each month they will be in the classroom for instruction.

A new church plant while we are there...

While in Ukraine, we will help to plant a new church, this time in another large city about three hours from Krivoy Rog. This city, Dnepropetrovsk, has about 2.5 million people, with less than 20 Bible believing churches of all denominations. The vision is to plant another "mother church", establish new daughter churches, and eventually another Bible School.

An evangelistic outreach will take place in Dnepropetrovsk while we are there. Pray that many will be saved during this time of evangelism, and that the church would begin with a strong core of new believers. One of the young pastors in Krivoy Rog is ready to move there to pastor the new church. Expenses for the church planting are \$3000. This includes a new sound system and keyboard, financial support for the pastor for the first year, and funds for building rental and other supplies. This investment will give the new church the financial boost to get established, so that it can become self-supporting. *Please agree with us in faith for this \$3000 church planting expense, that the funds might come in before we leave.* You are the only ones who know about this need.

From Ukraine to Argentina...

Immediately following our time in Ukraine, near the end of October, we will go to Buenos Aires, Argentina to the International Conference of Harvest Evangelism, which is headed by Ed Silvano. This is an outgrowth of the huge twenty year ongoing Argentine revival that has changed that nation and its cities. Pastors Gregori and Galena from Ukraine will accompany us, along with newly married Olga and Constantine, our Ukrainian translators.

We have hoped for some time that the Ukrainians could connect with the revival in South America, believing that there is a kindred spirit. God has awesomely made this Argentine trip possible! (Though our trip to Ukraine still needs all the funds.) A businessman who has been to both Argentina and Krivoy Rog told us the Lord directed him to send us to the Argentine conference; he has stretched his faith to provide for all six of us to go, praise the Lord!

God's direction to me: Write!

One of the Lord's directions to me that I have put off has been writing. It has become evident that the Lord is wanting me to do what he has already said (Write!) before He gives much new direction. So, in the coming months I plan to write small booklets like the one enclosed, and we hope to eventually translate them into Russian and other languages. We have observed that a message in print has long lasting power and is read by many people, especially in third world places like Ukraine.

Would you pray for me along the lines of Ephesians 6:19: *"And (pray) also for me, that (freedom of) utterance may be given to me..."* I know this verse is about preaching, but writing is also preaching. We learned that it's one thing to have a word inside of you. It's another thing to have the anointing for utterance to get it out. I have learned this in preaching, and I need a release of it in writing, so that the words will flow more easily! I am the writer, Jackie the editor. We both need prayer for this process. Have you ever tried to critique your spouse? Thanks! As of now, I am designing, printing and publishing the booklets at my desk.

A special thanks to you...

Some of you have been praying for us most of these last fifteen years. Others we have come to know more recently. What a blessing to be able to write to you! Some are friends who simply keep updated through our letters. We know some pray daily for us. Others pray when the Lord reminds them or when the letter comes. Some are led to regularly support us financially. Others give at special times. (For us, every month needs special and unexpected gifts!) All of you are very important to us, and you are partners with us in the work of the gospel! We love and appreciate you!

We are celebrating life!

We believe we are approaching new beginnings, new things to do, new mountains to climb. Many of our friends and neighbors are retiring. We are "refiring" instead! Jackie has decided, since this is her big birthday year (60) on Dec. 6, she will celebrate being alive every month! So, every 6th of the month is her birthday – until next July! We her family like parties, so we are celebrating with her! I told her she could do it the Russian way. Russians plan and do all the work for their own birthday party. OK, I'll help her...a little. We had the first one August 6. We started with really, really small birthday presents...twelve parties could get expensive! But, hey....she's worth it, and we are celebrating her life!

With love,

John and Jackie

Pray for:

- 1. Travel funds to Ukraine, anointing for the outreach*
- 2. Three classes of the new Bible School year*
- 3. The evangelism and church planting in Dnepropetrovsk*
- 4. \$3000 for the church planting expenses*
- 5. God's grace for writing gospel booklets*
- 6. Our daily and monthly needs*
- 7. Wisdom for the ministry ahead of us*

Remember: for tax purposes, write checks to "Scarlet Thread Ministries"

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