



# Lifeline

...a prayer letter from John and Jackie

August 4, 2001



Dear friends,

We greet you again in Jesus' wonderful name, with thanksgiving to God for His goodness and thanksgiving to you for your love and concern. You are a blessing to us!

### **Act on the words of Jesus...**

Jesus spoke about people who hear His words and who act on those words. He compared these people to the wise man who built his house on a rock. The foolish ones, Jesus said, are those who hear His words and do not act on those words. They are like the man who built on the sand. (Matt. 7)

The rains descended and the floods came to both the wise and the foolish, regardless of where their house was built. In fact, Jesus said, the winds SLAMMED against both houses! Life is like that. Jesus never guaranteed life without problems. On the contrary, he seemed to indicate we'd all get some wind and rain.

So, the rain and the flood and the wind hit both houses. The house on the rock stood firm. The one on the sand collapsed.

Both the wise and the foolish had heard the words of Jesus. Hearing the words of Jesus was not what made the difference in their lives.

*Acting on His words.* That is what made the difference. That was the key, Jesus said.

What we actually believe is most clearly seen in what we do, not in what we think. What we do is a declaration of what we believe.

This is not to be confused with a life of religious self effort or legalism. The kind of "doing" that Jesus was talking about is not self effort. It is obeying His commands because we trust Him completely.

This is the life of faith, the life of total trust in Him. If we really trust Jesus, we will obey Jesus.

The things that Jesus commands are beyond the ability of our flesh or our natural strength. They are not beyond His strength, however. This is why Paul said *"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."*

With all His commands, Jesus provides the supernatural energy necessary to obey. His life flows into all those who trust Him enough to obey what He says. The Bible calls this the "obedience of faith". Paul gave this as his job description in Romans 1: *"to bring about the obedience of faith among the nations"*. The obedience of faith is to actually do what we believe. It is to act on our convictions. Such action -- obedience to Jesus -- requires divine assistance. And that divine help comes *during* the action of faith and obedience!

Peter knew he could not walk on water. But when he saw Jesus walking on the water, something inside of him saw the possibility of doing that himself. He shouted, *"Lord, if it is you, command me to come!"* Jesus said *"Come!"* And Peter stepped out and walked on the sea. (Matt. 14)

How could he do such an impossible thing? He could do it because Jesus commanded Him to do it.

Jesus commanded the man with the withered arm to *"stretch out your hand..."* The man probably could not do this, but at the command of Jesus He obeyed, and during the action of the "obedience of faith", the supernatural power flowed into his arm and it was restored. (Mark 3)

Peter, James and John had been fishing. They had fished all night and caught nothing. Jesus came by on shore, and called out to them: *"Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch."* Peter said, *"Master, we worked hard all night and caught nothing, but I WILL DO AS YOU SAY and let down the nets."* They caught so many fish that the nets began to break! (Luke 5)

In the action of obeying a command of Jesus, miracles happen.

At a wedding, the wine ran out. Mary the mother of Jesus told the servants *"Whatever He says to you, DO IT."* Jesus told them to fill the waterpots, draw some out and take it to the headwaiter. (Wouldn't they have looked foolish bringing water to the headwaiter?) During the action of faith and obedience, the water turned to wine. (John 2)

...whatever He says to YOU, DO IT!

We may shy away from some of the words of Jesus, because they call us to a life beyond our natural strength. That is the point. Putting our trust totally in Him is to obey whatever He says to do. That obedience releases the very life of Jesus within you.

When Jesus talked about hearing "these words of Mine" and doing them, he had just finished the Sermon on the Mount. That sermon is mostly about our inner life -- attitudes and responses to life around us. Every part of that Sermon on the Mount calls us to live far above the dictates of our flesh.

While delivering that message, Jesus repeatedly referred to the common understandings of the Old Testament, using the phrase *"you have heard that it was said..."* Then he challenged people to a higher way of living with the phrase *"but I say to you..."*

For example: *"You have heard that it was said do not commit adultery. But I say unto you, everyone who looks on a woman with lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart."* In that statement he calls every man to a life far different than his natural tendencies. He calls men to a life of holiness in the most secret place of his thoughts. For many, obeying these words may seem as impossible as walking on water, but remember: Jesus commanded it. During the action of faith and obedience to His command, His very life within you rises to meet the command. You CAN do all things through Christ who strengthens you!

Many Christians pass over the words of Jesus because they frequently demand action. His words are consequently sometimes uncomfortable. It is necessary to focus clearly on His words, whether they bring us comfort or not, since He is our Lord and Master!

Remember this: His commands are spoken, not to your flesh, but to your born again spirit that is joined to the Lord. New Testament commandments are spoken to the life of God in you. You cannot respond to them in your flesh, but you can obey by drawing on the life of God inside of you. This life is released by faith and experienced only in obedience.

*"Forgive everyone." "Be anxious for nothing." "In everything give thanks." "Love one another." "Repent and believe the gospel." "Go into all the world and preach the gospel."* These are New Testament commands, not suggestions. Acting on these words in faith and obedience will find you "walking on the water" -- living above the dictates of the flesh, living "in the Spirit". You will discover the reservoir of His life within you, the resource of His presence and His holiness in your heart, as you trust and obey.

Act on the words of Jesus. Miracles happen.

**Sunday evenings at our house...**

**7 p.m.**

**"The Words of Jesus"**

**You're invited!**

#### **Ukraine teams:**

As you know, the Lord has been directing us to travel to Ukraine several times a year, and to send others there almost every month.

\*Our daughter Jen and her husband Scott (and five young people from Way of the Cross Church) are just now returning from Krivoy Rog. They've had a blessed time, seen many people saved and healed, helped open a new church in Dnipropetrovsk, had several days at a youth camp, and spent a week ministering at a new summer youth Bible School.

\*On August 4, our friend Marcia LaRock, YWAM missionary in Holland, arrived in Krivoy Rog with a team of seven, the day Jen and Scott left. They will continue to work with the Youth Bible College as well as with daughter churches. This team will be there most of August.

\*In September, our friend and evangelist Mark Johnson will arrive to open the new Bible School year and take the students to the streets. The Ukrainians love Mark!

\*In October, by God's grace, Jackie and I will again return to Ukraine.

\*Following us, in November, will come our friends Steve and Marilyn Hill, missionaries in Europe. After them will come our friend pastor Jeff Orluck...and so on month after month....

We are so grateful for these ministers and missionaries, all of whom trust God for their own provision to go, and for resources to help the Ukrainian churches. The work is multiplying, and there is an increasing need (as new churches open in other cities) for teams to go and to provide more partnerships of faith and love with the Ukrainians, to help the poor, reach the lost, build the churches, and train the leaders. **New churches for another city in Ukraine...**

Preparations are being made to start three new churches in Karkov, a large city of Ukraine near the Russian border with very few churches. Pastor Valodia and Svieta, who have already started two churches in Krivoy Rog, are willing to move to Karkov with their five children. This is not easy for

them. Their present worship leader and his wife will also move there. Valodia will pastor one new church, Svieta the second one, and the worship leader will pastor the third one. (We will put them on the list of our new heroes!) The plan is that by opening three churches at once, the work in this city will move faster, and they can assist and strengthen each other.

Please pray for these arrangements. Three meeting halls and two apartments are needed. Pray also that God will open the door for the Word and that many hungry people will come to Him. The plan is to open these three churches when Jackie and I are there. What a privilege for us!

#### **Galina's church building update...**

Pastor Gregori reports that they are hard at work restoring the building purchased for pastor Galina's church of 450 people. The daily work crew of fifty are made up of church members, Bible College students, and the homeless, all of whom are happy to work for food. Praise God the building was finally purchased for only \$2500! So, from the original gift of \$15,000 for the purchase, much is left for the reconstruction. Pastor Gregori anticipates an extra \$5000-\$7000 will be needed to finish the project. May the Lord provide!

#### **A new prison church...**

A new church has begun in another prison during the month of July. A prisoner whose mother goes to Gregori's church has started it. Saved, then sent to prison for crimes committed before being saved, he has four more years to serve. Gregori suggested to him to start a church there. In one month, this prison church has now fifty men! (Remember, we wrote of a similar church plant in another prison -- at last count that one has a hundred men.)

#### **Prison Bible College???**

Pastor Gregori is asking for counsel on how to open a Bible College in these prisons. We are thinking that the present Bible College classes should be videotaped and sent to the prisons. Pray with us for the funds to be released for cameras, video duplicators, and salary for new video staff to make a prison video Bible College possible!

#### **Thank you!**

We are unceasingly grateful for each of you who stand beside us in faith and love and support us in this ministry. You are our ministry partners indeed! As always, we know that your prayer is like a shield of protection and it brings a release of provision for us and for the ministry to which we are called.

We continue to trust the Lord to provide for us personally beyond the expected or known income. *Especially this summer!* It requires us to keep pressing in to hear His voice and be obedient to Him -- for where He guides, He provides. We can't afford to be "doing our own thing". Thank you for praying for us that we will know the wisdom of God, for this is the key to fruitfulness in every area. Thank you for your friendship.

May the Lord bless you in every way -- that's the blessing of Abraham. Genesis 24:1: *"...and the Lord blessed Abraham in every way."* Jesus redeemed you from the curse of the Law, that the blessing of Abraham might come through you and to the nations! (Galatians 3:13)

With love,

**John and Jackie**

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

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