



INSPIRATION FOR THE *UP* RELATIONSHIP

Lift

I WILL *LIFT* UP THE CUP OF SALVATION
AND CALL ON THE NAME OF THE LORD.

PSALM 116

INSPIRATION *for the* “UP” RELATIONSHIP

I KNOW MY REDEEMER LIVES

Shawshank Redemption is one of the most impacting movies of our time. Set in Maine, the story is of a man, Andy Dufresne, falsely accused and systematically abused, but who finally gets complete revenge on the crooked prison warden. But the movie is not called Shawshank Revenge. No, it is considered a story of redemption.

So what is redemption? We talk of redeeming a winning ticket or prize, but in the Bible, redemption originally meant, “to buy back; to restore something to an original state or owner but at a cost; to give someone back their rightful place, position, or respect.”

In this issue of LIFT we are exploring redemption. What does it mean to be restored to a meaningful and productive life?

What does it mean to experience the complete forgiveness of God and to be at peace with others? We will focus on messages of redemption from the Psalms, songs, art, and inspiring stories of God working in the lives of people just like you and me.

Take a few moments and read Psalm 130, especially verses 7-8.

**“O ISRAEL, PUT YOUR HOPE
IN THE LORD, FOR WITH THE
LORD IS UNFAILING LOVE, AND
WITH HIM IS FULL REDEMPTION.”**

Don McLaughlin



PSALM 40

Memory Verse

- 1 I waited patiently for the LORD;
he turned to me and heard
my cry.
- 2 He lifted me out of the slimy pit,
out of the mud and mire;
he set my feet on a rock
and gave me a firm place to stand.
- 3 He put a new song in my mouth,
a hymn of praise to our God.
Many will see and fear
and put their trust in the LORD.
- 4 Blessed is the man who makes the
LORD his trust, who does not
look to the proud, to those who
turn aside to false gods.
- 5 Many, O LORD my God,
are the wonders you have done.
The things you planned for us
no one can recount to you;
were I to speak and tell of them,
they would be too many to
declare.
- 6 Sacrifice and offering you did
not desire,
but my ears you have pierced;
burnt offerings and sin offerings
you did not require.
- 8 I desire to do your will,
O my God;
your law is within my heart.”
- 11 Do not withhold your mercy
from me, O LORD;
may your love and your truth
always protect me.
- 12 For troubles without number
surround me;
my sins have overtaken me,
and I cannot see.
They are more than the hairs
of my head,
and my heart fails within me.
- 13 Be pleased, O LORD,
to save me;
O LORD, come quickly to
help me.



I KNOW THAT MY REDEEMER LIVES

SONG
CCLI 184877

Who taught the sun where to stand in the morning?
and Who told the ocean you can only come this far?
and Who showed the moon where to hide 'til evening?
Whose words alone can catch a falling star?

Well I know my Redeemer lives
I know my Redeemer lives
All of creation testifies
This life within me cries
I know my Redeemer lives

The very same God that spins things in orbit
runs to the weary, the worn and the weak
And the same gentle hands that hold me when I'm broken
They conquered death to bring me victory

Now I know my Redeemer lives
I know my Redeemer lives
Let all creation testify
Let this life within me cry
I know my Redeemer, He lives

To take away my shame
And He lives forever, I'll proclaim
That the payment for my sin
Was the precious life He gave
But now He's alive and
There's an empty grave

And I know my Redeemer lives
I know my Redeemer lives
Let all creation testify
Let this life within me cry

REFLECTION

JOURNAL

on your “UP” RELATIONSHIP

After reading and considering each scripture listed below, record your personal response to the corresponding study question.

WAITING ON THE LORD ☞ PSALM 40:1-5

What makes it difficult to be patient with God when our desires, dreams and relationships don't work as planned? _____

What are the consequences you experienced when you did not wait on God? _____

What kind of faith does it take to praise God for the blessings that He is going to give you even before you're going to receive them? _____

GIVING YOURSELF MORE FULLY TO GOD ☞ Ps 40:6-11

“The pierced ears” refers to full devotion to God. What stands in the way of giving yourself more fully to God? _____

Finish the following statement. I will worship God more fully, both with others and personally by _____

DECIDING TO WAIT ☞ PSALM 40:11-17

Make a list of dreams, desires and relationships that you need to patiently wait for God to resolve. Make a second list of ways in which God has blessed you when you have waited on him. Pray over these two lists. Thank God for his past blessings and ask for patience as he delivers future ones.



Starting Over

by Sandra Mackey

**“IF AT
FIRST YOU
DON’T SUCCEED,
TRY, TRY AGAIN”.**

You’ve heard this expression, haven’t you? Everyone struggles with something. Your struggle may not be the same as your neighbor’s, but all of us have at least one area in our lives where success doesn’t come easily.

King David had his own struggles with sin and failure. He was confronted by Nathan, the prophet, after his adultery with Bathsheba and the subsequent murder of her husband, Uriah. David possessed absolute power, and could have had Nathan killed for his daring public con-

frontation. Or, he could have cold-heartedly laughed at the accusations and had Nathan thrown out of the palace. But David knew that Nathan’s message was from God, and, in what may have been the greatest moment of his life, he confessed, *“I have sinned against the LORD.”* (2 Samuel 12:13). David showed himself to be “a man after God’s own heart.” Though he was the king of Israel, he humbled himself before the King of kings.

Look at the 40th psalm. David stated, *“I waited patiently for the Lord...”* Psalms 38 and 39 are proof of David’s patience as he waited for the mercy of God. “He turned to me and heard my cry....” David had prayed and waited, and now he finally had the Lord’s attention.

“He lifted me out of the slimy pit...” In David’s day this would have been a cave or deep pit used as a prison. In the depths of this pit one would have spent long nights alone hearing only the howling of wild beasts, or the hollow sounds of the wind. *“Out of the mud and mire...”* where the longer he stayed, the deeper he sank, and was utterly unable to save himself. These are figurative

(continued on back cover)

STORIES OF FAITH

Only a few of our close friends know that we had only known each other for four weeks before we were married.



Anyone who is married or has been married before knows that it is a lot of work.

"I'VE SEEN GOD DO SOME AMAZING THINGS FOR US. HE'S ANSWERED MANY OF MY PRAYERS, AND EACH TIME I TRUST HIM MORE. THE DEEPER MY FAITH GOES, THE CLOSER I FEEL TO HIM." ADOWA

"OVER THE LAST SIX MONTHS, MY RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD HAS STRENGTHENED BECAUSE I KNOW HIM BETTER AND I'VE FOUND TRUTH IN MATTHEW 11:30. 'FOR MY YOKE IS EASY AND MY BURDEN IS LIGHT.'" LUTHER

The work is made much simpler, when both partners have Christ at the center. When we find it challenging to cope with certain situations we ultimately respond as though we were responding to Christ Himself. This isn't always easy, but the more you practice this, the easier it gets.

Luther and Adowa Sweet

I have been lifted up toward a closer relationship with God in many ways. My family, extended family, and my church, have been the main influences in my life.



"MY FAMILY AND MY HOME CHURCH HAVE PROVIDED AN EXAMPLE OF TRUE FELLOWSHIP, WHICH HAS BEEN THE FOUNDATION FOR MY RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD... MISSION TRIPS TO PLACES AROUND THE U.S. AND AFRICA HAVE INSPIRED ME TO DO GOD'S WORK WHEN I GET BACK." STEPHEN

I've been on several mission trips, which have taught me to appreciate all the things at home I take for granted. These have also inspired me to continue God's work when I get back. While retreats help me focus on my personal relationship with God, mission trips help me focus on others. I learn things from people I serve, but I also find great reward in knowing that by serving I may have done something to change a person's life forever.

Stephen Prather



Starting Over

(continued from page 6)

expressions to point out the dreary, dismal, ruinous state of sin and guilt.

These phrases describe the utter inability of a condemned sinner to save himself from his own guilty conscience, or the corruption of his heart.

"He set my feet on a rock and gave me a firm place to stand." The Lord changed David's sentence from "guilty" to "pardoned"; and his life from "corrupted" to "holy." He now had power over sin and could walk steadily in the way of truth and light.

"He put a new song in my mouth...." Cheerfulness and joy had long eluded David. His life was full of constant complaining and he continually fell prey to suffering and wretchedness. In receiving

God's favor he also received a new song of praise. "New" was used in scripture to signify excellence. So, David, the psalmist who had written many songs, was now able to sing a new, most excellent song testifying to his new beginning. He was starting over.

It's that time for each of us. Every Spring is an adventure in new beginnings. Flowers bloom, tender leaves emerge, and the colors of Spring explode, creating a mural of beauty everywhere we look. It's an excellent time for a fresh beginning - a time when we can turn and enjoy the grace of God again.

Lord, help us to wait patiently when we pray until we receive the new song You want to put in our mouths. ☺



EACH EDITION OF LIFT IS CREATED TO INSPIRE
OUR READERS TO GIVE THEMSELVES FULLY TO GOD.

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