



Into the Light

All things are possible with God
May – June 2021

Lost and Now Found

By Bob Van Domelen

⁴ “Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Doesn’t he leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it? ⁵ And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders ⁶ and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbors together and says, ‘Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.’” (Luke 15:4-6)



Recently, I watched the first episode of *The Chosen* (Season Two) and was caught a little off guard at the direction it took. The final episode of Season One had Jesus meeting the woman at the well, an event

that changed her life forever. Jesus entering Samaria in this new episode seemed a logical direction. His destination, however, was a crippled man, a Samaritan, but so much more than that.

Sitting around a fire, a crippled man is coaxed by Jesus to tell his story because, as Jesus shared, “We tell and listen to stories. Our stories connect us.” Then looking at the man with compassion, Jesus said, “Tell me your story.” And the man did.

Faced with life-draining poverty, he and a friend robbed a man traveling on the highway, stole his possessions and his horse, and left the man for dead. On his way to sell the horse, the man fell from the horse, knew his leg was broken, yet somehow made it home. But his physical condition was nothing compared to the guilt he felt over what he and his friend had done. They had killed a man.

Finished with his story, the man looked at Jesus and said, “I killed him.” “No, you didn’t,” replied Jesus. “Someone came along and made sure he would be nursed back to health.” “How could you know?” Jesus simply responded, “I know.”

This was a rather long introduction just to arrive at a simple point: Jesus went out of his way to seek out the man to heal him, to breathe new life into him. I hope that feels familiar to you because it certainly does to me.

I cannot count the many times I sat in church and later in a prison chapel waiting for words that felt like they were spoken just for me. “Yes, Bob,” the gentle voice would say, “I know what you did, and I forgive you even though many might not ever do so.” And in that secret place in my heart, those words would be received with heartfelt gratitude.

***My sheep listen to my voice;
I know them, and they follow me.*** (John 10:27)

Did you ever get the feeling that you were not only lost but so lost that you couldn’t be found? Maybe worse, that you didn’t *want* to be found. . . or found out. Despite the harm I brought to others, the shame of what I was doing was so great that I could not tell others. I believed that my choices were so far out of God’s design that my name was not to be mentioned in His presence. Why would God want to know me? That thinking made it easy for me to wish I struggled with any other issue than the one that brought so much pain and darkness.

A major part of the healing and change process for me has been to accept that Jesus *does* know my name, and more, that He wants me! Maybe this is a weak connection, but when I was a boy and sides were being chosen for a game of baseball or football, I always hoped that one of the captains would call out “We want Bob” but I was rarely near the top of their choice list. Now, however, I can hear Jesus call out “I’ll take Bob” and that fills me with excitement and a sense of belonging.

Doesn’t he leave the ninety-nine. . . and go after the lost sheep until he finds it?

I have read that the sheep know the voice of the shepherd and follow that sound and, more importantly, they trust the shepherd. Jesus, the Divine Shepherd, knows his flock, his children. He knows that they recognize the sound of his voice. He knows they follow where he leads because, like the sheep, they trust him. Then there is that lost sheep, the one who went astray and got so far afield that he could no longer hear the shepherd’s voice.

And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all those he has given me but raise them up at the last day. (John 6:39) Though it was only one sheep, it was not meant to be lost. Though I was weak and lost in my sinfulness, I was never *meant* to be lost. I was meant to be lifted up at the last day. Jesus left those he knew would be safe to search for and find me. “Here I am, Bob. Come to me.” And in my heart, I knew that voice. It was the one who loved me and died for me. “Over here, Lord. In this terrible place in which I find myself. Can you help me get out?”

Strong yet gentle hands lifted me and placed me on his shoulders. On the journey out of my darkness, Jesus sang love songs and my heart pulsed in rhythm with his melodies of forgiveness.

Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep

As much as I know those melodies are meant to be remembered and honored, some days I let my busyness and preoccupation with life make them hard to hear. Worse, there are times when I have a hard time even remembering them. But I have not forgotten his voice and even though the

melodies fade, the voice is singing new melodies, beautiful melodies.

The shepherd calls together friends and excitedly speaks of the sheep that was lost but is found. Some might ask "Where did you find him?" and might want to hear the details, but the shepherd is not concerned about where the sheep has been. He rejoices that the sheep once more listens to his voice.

You might not think so, but there are people rejoicing over you. They know of your heart's desire to change; they see you put aside the dark choices that were once so important to you, so much a part of your addictive cycles; and they recognize the new creation you are becoming. There will come a time when you recognize them, though maybe now is too soon.

Most of you must put up with people who see only your charges. You live with insults, threats of all sorts, and rejection more common than any sign of welcome. But none of that takes away from this message: God loves you, Jesus died for you, and the Holy Spirit lives in you. You were lost but are now found. So rejoice, for you have been called.

I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent. (Luke 15:7) □

Our Prayer Corner



Prayer is an incredible gift we can give one another, for there is no better thing than to lift our lives, hopes, and dreams to the altar of the Lord.

Let us pray . . .

- First and foremost, for our victims, that each day for them is a new day, a day without fear, and a day of healing.
- For those who feel completely lost and without hope, that they will come to know the presence and love of the Good Shepherd.
- For those who feel alone, that they will come to find others who care for them.
- For those seeking God, that His word becomes an invitation to learning and growing.
- For families and friends of registrants, that they will see their loved one as the sheep the Shepherd seeks.
- For chaplains in all institutions, that they are able to introduce the loving presence of the Lord.
- For churches/pastors, that they encourage the prayers for all those who are lost and need to be found.
- For Bob's health, that the ministry God has for him will continue to be an encouragement and hope for others.
- For this ministry, that Broken Yoke Ministries continues to be blessed with the financial support needed to meet basic expenses like this newsletter.
- (As Always) For those who are still abusing, that they will come to understand the devastation they bring on their victims and that they seek help for themselves.

Bits & Pieces

The following are taken from letters I have received since the last issue of this newsletter. Some are meant to offer hope and encouragement while others call out for us to be in prayer.

This year I will be under 20 years remaining of my sentence. I am at peace in that. I don't know how but I am. Once I stopped fighting Jesus in this, I just felt better.

We stuff everything (our issues) in a closet when we clean our room and then claim the room is clean. Instead of surrendering the things in our closet to God, we hold on to them and they are brought up time after time by Satan and used against us, against our witness, and thus against God.

Recently when I spoke with to my sex offender facilitator, one of the things she told me is that if I fail the polygraph test, she would have me revoked. Later when I thought about what she said, I realized the only way I could fail is if I am not completely honest.

Thank you for remembering all of us and continuing with your ministry. May God continue to bless your ministry and all your readers because, at least for me, I am much thankful. [Thank you for the blessing!]

After realizing I had just had a deviant thought, I told myself that it was inappropriate and that I needed to confess my sin immediately. I have Scriptures I use when these thoughts happen: 2 Corinthians 10:4-5 and Titus 3:3-4 are just two of them.

Can I Tell You Something?

A collection of *Into the Light* Articles
By Bob Van Domelen

This is just an announcement but one I want to share with you who read *Into the Light*.

For several years now, I have been considering a book based on the main articles found in this newsletter since 1997. Given that there were 145 to choose from, I let the Holy Spirit make the choices for me and in the end, 28 articles made the cut. They might not be the best by everyone's standards, but they do touch on issues that I found important in my own life as well as in the lives of those who correspond with me.

I have been learning that self-publishing is the direction taken these days, although the best choice is purchasing a 'package' with a reputable publisher. Base packages I have seen come with an average price tag of \$1100, so this is definitely a prayer-filled venture.

The book available as a PDF download on the ministry website (www.brokenyoke.org) for those readers who might have friends on the outside. When a decision is made about offering a physical book for purchase, I will make sure that information is made available to you. Until then, join me in prayer about this venture.

“Pro-Life Sentences”

by Stephen

It is the relentless, furious love of God the Father, and the Gospel of Jesus which gives life unconditional value and abundance. This love is a powerful force to work grace in our lives.

My parents were the ones who most demonstrated this unconditional love of God. They came to visit me here and they would say to me, “I am so proud of you!” I answered them, “But Mom, Dad, I am in prison with a life sentence!” Mom would answer, “I don’t care. You are my son. I love you and I am proud of you!” “And the Voice came down from Heaven and said, ‘You are My Beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased.’” (Matthew 3:17 – NIV)

What it means to be pro-life is to believe, because of the love of God, there is nothing that can take away the value of living life. No matter where we are living, or whatever we are living through, living life in Jesus is all GRACE. I hear it said here, we can never be happy or even okay, living in prison. To say that “I can never be happy until I go home,” “until I get my family back,” “until I can make some money,” “until whatever!” is the anti-life lie of the culture of death offered by Satan because it puts a condition upon the value of life. That is how Satan comes “to steal, kill, and destroy” life (John 10:10 – NIV).”

I do not believe prison life is a detour from life. Life is never “on hold” as it is often said. To be pro-life means that the quality of life is not based upon the so-called quality of circumstance. Rather, the quality of life is based on the quality of one’s spirit. This quality of abundant spirit comes from the Spirit of Jesus. This is the infinite value of the soul.

With this spiritual perspective of the love of God - an eternal point of view - there is nothing that can happen in life, either past or present, which can take away the quality and value of life. The love of God transcends all things (Romans 8:37 – NIV). In this spiritual life of Jesus, nothing can harm the soul hidden in this Spirit of Love.

It is for freedom that Jesus came (John 8:36 – NIV). I do not believe that Jesus came to set me free from the prison of TDCJ (Texas Department of Criminal Justice). He came to set me free **in** prison! A deeper, more powerful freedom. Free from attachments of the flesh and the stuff of the world. Freedom from addictions. Anyone set free from these sins is free indeed! This is abundant life. “The Lord is Spirit,” Paul says, “and where The Spirit of The Lord is, there is freedom.” (2 Corinthians 3:17 – NIV). It is for life and freedom Jesus came. I am free to live. I am free to worship. I am free to serve and live for Jesus, even here in prison. There is no greater freedom of power than living in love for Jesus!

All things are possible with God!

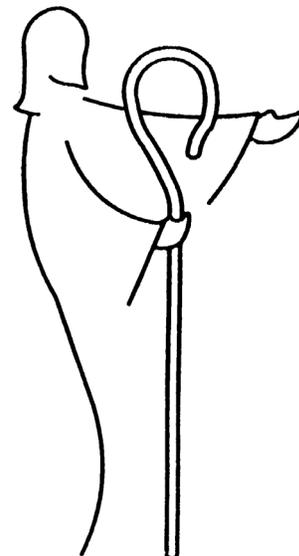
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Forgive and Awaken Us

Lord God, heavenly Father,
we all like sheep have gone astray,
led away from the right path by Satan
and our own sinful flesh.

Graciously forgive us all our sins
for the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ,
and awaken our hearts by your Holy Spirit,
that we may abide in your Word
and in true repentance and a steadfast faith
continue in your Church to the end
and obtain eternal salvation;
through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one true God, now and forever
Amen.

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A Little Humor

An out-of-towner drove his car into a ditch in a desolated area. Luckily, a local farmer came to help with his big strong horse named Buddy. He hitched Buddy up to the car and yelled, "Pull, Nellie, pull!" Buddy didn't move. Then the farmer hollered, "Pull, Buster, pull!" Buddy didn't respond.

Once more the farmer commanded, "Pull, Coco, pull!" Nothing. Then the farmer nonchalantly said, "Pull, Buddy, pull!" And the horse easily dragged the car out of the ditch. The motorist was most appreciative and very curious. He asked the farmer why he called his horse by the wrong name three times. The farmer said, "Oh, Buddy is blind and if he thought he was the only one pulling, he wouldn't even try!"

