

Captured by the Finished Work

Carl H. Stevens Jr. is pastor of Greater Grace World Outreach located in Baltimore, Maryland. Pastor Stevens is also chancellor of Maryland Bible College & Seminary and host of the international Christian radio program "The Grace Hour." This booklet was created from a message preached by Pastor Stevens.

Pastor Stevens can be seen weekly on cable television stations throughout the United States. Call us for information regarding programming in your area.

All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from the King James Version. Italics for emphasis are ours.

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INTRODUCTION

*“Two men looked out from prison bars;
One saw mud, the other saw stars.”*

Paul and Silas didn't have windows in their prison chamber at Philippi. According to Acts 16:24-25, they were thrown into the inner prison, with their feet in stocks. That meant they were on their backs with open wounds against the filthy floor. Still, at midnight they sang praises to God.

Those men were already prisoners, having been captured by the Finished Work of their Savior, Jesus Christ. They, like many others, were constrained to spread the Gospel as far as they could—at whatever the price.

The apostle Paul declared himself “a prisoner of the Lord” in Ephesians 4:1. He spent much of his Christian life in prisons and bound with heavy chains, but his vision went far beyond the stars.

While many of us have never been in a prison for any reason, many of us do have a sense of other kinds of bondage—to sin, sickness, financial difficulties. God's desire is that whatever our situation, we would be captured by the Finished Work and have a vision from heaven's perspective. With that, earthly shackles will fall off, hell's foundations will be shaken, and many will be saved.

Chapter One

PRISONERS OF THE LORD

“I will praise the name of God with a song, and will magnify him with thanksgiving.

“This also shall please the LORD better than an ox or bullock that hath horns and hoofs.

“The humble shall see this, and be glad: and your heart shall live that seek God.

“For the LORD heareth the poor, and despiseth not his prisoners” (Psalm 69:30-33).

In Psalm 69:33, God hears the *poor* in spirit—those who know they need Christ. He does not *despise* (He doesn’t regard with contempt) those who are His *prisoners*—those who are risen with Christ. God listens to and regards with great pleasure believers who are seeking the things that are above, where Jesus sits at God’s right hand; who set their mind on things above and not below; who reckon that they are dead, and their life is hid with Christ in God (Colossians 3:3).

To be a prisoner of the Lord means that I cannot get out of Christ.

Second, it means that I cannot leave my position in heavenly places—*ever* (Ephesians 2:6).

Third, it means that even if grace disciplines me, I can never come out from under grace.

Fourth, I cannot increase or decrease unconditional love. God's character is love (1 John 4:8); He changes not (Malachi 3:6). Jesus Christ, who became the expression of the Father's love to the world, is the same yesterday, today, and forever (Hebrews 13:8).

Don't Forget

The reason that many of God's people are not consistent—though they are beautiful Christians in terms of integrity and desire—is this: They become forgetful hearers and lose what they hear in sermons.

“Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him” (1 Corinthians 2:9). This is not about people who do not fail but about those who love Him. Those who have sinned much, love much (Luke 7:47). Furthermore, we don't even begin to know how much God loves us and how much He has

prepared for those who love Him.

The Holy Spirit Himself “searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.” How shall a man know what is in him, except by his human spirit? Even so, no one knows God except by the Holy Spirit. We have not received the spirit of this world, but the Spirit of God, that we may know the things freely given to us by Christ (see 1 Corinthians 2:10-12).

The natural or “soulish” man, the *psuchikos* man, does not receive the things of God: neither can he know them, for those things are only spiritually discerned (see 1 Corinthians 2:14). The Holy Spirit compares spiritual with spiritual. He does not speak according to man’s wisdom, but instead He teaches us everything about the spiritual world.

“But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged by no man. For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct Him? But we have the mind of Christ” (1 Corinthians 2:15-16).

When we do not let the Holy Spirit teach us, we fall back into ourselves and the bondage of our old ways. If, however, we become prisoners of Jesus Christ (Philemon 1:9), we are prisoners captured by the Finished Work.

Blessed with Healthy Emotions

God desires to bless us, and in all things make us rich. He doesn't want to add sorrow to our lives (see Proverbs 10:22).

To be "blessed" means to be empowered by the living Word and the Holy Spirit in God's grace. When God blesses us, we are on the receiving end of blessings. Empowered and prospering, we become blessing givers.

Our hearts will prosper. Our minds, including the memory and the conscience (with its norms and standards), our self-consciousness (what we're occupied with), our volition, and most of all, our emotions will prosper.

Projections to the unconscious mind cannot interfere with Christ's emotions in us. We will come out of ourselves, not in Adam's emotions in the sincerity of a good effort and striving to be right, but with the healthy emotions of the mind of Christ.

Showers of Blessings

God says that he who hears the Word of God shall prosper (Proverbs 8:34-35). In Deuteronomy 28:2, He said, "all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God."

Hearken to His voice: Hearken to the Word of God. Lay aside “all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to [deliver] your souls” (James 1:21).

If anyone is a hearer of the Word and not a doer, he deceives himself. He is like a man who goes to the mirror and beholds his natural face, and then goes away, forgetting what he is like. “But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work,” this one who practices the Word shall prosper and be blessed in every deed (see James 1:24-25).

When we listen to the Word of God preached, we must let the Holy Spirit teach us. When the Spirit teaches us, divine energy enters into every part of our soul and body. When by grace through faith we retain what He teaches, then we prosper (3 John 2). He teaches us how to prosper.

Prospering with Eternal Riches

The blessings promised by God extend to all areas of our lives. According to Deuteronomy 28:3, whether we go into the city or work in the field, we will be blessed.

In verse 6, whether we are preparing food and doing work in our home, or if we go out of the house, we will be blessed.

In verse 9, we are called God's people, separated unto Himself.

In verse 12, God will bless businesses by sending the rain in the right season.

And in verse 13, He will make us the head—more than conquerors—and we will no longer be the tail—the downtrodden. Our God loves to bless His children.

Chapter Two

THE POWER IN GOD'S LOVE

It is so crucial for us to understand the divine energy in love. The term we call “energy” and often read as “power” comes from several different roots. *Dunamis* is the divine power by which we were saved and translated from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God’s dear Son. *Energeia* is the power that transfers the Word to the memory. *Ischus* is the power to retain and recall categorical doctrine in the memory. *Kratos* is the manifestation of divine truth to the rest of our soul and body (Ephesians 1:19).

What amazing power is in God’s love. That is why we are here attending church, and that is why so many churches are worshipping God—it is the power of God’s love.

How about the energy that comes when we get to know the pure grace of God? How about the joy that becomes our strength, in Nehemiah 8:10? How about the gratitude when we grasp

the truth about mercy—that we will never get the punishment we deserve? Oh, the energy that goes into every part of us. That is why we worship and sing.

The Power of a New Name

Jabez made an interesting statement in 1 Chronicles 4:9-10. Not only did he refuse to submit to the name his mother gave him, which meant “sorrow.” Jabez prayed to the Lord and said, “Enlarge my coast.” He said, “Bless me *indeed*. Keep Your hand upon me. Don’t let me grieve You.” And the Lord granted all of his requests.

Jabez said, “I am not going to be a sorrow bringer. I am going to be a blessing bringer.”

The Power in Forgiveness

The energy of forgiveness is magnificent. We must learn to forgive those who have wounded us—and to *truly* forgive them in our unconscious mind.

A singer committed a crime and went to prison for many years. While he was there, among the few people to contact him were some members of a well-known Gospel singing group.

When he finally was released from prison,

he prayed that he would have an opportunity to sing again. For a long time, nobody called. But in God's perfect time, the leader of that group called him and said, "We're going to have an old-time gathering. Would you come and sing up a storm?" That man cried like a baby for two days. He had been forgiven—not only by God, but by faithful, forgiven Christians.

There is such power in forgiveness. On the video recording of that session, while he was singing so beautifully, I watched the eyes of those who knew the power of perfect love. Tears were running down their faces. That man was so thankful—and God was well pleased.

Never Give Up

When uncomfortable situations come up, we can so readily withdraw into Adam. It may be unintentional, yet we can withdraw into our emotions. We can withdraw into our problems. We can withdraw into our past. We withdraw because we keep failing in an area. May I say this?

We may withdraw into guilt and into negative energy. Perhaps we accept condemnation instead of exposing our failure to the light of grace. As many times as it happens, until victory

comes, keep drawing near to the throne of grace and don't quit. *Don't quit!* We cannot hide in a problem or a circumstance forever. It will find us out eventually.

Perhaps you have sensed the negative energy that comes from rejection, or from conviction without conversion. You can turn that into positive energy by allowing the flow of God's love, the teaching of God's grace, the miracle of rebound, and the consistency of His patience to fill you. God is waiting for you to receive mercy.

Chapter Three

PRISONERS OF THE FINISHED WORK

We are prisoners of the Finished Work. No matter where you are tonight, no matter what has happened in your life, if Jesus Christ is your Savior, you are a prisoner of the Finished Work.

Remember what Paul said in Ephesians 4:1: "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk [honorably] of the vocation wherewith ye are called."

Through all these years, and growing all the time, I know that I am a prisoner of Love forever. God is love. He will never let us go. He will never change, and His perfect love is always available.

The Lord said to Moses in Exodus 33:21, "Moses, stand on the rock." And we know, according to 1 Corinthians 10:4, that rock is Jesus Christ.

Then He said, "When I pass by, I'll hide you

in the cleft of the rock. When I pass by, and my hand will cover you."

He said, "Moses, you will not see My face. You will only see My back parts."

We don't walk by sight. We walk by faith. We don't see His face, because the Word comes behind us saying, "This is the way; walk in it." We walk by faith in categorical doctrine of Isaiah 30:21.

Hid in Christ—Not in the Past

The Bible says, in Colossians 3:3, that "your life is hid with Christ in God." The word "hid" meant that it was placed where no intruders could find it. When the pharaohs died, all of their treasures would go into a sepulcher, at the end of a special maze or tunnel. That way, anyone searching for the treasures could not find them.

Satan cannot find us because we are God's treasure, hid with Christ in God. What's more, *our* treasures are not on this earth, but they are laid up for us in heaven (Matthew 6:20). We are prisoner's of Christ, captured by the Finished Work.

When a certain woman who had lived in deep sin became gloriously saved, she said, "I

always wanted to know that even I could be forgiven and have a new opportunity." As a missionary today, she is not hiding in her past, but she is living in her new creation. She is a great treasure, hid with Christ in God.

The unsearchable riches of God's grace are inexhaustible, incomprehensible, unfathomable, and past finding out (Romans 11:33).

A New Identity, a Brand-New Name

In Psalm 118:26a, "Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the LORD"—and His name reveals the nature of Christ (Exodus 34:5-7a).

Psalm 34:1a says "I will bless the LORD at all times." But Jesus, in Matthew 5:44, takes us further by asking us to pray for and bless our enemies.

God is a God who blesses, a God who adds unto us, a God who provides what we need to overcome the natural inclination toward what people have named us and our predisposition in Adam.

Oh, the grace of Almighty God. I think of this testimony, not in remembering the sin, but in proclaiming the practical reality of Redemption. A certain man had been with a hundred men, sexually. He has now been saved for thirty

years. As a pastor and a missionary, he is hid with Christ, washed in the Blood of the Lamb. He is as pure as gold and a fantastic servant.

As co-laborers together with God, I beseech you that you do not receive the grace of God in vain. Now is the accepted time. Now is the given day. Now is the day of deliverance (2 Corinthians 6:1-2). *Now*.

Having received God's Word on this subject, by grace through faith, go forward and *know* that you know that you know! We have been delivered out of the bondage of darkness, and are now captives of the Living God and the work that was finished on Calvary.

"Wherewithal shall a young man [or woman] cleanse his way? by taking heed [to the Word of God]" (Psalm 119:9).

The Blood shed on the Cross goes into our unconscious, cleansing and purging it, leaving no short-circuits to hinder our walk. Captured, we desire to live with a single-eye toward the One who leads captivity captive.

CONCLUSION

We have been delivered from destruction through His redemption and “crowned with lovingkindness and tender mercies.” (see Psalm 103:4).

Imagine it! You have been crowned with lovingkindness and tender mercies—crowned as a king (Revelation 1:6). God has given you a crown, and it is lovingkindness and tender mercies—which is the very character of God.

How could we ever comprehend the Father of mercies, the God of all comfort? (2 Corinthians 1:3.) He can never act outside of the Finished Work. He is always true to His attributes, because that glorifies Him.

The apostle Paul said in 1 Corinthians 15:10, “by the grace of God I am what I am.” And 1 Peter 5:10, our God is the God of all grace—*all*.

In Psalm 132:13-15, God has chosen Zion, the city of God’s people, as His dwelling place: “This is my rest for ever: here will I dwell; for I

have desired it. I will abundantly bless her provision...." And when He blesses, God will never take back the blessing (Numbers 23:20).