

January - February 2005

The Gathering Net - 2005

Pastor Carmen shares his heart...

Dear Saints,

Whew, it's been a mighty involved two months. Elaine finished three weeks of rehab on her knees in November and was in good health except for heel spurs on both feet. She left the week before Thanksgiving for Arkansas to be with her mother and help give her aunt, who is the primary caregiver a break. It was the first Thanksgiving and Christmas that the two of us have been apart in 37 years. So I utilized the time and flew to Pittsburgh to spend Christmas with my mom and family. This was my first holiday with them since I've been married. I had a great time (snow included) even though for 3-4 weeks I had infected sinus and lungs (bronchitis) and was on antibiotics and steroids. This sickness was hard to shake, but I have recently gotten well.

Elaine returned home a week earlier than planned on January 2nd due to the unexpected

death of Jamie Caudill (40), a young woman who we adopted into our family

Lost loved ones?

years ago when she was just a troubled teenager. So after a night of rest, we packed

for Fort Meyers, Florida to share in Jamie's 'home coming' celebration.

During this same time the youngest of our 11 grandchildren, Trevor, Rachelle and Andy's 22 month old son, was rushed to emergency. He was very sick with double pneumonia and the RSV virus (very contagious and sometimes fatal) for those under five years old. He returned home after a week in the hospital; continued his breathing treatments and antibiotics. It took a lot of prayer, experienced doctors and hospital staff, the help of friends and love of family. He is doing just fine now. What a joy to see him laughing and playing once again. Thank you Jesus!

Family sick?

So except for a few other things: (1) Carmen's mom being rushed to the hospital last week (2) Elaine's heel spurs got worse; under doctor's care, (3) our brother-in-law taken to hospital in Arkansas and (4) Elaine's mom has fallen several times since she has been back home.....**we are all doing well and continue to be grateful to a loving, caring Father who is there with us through it all and in His time makes it all right again.**

Exhausted by it all?

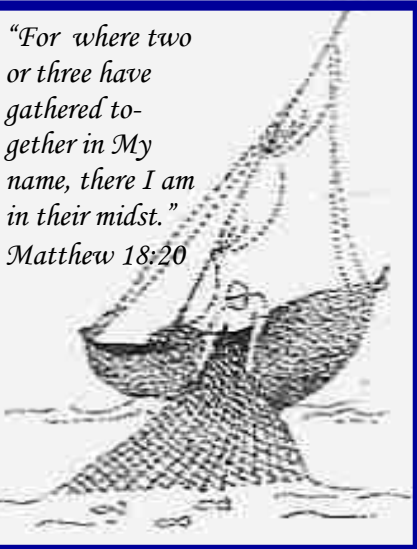
Rejoice in the Lord always...(Phil. 4:4)

In everything give thanks...(1 Thes. 5:18)

Now to get to the focus of this newsletter; a few months ago an article was sent to us. We thought it to be so encouraging that we would like to share it with you as sort of a mind-set for 2005. After reading it, I would like to make a few comments particularly focusing on the word, **Happy**.

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"For where two or three have gathered together in My name, there I am in their midst."
Matthew 18:20



(Continued from page 1)

Stop Waiting Until ...Be Happy Right Now

We convince ourselves that life will be better
after we get married, have a baby, then another.
Then we are frustrated that the kids aren't old enough
and we'll be more content when they are.
After that, we're frustrated that we have teenagers to deal with.
We will certainly be happy when they are out of the stage.
We tell ourselves that our life will be complete when
our spouse gets his or her act together,
when we get a nicer car,
are able to go on a nice vacation, or when we retire.
The truth is, there's no better time to be happy than right now!
If not now, when?

Your life will always be filled with challenges.
It's best to admit this to yourself and decide to be happy anyway.
Happiness is the way.

So treasure every moment that you have and treasure it more because you shared it with some-
one special,
Special enough to spend your time with
and remember that time waits for no one.

So, stop waiting

until you get a new home or a new car
until your car or home is paid off
until your kids leave the house
until you got back to school
until you loose ten pounds
until your divorce is final
until you finish school
until you get married
until you get a raise
until you have kids
until you retire
until summer
until winter
until fall
until you die;

There is no better time that RIGHT NOW TO BE HAPPY.

Happiness is a journey, not a destination.

So work like you don't need money.
Love like you've never been hurt.
And dance like no one's watching

(Continued on page 3)

(Continued from page 2) With all the negative things going on in the world and the trials and tribulations many of us face, I thought this article might have you consider, "How much we, as natural human beings, always seem to want things different."

Why? (1) because we're just not satisfied or (2) things are not up to our expectations. We are just NOT as "happy" as we want to be! Mostly, it is just because things are not going our way! Ouch.....sorry!

Let's look back at three words: **Happy**, **joy** and **contentment**. There are many definitions for all three and since we are in space constraint I would like to sum them up for us. **Happiness** is a state of well being, fortune, favor, or gladness. It is a feeling out of our **soul**; a natural emotion, which is usually dictated by circumstances, times, places, events. It is good and positive, but not the best. The very best is **joy** It can be both natural and super natural (spiritual). It encompasses delight, pleasure and rejoicing. It is not limited to just those; but is also a state of well being and satisfaction not dictated by circumstances. Let me explain. It is a **Fruit of the Spirit** by faith not feeling. It is **eternal**, not temporary, because it is exclusively based on our vertical relationship with Jesus. You see you can be sad (opposite of happy) in a circumstance in life (death of our son, Shawn) but still experience joy because of Shawn's and our relationship with Jesus.

Now many of us don't get to experience the fullness of JOY because of our mindset or attitude toward life! We often complain with words like these:

- * **It's just not fair.**
- * **It always happens to me.**
- * **Why do I always get the short end of the stick?**
- * **I am a child of the King...why does it seem like he favors them more than me and my family?**
- * **Boy, it sure seems like I always get the raw end of the deal.**
- * **Oh, I just know that God is angry at me**

and has given up on me.

Now I know that none of you saints of God have ever said those words.....I was just relaying what *others* have said. (chuckle) Seriously, though, the word we need to focus on is **contentment!** Paul said in Philippians chapter four, "Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say rejoice." He also said, "I have found the secret in life (peace, joy, etc.) and that is I am content in whatever circumstance I am in: hungry or full, naked or clothed, cold or hot, with or without. You know why he said that? He trusted in his Sovereign God.

Contentment is freedom from fear, care, discomfort; satisfied with ones possessions, status or situation. It literally means having everything you need within you. That is Christ in us.....the hope of glory! He is our everything; the EL SHADDAI.

Saints, I am writing this not only to you, but to myself. I too, want a fresh mindset and Godly outlook in life. I know this is long but please bear with me for one great example of what I am talking about.

Horatio Spafford in 1871 lost all of his business in the great Chicago fire. Shortly after, while his family was crossing the Atlantic Ocean he lost all four of his daughters in a collision with another ship. His wife was saved. Several weeks later as he was traveling over the very spot where he lost his daughters he wrote these words to the famous hymn, "It is well with my soul." Ironically, Philip Bless was tragically killed in a train wreck shortly after writing the music to the song. But, Horatio still said... "It is well, it is well with my soul." We sure see how his relationship with the Lord sustained him in joy even though he was grieved in his soul.

Elaine and I pray that 2005 will be a year when you too can draw on His mighty grace and strength, be content and give thanks in all things, and say, "It is well with my soul."

Enjoying Him,

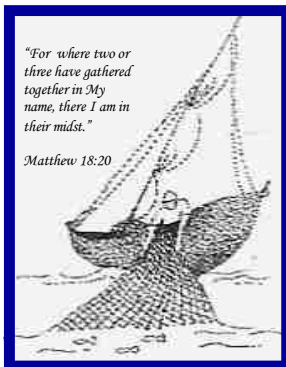
Carmen

THE GATHERING IS A MINISTRY OF UNITY AND RECONCILIATION OF THE BODY OF CHRIST!

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the prayer closet - "We are ever giving thanks to God for all of you, continually mentioning [you when engaged] in our prayers, recalling unceasingly before our God and Father your work energized by faith and service motivated by love, and unwavering hope in (the return of) our Lord Jesus Christ, the Messiah." 1 Thess. 1:2-3

Carmen in Ministry...

- Tues, Feb. 1 Teach Bible Study for Alabama Supreme Court (7 am)
- Wed., Feb. 2 Prayer Team for Get Motivated Seminar at Carmichael Center (6:30 am to 5:00 pm)
- Wed., Feb. 16 Servant Leadership Meeting at Frazer (10:30 am)
John 17 Pastor's Luncheon at Frazer (11:30 am to 1:00 pm)
- Thurs. Feb. 24 Beasley Allen Bible Study Downtown (Noon)
- Sat. Feb. 26 CAPLN Training Day in Greenville, AL (8:30am—3:30 pm)

Prayer Concerns...

- Pray for those who made decisions for Christ at the "Get Motivated" conference to grow in the Lord and find a church home, etc.***
- Pray for the Servant Leader Team and John 17 to accomplish God's purposes through the pastors in Montgomery.***
- Pray for churches in the Greenville area and all of Central Alabama to be touched by the teaching of CAPLN on Feb. 26. Pray for anointing on Carmen, Bill Hurley, Gwen Bradley and Jan Niel as they teach.***
- Pray for healing of Elaine's feet and for Carmen to sleep better.***