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From : GARY FIELDS, ID: M05398

To : Deana Ruggier, Customer ID: 18996791

Date : 11/23/2018 11:16:26 AM EST, Letter ID: 511416629

Location : 401

Housing : D2203L

Hello Deana,

This afternoon I have to give a speech in the "rec yard" as part of a Gavel Club (Toastmaster's) Thanksgiving Program. I just put the finishing touches on the speech, and I'm going to shoot you a copy. The tablet will be my teleprompter :-), although, once I get that "Mic" in my hand, I might be led by the Spirit to go in a different direction altogether:-) We'll see what happens... The "theme," of course, is Thanksgiving.

GOD'S PROMISES

Most of us are not too happy about giving thanks from prison....

Of course we would much rather be with family and friends during the Holidays, but we can all find reasons to give thanks.

Maya Angelou wrote a biography that she called, "I know why the Caged Bird Sings." But many years before that, the great poet Paul Lawrence Dunbar wrote the original poem, "I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings."

It was a good book! It was a great poem! But I know why the caged bird lost his song.... You see, little Chippie never saw it coming. One minute he was sitting in his cage, singing a sweet song, a melody pure and true:-), when Marge decided to clean out his cage.

She took the attachment off of the hose, and very carefully, began to vacuum out the bottom of Chippie's cage.... Suddenly, the phone rang.

When Marge turned around to pick up the phone, Thwunk! Little Chippie got sucked up into the hose. ... Marge panicked! But, THINKING QUICKLY, she practically ripped the vacuum bag apart, and POOF! There was a huge cloud of dust... and there sat Chippie, stunned, covered with dust and barely alive.

THINKING QUICKLY, Marge grabbed Chippie and ran into the bathroom, she turned on the faucet and held Chippie under the running water..... Just before Chippie drowned, Marge realized what she was doing. She took Chippie and laid him out on a towel. Poor Chippie was hanging in there, but he was in pretty bad shape. Most of the dust was gone, but he was soaked he laid there shivering, and trying to catch his breath.

THINKING QUICKLY...:-) Marge grabbed her hair dryer, and put it on high....:-)

A short time later, someone asked Marge how Chippie was doing....

"Well, Chippie doesn't sing much anymore," she said "he just kind of sits there and stares." LOL

Now, one thing I'm thankful for, at least I'm not Chippie. A dust storm, flood and hurricane, all within 3 minutes.... Phew! That had to be a trip.

My journey has not been an easy one... and you know what? We may have come here on different ships, but we're all in the same boat now.

Whether we took a plea deal, or faced a jury, there came a time when the gavel fell... a time when we found ourselves sitting in a holding cell, trying to wrap our minds around a chunk of time.

Later, for me, that razor wire felt like a leash, and the fences seemed a mile high.... I didn't feel much like singing, and for a long time, I could only sit and stare.

I didn't find God in prison....but where once I walked in His blessings, my faith was being severely tested, and I had to learn how to depend upon His Promises.

You see, I realized that if I allowed my circumstances, my situation or location determine my attitude, there was a good chance I would spend my time murmuring and complaining. I could spend my time wandering around in the wilderness, or I could press on towards the Promise Land.

Moses got the people to the Promise Land, but it would be up to Joshua to get them in..... and God said, "Only be

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strong and courageous, as I was with Moses, so I shall be with you."

When Josiah finally got into the Promise land, he found himself in Jericho, one of the oldest, most fortified cities in the world. And God said, in Joshua 6: 2, "See, I have given into your hands Jericho, and the king thereof, and the mighty men of valor."

Now, if Joshua had been like you or me, he might have said, "But what part of the game is that?" :-) The king was safely behind those massive walls, protected by a mighty army, and God was pretty much saying...."I've given you the victory."

Joshua faced a fortified city,
But he was standing upon promised ground-
There was no time for doubt, or self-pity,
Those walls would have to come tumbling down.

God said the victory was in his hand,
And though he might not understand it-
He believed what God said He had planned,
Those walls would fall as God had commanded.

But between God's promises and our possession,
There may be walls in well of our lives-
It's a place of prayer and intercession,
Where doubts fall, and our faith survives.

Moses faced the Pharaoh,
Having cast aside his fear-
And David faced Goliath
Without a sword or a spear.

Gideon faced a mighty army,
With just three hundred men-
And Daniel didn't cower
While in the lion's den.

Paul found joy in trials,
Through suffering and pain-
He faced it well rejoicing
And counting loss as gain.

But it was not by power, nor by might,
The victory was not theirs alone-
They were all strengthened in their fight,
By the power which flows from the throne.

Now Joshua, he faced a fortified city,
And we're surrounded by some razor wire-
This is no time for doubt or self-pity,
It's God's promises that we require!

You know, almost every time someone wins an award, whether it be it be an Oscar, a Grammy or a trophy for Super Bowl, they begin by saying, "I want to thank God." Well, we don't have to wait until this journey's over to be thankful for the Promises of God. Let His word be like a lamp into our feet, (to show us where we stand,) and a light onto our path, (saying, this is the way, walk ye in it). Let us all give thanks... for the promises of God.

He will lead you through the fire,

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He will lead you through the flood-
By the hand of the Messiah,
Once you learn to plead the blood.

Do that, and you'll be Happy to Give Thanks!

Gary

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