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From Up The Creek...

It Starts With NO CONDITIONS!!

Before I begin with the monstrous five page Blog I have been working on I am delighted to announce His latest move that just blows me away. In my previous post I wrote of building a bridge, through education, to carry me to the land of plenty. I told how expensive it was and how I had no idea how it would be funded, but as He was doing the leading, He would have to provide. I was told last night that we - the incarcerated - are once again eligible for Pell Grants. That means that 80 to 90% of the funding is already in place. Is that mind blowing or what? I am telling you loud and clear, God Is Good!!!

So...

In my last post I discussed "The Beginning" of building the bridge I need to carry me across the chasm between "have" and "have not" land. I am committed and that component of my life proceeds on autopilot. Amen.

I am 54 years old, I have been incarcerated close to 18 years. The world has changed. I watch it happen on TV, I hardly recognize it "out there". But I do recognize need, the need I see so brutally displayed on the evening news. I have learned to focus and to pray for those needs as they are presented as well as for guidance in how to merge the meeting of my needs with the greater needs of others.

Way back in third grade I had this wonderful, magical teacher who cared deeply for her students. (She is the one who inspired me to serve in education) She read to us each day. She read "Where the Red Fern Grows". Turns out it grows in the Ozarks. ;) That became my "Never, Never Land" and has become my dream, my need, to move to the Ozarks. To build a HOME.

Allow me explain why this NEED arose within me.

I have never felt welcome anywhere since the age of nine; it was at that age that I was ripped out of the best home any little boy could have. That is probably not TRUTH, never being welcome, but as it is my perception, it is in point of fact MY TRUTH. I NEED, deeply and profoundly need, a place to call home, cliché as it is. I need dirt that's mine, a place I am always, forever and always, WELCOME! It is a place no man can ever tell me to leave, that I don't belong and am not wanted. I NEED HOME! My home will be in the Ozarks, LORD willing. And His word says "To those that delight óñehelvbørðñ the Lord, He shall give them the desires of their heart"(Ps. 37:4) Amen. Now many people can say many things of me, but none can rightly say I don't delight myself in Him, FACT!

I have researched for over 10 years, constantly and quitely, researched these Ozarks of mine. The first point of fact is the effect Grystal Meth has had on that area, it's ravaged it! Recovery ministry needed. Second point is the cost of living, it's right around 20% less than the national average. As I am broke & what I earn will need to be spent on others, that 20% will be a help, amen. Land there can be had for right around \$8-900 an acre, and that is land located on county maintained infrastructure! It's true the land I refer to is classified as "junk" land because it is not ideal for agricultural use, but wonderful, beautiful LAND! PARADISE! Over the last 10 years I have come across many lots of 20-30 acres for around 20K, and that fits perfectly with my forecasted budget.

Both I am not sure why I stuck on that 30 acre budget, but "30" was and is the magic number. It has been confirmed in unbelievable ways. Believe me, it is a mind blowing trip how clearly God communicates to me at times! :) So, A nice, 30 acre homestead in the Ozaeks. Paradise!

I have a degree in Christain Ministry, a Bachelor from CBCS. I am also living proof that knowledge of the TRUTH does not prevent depression from occuring. All my life I have suffered with depression. I did not choose that word - suffer - lightly, I SUFFER. I don't speak of it much because I learned at a young age not to. That

people do not like being around a "downer" and will not "put up with it."

That is no longer my reality, the people in my life now are lovingly supportive. But that feeling is still there, so I suffer quietly for the most part. (Although Dad Urquhart, Aunt Di, and Mother T might take issue with "quietly". ;) )

There was one period of my life when I did not suffer. Strangely enough it was just after my youngest son was killed in 2015. I was broken by his death. I was on a yard with some of it's housing designated for "Mental Health Cases", "EOP"'s we call them, as does the state. It was also a real war zone, a serious, hard core, war zone. But those poor EOP's seemed broken too, and, as I was to come to know, for the most part, they had no one and nothing. Now I have written on the effects of poverty before, but poverty while in prison is a whole other level of misery!!! If you have ever done time you know exactly what I am saying. I saw many of these men out on the yard, just sitting on the dirt, alone and dirty, just staring at that little plot of dirt between their legs.

I could not inhabit myself during this period of time because the pain over loosing my son, Asheton, before I even knew him as a man, it was like swimming in a pool of lava. (Dear God, I can not even imagine the pain Rachel felt!!!) The pain was just quite simply beyond...So I looked outward, as we are called to do anyway, and I saw these men, broken and alone, my People! So I gather up all my resoueces to try to bless these men, quite specifically those alone and literally sitting in the dirt, radiating a sadness that was almost visible in it's intensity. So I bought up coffee, stuff for peanut butter sandwiches, and other snacks. I was able to do this only because of the loving support of Dad, Mother T, And DI. I was also able to plant a church, (The inmate pastor over in the chapel had proved to be a morphine dealer!) and fund a choir, pay for copies, books, etc. Having the resoueces to do all this allowed me to reach out, out of that pool of lave I found myself in, reach out to those who were branded as "Throwaways"

→ by CDCR staff and seemingly by the world.

→ I spent six months, the first six months of this period, just putting together "6 packs" of coffee (I made these little paper folds containing enough coffee for 6 cups.) and enough peanut butter and bread to make three sandwiches and called them "Care Packages". Now those of you who have done time with "EOP"'s are smiling because you know how HUGE that was for these men. :) Then I went out and just dropped down in the dirt next to them and, my own grief making me bold, just blurted out that I loved them and so did God. It was a trip, I often cried when telling them this, because I would never be able to tell Asheton that, but they never tripped over my tears, often joining me. I would then hand over their care package of coffee, sandwiches, and snacks. I would outright demand! that they know they were loved before I would leave em be. :) Loved so so so much! I just did this day in and day out until a time of such violence broke out on the yard it was no longer safe to go out and they stopped coming. I became known as the love guy by these men and they would without fail scream out a greeting whenever we passed. I was to see the LOVE of GOD transform many many of these men to clean, in their right mind, Christian guys going about their lives with a smile. God is GOOD my friends.

It was during this time when I was broken, too broken to do anything but blindly reach out and love the unloved that one day it hit me that I was not suffering for the first time I could remember; not just since Ashe died, but ever. No longer was there an underlying suffering naving away at my being. I walked in from the yard one day and got on my knees to pray and was then (and am now!) overcome with thankfulness for the privilege he was giving me to go and love. I wept a good half hour, got to where I could not stop. The tears were healing, but they wear tears of unspeakable joy my friends. Just a PURE joy like nothing I'd ever known, before or since.

That's all I want to do with my life, I don't much care about anything else, except the Homestead. Those two dreams, the seeds of those dreams, they have been nurtured and will one

day bare fruit, Amen & Amen.

Now, those Ozarks are being destroyed by meth, lives and families ruined. I was a meth addict once. It's the devil's dust, plain and simple. I firmly beleive that Satan is it's creator.

There's lots of love need in those Ozarks! I hope to build that 30 acre homestead there, quite possibly to become a "recovery Homestead". At least part of it. How's THAT for dreaming BIG?

I will have to finish this later, I have another 5 pages to go and today is Christmas, so I am going to EAT! Although right now I just do not have much of anything at all, it is a poor time for me. :( OH well. Life is good, God is great and all is well with my soul. God bless and keep us all until this apndemic is History, Amen & AMen.