FULL PARDON

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Written By the Inmates for the Inmates in the Lake County Detention Center

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Ralph's Testimony

I was baptized 31 years ago, but I was not ready. Two months ago, however, I was born again. I was saved by the blood of Jesus. I asked Jesus Christ to help me get through this problem. Jesus stood by me! I turned myself in to the Lake County Sheriff and received a sentence of 120 days in jail. With the guidance of four very good Christian teachers—Gary, Ken, Lowell, and Chaplain Pete—I am developing spiritually and growing in Christ. Thank You, Lord Jesus! Thank you my teachers, and God bless you my brothers in Christ. Amen!

Eddie's Testimony

If you're looking for a good story, I'm not trying to tell one. I'm trying to glorify God and what his disciples here at LCJ are doing and can do for you if you only put down the cards for an hour, the books or chess board, the gossip of your phony greatness in the game that got you here. I have been here 100+ days and have missed few "church calls." We have an outstanding group of volunteers who bring us the Lord's word and encouragement. None have the same style, only the same Bible and purpose – Saving the lost and educating us to the wonderful Word and world of our living Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

We have Scott on Wednesday evenings whose study, emotional plea for us to do the right thing and join "Team Jesus" instead of "Team Satan. Tom and Judi brought beautiful music and promise of our Lord's blessing and the example of a relationship that the Lord will carry through by our submission to Him. Brother Neil and his wife constantly challenge us to learn more, to seek our Lord while we are here in a state of limbo awaiting our future. Brother Lowell's teaching is salted with knowledge – we are looking at a brother with years of wisdom who comes to "us" (God's problem children) with total commitment. We have Gary who joyfully comes with Good News from prison to freedom. He brought *The Passion of The Christ* and writes his own Bible studies for us to study and share with others. Chaplain Pete, you're great! I love you all because you feed the fire in me to carry on and prepare for God's purpose and will for my life. I don't fully know what it is yet but I feel it and yearn for it.

Why? Because I have been a criminal since I was 9 years old. I was in and out of jail and spent 15 years in prison for murder. During that prison time, I went from a 4th grade education to earn three Associate degrees and a Bachelor's degree. But I never found Jesus Christ. I was too stupid to recognize the Lord and how important He was in my life. When I was released, I was still a gangster and that was all I wanted.

After a year in such activities I "retired" to a normal life and to raise a family. When I prospered, I took all the credit. Yeah right! But from 1996 to 2003, my life went from beautiful to ugly. I stopped being a good father and became an arguing drug and alcohol addict. My kids went to church and even ministered to me! My daughter said my success was by God's

grace and mercy! But to me my thoughts were, "I did this, not God! Why should I bother God, I'm not going to heaven! You can't kill people like I did and go to heaven." That shut them up.

I ended up separated from my family and in prison again. I was lonely and bored so I went to a church service. Wow! Within minutes I was sweating uncontrollably, my past was like a movie in fast forward with all of the awful things I had done flying by. The Pastor was talking directly to me (I thought). I couldn't stop my tears. A killer, a gangster like me who disregarded the law and life with no remorse crying in front of all these inmates! I've got to stop! What am I doing? I couldn't sleep that night and couldn't hold a steady thought the next day. I was alone and didn't have a single soul to talk to.

I went to church the next call. I needed answers. I was sweating when I walked into Chapel and asked Chaplain Henry what was going on. He told me the Lord by His Spirit was bringing me home. My constant tears and pain (brokenness) were my washing. A week or so went by and I went to church again. I got a Bible to read to figure things out. No luck. But all the time I knew but refused to believe. There had been a voice in my head from the first moment I went to church. Later I recognized the voice, Jesus Christ, had been with me for a very long time. I asked for forgiveness, read my Bible, and did Bible studies during my time in prison. I thought I was all right, but I wasn't. The old me took over when times got rough. I had to survive! I can do it myself. I was a fool! I had been a dwelling place for so many demons that it has taken me 6 years to recognize that I'm still a sinner and blind to the realities of the life I'm living. Every day Satan is on the attack, especially those who were once his. You can be a fool if you want to but the Bible teaches us to always be on guard, resist the Devil and he will flee!

I'm back in jail because I panicked and didn't call on Jesus Christ for help when I should have. I thought I would be OK because I went to church, mentored troubled teens, and stopped being a criminal. I thought I would get away this one time. Now in retrospect I could have called for help and not ignored the law. In jail, Satan tried to bring back my old self – hate nature and rebel against God. Satan thought jail would make me turn my back on Jesus Christ and it almost did. But my heart has taught me that I need all of what I'm learning more than freedom from incarceration because I'm being prepared for a real and true walk with Christ.

Thanks to Chaplain Pete and all the volunteers I'm on the road to making the right choices because of the things all Christians have in common - we pray to our Lord about everything, thank Him for everything, and do our all for His glory not our own. So stop asking for "one more chance" as I often rebuke myself for doing. The life of a disciple of Christ is hard. Satan is constantly pulling a trick on you. I salute disciples because I'm trying to be one. For now all I can do is say or pray "I rebuke you Satan in the name of Jesus Christ my Lord and Savior" because I've learned and am learning to discern what is truly God's will versus what is mine (Satan's). Just as we can live by faith that is as small as a mustard seed, we can also allow Satan to exist in our life in a space as small as a mustard seed! We can allow Satan to store in us bad habits, attitudes, and thoughts that we don't readily recognize because they've become a part of us. So look into yourself constantly. I guarantee that if you ask, "What would Jesus do? What would Jesus say? What would Jesus want? Your answer will most likely be "I rebuke you Satan in the name of my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!"

Doing the right thing is the hardest thing for criminally minded people. We don't want to be called soft, snitch, Jailhouse Jesus Junkies that hide behind the Bible, or other things that bring ridicule. For years, I called His followers those things. Now I know that I was very ignorant. The 12 apostles who knew the Word died for the Word. Those they taught died for the Word. Two thousand years later people are still dying for the Word. On May 8, 2009, it finally came to me – while Brother Neil was closing in prayer – I'm ready to die for the Word. To follow Jesus as a disciple calls for total submission to His will. Let Him carry you in your total abandonment of everything except Him. Team Jesus and you win. You only lose if you're without Him. The peace I'm looking for is coming. It's being fed to me at the Lord's pace, not my own. I want it now! So again "I rebuke you Satan in the name of Jesus Christ my Lord and Savior" for even trying to get me to talk back to my Father. That trick doesn't work anymore!!!

Under Construction by "NJ"

I remember becoming a Christian when I was 16 years old. It was a very exciting experience for me. The way I felt when I prayed and sang to God was a high all by itself. I lived to praise and worship God. But then over the years … 17, 18, 19. 20 … this feeling changed. Not because I wanted it to but because I chose other things to keep my life exciting, instead

of growing in God to further life me higher in Him. I've learned that this is the "free will" which God gives all of us.

It is just like a builder. He starts out with a vision, then he make a blueprint, and then he starts building. While he's building, he may take some things out and improve on others. This is how I feel God is doing in me. I envision a life (building) of God's Holy Standards. But then I started replacing the things of God with the things of the world. I've found out that a lot of the things I replaced are not in agreement with what God wants. He's teaching me that some things are not needed, they are just wants. I can do without them. He's also teaching me that "my building" – my walk and life in Christ – is something that will take my whole life to complete. So don't hold me to my mistakes and faults because "I'm still under construction".

Lord, please keep teaching and loving me until my building is complete in you. …"NJ"

El Testimonió de Carlos

Queridos hermanos los saludo fraternalmente en nuestro señor y Salvador ¨Jesucristo¨. Mi nombre es Carlos, soy colombiano, tengo casi 50 años de edad, estoy preso desde Agosto del 2003, por conspiración de tráfico de narcóticos y lavado de dinero, tengo una sentencia de 112 meses.

Yo les voy a contar mi testimonio de mi conversión, todo cómenos 2 años antes de mi captura cuando en mi cumpleaños mi hijo me regalo con presente en mi cumpleaños una Biblia y me dijo estas palabras textuales ¨Papi no te regalo otra cosa si no está Biblia porque sé que la vas a necesitar¨ yo la tome y no les preste atención, cuando llegue a Lake County Jail pabellón 2DB solicite a los presos si tenían alguna revista o periódico en Español, me contesto un Puertorriqueño yo tengo una Biblia en Español, entonces me a corde de mi hijo tome la Biblia y comencé a leerlo y no dormí en toda la noche la pase leyendo la Biblia y loica en todo momento la leí como en una semana, en cuanto leo toda la Biblia de seguro si lo Hubiera Leído cuando mi hijo me la regalo no hubiera estado en estas circunstancias pero Dios tiene un propósito con cada uno de nosotros, desde del 2004, le abrí mi Cora son ¨Jesús¨ me arrepentí de toda mi vida anterior le con fase todos mi pecados y le pedí fue limpiara mi corazón de toda maldad y me llenara de su santo espirito, esa noche tuve en sueno tan real que desperté asustado y sorprendido porque en el sumo veía que salían de mi boca, sapos, rancor, escorpiones, culebra, ratas y otras tantas porquerías i a partir de ese momento sentí un a tranquilidad en mi corazón y en mi conciencia, al abrir la puerta de mi corazón al señor el medio la paz y el gozo de la salvación y me abrió una puerta en el cielo con sus bendiciones y promesas entre ellas la vida eterna y no solo a mi si no también a mi familia.

Compañeros les pido por favor que escuchen el llamado de nuestro señor cuando sean tocados y si alguno que leyera este testimonio y fue tocado por el señor que no pierda al tiempo y entregue su vida al señor con un verdadero arrepentimiento del todo corazón, porque nosotros siempre queremos dejar todo para después, la decisión tienes que tomarla ahora mismo porque tú no sabes que será mañana la verdal era vida tú la vives cuando Cristo toma el control de tu vida, porque Cristo es el Camino, la verdad y la vida, (Juan 14:16), no pierdas el tiempo en las cosas de este mundo que no tienen ninguna importancia son toda vanidad, tú único importante es apreciar la sangre de Cristo que derramo en la Cruz del Calvario, pon tus pecados, los míos y de todo el mundo que ahí donde dios mostro su amor para con nosotros que en terno a su Hijo por nuestros pecados, yo pensaba que tenía una buena vida tener dinero mujeres, carros, poder, negocios, todo el mundo hablaba de mi que era grande con dinero y cada día quía mofa y mofa, nada de esto lleno mi corazón, solo Jesús lleno mi corazón, porque deje espirante en mi vida y Salí de ese Valls de tinieblas en que estaba amarrado, ahora soy libre porque estoy liberado de esas cadenas mundanas por la sangre de Cristo, si tu quieres tú también puedes ser salvado de esas cadenas con tomar la decisión de aceptar a Jesús en tu corazón, porque él es el unció que puede transfórmate por el poder del espirito santo obrando en tu corazón. Acéptalo Hoy y vive una nueva vida, libre de condenación. Amén

Volunteer's Column – In Memory of Sister Judi

On May 12, 2009, our sister in Christ passed from this life into the presence of her Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. For over two years she battled cancer. Even during that time she and her husband Tom continued their ministry to men in C-1. Judi and Tom served as chaplain volunteers in the Orange and Lake County jails for a total of 15 years. One of our Christian brothers, Greg, who was ministered to by Judi and Tom wrote the following memorial.

As I write this about Sister Judi, although we try – mentally and emotionally – as much as possible to prepare for this day, none of us, when it comes, are truly ready. My heart goes out to our Brother Tom because I can very well relate to his pain. But on the bright side, we all can say of Sister Judi as Paul said of himself, *for she has been poured out like a drink offering and the*

time has come for her departure. She has fought the good fight. She has finished the race. She has kept the faith. Now there is in store for her the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the Righteous Judge, will award to her on that day (2 Timothy 4:6-8). Truly, she has touched the heart of all who had the privilege to experience her great love for the Lord and her fellow man. No one that I know of showed more care, concern, and love than her. So I know without a doubt in my heart and mind that she is at home with the Lord! Sincerely, Greg

Take to Give --- E. P.

Take from me o Lord, the evil my tongue speaks

Take from me O Lord, the evil my heart seeks

Take from me O Lord, the evil my eyes love

Take from O Lord the evil that keeps me from above and separated from your love.

Give me O Lord, the wisdom of our word

Give to me O Lord, the worries of a bird

Give to me O Lord, all your shepherdly might

Give to me O Lord the strength to do what's right to be at your feet each and every night

Things that Matter the Most

By Donald an inmate of the Cross

I feel so forgotten living in a box,

Shirt, shorts, and a pair of socks.

Gone are the things I once used to have,

Locked up inside can make me feel sad.

Occasional contact from those I know,

Can make me feel happy and not so alone.

But it doesn't last long I just want to go home,

Back to the place where I used to roam.

Back in the world where time never stops,

Away from this place and out of this box.

But my choices are few and prisons not fun,

I'll sit here and rot until my time is done.

And when that it is and I'm finally free,

I'll open my eyes and be able to see,

The grass on the hillside, the sun in the sky,

The leaves on the trees, the birds as they fly,

The faces of children, who laugh as they play,

The spatter of raindrops that christen the day.

A hug and a kiss, a joke and a smile,

These are the things that make life worthwhile.

So until my release, I'll sit in my box,

Shirt, shorts, and a pair of socks.

And I'll think of the things that matter the most,

My faith in the Lord and in Him I will trust.

Testimony by Nicholas

To fellow inmates and my brothers in Christ. My name is Nicolas. I'm currently incarcerated in the Lake County Jail. I'm waiting to go to prison to serve my five year bid. I was arrested this past month on a technical violation of my probation. I felt as if my life was over but then one day when I was in D1B pod I gave my life to Jesus. I came to Chaplain Pete and told him about the change. He moved me to this new Program Unit pod. Since that time the Lord has been working miracles in my life. Let me tell you our God is great. I never in my life felt more loved and safe until I opened my heart to God. He has completely changed my life, even after being sentenced to five years in prison. I'm telling you God can change you too – just open your heart to Him. Give Him control of your life and watch how He turns things around. I came to the Program Unit pod to taking advantage of all the help available and before you knew it I was a changed person! Now all I want to do is lead others to Christ so I tell you my testimony for you so you can see how great God is! Even though we are locked up Jesus loves us and He cares. All you have to do is let Him in, open up your heart and soul and receive Jesus Christ's Holy Name. Since I've been in this pod I have bonded with and grown to love my Christian brothers. We have supported each other and have been all in one accord with God. I'm telling you guys that the Holy Spirit is flowing heavily in this program pod. And the Lord is changing lives. So I ask you as a brother of Christ to let go, let God in your life. I'm telling you He will change you. Amen and God Bless you all