



GOD'S LIFELINE

Those early days when I first went to prison were pretty terrifying? Without the encouragement and perspective of God's Word and learning the Scriptures while in the County Jail, I honestly don't believe I would have survived twenty years in State Prison. Like a Strong Lifeline, God's Word kept me from drowning in my despair.

Some of these Lifeline passages are from a single chapter in the book of Lamentations. In one particular verse, Jeremiah wrote:

"The LORD is good to those who wait for him, to the soul that seeketh him" (3:25).

What else could I do but wait. Those long, lonely hours in the middle of the night were bearable because of that promise. God would be good. TO ME. I was waiting, and knew in my heart, to see His goodness. The Prophet continues on to say:

"It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the LORD" (3:26).

Salvation, deliverance. It was a promise, right there in black and white. And though I was locked up behind those prison walls, I continued to cling to that hope with all that was inside me. I was waiting, believing and trusting that deliverance would surely come.

In the very next verse, Jeremiah says:

"If is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth. Let him sit alone and keep silent, because God has laid it on him" (3:27-28).

Some things are harder to learn, as we get older. Our hearts become calloused, weak, or indifferent. Perhaps age brings about the feeling of worldly wise...we think we've seen it all, and there is nothing new to learn. For all that pain of shattered dreams, such a heavy yoke of imprisonment was better borne at an early age.

As a young adult at the time of my imprisonment, my heart was still hammering out values and principles. There was still so much to learn; in the deepest part of my heart, I knew that this was true. So I gritted my teeth and I began trusting God that it was good to bear such a heavy yoke of imprisonment in my young adulthood.

But the best part of Lamentations 3 is verses 31 and 32:

"For the LORD will not cast off forever, though he causes grief, yet will he have compassion according to the multitude of his mercies."

This verse was like a light at the end of a tunnel for me. To know in my heart that things would not be like this forever! Though God had His hands in my criminal case, He also showed me great compassion. He helped me through those long nights. He was there with me during those lonely days of adjusting to my imprisonment.

The Yoke? Yes, it still was heavy to bear. But, time and again, God in His grace and mercy, threw out the Sturdy Lifeline of His Word just when I felt that I was about to go under.

Look...there are Lifelines in front of you too. Grab on like never before. He'll never let you sink!