

June 1, 2004

Pastor Jerry Shirley
Grace Baptist Church
3770 N. Water St.
Decatur, IL 62526

Dear Pastor Shirley:

Thank you for your prayers concerning Sarah's health, she is now feeling very well. One of the greatest privileges we have is prayer. Prayer is much more than words from the lips; prayer is the expression of the desires of the heart. John Bunyan said, "When you pray, rather let your heart be without words than your words be without heart." The Bible contains many prayer promises, but I like John 15:7, "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." God has invited us to pray. We should rejoice at the privilege; yet somehow we get careless and forget to ask Him for what we need. God enjoys answering prayers, just as we parents enjoy meeting the needs of our children when they ask us. John Newton wrote in one of his hymns:

Thou art coming to a King,
Large petitions with thee bring;
For His grace and power are such
None can ever ask too much.

I see the answer to many of my prayers each day. Continue to pray for us as we do His will in our lives.

We started off the first Sunday in May in Fernandina Beach with Pastor Brian Hudson. He and Sara were great hosts. We had a good day with them, and had some decisions that day. Then on Saturday Sarah spoke at Sherri Bonds mother/daughter banquet and I preached for Brother Bond on Mother's Day. He is growing and that was a blessing to see. The 18th and 23rd I filled the pulpit for Brother Ron Todd in Ormond Beach. Brother Todd began with just a few people and is averaging around 80. They had 100 on Easter Sunday. I saw their new building they are buying and hope to be in it in June. They will have great facilities and I'm happy for them. He and Margaret went to the graduation at Baptist Bible College. The 30th I was with Brother Jankowski in Clearwater. God answered my prayers as each Sunday was filled and I was doing what I love to do "Preach."

Thank you for your faithful support, making it possible for us to minister each week. May God richly bless you as you serve Him.

Sincerely in Christ,
Glenn Stockton
The Pastor's Friend

ENCOURAGEMENT

JUNE 2004

Good Morning Friend,

In re-reading Luke 24, I was captured with this phrase ...*Did not our heart burn within us, while He talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the Scriptures?* Luke 24:32

The verse is found in the wonderful Easter Sunday afternoon account of two followers of Jesus, walking dejectedly on the country road from Jerusalem to Emmaus. Their hopes were shattered. Their future seemed hopeless. Jesus was killed on the cross and now just days later, they had to get away from Jerusalem and all the pleasant times they had enjoyed with Jesus. When He was buried in the tomb, so were their hopes and dreams. They no longer had a reason to live. As they walked and talked, suddenly a stranger joined them. It was Jesus, but they didn't recognize Him. They never expected to see Him again. They were so depressed and *downcast* they just shuffled along in loneliness and desperation. But then the Stranger started talking to them about the events of the weekend. He spoke to them from the Old Testament, *from Moses and all the prophets*, the things concerning the coming Messiah. What a message it must have been as Jesus related Old Testament prophecies about Himself... about His birth, His life, His ministry, His suffering, His death and His resurrection. Eventually they recognized that it was Jesus Who walked and talked with them. Then as suddenly as Jesus appeared, He disappeared. As the two men reflected on their moments with Him, they said, *Did not our heart burn within us, while He talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the Scriptures?*

It was in the presence of Jesus and His Word that they discovered the *burning heart*. They were warmed. They were blessed. They had an "inner glow." And...they coined the phrase, *burning heart*. Do you know the blessing of the burning heart...the unspeakable sense of well-being...the moment of vitality when only He and His Word matter?

I thank God for the heritage of the Word in my life.

- I remember seeing my father with the open Bible in His hands, so deeply moved by the Word that the tears generously flowed.
- Our doctrinal statement begins with these words: "We believe the Scriptures, to be the inspired Word of God, without error in the original writings, the complete revelation of His will for the salvation of men and the Divine and final authority for Christian faith and life."

I remember when I took my first church. My excitement was somewhat diminished when I started calculating these numbers: morning messages, evening messages, and mid-week Bible studies...Where would I ever find enough things to preach about? I now have a different concern: Will I even live long enough to preach all the truths I have discovered in this book?

So often Sarah and I sit here in Florida and enjoy the Word...individually but also as a couple. The Word keeps getting more precious to us. Yes, there have been many moments when we have had *burning hearts*. I wish the same for you.

Be Encouraged
Glenn Stockton