

The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.
~ John 1:5



THE RISING SON

Easter reveals a very important principle of God's Kingdom. We can see that throughout history, God so often allows dark times of sadness, loneliness, brokenness, loss, and suffering, but then He rises up and

completely overcomes evil with good. Hebrews 11 is packed with examples of this. Here are a few others:

- Paul spent years imprisoned in dungeons – yet God used him to write Scriptures during that time.
- John was exiled to die alone – yet God gave him the great Revelation.
- Lazarus died as Jesus delayed – yet, greater than a healing, Jesus raised him to life.
- The young Christian church was persecuted and scattered by the government – yet God used them to spread His Gospel throughout the world.
- Daniel, betrayed by his peers, was thrown into a lion's den – yet God shut the mouths of the lions and moved the king's heart to set into law that Daniel's God would be honored (throughout Babylon!).

Oftentimes, the greater the darkness, the greater the advancement of God's Kingdom – and, the greater the blessing for God's servants who hold on to Him until He completes His plan.

Our Lord Jesus was not spared the fate of this principle. He, who deserved all the best this world could offer, was falsely accused, betrayed and sentenced to die the most terrible death by those who were commissioned to lead people to God. Yet, God planned His very death and blood to atone for our sins, rescuing mankind from darkness.

So, while the devil was leading sinful men to do the darkest deeds he could devise, God was accomplishing the greatest deeds that this world has ever known!

Easter reminds us of the glorious power and control God has in this world. It reminds us of the faithfulness of

Jesus, His Son, who endured the blow of darkness, the suffering and pain... Yet, He knew and embraced the will of His Father: ***"He humbled Himself and became obedient to death—even death on the cross! Therefore, God exalted Him..."*** ~ ***Philippians 2:6-11***

Jesus remained faithful, and He calls us to follow Him through the dark seasons of life. The SON has risen for us! And we will rise with Him!

So do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded. You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised. For in just a very little while, "He who is coming will come and will not delay..." ~ ***Hebrews 10:5-39***



I remember when God allowed me the privilege to participate in Ken's season of darkness. He was in his mid-sixties when he had a stroke and was placed in a nursing home. He was so distraught by all his losses and his perceived hopeless future. He told me he was looking for a way to kill himself. But the Lord sent His word to Ken. He surrendered his heart to Jesus, was baptized and was truly transformed! The God who said, "Let light shine out of darkness" shined in Ken's heart, and he became one of God's rays of light in that nursing home. He was so loved and appreciated by the residents and staff. God is so good!

Take heart, my friends. Jesus Christ is Lord! May the light of His love and word shine through you; for the darkness cannot overcome His Kingdom. ~ Chaplain Bill



These handheld wooden crosses are available for nursing home residents to provide them with a tangible reminder of Jesus' love for them. Includes a beautiful poem that will encourage faith and prayer.

Available at:
GodCaresMinistry.com
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THAT THE LIGHT MAY CONTINUE TO SHINE

As mentioned in our last newsletter, God Cares Ministry will be acquiring the resources and ministry connections of the Sonshine Society. What an honor it is for us to receive the baton of such a great ministry. As we step up to this significant assignment, I ask for your prayers; that the Lord would guide and bless our efforts to continue what He started in Sonshine 47 years ago. Pray also that He will empower His servants to restart their visits as the care homes begin to reopen. There will be some changes in safety measures that will require patience. May we all be open to God's grace and leading. If we acknowledge Him in all our ways, He will direct our steps and enable us to continue to shine His great Light.

Behind the scenes, we are gearing up to begin serving thousands more volunteers from Sonshine's network. We are also expanding our website and office in Avon Lake, Ohio to keep care home missionaries well equipped with all of Sonshine's and God Cares' resources. We anticipate this transition to be complete by mid-May.

As Sonshine has so faithfully done, God Cares Ministry is here to serve you as you serve the residents of care homes. May our Lord Jesus enable all of us to rise up through the devastation of the pandemic, the organizational changes, and any additional challenges that will come with time. To God be the glory for all He has done and will do as we abide in Him. (John 15:1-17) ~ B.G.

SONSHINE



BECOME PART OF THE TEAM

Along with our ministry expansion, we are intending to hire a part-time staff person (15-20 hours per week with possible future full-time) to serve in our distribution center in Avon Lake. This person will need to have excellent organizational skills with special attention to detail and accuracy, be proficient in Microsoft Office (some CMS experience is preferred), be capable of packing, lifting and carrying boxes up to 50 lbs., and have cheerful and clear phone skills. Previous experience with elderly in nursing homes is desired.

To submit your resume, email: info@GodCaresMinistry.com or send to: God Cares Ministry, P.O. Box 355, Avon Lake, OH 44012. No phone calls please.



A BLESSED REUNION

What a wonderful week this was! A few nursing facilities I visit have opened their doors for in-person visitation. Following their strict guidelines, I was able to see some of my friends for the first time in a year.

Despite being garbed in a gown, mask and face shield, Anna recognized me immediately and burst into tears of joy. She cried through much of our thirty-minute visit, repeatedly saying she couldn't believe I remembered her. She requested that we say the Lord's Prayer as we closed our time together. This request was unusual for her and it was a great privilege to join her in prayer.

Marjorie conveyed to me how much she missed seeing her friends on the Bible study team, and misses hearing Pastor Bill share Scripture. She told me repeatedly that she was so glad that I visited her. The gentleman across the hallway, who is newer to the facility, heard us pray and came to the door to speak with me and to listen to the Scriptural assurance that God is with us always.

At another facility, the residents were still gathered after lunch, so I took advantage of this time and started to sing "Jesus Love You". Many smiled and joined in the singing. Even a staff member joined in from her desk.

The residents were anxious to tell me about what the last year was like for them. Several had lost friends and we mourned together. We did a lot of praying. The loneliness was almost palpable, but the joy was overwhelming!

There was so much deep emotion between the residents and myself that I am not able to describe it. There is such a longing to reunite and a joy in doing so. They all appear to be very hungry to hear the word of God and to return to a place of normalcy.

While I am sure that this integration back into nursing homes will be "two-steps forward and one step back" for a while, I am most grateful for this door to be opening and that the opportunity to share the love of Christ in person is once again available to us. ~ Elaine Edkin

POINTS TO CONSIDER AS YOU PREPARE TO RE-ENTER THE CARE HOMES

Making arrangements:

- Contact your Activity Director. If they do not call you back in a few days, try again. *They are juggling many tasks.*
- Let your AD know you would like to start making “compassionate care” visits with residents who are lonely and needing a friend to talk to.
- Present your request in such a way that they understand that you want to help them meet their resident’s needs.
- Be sure to ask your AD how they are doing, and how you can be praying for them.
- Offer to pray over the phone.

Once you are in the home:

- Be prepared for a different environment. In some ways, because of all the losses and changes, it may feel like you are starting over. Plan to begin new relationships.
- You are entering a *Post Covid War* season that was far more difficult than we may realize.
- Encourage residents to share their experiences from the past year. Validate them!
- Be sure to connect with staff when possible. Thank them for all their hard work. You may want to ask them how you can help. Validate them as they share their challenges.
- There will be new safety rules; some may seem overly cautious. Respect them! I trust things will lighten up in the next few months.
- Your cheerfulness, yet also your sincere, heart-felt, and reverent empathy for what the staff and residents have just gone through, will be appreciated. Respect and trust creates a foundation for your gracious message of hope in Jesus.



meaningful the way they opened up about how challenging this was for them. A few others shared how the isolation & the unknowns were the worst part of the past year. Also, the loss of several residents.

Our message was all about the passion of Christ, with questions about events or people they remembered from Jesus’ last week. They answered enthusiastically and were SO alert! I had many things planned, just in case they stayed attentive and I used every one of them! My Resurrection Egg story was also well received. When I gave the closing prayer with the gospel message, they said an enthusiastic “AMEN!” We could tell they didn’t want us to leave when our time was up. And the very touching part was how VERY grateful they were about having us visit! It was their sparkling eyes that touched me the most. Their JOY & HOPE restored! ~ Betty Sanderson

JOY AND HOPE RESTORED

We just had our first visit at our assisted living facility after one year! 17 residents were ready and waiting for us. I was a little apprehensive about how this would go, with all of us wearing masks, being at a distance and them not being allowed to sing. God is SO good! It ended up being a BIG success! We sang opening songs to them, with Mike leading us with his guitar. Our microphone was necessary, so that everyone could hear through the masks.

We also had a sharing time, asking them about their experiences during Covid. It was very

We want to thank all of you who financially support God Cares Ministry. You are helping to make an eternal impact in the lives of countless residents and volunteer missionaries. If you are unable to give personally, but still desire to minister in this way, we have created an information packet to guide you in approaching your church’s mission fund committee. Through your efforts, they may be willing to add God Cares to their annual budget, extending your church’s reach to those who are suffering and have lost so much. May Jesus bless you for caring and sharing in His love. ~ B.G.



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*In the same way, let your light
shine before others, that they may
see your good deeds and glorify
your Father in heaven. ~ Matthew 5:16*

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Enhancing Trust



JESUS SAID: "...YOU CAME TO VISIT ME..."
~ Matthew 25:36

**The long-awaited time
has come!**

The care home doors are beginning to re-open for "compassionate care" visits. Our lonely neighbors are eagerly awaiting your return. Volunteers are being met with tears of joy and gratitude as they reenter the care homes.

We are here to help you as you return to your in-person ministry. See inside for helpful tips.