

Oct./Nov. 2023



Bethel

Colony of Mercy

Breaking the Chains of Addiction
Since 1948



The Lord is Good!

It was a **momentous occasion** as Bethel Colony of Mercy celebrated its **75th Anniversary, Homecoming and Bible Conference**. Former students and supporters from different states traveled far and wide to attend our annual celebration. The Spirit of God was noticeable throughout the entire gathering, and the **testimonies shared** by former students **were incredibly powerful, showing the remarkable transformation** and liberation from addiction that can only be attributed to the mighty power of God. The Bible Conference, held in conjunction with the Homecoming, was truly a revival of the Spirit. Evangelist Dave Kistler, known for his passionate and convicting preaching, delivered impactful messages that left a lasting impression on all that attended. Brother Dave said, **"I believe we have experienced genuine revival this week."** The hearts of those who were able to be there reflected Psalm 51. ***"Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me."*** For those who were unable to attend the conference in person, the messages are available on YouTube and Facebook. I pray others will benefit from these profound teachings.



Before the 75th celebration, the ladies held their first event, named **"The Royal Tea"** on the preceding Saturday. This gathering set the stage for future Women's Campus events, creating a sense of anticipation and excitement among the

attendees. **The Royal Tea proved to be a success**, it served as a platform for fellowship, encouragement, and bonding among the women. (see page 6 for pictures)

Additionally, the month of August witnessed the largest turnout ever for **Bethel Colony's annual golf tournament**. The tournament not only provided a fun experience for the participants but also served as an opportunity to express gratitude towards the valued supporters and graduates. The **turnout for the tournament was overwhelming**, and Bethel sincerely appreciated the enthusiastic response and attendance. (see page 7 for pictures)

Reflecting on the 75th Anniversary, Homecoming and Bible Conference, it is evident that Bethel Colony of Mercy continues to be **a beacon of hope and restoration for individuals struggling with addiction**. The immense dedication and **unwavering commitment of the staff, former students, and supporters have contributed to the success of this significant milestone**. The celebration of the Homecoming and the powerful messages delivered during the Bible Conference have shown the life-transforming work that occurs within the walls of Bethel Colony. As the event came to a close, the sense of reverence and gratitude for what the Lord has done was palpable. We all left with **renewed faith, strengthened convictions, and a deepened understanding of the power of God** to bring about the liberation and healing needed for lasting change. Homecoming and Bible Conference not only served as a time for reflection and celebration but also as a reminder of the incredible impact that God has daily at Bethel. **Jesus has and continues to change the lives of many**. Looking ahead, Bethel Colony of Mercy remains steadfast in its mission to

provide effective, Christ-centered programs, firmly rooted in the teachings of the Bible. The journey towards lasting freedom from addiction is a challenging one, but with the support and guidance offered at Bethel Colony, individuals find the strength and hope needed to overcome their struggles. Homecoming and Bible Conference serve as a testament to the enduring legacy of Bethel Colony, and the unwavering commitment to ushering souls toward a life of purpose, deliverance, freedom and personal relationship with Jesus. In conclusion, the 75th Anniversary, Homecoming and Bible Conference held at Bethel Colony of Mercy was a monumental occasion that saw individuals coming together to celebrate the transformative power of God in lives. The testimonies shared by former students, the remarkable preaching of Evangelist Dave Kistler, the Royal Tea event, and the record-breaking turnout for the Golf Tournament all added to the vibrancy and success of this 75th milestone.

Personally, I was also very honored to be recognized for 20 years of ministry at Bethel Colony during the 75th year

celebration! I am privileged to be a part of what God does at Bethel daily. Bethel Colony of Mercy continues to uphold its commitment to offering hope, healing, and restoration to those in need, and the 75th Anniversary, Homecoming and Bible Conference stand as a testament to the unwavering dedication to this cause. We can clearly say with the Psalmist ***“Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good...”***

Psalm 34:8



Pastor Paul and Stacy Pruitt
Executive Director

This is My Testimony... Niki Hutchins Women's Campus graduate

He brought the light back into my eyes without condemnation or any of the lies.

What you see here is beauty for ashes, and still I rise.

Binded, I was tied up and blinded buried in my past, I couldn't move on. Welcome to the story of my life always looking for a place when I already belong.

Emotions, well dare I say that they took my thoughts and ran them deep into the oceans. Soon enough the waves, they came crashing in, and there I lay all washed up naked on the shore in all of my sin.

Now going back and forth. It's the same as getting nowhere fast, and if I could sum up my life in only three words, they would be; in a flash.

All my life I had to fight, but it was never flesh and blood. It was me throwing my pearls to the swine while we wrestled in the mud.

Now I said that I would kill him dead if he ever lays his hands on me again, I've had my encounters with Harpo, and life it's no fairytale, my friend

Each day that I have, I'm blessed to be alive considering where I've been. I'm grateful that I even survived.

For the people who want to know and understand my story, I'll put it like this; to God be the glory.

In all honesty, all I remember are bits and pieces. Truth is the drugs fried my brain, and traded out my smarts for feces.

My days grew dark and my heart was ripped from my chest. I wish that I could say to you that I tried my best, but I'd be lying. The fact is that I allowed the enemy to stab and jab at me repeatedly as I lay there dying.

The chaos screeched like nails on a chalkboard, and the sound drove me out of my mind. I was looking for a way out, but that road became harder and harder to find.

I hurt a lot of people and I didn't care. I thought to myself, why should I after all life sure did hand me my fair share.

I cried out most days without crying at all the bombs inside my head exploded, and I built walls. I hid myself behind the shame, and I made them that hurt me the place to blame.

I would put up a guard so that I couldn't feel and the game plan was to take just enough to help me deal. But it only led me deeper in.

cont'd pg 3...

I was hanging on by a thread, and the thin of my skin. For the life of me I couldn't get ahead I mean, how was I supposed to? I literally could've been in the cast of The Walking Dead.

Looking back now I see how everyone tried their best to tell me. Man addiction is scary and all it ever did was fail me.

Someone help me please I prayed in a panic. My life had shattered right before my very eyes, and suddenly I was frantic.

Tell me, where do you turn when all your bridges are burned. It's time to face the music and you're the one who never learns.

This is more than a wake-up call. It's the moment you realize that you have been searching for something with no purpose at all.

As for me, I was the boy who cried wolf one time too many. I was incredibly loved by my family and friends, still am but didn't appreciate them any.

I was the woman at the well. I blew every dime that I had, and was headed straight for hell.

I thought that I was too messed up and damaged beyond repair so with razor sharp rebellion, I let Delilah in on the secret to my strength, and she gladly took my hair.

I grew faint, and to tell you that I am proud of myself or where I've been; well, I ain't.

But then a voice began calling me in. I've heard it before, but then I heard it again. A gentle one this time, soft and full of grace.

And as sure, as the sun shines He reached down and inside of me He slowly began to take the taste, and I tell you right now there is not a man alive who can take His place.

He catches my tears. You see, the opinion of man and what he thinks of me has weighed me down for years. And you wouldn't know this, but me doing this spoken word in front of all you guys, is also me facing one of my biggest fears.

But here I stand, and I have to say that God is good and life is grand. How amazing to know that it's all part of His plan.

When God said, let there be light surely he was thinking of both you and me. I believe it was that very moment that He set the captives free.

And as bad as I was, He never did see me that way. Standing here redeemed and bought with the blood, He sees only His Son Jesus Christ today.

Though I'm not perfect and prone to make mistakes. I'm worthy, so I'll carry my cross no matter the stakes. I'll do whatever it takes.

Freedom is a choice and it's up to us whether or not we use it as a voice. If no one knows your story, they will never understand your praise.

Set your goals. Make your mark and do it with a blaze. And SOUL-WHAT if no one likes it and by the way.

That's "S O U L-W H A T" and it all boils down to this. That this is my soul and I'm the only one who's gonna answer for me.

So, without condemnation or any of the lies, my prayer here is that He will bring the light back into someone else's eyes.

This is my testimony, Beauty for ashes and still I rise.

written by Niki Hutchins





Ramah Reflections

Look at God



God is so good! **The Royal Tea for the Women's Campus was a major success on every side!** The desire of my heart for this event was to bring Bethel Women's Campus alumni back together, and to celebrate the ladies who support this ministry. **We wanted graduates and supporters alike to come together for fellowship and encouragement, and that desire was met!** Many graduates, from the first graduating group to recent students, converged on Lenoir Presbyterian Church for fellowship. The event was also a fundraiser, and the generosity of those who chose to participate was overwhelming! We were flooded with toilet paper, paper towels, dry goods, and over \$6000 in monetary donations. We could not have had this event at all if not for the diligent work and direction of Cynthia and Stan Brown (Bethel Board member) who were our event coordinators. There are several other individuals who had a hand in making this event possible, and to each of them, **I say a whole-hearted "thank you" for making a little idea turn into a big success.**

The word that the Lord gave me to speak at our event was *sovereignty*. We know from our encounter with Esther that Mordecai indicated that Esther was where she was **"for such a time as this."** This story illustrates the sovereignty of God in a very poignant way. One little Hebrew girl was made queen of one of the most powerful empires of the day during the very time that the existence of the Jews as a people would be threatened. This is not a coincidence. God knew exactly who He was allowing to be placed in a position of authority. God chose for Esther to be where she was, and it was so. Esther could not pick her parents, her place of birth, or her position, but God saw fit to use these things to set her exactly where He wanted her for His purpose.

But Esther's story also shows us the significance of human choice. When confronted with the great evil of the day, **Esther had two choices before her: to remain unknown and save herself or to stand in the gap for her people and face possible death. God can set us up for His plan for our lives, but we must have the courage to choose His path.** In Esther 4:10-12, Esther tried to excuse herself from her destiny. She was afraid because she knew the law. Anyone who entered

the king's presence unannounced would be killed unless he spared them. The odds were not in her favor because she had not seen her husband for a month. We often look at things with natural eyes. We see the obstacle before we think of God's plan or purpose.

Esther nearly fell to this temptation, and it would have cost her dearly. But Mordecai sent her a message that included something that moved Esther to action: covenant. The book of Esther is conspicuous in Old Testament scripture for not mentioning God by name once. However, Mordecai alludes to covenant with God when he speaks in verse 14: **"For if you remain completely silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place."** Mordecai knew that it was not God's will for the Jews to perish from the face of the earth. There were too many prophecies that had yet to be fulfilled. But he warns Esther that if she does not act, her unbelief will condemn her. Esther chooses to summon her courage and fast for three days. God grants her the strength to do what needs doing, and because of her choice, the Jews were saved.

The takeaway from this biblical account is that we have to trust God's sovereignty in order to act according to His will. Whether He has seen fit to place us in a position we desire or not, He is the one who is in control. Many of us stall instead of acting on things God has desired of us because of the "what if" fear. What if it doesn't work out the way I want it to? What if people don't approve? What if I fail? God did not call us to account for the "what ifs"; He called us to move on His word. **We can trust that God is big enough, strong enough, faithful enough, and sovereign enough to bring His own will to pass.** So what are we waiting for? Some of us are like Esther before her decision was made. Perhaps we need to draw away and seek God to be reminded that He is exactly who He says He is, and that He will do exactly what He says He will do.

Blessed beyond measure,

Mrs. Regina Kelly
Women's Campus Co-Director



75th Homecoming Celebration 2023



The Royal Tea: For Such a Time as This



*Royal Tea:
For Such A Time Is This
September 30, 2023*

*Royal Tea:
For Such A Time Is This
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2023 Bible Conference





Associate Director/Pastor Zac Starnes

Thanksgiving Praise & Worship

This year we have been celebrating Bethel Colony of Mercy's 75 years of serving and ministering to those afflicted by the bondage of addiction. God is on the move at both the men's and women's campuses and you can feel His presence as soon as you step foot on either property. God uses Bethel in mighty ways to lead people unto salvation, to deliver them from the bondage of addiction, and to help families find healing and restoration. I am thankful and praise God for His continued work at Bethel and for the calling on my life to be a part of it. To think that He could use an old wretched man like me is truly humbling.

Psalms 100:4 states that we must **"Enter His gates with thanksgiving and His courts with praise. Give thanks to Him and praise His name"** (CSB). I was reminded of something profound at Bethel's annual Bible Conference. Dr. Dave Kistler said that **praising God is what we do for what He has done, and worshipping God is what we do for who He is.** Thanking God and praising God are something that should be synonymous. They go hand in hand and should not be contingent on how we feel.

The fall season is upon us and with it comes the change of the weather, the leaves of the trees change into magnificent colors and, of course, Thanksgiving. Thanksgiving is a time where we reflect on things in life for which we are thankful. Many people will have family get-togethers and spend time with loved ones around a meal as an expression of their thanks for their family and friends. There are those who do not have tightly knit families or many friends who will spend Thanksgiving alone. There are also many other scenarios in between that could play out, but **I wonder how many people are thanking and praising God at Thanksgiving time? I also wonder if Thanksgiving might be the only time that some thank or praise God?**

That breath you just took in is something to praise God about. Many of us have made poor choices and decisions in life where we should not be as healthy as we are and that is something to praise God about. The fact that He sent His Son Jesus Christ to die on a splintered cross for us to have an opportunity to be reconciled to Himself is something that we should be constantly praising God about. This Thanksgiving my challenge to us all is to not only be thankful for the things that God has done and for what He is doing but to praise Him for it and let others know about His wonderful works. Psalm 9:1-2 states **"I will thank Yahweh with all my**

heart; I will declare all your wonderful works. I will rejoice and boast about You; I will sing about Your name, Most High" (CSB).

We live in a world where many people feel the need to always have something stimulating their senses and where many believers need some praise music to foster in worship. Praise music can be a catalyst for worship, but the heart of worship is sitting in amazement and awe of a holy God. Psalm 100:5 states **"For Yahweh is good, and His love is eternal; His faithfulness endures through all generations"** (CSB). We worship God for who He is. He is good! His love is eternal! His faithfulness endures through all generations!

How easy is it to worship God if we are not thanking and praising Him? We can sing a praise song and we can have good feelings flowing through our bodies but if we are not praising God, we are operating in emotionalism and that is dangerous ground because our emotions can be deceptive. **Worshipping God is beyond our emotions and is not bound to the church building or only possible while singing a song of praise.** Have you ever just sat down with no background noise or distractions and just sat at the feet of Jesus worshipping Him for who He is? If not, I encourage you to try it.

Jesus tells us in John 4:24 **"God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth"** (CSB). Worship involves our personal awareness of the Holy Spirit and our need for God indwelling His people. God is not limited to space and time or bound to one place. He is found everywhere and found all the time and we can worship Him everywhere at any time. Worship must be done from a genuineness. **You cannot fake worshipping God and one cannot worship God unless they are reborn of the Spirit.** Part of our role as His creation is to worship Him but if we are not worshipping Him, then who or what are we worshipping?

As we enter this season of Thanksgiving let us not enter it lightly or casually. Let us thank and praise God for His many blessings. Let us praise Him for not giving us what we deserve. Let us cultivate a genuine desire to worship Him for who He is and not lose sight of His goodness and mercy in our lives everyday no matter the season.

Pastor Zac Starnes
Associate Director





Emotional Pain

Emotional pain is the norm. "Families are, with a few exceptions, dysfunctional....Families are rarely religious, and if they are, they are certainly dysfunctional." David Mills, *"Living in the Land of Cain" in Touchstone: A Journal of Mere Christianity. (2006)*. Seventeen years later, multitudes of families are in the same condition, if not worse. David Mills writing of the Lambeth Conference of Anglican Bishops in 1920 on marriage, describes it as *"an eloquence and directness that is in a word, lustrous: The fellowship between man and woman in marriage was the earliest which God gave to the human race... What our Lord adds about marriage is not given as new legislation, but as a declaration of God's original purpose. The man and his wife are no longer twain, but one flesh; and those whom God has joined together, man is not to put asunder....God will work, as those who wait for Him well know, the miracle by which two lives become one, yet so that each life became greater and better than it could alone."*

Society having left this biblical truth for many years is experiencing the consequences of emotional pain. Many dysfunctional families are those who have left God as their portion. ***"We look for light, but there is darkness! For brightness, but we walk in blackness....We stumble at noonday as at twilight: We are as dead men in desolate places."*** (Isaiah 59:9-10)

King David experienced dysfunction but did not abandon God. ***"For I will be glad and rejoice in Your mercy, for You have considered my trouble."*** (Psalm 31:7) The depth of David's trouble is written in Psalm 31:9-13. ***"My eyes waste away with grief, yes my soul and my body. My life is spent with grief and my years with sighing. My strength fails because of my iniquity, and my bones waste away. I am a reproach among all my enemies, but especially among my neighbors, and repulsive to my acquaintances; and those who see me outside flee from me. I am forgotten like a dead man, out of mind; I am a broken vessel. For I hear the slander of many; fear is on every side."***

David was full of emotional pain. He looked to God in his emotional pain. Consider (Psalm 31:1) ***"In You, O Lord, I put my trust."*** (Psalm 31:9) ***Have mercy on me, O Lord, for I am in trouble."*** (Psalm 31:14) ***"But as for me, I trust in You, O Lord; I say You are my God."***

I recently re-read the story of a young girl named Dorie who was born into a dysfunctional family. She wrote of

her experience in the book, *Dorie: The Girl Nobody Loved*. As a child Dorie was rejected by her mother and placed in an orphanage experiencing beatings by the orphanage director. Her beatings and rejection would normally have left her as an emotionally angry and resentful adult. Her father also left her. In the orphanage one girl said to Dorie; *"This is a place you go where nobody wants you."* She finally found a family that took her to a home. They beat her. At thirteen years old a group of college students came to the orphanage with a Bible story saying that Jesus Christ died on the cross for you and God loves you. Dorie remained seated as others left. She said to God, *"They said you love me. Nobody else does. If You want me you can have me!"* She states that instantly she felt that God was beside her, in her. In fact, an unexpected peace settled over her. *"This must be God."* That night in her bed Dorie cried for joy. "I had found Somebody who loved me." A friendly matron who joined the orphanage staff, Irma Fremm, invited her to go to church and gave her a gift. It was a small black book. On it was stamped, *The New Testament*. Tears blinded her eyes. It was the first gift she had ever received. That black book was in her possession at all times. As she marked it and memorized scripture, it helped her to keep hope in the rest of the trials she experienced.

We are entering the holiday season. You will probably experience emotional pain. Remember God loves you though nobody else does. Ask Christ to save you from your sins. Read John chapter 3 of the Bible and ask God to show you His love for you. Keep your Bible with you. Read it, underline it, and memorize scripture that God puts on your heart. For King David and Dorie sought Him in troubled waters. Emotional pain did not trump the joy of the Lord. You can experience His comfort in the troubled waters of life. ***".... Your mercy, O Lord, will hold me up. In the multitudes of my anxieties within me. Your comforts delight my soul."*** (Psalm 94:18-19) Trust in the Lord through it all. He loves you!

Where the grace blows.

Pastor Don Loss
Director of Counseling



Fill out and mail your prayer requests to us.

Name _____

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II Chronicles 7:14

“If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.”

Prayer Request: _____

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Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving; Let us shout joyfully to Him with psalms. For the LORD is the great God, And the great King above all gods. Ps. 95:2-3



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