

# THE UPWARD CALL

*Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet;  
but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead,  
I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God  
IN CHRIST JESUS.*

(Philippians 3.13-14 NASB)

#02-08160

DECEMBER 31, 2008

## **"GO BACK!" [THE RABBIT]**

I love rabbits. I think they are one of the cutest animals created by God, with their noses that seem to always twitch and their white, fluffy cotton tails. I often imagine God smiling as He put the finishing touches on the rabbit. He must have stood back and said: "This is good!" Call me a dreamer, if you will, but I imagine rabbits hopping around the throne of God and bringing delight to His heart. I have no doubt that the Lord has used rabbits to encourage me over the years. When I have been down in my soul, it seems that on many occasions rabbits have appeared in my path, as if the Lord was telling me all is well.

Well, on December 7, 2008, around 5.30 pm, I was driving home. The sun had gone down and I was driving through our community. I was probably going about 30 mph when this little rabbit ran in front of my car. I tried to avoid the critter, but it ran right into my path. The next thing I heard was a thud. I looked in my rearview mirror and saw the poor rabbit lying in the road. I began to cry out to the Lord. It went something like this: "Oh, Lord, please raise up the rabbit. You know how I love rabbits, Please, Lord, don't let it die; don't let it be hurt." I could picture the rabbit, which, from its size, appeared to be from this year's crop, all mangled on the road. I know for a fact that it was lying in the road on its side.

I was about a mile from my home and continued on because I could not bear the sight of a dead rabbit. However, after going about a quarter of a mile from the accident scene, I heard the Lord speak to me very directly and clearly: "**Go back!**"

At this point, I began to argue with the Lord. The argument went something like this: "Lord, I can't go back. You know I love rabbits. I can't stand the thought of looking at a dead rabbit. Or, even worse, what if it is crippled and lying in the road unable to move, what will I do then? How can I take care of a crippled rabbit?" I continued along this line, but to every point, the Lord responded: "**Go back!**" The conversation was getting pretty intense on my part to the point that I was willing to be disobedient. I was on the verge of just telling the Lord "I refuse to go back to see a dead or mangled rabbit." However, the Lord's persistent word to go back would not let me go, so that by the time I had reached my driveway, I knew that I had to go back. So I turned in the cul-de-sac and proceeded back to the accident site, fully expecting to see what I feared. As I was driving, I continued to imagine what I might see and what I might do. A dead rabbit was one thing, but an injured rabbit was an entirely different matter. I kept arguing: "What if the poor thing is lying in the road with its back broken and its little eyes staring at me? What will I do then?"

Well, a few minutes later, I arrived at the crime scene, and to my amazement, the little rabbit was sitting in the road sort of staring off into space. It seemed so calm. I began to examine the rabbit without touching it. I saw no blood, no signs of physical trauma, but I still wondered if its back was broken and it was frozen in place. I began to talk to it as if it would understand my concern for it, but it did not move. It just continued to stare in its frozen place. It was sitting in the lane of the road so that it could have been hit by another car. As I stood over the rabbit, two cars approached and they stopped. The first one had no interest in this guy standing in the road talking to a rabbit, so they slowly moved on past me. The next car was driven by a young woman who obviously had more curiosity and perhaps compassion, so she took the time to ask me what had happened. I explained to her what I had done, to which she responded that perhaps the rabbit was stunned. So, I returned to the rabbit again and began to talk to it. At this point, the little critter hopped up in the air, almost in a full circle, and ran off into the median strip of the road. To be sure that the rabbit had survived, I checked the area the next day and there was no sign of the rabbit. Thank you, Lord!

Now, I have no doubt that the Lord heard my first plea to raise up the rabbit. Without any doubt whatsoever, He raised up the rabbit and made it sit in that road, protected from traffic, until I could return. It was a miracle. The Lord also knew that I would argue my case but that I would obey His command. He had a lesson to teach me, and I was going to learn it because He had ordained that I learn it.

In many ways, the whole episode is comical on one level and in unbelief on another level. Can you imagine that I was arguing with the Lord over all the possible horrible outcomes and never once considered that the Lord, the Creator of all, as well as the Healer, just might have been telling me that He would answer my cry to raise up the rabbit? Instead, I acted as if the Lord wanted me to return to the crime scene and stick my nose, so to speak, in what I had done to make me feel bad over it. In those brief minutes, I totally lost sight of whom I was talking to and lost sight of His character of unending and immeasurable love. I had dragged the Lord down to my level of thinking rather than rising up to His level of love. I was in unbelief, which if it had continued for a minute longer would have resulted in disobedience.

But there was one other thing that I realize was happening with me at that moment. I was totally absorbed in myself and my feelings. For those brief moments, I could not get my thoughts off myself and what I would do with the rabbit. Simply, I had taken my eyes off the Lord and was caught up in myself and what I thought was a dire outcome and what I had to do to fix or resolve it.

There are many lessons to be learned from this rabbit encounter, but here are a few.

When the Lord speaks to us, obey without argument; after all, He knows best, and **we know that to the ones loving God all things work together for good, to the ones being called according to [His] purpose** (Romans 8.28 ALT).

When in difficult situations, don't play the what-if-game; get your eyes off yourself and the situation and on the Lord; look to Him for direction and trust Him for the outcome.

No matter what is going on in your life, never lose sight of the fact that **God is love** and all that He does is done in love, unconditional love. He is not out to get you, so to speak, to destroy you, or to make you feel bad over things you have done. He is the forgiving, restoring, loving God of all creation. He is after a heart-to-heart relationship in which you know how much He loves you and cares for you, and that He will see you through to the end.

To conclude, this is the last issue for the year 2008. It just so happens that this is the 160<sup>th</sup> issue for the year as well. The number **16** signifies **love** and factored ten times intensifies its meaning all the more. It is most appropriate that I close out the year with the word **love**, for this is the word the Lord gave to me for 2008. See issue #02-0802, January 4, 2008. God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ love you. Don't ever lose sight of this fact and don't ever allow anyone or any circumstance to convince you otherwise. God is love! Write this law on your heart as you press on toward the goal.

I leave 2008 with one thought.

Over 2,000 years ago, the Father sent His Beloved Son to this earth to die for the sin of the world. We were all like that rabbit; dead on the road of life. He came to save us, and He did. But here is the good news: A day is coming when the Father will tell His Son: **"Go back!"** He will not hesitate or argue. He will go back **without reference to sin, to those who eagerly await Him** (Hebrews 9.28). Some days, I feel like that rabbit in the road, just sitting and staring, waiting for someone to come by and deliver me. That someone is the Beloved Son of God who very soon will hear His Father's voice of love: **"Go back!"** He will obey, **for God so loves the world.**