

Volume 10 ISSUE 10 - October 2026

GETTING TO KNOW YOU





Devotional by Elder Keith Freeman

THE JOURNEY WITHIN

DISCOVERING THE LIFE OF CHRIST IN US

“Take nothing for your journey...” Luke 9:3

Every journey begins with a question:

What should I take with me?

When traveling into unfamiliar territory, our instinct is to prepare. We pack what we believe we will need because we do not know what lies ahead. But when Jesus sent His disciples on their journey, He gave them an unusual instruction:

Take nothing.

No staff. No bag. No bread. No money. No extra clothing.

Why?

Because before Jesus told them what *not* to take, He had already given them what they needed:

“Then he called his twelve disciples together, and gave them power and authority...” Luke 9:1

Their physical journey contained a spiritual truth:
They were being taught to trust not in what they could carry, but in what they
had already received.

And so are we.

WHAT'S IN YOUR BACKPACK?

When God calls us on a spiritual journey, we may not pack bread, clothing, or money—but we still bring a backpack. In fact, we have been packing it our entire lives. Fear. Insecurity. Shame. Resentment. Our need for approval. Our need to control what happens next. Our fear of losing money, possessions, food, shelter, or security. We carry identities other people have given us and identities we have created for ourselves. We carry our traditions, our religion, our politics, our opinions, our prejudices, our failures, our accomplishments, and sometimes even our certainty that we understand God.

Yet Jesus says: “Take nothing for your journey.”

Perhaps the spiritual journey isn't about discovering what else we need. Perhaps it is about discovering what we need to leave behind.

WE CAN LEAVE EGYPT AND STILL CARRY EGYPT WITH US

The children of Israel physically walked out of Egypt, yet in the wilderness they repeatedly looked backward. When they became hungry, thirsty, or afraid, they remembered Egypt. Their feet were traveling toward the Promised Land while their minds kept returning to the place God had delivered them from.

They had left Egypt, but Egypt had not yet left them.

Their backpack contained fear, scarcity, distrust, and an identity formed through slavery.

Our journey can be the same.

Something may have disappeared from our lives twenty years ago and yet still occupy space within us today.

We can leave an old situation and still carry its fear.

We can leave an old relationship and still carry its hurt.

We can leave an old religion and still carry its condemnation.

We can leave our past without ever putting it down.

God does not merely want to change where we are going.

He wants to free us from what we are carrying.

THE BACKPACK WE CANNOT PUT DOWN

A wealthy young ruler came to Jesus seeking eternal life. He had obeyed the commandments and lived a religious life. Then Jesus touched the one thing the man could not release:

“Sell all that thou hast... and come, follow me.” Luke 18:22

The man became sorrowful because he had great wealth. Jesus invited him on a journey, but he could not put down his backpack. The deeper issue was not simply money. It was attachment. His possessions had become connected to his security and identity.

Our backpack may contain something completely different, but the question remains:

What am I holding so tightly that I cannot freely follow where Christ is leading me?

LEAVE THE WATER JAR

The Samaritan woman came to Jacob's well carrying a water jar. She came looking for ordinary water. Then she encountered Jesus, who spoke to her about living water—a source of life within. Afterward, John records a beautiful little detail:

“The woman then left her waterpot...” John 4:28

She left the jar. She came carrying something she believed she needed and encountered Christ, who revealed another source. She arrived carrying a container. She left carrying a revelation.

How many things are we still carrying because we believe they contain something we need?

Eventually Christ shows us:

You don't need the jar anymore.

LAY ASIDE EVERY WEIGHT

Abraham had to leave the familiar and walk toward a destination he could not yet see. Moses had to move beyond the insecurity of asking, "Who am I?" and learn to trust God's answer: "I will be with thee." Paul eventually laid down the religious credentials and accomplishments that once defined him, counting them as loss that he might know Christ.

Again and again, the journey requires something to be released.

Hebrews tells us: "Let us lay aside every weight... and let us run with patience the race that is set before us." Hebrews 12:1

Notice that Scripture says every weight. Not everything we carry is necessarily evil. Some things are simply heavy. Fear may be heavy. The need for approval may be heavy. Being offended may be heavy. The need to always be right may be heavy. An identity created by something someone said about us thirty years ago may be heavy.

Eventually God asks: Why are you still carrying this? God will then open the backpack. Look inside. And begin taking things out.

THE STILL SMALL VOICE

Elijah experienced a great wind, an earthquake, and a fire. But God was not in them. Then came: "a still small voice." 1 Kings 19:12

Perhaps God has always been speaking, but our backpack has become too noisy. Fear is talking. Money is talking. Religion is talking. Politics is talking. Our past is talking. Other people's expectations are talking. Our insecurities are talking. And beneath all that noise is the quiet voice of the Spirit. The journey within teaches us to become still enough to hear it.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WE EMPTY THE BACKPACK?

This is where the journey changes. We might imagine that if everything we have used to define ourselves is removed, nothing will remain. But something is already there. Paul calls it a mystery: "Christ in you, the hope of glory." Colossians 1:27 The journey within does not lead us into emptiness. It leads us into discovery. We discover love where resentment once lived. Mercy where judgment lived. Forgiveness where offense lived. Peace where fear lived. Faith where uncertainty lived. And these are not treasures we must travel somewhere to find. They are the fruit of the Spirit: Love. Joy. Peace. Long-suffering. Gentleness. Goodness. Faith. Meekness. Temperance. Galatians 5:22-23

We spend much of our lives searching outside ourselves for peace, love, acceptance, identity, purpose, and even God. Yet Jesus said: "The kingdom of God is within you." Luke 17:21

THE JOURNEY WITHIN

At the beginning of the journey, we ask: What should I bring?

Eventually the question becomes: What am I willing to leave behind?

The backpack becomes lighter. The voices become quieter. And the life of Christ within us becomes clearer.

We do not have to manufacture love. We release it.

We do not have to manufacture mercy. We release it.

We do not have to manufacture forgiveness. We release it.

We do not have to create the life of Christ. We allow His life to be expressed through us.

Perhaps this is why Jesus could tell His disciples: Take nothing for your journey.

They thought they were beginning a journey into the world.

But Jesus was also teaching them about a journey of trust, surrender, and faith.

So, open your backpack. What are you still carrying?

Fear? Shame? Resentment? Religion? Money? Status? Politics? An old identity?

Someone else's opinion of you? Your own opinion of yourself?

Lay aside every weight.

Become still. Listen for the still small voice. And keep walking. Because the destination isn't simply somewhere in front of you. There is also a journey taking place within you. And as the baggage falls away, something that has been there all along begins to emerge:

THE LIFE OF CHRIST IN US.

Let us ask God daily, show me what I am carrying that You never asked me to carry. Help me release my fears, attachments, offenses, false identities, and insecurities. Quiet the voices competing for my attention so I can hear Your Spirit within me. Teach me to trust You when I cannot see where the journey leads. May Your love, mercy, forgiveness, peace, and life flow freely through me. With every step, may there be less baggage and a clearer expression of Christ within me.

Let us constantly ask ourselves....What is in my backpack that God never asked me to carry?

Become still. Listen. And be willing to leave it behind.



Hello Family,

I hope this finds everyone in a happy October mood.

Bible Study is a wonderful gift that takes us on a wonderful adventure, and
you can even watch it online

So you don't have to miss a thing except the fellowship and that's a lot.

There are snacks in the Fellowship Hall at 7:00 p.m. and everyone
gathers to have a

"Homemade sweets, coffee and fellowship", It's a great way to spend time
together.

Then at 7:30 we go into the Sanctuary and Pastor Michael breaks down
the notes in a way that we can all enjoy and understand.

We are all getting so much out of taking home the notes and practicing what we are learning about ourselves and God.

There is always something to look forward to here at New Image Ministries so stick around and see for yourself.

I want to talk about this newsletter for a minute; the name is “Getting to Know You” because that is exactly what it is intended to do.

We are a church “family” and we should take some time to get to know each other a little better.

You can submit a recipe or a “household hint” or you can call me and we can sit down with me for the column “WHO”.

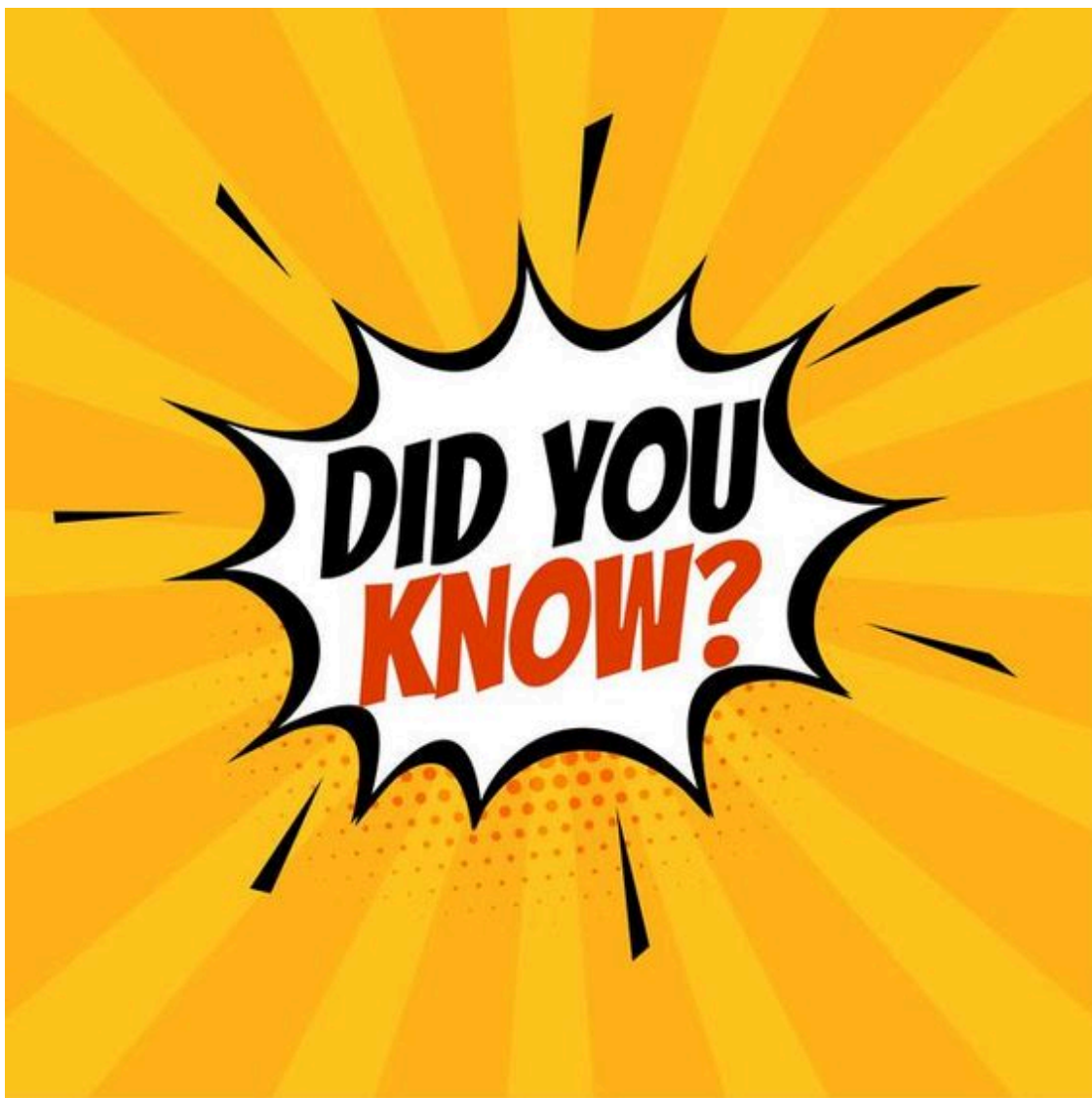
In “WHO” I interview someone every month and put that interview into this newsletter and everyone has

A whole month to figure out who you are. The following month I let them know and it is so much fun.

If you would like to sit down with me for an interview, please let me know.

Next month we will start the “Holiday Season” and it will be fun filled around here from now on until “New Year’s Eve”, I can’t wait!

Until next month and always with love and blessings,
Deacon Helen J. Caliendo

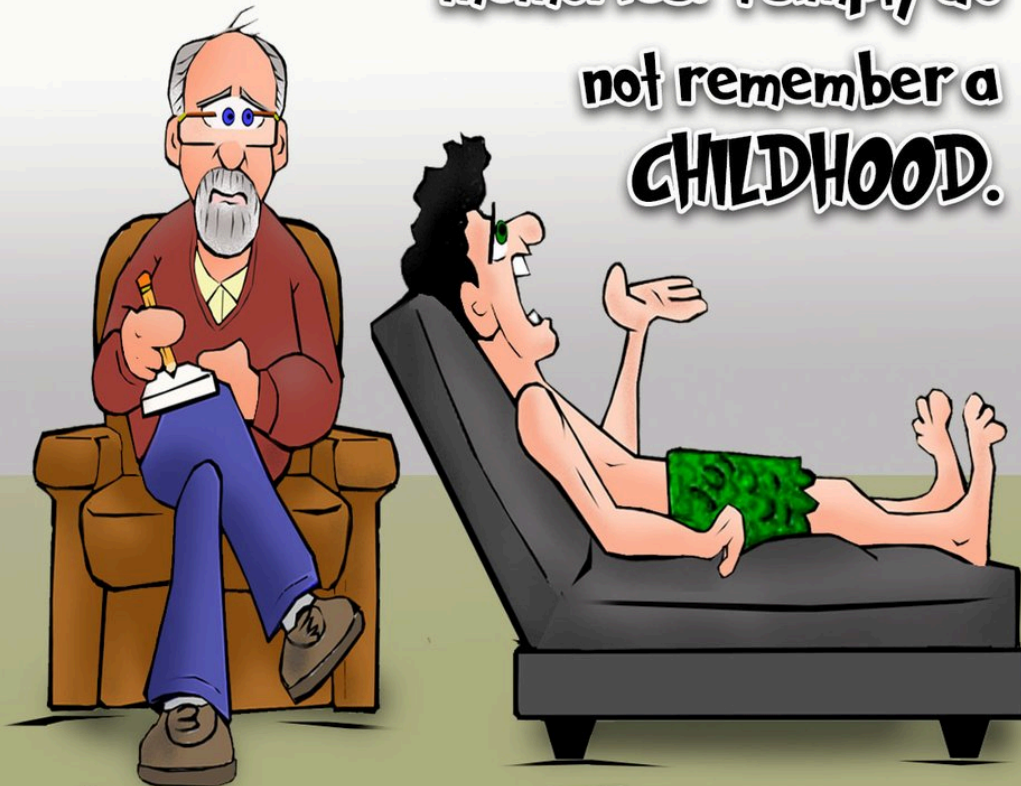


**Use a bread tab to hold
your spot on a roll of tape**

Before we go inside, repeat after me Psalm 23...
"The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want!"



It's not that I have **BAD** childhood
memories. I simply do
not remember a
CHILDHOOD.



Adam sees a Therapist



WHO AM I?

I was born in "The Bronx, NY"

I love the color "orange"

I love to "shop and write poetry"

My most treasured memory is "buying a house"

I enjoy "eating out"

My favorite meal would be; "steak, yellow rice, mashed potatoes and broccoli"

I enjoy "all types of music"

My favorite singer is "Stevie Wonder"

My favorite author is "Langston Hughes"

My favorite movie is "Remember the Titans"

My favorite actor is "Denzel Washington"

My favorite actress is "Sandra Bullock"

My favorite T.V. show "Wheel of Fortune"

"Giving gifts" is what makes me happy

What makes me feel at peace is "meditating"

I have traveled to "Africa, Puerto Rico"

My favorite vacation was "Puerto Rico"

My favorite holiday is "Christmas"

I love the smell of "dryer sheets"

My autobiography would be titled "Born on a Yellow Couch"

The best gift I have ever received is "my children"

The best part of waking up is "A New Day and a New Chance"

My superpower would be to "heal the sick"

The one thing I am most proud of is "my children"

My philosophy is "Where there's a Will, There's a Way"

"My daughter" really makes me laugh

I collect "Hour Glasses"

The most important law I would enforce if I were ruler is "Treat Everyone Fairly"

My warning label would say "Caution Creativity Could Explode"



MEET: WILMA TERENNA

I was born in the "Bronx, NY"

My favorite color is "Red"

I love "reading" and "going to the beach"

I spend each day taking care of "my spouse and my house and animals"

My most treasured memory is "the day I got married"

I have worked at banking and "bookkeeping"

I love "Chicken Parmesan"

I enjoy listening to "Jazz music"

I love "Michael Buble"

"Jason Statham" and "Tom Curise" are two of my favorite actors

My favorite actress is "Elizabeth Taylor"

"Soft music" makes me feel peaceful

I have been to "The Bahamas, Bermuda and California"

I would love to see "Europe and Greece"

My favorite holiday is "Christmas"

I love the smell of "roses"

My autobiography would be called "God is always in my life and my adventures"

A new day is" a good day for feeling loved"

I would love to be like "Wonder Woman" with all of her powers

I have had a "good family and a good life"

I collect little tchotchkes (knick-knicks)

If I were the ruler I would make "Be good to each other" a law

And "No Negativity"

"Do the right thing in life and you'll be blessed"

WHILE YOU LAY SLEEPING
THE LORD TOOK HIS HAND
AND PULLED UP THE SUN
TO BRIGHTEN THE LAND

HE AWOKED ALL THE BIRDS
TO SING YOU A SONG
TO KEEP IN YOUR HEART
ALL THE DAY LONG

HE SPRINKLED THE FLOWERS
WITH SWEET MORNING DEW
AND ASKED THEM TO BLOOM
AS A GIFT JUST FOR YOU

HE SENT YOU HIS LOVE
ON THE RAYS OF THE SUN
TO TELL YOU GOOD MORNING
YOUR DAY HAS BEGUN

WHEN YOU FEEL WARMTH
CARESSING YOUR SKIN
GIVE THANKS TO THE LORD
FOR IT WAS GIVEN BY HIM

SHRIMP AND GRITS



Ingredients

CHEESE GRITS

- 4 ½ cups water
- 1 cup stoneground grits
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ¾ cup grated sharp cheddar cheese
- ¼ cup grated parmesan cheese
- 3 tablespoons butter
- ½ teaspoon freshly ground pepper
- ½ teaspoon Tabasco, or to taste

SHRIMP

- 3 bacon strips, chopped
- Peanut oil, as needed
- 1 pound extra-large shrimp, peeled and deveined
- 2 tablespoons flour
- 4 ounces sliced mushroom (1¼ cups)
- 1 large garlic clove, minced
- 2 teaspoons lemon juice
- ½ teaspoon Tabasco, or to taste
- ¼ cup thinly sliced green onions, plus more for garnish

Directions

Grits: Bring 4½ cups of water to a boil in a large saucepan over high heat. Whisk in the grits and salt, reduce heat to low, and cook at a gently simmer for 35 to 40 minutes or until the grits are thick, stirring occasionally. Stir more often as the grits thicken. Remove the pan from the heat, add the cheddar, parmesan, butter, pepper, and Tabasco, and stir until smooth. Taste and adjust the seasoning. Keep warm over very low heat.

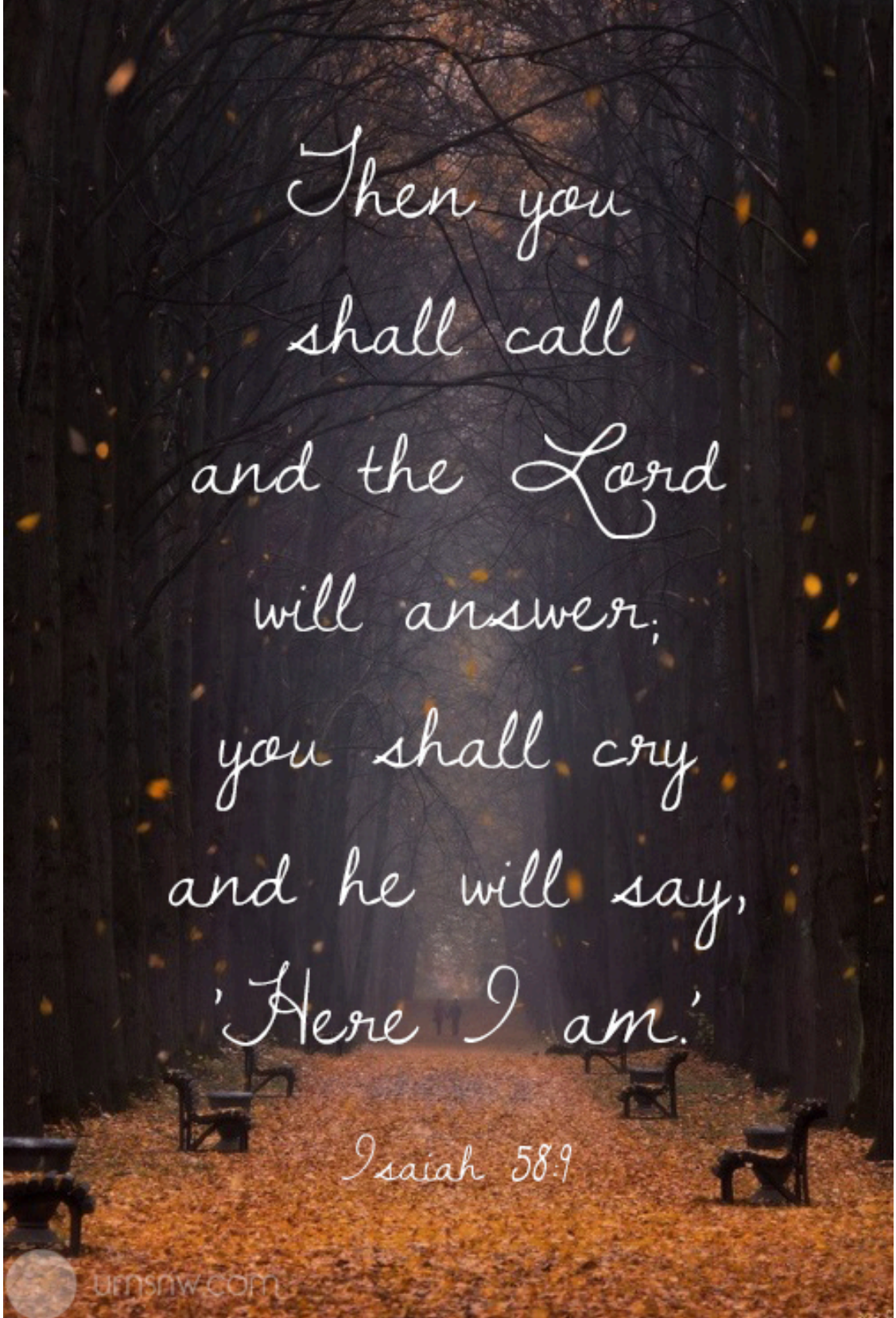
Shrimp: In a medium skillet over medium-high heat, cook the bacon for 6 minutes or until crisp, stirring occasionally. Transfer with a slotted spoon to drain on paper towels and leave the fat in the skillet. If there is less than 1½ tablespoons of bacon fat, make up the difference with peanut oil.

Toss the shrimp with the flour until lightly coated, shaking off any excess. In the skillet with the reserved fat, cook the shrimp over medium-high heat for 1 minute or until they begin to turn pink. Add the mushrooms and bacon and cook for 1 minute. Add the garlic and cook, stirring, for 30 seconds (do not let the garlic brown). Stir in the hot sauce, lemon juice, and scallions and remove from the heat. Divide the grits among 4 shallow bowls and top with the shrimp mixture. Garnish with additional scallions and serve at once.

But those who trust in the Lord will find new
strength. They will soar high on wings like
eagles. They will run and not grow weary.
They will walk and not faint.

Isaiah 40:31

Dear Lord, My hope and trust is in you. Be my
strength as I walk through the storms. You are
my covering and protection. Thank you for
encouraging me to keep on pressing forward.
I will keep my eyes on you.



Then you
shall call
and the Lord
will answer;
you shall cry
and he will say,
'Here I am.'

Isaiah 58:9



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God's mercy is bigger than any of your mistakes

THE DIVINE SPARK

Eternity in the heart of humanity!

ECCLESIASTES 3:11

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