

December 2015

Calvary Jail Ministries Newsletter



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MERRY CHRISTMAS!!!

Calvary Jail Ministry Newsletter

Volume 1 Issue 3

Greetings from the Calvary Jail Ministry team! We are continuing in our quest to publish a newsletter that will increase the awareness of the ministry that God has laid on our hearts and ultimately give Him praise for what He has done for us through Jesus Christ.

The greatest gift of all was the birth of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. We are about to celebrate Him and I pray we remember His birth everyday.

Christmas is a hard time for those incarcerated and their families. Sandra Kearns shares in this issue her own experiences. If you do not know Sandra, look at her website: www.onwingslikeadove.com and read her testimony.

As we have been given the greatest gift of all, Jesus, Todd Matthews shares in this issue how we are to give.

Finally, our chaplain, Dan Rodriguez encourages us to look around at what we have been given, enjoy our surroundings, think about our commitment to Christ, and pray for those incarcerated.

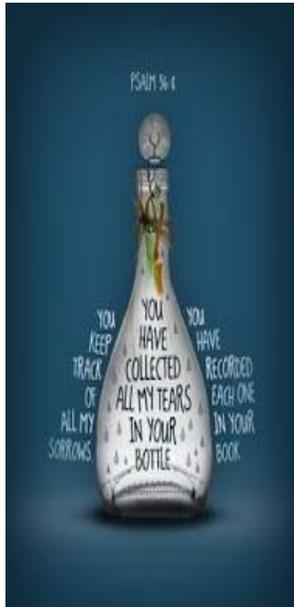
As noted last month, Frank Trogon was a board member of Calvary Jail Ministries and passed away in November. Please continue to keep his wife Ruth in your prayers.

But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days.

Micah 5:2 ESV

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Sandra Kearns— He Collects Our Tears



For most of us this is a joyous season as we get caught up in the shopping, the decorating, the baking, the Christmas programs and parties, and so many other things that take our attention. But there are many who are grieving the loss of a loved one due to death or maybe the lost of a loved one they feel is captive to the ways of the world as they have been lured into the drug world or are sitting in prison.

Our family certainly felt that void at our dinner table and family celebrations often as our son was drawn into so many things that took him away from his home. Each time I hear of a crime on the news I think of the family behind the act. They will never be the same and they, along with their loved one suffer the consequences of the actions.

I remember placing a candle in one window as a reminder to pray for our son's home coming and as a sign to him that we were awaiting his return. It is with that painful experience in mind that I pray for so many families experiencing those same emotions in this season of their lives.

On Wings has made tear bottles that we give our families with the scripture in Psalm 56:8, "You keep track of all my sorrows. You have collected all my tears in Your bottle. You have recorded each one in Your book" NLT.

Won't you stop right now and breathe a word of prayer for these families and their Prodigal. Grief comes not only due to death, but often because of the choices our loved ones have made.

Lord, we come acknowledging that You and You alone can draw the Prodigal back home to You. We ask you to breathe life into their dry bones. Set everything in working order in their lives, so that they will know that You are Lord. We know that You have a plan that You are working out for each one who sits in darkness at this moment. We pray that Your light will shine in the darkness of their heart and flood them with Your presence Lord. No situation is impossible or hopeless with You Lord, so do what only You can do in lives today. We trust You with each one and know that You are Sovereign over their lives and ours. Help them to release their loved one to You and accept Your perfect will for each one, whatever that may be. We love you Lord.

May God bless you each and everyone as you intercede for the Prodigals/Prisoners and their families. Have a very Merry Christmas and remember He and He alone is the reason for the season we celebrate. - Sandra www.onwingslikeadove.com

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Todd Matthews—A testimony To Giving

“Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven.

²“Thus, when you give to the needy, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward.”³ But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing,⁴ so that your giving may be in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

Matthew 6: 1-4
ESV

In Matthew 6:1-4, Jesus teaches and commands us how to give charitably. He also commands us three ways we’re not to give:

Vs.1: We are not to do our charitable acts in order to be seen.

Vs.2: We are not to sound a trumpet as the hypocrites did in the synagogues and streets in order that they could receive glory from people. (A modern day translation can read like this: “we are not to announce to everybody in the church our charitable deeds as some hypocrites in the church do, nor are we to announce in public our charitable deeds in order that we might receive praise from people.”)

Vs.3: We are not to let our left hand know what our right hand does. (This statement refers to potential spiritual pride in ourselves because of something good we did for someone else. There’s a danger in thinking more of ourselves than we should which leads to pride rather than humility.

A shorter summary of these could read like this:

Vs.1: We are not to give in order to be seen.

Vs.2: We are not to give to receive praise from people.

Vs.3: We are not to praise ourselves for what we do for others.

So, when we’re not letting our left hand know what our right hand is doing we’re giving “in secret” as the beginning of verse four states. This is the giving Christ commands. It should be noted though, that not all giving is done in secret and Christ is not prohibiting openly giving before others. At times giving is done before others, but what the question always will be is, “What was the motive behind the giving?” To honor God or ourselves? We’re always to give with the right heart attitude in obedience to God’s Word.

This kind of giving honors, pleases, and glorifies God. In return Jesus tells us that God (The Father) who sees “in secret” will reward you openly, as the latter part of verse four states. Seeing “in secret” speaks of God’s Omniscience. Omniscience means God has “All Knowledge.” He sees all our giving and the motive behind why we give. When it’s done with the right motive God rewards us openly. This is God’s way of blessing us so that others may see or hear about it. When they do God is glorified. It’s always done for God’s glory, not ours.

Having explained what these scriptures teach us, I would like to share my own personal testimony concerning Matthew 6:14 so that you may hear and know God’s faithfulness to His Word, and that God may be glorified in my life!

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Todd Matthews (continued)



In 1999 I was living in Mcleansville, N.C. I was friends with a young lady named Angie who I went to church with. Angie, like many of us at times, was struggling to make ends meet. She did secretarial work and drove a school bus part time to provide for her two daughters and herself. One Monday before I went to visit her I felt like God laid on my heart to give her \$100. So that evening after we were done visiting and I was getting ready to leave, I gave her \$100. She was reluctant to take it at first, but I explained to her that I felt like God laid it on my heart to give it to her. Upon hearing this she took the money. I did tell her there was one catch to receiving the money, “she couldn’t tell anybody I gave her the money.” I explained to her Matthew 6:14

and how Jesus taught to give “in secret.” She agreed and I left.

Two days later, on Wednesday, I went to church with the christian couple (Richard & Peggy) I lived with. After the service I went to the car to leave. Peggy was in the car but Richard was still inside. When I got in the car and sat down Peggy handed me a sealed envelope and said, “I’ve got good news for you, a member of the church has anonymously given you some money.” Immediately I thought in my mind (without saying anything out loud) that Angie had come to the church and given the money back. Then I thought to myself that I’ll just go visit her and give her the same amount of money a second time.

I sat back in the seat and opened the envelope. Remember how much money I gave Angie? It was \$100. Inside the envelope was \$200. At that very moment the Holy Spirit brought to my remembrance the latter part of verse four in Matthew 6 I spoke about at the beginning of this article, “the Father which sees in secret will reward you openly.” Tears of joy ran down my face as I explained to Peggy what God had done. That was the first time God had ever moved like that in my life and brought a promise of His word to pass in such an openly and unforgettable way. I’ve not forgotten since and I’ve shared it with many people through the years. I’ve also shared many other promises God’s brought to pass in my life. God is faithful to His Word!!



I pray this will be an encouragement to whoever reads it and that God is glorified! Amen! Merry Christmas!!!

Todd Matthews

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Chaplain's Corrnar—Dan Rodriguez, Calvary Jail Ministry Chaplain



Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem saying, “Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose^l and have come to worship him.”

Matthew 2:1-2 ESV

Greetings!

May the grace and peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

It is once again my blessed privilege to address you through this newsletter.

It is absolutely amazing how quickly time is passing by. The weeks, the months, the years..... and we hardly notice. Thanksgiving has just passed; Christmas is in front of us and New Year's is right around the corner.

Surely for most of us, this is a most wonderful time of the year. The beautiful “post card” colors of fall, the mild temperatures, wonderful times of joy with our most loved ones, and even the smell of burning wood in the air from our fireplaces. Don't we love it? Aren't we so blessed! Yes we are!

But as you and I know, not all are as fortunate as we are. Many families are suffering the deep and sorrowful pain of separation from their loved ones that are incarcerated.

I beseech you my brethren in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, your most fervent prayers for all those that are suffering. According to scripture in Paul's letter to the church at Rome, Chapter 12 verses 15-16 reads as follows:

Romans 12:15-16 (NIV)

15 Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. 16 Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.

I ask you to think and consider what Paul is writing in this statement. It certainly reflects the manner of which our Lord Jesus Christ lived his life, worked his ministry and left an example for his disciples to follow. Our Lord Rejoiced with the family that was celebrating the wedding in Canaan and He surely made the best wine man has ever tasted! But He also mourned alongside the family of Lazarus, one of his best friends.... and He cried. Jesus always associated with the poor and the sinners, and we can certainly see our Lord's compassion for the sick. The men and women that we minister to in our jails, would qualify in the category of “low position” in our society, I believe.

Are we following the example of the apostles? Are we also loving and caring about others as Jesus did?

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Chaplain's Corrnar (cont.) —Dan Rodriguez, Calvary Jail Ministry Chaplain



And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

Luke 2: 7 ESV

All scripture quotations are taken from *The Holy Bible, English Standard Version.*

[Oxford]: Crossway Bibles, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers, 2001. *BibleGateway.com*. Web. 21 December 2015.)

Are we deeply committed to live as Christians that is to say as Jesus Christ did? Or are we just practicing religion. Once again **I beseech you** to think, pray and ask the Lord if we are truly doing all that we can to bring blessings to the inmates: words of forgiveness, compassion, hope, healing, words of salvation and eternal life! Are we truly giving in the best way possible to uphold and support the jail ministry?

Once again, **I beseech you**.....Think about it, pray about it and may God bless you .

Merry Christmas!!!

Pastor Dan Rodriguez

Chaplain

In closing, 2015 is just about behind us. The year for me has gone by fast and I look forward to another year of sharing the Gospel and the love of Christ with those that are incarcerated. We have a lot of plans in 2016 for Calvary Jail Ministry that we will be sharing with you. We ask that you pray for this ministry. We ask that you pray for the prisoners we share the Gospel with. And we ask that you pray for their families.

In His Service,

Keven Carroll

From the board members of Calvary Jail Ministry, we wish you a Very Merry Christmas!!!

- Barry Spencer—Chairman
- Dan Rodriguez—Chaplain
- Robert Watson—Volunteer Coordinator
- Ken Farrington—Treasurer
- Ellen Duncan
- Gloria Lawrence
- Mike Baley
- Brent Jones
- Keven Carroll

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