

November 2015

Calvary Jail Ministries Newsletter

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Volume 1 Issue 2

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.

Prayer is the central theme for this newsletter. Prayer is critical for the jail ministry. We are limited by the number of people that can go into the jails and minister to the inmates, but we are not limited by the number of prayers that we can take with us as we share the Gospel and blessings of Christ to those that are incarcerated

Barry Spencer is the Chairman of the Board for Calvary Jail Ministries and he shares with us why prayer is important to him. He also gives us a guideline for prayer. The verses he uses are throughout the newsletter and I hope you will use them and this newsletter in praying for this ministry.

Todd Matthews defines for us what prayer is and how powerful it can be.

Our chaplain, Dan Rodriguez encourages us to pray and in closing, the Lord's Prayer is printed which serves as a model prayer for us to pattern our lives after.

Please set aside some time to not only read through this newsletter, but to pray along with us. Dwell on the verses that Barry shares.

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And let steadfastness
have its full effect,
that you may
be perfect and
complete, lacking in
nothing.
James 1:4 ESV

Barry Spencer—Calvary Jail Ministry Board Member

Over the years since I asked Jesus into my heart, I have taken many Bible courses, heard many sermons, and read books on prayer. But like they say, "If you want to learn something well become a teacher." Many of the principles I use in prayer now have come out of my preparation for the Bible study I teach at the Forsyth Jail each week.

True Christianity is not a religion, but rather a personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ. The prayer life is more than just "saying" prayers. Prayer is a time of deep fellowship with the Father and His Son who loved me and gave Himself for me. When I begin a time of prayer I start by thinking about Jesus being on the throne of my life. I am coming before Him to worship, praise and petition Him for my needs and the needs of others. Jesus said in Matthew 6:8 "Therefore do not be like them (the heathen). For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him". Oswald Chambers says in his book My Utmost for His Highest "Then why ask? The idea of prayer is not in order to get answers from God; prayer is perfect and complete oneness with God. If we pray because we want answers, we get huffed with God. The answers come every time, but not always in the way we expect, and our spiritual huff shows a refusal to identify ourselves with our Lord in prayer. We are not here to prove God answers prayer; we are here to be living monuments of God's grace". Since God hears and answers, what should we pray for? I John 5:14 gives us the answer, "Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us". We ask for the things we know He wants us to have. And what are those things? God tells us in His Word what He wants to give us through promises, commands and spiritual principles. Here are a few of the promises and commands I use in prayer. These verses are throughout this newsletter. As you read this newsletter, pray these verses and add your own as you fellowship with God in prayer.

⁶ Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, ⁷ casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.

I Peter 5: 6-7

1. Wisdom - James 1:4.
2. Guidance - Proverbs 3:5-6.
3. Victory over sin - James 4:7-9.
4. Handling anxiety - Philippians 4:6-7 and I Peter 5:6-7
5. Handling fear - Isaiah 41:10
6. Forgiveness - I John 1:9
7. Relating to and praying for others - John 15:12-13; Ephesians 3:14-19.

Remember our focus is not on our faith or the structure of our prayers but on "Him who is able to do exceedingly, abundantly above all we ask or think, according to the power that works in us". Enjoy your fellowship with Him as you spend time in prayer.

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Todd Matthews—A testimony to the Grace of God

⁵ Trust in
the LORD with all
your heart,
and do not lean
on your own under-
standing.

⁶ In all your
ways acknowledge
him,
and he will make
straight your paths.

Proverbs 3: 5– 6
ESV

⁷ Submit
yourselves
therefore to
God. Resist the
devil, and he will
flee from
you. ⁸ Draw near
to God, and he
will draw near to
you. Cleanse your
hands, you
sinners, and purify
your hearts, you
double-
minded. ⁹ Be
wretched and
mourn and weep.
Let your laughter
be turned to
mourning and
your joy to gloom

James 4: 7—9

Prayer is a common theme that runs from beginning to end in the Bible. It is mentioned first in Genesis chapter 12 and last in Revelation chapter 8. Out of the 66 books that make up the Bible, prayer is found in every one of them except 13. The words pray, prayed, prayer, prayers, prayest, prayeth, and praying are found some 545 times in the Bible. We find poor and rich, broken and happy, and distressed and peaceful people praying. We find people of many different nationalities praying. We find men, women, and children praying. We find unbelievers and believers praying, and the greatest example of all, we find our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ praying. So we see by this how very important prayer is.

Webster's Collegiate Dictionary defines prayer in three ways, 1.) an address (as a petition) to God in word or thought , 2.) an earnest request or wish , and 3.) the act or practice of praying to God . So prayer is actually speaking and expressing our thoughts, with humbleness petitioning God with our desires, and doing so diligently or on a regular basis. So, lets look further at these three and see what the Bible teaches us about them. Number # 1 teaches us that words are actually involved in our communicating with God. This means that we speak to God audibly by sharing our thoughts in the words that we speak. This doesn't necessarily mean one can't pray with their mouth closed and just speak to God in their mind (heart). But even when doing that one is still speaking so to speak. It's just your mind is speaking the words instead of your mouth. We've all prayed that way before. But most often when one is found praying in the Bible, they are doing so by speaking actual words.

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Todd Matthews (continued)

⁶ do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus

Philippians 4: 6-7

fear not, for I am with you;
 be not dismayed, for I am your God;
 I will strengthen you, I will help you,
 I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

Isaiah 41:10

Petitions means to pray with respect to a particular cause. When you pray and petition God you are actually praying about something specific that you desire God to answer. God can choose to either answer or not answer your petition. If He does choose to answer, it could be immediately or at a later time. God is not obligated to answer our petitions and that is why we humbly make our petitions known to Him. Some people who prayed and petitioned God are Moses (Ex 33:12-16), Hezekiah (Isa 37:15- 20), Paul (2 Cor 12:1-10), and Jesus (Mt 26:36-44).

Moses and Hezekiah had their petitions granted. Moses, asked that he would find favor in the sight of God which he did, and Hezekiah asked that God would protect him and his people from their enemy who was the Assyrians, and God protected them. On the other hand, Paul and Jesus didn't get the petitions they desired. Paul asked that God would remove the thorn in his flesh, which He didn't, and Jesus asked that God would make another way to atone for sins besides the cross, which He didn't. That just shows that God may or may not answer our petitions, but that doesn't mean we shouldn't pray and still make them known to God. Number # 2 teaches us that when we lift our requests and wishes (desires) we are to do so earnestly which means sincerely. Praying sincerely means to be free from pretense or deceit. When we approach God we have to do so humbly, sincerely, and genuinely. God knows our hearts and whether or not we're being sincere. If our faith is sincerely (1 Tim 1:5; 2 Tim 1:5; 1 Peter 1:22), then our prayers should line up as sincerely as well. Hannah, who was barren and couldn't have children prayed to the Lord sincerely (1 Sam 1:10), and the Lord blessed her to have a child (1 Sam 1:27).

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⁹ If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

1 John 1:9 ESV

Todd Matthews (continued)

The Lord also delights to bless us with the wishes (desires) of our hearts if we delight ourselves in Him (Ps 37:4; 1 Jn 5:14-15) if it's in accordance with His will for our lives.

Number # 3 teaches us that we are to make prayer an act of practice. This means that we need to pray often. Scripture confirms this. (Eph 6:18a) pray always with all prayer, (Col 4:2a) continue in prayer, (Jas 5:16) pray fervently, (1 Th 3:10) praying exceedingly night and day, and (1 Th 5:17) pray without ceasing. These are all commands to pray diligently. The best way to pray diligently is to practice praying everywhere as much as you can. And remember, we're not practicing just so we can be good at prayer but so we can become diligent at prayer. If one wants to learn better how to pray and what to pray for, I recommend studying what's known as the Lord's prayer (Mt 6:9-13). Take special notice that in the beginning of this prayer we are to come before God with a spirit of worship, adoration, and thankfulness to God the Father. We are to pray that His will be done on earth as it is in heaven. We are to confess our sins and seek God's forgiveness, while we also forgive those who might have sinned against us. We need to ask God to help us meet our needs, help keep us from giving into temptations, and help us live in such a way that our lives will shine forth the light of Jesus Christ, and Glorify God the Father. I pray that God will help us all to do this and I leave you with two closing thoughts:

- 1.) "Prayer is essential to any believer if they are going to have a close relationship with the Lord.
- 2.) a.) No prayer = No power b.) Little prayer = Little power c.) Much Prayer = Much Power.

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

12 "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.¹³ Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.

John 15: 12—13



Greetings!

I pray that the peace and grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you always.

It is once again my privilege to reach out to you through this newsletter. This is our second edition and we are really excited.

I would like to share with you something that is very near to my heart, and that is....PRAYER.

I love prayer. I love men and women that pray. THERE IS WONDER WORKING POWER IN PRAYER!

In Ephesians 6:18-19 it is written:

18With all prayer and petition, pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints, 19and pray on my behalf, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel,...

Our Apostle Paul wrote: With all prayer and petition, PRAY AT ALL TIMES IN THE SPIRIT ! To be on the alert! With all perseverance and petition for all the saints.

Today more than ever , we must be on the alert! We must pray for one another and we need YOU to pray at all times for each and every person that is involved in our ministry. We need an army of prayer warriors to keep our ministry effective in our mission of winning souls for the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ. Petitions of salvation, grace and mercy for all the inmates that we reach in every jail where we serve.

We ask that YOU please pray on our behalf that the Holy Spirit will always give us utterance. The exact words that the inmates need to hear as we speak to them the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

So I ask YOU this question. Will YOU pray? Will YOU pray for the salvation of their souls? Will YOU pray for their families? Will YOU pray for all their needs?

Will YOU pray for divine protection for all our volunteers, correctional officers and staff?

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

¹⁴ For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, ¹⁵ from whom every family^[a] in heaven and on earth is named, ¹⁶ that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in **your** inner being, ¹⁷ so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, ¹⁸ may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, ¹⁹ and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

Ephesians 3: 14-19

Will YOU pray that all our needs at Calvary Jail Ministries be met? See, these are just a few examples of so many petitions of prayers . Yes my beloved, we are the body of Christ and we need YOUR PRAYERS ! I am aware that we cannot all serve inside the jails. I am aware that we cannot all give financial gifts to our ministry. But I am also very very aware that we can all PRAY for Calvary Jail Ministries!

Therefore I beseech YOU to please pray! As Christians, it is the most powerful weapon we have.

Prayer moves God's heart! Prayer makes miracles happen! Prayer moves mountains!

So once again I ask YOU: Will YOU pray?

May God bless you for your faithfulness, in Jesus name **I pray**, amen.

Pastor Dan Rodriguez

Chaplain

The Lord's Prayer

⁵ "And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. ⁶ But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

⁷ "And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words. ⁸ Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. ⁹ Pray then like this:

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Conclusion

“Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name.^[a]
¹⁰ Your kingdom come,
your will be done,^[b]
on earth as it is in heaven.
¹¹ Give us this day our daily bread,^[c]
¹² and forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.
¹³ And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.^[d]

¹⁴ For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, ¹⁵ but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Finally, One of the board members for Calvary Jail Ministries, Frank Trogdon passed away over the weekend. Frank had a heart for sharing the Gospel with those incarcerated. He will be greatly missed. Please keep his wife Ruth in your prayers.

Thank you for your continued prayers!

In His Service,

Keven Carroll

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