

February 2016

## Calvary Jail Ministries Newsletter

Newsletter Overview—Page 1

Todd Matthews—  
Defines God —Pages  
2 – 4

Chaplain's Corner—  
Page 5

Conclusion Page 6



Calvary Jail Ministry Newsletter

Volume 2 Issue 2

### **HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY**



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.

In this edition Todd Matthews describes God for us. If you are new to the newsletter, I've included below an excerpt from Todd's testimony:

"I went to prison 7 different times. I was housed at 19 different state prisons and 2 different federal prisons. I've been in 8-10 different jails and 5 different drug rehabs. I've also been in 4 different car wrecks and gone through cancer twice. I always tell people that this is my resume.

This was a lot of my life when I was a sinner who didn't know Jesus Christ, and quite a bit is also my life as a born-again believer who does know Jesus Christ. God has been so faithful to me. He's loved and disciplined me, but He's never left or forsaken me. The second part of my resume looks like this and all because of "GOD'S RACE."

I've been out of prison for over 3 years. I've been sober for over 5 years. I've been self-employed for over 3 years. I've received my "Associates Degree in Biblical Studies," and am currently working on a Bachelor of Arts in Bible from Piedmont International University. My ultimate goal is to get a Doctorate in Biblical Studies. I have taught Sunday School for the last 2 years, taught Bible studies and shared devotions at the Bethesda Homeless Shelter for the last 2 years, and given my testimony to several different groups for the last 3 years. Biggest thing of all, God blessed me to get married to a very beautiful and humble godly woman. We have been joyfully married for almost 2 years now."

Dan Rodriguez, chaplain from Calvary Jail Ministries, will challenge us to share the Gospel

# Calvary Jail Ministries Newsletter

<sup>8</sup> And the four living creatures, each of them with six wings, are full of eyes all around and within, and day and night they never cease to say,

"Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!"

Revelation 4:8

## Todd Matthew - Defines God

If I were to ask you who God is, what would you say? Many people would probably say things like, "God is the Creator of the universe or God is the ultimate being, or maybe just God is God."

Furthermore, if I asked you what God is, what would you say? Again, many people might say things like, "God is life or God is power or, God is nature, etc." These two questions seem simple enough to answer, and they are, but they have to be answered accurately according to the Bible. So let's take a look at the Bible and what it teaches us, so that we will know what to say to anyone who might ask us these questions.

Who is God ? In Exodus 3:11-15

the Scripture gives us the account of God's call on Moses's life, and Moses's encounter with God at the burning bush. Verses 13,14 teach us exactly who God is. They read as follows, "*Then Moses said to God, Indeed, when I come to the children of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you, and they say to me, 'what is His name?' what shall I say to them?' And God said to Moses, " I AM WHO I AM . " And He said, "Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, " I AM has sent me to you. "*" In these verses God reveals who He is to Moses by His name. It is the Hebrew name commonly known as *Yahweh* . The English translation of this Hebrew word we know as *Jehovah* . This name simply means, "I AM the One who is/will be," "The Self-Existent One," or "The Self-Eternal One."

So, whenever someone asks you who God is, then you can confidently tell them, God is Jehovah.

What is God? The Bible speaks specifically about what God is in His essence. The first and foremost fundamental thing that Scripture describes God as is Spirit. John 4:24 reads, "*God is Spirit , and those who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and truth.*" John teaches us that God is Spirit. What does this mean? It means that God, in His natural state, is Spirit. God doesn't have a body of matter as humans do which is made up of flesh and bones. How do we know this? By Jesus' statement in Luke 24:39. In Luke 24: 36-38 Jesus had all of a sudden appeared in the midst of His eleven disciples. The Scripture says they were frightened and supposed they had seen a spirit. Then Jesus said these words in verse 39, "Behold, My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Handle Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have." It's also important to note that along with being Spirit in His essence, God is also invisible in His natural state.

# Calvary Jail Ministries Newsletter

## Todd Matthews—Defines God

Col. 1:15; 1 Tim. 1:17; and Heb. 11:27 speak about God's invisibleness.

The Bible also speaks about three other things God specifically is. First, God is light. 1 John 1:5 says, *"This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all."* What does this mean? John MacArthur describes it very well when he writes, "In Scripture, light and darkness are very familiar symbols. Intellectually, "light" refers to biblical truth while "darkness" refers to error or falsehood. Morally, "light" refers to holiness or purity while "darkness" refers to sin or wrongdoing" (MacArthur Study Bible, NKJV, pg.1964). So this teaches us two things, when the Bible speaks about God being light, light refers to biblical truth and holiness/purity. We are to learn and know biblical truth (2 Tim. 2:15), and God also calls us to be holy as He is holy (1 Pet 1:15-16).

Second, God is a consuming fire. Hebrews 12:28-29 reads, *"Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. For our God is a consuming fire."* God being a consuming fire speaks of God's justice and judgment upon sin, most especially His judgment upon sin at the final great white throne judgment at Christ's second coming. God is a God of justice and He must judge sin because of His justice. But He will judge fairly and accurately just as Scripture portrays He will (Romans 2:5-11).

Third, God is Love. 1 John 4:8 reads, *"He who does not love does not know God, for God is love."* Moreover, 1 John 4:16 reads, *"And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him."* Most people, even if they are not a Christian, are familiar with John 3:16, which reads, *"For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."* Moreover, Romans 5:8 reads, *"But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were sinners, Christ died for us."* God loves people and wants to save all those who are lost and come to Him with a repentant heart. He is ready to run to (Luke 15:20) and forgive those who will come to Him seeking forgiveness of their sins (Luke 15:11-32.).

# Calvary Jail Ministries Newsletter



## Todd Matthews—Defines God

John MacArthur gives us great insight into God’s love when he writes, “As He is spirit, light, and a consuming fire, so He is love. Love is inherent in all He is and does. Even his judgment and wrath are perfectly harmonized with His love” (MacArthur Study Bible, NKJV, pg.1971).

In summing it up we have learned who God is and what God is. God is Jehovah. God is Spirit. Also, God is a consuming fire. God is light, And God is love. We’ve learned what His name means, and what these four features of God mean. So now we’re equipped to do what Peter tells us to do in 1 Peter 3:15, “*But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense (answer) to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear.*” I pray that God blesses our memory to remember these things about Him, and always be ready to share them with others.

God bless you all.

Todd Matthews

<sup>3</sup> Remember those who are in prison, as though in prison with them, and those who are mistreated, since you also are in the body.

**Hebrews 13:3**

# Calvary Jail Ministries Newsletter

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

Hello once again to all!

<sup>23</sup> For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans: 6:23

Grace and peace to you from God our father and from the Lord Jesus Christ! It is once again my blessed privilege to reach out to you through this newsletter. We have had the blessing to produce a few newsletters by now and I pray they are a blessing to you.

I have been thinking lately on a Bible verse that I am sure we are all familiar with. We have probably read it many times and have heard it many times. But, how much have we really thought about it?

Romans Chapter 10 vs 13-15

**“Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”**

**14** How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? **15** And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written: “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!”

Paul declares that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved. This is an outstanding statement! And there is no doubt that all who repent of their sins and call upon His name shall receive forgiveness of their sins, grace from God and the salvation of their souls. There is NOTHING in this life more important or more precious than this!

But Paul's next statement is even more impressive and of deep concern. **How can they call upon the one they have not believed in? How can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?**

We are called by God to **GO OUT** and preach the Gospel! Everywhere! We are to **GO OUT** through the highways and byways, to our relatives, friends and to everyone we meet. This includes all who are incarcerated in the jails. We should share the good news of God's love and forgiveness which is offered only through His son Jesus Christ. And Paul says:

**HOW BEAUTIFUL ARE THE FEET OF THOSE WHO BRING THE GOOD NEWS !**

So, how beautiful are your feet? Where have your feet been taking you to share the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ? Have they been anywhere at all?

I invite you to seriously think about this. **It is a matter of life or death!** What have you done? What are you willing to do? Will you join us and go with us to preach the gospel? I pray you answer **YES** to this call.

God bless you all,  
Pastor Dan Rodriguez

Chaplain

# Calvary Jail Ministries Newsletter

## *Conclusion*

Greetings!



One of my favorite days of the year is Ground Hog Day (I know, I'm a little weird). I love warm weather and the hotter the better. I always anticipate Ground Hog Day as I know Punxsutawney Phil is going to tell us whether we will have an early spring or not. While I realize that he can no better predict spring than me, it is just fun to talk about. And for me, it is anticipating something I love, warm weather.

One of the struggles we encounter in ministering in the jail is getting the inmates to anticipate a better day. They are often heavily consumed with their circumstances and surroundings. I get that. However, we try to get them to think about anticipating when their time on earth is done and where they will spend eternity. If you grew up in church like I did, this is not hard and we often take it for granted. But for some of these men and women that are incarcerated it is very difficult.

Please pray that they will look beyond their current circumstances and turn their ultimate anticipation to Christ. Please pray that they will be receptive.

In closing, Valentine's Day can be a fun day or a difficult one. For those incarcerated, it is usually hard. Please keep each inmate, their families and those working in the jails in your prayers.

Thank you so much,

In His Service,  
Keven Carroll  
Calvary Jail Board Member

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