

The Call for Prison Ministry

The Christian ministry to prisoners is very important. The fact is that Christ called us to visit those in prison (Mat. 25:43). We are to share Christ's love and sacrifice with them and we are to comfort them in a time of need. They need to hear Christ's message of freedom because most of them are imprisoned in two ways.

They are physically imprisoned. They have broken the laws of the land and their punishment is the loss of the freedom we Americans' hold so dear. They were involved with something in their life that cause them to break the law. There are many reasons and explanations for the causes of their crimes. Most of them have to do with the second kind of imprisonment that we will talk about later. They are cut off from their families, friends, and freedom. They have no one to support them in their hard times. The prisons keep them from hurting others on the outside. The justice system seeks to make them understand that what they did was a crime and rehabilitate them.

The problem is they are not being rehabilitated. If they are released from their physical prison, most of them return to an environment and a world that forces them to commit more crimes. By visiting the people in prison, spending time with them, and caring for them, we Christians can show them how to survive and change. We can give them comfort.

The second type of imprisonment they face is one all non-Christians face the bondage of sin. The human race has been dealing with this bondage since the fall. The value in prison ministry is that these inmates may be able to see their bondage to sin better than others. They are locked in a physical prison for crimes due to sin. Whether

they sin by killing or sin by stealing, they are physically imprisoned. Christians need to step in where the justice system cannot. The only way to totally rehabilitate a prisoner is through Christ.

Christ grants all prisoners freedom if they ask. With this freedom through Grace, He begins to teach them and help them to overcome sin. He helps the prisoner to break the bonds of the flesh. He teaches us to listen to him for guidance instead of our sinning flesh. Christians must take this message of freedom to the prisons.

If the prisoners can see how the love of Christ has freed us, they can accept the same freedom. True rehabilitation through Christ grants them freedom to live a life of security, hope, and love. We need to let His love shine through us and then we can share with them God's truth.

If we do not carry out Christ's commission to them, we help to doom them. They will live their life physically imprisoned because of their crimes. They will live their life spiritually imprisoned because of sin. Worst of all they will spend their eternity imprisoned in hell because of their rejection of Christ. They will truly be damned.

Let us answer Christ's commission by spending time with the earth's prisoners and sharing the Gospel, supporting prison missionaries and chaplains, and providing church homes after they are released. Because we want to see as many people as possible given the freeing Grace that sends us to heaven. We also want to hear our Savior say to us, "Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me."(Mat. 25:40)

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