

nothing that you could ever do to deserve it, but it's yours if you want it. All you have to do is believe and accept it. The Bible says, "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Romans 10:9, 10).

Every day someone in prison is telling that same thing, or something very similar, to someone else that needs to hear it. People are being saved, being delivered from drug addictions, getting out of gangs – and the list goes on. Let's praise and glorify our God for all of this! He is the potter; we're just the clay.

I challenge you, dear friend in Christ, to look and see the work that God is doing inside our nation's prisons. Pray about it, then find a way to get involved. I encourage you to talk to the people who go into prisons as a ministry. They preach, teach, encourage, and help men and women develop skills to become more effective witnesses for Christ. But the best and most meaningful thing that they do is love and accept the inmates as fellow brothers and sisters in Christ. For a little while the fellowship changes the atmosphere and the prison disappears. It's just a roomful of believers worshipping God together, and it's great. That really matters and makes a difference in lives.

What can you do? Here are a few possibilities:

1. Find out what you can do to help one of these prison ministries. They're already in the trenches doing the work, but they can all use some kind of help or support. There are a lot of them out there, and it's not the most popular ministry to support.

2. Provide a good study Bible to someone on the inside. An 11 year old boy named Zion gave the money that he'd been saving up, and

helped buy one man a study Bible, and that one Bible has borne more fruit than I could list here. I was that man.

3. Finally, if you feel like getting really crazy, you can help send one of these inmate evangelists to one of the many Bible colleges that have degree programs through correspondence. It will better equip them to do the work that God has for them. I was provided that opportunity, and am earning a degree in Pastoral Studies through Patriot Bible University. It has been such a blessing. I tell you, friends, the fields are ripe for harvest; and praise be to God that many are answering His Call to work.



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***"The word of God is not imprisoned."
- 2 Timothy 2:9***

THAT GUY'S AN EVANGELIST?

Nathan L. Cothorn



When I hear the words “Prison Ministry,” I naturally think of the outside/in model: people going into prisons as part of a ministry to share the Gospel and the love of Christ with the inmates inside. But there is another, largely unknown, model for prison ministry that makes up the greater part of all evangelistic outreach taking place in today’s correctional facilities. This ministry is being carried out by an ever-expanding population of resident evangelists who I believe you can point to as one of the most effective tools that God is using to bring people to Christ inside of prison walls. And yes, by resident I do mean inmate.

What?! You mean prison inmates who are currently serving time doing the work of evangelists? Sure. Why not? You can find them in prisons throughout this nation, testifying to the grace and mercy found in a wonderfully loving and forgiving God who loves even the most unlovable of characters.

The men and women proclaiming this desperately needed message of love and forgiveness can themselves well attest to the life saving and life giving power of Christ. They’ve been washed in the blood of the Lamb, and that washing has changed everything for them. In the Bible we learn that the person who has been forgiven much loves much. Well, friend, these people have been forgiven much, and they know it. That’s what makes their testimony such a powerful tool for sharing the Gospel with fellow inmates. Their changed lives are a visible and tangible demonstration of the power of Christ to change the heart.

The Bible is packed full of stories of people who started out bad. More than a few were pretty rough characters. But they were called to serve God, and did so, in many meaningful and powerful ways. The history of the church is ripe with these kinds of stories.

The Apostle Paul ministered from behind

prison walls, both to fellow inmates and to free people. Yes, I know, he was locked up for preaching the Gospel, but let’s not forget how he started out: as one of the worst persecutors of the early church. He played the part of “coat rack” at the murder of a Christian named Stephen, not only approving the heinous act, but encouraging it. I don’t know about you, but I know men doing life sentences for similar things. It’s called complicity to murder. But God had a plan for Paul, and called him to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ. God will use anybody willing to submit their heart and their life to Christ.

This very day in prisons everywhere, there are prisoners who have been called and have answered the call to serve. They are sharing the Gospel and proclaiming the name of Jesus Christ in word and walk. As Christians, we don’t share the Gospel simply because we’re commanded to. No, we do it because we just can’t keep to ourselves all that Christ has done for us and in us. The love of Jesus is contagious. I, for example, know what Christ has done for me. I know very well the man I was before I met Him. I know the depths from which He saved me. I was as rotten an apple as you could find, guilty and deserving of every bit of punishment I had coming. And yet, when I gave my heart to Christ, you know what He gave me? Mercy, Forgiveness, Acceptance, Sonship, Peace, Love, Joy and Life Eternal. That’s my personal testimony. It’s what I share with guys in here. Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound that saved a lying, cheating, no-good, miserable gang-banging wretch like me. Yes my friend, God loves even the likes of me, and He loves you too – Even You!

The Bible says, “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16). I’ve

known that verse since I was a small child, but didn’t really understand what it was telling me until just a few years ago. What I learned was, we’re all professionals in the sin game. Every time we’ve lied, or stolen, or cheated, or hurt people, we’ve sinned against God. The Bible says, “Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law” (1 John 3:4). We’ve been breaking God’s Holy Law our entire lives. John also tells us, “All unrighteousness is sin” (1 John 5:17). Even seemingly small sin that doesn’t hurt anyone else is still sin, and the Bible teaches us that there is only one penalty for sin: “For the wages of sin is death...” (Romans 6:23). A wage is something you earn, and friend, it doesn’t matter who we are, where we’re from, or who we’re related to – we’ve earned it. Every one of us. We’re all sinners, and the one and only penalty for sin is the death of the sinner.

But, don’t panic just yet. This is where we find the love of God shining the brightest. The Bible says that “God commendeth (demonstrates) His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8). A Holy and Just God must punish sin, but a loving God provided a way to do that and save the sinner at the same time. He sent His Son, Jesus, to take our penalty of death on Himself and pay it with His own life. And that’s exactly what He did. That’s what people mean when they say that Jesus died for you. He took my punishment, and your punishment, on himself, paid for it with His life’s blood, and now offers you the “Gift.”

The gift? Yep. Look at the second half of Romans 6:23: “For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Eternal Life – and it’s a gift. That means it’s free. You don’t earn it. It’s His to give. You don’t pay for it. Jesus did that at the cross when He died in your place. There is