

Jesus Is The Key Ministries



Isaiah 61:1



County Jail Chaplain Ed Welsh

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Matthew 25:36

I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.

Jesus Opens the Door



"Jesus is the key that unlocks the prison doors"

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I just returned from a weekend at Calvary Chapel Conference Center in Murrieta. Every year Calvary Chapel Downey puts on a Prison Ministry conference and this is the seventh one I have gone to.

The first year I went, we had only started CCCH Prison Ministry months before. It was and still is a excellent tool for networking with other prison ministries. The workshops have given ideas and resources that have been invaluable to us, especially in the beginning.

It was at the first conference when I saw the logo Downey has for their prison ministry, a dove clutching handcuffs, that the idea came for our logo. The idea of our logo is; the key that opens the prison door is Jesus (the cross). But of course there still is a dove too. John Miller was the one who came up with the actual design.

This year there were five couples from our Prison Ministry representing us there. Pat and Ralph Wood came all the way from Colorado to be with us. What a blessing! And for the second year in a row Chaplain Dean Parker, the Chaplain from Chuckawalla State Prison came to be with us.

Chaplain Parker is the State Chaplain at Chuckawalla State Prison. It is one of the two prisons our teams go to on every first and third Saturday of the month.

Pastor / Chaplain Mark Maciel, (Associate Pastor from Calvary Downey) started these conferences some 15 years ago. Everyone is different and always a blessing.

Mark and myself have similar testimonies. He and I both got out of prison about the same era. He learned his lesson first time in and only went the once. I did mine on the installment plan and was in and out for most of my teens and twenties.

Another difference between us is he accepted the Lord while in prison, I waited till a few years after I got out. And where I just started Bible college this past semester, Mark has a Doctorate of Divinity from Pepperdine!

Chaplain Ray (Pastor Bob Hoekstra's father) and his ministry, International Prison Ministry, played a big part in Mark's early ministry. He was preaching and teaching while he was still an inmate himself.

Mark story is an awesome example of why we should be going to prisons and sharing the gospel. After receiving the Lord as his savior, it transformed his life enabling him to escape the life he had lived and now is being used mightily.

He has opened two Christian homes; House of Jeremiah & House of Esther, that have helped many men and women over the years. Until recently, he was the director of Chaplain's for Los Angeles County. And he travels extensively around the country going to prisons.

It was Mark who helped me get my job as Chaplain. He had asked me about it for a couple years before I thought about it seriously. I think of all the time I wasted by not having enough faith. It is my only regret, I didn't take him up on the offer sooner.

On February 15th, 16, and 17th there will be 19 people from CCCH going with Calvary Downey, Calvary Costa Mesa and International Prison Ministry from Texas, to northern California to go into four different prisons.

There are three state women's prisons there that they will be going to, plus we will be going back to San Quentin again.

I am really excited about the Quentin trip this time because it looks like we are going to be able to go to the cell blocks and walk the tiers. What I would really like to be able to do is go to death row but I am sure we won't be able to, it takes special clearance to get in there. The population has grown to over 600 on the row now. East Block was where I was housed when I was there. Now it is where they have one of the three death row areas.

To be able to walk the tiers will be a real blessing. It is my prayer that we will be able to talk to the inmates who wouldn't normally go to chapel.

To walk across the upper yard again, (the "Big Yard", is what they called it in the old Cagney & Bogart movies) will bring back many memories for me.

It may be one of the last chances to be able to do anything there. They are talking about closing Quentin down. And it really does make sense to close it. It was 125 years old when I was there and that was in the middle 70's! To say the least it is not the best accommodations. The *Hotel California* song done by the Eagles was about Quentin. "You can check in, but you can never leave."

I am sure that is some real expensive property. Who knows how much bay shore land there would be when they tear it all down? And they will probably be able to build a couple modern prisons to replace it with the money made off of the sale of the land.

One thing for sure it is a real piece of our states history. It is the oldest prison in our state. Starting out as a prison barge in the bay. It was built by inmates living on the barge who had civil war cannon balls chained to their legs.

Another part of its history is the chapel in San Quentin was built partly with funds that Billy Graham helped raise. They have pictures in the chapel where he was there for the ground breaking. I wonder how many things like that he did throughout his career? I know he has touched a lot of lives.

Anyway please put it on your calendar for the day our team will be up there. Just like any other missionary team going out to share the gospel. We really do need your prayers.



San Quentin's East Block

Monster and Hannibal Jesus Died for them Too

I know I have said this many times in these news letters, but I really like my job!

For a number of years I worked in aerospace and I really liked that too. One of the first programs I worked on was the F-20 Tigershark. Soon after the roll out of the first plane they put on a show for the people who worked on it. I'll never forget the excitement I felt that day as I watched the plane go through its paces, I was hooked. From that day on I was an airplane nut!

I've experienced that same kind of thing again in this Chaplain's job. Seeing the first man come to the Lord and being able to play a part in it, I was hooked!

When Pastor Jack brought me in front of the church last year to tell everyone of the Chaplain's ministry, he joked that I had gotten an instant 23,000 man membership. Actually the truth be known there are 23,000 inmates in the whole county jail system. At Men's Central Jail the population ranges between 6,500 and 7,000. And of course not all of the men come to services or counseling.

But one thing is true I do have a captive audience and so many are at the end of their rope. In desperation they will reach out for any hope at all. Jack has the opportunity to share the gospel to thousands of people all over the world as well as pastor our church. But he doesn't have the chance of leading the kind of men to the Lord I meet every day at my work. It is another example of how God uses different parts of the body to His glory. I know God has me here, not because I am anyone special, it is just the opposite, He is using my ugly past to His glory.

I want to take the time to write about two inmates I have been working with, two men of the type I doubt Jack would ever have the chance to meet. Two men God has brought into my life for a reason. And when all is said and done I hope God will be glorified and these men come to know Him.

A number of months ago I was walking the cell tiers of a module of one of the many lock down units. These men can not come out of their cells to come to chapel or my office for counseling. So in that case we go to them. We will walk the tiers with a cart full of Bibles and whatever other religious material we have to hand out. Sometimes when the prayer requests or Bible questions spark something in the hearts of the men in the adjacent cells, we end up with a mini Bible study.

On this particular day I was talking to a couple young gang-banger types who were asking me some questions on the Bible. I noticed a guy close to my age a couple cells down who was listening to what we were saying while trying to act like he wasn't.

As I was on my way out from the tier the guy called to me to stop at his cell. He introduced himself to me by saying, "people call me Monster." I don't use the inmates names within these news letters to protect their privacy and God knows who it is when some of you pray for the men I write

about. But I asked him if he minded me writing about him and he said I could. So it is his actual AKA but I think it will be alright for this.

Monster is a very big man. I am no little guy myself but when we shake hands my hand feels small in his, not many men can make me feel that way. He doesn't look like a monster all ugly and grotesque but he does have hard features and everything about him is big including his face.

He has a very uncommon first name that was hard for me to remember. Even after coming to see him a few times, I still never remembered his name. I'd come in saying, "I'm sorry what is your first name again?". He very gently replied, "that is alright Chaplain, just call me Monster, everyone does."

I was embarrassed that I wasn't remembering his name. But more than that I felt the Lord giving me some insight into this man and his past. The Holy Spirit revealed to me that all his life he has been treated like a monster. Young kids can be cruel and I just know he got that nickname while he was a kid himself.

I am getting ahead of myself in this account. Back to the first day when I first met Monster...

He heard me talking to those other inmates and it sparked his interest. He stopped me and asked me for something to read. I could tell he wanted more, he wanted to talk. And that is what we did.

It turns out he is down here from death row, was sentenced to death in the early 80's and now has come back on appeal. What first struck me about him was his gentle way and how respectful he was. At times it is hard to hear him above the noise on the tier.

In our very first conversation we got into talking about God and salvation extensively. Over the years on the row he has seen a number of men who he respected as being "solid" (that means you are a stand up guy to a con) that at some point turned to God and he observed a real change in their lives. That convinced him God was real. But the problem was he is even more convinced that God would never forgive him of his particular sin. He is far from the first one I have met in there who felt that way but he has been the hardest one to try to convince he is wrong in believing that way.

Monster started getting in trouble a long time ago, while he was a young boy in Mexico he was sent away to what sounds like prison for kids. Where discipline is being tied up to a post and getting whipped.

While he was still young he came to this country with his mother and step father and they ended up in East LA. The step father was very abusive and he did not like being at home at all. Growing up on the streets of East LA with more than a few things stacked against him, it isn't surprising that the day came where he ended up in Soledad Prison for killing a man.

I am not sure how long he was in prison for that crime but there came a time when the Parole Board

decided they were going to let him get back out. Only thing was he was afraid to get out. The way he put it to me was he knew his mind was all messed up and he knew if he went back to the streets something bad was going to happen.

He was so frightened of this that he made a very unusual request of the Catholic Chaplain there at the prison. He told the priest that he wanted to go to a monastery instead of going to the streets. He felt the structure there would help him.

Well that didn't happen, instead he went back to East LA and just two days after he was out he called his parole officer asking him to lock him back up before he did something wrong. Later at the trial when asked why he didn't lock him up, the parole officer said he had never had anyone ask him that before and figured he was just trying to run some kind of game on him. The next day monster killed two more people.

The day he recounted things to me I could feel the evil present. It was a profound experience to me. I am not standing in judgment on what he has done, he is already doing a lot of that himself. I know he has taken three lives and probably done other evil things. But I have to believe that Jesus' shed blood is still stronger than all that. And before Monster goes back to the row or gets a life without sentence and goes back to prison, my prayer is that he finally realizes that he too can find forgiveness in Christ.

Since getting to know him the only real improvement I've seen is his willingness to seek understanding. It seems to be a big step for him. I know every time I see him now he is asking me for things to read and he is reading his Bible all the time. Only God knows where it will end up but I would ask you to pray for him.

The other guy I want to tell you about is even more of a challenge in every way possible.

One Friday night I got a call at home from the Watch Sergeant at the jail. It had never happened before and my first thought was I forgot to turn my keys in or broke some other kind of security rule. But it wasn't that at all, he was calling to ask a favor. He wanted to know if I would be willing to come in to see a man that was in High Power.

I have been told he is considered one of the most violent men in custody in the whole state. The Sheriff's Department built a special cell for him in High Power. It is already the highest security in the jail and now they are specially modifying his cell for added security. Now they have dedicated a whole row in there just for him. They have built a special Plexiglas wall in front of his cell. With a special two way box on the front where anything he gets from food to whatever is put in, locked and then his side opened for him to get it out.

Again I don't want to use his name even though I have already asked him if it was alright. But many of the deputies have given him the name Hannibal so that is what I'll use for this.

No he isn't a cannibal. They gave him that nickname because he has to wear a face mask like Hannibal wore in the movie. He has full blown AIDS and he is

what they call a spitter. Or he could use his AIDS as a weapon if he were to bite someone.

Hannibal has already been in jail about ten years and has already been sentenced to thirty years to life for murder. Now they have him back on another murder charge seeking to give him the death penalty. I don't personally understand the point, he will be dead from the AIDS long before they will ever be able to execute him. But I guess someone thinks it is important enough to go through all this. He has more murder charges waiting in the wings of other states but I think this is going to be the last.

They asked me to come talk to him to try to help calm him down. He was very upset for a number of reasons. He has some extreme mental issues already and add to that the living conditions he has brought upon himself, it is no wonder why he would be upset. A sane man would have problems dealing with it. I was the first one to come see him that wasn't wearing a Sheriff's uniform.

I was talking to someone from our church a few weeks ago that works for the Sheriff's Department but is at a sub-station and doesn't work at the jail. He still knew all about Hannibal. I guess most in the Department knows something about him.

In getting to know him has been an experience like no other I can remember. I want to help be a pressure relief for him and by being someone he can talk to it seems to be helping some. At least the Watch Sergeant seems to think so. In time of course I would love to be able to help lead Hannibal to the Lord. But just being there for him is all it has been so far. And for now that is enough.

There is a long way to go in this. He says his case is going to take from three to five years to adjudicate and he may not last that long. His illness may very well get him first.

Just like in the case of Monster, there was a lot of abuse in Hannibal's past from an early age. His father was an American Indian who was going to teach him the ways of their ancestors. As a little boy his father took him on a hunt and after they killed the deer his father gave him the knife to slit the deer's throat, the little boy recoiled in horror. To teach him to be brave his father tied him up and whipped him until as Hannibal put it, "the warrior spirit" came to take the pain away from the beating. From what I understand it was a classic example of Multiple Personality Disorder, where the person transfers the painful experience onto an imaginary being.

Hannibal has had many more "warrior spirits" come join him over the years. They have taken pain away and taken care of his enemies. According to him the warrior spirits had a lot to do with what has happened in his life. That is one thing he has told me I didn't have any trouble believing.

I didn't know how he was going to take it but I told him that I didn't think his "warrior spirits" were friendly spirits. He asked me what I thought they were, with a smile on his face when he asked. I told him that I believed them to be demonic. When he asked what I meant by demonic, I told him from the devil. And he came back with a dictionary definition of what demonic means. He may be a very confused person but he is also a very intelligent person.

He became very animated and in an excited voice he said I was not the first one to tell him they weren't friendly spirits. He said a Chaplain he met sometime in his past told him the same thing and gave him the challenge that if they are friendly to ask one of them to leave and see what happens. He really became animated then and said that when he did try to get one to leave he really went through hell. It is the first person I have met that I am convinced is demon possessed.

It really gave me the creeps! One of the first things I thought of was the place in scripture where the demons say : *And the evil spirit answered and said, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you?" 16 Then the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, overpowered them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded.* Acts 19:15-16

It made me realize I really couldn't do this on my own. Sure I already knew that but this has made the whole thing so real to me. I know I need the Lord to go before me, be sure I stay prayed up and in the Word. I am so comforted to know many of you are praying for me. It is one of the reasons I choose to write about this so all of you would know specifically what to pray for. I really need discernment and wisdom in dealing with all this. And I seek protection for my family in all of this.

I had a scary object lesson one of the times I was in seeing him. I sometimes come home and share with my family about what God is doing at the jail. There had been a few times I had come home still thinking of that days' visit with Hannibal and come home and told my wife about it. My twelve year old little girl had heard about him and one day on my way to work she told me that she wanted me to tell Hannibal hi for her and to say she is praying for him. It blessed me to hear her say that and I was blinded of the danger. When I saw him I mentioned to him what my girl had said wanting to cheer him up. Well he thank me and asked me to thank her and that he would tell his warrior spirits about her. Like she was doing, telling her God about him. When he said that it shot a jolt of fear up my spine. One thing for sure I will never do anything like that anymore!

I guess I have been more than a little naive in not realizing how dangerous this ministry is. Each and every day I am walking into the devil's den. And I can not take anything for granted. I guess you could say this has been a reality check for me. And it has opened my eyes to how I need to stay on my guard at all times for the enemy and his attacks. If he can't get to me, the enemy will try to attack my wife or kids or what ever it takes to try and pull me down. I thought I understood what spiritual battle was all about but now I know I wasn't taking it seriously enough. Even just now as I have tried to write this account, it has helped me see why these past few months have been so tough.

Every time I go to see him and he tells me things about himself, I am reminded of something from scripture. He told me of how he hurt himself repeatedly. How the warrior spirits had him stab himself. He told me how he once stabbed himself with a pencil pushing it in all the way, then not letting the doctors touch him. Only to cut himself open to take it out later and he said to me the warrior spirit kept him from feeling any pain. It made me think of: *a man with an unclean spirit, who had his dwelling*

among the tombs; and no one could bind him, not even with chains, because he had often been bound with shackles and chains. And the chains had been pulled apart by him, and the shackles broken in pieces; neither could anyone tame him. And always, night and day, he was in the mountains and in the tombs, crying out and cutting himself with stones. When he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and worshiped Him. And he cried out with a loud voice and said, "What have I to do with You, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I implore You by God that You do not torment me." For He said to him, "Come out of the man, unclean spirit!" Then He asked him, "What is your name?" And he answered, saying, "My name is Legion; for we are many."

Mark 5:2-9

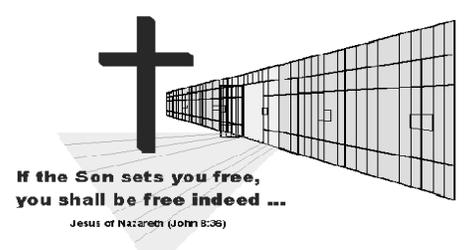
Does that mean he is not responsible for his actions? In the law of our land it says that if someone in criminally insane, no, they are not responsible. There is still God's law in all of this and I do think we are all responsible for our actions but He also gives all the opportunity to repent and be saved.

They may have to go to death row to pay for their crimes committed but it still does not mean they will have to pay for them for eternity. I know there are many Christians who would not agree with that. I remember hearing a man claiming to be a Christian, that he would want to have no part of a God who would forgive someone like Ted Bundy. James Dobson took a lot of heat at the time for his involvement with the case.

In the end Bundy confessed to killing twenty eight women and he was suspect in at least eight more murders. Did he deserve to die? There is no doubt of that and more should be done to expedite the over six hundred on the row now. But I also believe that every one of them should and could obtain forgiveness for their sins if they would only ask God's forgiveness. What sin is so powerful that the shed blood of Christ cannot cover it?

I have talked with many men accused of murder some are in tears as they confess what they have done. Some honestly didn't mean to do it, others wish they could just take it all back. They know their lives are ruined and their future is hopeless. Or at least that is what they think until they find out there is still hope in Jesus and what he did on the cross for us all.

I am really back to what I was saying in the first article in this newsletter. I really do like what I am doing. How many people are blessed with being able to share the Gospel with ones like this. God is so good! Faithful even when I am not.



The Start of a New Year and Thankful for what God has done already

About three months ago I wrote a letter of thanks to the church by way of an open letter. It kind of got me off the cycle I had been on of writing a newsletter every two months. It doesn't come easy to me to write these things. But I feel a need to keep informed all the people supporting this ministry. I will do my best to do them every two months, but please be patient with me.

At the time of the open letter to the church, the ministry at the jail as a Chaplain had just turned a year old. Well now it is the start of a new year and it is my prayer that the Lord continues to bless what we are trying to do in the prisons and jails. People come and go in this ministry, any ministry for that matter. But what really blesses me is to see there is a core group of people who have been in it with me from the start. They are the true soldiers in this battle.

It is good getting different people who just come for a season or two and then the Lord calls them to a different ministry. God uses them all in His will and way.

I am in hopes of more volunteers joining up with us. The ranks do need some filling. Both for our Blythe groups and for our Chino prison group too. At Blythe we can sign people up at any time and we can always use added people. There are ten yards and we go out with different teams 1st and 3rd Saturdays of the month. For the Chino group we only get one time a year and that will be coming in about April. So if you are interested in either groups at all, pray about it and see how God will lead.

Anyway if you get this newsletter, you probably have been for awhile. You may even be a supporter and I thank you for that very much. But right now I am trying to convince even just a few of you to consider joining our team to come into the prisons with us.

Unfortunately there has been another obstacle put in our way in doing the women's prison at CIW. We will still be going in to do a second concert within the next few months. But it looks like it will be awhile yet before we are able to get a women's group in there as we had planned. We do have one woman in there from our church being "trained" by the Chaplain. She will also be able to go in with Calvary Chapel Downey, so at least she will get a balanced view in her training. Please just keep that in prayer along with my other requests. God knows the particulars of our needs and He will sort them out.

One bright spot is the new group going into the local Youth Authority. The men that have started to go in there have been coming back with some awesome praise reports on what has been going on. Don Fagan told me a few weeks ago he likes it better than anything else he is doing in prison ministry. Another man told me he had planned to only go in twice a month, now he has decided to go in every week! I really like it when I hear things like that.

One thing that has added pressure to being able to find the time for this news letter is that I am going to Bible college now. I just finished the first semester a few weeks ago. For all of you encouraging me and praying for me, thank you. It helped a lot. It didn't turn out to be as traumatic an experience as I thought it would be. I really enjoyed it. I took the book Matthew and public speaking. This semester it will be Genesis and public speaking again. At this rate it will take me three more years to get the units I am supposed to have for my job. But that is ok, it's all in God's timing.

Another thing that I am asking for again is for used Bibles and other Christian books. Do you have some stacked up somewhere not being used anymore? If you do please bring them to the church and donate them to the prison minis-

try.

It is amazing how much was accomplished last year. In the LA Jail alone our church distributed more Bibles than any other organization besides the Gideon's. The Gideon's gave us 14,000 of the pocket Testaments and another 1,000 of the recycled hotel Bibles. We as a church added another 2,500 to the overall count. But it really is a never ending battle to keep the men with Bibles and other things to read.

In just this past week I came across a new magazine called *Today's Christian Man*. The very first issue came out this month. The editor has already committed to try to get some donations from businesses to supply us with 700 copies of the magazine every month!

Daily Bread, gives us 500 copies every three months and *Guidepost*, gives us 200 a month. With an ever changing population of 7,000 men you can see the challenge it is to get good Christian literature of the magnitude needed. If any one has any connections for resources on any of these things please contact me. I am always looking for leads wherever I can.

We are starting a new year, new challenges and I know there will be some awesome victories for the Lord. He is the one who does it all.

Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen. Eph 3:20-21

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