

AMBASSADORS OF RECONCILIATION MINISTRIES



Life is messy, but Jesus gives hope
to all who need to be set free
behind bars of steel
and walls of bitterness.

Who do you hang with? August 2017 Newsletter

Scripture is clear. Who we spend our time with is important. It is a lesson we all can benefit from. It is a command the Pharisees took special pride in following.

So why do we see Jesus apparently ignoring it? In that culture, you identified with people by your presence at their homes and meals. In the eyes of the Pharisees, many of the common people, and probably even His own disciples, when Jesus visited Zacchaeus and Matthew, He was guilty by association. He was eating and "partying" with tax collectors and sinners, prostitutes, drug dealers and gang members. How could this make sense? Wasn't Jesus violating the very Scriptures that spoke of His coming? What kind of example was this for those who followed Him? Didn't this compromise His holiness?

So how do I reconcile Jesus' sinlessness and His free association with the sinful?

And if I were to follow His example, what would that look like in my world? Should I go toss a few beers down at Joe's Bar with the regulars? Should I encourage the folks at jail to go hang around with the people they used to trade drugs with? Or were the Pharisees right about staying pure, staying away from "sinners"?

Jesus never backed down on the need for personal holiness, but included in that "set-apart-to-God-ness" was **JUSTICE**, a biblical concept for which we have no real American counterpart. We tend (as did the Pharisees) to associate justice with guilt and punishment, getting what we deserve, which Paul tells us is only death! (Romans 3:23) Yahweh, on the other hand, and Jesus as His perfect incarnation, spoke of justice as compassion toward widows, orphans, aliens, the sick and disabled, and prisoners. (Luke 4:18, Isaiah 61)

I HAVE NOT COME TO CALL THE RIGHTEOUS, BUT SINNERS TO REPENTANCE

JESUS ANSWERED THEM, "IT IS NOT THE HEALTHY WHO NEED A DOCTOR, BUT THE SICK"

LUKE 5:31-32

JESUS DIED FOR,

PROSTITUTES, DRUG ADDICTS, DRUG DEALERS, ALCOHOLICS, SINGLE MOTHERS, HOMOSEXUALS, SEX ADDICTS, AND ALL THE REST OF THE GROUPS THAT SOME PEOPLE WOULD RATHER PERSECUTE THAN LOVE

GOD HATES THE SIN, NOT THE SINNER

This kind of justice characterized Jesus' ministry, and constitutes His most strenuous example for us as His followers. This is why Jesus might today walk into a bar or a crack-house, not to "party hearty" and show everyone He was a regular guy, but to respond to those seeking deliverance with compassion, as opposed to condemnation. He sought out those who knew their need, who were ready for harvest. After all, the Good News (**Jesus died to save me**) is only "good news" to those who already truly "get" the bad news (**I really do need saving!**)

And if we are serious about following His example, we will reach out to the poor, the disadvantaged, and the prisoner, as He did, with that same Good News. We will share the healing Jesus gave us with others who are sick; we will share with other sinners that Jesus calls us all with open arms into His beautiful, compassionate holiness. We will meet them where they are, as Jesus did, not to share in their sin, but to share with them the hope of His deliverance and transformation!

You can join **ARM** as we carry that Good News to prisoners sitting in jail cells right here in Butte County! Let me tell you how...

**"I hate the gatherings of those who do evil,
and I refuse to join in with the wicked."**

Ps 26:5

**"He who works deceit shall not dwell within my house;
He who tells lies shall not continue in my presence."**

Ps 101:7

**"Away from me, you evildoers,
that I may keep the commands of my God!"**

Ps 119:115

**"Walk with the wise and become wise;
associate with fools and get in trouble."**

Pr 13:20

**"In the paths of the wicked lie thorns and snares,
but he who guards his soul stays far from them."**

Pr 22:5

"Bad company corrupts good character."

1Cor. 15:33

"Be holy, for I am holy"

1 Peter 1:17, Lev. 11:44, 45

How can I help carry God's Word to Inmates?

You can volunteer to mentor an inmate on the glass, write an inmate in prison, donate needed funds to provide study Bibles and discipleship materials, and support us as home missionaries, as we visit inmates and challenge God's people across Butte County to rise up and fulfill Jesus' Great Commission in our Butte County Jail! **BUT RIGHT NOW**, the Butte County Jail is preparing for another visitor orientation for the Thursday evening ministry, where we are able to go right into the jail pods each week to lead the inmates in Bible study and prayer. It is scheduled for October 20th, in the East facility at 6 pm. **Please pray about it!** If you are serious about setting aside at least one or two Thursdays a month to minister to inmates, 7:30 – 10 pm, then please fill out the application attached to this email and either turn it in at the jail lobby, or send it to me, mail or email, and I'll get it turned in for you. Call me if you have any questions! **Please tell friends at your church, anyone who is serious about walking with Jesus and making disciples!**

**"It's the broken that understand the power of mercy.
It's the broken that understand the power of redemption."**

Bryan Stevenson

Check this out! You will cry! I did!

http://www.christianitytoday.com/pastors/2017/february-web-exclusives/face-to-face-with-man-who-killed-my-son.html?utm_source=leadership-html&utm_medium=Newsletter&utm_term=22788841&utm_content=495401520&utm_campaign=email This is a link to a video documenting the reconciliation between a father and the young man who murdered his son. Both of them found peace with God in the aftermath of the tragedy, and God's grace in the forgiveness and release of their meeting is amazing!

Prayer Requests:

- Praise God for His work in the hearts of inmates! Only He can transform sinners like us into His children!
- Praise God for those who have expressed interest in joining our Certified Jail Ministers, as they disciple inmates on the glass weekly, and show them that someone cares about them. Please pray that God would confirm His call in the hearts of potential volunteers, and raise up more of them for the harvest.
- Pray for inmates struggling as Satan tries to destroy their lives, their families, and their spiritual victory. It's a war! Pray for strength, courage, faith, perseverance, and Christians around them to hold them accountable!
- Pray for God to bring Butte County churches alongside us to reach out to "the least of these, my brothers."
- Pray that God would raise up many committed jail visitors from the Church in Butte County, who will come to the Butte County Jail Visitor Orientation on October 20th. Pray that they would present God's Word and His love in person on Thursday evenings to men and women inmates who need to hear and see that God cares for them.
- Pray for continued donations of Christian books, to help guide those who are spiritual seekers, and those who want to grow in Christ. Pray for continued spiritual revival in the jail!
- Praise God for our donors, who make this faith venture possible. Thank you to all those who gave recently in honor of Dorothy Grell, as we grieve our loss, heaven's gain, in her passing into eternity. ***"We thank God on every remembrance of you."*** And pray that God would raise up more donors, so that His work can continue to grow in the jail and Butte County.

**Bless you all as you serve Him
and walk according to His calling!**

Jan and Roxanne Carlisle

