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Beloved in the Lord —

SOME OF GOD'S greatest men – Moses, Job, David, Asaph - wrote verses that underscore in biblical beauty the length and brevity of our lives:

None perhaps is more beautiful than Psalm 90:1,2, a prayer of **MOSES**: *“Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting thou art God.”*

JOB, who is believed to have lived shortly before Abraham, laments: *“Now my days are swifter than a runner; they flee away, they see no good. They pass by like swift ships, like an eagle swooping on its prey.”* Job 9:25,26

And in Psalm 39:4,5 **DAVID** entreats God: *“Lord, make me to know my end, and what is the measure of my days, that I may know how frail I am. Indeed, you have made my days as handbreadths, and my age is as nothing before You; certainly every man at his best state is but vapor.”*

ASAPH, a prominent Levite singer and prophet in the courts of David and Solomon, seems to echo David's words: *“For God remembered that they were but flesh, a wind that passes and comes not again.”* Psalm 78:39

Time cannot be brought back once it has passed. Christians cannot live as though there is no day of reckoning. Two thousand years ago **PETER** was already reminding his disciples that judgment was soon-coming: *“For it is time for judgment to begin at the household of God; and if it begins with us, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God?”* I Peter 4:27

And what about you and me? Will we be prepared? Will we have done our best to convey the Good News of His mercy to those within our reach?

“I am the light of the world; he who follows me will not walk in darkness but will have the light of life.” John 8:12



Follow Jesus. He's already been where you are going, and He knows the way home.

It's wonderful to receive *any* letters requesting bibles or books, but this letter was a particular blessing. He's speaking of prisons of the body AND of the spirit

"Brothers and Sisters....Greetings again in Christ's name. I am no longer in prison. Praise God – either kind of prison at that. I am one day hoping to be the man God wants me to be. I do not have any money. I live in an apt only because God has blessed me with a few great Christian friends. Lost everything in my transition back into the free world—except my Bible. Am requesting faith based Christian books—book markers—bible dictionary, anything to help live a life for Christ. May God bless you all. Anything you can do to help. . .please send books to me at"

She's in a faith-based program and needs what she requested for the program, all of which we were more than happy to send on your behalf:

"My name is Judy. . . . I am in a PAL program, serving a life without parole sentence. I would love to receive either a New International Version or an English Standard Version study bible and also a Bible Dictionary or a journal for my daily walk with God. Thank you and God bless. . . ."

With more than one hundred *state prisons, private prisons and jails*, Texas has the second largest prison system in America, behind only California! In addition, there are 18 *federal prisons and 9 prison camps*. Their capacity varies from a few dozen to over 4,000. We sent books and bibles to *three* of the larger facilities this month. Here are two of their letters. Their requests went with our prayers:

"... I am writing to see if I could get a bible. I am in prison in Texas. I've made mistakes in my life and now I have to sit here for what I did. If you could send me a bible to help me with my faith, that would help out a lot. . . ."

"... I am currently incarcerated in Texas, and I received your information in regards to a Holman Illustrated Pocket Bible Dictionary. I am writing you to request a copy of said book to assist me in my study of God's Word. Also if possible could I request as well any other reading material that could further my search of scripture . . . I appreciate whatever you can send. . ."

**"SCIENCE AND RELIGION ARE NOT INCOMPATIBLE; THEY ARE DIFFERENT PATHS TO TRUTH."
Hutton Gibson**

***"I wish I had a nickel"* for every time a prisoner writes for a book or bible because he saw another inmate with one:**

"I saw a Bible my friend has and he told me about you. I would like to start studying the Bible. I have a hard time reading so I'm asking if you can send me an ESV study Bible, a Bible that will last me. I don't have any family and I don't get any money. God bless you."

This prison holds over 2600 inmates. It has an unfortunate reputation:

"Hello, I am blessed by our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Thank you very much for the very special Bible. I have been reading Romans. Thank you also for the book you sent with it, a study guide. I only make 34 cent an hour here, and I can't afford to buy books. I only read Christian books now. I have just about read all the books in the chapel, and the library doesn't have a very good selection. Every time I read one of your books I pass it on. So the seed you are sowing doesn't stop with me. . . ."

“A woman hiking found a precious stone. The next day she met a traveler who was hungry, and opened her bag to share her food. When he saw the stone he asked her for it; she gave it without hesitation. The man left rejoicing. The stone would give him security for a lifetime. But a few days later he found the woman and returned the stone to her. “Here is your stone,” he said. “instead, give me what you have within you that enabled you to give me the stone.”

For various reasons, inmates get moved around from prison to prison. . . .

“Thank you for the books. I have Corrie Ten Boom, I’m Gonna Bury You and others. We are back at my old prison now, and they lost my book A Quick Guided Tour Through the Bible.” It was my favorite and my bible was also lost. If you have a copy of these that would be great, but I would be thankful for any and all. . . .

When bunk beds are stacked one above the other—or only three feet apart—it’s easy to see what your “bunkie” has. . . .

“I saw a Bible my friend has, and he gave me your address to write and ask you for the same Bible he has because it is easy for me to understand. . . . I have a lot of time and I would like for my Bible to last, and I would like to study the Word of God and get to know the Lord Jesus, and I want to have a personal relationship with Him Please help me in this matter. Thank you. God bless you.”

COVID restrictions are still in place in some prisons. It’s mostly due to health problems resulting from over crowding:

“I am incarcerated in Washington, and I came across a bookmark in the chapel. I saw a note on the bottom that said you provide free bibles and books. Since COVID our Chapel hours and fellowship opportunities have been greatly reduced, and we are forced to do more self studies. So an avenue for resources would be a great tool for all of us to further our walk with Jesus. If this is something you can do, please let me know. Thank you and God bless!”

“Give to every one who begs from you, and of him who takes away your goods do not ask them again. As you wish that men would do to you, do so to them. If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you. For even sinners love those who love them.” Luke 6:30-32

It has only been open for 15 years, but it already houses 2,000 inmates! At least one inmate with a sense of humor is making the most of his “time”—

“Good morning, I am writing to ask for help with books and supplies while I spend time in prison. Will you please send me a composition notebook and any other supplies you offer. I now have much more time for journaling and reading. LOL! Also, if you have other addresses I may write for study books or supplies that would be great. We all thank you for the program you have set up. . . .”

In addition to faith-based services, this prison has a Faith Based Dormitory. If only every prison in America offered these things!—

“. . . I wrote your organization a couple of months ago for one of your Pocket Bible Dictionary books. I did receive it, and I will say that it has increased my understanding of the words and terms of the Bible. I also noticed in the very front that for more books and Bibles to write you, and I am requesting a Holman Illustrated Pocket Bible Handbook, and your Bible concordance. . . . If reading the dictionary can help me this much, I can only imagine how much the others can help me. I also want to express my gratitude and say thank you for the pocket dictionary. It has helped me so much. . . . God bless”

Our early European settlers brought Bibles with them, which explains why *the first Bible printed in the Western Hemisphere was John Eliot's Indian Bible printed in the Algonquin language in 1663*. The order was so large it required a special shipment of paper from England. *Scottish immigrant Robert Aitken printed the first full English version in 1782*.

CHAPLAINS' CORNER

Attached to this chaplain's email was the beautiful quote from Isaiah 61:1—*"The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to bring good tidings to the afflicted . . . to proclaim liberty to the captives and the opening of the prison to those who are bound. . . ."*

" . . . Good afternoon, Thanks so much for the books. Yes, we would like to receive more of your books. God bless. . . ."

I had been told certain prisons in this next state were difficult to get into — even with bibles and books as "chum," as fishermen call it. And yes, this chaplain was cautious. But after my assuring him that in over 50 years we'd never had a complaint, and his giving me strict instructions as to how to go about sending our "gift," and advising me not to use his personal name, he accepted boxes of bibles and books. And they're on the way to him.

Not all chaplains will take fiction books. So when we received a donation of some two dozen popular books of this type, I asked the Lord what to do. A chaplain in a small state we hadn't heard from in two years came to mind. In the past he had never wanted anything but bibles. But nothing ventured, nothing gained. So I prayed and called him. His response:

"We've begun putting together a package for each new prisoner. . . personal hygiene

items, information about their new prison life, a book or bible when we have them. . . . We have over a thousand inmates here. Send what you've got. And if you have any large print bibles, please send them, too!"

Thanks to you, we did have large print bibles on hand, and they were included in the boxes along with a truly "Giant" print bible he said he could welcome for their library!

It helps to be my age and to have been in this ministry for some fifty years. This prison is one of the largest in the U.S., and the chaplain was reluctant to accept books. But when I told him how long I'd been at this, and that our records show we sent him 400 copies of *I'm Gonna Bury You* in February of 2016, plus bibles and other books, the door opened. And another supply of books and bibles are on their way.

**"In one bold stroke, forgiveness
obliterates the past and permits
us to enter the land of new be-
ginnings."
Billy Graham**

Ever talk to somebody who just sounded plain happy to chat with you even though you'd never met? This chaplain (who has been in ministry for over 30 years) was one of those. I snooped a little and learned he is from West Virginia, where Gene was born:

"Mrs. Neill, I'm just calling to let you know we received your books and are very thankful for them. If you can call me again the first of the summer, we might have some more needs then. In the meantime, the ones you sent have been placed in the library so the inmates can check them out. . . ."

This beautiful photo was sent to us by the Chaplain upon receipt of your gift this month. His letter read:

**“Sister Neill,
Matthew 25:40
With our hearts
we wish to
thank you for
the Bibles and
other Christian
books you sent
us. When a
book is in jail it
is read count-
less times and
then passed
among other**



Again your ministry is very much needed and appreciated

inmates. We pray the HOLY SPIRIT will enlighten the spirit to the truth of God. Again, your ministry is very much needed and appreciated. . . .”

GOD BLESS YOU FOR YOUR HELP IN REACHING INTO PRISONS AND JAILS AROUND AMERICA WITH THE GOOD NEWS AGAIN THIS MONTH

**Vaughn Correctional Center, Georgetown, DELAWARE
Blackwater River Correctional Facility, Milton, FLORIDA
St. Tammany Parish Correctional Facility, Covington, LOUISIANA
Perryville Prison, Santa Rosa Unit, Goodyear, TEXAS
West Tennessee State Penitentiary, Henning, TENNESSEE
Stafford Creek Correctional Center, Aberdeen, WASHINGTON
Beto Unit, Tennessee Colony, TEXAS
Potomac Highlands Regional Jail, Augusta, WEST VIRGINIA
Union County Corrections, Elizabeth, NEW JERSEY**

**Fort Stockton N5 Unit,
Haysi Regional Jail,
McPherson Unit,
Hendry County Jail,
Oregon State Penitent.
Federal Prison Camp,
Graceville Corr. Fac.,
Federal Correct. Inst.**



**Fort Stockton, TEXAS
Haysi, VIRGINIA
Newport, ARKANSAS
LaBelle, FLORIDA
Salem, OREGON
Bryan, TEXAS
Graceville, FLORIDA
Beaumont, TEXAS**

DEAR SEARCHERS,

I AM not in the things of this world. Although I am all around you, what matters is not what you see with your eyes, but that ***I AM*** in you. *For God is not material, nor flesh and blood, but Spirit.*

Augustine of Hippo—who ultimately became known as Saint Augustine—spent many years searching this world for meaning. Finding nothing of true worth or value, though God was all around him, he ultimately realized he was missing God because he was searching in the “created things” of the world. Taking pity on Augustine, a loving God stooped down and revealed Himself to him. And later Augustine wrote of this encounter with God:

“You called, you shouted, and you broke through my deafness. You flashed, you shone, and you dispelled my blindness. I have tasted you, now I hunger and thirst for more. . . .”

“My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.”
Psalms 42:2