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FRIENDS IN CHRIST -

C. S. LEWIS once said, *“There is no neutral ground in the universe: every square inch, every split second, is claimed by God and counter-claimed by Satan.”*

If you understand what Lewis meant, then you doubtless have not only read the book of JOB but have also personally experienced some of its teachings. (Who hasn't!)

Perhaps it was the book of JOB (and personal experience) that led Peter to warn us:

“Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour” (I Peter 5:8).

Peter's warning might have been worded a little differently: lions on the prowl for something to devour don't roar. They wear sneakers. And they're “on” you before you know it. That's Satan—always looking for a back door he can slip through “ere we are aware.”

Never one to beat around the bush, three times the apostle Paul also called for the saints to arm themselves against the schemes of the devil:

“For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against . . . the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in heavenly places. . .” Eph. 6:12-18.

Pastor William Gurnall (1616-1679), whom I quoted some time ago, spoke of this deadly serious spiritual war for our souls this way:

“. . . A War between the Saint and Satan. And that so bloody a one, that the cruellest war which ever was fought by men, will be found but sport and child's play compared to this. . . The stage whereon this war is fought is every man's own soul. There is no neuter in this War. The whole world is engaged in the quarrel, either for God against Satan, or for Satan against God.”

These truly ARE the “End Times.” The WAR for our souls rages across this nation.

HE GAVE HIS WORD

“BECAUSE they have set their love upon Me, I will deliver them; I will set them on high because they have known my name. They shall call upon Me, and I will answer them; I will be with them in trouble; I will deliver them and honor them. With long life I will satisfy them, and show them My salvation.”

Psalm 91:14-16

The tracts, calendars and bookmarks—not to mention all the Bibles and books we send to inmates—are like Christmas gifts all year long. The “outside” world has been taken away from them; often not even the clothes on their back are their own:

“My name is Justin. I’m locked up and am in need of a bible if you have it. And all the books you offer when it come to religious materials. And also if you have it, a 2022 calendar. I’d like my own personal bible that I know is mine that the prison staff can not take away or charge me with destruction if I write in it. Thank you for your time and effort.”

“I’m writing to request books and book markers. Please pray for my family. We just lost our brother from Covid-19. He was 48 years old. He leaves two kids. . . .I hope God blesses your ministry. Do you offer any study bibles? Do you have a 2022 calendar? Please keep me in your prayers. . . . Please pray for our new chaplain. His name is Paul. May God bless you.”

Of course, we have books, a study bible and a stack of 2022 calendars! YOU’ve made sure of that; and now these two inmates have what they requested, plus Gene’s book. Thank you!

This inmate asked for Gene’s book. He included the quote about David. It’s not original, but it shows he’s learning there’s never been a “giant” in any of our lives that faith couldn’t fell:

“. . .’GOD doesn’t need a lot to do a lot. All David had was five stones, and all he needed was one. FAITH doesn’t have to make sense. It makes Miracles’. . . . Please can I have a copy of Gene Neill’s book?”

I’ll say it again (though it’s obviously not necessary): news about our little calendars is really getting around—

“Will you please send me the free bibles and books advertised on your calendar?? It’s the one that says ‘Write to us for free Bibles and books. . .’ I’d like a large print bible if you have them. Thank you and God bless you!!! David”

I don’t know much about this ministry, but I was grateful to be able to help this inmate:

“I found a lead to your information from Joshua Cowboy ministries and was hoping

you had a devotional (preferably for cow-boys) you would like to share with me. . .”

**TENNESSEE SENSE OF HUMOR
SEEN ON A CAR’S BUMPER STICKER:
YOU CAN’T TAKE IT WITH YOU!!
PROOF:
YOU’LL NEVER SEE A U-HAUL
BEHIND A HEARSE!**

Texas is the second most populated state in America. It locks up a higher percentage of its people than any democracy on earth. There are many reasons for that. But all told, including state prisons, jails, youth correctional facilities and Federal prisons, that comes to approximately 251,000 people. It’s no wonder we receive so many letters from there—including this next one:

“I hope and pray my letter reaches you in good spirit and health. I would like a copy of the book I’m Gonna Bury You. I am also in need of a large print bible if possible. My brother in Christ here also would love a copy of the book. He has no stamps/envelope to send for the book. So if you can, also send him a copy. . . .”

“Thou will keep in perfect peace the one whose mind is stayed on Thee because he trusts in Thee.” Isaiah 26:3

I don't bother to ask Chaplains if they would like our calendars and bookmarks. I'm sure they'll be welcome. So I add them to the boxes. And praise the Lord, they all seem to make them available to the inmates:

“I am in prison in Florida. . . I went to church and I got a bookmark that says that I can write y'all to get a bible. If possible can you please send me a new kind of translation bible easier to read. Thank you very much in advance. Also, I am interested in doing bible studies as well. I want to learn more about God. . . .”

This inmate writes for himself and two others. He's just over thirty-five, serving time in Colorado, with more charges pending in another state. Only the Lord could have kept him alive thus far:

“I was given a bookmark from the chaplain with your address on it saying if I want bibles or books to write you. So here I am. I'm not sure what I'm supposed to put in this letter but if you have any books or devotionals or a study bible—large print—I'm in bad need. I was saved a year ago. My ex-girlfriend planted a seed in me. . . . I was arrested and woke up three days later in jail. . . . I woke up a new man with a desire to do good and learn about Christ, and it's been an amazing time. . . . All I had is gone. But what I've gained is a place in heaven with Christ. And I use all my time to read the Word, which is why I want a good study bible. I don't know what God wants of me but I'm letting the Holy Spirit drive my life and life has never been better. . . . Thank you very much for all you do for everyone. . . .”

This inmate describes the Lord He has come to know as “merciful and loving.” And so He proved Himself ever since the days of Moses:

“I am an inmate and recently turned my life over to God. He has shown me over and over again how loving and merciful He is. He has also shown me that He will (and He has in abundance) provide for my needs. . . . I got your address from Prisoners in Christ while doing their bible study. I noticed it says to request your book, so I am. I am serving 15 to life So I have plenty of time on my hands. Thank you and God bless.”



The Chaplain who gave this inmate our address died of Covid 19 after a brief hospitalization. The prison staff said, “he was a man who loved God.” God has not forgotten him:

“My chaplain gave me your address and told me to write and request a copy of I'm Gonna Bury You! I'd be very grateful to receive this blessing from you. I was recently born again and I believe your book has an important message for me. I want to thank you for taking the time to read and respond to my letter. God bless all of you.”

As children we loved to watch the ripples created by pebbles we tossed in the water. It's like that today with every book we place in the hands of someone: the “ripples” go on:

“I have learned about you through my cell-mate. And I'm interested in seeing if you have a Bible Study series . . . I am interested in becoming an active Christian. So send anything you have to help me study, learn and thrive.”

“You make known to me the path of life. In your Presence there is *fullness of joy*; at your right hand are *pleasures forevermore*.”
Psalm 16:11

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER:

In checking with the chaplain of this prison to make certain they received our shipment of bibles and books, he said:

“We did! We did! The softbacks have been distributed in lockdown, and the hardbacks to population. But I wonder if you have a few Spanish New Testaments on hand? Our Spanish population is growing. . . .”

Yes—God bless you - we do. And by the time this newsletter reaches you, they will be in the hands of still more prisoners.

Last month I told you we had received a request for books and a bible from an inmate who said he was writing because *“the chapel ran out.”* Praise the Lord, we can't have that! Smile. So I sent the inmate his books *and then called the chaplain the next morning.* His response briefly conflicted with the inmate's. *“The Gideons furnish us with bibles.”* He said. But when I asked what kind of bibles, he corrected himself: *“That's New Testaments, not the complete bible.”* And when I told him we could provide complete bibles, hardbacks or softbacks, he happily accepted both! Not to mention saying, *“Yes”*, to some of the Christian books we have available. **So what started out as a “No, thank you” became an opportunity to send a wonderful supply of almost everything. Thank you, Lord!**

Some prisons now supply us with a blank **“Donation Form”** ahead of shipment. We are required to fill it in and return it; then the Chaplain submits it to the Warden for his approval—a process that takes a couple of weeks. I goofed up recently, sending a box off without a signed Form. I panicked – these bibles and books cost you something, and they are of great value to the inmates. But when I called the chaplain—whom I know—he gave me a mini-sermon on *“all things work together for good!”* Smile. And as we hung up he admonished me not to worry: *“My copy of the Form will suffice for me to pick them up. I'll go to the Mail Room right now!”* PTL!

WHEN I CALLED this chaplain for the first time, he was very pleasant, but told me he had books stacked up he wasn't distributing because of Covid-19. But when I asked if he might be able to take just a couple of things—**INCLUDING** some large print bibles—he said he could *“always find a place”* for them. Where there's a will (and even a few large print bibles), there's a way!

There is a small Mennonite community in this area. We often see their horse-drawn buggies alongside our rural highways. And it's not uncommon to see one of the men (less frequently the women) in the post office. They're generally quiet, though they'll smile and answer if you greet them first.

Not long ago I was at the post office counter mailing a number of boxes and packages to the prisons. I was aware that one of the men had come in and was waiting at a discreet distance behind me for me to finish.



As I told the postmistress goodbye and started for the door, the Mennonite gentleman stepped toward me and expressed a polite curiosity as to whether I was sending books to prisons.

When I responded, "Yes," he asked, "Do you accept donations?" And when I told him that was how we supported the ministry, he placed a \$100.00 bill in my hands, accepted my surprised thanks with a smile, and moved on to the counter.

You never know who's watching! But God does.

His peace abide with you—


The NEILL Family

HERE ARE A FEW OF THE PRISONS AND JAILS INTO WHICH YOU HELPED US TAKE THE LORD'S GREAT LOVE AND JOY THIS MONTH—

Oaks Correctional Facility, Manistee, MICHIGAN
Cobb County A.D.C., Marietta, GEORGIA
Sussex Correctional Center, Georgetown, DELAWARE
Los Angeles County Jail, Los Angeles, CALIFORNIA
F.C.I. Lompoc, Lompoc, CALIFORNIA
Colorado Department of Corrections, Canon City, COLORADO
Cummins Unit, Grady, ARKANSAS
Travis County Jail, Del Valle, TEXAS
Taylor Correctional Institution, Perry, FLORIDA
Randall Williams Correctional Center, Pine Bluff, ARKANSAS
Byrd Unit, Huntsville, TEXAS
Mississippi County Work Release Center, Luxora, ARKANSAS
Green River Correctional Center, Central City, KENTUCKY
Caddo Correctional Center, Shreveport, LOUISIANA
Avenal State Prison, Avenal, CALIFORNIA
Tooele County Jail, Tooele, UTAH
Houtzdale State Correctional Institution, Houtzdale, PENNSYLVANIA
Ector County Sheriff's Office, Odessa, TEXAS
Hamilton Correctional Institution, Jasper, FLORIDA
Piedmont Correctional Institution, Salisbury, NORTH CAROLINA
Eastern Reception and Diagnostic Center, Bonne Terre, MISSOURI
Neal Unit, Amarillo, TEXAS
Burleigh Morton Correctional Center, Bismarck, NORTH DAKOTA
Neshoba County Jail, Philadelphia, MISSISSIPPI
Los Angeles County Jail, Los Angeles, CALIFORNIA
Wright County Jail, Buffalo, MINNESOTA
Desoto Annex, Arcadia, FLORIDA
Laurel County Jail, London, KENTUCKY
Rowan County Detention Center, Salisbury, NORTH CAROLINA



GENE NEILL
Founder

THE VOICE OF TRIUMPH

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- DATED MATERIAL -
ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

GOT TIME?

The following is a condensed letter an inmate wrote for his prison newspaper and sent on to us. In America today, we are often so busy with “stuff” we fail to listen to what God is trying to say to us. It took many hard years in prison, but this inmate is finally listening:

“Sometimes it can be so refreshing to pump the brakes and take time to look, listen and see the LORD at work in the world and in people’s lives around us. I remember a spring morning twenty years ago when the LORD blessed me through a deputy sheriff as he walked up and pointed to a miniature rose bush and asked me: ‘What do you see?’ When I replied, ‘roses’, he said, ‘Look closer.’ Again I replied, ‘A rose bush.’ Then he said, ‘Look again. See the dew dropping off the rose petals? Look at the lady bug that stopped in flight for a drink.’

“He went on telling me that we get so caught up in the doing of life that we fail to realize and appreciate the wonderful things in creation God has placed all around us. It was many years later that I realized the depth of the truth God was speaking that day. I now see that not only does this lesson apply to the physical, but also to the spiritual. Sometimes we need to slow down and stop in order to eliminate all the distractions: to get in touch with what God has done and is doing all around us.

“These are the moments that encourage us to carry on the work of our Father in Heaven.”

“The LORD says, Be still and know that I AM GOD.”

Psalms 46:10