

NOVEMBER 2022



The Voice of Triumph, Inc.

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Dear Friends in Christ,

It was **November 2010** — 12 years ago this month — that Gene stepped away from this earthly pulpit and into the presence of our God and Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. That must have been a grand day for Gene! I have no doubt but that the first words he heard were, *“Well done, thou good and faithful servant . . . enter into the joy of thy Lord.”* Matthew 25:21

It had been a long journey from **November of 1971** when Gene cried out to God from a solitary cell in the Federal Penitentiary in Springfield, Missouri, *and God answered him*. It was right there in that awful edifice of concrete, brick and stone that Gene began telling everyone who would listen what God had already done in his life; and that one day He was setting him free so he could spend the rest of his life telling the whole world what happened to him there in that solitary cell. Of course, not everyone believed him. Not when they knew that Robert Stroud, the *“Birdman of Alcatraz,”* and crime bosses like Gotti, Genovese and Gigante had died there. Men were sent to Springfield to die.

“Gene,” one of the guards told him, when Gene tried to witness to him, *“You’re never going home. You need to quit thinking about it. You’re going to die in here. You might as well get used to the idea or you won’t be able to stand it.”*

Not so, Gene insisted:

“There’s a real God who loves me. And one day before very long He’s going to come down here and get me out of here. . . .” And two years and thirteen days later Gene walked out of the Federal Prison near Fort Walton Beach, Florida—a free man.



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“COME UNTO ME all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” Matt. 11:28-30

So simple.

Yet so many still miss it,
in prison or out.

But you and I are here
to help the ones still
“crying out, with tears,”

*“Lord, I believe; help my
unbelief!”* Mk 9:23-24

Some letters, for reasons not always easy to explain, just draw tears to my eyes. This was one of those:

“My name’s John and I’ve recently gotten back to know Jesus. I’m looking for any reading materials and advice. I have nobody, but I know my true Father is there for me and that’s Jesus. To be honest I am scared because I will be getting out within 8—14 months, and I don’t want to fail and come back. I know with prayer and resilience and faith I will be okay, but it is a real difficult situation. Thank you for listening to me. . . .”

We know him well; he’s been writing us for more years than we can recall. Any Christian book probably would do; he just wants a calendar to mark off the days of one more year:

“Hello there. . . . Requesting with a Please and a Thank You any type of 2023 calendar that can be sent to a prison setting. Staples ok. No wire. Here in San Francisco area it has cooled off a lot from 100 degree days. . . . We are still rated #2 behind L. A. in state for Monkey Pox! Hopefully it won’t enter these prison walls. . . . We keep going ‘off—on’ Covid-19,

lockdown—quarantines . . . This virus and prisons sure don’t mix well! Movement . . . Guys moving from one building to another, hoping to find a better one. Buses coming in from other prisons—jails. Everyone wondering with mixed emotions who will be coming. Gang ones, troubled ones, violence, gays – transgenders, or ? Take care for now. In the love of our Lord Jesus. . . .”

It’s a real good feeling to be able to “fill” a request like this next one:

“I am an indigent inmate. . . . I’m trying to obtain an English Standard Version of the Bible with large print. My eyesight is pretty bad. I have asked here at the jail for months with not even a reply. I got your address through another inmate, and was hoping you may be able to help. If there’s any way one could be sent to me I would greatly appreciate the kindness. And anything like a devotional would also be very welcome. And/or literature that could be shared.”

It almost seems atypical—if that’s the right terminology—but in all the many years of this ministry, and our encounters with

literally tens of thousands of inmates, only one that I know of ever tried to “run a game” on us—to pretend he was innocent when he wasn’t. Or to lie about his charges. They know we’ve been there and will understand. It’s as though they were tired of running, tired of the lies, and just want to find a new way of living. Like this man:

“To whoever cares to listen. . . I’m a 41 year old currently serving a 1—2 year sentence for probation violation. The violation was for dirty drug screens, and the charge I’m on probation for is assault w/a dangerous weapon. I guess I’m writing because I’m a recovering addict who was doing amazingly well and then fell off for 10 months. And I don’t even know why. Everything was going ok. Maybe I’m looking for someone to pray for me. Whatever you can manage I’d greatly appreciate it. . . . I’m just struggling and I could use all the support I can get. Thanks. I’d really appreciate it.”

(Maybe someone who’s reading this will take a few minutes of each day to pray for him and ask God to help him turn his life back around again. Thank you!)

“IN NORMAL LIFE we hardly realize how much more we receive than we give, and life cannot be rich without such gratitude. It is so easy to overestimate the importance of our own achievements compared with what we owe to the help of others.” **Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Letters from Prison**

2022

What is “perfect love?” It’s allowing morally blind men to force you to carry a cross too heavy for just one man to a hill outside the city and nail your hands and feet to rough splintered wood and watch you die. Allowing it when you have the power to say a word and they will die, and you can come down from that cross and be spared the agonizing pain and death. Sure, you think at least some people years down the road—even as long as 2,000 years later—may be worth the dying for. But that’s a long time away; are they really worth the risk? Worth the dying for? What is our answer to that question? Was Christ’s suffering death worth it? Maybe the answer to that question is the same as the answer to this one: Did you and I answer, “Yes,” to Him when He called our name?

We have no idea where he found this book. But we just received a new supply, and one is on the way to him:

“I found one of your course work books called *Walk Thru the Pentateuch: Discover the First Five Books of the Old Testament*. Do you have any more that can take me thru the entire Bible? . . . I would appreciate anything you can send me to help me with my study of the Bible. . . .”

It costs three to five times more to house prisoners in High Security Centers, sometimes called Supermax. Is it worth it? Sometimes. . . .

“Hello. . . I am an inmate serving multiple life sentences at this time. I am a serious Christian studying the Bible every day, growing closer with the Lord as I begin to

learn more and more through out my studies. However, I do come to instances where I do not understand certain words that are in the Bible. I would like to request a Bible Dictionary if that is at all possible. . . . Thank you, God bless you.”

The letters that I’m most sorry to receive are those from women. Nothing destroys the familial bedrock more completely than children with both Father and Mother in prison:

“. . . Your story is amazing. You have encouraged me. I am currently an inmate in the County Detention Center. I’ve been incarcerated 10 months. I’m still waiting for my plea deal which could be another year away. I have rededicated my life and am currently reading the Bible through. I’m also involved with Bible studies. What are your favorite verses to help me be encouraged to get through everyday life in prison? My husband is also incarcerated. He doesn’t write very well, but I am sure he would enjoy reading your book. He wants to complete whatever sentence he gets and then come and preach the Word to other inmates and share his testimony. If you can send a book to him it would be appreciated.”

Yet another woman—this one in a jail in south-central Texas—writes:

“. . . I have been doing a lot of reading of the Bible and other books on the Word of the Lord. I’m writing to inquire about literature you may have concerning the Word. I would really appreciate it if you could send me a book or two. I have a hunger for the Lord I have never had before. If you could, also send my Bunkie literature too. We pray and talk about the Lord with each other daily. A big thank you for any material you send.”

200 YEARS AGO a pastor with a sense of humor at the Church of St. Edmund in London repeated the final lines of the hymn they had sung: *“Love so amazing, so divine, demands my soul, my life, my all.”* Then he added: *“I’m surprised to hear you sing that. Do you know you put only 15 shillings in the collection bag this morning?”* (About \$4.00 then.)

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

SINCE EARLY 2020, two of my favorite prisons – that is to say *favorite prison chaplains* - have been hit by storms, flooded out and closed. And in two different coastal states! One of the prisons never expected to be able to reopen, but finally did so earlier this year. You may recall you helped replenish their library.

What you don't know is that a little over six weeks ago the second prison – in a separate state – was able to partially reopen. (The remainder of the prison population is still sharing space in a nearby facility.) We sent the first supply of replacement books as soon as their refurbished library opened. When I talked with the chaplain four weeks ago he thanked us for the first shipment and added, *“But we really could use more bibles, and the bigger print is always better.”* And so, off those went as well. This particular chaplain has always closed his emails with. *“Today is the best day of your life; spend it with the One who gave it to you.”* And even after all these difficulties, I know he still does.

I've been waiting patiently for a month to receive a Warden's approval for us to send books. (Pre-approvals are becoming more common.) Only to find out today that it's been “a done deal” for three weeks. The Chaplain just has so much to do he forgot to email the signed approval

to us. Whoops! But Praise the Lord! Let's look on “the bright side.” At least this prison didn't require I list every book by name. (Some do.) And the books will go out tomorrow, probably arriving the day before *Thanksgiving!*

Built 144 years ago (1878) and still in service, the prison in the photo below initially served as a state prison and area for prisoners awaiting trial. Today it's part of a triplex—an Intake Center, and both Medium and *High Security Centers*. We sent several books this month to a prisoner serving time in *High Security*. But it's not the oldest still running. There's San Quentin (opened 1852 Califor-



nia), where we also sent books this month. Others still running are Auburn Corr. Facility (opened 1818 New York); the infamous Sing Sing (opened 1828 New York) and New Jersey State Prison (opened 1798, making parts of it *the oldest in America!!*) They wouldn't let me in, but I waited in our vehicle outside the New Jersey prison over three decades ago while Gene went inside to minister to the prisoners! †

ONLY GOD would let men put someone in prison so He could go set them free. Those verses in Isaiah that tell us -

My thoughts are not your thoughts,
Neither are your ways my ways, says the Lord,
For as the heavens are higher than the earth,
So are my ways higher than your ways
And my thoughts than your thoughts.

HE REALLY MEANT THEM! Like He meant everything else He said in His Word. Got a problem? Tell Him about it. And He'll take care of it, too.

GOD BLESS YOU~!

Dorothy

Dorothy and 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—

Potomac Highlands Jail, Augusta, WEST VIRGINIA
Laurel County Jail, London, KENTUCKY
Logan Correctional Center, Lincoln, ILLINOIS
High Side Center, Cranston, RHODE ISLAND
Sauza Baranowski Correctional Center, Shirley, MASSACHUSETTS
Ferguson Unit, Midway, TEXAS
Kern County Jail, Bakersfield, CALIFORNIA
Craven County Jail, New Bern, NORTH CAROLINA
Elyria City Jail, Elyria, OHIO
Eastern Reception Facility, Bonne Terre, MISSOURI
Virginia Beach Correctional, Virginia Beach, VIRGINIA
Bledsoe County jail, Pikeville, TENNESSEE
Onslow County Detention Center, Jacksonville, NO. CAROLINA
Emanuel Women's Facility, Swainsboro, GEORGIA

Brazoria County Jail, Angleton,
Osceola County Jail Kissimmee,
Danville Correctional Center,
Wilson County Jail, Floresville,
Elyria City Jail, Elyria,
South Bay Correctional Facility,
Western Virginia Jail, Salem,
Atlantic Co Jail, Mays Landing,
NW Corr. Complex, Tiptonville,
Lake County Corr. Waukegan,
Jefferson Corr. Beaumont,
Troup County Jail, LaGrange,



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THE HIGH WAY

This is “Gene’s month.” So I’m sharing part of one of his letters from prison. He had more joy *behind walls* than most people would have on the way to dine at a fancy restaurant here on the “outside.” Not that I would mind that. Smile. But he always wanted to make sure *my joy* was full, too, because he believed it was the way God wanted us to be:

. . . . God isn’t pain or sorrow or care or sadness. He’s not even disappointment nor frustration nor misunderstanding—nor valleys—nor climbing out of valleys. He is the tip, tip top of a very Sacred and very Holy Mountain where nothing exists—nothing exists—but infinite and eternal joy and peace and love and warmth. The palm of His hand. The shadow of His wing. His infinite and eternal love. . . . There are no valleys in God’s Kingdom—there is no sorrow:

“And a HIGH WAY shall be there, and . . . the redeemed shall walk there. And the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion . . . ; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.” (Isa. 35:8-10)

There are no valleys. His redeemed fly on wings from one mountain peak to the next—from joy to joy—from Glory to Glory:

“Blessed are the men whose strength is in thee, in whose heart are the HIGH WAYS to Zion. . . .”