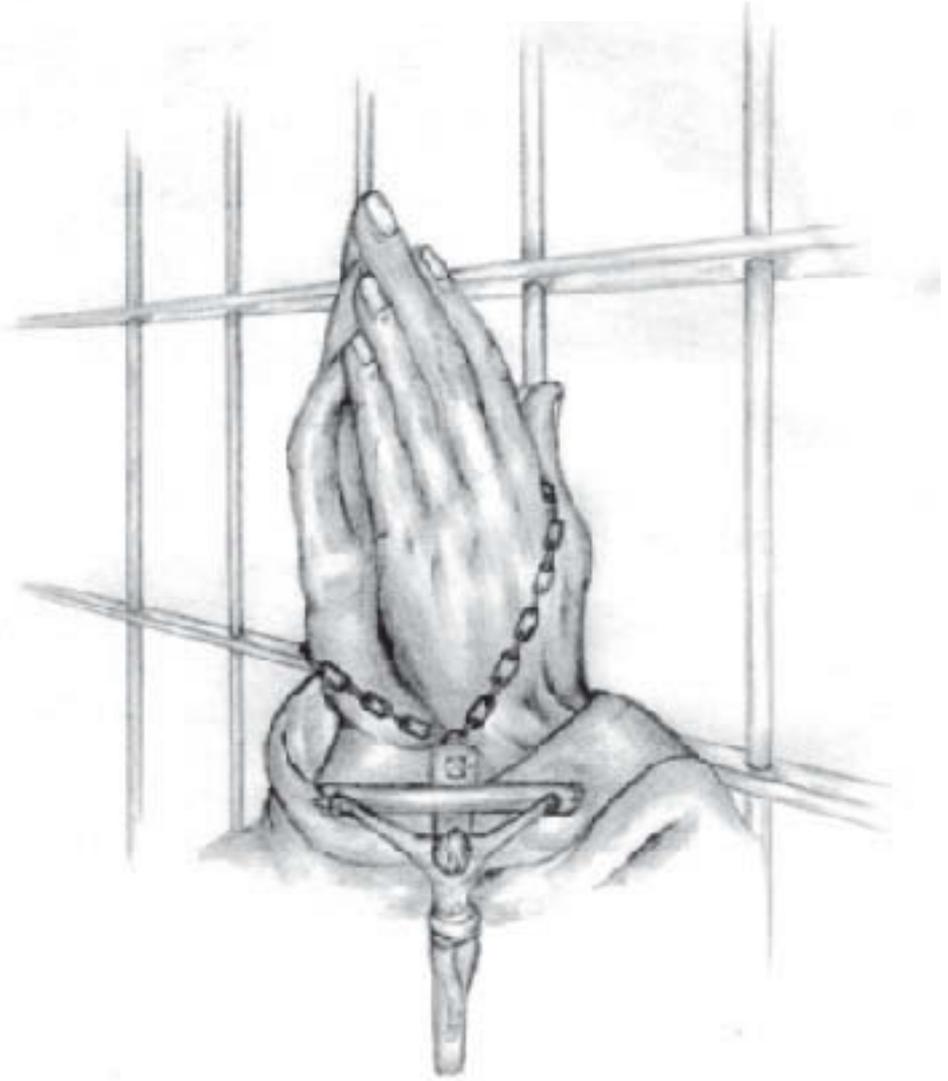


“Blessed Are You”

2014 Lenten Devotionals



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Prison Congregations of America

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Dear Friends,

One of the many joys of my job is that I get to visit with prison congregation members about writing for the annual Lenten Devotional Booklet. Just like people everywhere, some of these people love to write and are confident in their ability to do so. Some are not comfortable with the request. They either feel that they have nothing to offer, or they consider themselves inadequate writers. The gifts offered by this year's writers have blessed us yet again. We corrected some spelling and some grammatical errors, and a few of the essays were dictated to us, but contained in this booklet are the hearts of the writers, who because they trust God, trust the rest of us with their words.

This year's theme, "Blessed Are You," gave the writers a chance to consider what it means to be blessed. We talked a great deal about family and friends. We talked about the amazing blessing of God's love and grace. Then I asked them to consider ways in which they, themselves, are blessings to others. This was tougher to answer, and often, if there was a group, they answered for each other. Eventually, though, the fact that we are all blessings in some way was brought forth. We then talked about how we are blessed to be a blessing – that we can't keep blessings just between God and us. They must be shared.

And so on these pages are the blessings shared by forty writers. I believe you will be humbled and blessed, as I was, by what you experience herein.

Use these meditations as you will. Copy as you wish or download additional copies from our website. All we ask is that you please give PCA and our writers credit for anything you share. If you would like additional print copies of this booklet, contact the PCA office and we will send them to you if there are extra.

With joy and blessings,
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Daily Meditation



Wednesday March 5

We are blessed by hearing, by believing, and blessed to receive the word of God. A blessing is the Gospels. Amen

Being loved by God.

Love, peace, patience, kindness, gentleness, goodness, joy, self control, faithfulness. Galatians 5:22

Eternal life. John 3:16

Saved. Romans 10:13

Salvation. Psalm 27:1

I will give you showers of blessing. Ezekiel 34:26

New creation in Christ. 2 Corinthians 5:17

Generation. Luke 1:48

Prayer: Father God, thank you for the spirit that you bring on us. The blessing we receive of you. Thank you, Father God. All praise to you. In Jesus name. Amen.

Thursday March 6

Psalms 119:11-12 Your word I have treasured in my heart, that I may not sin against you. Blessed are you, O Lord; Teach me your statutes.

When Moses spoke God's word to the people in the desert, it was so that the people could hear and obey the word of God and thrive under his steadfast love, and receive his blessings. Jesus tells us, "If you love me, keep my commandments."

How do we obey our Lord, if we do not know his word? If we love the Lord and treasure his word, and strive to understand, we prepare ourselves to receive his blessings.

How do we receive God's blessing, if we have not heard his word and obeyed it? The greatest joy in my life today is spending time reading, studying, and meditating on God's word. Since the day I turned to God, I continually grow in his word, living in the fruits of the Spirit. Through God's word I have life, I know love, I have freedom, and the cares of this world no longer grieve my Spirit. Treasure God's word in your heart, be blessed, and join me in the glorious kingdom to come.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, give me the strength and the wisdom to walk in your word this day, that I live my life by your will, and not by mine. In the name of Jesus I pray. Amen.

Friday, March 7

Romans 12:4-8 For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.

The verses above talk about how we're all blessed with different gifts and that each of our gifts is important. First of all, I am blessed with great parents who have loved me and treated me well, even when they disciplined me. I am blessed by being able to live well in spite of my disability. I am also blessed with the gift of a good memory. I can remember things (especially directions) that the rest of my family cannot. For instance, when we used to have to go to Minneapolis to the Shriners' Hospital, I was the one who could always remember how to get from the hospital to the Mall of America! I love it, that these gifts and blessings are from God and are signs of God's love.

Prayer: Thank you God, for everything you've given me, with every gift that you have blessed me with. Amen.

Saturday, March 8

Jeremiah 29:11-13 “For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call on me and come and pray to me and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.”

I've heard about God all my life, but I've never known him. After 20 years of drugs and alcohol, 8 treatment centers, 4 times in prison, I decided to do something different. My way does not work. On April 20, 2013, I surrendered - everything - my will. Once I did that, and meant it with all my heart, I was able to see clearly. This brought me to a repentance, which has changed my life around. I developed a better attitude, a hunger for God, and the desire to change. It took faith, even the faith as little as a mustard seed.

Prayer: Lord, I thank you for giving me the opportunity to find you, and for the faith that has brought me this far. I ask for strength and wisdom to go through these next ten months, to see the wonderful and glorious plan that you have for me. Amen.

Monday, March 10

1 Chronicles 29:17 I know, my God, that you test the heart and are pleased with integrity. All these things I have given willingly and with honest intent. And now I have seen with joy how willingly your people who are here have given to you.

To be a blessing is to be an instrument and to be a tool used by God through the Holy Ghost. God has more for you today, than what you went through yesterday. Don't give up, don't give in, hold on, the blessing is on the way.

Why are you so happy and full of joy? Because the Bible says, what you make happen for others, God will make happen for you. It may be information, food, shelter, clothing. Your contribution to others determines God's contribution to you. How you receive Jesus is your reward and blessing.

Prayer: I am blessed to be a blessing. Saved to serve my Lord and King. Given light that I might use it - other souls to him to bring. Amen.

Tuesday, March 11

1 Corinthians 13:1-13

These verses means a lot to me. I'm thankful that God gave me hope and love. He also gave me strength, and blessed me with two lovely daughters, and a Christ-loving family. If it wasn't for them, I'd be gone. But Jesus put his hand on me to show them, my loved ones, the true word. God bless you all. These days in prison have changed me to be a better man, to put my kids and family first, and take the major step for God. For he's not carrying me, I'm carrying him.

Prayer: God almighty, please be with my family and kids as times are hard. Thanks for your love God; you are my king. Amen.

Wednesday, March 12

Psalm 142:7 Set me free from my prison, that I may praise your name. Then the righteous will gather about me because of your goodness to me.

Prison Been a Blessing For Me

When I ask for a favor Lord,
I didn't have prison in mind.
But Lord your plans are
10x10x10 better than mine.

Chorus

Prison been a blessing for me.
I live for the bottle you see,
But here in prison I'm free.

Lord you been so good to me,
It took prison to help make me see.
The love for the shed blood for me,
Lord, prison been a blessing for me.

Chorus

Lord you said you would make the way,
Straight and level for me.
As I look down the halls here in prison I see,
They are straight and narrow and sound.
Prison been a blessing for me.

Thursday, March 13

Ephesians 1:3-4 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. (Also Deuteronomy 11:26-27).

So many scriptures came to mind about blessings to be or to receive. In my heart, after praying, the key for me is this thought. If the Lord withdrew his blessings, (i.e. Job) would I still praise him, focus on him? My prayers - prayers of faith or panic? I have never been without his blessings, so I am unable to answer this or to have this knowledge. Blessings = promises, not a measure of my worth to him, or who I am, it is because of who God is.

Salvation, his protection, and his provision are some of his most personal blessings to me, that I am "blessed" to share, give, and rejoice in daily. Futuristically, I wait on the blessing of dancing from this physical life to eternal life with Jesus Christ, to life everlasting with him in heaven.

Prayer: Lord, may I lie still in the morning, or when I wake with a listening ear, receptive heart, my soul yearning for your voice, for then I am blessed as you direct, lead, and guide me throughout the day to be a blessing to others. As you open my eyes to see how I am blessed. Thank you for a healthy mind, body, soul, and spirit, gifts from you. May praise be continual in my heart and upon my lips. Thank you for your love, mercy and grace. Thank you for songs you sing over me and for dancing feet. In Jesus' most precious name, Amen.

Friday, March 14

Psalms 139:14 I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made: your works are wonderful, I know that full well.

God has truly blessed me and everybody else, for he has given me and us these wonderful machines to live in and love in and experience all his beautiful world that he created for us all. The varieties of animals and creatures, which he has also blessed with life, to enjoy his wonder of creation, all the majestic beauty of nature - the freshly fallen snow sparkling in the moonlight, the blossoming of new life and color of the springtime, and all the color and changes of the seasons. The feelings that our bodies get to experience - the pleasures and the hurts, the tender moments of love of all kinds and the emotions that go along with them. The intelligence and thoughts of our minds, and the good that becomes of them.

Prayer: Thank you, dear God, for giving us these wonderful and beautiful vessels to experience all the joys and wonders of your awesome creations. So intricate and complex in its simplicity. All glory to you, dear God. In Jesus sweet name we pray. Amen.

Saturday, March 15

John 3:16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him, shall not perish, but have everlasting life.

God blessed us all with the new covenant. He sacrificed his son for our inadequate behaviors, and has given us the opportunity for eternal life. He only asks us to have faith in him alone. To follow the Ten Commandments, that in itself, is a minor payment for eternal life.

Prayer: God, please forgive us all for our shortcomings and guide me to the path of righteousness. Amen.

Monday, March 17

Matthew 5:11 "Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me".

That God will take the time to bless you, and make those wronged, by those claiming to be righteous, redeemed in heaven. Glory be to God - what a wonderful feeling to know that those that have been falsely accused on earth, will be rewarded in heaven.

Prayer: Thank you God, for continually reminding us that you know best. Amen.

Tuesday, March 18

Psalms 1:1-2 Blessed is the one who does not walk in step with the wicked or stand in the way that sinners take or sit in the company of mockers, but whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and who meditates on his law day and night.

In these current and trying times, society seems to have lost sight of blessings. We take so much for granted that we forget that God truly is the one that provides for us all. We can easily be blessed by God, by doing what he wants. If we think about his word all the time, day and night, we won't be tempted to walk with the wicked, or stand in the way of sinners, or sit with those who mock. God might just hand out blessings to anyone he can, if he chooses, but if we chose to do what is right, oh, what blessings will follow from our father!

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, help us this day to do your will. Lead us so that we may follow. Guide us that we won't stray. Grant us your blessing as we carry out his day for you. In your Holy and precious name, Lord Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.

Wednesday, March 19

Matthew 5:8 Blessed are the pure in heart for they will see God.

I like this, for God gave me a big heart to share with all those I come in contact with. Thus I can show and speak how Jesus turned around my life and glorify him. With faithful obedience from my heart, maybe I can help others to come to know Jesus is our savior. To find hope and joy, the deepest form of happiness, follow Jesus, no matter the cost.

Prayer: Dear God, help us all to be blessings to one another. Amen.

Thursday, March 20

Genesis 1:2 “Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep and the spirit of God was hovering over the waters.”

Before: I once had a vision of a man reaching his hand down to help me up. Now I sit upon a rock. I grabbed that hand. I was quite heavy. Only by grace did I make it out on the sand, toes wiggling in it. Smiling, God’s glory shining. He carries me sometimes and others I follow. The sun always peaks through the clouds and shines on the ocean. I feel the warmth. Weeping from the mercy, I get up from my knees and help push my rock over the pit, no matter what, darkness is no more!

“When we experience God’s love, we then can learn to give love. You’re forgiven in Christ. Take your rest, healed and restored in my peace. His love can make the most difficult nature into a miracle of astonishing beauty.” - Unknown

Prayer: “Show me the way Lord, let my light shine: As an example of good to mankind. Help them to see the patterns of thee, shining in beauty, lived out in me.” (Unknown) In Christ Jesus blood, Amen.

Friday, March 21

Psalm 41:1-2 Blessed are those who have regard for the weak; the Lord delivers them in times of trouble. The Lord protects and preserves them--they are counted among the blessed in the land--he does not give them over to the desire of their foes.

What this scripture means to me is that God is telling us to help the weak or those who are in need. Like when one of my friends was having problems with an officer. I just told him to pray and give it to God, so that Jesus can take control of the problem.

Prayer: Our Father God in heaven, help us to give us for this day that your will be done for us. In Jesus name. Amen.

Saturday, March 22

Psalm 23:1 The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.

I am truly blessed each and every day with the rising of the sun. Once again it allows me to see and experience what God has given to me. I believe that Psalm 23:1 speaks to me daily: The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.

He blesses me with everything I need, he gives me his word to guide me; He gave his son to save me, I shall want for nothing more.

As the sun sets in the evening, I am blessed with a time of peace and rest. I am blessed with the promise of eternal life through Jesus Christ. Once again I rest and anticipate the dawn.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I praise you and thank you for all you do for me, my family and my Christian brothers. Give me the wisdom to do your will as I proceed each day. In the name of your son Christ Jesus I pray. Amen.

Monday, March 24

Isaiah 41:10 So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. (Also Joshua 1:9).

I am an inmate with a fairly large number of years to spend in prison. I have learned a lot since I was born again in county jail in July 2011. There are just countless blessings and promises throughout the Bible. As we learn each one, it is important to confess them aloud, realizing the power of the tongue, and releasing the victory within the scriptures. These two verses I quoted from Isaiah and Joshua are comforting promises, knowing to be strong and courageous and the Lord will be with us wherever we go.

Prayer: Romans 15:13. May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him. That you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Tuesday, March 25

Deuteronomy 23:5 However, the Lord your God would not listen to Balaam but turned the curse into a blessing for you, because the Lord your God loves you.

God has plans for you, some good and some bad. It may seem like a curse, but it depends on how you want to look at it and how you deal with it. God blesses you with a positive outlook. It feels good to be blessed, like you want to give back to people who have helped you along the way, like you want to do more for them than they did for you.

Prayer: Dear God, thank you for blessing me even when sometimes the blessing is hard to see. Amen.

Wednesday, March 26

James 1:12 Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he is tired, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.

What this scripture means to me is that if I can overcome trials and temptations while maintaining a personal relationship with Christ, I will be blessed with eternal life.

Prayer: Dear Lord, make me, mold me, teach me to walk with you and be more like you. Amen.

Thursday, March 27

Matthew 5:4-5 Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

I thank Jesus for giving me peace. When I walk and when I go for two mile run, he, in all ways is with me. I thank God for all my friends.

Prayer: God help all the people that are hurting and need things. Amen.

Friday, March 28

Matthew 25:35-26 For I was hungry, and you gave Me something to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me something to drink; I was a stranger, and you invited Me in; naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me.

My family is my blessing. For the past two years they have supported me through all my trials and tribulations. Their love has kept me going and given me something to look forward to. I am in prison right now and my mom and dad try to visit me as much as possible. They send me money and I call my mom twice a week to talk to her and see how my family is doing. I have several family members who write me and I write back to them. I get pictures from my mom of different family members or trips they have taken. In early July, my sister had a baby shower and my mom bought a present for her from me. My family has always been a blessing for me and I thank the Lord everyday for giving me the family I have.

Prayer: Lord, I just thank you for the blessings you have given me through my family and friends. I ask that you keep them safe and sound. I pray that I can be a blessing to the girls here in prison and to those outside of these walls. In your name I pray. Amen.

Saturday, March 29

Matthew 5:5-6 Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

Many people in prison, (and in the world), have a fear of praying, or they just never have done this before. All you need is your voice or your thoughts and a quiet place or at a certain time in your day, at night, or any time. You just talk to God as you talk to your friends. Thank him, praise him, ask for forgiveness and close your prayer "in his son's name Jesus".

He loves you. Anytime, anywhere you can pray to him and he will be with you, always. Just try it, you will be with him.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for this day, for all you do and for who you are. In Jesus name I pray. Amen.

Monday, March 31

Acts 20:35 In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: 'it is more blessed to give than to receive.' (Also Matthew 5:3-11)

I am thankful that God has blessed me with not only life in general, but also by giving me the ability to be able to write. In other words, to be able to express my thoughts down on paper and share them with others that may receive a blessing from them.

My favorite scriptures on blessings are found in Matthew 5:3-11. Acts 20:35 is truly one that I use myself quite frequently. Because I tend to be easy going and willing to give more freely than some, I don't expect anything back in return. That makes my giving turn into a blessing, not necessarily to me, but to God and to those that are on the receiving end.

Prayer: Dear Lord, help me to be a blessing to others through my words and through my actions, so that they may receive a blessing from what they hear and what they see as I live out my daily life. Amen.

Tuesday, April 1

Psalm 1:1-2 Blessed is the one who does not walk in step with the wicked or stand in the way that sinners take or sit in the company of mockers, but whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and who meditates on his law day and night. (Also Isaiah 30:18)

How often do I wait to be a blessing to someone and not know when I already have been? Sitting in church one day, a girl tapped me on my shoulder to ask if I was singing that morning. When I told her I was she thanked me and told me that when I sing she no longer feels as if she is in prison. What a blessing she was to me that day, because that day I was feeling depressed and unwanted. How wonderful that we both blessed the other one by kind words, and a sense that even though we are in the valley, soon we will be on the mountaintop. God showed me that when I rest in his pockets of grace, not only am I blessed, but am also a blessing.

Prayer: Thank you Lord, in my being a blessing, I am also blessed. May I be shown more and more the blessings that you have for me. Lord, continue to hold me in your pockets of grace. Amen.

Wednesday, April 2

Matthew 5:9 Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. (Also James 1:22)

These verses mean a lot to me. I grew up in an abusive family and I found myself always trying to make peace, or make things all right. I still find myself doing this, except now I try to do it with scripture. The verse in James, I think, is really easy to deceive ourselves, but if we do what Christ wants, the blessings come from obedience.

Prayer: Lord, I pray for obedience and understanding of your word, that I can be the servant that you desire me to be. Amen.

Thursday, April 3

Isaiah 30:18 Yet the Lord longs to be gracious to you; therefore he will rise up to show you compassion. For the Lord is a God of justice. Blessed are all who wait for him!

The Lord wants you to know he loves you in all you do that is good through him. God will take his wrath out on those he sees fit and love those who follow him.

Prayer: Dear Lord, thank you for all you do in our lives and for what you do in the lives of those who follow you. You are all knowing and all forever. Thank you for all and every ounce of love you pour out on our souls. Amen.

Friday, April 4

Psalms 1:1 Blessed is the man who walks, not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinner, nor sits in the seat of the scornful.

For many years I have walked with the ungodly and found myself being pulled deeper and deeper into the dark sinister world of hate - greed, sex, thief, etc. A world where the prince of darkness continued to keep me ensnared in the corrupted world, through the company of sinners. This life left me lost, perplexed, and hateful because I was so consumed by Satan's water and seed.

Now I am blessed because I do not walk in the counsel of evil, nor station myself in the pathway of wrong doers or occupy the seat of the scornful. But I do praise the Lord day and night. I'm blessed to have such beautiful Christian friends.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank you for changing my corrupted life and turning it into something righteous, respectful, considerate, and appreciated. Thank you for blessing me in becoming the man I am today. Amen.

Saturday, April 5

Joshua 8:34 Afterward Joshua read all the words of the law - the blessings and the curses, just as it was in the book of the law.

I'm in prison right now and times get tough for me in here from time to time, especially with having a mental illness of bi-polar. The above Bible verse is like my case manager. He is a blessing to me. I was really depressed and was in and out of the hole, I really wanted to give up on life. My case manager saw that and told me that he wasn't going to let me give up and he wasn't going to give up on me. That really stuck with me and it helped me out of my depression. He's like a blessing and my inspiration. He saved my life from the path I was going down in prison. He was a gift from God. I can safely say, I'm depression free at the moment. Like it says, Joshua read to women and children and the foreigners who live among the men. Joshua 8:34, that's like my case manager, he helps people even if he hardly knows them. He's a sure blessing.

Prayer: Our Father in Heaven, thank you for all your blessings and touching my heart with a wonderful case manager that saved me from a huge downfall. We pray this in Jesus holy name. Amen.

Monday, April 7

Matthew 6 (The Beatitudes).

I have recently lost my mother. When I found out that she had passed away, I was initially very mad and bitter at the justice system. I went up for parole 4 months ago and I was compliant in every way. The parole board denied my parole for 6 more months. I knew my mother was in poor health and I had a terrible feeling she would not make it. I called and wrote her often and she was very close to me. She was very happy that I had given my life to Christ and I had a wonderful talk with her a week before she died. I wrote her a wonderful letter that she was very happy to receive a couple days before she passed. I now feel that I was blessed not to have seen her in her final days, so that my memories of her will be of when she was a strong, all knowing mother who I was still, just her little boy.

Prayer: Dear Lord, give me the strength to stay on the narrow path to righteousness and be a blessing to my mother and make her proud as she looks down on me. Carry me through my struggles and let me be a blessing to others. Amen.

Tuesday, April 8

Psalm 128:1 Blessed are all who fear the Lord, who walk in obedience to him.

This verse means more than walk the walk or talk the talk. It means living each and every day not for yourself, but for the Lord. Each and everyday, thank the Lord, praise his name, give him the credit in everything you do and let him guide you! Basically, giving him total control over your life. In times of struggle or tribulation stop and ask yourself what would Jesus do. No matter good or bad circumstances, turn to God and spread his graces to others. That's part of walking the walk and talking the talk. Let it be known, God is a wonderful God who is full of blessings, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and 365 days a year, if you only call upon him to direct your path.

Prayer: Lord, I pray that people won't only walk the walk, but also talk the talk. That's your words of eternal grace. Let every mouth confess you are and each day we give you the greatest praise. Amen.

Wednesday, April 9

Psalm 24:3-6 Who may ascend the mountain of the Lord? Who may stand in his holy place? The one who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not trust in an idol or swear by a false god. They will receive blessing from the Lord and vindication from God their Savior. Such is the generation of those who seek him, who seek your face, God of Jacob.

When climbing that high mountain to meet our Father in his holy place, there come many battles. Some good, some bad, but throughout it all, we can look upon them as blessings. We are blessed to get to the top, to finally feel the joy, peace and love without the life of long-suffering children. WE are his children and with that we can be a blessing in many ways. It all starts with a simple smile and a caring heart. Are you ready to be blessed, and be a blessing?

Prayer: Father, please bless these meditations to be reached out to those who need it the most. Amen.

Thursday, April 10

Acts 20:35 In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'

I always found great joy in giving, because it was a blessing for someone else.

Prayer: Dear God, thank you for the joy of giving. Amen.

Friday, April 11

Isaiah 61:1-3 The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn, and provide for those who grieve in Zion - to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of joy instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair. They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the Lord for the display of his splendor.

Five years ago one of my best friends was diagnosed with cancer. Six months ago she passed away, leaving an amazing husband, five children and seven grandchildren. The family are all sold-out-Christians who stood beside believing that healing would come for her, but it never came. Twenty-six years ago I lost my daughter unexpectedly and tragically. Because I've lived and walked the road of grief with God, my friend's husband has opened up to me with his pain.

Laura Storey sings "Sometimes your blessings come through teardrops." Matthew 5:4 says "Blessed are those who mourn when you've lost what is most dear to you." My friend's husband mourns, he's lost what is most dear to him. I am honored to comfort him. Isaiah 61:1-3 says "God has sent me to heal the broken hearted, comfort who mourn, give beauty for ashes, joy for mourning, praise for heaviness." God sent me to my friend, to help heal his broken heart, comfort him, give him joy and lift his heavy heart. By doing this, I have been blessed with the same gifts - to my own broken and hurting heart.

God came along side me when I went through my nightmare. He's now brought me to bless my friend with assurance that God does see, does care, does know and will be there. I don't have to have all the answers, not knowing is sometimes the greatest comfort - greater blessing.

Prayer: Lord, you say heart shattered lives don't, for a moment escape your notice. Please use me to bless those whose hearts are shattered, as you have blessed and comforted me. Amen.

Saturday, April 12

Ephesians 4:1-3 As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.

As a Lakotah, in my childhood days I had a grandfather that would take me along with him on a night in the cold winters. With just the two of us, I would listen to my grandfather speaking in Lakotah. Stories of his time and in modern day life now is long forgotten. I remember him telling me once, "In order for you to survive in this world, you must learn how to be color blind! You have to learn how to see with your heart and not your eyes. The heart only sees the pureness of others that is good and the color through your eyes shows only judgmental prejudice and earthly ways."

In this life I have learned to live in my own self-made purgatories, as a child of God and also living the Lakotah spiritual up-bringing. Before anything else, I realized I must have unity in the body of Christ. It was by every effort and encouragement of our Lord, that I was blessed with the gift that I have found. That I would be saved, loved and forgiven; that through him, many can be given a new life to never be alone again. The blessing is to be free, no matter where you are, learning to be color blind in God's word and I promise you will see every breath you take is a refreshing one.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I pray for all the solitary brothers and sisters in prisons everywhere, that you comfort them with love, peace, humbleness, in your promise always to be blessed. Amen.

Monday, April 14

Matthew 7:1 Do not judge or you will be judged.

Go ahead and hate the sin, but please do not hate me;
For it's not wise to judge someone and this I failed to see!
You know it happened long ago, my heart would not forgive.
I could not love my fellow man and so he ceased to live!
With my words, I lashed at him, I wouldn't let it go.
You know my tongue cut like a knife and soon his blood would flow.
Now they say it's not my fault, I didn't throw the knife,
But I can't help but blame myself - I feel I took his life!
So if you feel you can't forgive and for this crime I owe,
I tried to warn you with my words, I thought that you should know.
If I've failed to change your mind or just a change of heart,
It's safe to say, I've changed my ways, it's time for me to start!

Prayer: Lord, guide my feet to step into the foot steps that are there of a man who made them long ago who loves and really cares. Amen.

Tuesday, April 15

Matthew 5:3 “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

I want to write about when I met a friend of my grandmother. When I first met him, he was dating my grandmother. I actually got close to him and he has been there whenever I was struggling, helping me get back on my feet. Even while I'm here, he's caring for all my belongings. When I get out, he is willing to help me. He writes me and helps me to stay positive. Coming back this second time, has allowed me to meet good people, a blessing. God had something in store for me. I've been a blessing by giving life to the sick through transplanted blood or bone marrow. I am blessed even as I feel bad about what got me here. I know I'm still a good person because my friends have been a blessing. They let me now be who I am...a blessing.

Prayer: Thank you God, for reminders that no matter what we go through we can still be a blessing to others. Amen.

Wednesday, April 16

Matthew 5:7 Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

As an ex-offender, I carry with me the stigma of my felony conviction. All I want is for people to view me as who I am, not my post or previous record. I am a creation of Christ. I ask only for mercy and God's blessing in my life. To gain mercy, I must show mercy. I pray every day for opportunities to show mercy. Bless me as I demonstrate mercy to others.

Prayer: Dear God, thank you for showing me mercy and for reminding me to show mercy to others. Amen.

Thursday, April 17

Psalm 91

This Psalm means a lot to me because God saved me from a life on the streets of California. He brought me out of trouble and hurt and gang life. He brought me peace and love forever and ever. If it was not for God, I wouldn't be here today. Thanks Heavenly Father for an awesome life.

Prayer: I pray for us inmates, to walk with Jesus and get to know his word each day and second. Amen.

Friday, April 18

2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!

I've been locked up for 5 years. Two years ago, I was very bitter at the whole world. I told all my loved ones to get lost, don't write, you're all dead to me. It's been very lonely. Then about two years ago, New Life (prison ministry) offered us greeting cards at no charge, just postage. So every month I got them and they were piling up in my cell. For a while I missed all my family and friends. I didn't know how to say I was sorry for what I said, or my actions that got me here. So I started sending the cards I'd accumulated for months. All I did was sign my name and sent them. Today I'm blessed with mail almost daily, most have forgave me and I'm not so lonely and bitter. In fact, I'm fairly happy to be alive and well. If this isn't a blessing, I don't know what is.

Prayer: Thank you Lord, for showing me your will for me. Amen.

Saturday, April 19

Jeremiah 17:7-8 Blessed are those who trust in the Lord and have made the Lord their hope and confidence. They are like trees planted along the riverbank, with roots that reach deep into the water. Such trees are not bothered by the heat or worried by long months of drought. Their leaves stay green and they go right on producing delicious fruit.

This passage says we are most blessed when we trust and rely on the Lord. By putting our hope and confidence in him, He will bless us. What I find so incredible about this promise is, the trust, reliance, hope and confidence we possess, are also gifts or blessings from God to us. Everything truly does begin and end with him.

We will be like a tree planted by the river, firmly established in the day of drought, so we can keep on growing and thriving. His supernatural power of grace, to live obediently and victoriously, flows through us, to bless us. In return, we bless others with the resulting delicious fruit we will bear when we are rooted firmly in him.

Prayer: My Dear Heavenly Father, please help me to always remember that true blessings come only from your divine hand. I ask that you keep me rooted in your nourishing abundance so I can share what you have shared with me, that I will be blessed, to be a blessing. Thank you for your provision. In Jesus name I pray. Amen.

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These writers represent the following prison congregations that use the PCA model:

Church of Hope, Pierre, SD

Cornerstone Prison Church, Sioux Falls, SD

New Beginnings Church, Denver, CO

New Life Prison Community, Newton, IA

St. Dysmas, Sioux Falls, SD

St. Dysmas, Springfield, SD

The Church of the Damascus Road, Fort Dodge & Rockwell City, IA





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