

FALL/WINTER 2023 NEWSLETTER

WISHING YOU A BLESSED HOLIDAY SEASON



YOUR SUPPORT HELPED US TO PROVIDE THE FOLLOWING MINISTRY JULY 2023:

- Religious Classes: 151
(With 1,251 attendees)
 - One-on-Ones: 78
- Bibles Distributed: 56

AUGUST 2023:

- Religious Classes: 161
(With 1,253 attendees)
 - One-on-Ones: 87
- Bibles Distributed: 56

SEPTEMBER 2023:

- Religious Classes: 178
(With 1,232 attendees)
 - One-on-Ones: 79
- Bibles Distributed: 38

OCTOBER 2023:

- Religious Classes: 162
(With 1,079 attendees)
 - One-on-Ones: 76
- Bibles Distributed: 32

The Big Four Continued:

"They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer" (Acts 2:42).

As our fall newsletter comes out, it marks a full year of my tenure as a chaplain at the Mesa County Detention Facility. As a follow-up to that, I must say that, "I am having a blast!" As much as I would like to expand on that, I am going to give in to my OCD and finish what I started.

My first newsletter had to do with asking that you would pray for us. This is a longstanding and continuous request. My next two newsletters dealt with fellowship and the remembrance of the Lord. As would follow in the big four of Acts 2:42, I would like to talk about teaching for a minute.

I doubt that a week goes by that I do not hear a statement much like this: "I am so tired of church. I just go there and some guy talks at me." Worse than that, I even hear this phrase: "I hate teaching." This, if I dwell on it, makes me very sad, and sometimes angry. How can something that means so much to me, be discounted or seemingly abhorred by others? We can avoid or discount such statements. We can definitely be numbed by their overuse, but what are we to DO with them?

We, at first thought, can pass them off as the words of an unbeliever or a believer going through a hard patch. But we know by experience that these are often our peers, our mentors, or the person in the mirror. They are often Pilgrims, just like us. How do we help them?

The two phrases that knock around in my brain are these contradictory catch phrases. One says, "If the student has not learned, the teacher has not taught." The other says, "The only way to learn mathematics is at the end of a pencil." One discounts

the responsibility of the learner. The other discounts the responsibility of the teacher. For anything to be transmitted from human to human, there must be some sense of responsibility for both parties. We can have a "hearer" with their hands mashed against their ears blaming the speaker, while the "speaker" covers his mouth and blames the hearer.

In the passage itself we have some clue as to the responsibility of the parties. They both should be "devoted" to teaching. In that sense, the hearer would seem to have a major part in the process of learning. In a traditional church setting, I always appreciated seeing people with notebooks. I have known people who would jot down questions, and then spend the rest of the week asking people (including the speaker) questions that they had about what they had heard. Jotting down or praying about what we should DO as hearers is also important. One of the major "clogs" of teaching in our church culture is that we do not listen to DO. I think if more of us DID, our teaching would be much more meaningful. Let's put it this way, if we were getting ready to go to Israel as first responders, we would have no problem motivating ourselves to actively learn first aid, regardless of the style or competence of the teacher. We would be begging the teacher for his knowledge. We would be preparing to DO, not just to listen. We should always ask ourselves, "What is the goal of my learning or teaching?" We know that that goal is love, but how are we to express it in our daily lives? Are we a moving vessel that God is able to guide?

Which brings us to another point. Context is everything. Most people that I know that are "down on teaching," are actually starved for fellowship. It is not that they loath teaching, it is that they are lonely. We show up to a teaching service

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SUPPORT & DONATIONS

If you are interested in supporting The Mesa County Jail Ministry financially and/or through prayer; scan the QR code below or contact us at: 970.244.3351 Mesacountyjailministry.org

2536 Rimrock Ave Suite 400-171 GJ CO 81505



Scan QR Code To Donate

WHAT DOES IT TAKE?

What does it take to bring the Good News of the Gospel into the Mesa Detention Facility?

The Mesa County Jail Ministry (MCJM) was established in 2014 to bring glory to God. At that time the Jail needed a chaplain. Several local believers gathered and were inspired to begin the MCJM. Looking back on almost 10 years of ministry we have been sustained by utter reliance on God.

It takes His hand upon us.

As the MCJM got started it was important to establish a good working relationship with the Sheriff's Office. Brand new, and with no track record we entered this relationship with humility. Looking back at the first years, God blessed us with gracious partners in the Sheriff's Office. We were given grace many times as the MCJM got its feet on the ground. The MCJM recognizes and appreciates the privilege we have as we work alongside and partner with the Sheriff's Office.

It takes humility and His favor.

In the beginning, a faithful Board assembled and bought on Doug Winter as the first Chaplain. God provided a CPA, Carl Boydston, as treasurer. Doug worked for what we could pay, the first year that was not much. Soon the Christian community came alongside. Clifton Christian Church and First Presbyterian were the first churches to adopt the MCJM. At the first annual banquet 250 people attended. After that, God has led other churches and many people to pray for and support the MCJM.

It takes the commitment and the generosity of God's people to sustain this local work.

The Mesa County Detention Facility averages 450 inmates on most days, and books into the Jail over 5,000 inmates per year. The Jail never closes. Today, inside the Jail, Chaplain Tom and Chaplain April along with 20 volunteers faithfully minister to the needs of those in the facility. This ministry, inspired by God, is sustained by the faithful prayers and giving from the Christian community.

It takes the faithfulness of many.

One aspect of the Jail ministry is that it does not end when inmates leave the facility. Chaplain Tom and Chaplain April along with many of the volunteers follow up with former inmates on the outside. We work individually, within our churches, and with Community Corrections continuing to mentor and develop fellowship with them. Many of us continue our relationships with those sentenced to the Department of Corrections through regular correspondence.

It takes continued love and devotion.

There is always more we can do. As we continue in partnership with the Sheriff's Office and the supporters of the MCJM, we look forward to what God has in store.

It takes a vision.

-P. von Guerard 11/23

INMATE EXPRESSIONS

Born Again

"At one time, I let bitterness blind me. I was hurting, angry, and withdrawn. I was busy living my life my way, pride and ego being the biggest motivation. I carried a lot of old sorrows inside of myself.

One evening, I surrendered and asked Jesus into my life. A religious volunteer guided me into personal freedom with prayer. I will never forget that moment, it is molding me with the Holy Spirit into someone that finally likes herself for the right way through salvation. Now I'm spending my time getting better, not bitter with the guidance I've been needing most of my life. God is Good."

The Way

Addiction: Addiction is hurt. Addiction is real. Addiction is the joy I looked for inside of a pill. Addiction is bad. Addiction is sad. Addiction is the thing I resented when I looked at my dad.

Hurt: Hurt is very painful. Hurt is very real. Hurt is the reason I took so many of those pills. Hurt made me cry. Hurt told me lies. Hurt was inside and trapped in the prison of my mind.

Love: Love is patient. Love is kind. Love is real. Love is what Jesus gave me instead of that pill. Love means honest. Love is true. Love is the reason that God sent Jesus to die for you.

Free: Free is the answer. Free is the way. Free is the spirit you get when you pray. Free is the truth. Free is the smile. Free is eternity and not just a while.



Thank You To ALL Who Sponsor MCJM Thanks to Our Church & Business Sponsors below

Rimrock UPS • Friends of the Library • Downtown Vineyard Church • Appleton Christian Church
GJ First Presbyterian Church • Redlands Community Church • Victory Life Church • Canyon West Church • Church On
The Rock • Clifton Christian Church • Monument Presbyterian Church • Calvary Bible Church • Calvary Chapel GJ
Merge2Media • KJOL • Canyon View Vinyard Church • GJ Seventh Day Adventist Church • Heritage Church

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- Chaplain Tom *The Big Four continued from page 1...*

and expect someone to solve our personal or marital difficulties. In our lack of devotion or ignorance of fellowship, we expect our teacher to meet our emotional needs. We must not neglect the other three facets of Acts 2:42, and then blame our teachers because we are not happy with our spiritual lives. We should not give up on prayer because it does not meet our need for fellowship. We should not give up on fellowship because we need deeper teaching. We must have balance in all four areas of our spiritual lives, otherwise we will be disillusioned with the one that we actually attempt to do.

But what of the teachers, do they not bear some of the responsibility? Of course they do. We have all sat under teachers that are "information dumpers." It would seem that the speaker did not care if the hearers learned anything or were inspired to do anything. It was obvious that the presenter knew the subject, but it did not seem to matter if the students learned the material or had any inkling that the material was something that was worth acting upon. Personally, I have known very few teachers in local churches that fit this category. However, I know that they exist. What is a teacher to do about it? Short

of passing out tests (which is a great advantage to secular professors), what are Christian Teachers to do? The primary question to ask ourselves is this, "How do I know that I communicated anything?" Asking is one way. Another way is observing your class or congregation. Are the encouragers encouraging? Are the evangelists evangelizing? Are the helpers helping? Are the other teachers teaching? What can I do to encourage life change?

On a final note, I must say that in the jail setting, we seldom talk about the topic of teaching. But when we do, we boil it down to this: If you examine the Scriptures for yourself, you will be able to discern error and false teaching. Like an FBI agent looking at a suspected forgery, we should know the real thing so well that we cannot be fooled by the fakes. But if we are unlearned, we can spot false teachers by their arrogance (see the book of Jude). This is our "magic pen" to help us spot the counterfeit bills. This may be the answer for us all. Are we humble enough to be taught by others? Can we learn from the learners? Can we be devoted to teaching?

- Chaplain Tom

The background of the poster is a wooden plank texture. On the right side, there is a blue plate with a red and white checkered napkin tied with a red ribbon, containing a silver spoon and fork.

2024
Banquet
Mesa County Jail Ministry
Annual Banquet

February 24 2024 5:30-7:30



Scan the QR Code for tickets or
Visit mesacountyjailministry.org



MESA COUNTY
Jail Ministry



**Wishing You a holiday season
adorned with
God's boundless love.**

May your time be showered with blessings, and filled with the purest joy. May each moment be a testament to the beauty of grace, and may your heart be a sanctuary for peace. Happy Holidays and a season of abundant blessings to you and your loved ones.

From All of us at the Mesa County Jail Ministry we are thankful for your continued support, time and prayers.

"WOW, THANK YOU SO MUCH!"

For as long as I can remember, gift bags have been distributed to the inmates at the Mesa County Jail in December. This year will be no exception. The gift bags may contain hot chocolate mix, Rice Krispies treats, hard candy, Ramen, and chips or pretzels. Some inmates make icing out of the hot chocolate mix and use it to coat the Rice Krispy bars. Thanks to our faithful supporters, gift-bag items are purchased from the Jail Ministry budget. Even special needs, like sugar free and nut allergies are accounted for. It takes about two to three hours for 20 volunteers and jail staff to assemble about 450-500 gift bags. Coordinating gift-bag assembly with the head count for distribution on each of the 6 Pods (housing areas for inmates) and special diet needs is a real-time balancing act.

Why do we do this? As followers of Jesus, we seek to share His grace with everyone. "In the New Testament grace means God's love in action towards those who merited the opposite of love." (J.I. Packer, Knowing God, 1993).

Most inmates are very grateful for the gift and kindness. "Wow, thank you so much!" Is a common refrain. The look of surprised joy on their faces makes the effort worth it. As we minister at the jail, our effort is inspired by a selfless love from God for some of the least of these.



ANGEL TREE

A Program of Prison Fellowship

Incarceration can strain family ties to the breaking point. By providing Christmas gifts on behalf of incarcerated parents, children with a mom or dad in prison unwrap joy each year with Angel Tree Christmas—a gift that reminds them they are valued and loved. Prison Fellowship Angel Tree allows local congregations to extend the hope of the Gospel to families with loved ones in prison.

Every year, we have the privilege to administer the Angel Tree application process in the Mesa County Detention Facility. In June, the applications arrive. Posters in English and Spanish are put up in the six Pods. Each Pod contains 50 to 80 inmates. The application period runs through August.

Part of our ministering to inmates, is to encourage inmates to do their best to maintain contact with their children. Inmates feel remorse because their circumstances have separated them from their children. The Angel Tree Program gives inmates the opportunity to do something for their children and, although they are incarcerated, helps to develop an attitude of being a parent. This year, 84 children of inmates in the Mesa County Detention Facility will receive Christmas gifts in the name of their incarcerated parent. In many cases, the Inmates can participate with their children's gift opening via a video call. A number of inmates have expressed appreciation and joy for this opportunity.

We trust God to use this program for children to experience love from their parents and build the self-esteem inmates need to dedicate themselves to maintaining contact with their children. Pray for this love to bear fruit and lead Inmates and their children to Jesus.