

Youth Prison Ministry

Jesus calls us to be His witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. (Acts 1:8) He gave His disciples the instructions to go and make disciples. (Matt 28:18-20) All Christians are disciples of Jesus Christ and are called to carry out these instructions. We are called to share the message of Jesus Christ and the hope in Him to all people. This includes those who are in prison. Jesus said that whatever we do for those considered least, we do unto Him. (Matt 25:45) This includes visiting those in prison. (Matt 25:36, 44)

“When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, He will sit on His throne in heavenly glory. All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep on His right and the goats on His left. “Then the King will say to those on His right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. 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, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.’ “Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’ “The King will reply, ‘I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.’” Matthew 25:31-40

Why Prison Ministry?

Prisoners are just like all people in that they need to hear the message and hope of Jesus Christ. Evangelism through Prison Ministry enables those who have made mistakes to still have the opportunity to hear about the Good News of Jesus Christ while they are in prison. Crime is a sin just as any act of disobedience is sin. “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” (Rom 3:23) Crime is a sin that may put a person in prison but all sin separates all men from God. The only solution to sin and separation for all mankind is through Jesus Christ. (John 14:6) “An inmate in an American jail or prison is really no different from you and me. We are all sinners, and an inmate who makes a life-changing decision for Christ is no different from any one of us who has made that decision to follow our heavenly Father.” (Good News Jail & Prison Ministry) The only way for a prisoner to “change” their heart is through a commitment to Jesus Christ. Whenever a person commits to Christ, they are a new person internally. The old life is gone and the new life has begun. (2 Cor 5:17) This change for prisoners may begin inside the prison but it continues as they transition back into society as a faithful servant of Jesus Christ. Therefore the goal of prison ministry is to share the message of Christ to the prisoners so they can become “changed” or “born again” and grow as fruitful disciples of Jesus Christ.

Texas Youth Commission

The mission of the Texas Youth Commission (TYC) is to protect the public by confining youth in a facility with programs to rehabilitate them while emphasizing positive development, accountability for their actions, and discipline training. “In the simplest terms, the job of the Texas Youth Commission is to fix broken children.” (Texas Youth Commission) Many of the youth at TYC have committed the most serious offenses and already have failed at other intervention attempts at the local and county level. Out of 75,000 youth in Texas that are referred to the juvenile justice system, only about 3% make it to TYC and these are the most violent and chronic young offenders.

Giddings State School

The Giddings State School is one of the TYC facilities. The Giddings facility is best known for the Capital and Serious Violent Offender Treatment Program. This special treatment program for violent offenders has been stated by TYC to significantly reduce continued criminal behavior. The Giddings facility also offers specialized treatment for sex offenders and youth who are chemically dependent. Giddings State School is a maximum restriction facility of TYC. It has 380 predominantly violent male offenders.

Volunteer Ministry to Prisoners

The Texas Youth Commission defines its role to fix broken children. They have programs and treatments that help benefit the youth. They even have a way to measure success by achieving a reduction in recidivism (habitual relapse into crime) among TYC youth. But it is not TYC that fixes people or truly changes people. It is Jesus Christ who changes a person from the inside out. Jesus fixes broken people, He is the only variable that truly changes and

benefits youth, and He is the only measure of true success. But it takes His witnesses to share the source of mending and change. It takes Christians becoming volunteers to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ with the youth in the youth correctional facilities. Jesus commands us to go and preach the Gospel to every creature. (Mark 16:15) Volunteers are needed who have a desire to demonstrate the love of Christ in every action, word, and deed. (Col 3:17) Volunteers will need to keep focused on Christ from start to finish and not become weary or give up. (Heb 12:1-3) Volunteers will need to be motivated and enthusiastic to serve Christ and demonstrate the fruit of the Spirit of God. (Gal 5:22-25) Volunteers will need an attitude that reflects the attitude of Christ. (Phil 2:5-11)

Prison Ministry Activities

Activities of the Tejas Summer Prison Ministry:

- Visitation
- Writing them

Visitation

There will be a group of guys who have voluntarily decided that they want to have Tejas staff visit them. There will be four Tejas SMT members who will go on Saturdays to visit with the guys.

Writing Letters

Writing letters can really impact and minister to the students. This can be a great opportunity for encouragement and evangelism. Many of the youth do not receive letters. They appreciate receiving letters and a written letter may provide them the opportunity to hear the good news of Jesus Christ.

Note: If you would like to write letters, please check with Jennifer about the appropriate procedures in sending and receiving letters. Do not give out your personal address and contact information to the youth. You will send and receive letters through the camp.

As Scripture says, "Anyone who believes in him will never be put to shame." For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile—the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!" **Romans 10:11-15**

"They Say They Are Just Convicts"

They say they are just convicts,
Always breaking the rules.
Why do you go see them,
You must be a fool.

I just can't quite explain it,
He didn't die for the Saints.
Oh, praise the Lord Jesus,
He died for us that ain't.

They don't care about anything,
It's a waste of your time.
But God can save anybody,
When they are prayin' and cryin'.

They say they are just convicts,
But one day they will see.
A bunch of guys in "white,"
Up in Heaven so free.

They say they are just convicts,
You can see it in their face.
But most of us need a mirror,
This is all about God's Grace.

This is all about the Lord Jesus,
He died for me and you.
They can get saved in prison,
So, what are you gonna do

Zeke Young