



Missionary Evangelism to Corrections

Sharing the gospel & Christ's love with those in corrections since 1982

"I was in prison and you came to me" Matt.25:36cESV

Save the Date!!!

MEC Event

Viewing of the movie "Sabina"

By Voice of the Martyrs

November 13th, 2022

6:30-8:30pm

Lakes Free Church
29620 Olinda Trail
55045 Lindstrom MN
Testimonies & Offering



August 2022 MEC Newsletter

MEC Spotlight Sarah Carlson

My mom had me when she was 17 and dad left the state when he found out my mom was pregnant. Three years later mom married a man who was physically, verbally, emotionally and sexually abusive to me. That abuse led me to believe that that's what love was. When I was 17, I met a man that introduced me to IV meth and cocaine use. He was also abusive in every way, however, that's what love looked like to me. I was 19 when I gave birth to my first child. At 21, still using the same drugs, I became pregnant again and wanted to quit using. Yet my "friends" would bring me dope, even though they knew I was carrying a child.



I was desperate to quit for myself, my toddler and the one I was currently pregnant with. I grew up in the church and had given my life to Jesus when I was five years old. I remember, after finding out I was pregnant again and deep into my addiction, how I was sitting in my bathtub talking to Jesus, telling him I didn't want to die without being baptized and I didn't want to continue using. I remember telling the Lord, "I don't know if this will be good enough, but I baptize myself right now.", and I hoped that He would honor it. He did. I had an encounter with Jesus in that moment. I cried and cried and felt an inner, deep cleansing and such a strong desire to read the word and go to church. I wanted more of that encounter that I had with Him.

I moved out of the area where I had been, in order to get a new start and went to church three days a week. During that time, I had one more child. Then, starting to let in little compromises, I took a job working on Sundays, so I wasn't going to church regularly. Then I stopped reading the Bible every day, started listening to old music which was triggering, started smoking, then drinking. It didn't take long to dabble in using coke and meth again. Those little compromises led to bigger ones and 14 more years of drug addiction. During those years, I

Overcoming Adversity

The definition of adversity is "serious or continued difficulty or misfortune, hardship and suffering, adverse or (extremely) unfavorable experiences". When something that is hard is ongoing, it wears us down and it gets harder and harder to see your way out. It is tempting to say that something that is hard is adversity and that kind of negative thinking can blow challenges out of proportion.

Differentiating between hard or difficult situations and adversity is helpful. It can show you what you need to deal with and help you see if your solutions are short term efforts and actions, or if you need to look at underlying issues and find ways to manage or resolve those. Short term solutions are not enough to affect foundational issues and help us build correctly. **We usually have to work out some short term and some underlying long-term issues and solutions.**

Sometimes hard things or adversity can occur because of natural events such as illness, can be caused by others who had responsibility for us, circumstances not working out, or something we bring on ourselves. If it is others, it is tempting and natural to blame them instead of

understanding their challenges and finding other solutions. If it is something, we have brought on ourselves, we may feel stuck in guilt. Either way seeking God's forgiveness and resurrection power will allow us to go



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I Love You, Lord

I love you, Lord And I lift my voice
To worship You Oh, my soul, rejoice! Take
joy my King In what You hear Let it be a
sweet, sweet sound, In Your ear.

Source: [Musixmatch](#), Laurie Klein, I Love You, Lord lyrics
© House Of Mercy Music, CCLI song number 25266

Surely the Presence of the Lord

Surely the presence of the Lord is in this place,
I can feel His mighty power and His grace.
I can hear the brush of angel's wings,
I see glory on each face;
Surely the presence of the Lord is in this place.

In the midst of His children, the Lord said He
would be.

It doesn't take very many, it can be just two or
three.

And I feel the same sweet Spirit that I've felt oft
times before. Oh, surely I can say I have been
with the Lord.

There's a holy hush around us as God's glory fills
this place. I've touched the hem of his garment
and I can almost see His face.

And my heart is overflowing with the fullness of
His joy. I know without a doubt that I have been
with the Lord. 1977 Lanny Wolfe Music (Admin.
by Capitol CMG Publishing), CCLI Song Number 7909

Lord, You are More Precious than Silver

Lord, You are more precious than silver;
Lord, You are more costly than gold;
Lord, You are more beautiful than diamonds;
And nothing I desire compares with You.

Lord, Your life is divine, eternal.

Lord, Your life regenerated me.

Lord, Your life is
growing within me,
Until I am fully
conformed to Thee.

Lord, Your love is
wide as the ocean.

Lord, Your love is
deep as the sea.

Lord, Your love encompasses the nations,
And that is all I want to live in me.

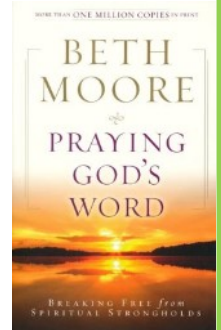
Lord, Your light is shining within us;
Lord, Your light drives darkness away.
Lord, Your light is guiding us onwards,
Preparing us for the coming wedding day.

Source: [hymnal.net](#), Writer: Lynn DeShazo, Integrity's Ho-
sanna Music!, CCLI Song number 11335



had two failed marriages. After the second one, I felt so reject-
ed that I felt everyone, including my kids, would be better off
without me.

I left the state and abandoned my kids to go self-
destruct. I started smoking dope, then shooting it, then
manufacturing it. I was in and out of county jails in Arkansas,
when a woman named Sheila came. She was part of a prison
ministry from a church near the facility. One time, she gave
me a book by Charles Stanley that really ministered to my
heart at the time. It helped me see that I had a root of rejection.
It was a revelation (an ah-ha moment). I realized a lot of my
decisions were based on rejection and trying to protect myself
from ever feeling it again. Pushing people
away, being mean, putting up walls, not loving
people or letting them love me and using drugs
and alcohol to numb the pain were all part of
that. Another time, she brought me a book by
Beth Moore called "Praying God's Word". I
was so thankful for that book, that I kept it
close to me all through my last three years of
addiction when I was homeless. Praying scrip-
ture over my circumstances, I may not have
seen the fruit of that in the moment, but
looking back, I see how those prayers became
my reality. Sheila coming to visit us was life changing for me.



The last time I went to jail in Arkansas, I was going
with a friend to go pick up 5.5 ounces of meth. We found out
very quickly that it was a controlled buy (the police or a sur-
veilled informant sells drugs). While in jail, I tried to go to the
psych ward, so I could get access to a phone by telling the
Correctional Officer that I was suicidal. That backfired - and I
went to the Hole for 3 days, wearing nothing but the Velcro
turtle suit.

I was hopeless, broken and alone in that
cell. All I could do was cry out to God for com-
fort. I sang three songs that I remembered from
church over and over and over for those three
days. Moments after I got put back into popula-
tion, they told me to grab my mat. I was being re-
leased. The friend that I was arrested with (my charge part-
ner) was posting bond.

That buy had been part of a drug sting; the charge
turned into a federal indictment. Now I was looking at 26
years to life along with 22 other people over 13lbs of meth
brought in from Mexico. I was homeless and told my
bondsman that I would catch more charges because everyone I
knew was a meth cook. I wanted to go back to Minnesota, so I
could be with my kids until I had to go to court. He bought me
a ticket, but made sure I knew that, when I was called, I
needed to come to court. I didn't want the Federal Marshalls
bring me.

When I got to Minnesota, I did not know anyone who
was willing to help me except other addicts who were in-
volved in the same lifestyle I was trying
to leave behind. Soon no one wanted to

forward.

Turning difficult situations into a challenge to overcome can make it more exciting and easier to not dismiss, but can give us the ability to work through them.

We need to look beyond ourselves to God's strength. His power and turning to Him helps us overcome what we cannot do ourselves. In our weakness is His strength.



When we cultivate our love for Him, then turning to Him becomes second nature. As we abide in Him we grow in faith, like trees planted by a river instead of being tossed about like chaff (See Psalms 1:3&4). After Jesus described Himself as light of the World and the light of life, He walked out of the temple and He and His disciples saw the blind man who had been so from birth. Being so, marginalized this man, and others thought that his blindness was brought on by his sin or his parents' sin. Jesus said that this man's form of adversity, his blindness, was there, so that God's work could be displayed.

In order to get from where the adversity controls us, to a place where we are blessed, the beatitudes are foundational. Jesus said, we are blessed if we are poor in spirit, mourn, are meek, hunger and thirst for righteousness, show mercy, are pure in heart, make peace and pursue righteousness, bless those who are against us and forgive. Wow! What a mouthful or what a heartfelt. And they're all things that our hearts are not full of, unless we turn to and receive from God. Then we can be part of His Kingdom (loved and love other), comforted, inherit (land or earth), be filled, shown mercy, see God, be called His sons and be part of God's Kingdom.

Blessed here means happy, fulfilled, joyful, having enough, complete. Each of these areas can be a complete study in themselves. Here is a short commentary on each. Mourning is necessary to receive comfort. When we experience loss, ..., or even something we need but did not receive, we can get stuck. Mourning opens our hearts to receiving comfort and our hearts are softened. If we have not had those relationships, it is humbling but rewarding to seek and find them.

Meekness is not weakness, but power under control. Moses was a strong leader and the Bible describes him as meeker than any other man on the Earth (Numbers 12:3). A commentary on Titus 3:2 says, "The meek are

let me stay with them anymore. I had worn out my welcome everywhere. One night it was raining, I had a kidney infection, bronchitis and nowhere to go. Just then, a friend I used to use with, called me out of the blue to ask if I was ok. He was staying at Minnesota Adult and Teen Challenge at the time. Long story short, after a couple night's stay in a homeless shelter, I entered the doors of Minnesota Adult and Teen Challenge. At the time, I thought I would stay until one of my boyfriends got out of prison. Then I could take off and be with him.

But...God had other plans. I had a supernatural encounter with Jesus and received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. In my 14 months there I had many more incredible encounters. I was set free, delivered from trauma & addiction, my relationships with my family were restored and I now have a relationship with my biological father.

While at MnATC I was flying back and forth to Arkansas for the court dates. At the time of my sentencing I was in the transitional housing. I had taken responsibility for destroying evidence and received two downward departures from the mandatory minimum of four years. When I went to court that day, I fully expected to go to Federal Prison. But... God had a different plan. I received three years of probation, a 100-dollar fine and 50 hours of community service. God is so good.

When back in Minnesota, I started working at MnATC met my best friend (also a graduate there) and future husband. I got an apartment and filed for custody to get my kids back. I wanted them to know I would do everything I could to get them back and that they were worth the fight. The oldest two were with their abusive father who was not going to let me have them back and I was prepared for an ugly and painful fight. But.... God had a different plan. My children's father did not open his mail, so did not know he had to show up to court. I won by default and he didn't try to fight it. My parents were supportive and wanted me to do it correctly through the courts, so I gained custody of all three children within months.

Since then, I have worked at MnTC as a recovery coach, PRSS, supervisor, manager and now I have my addiction counseling degree. My husband is also a counselor and youth chaplain at MnTC. My oldest daughter went through MnTC as well and is a now an addiction counselor. God has given me a life that I never dreamed I could have.

Sarah Carlson



We know we are not alone in ministry so each month we lift up another ministry.

Reading through the prayer requests, it struck me this time again, how many children are impacted by their parent's incarceration. It is very sad to see children separated from their moms and dads; often they don't even understand what is happening since they are too young.

Please pray for God to reach out to the parents that are incarcerated and let them see that their children need them. Pray for the families and caregivers that are taking on the responsibility of caring for those children while their parents are away. And of course, pray that the Lord be with those children and be a comforter for them. Thank you.

Nadine Behrens

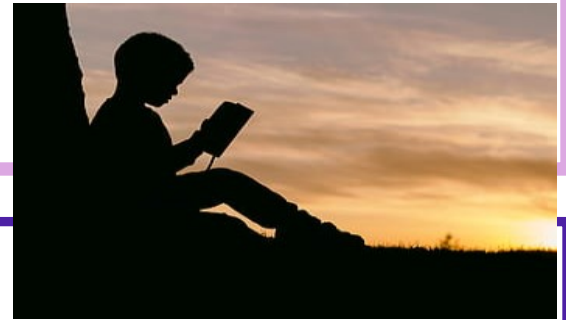
For this reason this month's ministry shout out is to:

Children of Incarcerated Caregivers



We are a non-profit devoted to promoting the best interests of children when their parents are sentenced to prison or otherwise involved in the criminal justice system.

Visit their website at: **www.cicmn.org**



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those who quietly submit themselves to God, ...comply [and]... are gentle towards all men." Jesus was meek (Matthew 11 & Matthew 21). Those that are meek have their needs met by "inheriting the land". This refers to a good place, both spiritually and physically. Seeing the connection is healing.

We all hunger and thirst.... if we do so and seek after, righteousness, we will have the needs of our spirits and souls met. Following Jesus, we will be filled with His Spirit and have love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness and self-control (Galatians 5). Don't you need that? Don't you really want these? What are you willing to do to go after them?

Mercy is loving kindness, compassion from the innermost being that meets a need. It includes to be inclined to and toward, to be gracious to, to benefit, to pity, have compassion, to forgive (International Standard Bible Dictionary summary & Vines Dictionary).

Only God can take our deceitful hearts and make us pure in heart. No environment cleans itself, but all need consistent cleaning. We make mistakes and let sin and impure things into our hearts. We all have sin, when we try to meet our desires or needs in a way that is not good or Godly. Sin is deceptive and condemning [...] and leads to bringing us down; something in us dies. When we ask for forgiveness and find good, God-given ways to meet those needs then we receive blessing...

We are supposed to be at peace, to live it and to make it. (Strong's Bible Dict.) Peace offerings were to be spontaneous, solemn, joyful, given with thanksgiving and could fulfill vows or be freewill. Making peace is one of the ways we show that we have accepted God as our father. Are we Peace breakers, Peace fakers or Peace makers?

We would naturally react to persecution, insults and lies negatively, lashing out and defending ourselves. It takes God giving us His peace, forgiveness and love in order to be able to respond in love, to create new, different relationships. (Smith's Bible Dictionary) 1 Corinthians 13 gives an excellent definition of love. Seeing our lack, learning and asking God to increase Himself in us; this way is lifegiving. *Karen Selby*

This is an excerpt from *Overcoming Adversity: The Word on Problematic Thinking*. For the entire article including questions as a Bible Study, go to our website www.mecjailministry.com or click here:

http://www.mecjailministry.com/newsletter/Overcoming_Adversity.pdf

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