

Our Prison Ministry

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"The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon Me; because the LORD hath anointed Me to preach good tidings unto the meek; He hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound." ~ Isaiah 61:1

Our Lord Jesus Christ came to fulfill this passage. He stood up in the synagogue of Nazareth and read this portion of Scripture. He then sat down and said, *"This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears"* (Luke 4:21).

Jesus, *"full of grace and truth"* (John 1:14) came *"not ... to condemn the world"* (John 3:17), He *"came not to judge the world"* (John 12:47). He came to save the world. He came to set the captives free!

He was anointed by the Father to:

*"preach **good tidings** unto the meek."*

He was sent by the Father to:

*"**bind up the brokenhearted**"*

*"proclaim **liberty to the captives**"*

*"proclaim ... the **opening of the prison to them that are bound.**"*

What beautiful words these are; what a glorious mission this was. His Father had given Him a divine prison ministry: *"The LORD looseth the prisoners"* (Psalm 146:7). He came to set men free. He freed them with the truth!

“And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:32).

“If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed” (John 8:36).

Truth liberates. Error enslaves.

The bondage that comes from error is far more binding than that of a physical prison.

The risen, ascended Lord Jesus Christ called Paul, and anointed him to expand His freedom mission to the Nations (or, Gentiles).

*“Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, **called to be an apostle**, separated unto the gospel of God”* (Romans 1:1).

*“Paul, **called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ** through the will of God”* (I Corinthians 1:1).

*“For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am **the apostle of the Gentiles**, I magnify mine office”* (Romans 11:13).

Paul taught freedom from sin, the law, guilt, and religion. He sought to bring men to the full realization and life of this freedom in Christ:

“Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage” (Galatians 5:1).

“Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty” (II Corinthians 3:17).

“For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father” (Romans 8:15).

We, who are *called*¹ and *anointed*² of God, also join in bringing the glorious message and ministry of liberty and freedom to those who are in bondage.

This is the basis of the dispensation of God that we are called to serve in. We live and minister in God’s glorious “*grace and peace.*”

“Grace to you and peace ...” (Romans 1:7).

“Grace be unto you, and peace ...” (I Corinthians 1:3).

1. Romans 16:13; I Corinthians 1:27-28; Ephesians 1:4; II Thessalonians 2:13

2. II Corinthians 1:21

“Grace be to you and peace ...” (II Corinthians 1:2).

“Grace be to you and peace ...” (Galatians 1:3).

“Grace be to you, and peace ...” (Ephesians 1:2).

“Grace be unto you, and peace ...” (Phlippians 1:2).

“Grace be unto you, and peace ...” (Colossians 1:2).

“Grace be unto you, and peace ...” (I Thessalonians 1:1).

Grace unto you, and peace ...” (II Thessalonians 1:2).

“Grace, mercy, and peace ...” (I Timothy 1:2).

“Grace, mercy, and peace ...” (II Timothy 1:2).

“Grace, mercy, and peace ...” (Titus 1:4).

“Grace to you, and peace ...” (Philemon 1:3).

All the world around us lies in deep bondage. They are helplessly enslaved to sin, self, guilt, shame, tradition, and more than anything else religion. We seek the freedom and liberty of others – a freedom that our Lord Jesus Christ secured for them by His cross-work. We help lead them to *Him* – a place of “*grace and peace,*” and divine joy.

Chuck Swindoll speaks of this glorious undertaking:

“I can’t think of a greater mission in life than helping others know how to enjoy the life God has supplied.”³

We do not battle with those who are around us. They are not our enemies. They are the ones that we are seeking to liberate.

“We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places” (Ephesians 6:12).

To liberate those who are imprisoned, we must carefully follow Paul’s tender instructions:

“And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; and that they may recover

3. Charles Swindoll, *The Grace Awakening*, Word Publishing 1990, page 129.

themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will” (II Timothy 2:24-26).

Like Moses of old, our message and ministry is,

*“Thus saith the LORD, **Let my people go ...**” (Exodus 8:1).*

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