

“Love Lifted Me Recovery” - July, 2020
Newsletter for April, May, June, 2020
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Web Site: www.Loveliftedmerecovery.com

Here's a little Bible study message from Ephesians 2:1, 4-5 “And **you He made ALIVE, who were DEAD in your trespasses and SINS.**” “But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when WE were DEAD in TRESPASSES, **made us ALIVE together with CHRIST.**” I heard a great quote some time ago, and I'm not sure who said it originally, but it went like this: “**Jesus did not come to make bad men good, but to make DEAD men LIVE.**” I thought about the question people always ask about why so-called “good people” need to come to Christ. I thought of going to a funeral and looking at the body in the casket. Some of them are made up and fixed up so that they look pretty good. Others look pretty bad, and others are so bad (ravaged by disease, or a car accident or worse), they can't even have an open casket service. I went to one funeral where we were all forced to go by the casket to get out of the building, and I looked, and my friend's body was all swollen and bloated, and it didn't even look like her. I wished I hadn't looked at all. But anyway, **no matter how good the body in the casket looks, isn't it still DEAD? All of us are DEAD towards God until we come to Jesus Christ and are born again and given eternal LIFE by Him.** It doesn't matter how good some people look in comparison to others, **no more than the better-looking body in a casket is more alive than the terrible-looking body. They are ALL DEAD, and WE are ALL SPIRITUALLY DEAD before we come to Christ. Only Jesus Christ and the Spirit of the Living God can make us spiritually ALIVE.**

Bible Study Lessons on the Internet

Our many Bible studies are always available on our website, and we are happy to report they were used during the Coronavirus pandemic. We received a phone call from Wesley Russell at the Bible Tabernacle, and he said they were using our Bible study lessons (the same ones the prisoners in our prison ministry get in the mail) for their congregation, since they couldn't meet for Bible study or church services during the time of the Coronavirus restrictions. At our March Bible Tabernacle Board of Directors' meeting, Wesley had said they wished they had some kind of hand-outs for their people while services were not allowed, and we suggested our Bible study lessons, and that they could just print them out from our website and make however many copies they needed for their people. Wesley said it was working out great, and the people were enjoying doing the Bible studies. Since the Bible Tabernacle is not only a church, but also a residential ministry for homeless men, women and children, the people living there are required to have Bible study every day, so this works out great for them. They started out with our Romans study and our Ephesians study, and then they can continue on to others. Praise the Lord!

Monthly Evangelistic Outreach to Venice Beach

Saturday, April 4, 2020 - Due to the Corona-virus emergency restrictions, our Venice Beach outreach for this date had to be cancelled, as the beaches were totally closed, so we couldn't even go down there and feed the homeless or anything. Not just the parking lots closed, but no people allowed down at the beach or the Boardwalk at all. We had already made up 168 lunches, so we did a series of “mini-outreaches” to find homeless people around town here to give them to. The first one was on a Sunday, and Stephani and I filled one of our big carts with lunches, and we went out in the neighborhood and gave out about thirty-five or so lunches to homeless people we found on Venice Blvd.

We couldn't do church in the usual way, but we "did church" by giving out gospel tracts and food to the hungry in the name of Jesus. We planned to go out again several times, each time in a different direction, and see how many lunches we could give out in each "mini-outreach". When I called a few people to tell them the outreach had to be cancelled, Felipe said he would come over and take some of the lunches and give them out in his neighborhood, as he sees a lot of homeless people there. He took about 30-35 lunches, and told us later that he had given them out in the Hollywood area. The next time, Tom, Kaela, and I took the car and went looking for homeless people to give some more of the lunches to. We drove up to the intersection of Lincoln and Washington Blvds., parked, and then took out the big cart and filled it with lunches. It was later in the day, so we didn't find as many as when we go early in the morning, but we managed to give out about ten or twelve lunches. The only person who was not appreciative was a man hanging out at the Walgreen's, and he made a rude remark and only wanted money for beer. Thursday, Stephani and I took some more lunches and went up to Rose Ave. where I had seen quite a few homeless people in tents along the back fence of Penmar Golf Course. We ended up giving out about 40 or so lunches. Everyone was very thankful and happy to see us. One older man poked his head out of his tent and asked for a second lunch, saying, "It's going to be a long night." On Saturday, Tom and I were doing some errands, and we found six homeless people outside of the Rite-Aid, and gave them some lunches. The last of this outreach's lunches were given out by Stephani and me, as we drove down Washington Blvd. towards the beach, Venice Blvd. near Abbott Kinney Ave., and then over towards Rose Ave. and its environs. We found quite a few people in tents, and another area where we would have to get to when we made up more lunches, as we had run out by then.

Saturday, May 2, 2020 - This would normally have been our day for the outreach, but since we didn't really think things would be "back to normal" by then, we made up lunches and started giving them out in the last week of April and the first week of May. The new lunches we made up had a different gospel tract in each one, so we could go to areas where we had already been last time. Felipe came over again and took about forty or so lunches, and said he would give them out over in Hollywood again. Kaela and Stephani gave out several lunches when they were at the laundromat on Venice Blvd., and I gave out some while doing errands during the week. Saturday, Stephani and I took about 73 or so lunches in the car and went to an area here in Venice where we had seen a lot of homeless people in tents a few weeks ago. We prayed, and also Tom stayed home and prayed for us while we were gone. In less than an hour, we had given out all the lunches we had with us, and there were still more people around on the other block. Thursday, Stephani, Kaela, and I went and gave out all the remainder of the lunches in about a half an hour. We went over near the Venice Library, and there were quite a few people in tents. The very first man we met took a lunch gratefully, and said, "Wow! We were just wondering if we would have anything to eat tonight."

We have not been trying to give out clothing or toiletries this time, as the whole dynamic and atmosphere is different. When we minister down at the beach, the homeless people seem more relaxed and open, but out on the streets, they are huddled in their tents and more fearful. We've just been giving them the lunches which each contain a gospel tract. We also don't have the opportunity to give out the gospel tracts to the people who would normally be down at the Venice Boardwalk just walking around, so we pray that things will return to "normal" as soon as possible, so that we can get back into our old routine.

Saturday, June 6, 2020 - Tom, Kaela and I made up 163 lunches altogether, and we began giving them out right away, as there was no sense in waiting for the actual "day" that our outreach would normally be. We had heard now that the Boardwalk down at Venice Beach will possibly not open up until August or September. The beaches are only open for jogging, swimming, etc., but no picnics, no sun-bathing, and no congregating of any kind. That means the homeless still can't go back to their old

spots in the areas alongside the Boardwalk, and there would be no tourists and other people down there just enjoying the beach for the day, and those are the ones to whom we also give out gospel tracts. We continued to give out the lunches and gospel tracts to the homeless people we could find around town here. Kaela took quite a few of the lunches, as she says she sees quite a few homeless people in her area (she lives in Westchester). Felipe also came over and took a lot of lunches to give out in the Hollywood area again. Tom and I saw a homeless man on a bike, and offered him a lunch. He was very, very thankful to get it, and he said, "It's really rough out here right now." I think, with restaurants being closed, there's no leftover food from them that maybe some of the homeless used to get, or dumpster-diving in their trash bins. Out driving, I saw a homeless man sitting on the curb right where I had to turn, so while waiting for the light to change I offered him a lunch. He looked familiar, so we probably had seen him down on the Boardwalk before. I asked if he would like a second lunch, and he said he would share it with someone, so I gave him two more. Another time, Tom and I went down to the same area near Rose Ave. where we had gone last month, and gave out all the rest of the 163 lunches that we had made for this month. Some people were still asleep in their tents, but we woke them up and even those said, "God bless you" and most people were very thankful. We also asked if the empty tents had people that would be coming back, and were told how many were there, and we left lunches for those.

Prison Ministry

Anthony Barbarin, California Correctional Institution, Tehachapi, CA - "Working these Steps has really helped me build a stronger relationship with God. At times, it has been kind of hard to stay focused and positive, but God has been my strength. Watching the news has had me worried about my family with all this Coronavirus stuff, and it's kind of scary being in prison right now. So, I thank you guys for helping me with my faith in Him. With love, Anthony"

Carmelo Soto, CTF North, Soledad, CA - "I would love to share with you how I came running back to God. You know the story of the Prodigal Son, and I can find myself in the narrative since I had moved out of my Father's house and will to a "far country." When we reject God's will, we also enter a "far country" even if we never leave our hometown. Satan beckons with promises of new experiences and entertainment, but the reality of the "far country" is that it doesn't fulfill those empty promises. How do I know this? Because I got curious and ended up living a drug-infested life for thirty years, finally ending up in the "pig pen" of prison. Well, reading my Bible, I came across John 8:1-11, where Jesus offered forgiveness instead of condemnation to the woman caught in adultery. My eyes were open, and I then accepted the Lord's forgiveness. I thank the Father every day for not abandoning me in my hour of great need. His Holy Spirit wades into the mess I have made, and He offers to guide me out of the pit. This Covid-19 situation we're in right now will pass, and conditions around us will fluctuate, but if we belong to Christ, He will use every situation to accomplish His will in and through us. God bless you both, and thank you for being the light in dark places. Your brother in Christ, Carmelo"

Alladin Pangilinan, San Quentin State Prison, San Quentin, CA - "Throughout my years of incarceration, since 1995, I have done all you can think of in a convict's lifestyle, including drugs and alcohol. A few years passed, and one day I got caught and was put in isolation in my cell. I felt helpless, without hope, and in deep depression. One night in my cell, feeling so alone, and without television, radio or any other entertainment, I finally looked up and cried out, 'Lord Jesus, I give up! I surrender! I am weak and I am a sinner. I need You now, please!' Just after saying those words, my knees crumbled, and I was kneeling down, bowing my head with shame and guilt. Tears were coming out of my eyes, and I felt something different in me, a unique sensation of feelings around my body and through my heart. He spoke to me in Tagalog, not English, and in translation He said, 'Din,

you know I never left you, I was here with you since you were born until now, I was just waiting for you.' He was just waiting for me to wake up from my deep sleep, to confess my sins and be forgiven my Him and be saved. I trusted Him, without a doubt, and whatever I do now, wherever I go with every step I take, I know that He's walking with me by my side. I'm beginning a new life with my Lord Jesus Christ by my side. Alladin Pangilinan"

Michael Nichelini, High Desert State Prison, Susanville, CA - "I started your 12-Step program some time ago, but then I started using drugs again, so I just couldn't finish. Naturally, that got me into trouble and put on disciplinary status, which means having to stay in my cell. I just couldn't figure out what to do, and then I had a moment of clarity and realized I had to start focusing on myself and my recovery again. I had nowhere else to turn, so I'm going to finish my Step 4 inventory right now, and I hope you will allow me to continue in the 12-Step program. God bless! Michael"

Tai Dang, Avenal State Prison, Avenal, CA - "Here in prison, we are affected by the Coronavirus in that there is no school or college classes, no self-help programs, and our yard time is limited to one hour and forty-five minutes a day. We have lots of time in our cells, which means time to do our Bible lessons. As you know, I've been with Love Lifted Me Recovery program for about seven years, and I would like to ask you if I can refer to you as my 12-Step sponsors, especially for my upcoming Parole Board hearing. Also, before I forget, do you remember Stacy Worthy? He paroled almost five years ago, and he recently passed away at the age of fifty-five. Stacy was the one who first referred me to your program. Much love and respect, Tai Dang"

Yes, we do remember Stacy. Stacy had come on the outreach with us several years ago (July, 2016, in fact), and was living down south of here, but we hadn't heard from him in a while. His release from prison was good news years ago, and although this news is sad for us here, we know he is now totally released from all pain and sorrow, and is rejoicing with Jesus and all the saints in heaven. Praise the Lord!

Earnest Zeigler, California Men's Colony, San Luis Obispo, CA - "I want to thank you so much for turning my life around. Your Bible studies have made me to give my life over to God. I have done very wrong in my past life, and I pray that He will forgive my sins. I walk with God and His Son Jesus Christ now. The devil can't get me. Now I have peace with God and Jesus Christ who died on the cross for all of our sins. Keep up the good work, Earnest"

John Harrell, CTF North, Soledad, CA - "My name is John and I am writing to you to ask if you have a Bible study I can do. I am new to God and I have confessed my sin to God and I have asked Him to forgive me for my sin. I want to grow in the grace and knowledge of God, if you can help, thank you very much. John"

David Von Haden, Avenal State Prison, Avenal, CA - "I want to thank you for the 2020 calendar you sent me. That helped me out a lot. My mom would always send me different calendars, but once she passed away, it was hard to find one. I have it hanging next to my locker, so I can see it every day. I want to thank you for all you do for me and everyone else for you sure made a difference in my life and others. I really enjoy the Bible studies and learn a lot from them, and they help me in my walk with the Lord. Your brother in Christ, love, David"

Troy Spann, California Men's Colony, San Luis Obispo, CA - "I love my Bible studies, and I run across a lot of important Scriptures. You are helping to educate me in God's word. I also love the photos you sent me of your beach outreach. I can tell you really touch a lot of people's lives, including mine. Once I'm released, I hope to have the opportunity to join you on your outreach. Sincerely and with love, Troy"