

“Love Lifted Me Recovery” - July, 2022
Newsletter for April, May, June, 2022
Pastors/Chaplains Tom & Dottie Hooper
Web Site: www.Loveliftedmerecovery.com

What is Trustworthy in These Troubled Times?

We live in a broken world. In Second Peter 1:16-21, the Apostle Peter tells us what we should be trusting in when times are difficult, such as the times we are living in now. He says in verses 16-18, “For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were **EYEWITNESSES of His MAJESTY**. For He received from God the Father honor and glory when such a **VOICE CAME to Him from the EXCELLENT GLORY: “This is My Beloved Son, in whom I AM WELL PLEASED.”** And we heard this **VOICE which CAME FROM HEAVEN** when we were with Him on the holy mountain.”

Peter states how he was an eye witness to Jesus and His miracles and teaching, and that he “did not follow cunningly devised fables” in telling them about Christ. “Cunningly devised fables” means made-up stories done in a way that will deceive people into thinking they are true. Peter says that he and the other disciples were personally on the scene when God the Father spoke from heaven (“the excellent glory”), saying, “**This is My Beloved Son, in whom I AM WELL PLEASED.**” God the Father spoke in an audible voice from heaven several times, such as at Jesus’ baptism, and on the Mount of Transfiguration. Peter was there to actually hear the voice coming from heaven acknowledging Jesus as the Son of God. In verses 19-21, Peter says, “We also have **the PROPHETIC WORD made MORE SURE**, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts: knowing this first, that **NO PROPHECY of SCRIPTURE is of any PRIVATE interpretation**, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but **HOLY MEN of God SPOKE as they were MOVED by the HOLY SPIRIT.**”

Definition: “**The PROPHETIC WORD made MORE SURE**” – You need to **BASE your FAITH on the written word of God, which is “MORE SURE” than anything else**, and where God promises that He will never leave you or fail you, and that His word holds true through every problem and storm of life. The Apostle Peter, in II Peter 1:19-21, after describing the vision of seeing Christ in His transfiguration and hearing the voice of God from heaven, says that “**We have a MORE SURE word of prophecy!**” (KJV) You might ask, “What could be more sure than seeing a vision of Jesus in all His glory, and hearing the voice of God the Father coming down from heaven?” Well, **Peter goes on to say that what is “MORE SURE” than visions and voices is the WRITTEN word of God, the Scriptures!** God has given us His WRITTEN WORD (“Scripture” means the WRITTEN word of God - the Bible), which was originally given to holy men of God by the Holy Spirit. We must judge and **test all so-called prophecies, visions, voices and emotional experiences against the WRITTEN truth of God’s holy word!** Anything else will open us up to false teaching, false prophets, demonic deception and spiritual “shipwreck” and heartbreak. No, not losing your salvation, as that can’t happen, but it could allow Satan to get you sidetracked and make you ineffective for any real service to God. “**NO PROPHECY of SCRIPTURE is of any PRIVATE interpretation.**” means that Holy Scripture, the Bible, did not come to us by man’s invention or interpretation, but directly from God. The Bible itself claims to be the written word of God. The Bible is actually 66 books written by many different human authors over several thousand years, and yet it is **ONE BOOK written by ONE AUTHOR, God**. In the Bible, God says 2,500 times, “God said...” or “The Lord has said...” or “Thus saith the Lord...” God has made it very clear that He is speaking through this Book. The Holy Spirit of God inspired or “moved” men to write the Scriptures. **The word “inspired” means**

God-breathed, so the very words of Scripture are ALIVE and POWERFUL and can change your life!

The Bible is God's word given to mankind, and from Genesis to Revelation there is one common theme: God's love for mankind, and His plan to redeem His creation from sin by sending His Son Jesus, to die on the cross to pay for our sins.

• **I John 5:13** "These things **I have WRITTEN to you that BELIEVE** on the name of the Son of God; **that you may KNOW that you have eternal life, and that you may believe on the name of the Son of God.**"

Monthly Evangelistic Outreach to Venice Beach

Saturday, April 2, 2022 - Our ministry team consisted of Tom, me, Sheldon, Michael, Kaela, Felipe and Ricardo, and we were excited to have Terry Lester come, who just gotten out of prison. Terry didn't have a ride, but took the bus all the way from his transitional program in Wilmington. He got a little confused by all the bus transfers, so he called and said where he was. It was right on the way to the Boardwalk, so I got in the car and picked him up. The others went in two groups, Kaela and Sheldon to the south part of the Boardwalk, and Felipe and Ricardo to the homeless along the street and under the freeway at Sepulveda Blvd. Felipe said they went there last month, too, and it was a blessing to minister to those people. Terry and I met Michael Spencer down at the Boardwalk, so the three of us took the north part of the beach, parking lot and Boardwalk. Tom was in a lot of pain, so he stayed home and kept us covered in prayer. We had 180 lunches, lots of socks, toiletry/hygiene packets, shoes, and used clothing. The shoes were a real blessing, as they went to homeless people who really needed them and they all got the right size! Michael helped one man by giving him a pair of socks, and then helping him put on a pair of size nine-and-a-half brand new tennis shoes. They fit the man perfectly and he was so happy. Others received jackets, sweatshirts, T-shirts and pairs of jeans. One woman on a bike got a knit hat, and we saw her later wearing it, and she was also very happy. Everyone got lunches, of course, but we had a few left over, so we went down Rose Avenue to one of the side streets where there are a lot of tents set up. They were all thankful to receive lunches, too. When we were still on the Boardwalk, Terry asked if we would be going by the Phoenix House, because he had heard of it, and a friend of his had gone there after leaving prison. His friend was not still there, but we saw Francisco Hernandez again, who did our program in prison, and who has been out of prison since 2018. He now has a full-time job at the Phoenix House, and he said we could give gospel tracts to the men who were out in the yard. The men were very receptive of the tracts, and one man even asked, "Are these the little Jesus books?" (and he took one). Michael was out in front of their yard, and he was able to give his testimony to the men who were down that way. I didn't hear all of it, but I did hear Michael tell the men, "I tried every program there was, but not until I gave my life to Christ did my life really change for the better." As we went up and down the Boardwalk, Michael and I handed out gospel tracts to anyone who would take one, both in English and Spanish. These were to people who were just out for the day at the beach, and a few county workers there, and the homeless get a gospel tract in each lunch. After we finished, I took Terry to our house, and he met Tom and we visited for a while. Terry had been doing our 12-Step program and Bible studies and writing to us since 2013. Back to the Boardwalk, Sheldon and Kaela had a successful time, but they said there were not as many homeless as usual, so they had lunches left over. Tom and I would give them out during the coming weeks. We had some great encounters last month with the leftover lunches, and here's one of them: while doing some errands, on the way back to where we had parked, we gave out six lunches to some homeless people who were living in sort of broken-down old motor homes parked right near our car. The first guy I approached and asked if he wanted some food said, "Oh, give it to someone who really needs it. I've already eaten today." Now, this was at 1:30 in the afternoon, and he wasn't planning on eating again that day? I convinced him to take a lunch, along with the two guys who were with him in the motor home, and they were all very grateful. Meanwhile, Tom approached the people in the other motor home and asked the young woman if she needed any food. She said yes and took a lunch, and he gave her two more for those in the motor home with her. She also seemed surprised, and said, "Are you sure?" Here we are, so blessed by God and having three meals a day and then some, and these people are so in

need. I don't think our society has any answers to this problem, along with many other problems we see in the world today, but Jesus will straighten it all out very soon, as we believe He is coming back any time now.

Saturday, May 7, 2022 - It was a beautiful day today for our monthly outreach to Venice Beach. Besides Tom and me, we had Sheldon, Kaela, Felipe, Michael, and some first-timers, Kevin, Lucy and Ulysses. We had 180 lunches, lots of socks, hygiene/toiletry packets, used clothing, and shoes (some in very large sizes). A few of the people who took the very large size shoes weren't really that size, but I guess shoes that are too large are better than no shoes at all. One man, Dominic, was very new to the Boardwalk, and probably fairly new to being homeless. He got some pants, a belt, a shirt, some toiletries and two lunches, and he was very thankful. There just aren't as many homeless people down at the Boardwalk as there used to be since last summer, when the LA Sheriffs moved them off the beach and Boardwalk, but we still found quite a few. They were all happy to get food, clothing and toiletries, and of course, each lunch contains a gospel tract. Felipe, Lucy and Ulysses went to the little park by the Venice Library, which has probably 50 or more tents with homeless people in it now. Sheldon, Kevin and Kaela went to the south end of the Boardwalk, and Michael and I went to the north end. Tom stayed home to keep us all covered in prayer. Sheldon's group saw a small group of people sitting on the grass, and it seemed like they were having an AA meeting. Several of the homeless people they had just given lunches to said they should give some to this group, also, so they went up there. Sheldon wasn't sure if they were actually homeless, but they received the lunches gratefully, so maybe they really did need them. Michael and I had enough lunches to give out some on the streets up in Venice, just off of Rose Avenue. Even with all of that, we still had quite a few left over to give out during the coming weeks. Everything in the lunches is either canned, bottled or packaged, so they won't spoil. Tom and I have really enjoyed having these lunches to give out when we're just driving around town, and see some homeless people and have something to give them.

Saturday, June 4, 2022 - We decided to have our outreach on the usual day, even though there was going to be a Venice Gay Pride Festival down at the Venice Boardwalk. I looked on-line, and it said it didn't start until noon, so we got down there and did our thing before all the craziness. We also ramped up our prayer, as there would be many, many demons down there for this festival. So, "Onward, Christian Soldiers," and our little band of warriors consisted of Tom, me, Sheldon, Kaela, Felipe, Johnny, Michael, Ulysses, Lucy and Bibi. Just as we did last month, Felipe, Lucy, Bibi and Ulysses went to the little park by the Venice Library, which has probably 50 to 60 tents with homeless people in it. Sheldon, Johnny and Kaela went to the south end of the Boardwalk, and Michael and I went to the north end. Tom stayed home to keep us all covered in prayer. We had 175 lunches, lots of socks, used clothing, shoes, and toiletry/hygiene packets for the homeless, and dog food for their dogs. Sometimes, we wonder if the things we put in the lunches are really appreciated, but one man came up said, "Oh! Are these the lunches with the little applesauces?" I guess we will keep putting the little applesauce cups in the lunches. Michael and I gave out all of our lunches, clothing and other things. Sheldon, Johnny and Kaela said there was a huge section of the Boardwalk that was fenced off for the festival, but they were still able to give away most of their lunches. They had about 10 left and divided them up to give away during the week. All the homeless people were very thankful to receive the things we had for their physical comfort, and also every lunch contains a gospel booklet for their spiritual comfort. Michael and I saw a homeless woman walking along, cursing and yelling, and we offered her a lunch. Immediately, her attitude changed, and when Michael said, "God bless you", she said it back to us. It's amazing how offering a little lunch opens the door for giving out the gospel as well. We saw a man who already had some food from another Christian ministry that is there every Saturday, but when we gave him a lunch, he said, "Wow! I have so much food for today, I won't have to beg!" We prayed for several people: a man named Jack said he had a brain tumor, and we prayed for his healing; and a man who said his name was "King James" asked us to pray that he could find a place to live. After giving out all the lunches and clothing, we continued giving out gospel tracts to the people just passing by. There was also another Christian group with a table set up, and they said they were so happy to see other Christians out there giving out the gospel.

Prison Ministry

Arnaldo Valdivia, Calipatria State Prison, Calipatria, CA - "I want to thank you for the Bible lessons. I really like them and I enjoy doing them. I feel myself growing with God. I'm returning my lessons for the Gospel of John study and the Ephesians study. I'm also enclosing some stamps for your ministry. Thank you and God bless you. Your brother in Christ, Arnaldo"

Tommy Lee Wickerd, San Quentin State Prison - "Thank you so much for the awesome letter and two lessons. San Quentin is back on quarantine due to the Omicron Covid, but I'm okay, and so are the deaf guys I interpret for. My wife Marion doesn't like the quarantines, because it means no family visits. I can hardly wait to get out of prison and be with my wife and kids and grandkids. Thank you for all the love you put into your program. God bless, Tommy"

Cynthia Marquez, Central California Women's Facility, Chowchilla, CA - "Thank you for allowing me to be a part of your 12-Step correspondence course. I know God has a hand in this. I want to share a little bit of my story: my father was not in my life, and my mother worked all the time to support us, but I felt angry, hurt, abandoned, neglected, and I went to the streets in search of love and acceptance. I became a mother at age thirteen, and I was introduced to a life of alcohol, drugs and crime. I was in and out of jail, and was introduced to God in services there. I struggled and struggled to believe, and finally ended up with a life sentence in prison. While waiting in solitary for trial, I surrendered my life to Jesus, and prayed and left it in His hands. I have been clean and sober since then, and as time goes by, I continue to seek understanding, and I know today that He is with me every step of the way. Love, Cynthia"

Sam B. Cheng, Pelican Bay State Prison, Crescent City, CA - "Enclosed are two books of stamps as a donation to help you with your prison ministry correspondence. I also want to make more earrings for your Christmas shoeboxes that you do every year for "Operation Christmas Child". I need to get some more of the supplies, and I will make more for you as soon as I can. God bless you! Sam"

Gary Booth, California Institution for Men, Chino, CA - "Thank you for the lessons for the 12-Steps. I never knew the 12-Steps were in the Bible, because nobody ever talked about it as you have it laid out in your studies. I did programs for thirty years, and it was all about attack, attack, attack and "remember, people have triggers" and being in those environments on the streets. The counselors don't sit down with you and try to help you with what brought you there, it's all about "Let's get your Medicare or food stamps." Instead, I'm now doing what Second Chronicles 20:12-23 says, and that's praising the Lord! I tell everyone around here that our greatest defense is prayer and praise. Take care, and I love that you are here for me. Love, Brother Gary"

Sabrina Limon, Central California Women's Facility, Chowchilla, CA - "I want to thank you for giving me this opportunity to be a part of healing through Love Lifted Me Recovery. I am a Christian woman, and your program is part of His many great works. All things work together for good for those who love the Lord. I look forward to each step I take in this recovery, as each step brings us closer to Him and makes us better and able to help others. Thank you for helping God's people. Much love, Sabrina"

Nathaniel Dennis, California Institution for Men, Chino, CA - "First off, thank you for all you have done clearing a path for me to know Christ. This 12-Step program will not only assist me in finding a path to freedom, but spiritual freedom as well. I'm a L.A. resident, and when I looked at your photos of your outreach at Venice Beach, it made me realize how much I need to be involved in outreach and helping people myself. If the Parole Board gives me a release date, I would love to help you with your outreach. Thank you again for your excellent outreach and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. Nate"