

“Love Lifted Me Recovery” - July, 2023

Newsletter for April, May, June, 2023

Pastors/Chaplains Tom & Dottie Hooper

Web Site: www.Loveliftedmerecovery.com

Hebrews 12:1-2 “Therefore, we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.”

I used to just think of this verse as speaking of **Jesus being the finish line** in the race we are running as Christians. It also gives the idea of Jesus as the “author” or beginning of our faith, and the “finisher” or end, such as saying from A to Z. In Revelation 1:8, 11 & 17-18, Jesus does say He is the Alpha and Omega (A and Z in the Greek alphabet), and the beginning and the end. Then, one day I heard an additional way to think of these verses, and they said Jesus is the “finisher” as in a “finish carpenter”. A finish carpenter goes around the house after the construction is done, and takes care of all the little details, checking for rough spots or blemishes, and smoothing them over. He also may put in the drawer pulls, knobs and other little embellishments to make everything perfect and useable. **This is what Jesus does in our lives, if we allow Him to take control. He smooths over the rough spots and removes character defects, and perfects His work in us by producing His fruit in our lives through the Holy Spirit.** All of this is only done AFTER we have received Jesus as our Lord and Savior, and been born again (that’s the rough construction job). The “finishing” work may take the rest of our lives here on earth (the Bible also calls this process “sanctification”), but **it is to perfect us, make us USEFUL (see II Timothy 2:21) to Him here on earth, and make us ready to live in heaven with Him.**

Monthly Evangelistic Outreach to Venice Beach

Saturday, April 1, 2023 - Our ministry team today consisted of Tom, me, Johnny, Felipe, Kaela, Jose, Ricardo, Ulysses, and Josue. Kaela and Johnny went with me, the rest went with Felipe, and Tom stayed home to keep us covered in prayer. Felipe’s group gave out lunches to the homeless who were camped out under the freeway overpass in West L.A. My group went to the north end of the Venice Boardwalk, and about halfway down from there. We had 182 lunches, socks, toiletry/hygiene packets, clothing (including men’s and women’s underwear - a much-needed item), shoes, and knit hats (made with love by my friend Debbie in Phoenix) for the homeless, and dog food for homeless people’s dogs. We gave out almost everything, with only a few lunches left to give out during the next week or so. Everyone was very thankful and happy to receive the food and clothing, and the shoes were especially appreciated. Those who received the knit hats were very grateful. Felipe said their part of the outreach was “more than terrific”, and he was really glad they had extra lunches this time. They did have a few left over, but they just split them up and gave them to the people there. Johnny gave lunches to one group, and one man was wearing a suit. Johnny said, “God bless you,” and the man turned to his group and said, “See, I told you God would provide for us.” In another group, Johnny gave a lunch to a man named Alfredo, and he also asked for a pair of socks. We all looked through our bags, and realized there were no more socks, so another homeless man gave his socks that we’d just given him to Alfredo. Another man (I forgot to ask his name) asked for prayer, so I prayed for him, and he also received toiletries, a lunch, a shirt, and some other things. Several people said all their clothes had gotten wet and dirty during the rain, so they were glad to get clean, dry clothes. Each lunch contains a gospel tract, and we also gave out tracts to the people just

passing by. One young man was reading the tract we gave him, and he liked it so much, he came back and asked if he could get some other ones, too. We gave out gospel tracts in English and Spanish, and most people were very receptive. We always pray that the “seed” of the gospel would be planted in good ground in the hearts and minds of the people who received them. All in all, we had a very successful outreach and had a lot of fun, too.

Saturday, May 6, 2023 - Our wonderful team of volunteers today consisted of Tom, me, Felipe, Kaela, Scott, Ricardo, Ulysses, and Josue. The homeless who were camped out under the freeway overpass in West L.A. had all been cleared out by the city, so Felipe and Josue went to the south end of the Venice Boardwalk, and Ricardo and Ulysses went to homeless people by the freeway at Culver Blvd., and a lot of them were in motor homes. Felipe said he had some extra lunches from another place, and amazingly, some of the homeless people had come back under the freeway at Sepulveda, so they gave out lunches there, too. Kaela, Scott and I went to the north end of the Boardwalk, and Tom stayed home to keep us covered in prayer. Kaela had torn her Achilles tendon and was wearing a “boot”, but she went above and beyond the call of duty by coming on the outreach, even though her foot was hurting. We had 177 lunches, lots of socks and used clothing, hygiene/toiletry packets for the homeless, and dog food for their dogs. We gave out all the socks and hygiene packets, most of the clothes, most of the lunches, and all of the dog food. The few lunches we had left would be given out during the next few weeks. A man named Larry got a couple of T-shirts, a hygiene packet and a lunch, and he was very grateful. We saw Jean, who said she would be 88 years old in a few days, and she’s living out of her van. She said she had been in the hospital for a while, so that’s why we hadn’t seen her lately. She got a lunch and some large-print “Our Daily Bread” booklets, because she’s already a Believer. A man came by on his bike and said, “Hello” to us and I recognized him. His name is Malik, and he’s no longer homeless, but living in a hotel and waiting to get a low-income apartment. He thanked us for the many years we had given him a lunch when he’d been down there, and he gave me a big hug. Scott said he thought there would be more homeless people down at the Boardwalk, but we told him that the city has been clearing them off and putting some of them in hotels. At a large group of homeless people, one man named David spoke with an accent, so I asked him what was his native language. He said, “Italian”, so I dug around in my bag until I found a gospel tract in Italian. He was so happy to get one in his native language! Another young man (not homeless) asked me what the tracts were about, and I said, “They’re about God and Jesus.” He said, “I’m Jewish”, but he ended up taking two tracts. The most important part of our outreach is that we had the good news of Jesus Christ to give out to whomever was willing to take a gospel tract (there’s a tract in each lunch, too). A man named Juan was sitting on a bench said he didn’t need a lunch, but he saw the tracts in my hand and asked for some in Spanish, and I gave him several. Praise the Lord! We had a great time ministering the gospel of Jesus Christ to the homeless and others just down at the beach, and providing for some of the physical needs of the homeless, as well.

Saturday, June 3, 2023 - We were blessed today to have volunteers, besides Tom and me, and they were Kaela, Laura, Felipe, Amy, Ricardo, Ulysses, and Josue. We had 180 lunches, lots of socks, toiletry/hygiene packets, and used clothing for the homeless, and dog food for their dogs. Amy and I went to the north end of the Boardwalk, Kaela and Laura went to the south end, and Felipe, Ricardo, Ulysses and Josue went to the homeless people by the freeway at Culver Blvd., where there are lots of people in tents and motor homes. They also went to Skid Row in Los Angeles. We gave out almost everything, and people were sincerely and genuinely thankful and grateful. One young man named Yaeger looked like he had tears in his eyes as he clutched to himself some new clothing, toiletries and a lunch, and thanked us. We saw some people we recognized, and some recognized us, too. We saw O.G. and Seren, and a man named “Bear” said he remembered us and the gospel tract with the title of “The Bully” that we had handed out one time before. He asked for some other tracts, which we gave him. Amy said she thought people were just as grateful to get the clothing as the food. It was Amy’s first time and Laura’s first time, and they both said they enjoyed the whole outreach. We also gave out gospel tracts to the

people just walking along the Venice Boardwalk - lots in English, some Spanish, and one in Vietnamese and one in Russian. The Vietnamese woman was homeless, and I remembered her from before, and had made sure I had a tract in Vietnamese for her. We saw Juan, and we had given him tracts in Spanish last month. He asked for more tracts in Spanish, and I took a bunch out of my bag, and he picked out the ones he hadn't read yet. We met a man named David, and he said he was just out here from Denver, and also said he was already saved. We talked with him for a while, and when I told him we gave out food and clothing to the homeless, he gave us a pile of his own clothes, because he said he "needed to lighten up." We were especially thankful, because we didn't have much men's clothing this time. We gave a pair of David's jeans to one man, and when we saw him later, he said they didn't fit him, but he gave them to another guy, who put them on right then and there, and they fit him perfectly. We gave out most of the dog food, and Felipe's group encountered some people who asked for cat food. Felipe went out and bought some and gave it to the people who had cats. Felipe said they had an awesome time. We all had a great time as we went "out into the highways and hedges" to reach people for Jesus Christ, and invite them to come into His kingdom.

Luke 14:21-23 ".....Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in here the poor and the maimed and the lame and the blind. And the servant said, 'Master, it is done as You commanded, and still there is room.' Then the Master said to the servant, 'Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that My house may be filled.'"

Prison Ministry

God has blessed us with a prison ministry that reaches men and women in every state prison in California, some federal prisons around the country, and prisons and jails in many other states. We have well over 400 people doing our Bible studies and 12-Step program by correspondence. Most of them have found the Lord in prison, some have made rededications since coming to prison, and some have come to know Christ through our ministry. They are growing in their faith, because God's word does not return void, but will accomplish His plan and purpose. Here are a few portions of letters we've received from inmates:

Benny Perez, California Men's Colony, San Luis Obispo, CA - "I want to start by saying how much you both have meant to me in my life and my recovery. When I first began Love Lifted Me Recovery back in 2013, my life was a shambles. I was struggling horribly with and in the grip of my addiction, and using drugs on a regular basis. As I reflect on everything I've been through in these last ten years, I am flooded with many emotions. I have come a very long way and am so grateful that you and your program have played a big part in turning my life around. When the chips were down and I was giving up, both of you and my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ were there, helping me get back on the right track. I have dedicated my life to our Lord Jesus to do good in this life and be of service to Him. God bless you, your brother in Christ, Benny Perez"

Richard Newman, High Desert State Prison, Susanville, CA - "You guys are awesome! Thank you for everything, the Bible lessons and the support letters over the years. I am a teacher's aide for GED preparation classes, and help tutor students for getting their high school diplomas. I'm good at math, and show them my little tricks. I tried living this life my way, but that didn't turn out all that good. So, I pick up my cross every day until I can be out of this world and with Christ. I'm done! I see the anger, violence and sin in this world, and I do not want any part of it, so I do all for the glory of the Lord. Take care, respectfully, Rich"

Ruben Lopez, California Institution for Men, Chino, CA - "I am doing fine, thanks to God who is able to

do all things for those who call upon His name. Enclosed is my Step 3 lesson. I really got a lot out of this study and learned so much about sin and why I was under its grips for so long. God is able to forgive our sins and do what we thought was impossible, forgiving our sins and giving us freedom from our lusts, desires and things that bring us under bondage and slaves of sin. This was a great study. God bless you, sincerely, Ruben”

David Potter, Corcoran State Prison, Corcoran, CA - “I enjoyed your Bible study paper entitled “Diligence vs. Procrastination.” I’ve been thrown back and forth between those two actions my whole life. I am doing so much better these days by working the principles of God’s word and of Step Ten. I also enjoyed the little devotional about Jesus being the “finish carpenter” in our lives, checking for rough spots or blemishes. Amen! Thank you also for the letter of recommendation for my parole hearing. God bless you & take care, With Christ, Dave”

Nelson Alo Pupa, California Men’s Colony, San Luis Obispo, CA - “I pray that our Heavenly Father continues to bless the both of you and your ministry. As for me, I went to another parole hearing and was denied for three years. It’s okay, though, because I’m trusting God for next time, if we don’t go in the Rapture first, The way things are going in the world, it’s everything that God said in His word would happen. It’s happening right before our eyes! We as believers have got to be ready, and help as many people as we can to come to Christ and get saved, because Jesus is coming back sooner than we think. Thank you, Tom and Dottie, for being there for us all. God bless, Nelson”

Shaná Thornton, Brentwood, CA - “I thank God for your ministry, and how you are reaching those in the prisons.. My husband, who is in prison, and I have started your Ephesians Bible study. Ken and I made time to do them together on Sundays and Tuesdays. Ken is new to his faith in Christ, and I gave my life to Christ when I was twelve years of age. I’ve prayed that God would send someone to him or allow him to come across a program that would help him develop his faith in Christ. He wrote to three or four other groups, but you are the only ones who not only accepted him, but me, too. Thank you for allowing us to partake in your Bible studies. In Jesus’ name, Shaná”

Jonathan Mendoza, CSP Sacramento, Represa, CA - “I thank God for the blessing of having people like you in my life. I’m so grateful for you sending me the wonderful Bible studies, and especially the 12-Step lessons which have been life-changing for me. I want you to know that God has been speaking to my heart through these 12-Step lessons a lot, like never before. I have done many different self-help courses, but none of them as powerful as your program,. It is truly life-changing when we surrender and allow God to do His good work in us. As God’s word says, “We are changed from glory to glory.” I want to remind you that your work in the Lord is not in vain. You are making a difference and bringing the light of God’s word in places like this. Blessings in the Lord, Jonathan”

Thank You to our Ministry Supporters!

We want to acknowledge our ministry supporters, as we could not do any of this ministry without you. Those who support us financially, or with prayer, or by going out on the outreach, or by giving us toiletries, socks, or clothing, you are all loved and blessed by God, and we love and appreciate you so much! You will receive rewards in heaven for your part in every soul that is saved, or Christian who is encouraged and restored to fellowship with the Lord. One more thing..... If you have never seen them, we have photos of the outreach on our website. Website is Loveliftedmerecovery.com. Some are old photos from 2013, then some from 2017. Since then, we haven’t had anyone to come along with us to take pictures, but it will give you an idea of what the outreach is like. The individual people may be different, but the situation is the same, and there are new people who need to receive the word of God.