

“Love Lifted Me Recovery” - January, 2025
Newsletter for October, November, December, 2024
Pastors/Chaplains Tom & Dottie Hooper

Behold, the Lamb of God!

What does it mean when the Bible says that **Jesus is the Lamb of God**? John the Baptist pointed to Jesus and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!”

•**John 1:28** “The next day **John saw Jesus** coming toward him, and he said, “Behold! The Lamb of God **who TAKES AWAY the sin of the world!**”

Jesus, the sinless Son of God, **died on the cross and shed His blood as He took the punishment for our sins**, and now God can forgive us for our sins if we believe in Jesus. Under the New Covenant (New Testament), **our sins are completely TAKEN AWAY (remitted) and WASHED AWAY in the BLOOD of JESUS**. In the Old Testament (under the Old Covenant), their sins were only COVERED TEMPORARILY until the Messiah, **God’s Lamb, would come to die and PAY the PENALTY** for the sins of the world. **The animal sacrifices (many times a LAMB, such as the Passover lamb) of the Old Testament were SYMBOLIC of what Jesus would do on the cross to take away our sins**. Every year, they would have the Day of Atonement to remind them that God’s Lamb was not yet come, and **continual sacrifices and sin offerings** during the year. (See Exodus 30:10, Leviticus 16:30). The literal meaning of the word “**atonement**” is **covering** (“kapporah” in Hebrew, as in Yom Kippur). Now, when we believe in Jesus, and accept His sacrifice on the cross, **our sins are NOT just covered**, they are **REMITTED and TAKEN AWAY COMPLETELY** (REMIT means to release from the guilt or penalty of).

•**Hebrews 9:12** “Not with the blood of goats and calves, but **with His own blood** He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained ETERNAL redemption.”

•**Hebrews 9:25-26** “Not that He (Jesus) should offer Himself often, as the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year (on the Day of Atonement) with blood of another (animal sacrifices) — He then would have had to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now, once at the end of the ages, He has appeared to put away sin by the SACRIFICE of HIMSELF.”

•**Luke 22:20** “Likewise He also took the cup after supper saying, ‘This cup is **the new COVENANT in My BLOOD**, which is shed for you.’”

•**Matthew 26:28** “For **this is My BLOOD of the new covenant**, which is shed for many for the REMISSION of sins.”

•**Hebrews 9:9** “It (animal sacrifice) was **symbolic** for the present time in which both gifts and sacrifices are offered **which cannot make him who performed the service perfect** in regard to the conscience.”

•**II Corinthians 5:21** “For He (God, the Father) made Him (Jesus) who knew no sin **to be SIN for US, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.**”

•**Revelation 1:5** “And from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn (first to be resurrected) from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and **washed us from our SINS in His own BLOOD.**”

Monthly Evangelistic Outreach to Venice Beach

Saturday, October 5, 2024 - We had a great outreach, and those who showed up to help Tom and me were Felipe, Ricardo, Ulysses, Jose, David, Kaela, Christina, Sheldon, Victor, and first-timer Bob. Bob was doing our program and Bible studies when he was in prison, and he’s been out for about two years now. He came all the way up from San Diego to go on the outreach with us today. He said he was so

happy to be a part of the outreach and giving out the lunches. We had 184 lunches, socks, used clothing, shoes, lots of jackets and sweatshirts, and some blankets for the homeless, and dog food for their dogs. Victor, Sheldon, Bob and I went up to the north end of the Venice Boardwalk, and Kaela and Christina went to the south end. Kaela said there were not as many homeless people at their end as usual, but they gave out most of the lunches and clothing, and lots of the dog food. My group found enough homeless people to give out all of our lunches and most of the clothing and other items. We saw Seren, "Boston" and Aiesha and some others we remembered from other times, and lots of new people. The city seems to be clearing off some of the homeless, but there were quite a few still at the Boardwalk. Felipe, Ricardo, Ulysses, Jose, and David went to the homeless encampments under the freeway overpasses throughout West L.A. and some just along the street, in store parking lots or in parks. Felipe said they had a great time and gave out all of our lunches and clothing. They went first to Skid Row to help another group feed the homeless there, and then later in the afternoon to give out our lunches. Felipe said, "We like to go later, because other groups feed people in the morning, but by afternoon or evening, they are hungry again, so we give them the lunches then. We found a man named Michael who was sleeping on the grass, and he jumped up and gladly took a lunch and several items of clothing. A man named O'Shea was riding his bike and took a lunch and a sweatshirt. He said he was a Christian and asked if we had a "word for the day" for him. Sheldon shared some things he'd been learning in his personal prayer time and Bible study. We gave a lunch to a young woman who was digging in the trash cans, but she was not quite "in her right mind" and didn't want the lunch. She tore it open and only took the package of peanut butter crackers. Later, when Bob and I gave a lunch to one man, that man asked if we could give one to his friend, and we walked over to where his friend was, gave him a lunch and ended up also giving them the opened lunch and they said they would share what was in there. We had some very large sizes of women's pants, but found a woman who said they would fit her. She also asked for some more of the tracts, so I gave her several different ones. Another man got a brand new pair of jeans, and they still had the tags on them. He was very happy, and said they would fit him. Everyone was very thankful, and some said, "Keep doing what you're doing, you're a blessing." There were a couple of people who were "not all there" mentally, and one man was wearing long robes, had bare feet, and had a ten-inch shiny metal cobra sitting in his lap. It was really creepy, and he said his name was "Swami", and he didn't really talk sense, but he took a lunch. Another man had five-inch horns attached to his forehead, and he was also kind of creepy, but he took a lunch. There is a lot of spiritual darkness down at the Venice Boardwalk. Every lunch contains a gospel tract (shining a light in the darkness), and we also handed out gospel tracts to people who were just down at the beach for the day.

•**John 8:12** "Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, '**I am the LIGHT of the world. He who follows Me shall NOT walk in darkness**, but have the LIGHT of LIFE.'"

•**Colossians 1:12-14** "Giving thanks unto the Father, who has QUALIFIED US to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in LIGHT; **He has delivered us from the power of darkness**, and has translated us into the kingdom of **His beloved Son**; in whom we have redemption through His blood, even the FORGIVENESS of sins."

Saturday, November 2, 2024 - Praise the Lord! We had a great time down at Venice Beach again, with Tom, Dottie, Johnny, Felipe, Ulysses, David, Kaela, and Kathleen. Johnny and Kaela went to the south end of the Boardwalk, Kathleen and I went to the north end, Felipe, Ulysses, and David went to the streets around in the community and to homeless encampments under the freeway overpasses, and Tom stayed home to keep us all in prayer. We had 182 lunches, lots of socks, hygiene/toiletry packets, shoes, used clothing, and blankets for the homeless, and dog food for those who had dogs. Kathleen and I gave out all of our lunches and clothing, and many people were blessed and very grateful for what they received.

A man named John said he was from Bogota, Colombia, so I gave him a couple of gospel tracts in Spanish as well as the one in English he had in his lunch. He also got some toiletries. We talked to Leon, who used to be helping 89-year-old Jean down at the Boardwalk, and he said she might have just

taken off to go up the coast or something, as she wasn't there today. Another man named Donell asked for two lunches, and he also got toiletries and some T-shirts. We had a pair of very nice size 13 boots, and the guy who got them said they fit perfectly and he was very happy to get them. We saw Saran and others we recognized from before, and we were almost mobbed again by the people standing in line to get food from another ministry. We didn't know if that ministry was giving out the gospel or not, so everyone who took one of our lunches got a gospel tract inside. Several people in line asked for socks, and one man asked for some pants for his wife. I said we had more socks and clothing in the car, so I went back and got several things. He said the pants would fit his wife, and actually, we saw them later, and gave her a lunch, too. We gave socks to the people in line who had asked for them, and as I said, we gave out everything this time. People who received jackets and sweatshirts were very thankful, as the weather is getting colder. Kaela and Johnny said there were not as many homeless people down at the south end, because there was some kind of festival going on. Maybe those people had moved up to the north end of the Boardwalk, and that's why we saw so many there. Johnny said there was nothing out of the ordinary, but a lot of grateful people, and he was glad to be out there once again. Felipe's group went all over West L.A., Culver City and Venice, finding homeless people on the streets.. Felipe said, "Oh, boy! Near LAX airport, we found a lot of veterans and seniors who were homeless, and some living in motor homes. We all had a great time, and everyone received the things we gave them with thankfulness." We continued to give out gospel tracts as we walked along the Boardwalk. We gave out many in English and Spanish, and one in Chinese. The Chinese lady (not homeless) asked if she could have the same one in English, so that she could practice her English, so I gave her one - it was the Chick tract "Creator or Liar?".

Saturday, December 7, 2024 - We had a great team today, as Tom, Dottie, Felipe, Ulysses, David, Ricardo, Jose, Victor, Johnny, Kathleen, and Dominic went out to serve the Lord by reaching out to the homeless. We had 181 lunches, lots of used clothing, including jackets and sweatshirts for the colder weather. A box of twenty-five knit hats (beanies) was sent to us from one of our prisoners and his daughter, for us to give out to the homeless. We also got a box of hand-knitted hats from my friend Debbie in Phoenix, and some more hand-knitted hats from one of our women prisoners, and she said she will be sending more later. We are very thankful to all of them for their thoughtfulness and kindness in thinking of homeless people being cold in the winter and needing these hats. For today's outreach, we also had toiletry/hygiene packets, socks, shoes, some blankets, and dog food for those with dogs. Most important of all, each lunch contains a gospel tract, so we are ministering the gospel of Jesus Christ as well as meeting some of people's physical and material needs. Johnny and Victor went to the south end of the Venice Boardwalk, Kathleen, Dominic and I went to the north end, and Felipe, Ricardo, Jose, Ulysses, and David went to the streets and to homeless encampments under the freeway overpasses, and Tom stayed home to keep us all in prayer. Each one of our groups gave out all of the lunches and most of the clothing and other items. Everyone was very thankful to receive the food and clothing, and several men got new jeans in their exact size, and they were very happy. We saw Daniel, Anthony, and "Ruffin", and they all received food and clothing with big smiles on their faces. We saw a group of about 10 workmen, asked them if they spoke Spanish, and they each took a tract in Spanish - no one refused. We also gave out gospel tracts in English and Spanish to people who were just down at the beach for the day. Felipe's group went to find homeless people under the freeway overpasses, and along the streets of West L.A. and Venice. Felipe said they drove up and down alleys looking for homeless people, and were able to give out all of the lunches, clothing and everything. We thank the Lord for Felipe's diligence in seeking out and searching for people to whom they could minister in the name of Jesus.

Prison Ministry

Royce Casey, Valley State Prison, Chowchilla, CA - "Your letter and Romans Bible study lessons were perfectly timed. The verses on the Lord's purpose, and your study on God choosing the low things of the

earth, were just what I needed. I was denied parole twice and I felt sad, scared and hopeless, and thought I was at the governor's mercy. The truth is that I am at God's mercy and on His time-table. He knows when I am going home. I trust that the Lord Jesus has perfect timing, and He must want me here for a while longer, and He has something here to teach me. Do you realize I've been doing your Bible studies and 12-Steps for over ten years? I've grown immensely since then. In Christ, Royce"

Diego M. Sobalvarro, Ironwood State Prison, Blythe, CA - "I give God thanks for you both and for taking time to write and send our Bible studies. Since working the Twelve Steps with you and doing your Bible studies, I have grown in my understanding of God's word and gained insight into maintaining my recovery. Thank you so much for your support. I am more focused now than ever to be watchful in living a lifestyle that is well-pleasing to God and honors His name. God bless you, Diego"

Charles Creasy, California Institution for Men, Chino, CA - "Thank you for your inspiring letter and how you choose to be of service each day giving joy and the love of Christ to so many people. When I get out, I trust that I can feel safe and secure living a life giving back to the community that I once harmed. Thank you for showing me this is possible. I understand my past does not define me, who I am today, but I choose to live my life in obedience to our Lord and with His blessing. With my love and respect, Charles"

Rosa Gonzalez, Central Calif. Women's Facility, Chowchilla, CA - "I received the photos you sent of your outreach, and I was wondering if I can donate some beanies to the homeless people. I know a bunch of us want to send you hand-made scarves and knit hats so they can be warm in the colder weather. Love, Rosa Gonzalez"

Richard Roberts, California Institution for Men, Chino, CA - "I just finished Steps 8 & 9, and made a list of all those I had harmed. Seeing how long that list was makes me want to never be that person again. I'm starting to love myself again. It's interesting that it took prison to change me. I had never taken a moral inventory of myself or reflected on how I have behaved in my lifetime. I'm embarrassed and remorseful and determined to never be that person again. I now have God to help me go forward in my life and I feel good about my future with Him. Thank you for being there and helping me and others. God bless you, Richard"

Gilbert Rosales, Ironwood State Prison, Blythe, CA - "I want to say thank you for being there for us, and I appreciate it so much. Your 12-Step and Bible course has really helped me learn about myself and the Lord Jesus Christ our Savior. I can't wait for the next lesson! Your friend, Gilbert"

Steve Koch, California Institution for Men, Chino, CA - "I want to thank you for your wonderful ministry and service for our awesome God. I do enjoy these Bible studies I have been blessed to do. I have read, studied and even taught God's word, but I am still learning. I am 74 years old and have been in prison since 2008. God kept calling me to return to Him and I kept running from Him, but He sure got His way. Jail, then prison which I have come to call "The Big Fish" (such as in Jonah 1:17) that swallowed me up. And here I'll remain until God sends me out. I do thank Him and now serve Him. God does truly work in us to will and to do His good pleasure, and that truly is a blessing. God bless you, love, Steve".

Thomas Gamez, Valley State Prison, Chowchilla, CA - "Thank you, Tom and Dottie, for not giving up on me and all the other inmates that you bless with your ministry. Thank you for being there for us inmates, for we love God. Asking for help was not a part of our lives before, but now asking for help will always be in our lives, because we want to change, and with the Lord Jesus all things are possible. Sincerely, Thomas Gamez "