

PRISONERS OF HOPE

*“Fear none of those things which thou shall suffer.
For you shall go into prison that you may be tried.
Be faithful unto death and I shall give you the crown of life.” Revelation 2:10*

The length of our prison term depends on our willingness to relinquish our stubbornness, our pride, our arrogance, our self righteousness, our life.

IF YOU LOVE THE LORD WITH YOUR WHOLE ATTITUDE, YOU WILL DO WHAT HE TELLS YOU TO DO AND YOUR PRISON TERM COULD BE SHORTENED, ALTHOUGH THE SUFFERING IS MANDATORY. WITHOUT IT YOU WILL NEVER BE A MAN TO ALL MEN.

You will notice that our prison terms are only overcome by death. You can break out of the prisons you are put into and remain the same degenerate, evil, half-baked imbecile. However, if we humble ourselves under His mighty, severe dealings and submit to our masters in prison we will die daily and eventually be dead to our old prison called SELF.

The prison of self has many walls and we are all in solitary confinement until we have broken through every wall, dying daily as God sets up circumstances that will challenge us to submit to and die out to the walls of self. Jesus walked through walls leaving behind the old nature, the old habit patterns, the old ways of speech, thinking and relating. His change was so drastic, His closest friends did not recognize Him. John, the Baptist, His cousin did not recognize Him. His laughing at stupid jokes, his jovial nature was changed into sober kindness and compassion.

Now let us ponder a few of the prison walls we hang onto as God attempts to free us. Submitting our ways to the authority God puts over you. I am not talking about the pastor, the government, the pope. I am talking about the one God has given you to walk with — the one you think you have a right to have rights with. Perhaps it is

a husband or children, a boss who is a prick in our eyes. It is amazing how that very person can turn into a sweetsie baby after our will has submitted. We make our enemies our friends by submission and forgiveness.

We all have our reasoning for doing what we do. If we are to become conformed into the image of God's Son our reasoning power must come from God for He admonished us, “Come let us reason together for your sins which were scarlet will be as white as snow.”

As long as we have our own reasoning and justifying our sin, we are considered sinners. Some will ask me, “Why did you do that?” I say, “I have no reason, I just do it.” Try and help a prisoner get set free by saying, “This is the WAY,” to do such and such a thing and the old reasoning tongue starts prattling and the prison wall remains.

Exposing any lack in a prisoner is like fighting a wild tiger as we would rather keep up our appearances than suffer the shame of the cross. We would rather be cloaked with our old wineskin which is a filthy rag than suffer the humiliation and be cloaked with humility. You are lacking patience with so and so. You are trying to write the script for another's life. You look down your nose at your brother or sister. You are bossing and lording it over rather than serving. You think you know when in fact, you do not know as you ought. You are seeing too much and not perceiving. Understanding is like a medicine and you are lacking. You are judging by the seeing of the eye and the hearing of the ear and not with righteous judgment. We persist on being right,

arrogant, and then feign humility. We would rather remain appearing good in our own eyes than suffering the unclinking of our filthy old garments.

THESE ARE BUT A FEW OF THE MANY GARMENTS WE GIVE UP IN PRISON TO GET SET FREE.

How long your prison term is depends on you and you alone. Those iron gates remain open only to

those who are dead to self. A person who is dead cannot be judged. "For in our humiliation, our judgment is taken away." The cross is a place of judgment, humiliation and shame but the end thereof is the joy of the morning, the excitement of a new life.

"Turn you to the stronghold, ye prisoners of hope; even today do I declare that I will render double to you." Zechariah 9:12



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