



Polk County Jail Ministry

- JESUS ALIVE IN LIVES -

Issue 211 - January, 2023

The Harvest Is Plentiful!

Greetings and Happy New Year as we begin this hope filled 2023! *Let us not give up meeting together as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another and all the more as you see the Day approaching.* Heb.10:25 Jesus is pleading with His church, His Body, to become engaged with each other and the world around us for the sake of the gospel, the good news. In Matthew 9:35-38 *Jesus was going through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. When He saw the crowds He had compassion on them because they were harassed and helpless like sheep without a shepherd. Then He said to His disciples **The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into His harvest field.*** There is so much to be done oh child of God! Will you answer His call and go into the field and be a part of His harvest of souls? Each of the members of His body have been gifted and equipped. We must simply respond to the Master, the LORD by saying yes! Send me, use me, shape me to be Your vessel that brings You glory. **The harvest is plentiful** will be the ministry's theme for 2023, is highlighted each month in the Jail Ministry Newsletter, and at this year's banquet.

I recently had a request from a man in medical for a Bible and some direction for his life. When I arrived and called out his name the man sat up in bed. I listened as he explained what brought him to Jail and how he wanted to be rescued from his wayward path. I could tell God had been working in his life drawing and showing him his need. I shared my testimony of an empty heart and how I tried to fill it with

everything but the One who created me to know Him and love Him, Jesus Christ. When I finished he was tracking every word, and responded that's me! I'm empty inside my heart, and I want that answer for my life. He prayed and gave his life and heart to Jesus Christ. He said, "I've never felt anything so real. I normally don't cry, but I can't hold them back." One of the other men next to his bed was noticeably touched by this conversation. He told me I had worked with his Dad many times as he often came to Jail with alcohol issues. His Dad finally gave his heart to Christ while in Jail, got help with treatment, but eventually died of liver issues. I told him don't repeat your Dad's life. I gave him a Bible and knew God had sown a seed in his heart that day.

With the start of a New Year we must renew our dedication to what is obviously the hand of God as He continues to touch lives through the Polk County Jail Ministry. We are so blessed to be where He is actively working all around us. Will you commit to pray daily, give faithfully, and tell others of God's Sovereign hand on this ministry and in your life? We have watched God do some amazing things in 2022! I believe it is due to the prayers of God's people. Your petitions and intercession before God have become a reality that I get to



experience daily. Without your faithful and generous gifts to the ministry we couldn't be fiscally responsible, so I give my heartfelt **thanks** to each one of you! What a **great God** we serve! **Amen!!**

- Chaplain Jerry

Quote of the Month: **Afflictions will either warm you up toward spiritual things or turn you cold. – Joni Eareckson Tada**



T. J. Vasquez – One of the Harvest!

My name is T.J. Vasquez. Through 25+ years in addiction I've spent a lot of time in various jails and prisons around Iowa. I had no clue if the viscous cycle of addiction, treatment centers, mandatory meetings, and DHS involvement would ever end, but God did! I was introduced to meth and all drugs in my teenage years. I'd always thought I knew God and prayed

especially when I was in a pinch or in desperate moments. All I ever wanted my entire life was to have a family, build a family, and live happily ever after. My addictive patterns are that I want more, the most, and to be in control. I spent the majority of my life with God on the back burner portraying to be The Man, some wanna be gangster, the next Tony Montana, a womanizer, a liar, a cheater, a gambling addict, a sex

addict, and a thief. My life was in a terrible never ending cycle. I was lost in addiction going from one toxic relationship to another. My children's mothers left with my kids, and I was off to the races on my way to jail or prison, treatment, and mandatory meetings. This played out three times until God stepped in and changed all that. 12 step meetings were not for me. They didn't work. I would find more connections or leave them feeling like I wanted to get drunk or high more than ever. At the end of my last run in the evil world of addiction I had just accepted the fact that this is the way my life would go either in death or federal prison. Everyone around me was getting busted, and I thought it would not be long and it would be my time next. But in 2019 I was diagnosed with congestive heart failure, and my heart was only working at 16%. I had kids with multiple woman and relationships that didn't work.

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PRAYER REQUESTS:

- 2023 will be the greatest year the Jail ministry has experienced as the Holy Spirit is poured out on all the incarcerated, and the staff of the Sheriff's office as we seek a harvest of souls.
- Prayer that the volunteers would be used by the Holy Spirit to bring God's eternal Word to their Bible classes, one on one's, and book cart ministries.
- Pray for Board member David Hamlin, wife Edna as they continue their battle with cancer.
- Jim Bagbey's beloved wife Ruth went Home to be with the Lord on January 5th. Please pray for Jim and his family.
- Prayer for Sheriff Kevin Schneider and his administrative staff with daily pressures and demands.
- Ask God to provide an Administrative Assistant to the Chaplain who is proficient in excel and other computer related skills. Immediate need, part time, someone burdened and called to this ministry.
- Prayer for an assistant Chaplain to come along side me and learn the ministry. God would reveal this man who He's been preparing for this assignment.
- Pray for the Jail staff as the over time is demanding, exhausting, and hard on family life.
- Open up the south end of the Jail's five housing units that do not receive Bible studies now.
- Allow the ministry to have access into the housing units to conduct Bible studies rather than in the current class rooms. Then there would be no limit to the numbers of inmates who could participate.
- I would be used to bring a godly presence to the Sheriff's office staff as Chaplain.
- God's hedge of protection for our public servants the Detention Officers in the Jail, and those Deputies out on patrol.
- Officers would help promote Sunday services at 10:00 A.M. and a greater number of inmates would awaken to watch.
- Many opportunities to speak and promote the ministry around the Polk County area in local churches, businesses, and small groups in 2023.
- Churches would embrace discipleship of those recently released to help them grow.
- Brokenness would occur with those arrested and brought to the Jail, and they'll see their need for a love relationship with Jesus Christ.
- An insatiable appetite for the Scriptures in the ones who have given their hearts to the LORD.
- God's people will be fervent, strategic, committed, and deliberate with their prayers for the Jail ministry this new year. Prayer moves God's heart and hands.
- Those who find Christ while incarcerated will leave the Jail single minded, and focused on pursuing Him with all their hearts and minds. They'll determine to resist temptation to go back to the old life styles and friendships.

- Inmates will learn disciplines of the faith; to pray, read God's Word daily, get connected to a Bible centered local church, have a mentor, and find gainful employment.
- Prayer that the DOC Discipleship Outreach Center 42nd and Douglas would see more interest in the classes on Boundaries in January on Tuesday at 9 AM and Thursday at 7:00 PM Giving and Receiving a Blessing. Seeds are being sown.

ANSWERS:

- All glory, honor, praise and thanksgiving to God for His huge blessings on this ministry in 2022! Spiritual seeds of God's Truth were sown into countless lives. Thank God He is rescuing lives not arresting them! He brings people from all over the world to hear and respond to the gospel!
- All the lives changed by the power of the Holy Spirit! **224** gave their lives to Christ, **3,301** viewed the Sunday services, and we gave out **3,704** Bibles in 2022!! **PTL!!!**
 - We thank the Lord for the continued open door in partnering with the Sheriff's office.
 - I thank God for each of you our great partners for this ministry! Blessings to each of you for your commitment to pray fervently and give generously!

MOST WANTED:

- Clothing closet needs: men, women's clothing, shoes, winter coats.
- Paperback books: *Left Behind #6-12* Men and women's daily devotional books

Ministry Monthly Report: January 2023

	Monthly:	Ytd:
Inmate Request:	877	877
One-on-One inmate counseling:	669	669
Religious reading materials given:	705	705
Bible Study groups:	34	34
Inmates involved with studies:	166	166
View Worship Service:	240	240
Volunteer Hours:	149	149
Number of Volunteers:	21	21
Bibles given:	330	330
Number of New Believers:	14	14

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My best friend Chucky Freeborn was murdered in a drug deal gone bad that he had nothing to do with at all. Close friends were getting ridiculous amounts of federal prison time, and my heart failure were all signs I needed to get my life together. But I would push it a few more months until I was broken, and at rock bottom. That is when I can say that Jesus Christ stepped into my life. On 01/09/20 I would begin treatment at Mecca/Prelude now known as CFR for my 3rd attempt at treatment. I couldn't see at the time how it was going to help, but God did! While there a childhood friend, Ryan Claiborne, offered me a place to live, to try sober living, and to chase God! 2 Corinthians 5:17 **Therefore, if any one is in Christ he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.**

Today I can say I'm in recovery and co-founder of Sober Soldierz. It's a recovery family where we believe that Jesus in recovery must come first. For the first time in my life I have 3 years in recovery, and no longer identify myself as an addict or alcoholic. God is the One who changed all that! I am a new creation in Christ Jesus, choose not to identify myself with negative labels, and no longer use any mind altering substances. I met my best friend and other Sober Soldierz co-founder Cody Larson

while in the Prelude treatment center. Cody and I were two separate lives put in the same place, and God would do the rest. It all began with a small group of 6. Sadly the others chose to go another route or back out there. We decided to follow Jesus, and build this into a recovery family that is changing lives not only in the Des Moines area but around the world! It began with live meetings and has grown into a Facebook group with 4,700 members! Check out our website at SoberSoldierz.com for meeting details. Matthew 4:19 **Then He said to them. Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.** I truly believe that everyone reading this will not live to see the full fruition of the glorious puzzle God's building known as the Sober Soldierz recovery family. We are in the very beginning stages, the genesis of this story. We will never know the impact Sober Soldierz can have, but God does! He's given me the family I always wanted, and you can come check out your new family too. We're saving a seat for you!

Please help support  **The Polk County Jail Ministry**

(THANK YOU for your financial support! Please make checks out to the Polk Co. Jail Ministries Inc. and use the enclosed, self-addressed envelope.)