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The Apple of God's Eye...

By Chaplain Michael A. Hernandez



As we interact within society, we typically put our best foot forward giving our best

-version to our daily tasks at hand. After all, the bible teaches "as a man thinketh, so is he." Subsequently, it could be said that we constantly radiate who we are amongst others.

So the question is are we intentionally reflecting what we want to be reflecting? Specifically, are we reflecting a humble and obedient intentional disciple of Christ, or are we reflecting a watered-down version of Christianity as one who is attempting to balance God and willful sin?

The Fruit We Bear...

Truth be told, one can easily answer this by simply examining the

fruit they themselves are bearing. Is it good fruit, pleasing before God, and aligning with His Word? Or is it justified, well-intended compromise in an effort to simply get from point A to point B through life as best able? If it is the latter, it is bad fruit.

What do we do ourselves do with bad fruit? It isn't good for consumption. As a matter of fact, it will make you sick! Knowing this, would it be foolish to polish it up and make it as presentable as possible as if to say look everybody I am yielding good fruit! Within this glaring analogy, one would likely say they'd never!

Before you declare your reasoning, let's go deeper...

The truth of the matter is that those who are yielding good fruit will recognize the rotten polished presentation while those who are yielding bad fruit may

be holding onto it, even deeming it as acceptable and fit for daily spiritual consumption!

How is it then that bad fruit can be seen so contrastingly different? My brothers and sisters... it happens every day amongst everyone. The question is are you yourself able to tell the difference between good and bad fruit?

*...the jail population can be easily judged as the caged refuse of society.
Despite this...we are commanded to
“remember them as though you were in prison with them.”*

Imprisoned Fruit...

What about jail inmates? Are they all bad fruit? If so, what is their purpose henceforth? They are certainly a population that can be easily dismissed. Worse yet, the jail population can also be easily judged as the forgotten society. Despite this, God deems them as important as we are commanded to remember them. Hebrews 3 (ESV) states, “Don’t forget those who are in prison. Remember them as though you were in prison with them. And don’t forget those who are suffering. Remember them as though you were suffering with them.”

Their Story...

Everyone has a story; right, wrong, or indifferent, it is their story as yours is yours. Looking back at your life, were you always good and ripened fruit sweet to taste and nourishing to others? I think not as we all fall short of the glory of God. Oftentimes, people ask me if I am fearful for my safety within the jail population. Every single time, I just smile and tell them that some of the finest and most humble people I have met are serving their time, but also becoming so much more than they thought they could be.

“...it dawns on me that I am witnessing the ripening of sown spiritual seed. I hear stories coming together to form powerful testimonies waiting to be shared!”

While their stories are certainly marred with bad choices or extenuating circumstances, many times their sentenced time is oftentimes the perfect opportunity to reflect upon what has been, what is, and what can be spiritually fruitful in their lives.

When I hear these stories come together, it dawns on me that I am witnessing the ripening of sown spiritual seed. I hear stories coming together that are forming into powerful testimonies waiting to be shared!

In Memoriam...

Remembering a Faithful Heart

Longtime Mesa County Jail Ministry volunteer **Mario Chacon** passed away January 30, 2021.

As per Kurt Neuswanger, Music Director at KJOL, Mario was a Spanish Bible study volunteer for several years within the jail ministry. He and his wife Josie had a strong love for the Lord.

"They came to the U.S. from Mexico about fifty years ago and lived in Thompson Springs, Utah, where they raised their family and attended the local Baptist Church in Moab every chance they got, despite not fully understanding all the words in the English teaching service," says Kurt. "Mario never stopped learning, as evidenced by his desire to keep taking English classes at the library even into his 70s. I tutored Mario and Josie for years and we so enjoyed talking about what was happening in the church. When they moved to Grand Junction, they were active at Junction Community Church for years. Mario oftentimes spoke about his love for his sons who lived in Grand Junction, and how they married Christian women and raised strong Christian kids."

Through his teachings, Mario's legacy continues on even after his passing. He will be greatly missed by his family, his church, and the jail where he generously gave his time.

Thank you for faithfulness, Mario!

Kurt Neuswanger
Music Director
KJOL

And from all of us at the Mesa County Jail Ministry,

Well done, good and faithful servant!

In Memoriam...

The Jail Ministry is saddened at the loss of **Richard Long** who passed away on March 9, 2021. He was a longtime Mesa County Jail Ministry volunteer and a personal friend of mine. As a member of Gideons International, he spent several years as a regular leader of Sunday Worship and assisted with various ministry responsibilities as called upon. Richard was also instrumental in providing Gideon Bibles and pocket bibles and continued to work with our ministry until his death.

In late January, I contacted Richard about needing some more pocket bibles. Although he was sick at that time, he called me and said he would place a box of bibles in front of his house. Shortly after, he was admitted to the hospital where he passed away.

True to his fidelity, one of the last things Richard did was to get Bibles to our community jail inmates. He was a good friend and a faithful servant of the Lord.

Paul Von-Guerard
MCJM Board Member

Volunteer Spotlight

Character for Life!

By Scott Bell

My name is Scott Bell and I am the founder and director of The Compass Center. Founded in 2014 in Tuscarawas County Ohio, we have been in Mesa County since 2019 as a non-profit community outreach ministry

Our mission is to *meet people where they are, love and respect them unconditionally and help them take **their** next positive step forward.*



Ministry Coordinator, Carrie Conrad and I take this mission statement very seriously. Opting not to have any facility or office space of our own, we work exclusively within the local jails, prisons, sober houses and other community organizations which allows us to meet people where they are.

In implementing our Character for Life development program, we have found that those battling to emerge from addiction, incarceration and homelessness have a tendency to make life decisions based primarily on emotion and less on character. We teach that when people make emotionally-based decisions, all too often, they find themselves regretting their actions and typically find themselves in even deeper trouble. Given these dynamics, we must all learn to step back from our emotions, understand them and consider why we feel the way we feel so that we are then able to make decisions based on thought and character.

This is the basis for the *Character for Life* program. This development program targets 48-biblical character values (one taught each session) consists of aspects such as *Forgiveness, Respect, Integrity and Empathy*. Using *Lodestar Guidance* discussion guides and done in a roundtable open discussion format allows individuals to express themselves, hear and respond to new ideas and apply the principles through specific action steps. The curriculum walks an individual through four significant life categories (1) Learning to take responsibility for themselves (2) New points of view and problem solving (3) Being an agent of change and (4) Teamwork and being a positive influence.

As a result, we are witnessing the fruits of our program!

"I have never had this kind of support, especially since my relapse just two months ago. To know that someone is working so hard just to see me have a better life is overwhelming at times. Thank you for your continued support on this journey of sobriety."

—Damien, former heroin addict and convicted felon

"Since leaving prison I have been trying my hardest to step back from my emotions and think with character like you and Carrie taught me. It has been eight months and I am employed, I'm going to church and my relationships are healing. I've never had so much hope."

—Zach, former state prison inmate

ASK THE
CHAP...

Dear Chaplain,

I have learned much about myself and my faith during my time at the jail. I have accepted Jesus Christ as my Savior and am looking forward to doing things so differently when I get out of here. The problem is that my family comes from a very religious background and anything other than their religion is not accepted. I have tried to tell them that my faith is based upon the Gospels and teachings of the Bible. But beyond the traditions of my former religion, I feel my family is more loyal to their religion than they are to Jesus Christ. It doesn't make any sense! I was really counting on my family to support who I am in Christ as opposed to who I was and the damage I've caused because of my addictive lies and behaviors. I was hoping to be welcomed and supported even hoping that my family would go to church with me. I love my family and I only want to love them in a way I never have. I have a different heart

now. Where do I go from here?
~ Lonely Linda...

Dear Linda,
I wish there was an easy answer to your question. Remember, your family is where you were before Christ, at least that's what I assume given the traditions of your family of origin. Remember they don't know the new creation of you as your old nature has passed. I understand you need spiritual and emotional support and you want to continue the journey you have begun with Jesus. For that, I am so happy for you! Truly, the best is yet to come, as you are faithful and continue to grow in your faith.

What I would encourage you to do is find a solid, Bible-teaching church and develop spiritually close-knit relationships with those within your church community. But all the while, love your family the way you have been loved by those from the jail ministry. The Bible says that "*God demonstrated his love for us and while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.*"

So ask yourself, what kind of grace does your family need most from you at this time? Pray for them. Love them without expectation and leave the rest to God. Remember they are His and he has a plan for all of them as he does for you. The question is, will they meet Jesus in you?

Your testimony is still being written and I suspect there are many people whom you've yet to meet who will love and spiritually encourage you. Ask God to give you a specific wisdom beyond your good intentions and understanding so that you can convey a love for your family as they have never felt from you before.

I wish I could guarantee changed hearts and spiritually-easy outcomes. I can't. You can't. Only God can change hearts. But as you continue your walk with God and earnestly seek Him, your family will see what God has done and is doing in your life. Who knows, maybe the love of Christ in you today will so contrast with who you were and bring the salvation of God into the lives of your family. That would be a really cool thing!

I am praying for you! Stay faithful and stay focused on Christ. Your ministry begins now, not necessarily when you are released. Begin thanking God for the awesome work He is doing within your heart and even within your family right now! Now go forth and greater love those in your harvest.

I am praying for you...

Chaplain Michael



Outside the confines of jail or prison, The Compass Center offers two other legs within this three-legged stool philosophy. These are *Jobs for Life* and *Sundays with the Compass Center*.

Jobs for Life is a faith based four week, eight session, 16 hour course that strives to restore dignity and self-worth through the value of quality employment. Our students learn how important good character is to employers. We discuss values, work up a quality resume, learn interviewing skills, create individual “one-minute commercials” and meet with local business leaders and human resource directors.

Jobs for Life students learn to identify existing roadblocks that might be holding them back from realizing the job of their dreams. We help students develop a working plan and an execution strategy to overcome and eliminate those roadblocks clearing the way to fulfilling, consistent employment.

Sundays with The Compass Center is a very non-traditional faith environment specifically geared toward those coming out of addiction, incarceration or homeless population. We have come to understand that these particular populations do not readily feel comfortable or even “worthy” within a traditional church setting. Subsequently, we utilize a casual discussion format to identify, discuss and apply biblical issues of faith, spirituality and salvation to our lives.

These three legs, Character-Employment-Faith, support the one overriding theme of HOPE; Hope to overcome, Hope to change, Hope for the future, Hope for a better life. Please prayerfully support our program. If you have any questions regarding our ministry, please contact us. We would love to hear from you!

Onward!

Scott Bell
970-773-3591
conemdad@outlook.com

~~~MCJM Banquet Update~~~

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, our annual MCJM fundraising banquet has been regrettably postponed. These necessary precautions have greatly affected our ministry as our annual banquet is our primary source of ministry income. Our hopeful target banquet date is late this summer or early fall as social-distancing restrictions allow us to convene. Please continue to check out our website for the latest updates at mesacountyjailministry.org.

Apple continued

Can that not be said of all of us who are also harnessing our own stories, now for God's glory?

Ministry Now!

These new seeds are not sprinkled and spread upon an inmate's discharge. These testimonies are being shared amongst the jail pod. Some inmates have even begun bible correspondence courses realizing their calling is to formally learn the Bible and move on into ministry. Is this not somewhat likened to Paul's journey and the spiritual fruit he produced while he was imprisoned?

For some inmates, the verse reading, "For I know the plans I have for you," screams hope and for some inmates, is a newfound revelation reality. To think it took and started with a time-out in life; a sentence bestowed or awaiting, which propelled them into a life or ministry that couldn't have otherwise occurred without these specific, God-timed circumstances!

As 2021 continues to unfold what seems to be historical changes within our society, both as a nation and around the world, there is a refreshing hope in believing that a fresh-fire of disciples for Christ are being edified and equipped for a harvest from whence they came, but now are returning as a light and salt for God's glory!

So I ask you to please...

- Pray for our ministry.
- Support our ministry.
- Watch God work His will in the lives of those we deemed as bad fruit.
- Stand side by side as brothers and sisters in Christ to share the Good News while you are yet able.

Until next time...

Chaplain Michael A. Hernandez
michael.hernandez@mesacounty.us



INMATE EXPRESSIONS

Beauty for Ashes

We are all but beauty for ashes, so to speak
this don't make us strong but it don't make us weak
time to speak the truth and come together, hold each other up sister and brother
quit adding to the struggle with the sin we juggle
people run the wrong way teaching to sin and not pray
how much pain must we cause God, fighting for what's right while doing wrong
tripping over grace causing hurt look around watching it all fall down
better start praying before you drown

How much hatred can fill one heart? How many tears before we fall apart
come on people blend together, or we will all be dead forever
it's almost over, the race we ran and look now God's our biggest fan
so hold your hand out ~ help someone don't let hurt be your ransom
breed a love that will last, don't be the one who walks past the outcast
we are all leapers here so let's love each other so there is no room for fear

~Female Inmate / Servant of Christ

Keep the Candle Burning...

--Support Our Ministry--

Over the years, our ministry supporters have been faithful in supporting the Mesa County Jail Ministry. Due to COVID-19 precautions however, organizations everywhere have been affected and we are no different. Subsequently, we are reaching out to our community asking everyone to prayerfully consider supporting our ministry. Now more than ever, we need to come together and continue to heal on a number of levels. Please consider making a tax-free suggested monthly contribution of just \$15 a month. Your generous contribution of any amount would go to support our ministry Chaplain, the purchase of Holy Bibles, reading glasses as well as various ministry supplies. Your support is critical as we strive to continue within our efforts to minister to jail inmates, so they too may continue to receive the Word of God.

The Mesa County Jail Ministry is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization and faithfully relies on the support of our community in order to sustain our efforts. Check out our website at mesacountyjailministry.org or contact Chaplain Michael A. Hernandez at 970-244-3351 for more information.

Ministry Beyond the Jail...



Life After Incarceration

My Journey Continues...

By A New Soldier for Christ

*"Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time
my mother conceived me."*

~Psalms 51:5

I am human therefore I am a sinner. As far back as I can remember what I knew as sin wasn't at the time sin at all, it was just my way of life. I was taught at an early age to be prideful. The environment I grew up in forced me to be tough. I learned early on how hate came with the territory. It was a feeling inside me I didn't understand but it was there and it controlled me and it made me who I was. It was a feeling that brought fear into my life despite being my norm. That fear had me in a shell that held me back from who God wanted me to be.



*"What I once knew about life went against everything that God is about and
everything I knew and believed in eventually destroyed me."*

Jesus tells us we must be born again in the book of John. Paul tells us in Romans, *"Do not conform to the pattern of this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is - his good, pleasing and perfect will."* We must put away the things we once knew and seek the kingdom of God.

It wasn't until I went to jail for the fifth time that I picked up the Bible and start reading it. When I first read God's Word, it didn't make any sense at all. In being completely honest, what I did understand I found hard to believe and disagreed with almost all of it. It completely clashed with my lifestyle and what I learned in order to thrive and survive! Little did I know that God was planting seeds in my heart. If it wasn't for my time in jail and the Mesa County Jail Ministry, I don't believe I would've ever found God. Subsequently, I truly count it a blessing that God would chastise me and love me enough to put me somewhere in order for me to get to know him.

Proverbs 3:11-12 really spoke to me as it states, “My son, do not despise the Lord’s discipline, and do not resent his rebuke, because the Lord disciplines those he loves, as a father the son he delights in.”

“On the streets, I feared no one and rarely did anyone challenge my street authority. This of course ran completely contrary to the biblical principle which teaches love and humility and how the first shall be last and the last shall be first!”

I am still in awe about who I was then and who I am now. The message of my heart and to all I speak to is simple; when you confess Jesus Christ as Lord, as God’s only son whom he sent to this world to die for our sins so that we can be washed by the blood of Christ, and thus be saved. It is as simple of a message for us to receive and yet so completely counter to everything the world screams as truth!

This being said, I can’t stress how hard it is to follow Jesus within my own strength. It is not all rainbows and butterflies. We live in a world full of hate betrayal and lies. Daily the world drastically changes but I have learned to follow Jesus who is true and faithful to His every word, *the same yesterday, today and tomorrow!*

If we continue to follow the things of this world we will continue to fail ourselves and our loved ones. We must stand firm in our faith in Christ and live by his every word. John 10:9-10 clearly states, *I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. They will come in and go out, and find pasture, the thief comes only to steal, kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.*

By His grace, I am greater becoming the man he intended me to be and no longer the man the world was grooming.

~RG - Former Inmate

In cooperation with the Mesa County Sheriff’s Office, the MCJM is the primary support for the Chaplain position at the Mesa County Jail. Thanks to the Lord for the support provided by Grand Valley Churches and individuals far and wide. The Mesa County Jail Ministry (FEIN# 30-0845521) is a qualified 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization and donations are tax deductible. Established August 2014. To financially support this ministry, you may mail your donation to:

MCJM
2536 Rimrock Ave., Suite 400-171
Grand Junction, Colorado 81505
or go to: www.mesacountyjailministry.org

<https://www.facebook.com/MesaCJMinistry>



How May We Pray For You?

Please email our ministry chaplain at:
hisservant2000@gmail.com

Board Perspectives...

Welcome to our Ministry Board

ELLEN WOODS

Hello, my name is Ellen Woods. I have been a jail volunteer for nearly seven years. How easy it is to lose track of time!



I am really looking forward to serving on the ministry board as I very much enjoy working with others especially when I can work with people who are committed to our Lord.

What a privilege it is to serve those who are brokenhearted and oftentimes feeling hopeless as many of the women in the jail are separated from their families and children.

I have learned that many of these women have a deep desire to live in such a way that would bring honor to those that love them. Subsequently, as they come to know the Lord in a deeper manner by way of faith and biblical obedience, their lives can now honor God as well.

Within the years of ministry, I recognize how one little mistake can lead to a life of serious change and desperation. Despite this, trusting God and accepting Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior can turn any life around, even jail inmates.

And then there is YOU...

Have you accepted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior? If not, today is the day to do so! Simply pray this prayer...

Lord, I confess and admit that I am a sinner. I accept Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior and ask you to come into my heart. I believe you are the son of God who died and rose again on the third day. You are the Savior of the world and now the Savior of my soul. Forgive me of my sins and lead me as Lord of my life. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

If you prayed this prayer, the Bible says you are now saved! Find a strong church that exclusively teaches from the Word of God (the Bible) and get to know others who can spiritually strengthen you and journey with you as a new believer of Christ.



Our Vision

We exist to provide the Gospel of Christ Jesus to the Western Slope and beyond, to bring quality Christian music and teaching from the Word of God, and to support the local church and the Body of Christ.



WWW.KJOL.ORG

99.5 FM Grand Valley

91.9 Montrose

94.5 FM & 1400 AM Delta

91.3 FM Paonia, Hotchkiss

620 AM Western Slope

Weekdays

5:00am Turning Point, Dr. David Jeremiah
 5:30am Know The Truth, Philp De Courcy
6:00am Dave and Leslie in the Morning
 6:45am Lighten Up, Ken Davis
 7:20am Bible Quiz
 7:30am Breakpoint
 8:05am Family Life Today
 8:30am Back To The Bible, Nat Crawford
 9:00am Focus on the Family
9:30am Mid-Mornings with Leslie Kell
10:30am Prayertime
 10:35am Revive Our Hearts, Nancy DeMoss Wolgemuth
 12:01pm My Money Life
 12:05pm Turning Point, Dr. David Jeremiah
 12:30pm Insight For Living, Dr. Chuck Swindoll
 1:00pm Chris Fabry Live!
 1:55pm Joni and Friends, Joni Eareckson Tada
2:00pm Music with Ken Andrews
 3:00pm In Touch, Dr. Charles Stanley
 3:30pm Moneywise
 4:00pm Adventures in Odyssey
4:30pm Afternoon Drive with Kurt Neuswanger
 4:45pm Lighten Up, Ken Davis
 5:30pm Breakpoint
 6:00pm Focus on the Family
 6:30pm A New Beginning, Greg Laurie
7:00pm Evening Praise with Ken Andrews
 8:00pm Bold Steps, Mark Jobe
 8:30pm Truth For Life, Alistair Begg
 9:00pm Living On The Edge, Chip Ingram
 9:30pm Summit Life, J.D. Greear
 10:00pm Haven Today, Charles Morris
 10:30pm Nightsounds, Bill Pearce

Weekends

Saturday

5:00am Focus on the Family Weekend
6:00am Saturday Morning with Dustin Richie
 7:00am Saturday Morning Kids Programming
 7:00am Ranger Bill
 7:30am Down Gilead Lane
 8:00am Adventures In Odyssey
 8:30am Lamplighter Theatre
 9:00am Jungle Jam and Friends (summer only)
 10:00am Focus on the Family Weekend
12:00pm Saturday Afternoon with Scott McIntire
 3:00pm Science, Scripture, and Salvation
 5:00pm Breakpoint This Week
 5:30pm Homeward
6:00pm Contemporary Christian Music with Kurt
 7:00pm Christian Music Rewind
 9:00pm Celebration of Praise



Sunday

5:00am Sunday Praise
 7:00am Moody Presents
 7:30am Grace To You Weekend, John MacArthur
8:00am Sundays with Scott McIntire
 10:00am The Moody Church Hour
 1:00pm Truth For Life Weekend, Alistair Begg
 1:30pm Turning Point Weekend, Dr. David Jeremiah
3:00pm Sunday Afternoon with Dustin Richie
 4:00pm Adventures In Odyssey Weekend
 4:30pm Focus On The Family Radio Theatre
 5:00pm Jungle Jam and Friends (summer only)
 6:00pm Living A Legacy, Crawford Loritts
 9:00pm Unshackled

"Friend-Raiser"

Please join MCJM in supporting our local ministry partners at KJOL Radio Ministries



2536 Rimrock Ave., Suite 400-171
 Grand Junction, CO 81505
 970-244-3351

Help Us Save Postage - If you'd prefer to receive our quarterly newsletter via email, or wish to update your contact information, please go to <https://www.mesacountyjailministry.org/> and sign up at the bottom of the page.