



CELEBRATION OF GRACE SUNDAY INSTRUCTIONS AND RESOURCES

April 16, 2023

This material is designed for pastors and teachers as an introduction to the Adams Christian Prison Ministries and to provide materials and topical suggestions for Celebration of Grace Sunday.

ABOUT ADAMS CHRISTIAN PRISON MINISTRIES

ACPM is a non-profit organization that offers a variety of ministries and programs to those incarcerated at the Adams County Adult Correctional Complex. Having established a working memorandum with Adams Prison Board, ACPM provides a full time Chaplain (Reverend Angel Perez) who helps serve and support ACACC staff, inmates and pre COVID-19, oversaw nearly 100 volunteers offering counseling, Bible studies and support to inmates.

ACPM is a ministry of “renewal, reconciliation and restoration” on behalf of and in collaboration with all the churches of Adams County. This truly is a ministry that belongs to all our Christian churches in the county. For this reason, the ACPM Leadership is designating Sunday, April 16, 2023, as a “Celebration of Grace Sunday,” celebrating God’s love and mercy that is freely available to all.

The primary emphasis of this campaign is that God loves and values every one of us and that His mercy in Christ is greater than all our sin. Adams County Churches are invited to observe this “Celebration of Grace Sunday” by setting aside time in their worship services on April 16th to pray specifically for those incarcerated; to come to the Lord’s Table in Communion in honor of inmates; and to consider a special offering to support the ongoing ministry at the correctional complex.

ACPM has established a \$10,000.00 financial goal for “Celebration of Grace” Sunday. Gifts may be forwarded to: ACPM, P.O. Box 4122, Gettysburg, Pa 17325. Donations may also be given securely online at the ACPM website: www.AdamsCPM.org.

MATERIALS

We have provided the following materials to be incorporated during the Celebration of Grace time. We suggest the use of these materials, please incorporate them as you see fit without hindering your faith group liturgy, sacraments, or traditions.

LITANY OF PRAYER FOR THE INCARCERATED

Leader: Heavenly Father, you are Sovereign overall, giving justice and proclaiming liberty to the captive. You were with Joseph when he was imprisoned in the king’s jail. Your spirit visited Paul during his incarceration.

And you sent your Son, Jesus, to proclaim good news and freedom. God, we ask you to be with all those who are incarcerated today, for those living out sentences, and those awaiting trial or bail. Let your spirit of peace and comfort be upon them as they are some of your most vulnerable children.

Response: Gracious God, we pray for those who are incarcerated.

Leader: Father, we pray for the families of those who are incarcerated, that they would receive the care and attention they need, and have their physical, emotional, and spiritual needs met by other family members, friends, church members, or someone else in our community. Lord, allow them to keep their hope alive that a family member behind bars is not forsaken or forgotten by God.

Response: Gracious God, we pray for those who are incarcerated and for their families.

Leader: Father, we pray that you will grant those behind bars your peace. Help them to know your presence in their lives and in the lives of their families, through faith in your Son, Jesus Christ, who is our peace.

Response: Gracious God, we pray for those incarcerated. Grant them peace.

Leader: Father, only You know the feelings and emotions of those who are incarcerated. We cannot know exactly what they are living through. Our world can be very dangerous, and perhaps this is true for these men and women who might be living in fear. Help them see that they can run to You, Father, for You are a Rock and a Shield for those who trust in You.

Response: Gracious God, we pray for those incarcerated. Protect them from danger.

Leader: Father, thank you for those who have trusted Jesus Christ for eternal life. Enable them to look to the future in the hope that is found in Him. Give them a desire to seek Him and help them live in the knowledge of your eternal home where all evil and suffering will be no more.

Response: Gracious God, we pray for those incarcerated. Give them hope.

Leader: Father, you determine the future and know that which is not yet. Help those men and women see that you have a purpose for where they are now, and to know that you can use anyone for your glory and for your purposes, including them. Help them know your grace – that they are valued, loved unconditionally, and pardoned without parole – through the redemption that you offer in Jesus. Help them fix their eyes on Him during their difficult journey behind bars.

Response: Gracious God, we pray for those incarcerated. May they know your purpose for their lives.

Leader: Finally, Father, we thank you for all those who work in our correctional facilities. Grant them peace and safety in their challenging work. Give them a genuine empathy for and sensitivity to the needs of the incarcerated entrusted to their care. We pray that they may carry out their important roles as a high calling, rather than a mere duty or obligation.

Response: Gracious God, we pray for the incarcerated and for those entrusted with their care.

Leader: Hear our prayer this day, as we celebrate your amazing grace available to all!

Response: Amen.

PRAYER REQUESTS (Please pause and pray for these requests)

- Request 1
 - Please pray for my family, our finances, and our emotional issues. Please pray for our distress. Please pray for my children and family.
- Request 2
 - Please pray for me as I wait for my court hearing.
- Request 3
 - Please pray for my uncle. His kidneys are failing, and he hasn't been doing good.
- Request 4
 - Please pray that the judge would grant me parole so I can be reunited with my children.
- Request 5
 - Please pray for me to remain sober when I get home and for things to work out between me and my father.

TESTIMONIALS (Please read these testimonials during your service or mass)

- Testimony #1
 - "While I have been here at the Adams County prison, I have found my relationship again with God. I was in a very dark place and was playing with the devil before coming in here (prison). I am thankful for my incarceration because I was able to open my eyes and see what I was missing out on again! I was missing out on my relationship with God that I had lost and forgotten about! Everyday I read and write about the Faith to Faith devotional that was given to me by another inmate. Now every morning and every night I start and end my day with prayer and the word of God. Thank you! I am looking forward to going back to church and a changed life when I am able to go home. Thank you, again."
- Testimony #2
 - "Chaplain, Thank you so much for the book "The Gift of Forgiveness." Now I understand what you meant by the book having the answers to my questions about forgiveness. God bless you. It has given me great insight not only on my past but my present; and my future as well. I could never thank you enough. I have added to my list of books to purchase."

CELEBRATION OF GRACE SERMON IDEAS FOR 2023

Celebration of Grace is an opportunity to focus upon God's wonderful grace. As part of this special Sunday, Adams Christian Prison Ministries encourages you to celebrate communion in solidarity with all the congregations, inmates, ministers, and prison staff who are following Jesus. Together we are the body of Christ seeking Renewal, Reconciliation and Restoration.

The following texts are provided as a springboard for preaching ideas. Prayerfully, select one of these texts or pick another. May the Holy Spirit guide you in selecting the best text for your ministry context. Together, let us celebrate salvation, communion, and ministry in Jesus' name.

Psalms 103:1-13-12 "The Lord is Compassionate and Gracious"

Matthew 9:9-13 "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick"
Matthew 25:31-46 "Loving the Least of these"
Matthew 28:19-20 "The Great Commission"
Luke 10:1-2 "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few"
Luke 14:15-23 "Go out and compel them to come in"
Luke 15:1-7 "The Lost Sheep"
Luke 19:1-10 "The transformation of Zacchaeus"
Psalm 30:1-5 "Joy comes in the morning"
Ephesians 2:4-9 "Saved by grace through faith"
John 1:12-17 "Grace and truth through Jesus Christ"
Romans 5:12-17 "Grace and the gift of Righteousness through Christ"
Luke 4:14 19 "The Mission of the Lord"
John 3:1-17 "For God so loved the world that he gave"
John 8:31-32 "The truth shall set you free"
Romans 3:21-26 "Justification through faith"
Romans 4:1-8 "Blessed is the one whose sin is not counted against him"
Romans 5:6-8 "While we were still sinners, Christ died for us"
Romans 5:16-21 "Grace reigns to bring eternal life"
Romans 8:1-6 "No Condemnation"
Romans 8:31-39 "Nothing can separate us from the Love of God"
Romans 10:8-15 "Everyone who calls on the Name of the Lord will be saved"
Romans 12:9-16 "Love must be sincere"
Acts 16:16-34 "Salvation in a Philippian Jail"
Hebrews 19:12-18 "Their sins I will remember no more"
1 John 1:7- 2:2 "The Lord is faithful, just and forgiving"

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Hebrews 13:3 ESV

Remember those who are in prison, as though in prison with them, and those who are mistreated, since you also are in the body.

Psalms 69:33 ESV

For the Lord hears the needy and does not despise his own people who are prisoners.

Matthew 25:35-46 ESV

For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.' Then the righteous will answer him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?' ...

Isaiah 61:1 ESV

The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to bring good news to the poor; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound;

Isaiah 42:7 ESV

To open the eyes that are blind, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, from the prison those who sit in darkness.

Psalms 146:7 ESV

Who executes justice for the oppressed, who gives food to the hungry. The Lord sets the prisoners free;

Psalms 102:20 ESV

To hear the groans of the prisoners, to set free those who were doomed to die,

Matthew 25:36 ESV

I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.'

Luke 4:18 ESV

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed,

Psalms 79:11 ESV

Let the groans of the prisoners come before you; according to your great power, preserve those doomed to die!

Genesis 39:20-23 ESV

And Joseph's master took him and put him into the prison, the place where the king's prisoners were confined, and he was there in prison. But the Lord was with Joseph and showed him steadfast love and gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison. And the keeper of the prison put Joseph in charge of all the prisoners who were in the prison. Whatever was done there, he was the one who did it. The keeper of the prison paid no attention to anything that was in Joseph's charge, because the Lord was with him. And whatever he did, the Lord made it succeed.