

# No One is Beyond Redemption!



**Sr Lini Sheeja MSC**

# Prison Ministry Call is.....

“The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free” Luke 4:18



**The same  
scroll  
is in your  
hand given by  
Jesus**

# Eightfold Path for Prisoners' Transformation

- \* Reachout
- \* Release
- \* Repentance
- \* Reconciliation
- \* Reformation
- \* Rehabilitation
- \* Reclamation
- \* Redemption
- \* Redeemer - Jesus

# Redemption

In Christian theology, redemption (Greek: Apolutrosis) **refers to the deliverance of Christians from sin.**

# Bible Verses on Redemption

## **Isiah 44:22**

I have swept away your offenses like a cloud, your sins like the morning mist. Return to me, for I have redeemed you.”

## **John 3:16**

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

## **Psalms 107:2**

Let the redeemed of the LORD tell their story— those he redeemed from the hand of the foe

**Psalms 111:9** He provided redemption for his people; he ordained his covenant forever— holy and awesome is his name.

# God, in Search of the Broken!

God came down in our sinfulness! God came down when we were lost! Every sin brings in shame, emptiness and misery into the human heart; killed in short and God knew with that guilt, with that shame, with that power of evil in the heart of man, man would never be happy and therefore God came in search to take that burden, that bundle, that misery, that shame of sin away. Man was hiding as we read in Genesis 3:10, I'm naked said Adam. That's when God asked that question to Adam, Adam, who told you, you were naked? Gen 3:11. I didn't say that you were naked. Did I say that you need to be ashamed of yourself? Did I say you were empty?

# God, in Search of the Rejected!

Although Adam was hiding himself, God who went in search of Adam said, I didn't say that you were naked. In the Bible, to call someone by name means, to call someone with respect and love. Even after Adam committed sin, God came in search of Adam with love and respect. From then on the history of salvation has set its strength. Every time man rejected, man rebelled God knew, how miserable man would be!

# God, in Search of the Lost!

Did I say you lost your standing with me? In the eyes of God we never lose our worth. Even when we commit a sin we remain precious in His sight; for God is infinite love. God cannot but love, fire cannot but warm up. The nature of fire to warm up and the nature of God is love alone and never give up on any human being. The nature of God is love. Even when we sin and rebel against God, God continues to love us. In Luke 15, we read Jesus telling us, I go in search of the Lost sheep and that is the nature of God and Jesus reveals this to us.



# God, in Search of the Sinful!

A sheep that is lost and entangled in the midst of thorns and thistles in the desert, the Shepherd knows that the sheep will perish and so, the Shepherd in search of it. God is always that nature, going in search of the lost. And that is the reason the Heart of God always goes in search of the sad, the broken, the vulnerable, the sick and the sinful.

# God, in Search of the Sick!

Human being was created by God for His own purpose but became fallen, sinful and unable to live in a way that fulfills God's plan. God also chooses the filthiest places, the stinking places for his work of redemption. Behind the walls of the maximum security prison, hard-core criminals are being transformed into messengers of hope. "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners" (Mk 2:17). The purpose of Jesus coming to this earth was to call sinners and to redeem the lost. Jesus who cried out from the Cross, "*I thirst*" (Jn 19:28) continues to thirst for the souls behind the dark cells of prisons.



# God, in Search of the Hard-Core Criminals!

Many a time we tend to think God speaks only to the good people, the bishops, priests, religious and the holy people. But the fact is God speaks to everyone. One needs to be open to the voice of God. Today, many of our brethren behind the bars are redeemed, whom the society brands as the hardcore criminals. In their sinful bondage they respond to the voice of the Lord, “Follow me” and they follow the God of the Lost. God said, “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you” (Jer 1:5).

I have not come to call the righteous,  
but sinners to repentance, Luke 5:32



For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost! Luke 19:10



# Jesus ate with Sinners and Tax Collectors (Mark 2:16)



**“No, Lord,” she said. And Jesus said, “Neither do I. Go and sin no more.” John 8:11**



# Can any Good Come from Prison Cells?

Mathew surrendered everything under the feet of the Master for a cause and followed Jesus. Mathew denied everything when he found Jesus. Prodigal Son sitting in the pigs' shed remembered the Father's house. Our brethren come to themselves in the prison cells as they listen, read and internalize the Word of God. Word of God is read more in prison cells by the rejected and dejected ones. The people who witnessed the miracles of Jesus' multiplication of five loaves, healing the leper, the blind, walking on the sea abandoned Jesus when He was on the Cross.

# Can any Good Come from Prison Cells?

But the Centurion, who never saw any miracle of Jesus proclaimed, 'Truly He is the Son of God' (Mt 27:54) when he saw Jesus crying out from the cross Abba Father and when he witnessed the death of Jesus. This is the conversion of the heart, looking at the agony of Jesus, gazing at the way Jesus died for the humanity he changed himself and became a strong follower of Jesus. All those who were branded as criminals by the earth become the redeemed ones by heaven and find their destination.

# What the Earth Gives up, the Heaven Makes it!

The story of the **Prodigal Son** shows that God will accept any sinner who repents, no matter what they have done. The father in the story is meant to represent God, and the **prodigal son** is meant to represent a sinner.

What the earth gives up, the heaven makes it!

# Can Prisons be a Places of Redemption?

Sr Lini Sheeja MSC, hailing from Enayam Puthenthurai, Kanyakumari, belongs to the Congregation of Missionary Sisters of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus (MSC). She is a Social Worker by profession and she served as the team member of Childline (BOSCO). She stood for the upliftment of women and children in slums in Bangalore, formed many self-help groups to empower the women. She served as the Medico Social Worker at St John's Medical College Hospital, Bengaluru as she dedicated her life there for Pediatrics and Geriatrics. She also served as the National Secretary of Prison Ministry India and Chief Editor of Prison Voice - a national monthly magazine.



## Books

1. Peasiathu Mounam - 2012
2. Sound of Silence - 2020
3. Redeemed Prisoner - 2021

The book *Redeemed Prisoner* is a very inspirational book written by Sr Lini Sheeja MSC, containing true life stories of prisoners who have made that 'U' turn in their lives. The hymn, 'God still loves the world' is as very relevant as God is constantly at work in the lives of each and every one of us to bring out something beautiful for Him, for the world and for ourselves. When we realize our brokenness, weaknesses and sinfulness, God takes charge of our lives, touches us and transforms us. While recommending this book to every person who needs to be motivationally charged, I thank Bishop Allwyn D'Silva, Convener, PMI, the Staff, from the Director to the Volunteers and all engaged in this challenging Prison Ministry of India (PMI). Let us not forget that every saint has had a past, every sinner a future.

Congratulations and God bless.

Rev Dr Jervis D'Souza  
Deputy Secretary General, CBCI

REDEEMED PRISONER

SR LINI SHEEJA MSC

## REDEEMED PRISONER

SR LINI SHEEJA MSC



# Saga of Redemption

The Holy Bible is a Saga of Redemption. The book, 'Redeemed Prisoner' is another Saga of Redemption. Each PMI volunteer can write another Saga of Redemption by your passionate service for our brethren behind the bars. Stoop through the prison gates. To meet our brethren behind the bars, the volunteers need to stoop down. In-order to see the baby Jesus, the Shepherds and Magi had stooped down. My most important learning about Prison Ministry is the first day when I had stooped down through the prison gates, which taught me the remarkable lesson about humbling oneself to lift the other!

# God in His Work of Redemption!

Our God is busy 24 hours in His work redemption. As the song goes beautifully,

Every moment of every day  
Our God is waiting to save  
Always ready to seek the lost  
And to answer those who pray

We accompany our brethren and God redeems!

# PMI Volunteers in Redemptive Work!

Prison is a rejected place by the society because criminals and sinners are thrown there. The moment they are thrown behind the bars they are labeled as criminals and no one wants them. PMI volunteers are love bombs who reach out to the prisons, reach out to the brethren behind the bars with love in one hand and the Word of God in the other hand. Thanks to the Almighty who uses the PMI volunteers as His instruments to transform and redeem the souls for Him. PMI volunteers accompany the brethren behind the bars to refocus their life bidding adieu to the evil ways. God came down in the form of Jesus and the first message He preached was “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near” (Mt 4:17).

# Jesus behind the Bars

Some prisoners in their dark moments when all the doors seemed closed around them encounter God the Redeemer and open themselves to His holy will. PMI volunteers don't carry Jesus to the prisoners from outside. Our God is already present there, for He says, "When I was in prison, you visited me" (Mt 25:36). We accompany our brethren behind the bars to encounter our Crucified God and to gaze at the disfigured face of our God on the Cross. Jesus taught that God is to be found in prison. Can the convicted and death row prisoners be redeemed too? Jesus redeemed a death row prisoner on the Cross as He said, "Today you will be with me in paradise" (Luke 23:43) and it continues even today in the dark cells of prisons.

“Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise.” Luke 23:43

## Jesus Redeemed Good Thief on the Cross



# The Wounded in Death Chambers!

Pope Francis said the Church should be the “field of hospital” where the wounded are. The wounded are more in prisons, especially in the death-row chambers. The Pope defines a holy person as one through whom God passes. We are the hands of God; we are the eyes of Christ; we are the voice of the voiceless. When we look into the eyes of the prisoner, there is no doubt grace passes to us from them too. 90% of the death row prisoners are victims who have been abused as children, who have faced violence, witnessed violence, and finally they act out that violence that has been all too familiar to them and the cycle is completed.

## **Prison Ministry – A Journey towards Redemption!**

Prison Ministry is a journey in which the PMI volunteers accompany our brethren behind the bars. The journey of every prisoner ends only when they are redeemed by God. So, PMI is a journey towards redemption. In our entire society, it is only our brethren behind the bars who do not create walls for themselves. For, they have the external high walls which restrict their freedom, just because they made a mistake in their lives or were forced into crime or were urged to commit a crime by conducive situations.

## **Prison Ministry – A Journey towards Redemption!**

The external walls are not so painful in their lives compared to the walls which family members or society impose on them. The moment they are arrested they feel abandoned. Life becomes meaningless. They tend to think that they should die meaningfully rather than live a meaningless life. When you go to prison and meet our brethren, ask them about their first day's experience in prison, the day when they were mocked and laughed at by their enemies. You will commit yourself to live or them!

# Prison Ministry – A Call within a Call

“Not all of us can do great things. But we can do small things with great love”, said St. Mother Teresa, the Saint of the Gutter who answered the call within a call. A child is carried in a mother’s womb before birth and he/she is carried to the tomb after death. From womb to tomb the human being longs for love, care, affection, understanding, acceptance and so on. Nobody wants to be a criminal and no one is born a criminal and PMI believes that no one is beyond redemption. You’re never going to know if you can swim, unless you jump into the water. You’re never going to know that you can change the life of a prisoner, unless you become a passionate PMI volunteer.

# **Prison Ministry – A Call within a Call**

Prison Ministry is a call within a call to reach out to the broken, dejected, unvisited, the lost, least and the last. You need not be a judge, lawyer or a police officer to work for prisoners. But you can be an ordinary human being, who can do small things with great love for the love of our brethren behind the bars. If you have the eyes of Jesus who looks at the prisoner with eyes of compassion and the heart of Jesus who can hold the prisoner with love, just say 'Yes' to the call of our Redeemer. If you want to visit the God of the Lost, walk into the dark cells of prisons where broken beings await you.

# **Prison Ministry Call is....**

- \* A Call of Love**
- \* God's heart reaching out to the suffering of his children**
- \* Inviting His earnest lovers to join hands with Him**
- \* To heal the broken world, to the least, the last and lost**

# **Prison Ministry Call is.....**

- \* A passionate adventure**
- \* God called Moses by hearing the cry of the Israelites**

**(Exodus 3:9)**

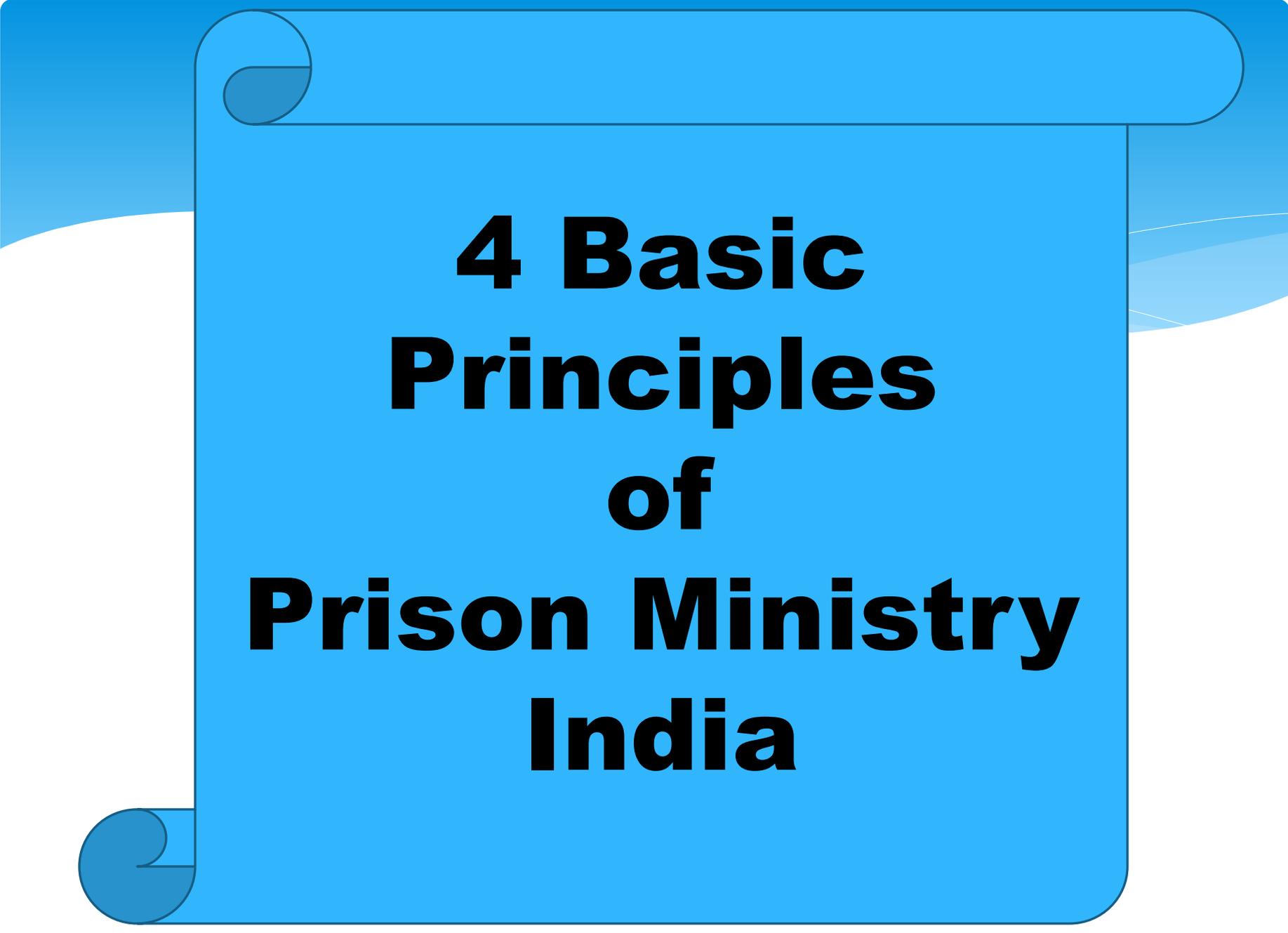
**Today the Lord has called you by hearing the cry of our brethren behind the bars.....**

# God of the Lost – A God of PMI Volunteers!

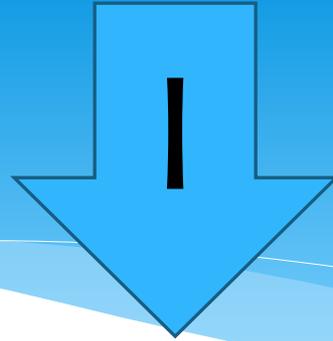
We are human. We break; we make mistakes. But some are caught and thrown behind the bars. They go through the moments of loneliness and feel desperate. All those who passed by the tax booth of Mathew, the tax collector, looked down on him. But the look of our Redeemer was different on Mathew. One look and two words, 'Follow me' changed the entire life of Mathew. And today we read, a important book from the Bible, "A Gospel of Mathew". Sinner to Saint! What more? There are many saints behind the dark cells of prison. The look of God is completely different from the look of man! All things are possible for God!

# The Cry of Prisoners!

Prison Ministry India is a call of the God of the Lost to each volunteer to reach out to the lost, least and the lost. The moment one enters the prison cells, their future is shattered, and their life is destroyed as the society looks them down. Their children are looked down. PMI serves in 1,350 prisons and 4,78,600 prisoners in India. We have 20 rehabilitation centres for released male/female prisoners and their children. Many of our brethren behind the bars have no shelter to live after their release. We witness the cry of many families as they sell their property, houses and belongings to release their loved one. As the God of the Lost heard the cry of the Israelites, we hear the cry of our brethren? What shall we do for them is the question put forth before you today?

A blue scroll graphic with a white background, featuring a dark blue border and decorative scroll elements at the corners. The text is centered on the white background.

**4 Basic  
Principles  
of  
Prison Ministry  
India**



Prayer  
Our  
Power House



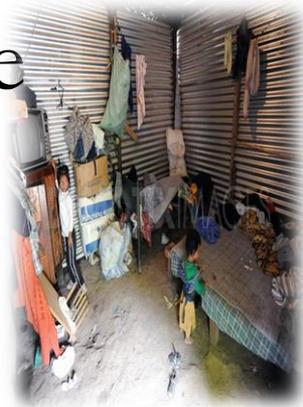
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Inconvenience  
Our  
Convenience



# Inconvenience our Convenience

- \* Family life – Husband expects everything on table while returning home
- \* Jesus – Born in manger, no place to lay His head, died on the Cross, buried in the borrowed tomb.
- \* Jesus suffered maximum inconvenience





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III



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**God's  
Providence  
Our  
Bank Balance  
(BDP)**



# God's Providence Our Bank Balance

- \* God provides
  - \* Life of a beggar Vs Our life
  - \* Life of Abraham – Father of Faith
  - \* Leaping into darkness with faith



IV

**Begging Our  
Lifestyle**

**Prison Ministry India  
A/c No. 0416053000001419  
South Indian Bank  
IFSC Code -SIBL0000416  
Sarjapura Road Branch  
Bangalore**

# Begging Our Lifestyle

\* Prison Ministry is not a struggle, rather a blessing as we stretch our hands before others for the sake of our brethren

\* No foreign projects

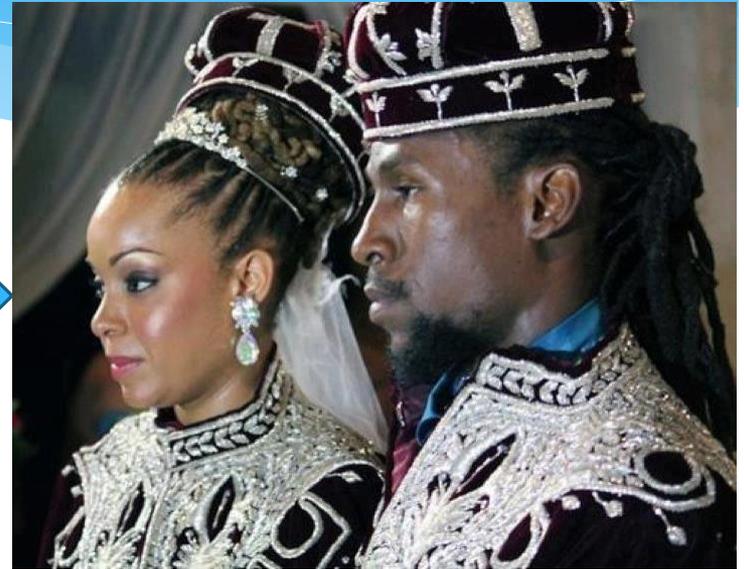
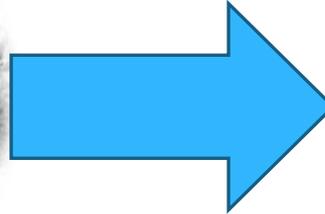


# Begging Our Lifestyle

- \* Becoming one with the helpless, innocent brethren, our brethren who wants to change
- \* Why do we follow this style?
- \* We are not humiliated rather elevated

We Beg

To Make  
Them



Kings and  
Queens

Let Our Attitude  
Be.....



They are  
Kings  
and  
Queens



**We are  
Servants**

# Begging Our Lifestyle

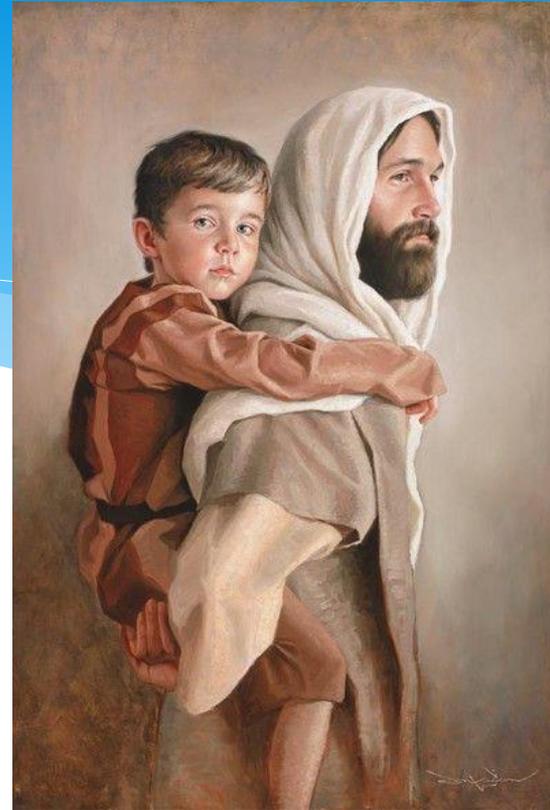
Prison Ministry is not a struggle, rather a blessing as we stretch our hands before others for the sake of our brethren

No foreign projects



# Begging Our Lifestyle

- \* Becoming one with the helpless, innocent brethren, our brethren who wants to change
  - \* Why do we follow this style?
- \* We are not humiliated rather elevated



God Carries  
Us



Let us Care and Carry  
the Burdens of  
Our Brethren Behind the  
Bars

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If You and I don't do  
Who else will do?

---

They are Our Brothers  
and Sisters

# Do you want to go to Heaven?

- \*Mt 25:36 (When I was in Prison  
you visited me)
- \*Now enter into the Kingdom of  
my Father

Thank You and  
May the God of  
the Lost Bless you  
and your Families

