

NOVEMBER 19, 2004  
*"Treasures in Prison"*

This may sound offensive to some, but prisons contain many of God's children, for it is in places like this where the Lord has hidden some of His special treasures. Behind these walls are men and women who shine with the Holy Spirit. Unfortunately, society's inclination is to dismiss prisoners as unredeemable and incorrigible, with little worth and having no ability to contribute anything of value to the world. Even some Christians seem to hold this view, and many churches and ministries have tried to keep a safe distance from those who are incarcerated. They often do the same with those who have been released but remain branded by law enforcement and the criminal justice system as ex-cons, felons, or parolees.

I must humbly say that Christians who hold these opinions and act like this are wrong. Yes, there are men and women in correctional facilities who have broken the law, though some may actually be innocent. Countless others are on parole. But God hasn't given up on them, just as He has never given up on me, for the Bible makes it clear that with the Lord there is forgiveness, mercy, and hope.

Of course we must all make our own choices. Some will reject the incarcerated, while others will be able to see what the Lord is doing in their lives. But I refer to John 3:16 as a reminder: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Whosoever is a very big word, and it includes everyone!