

# *Living in Prison*

Some of you feel as though you are imprisoned on the land where you live, or work, or go to church. If you had a choice, you would be gone in a heartbeat.

I doubt that very many people in a literal prison have access to this blog and follow it. For most of you who feel this way, the prison is the economic reality of your life. You are simply stuck in a ghetto and see no possible way to leverage the resources you have to move somewhere else.

For some it is the middle class bondage of having bought unwisely and now being in a house you own, but it really owns you since you are upside down on the mortgage.

For others the prison is created by social contracts. You may be stuck where you are because a spouse absolutely refuses to move. You may be staying until your kids finish high school. Or it may be that you need to stay close to parents or to grandkids because of special needs.

Another variation of the social contract is the job situation. Maybe you took a job in a city you did not like simply because you needed to pay your dues in this company, or maybe you are in the military and you were assigned to a defiled place.

Finally, there are those wonderfully confusing situations where God is the one who imprisons us on a piece of land. We know He wants us here, but have no clue as to why or for how long.

So, prison happens.

When you have cycled through all the emotional pain of the situation, it is time to get down to work.

My beginning point is that God has a plan for you and for the land. In some situations, we can see that this is a Father-filtered plan. You follow the trail of His fingerprints and can see that beyond any shadow of a doubt, God brought you to this land you hate.

By contrast, there are other situations where you are wallowing in overwhelming guilt over the choices you made which landed you there. You can follow the trail of all the things God did to warn you and try to redirect you, but you were obstinate and therefore utterly deserve the mess you made for yourself.

It is important to not let guilt get in the way of this project. Let's take a worst case scenario and say you are in a government prison. You are absolutely guilty as charged. There is no excuse for what you did and you deserve to be there.





Even if every bit of that is true, it does not mean that you stop being a child of God for that period of time. It does not mean that you stop growing or stop serving the King while you are in prison. It just means that you have a different playing field.

And even though it was not God's first plan for you to commit that crime (or make whatever other mess you made) rest assured that He is not a One Plan God. The majesty of our Father is that He will start over or adjust the plan as many times as He has to through the course of your life.

The simple reality is that most of us are already on God's plan for our life number 5, 782 even if we look like spiritual leaders. God works with our free will. No matter how many cues we miss, no matter how often our stubbornness or fear or foolishness causes us to decline to walk through the open door He placed in front of us, He just adjusts the plan and keeps working with us. No matter how many cliffs we drive off, He is there at the bottom of the cliff ready to adjust the plan and keep going forward.

Regardless of whether God personally transplanted you to this place you don't like, or you did it yourself with one or 1,000 bad choices, it is irrelevant. God is already out ahead of you and is vigorously engaged in creating the platform for a relationship between you and the land.

So how do you begin?

The very first question is whether you are there to give or receive. Don't default into thinking you need to clean it up. It may be, but that is not a given.

One of the most fascinating land experiences in my life was when I was in a city with a triple death spirit. I was there quite involuntarily, and was as trapped as I could be, living in a mediocre hotel for a week. I did not have enough gumption to even think about being dangerous. I simply tried to survive.

Yet God incarnated Psalm 23 there for me. In the very presence of my enemies, He withdrew a huge deposit from that land and gave it to me and it has marked my life ever since. In fact, I think He got a big kick out of blessing me with treasures from the land which the dark world thought they had all locked up.

Now for those of us with Obsessive Compulsive Serving God Syndrome (OCSGS), it seems really odd to receive and not give. I wrestle with that in the city where I am.

I don't particularly care for California, but God has emphatically placed me here and not allowed me to move. I care even less for the city of Anaheim. I happen to know some uglies about the city, and I just don't appreciate its misuse of the Ruler gift.

But I am here because God wants me to receive from the Ruler gift in a big way. It





has a global anointing to it, and in fact, being here on this land has radically changed the face of the company. While I still don't like the city, I am deeply grateful for the life that has flowed from it to me.

However, I feel a floating guilt about receiving and not giving. We have attempted a number of different projects to engage with the city in a life giving manner and are so far absolutely at zero. There is no grace for any of them. I can't even make friends with the neighboring businesses. God simply is not partnering with me in the art of giving back to the city.

I have finally given up on it although I leave the empty file open just in case it was a matter of timing. It could be that the command will come in the future to do something here. I still feel a low grade floating guilt over not giving back, and a bit of shame over not modeling on my home turf what I teach you to do, but I think both the guilt and shame are related to my OCSGS, so I suppress them and keep on receiving.

How do you know if you are supposed to be receiving? Well, ask the King for sure. That is the first step!

Also observe. Look at the baseline of your life before you arrived at that prison and then compare it to what you experience while you are there. I know that lots of things in your life are worse since you arrived (or you would not call it a prison), but is there anything that works better there?

For example, think of Joseph. He grew up in Hebron which is one spiritually loaded piece of land. His father, grandfather and great-grandfather all had significant encounters with God while there. He too had dreams of a spiritual nature there.

There is no reference to his being spiritually discerning in Potiphar's house nor of his having discernment in the palace. In fact, as Prime Minister, married to a priest's daughter, he was reduced to using a silver cup to do divination from the dark side.

But in the prison, he was brilliant at dream interpretation. It could be that this was just a visitation from God to spring him from the pen, or it could be that it was the result of his being on a portal in prison which reawakened that facet of his spirit which had been dormant for awhile.

So look at the baseline from before you were "there." Granted forty-eleven things are worse since you are in your prison, but is there anything that is easier, more fluid, more natural, more robust? If God is trying to massively strengthen some portion of your life through the anointing on the land, then the best thing you can do is lean into it and receive everything He placed there for you.

If nothing sparkles in terms of receiving, then the only other possible option is that you are there to give (No, Virginia. Just surviving until God lets you leave is not one of the options).

Now the giving dynamic is tricky. We are so easily drawn into going after what is wrong with the land. In our pain and anger, we can swiftly create a catalog of all





the brokenness that is there. Then we tap into our OCSGS and commit to taking all this trash out just because it is there and we are there. Who wants to coexist with vermin anyway, right?

One of the biggest transitions in my land cleaning journey has been learning how to work from the position of design, not need. In the past, I would take ownership of far too many problems, and I found that while I was busy with a dozen things which were a reach for me, I was missing the things God had specifically designed me for.

I had a ceremony where I officially gave the responsibility for the whole wide world back to God and dialed back to just the land which He had designed me to cleanse and therefore assigned me to cleanse. It is still a bit weird to walk by land which is clearly defiled and to not do anything to help it, but as I stick to what I am assigned, life is just better all the way around.

It seems I never quite learn that lesson though. I just got a slap in the face yesterday as I realized I let my hangups block me from one of my assignments.

Here is the background. I drive up and down Harbor Blvd a lot on my way to Brea. The corner of Harbor and Commonwealth is THE corner in Fullerton. This Exhorter city has dumped a lot of money into the downtown redevelopment, and that corner has gone through some visible redesign over the last 30 years and is highly valued now.

The building on the SW corner has been a hard luck building for a long time. Back in the day when I first wandered through the area, it was a pawn shop. Now this was no ordinary pawn shop. It was dark. Really dark. The owner did a short stint in prison for murder and came out more arrogant and vicious than before.

Time passed. The redevelopment agency displaced him. The building was rehabed and someone else moved in. They went out of business. Someone else came in and redesigned it. They went out of business. A third company did the same.

The decades roll by, businesses come and go on the most desired corner in Fullerton, and I know that the cause is the defiled land, but I feel no urge to go there.

The most recent tenant, less than a year ago, was a VERY upscale restaurant. I watched the remodel process and mused to myself how nice their presentation was.

And, for the last six months, every time I have driven south on Harbor Blvd past the restaurant I have thought, "I should go there some time."

I never did.

You see, I have issues with restaurants. For the most part they are expensive, and I am cheap. And they serve different food than I would mix and match. So I





generally eat at home unless I am on the road and have to eat out. And even then, I cringe at paying \$20 to \$40 for a plate of food. Most of the time, I simply can't justify putting \$4.00 worth of food in my mouth and spending the rest of the money on ambiance.

So, I never went to that restaurant.

But as I look at my design, there are three things that stand out as applicable to this battle. First, I have authority for life. I could come against the death spirit that has devoured several businesses due to the murderous previous owner of that land.

Second, I have an anointing for retail cash flow. Whether it is a restaurant, or a store, or a gas station, people flood into the store as soon as I am there. I could have done a lot of damage to the lack of sales on that land.

Third, I have an anointing for releasing the Prophet gift into its destiny. Just looking at it from the outside, I am reasonably sure it was a Prophet company. What would have happened if I had gone there with a friend and celebrated the excellence of the gift?

God designed me for that battle. He nudged me dozens of times. I knew what the defilement was. But I simply let my issues and hangups about getting good value for my dollar block me from doing Kingdom work.

And yesterday when I drove back from an errand in Brea, I noticed that it was closed and the building was for lease.

Again.

My bad.

Not everything that you need to do to cleanse the land in your prison is based on your design. Sometimes you just have to get a big old dose of defiance and tell the devil you have nothing at all in you that can deal with the mess in the land, but since you are seated at the right hand of all Majesty, you can bring the work of Christ on the cross and the power of Resurrection Sunday to bear on his mess.

At the end of the day, it is all about who we are in Christ. I know that.

But I also know that God is the master strategist, and the first place I learn to look when there is land to be cleansed is at my design. Who am I? What has God already placed in me that He would enjoy using here in this prison?

Quite often I find a one to one match to some of the defilement on the land.





Your job, then, is to take your eyes off the mess that your prison is. Take a look at your design first. Then check to see if there is a gift God wants you to give Him by making a deposit of His life, manifest in you, into the land.

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From the Quarterdeck, in Anaheim

