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Sharing Christ with Truckers and Travelers Since 1985

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Dear Ministry Friends and Supporters:

Many of our newsletters often start with some sort of 'seasonal' thought. However, writing one in the 'dead' of winter can sometimes be tricky because the weather can change drastically between when the letter is written and when it is sent out. We can have a string of bright and sunny days and the next week we can have a snowstorm. Sounds a little bit like life doesn't it? Things can be going along just as we have planned and then all of a sudden, something unexpected arises that needs to be dealt with. We can get frustrated, upset and even angry about those things that change our plans. We wanted to do something else!

There is certainly nothing wrong with making plans. In fact, it is a wise thing to do. Scripture tells us, "Commit your works to the Lord and your plans will be established." (Proverbs 16:3) However, we must also remember that, "The mind of man plans his way, but the Lord directs his steps." (Proverbs 16:9) and that, "The steps of a man are established by the Lord, and He delights in his way." (Psalm 37:23) Isn't it comforting to know that God says, "I will instruct you and teach you in the way which you should go; I will counsel you with My eye upon you."? (Psalm 32:8) What a blessing to know that the Lord "delights" in and "directs" our way, and that His "eye" is always upon us!

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO CARLISLE TRUCK STOP MINISTRY! Can you believe it? This year, CTSM is celebrating our 40th year of ministry to the truckers and travelers in the greater Carlisle area! Your faithful financial support has made this possible and has been a tremendous blessing to the Ministry and those that it serves. Would you prayerfully consider a special 'Birthday Gift' donation to celebrate God's faithfulness over all these years?

Each year as we develop a budget for the next year, we look at our income vs. expenses from the previous year and make any needed adjustments. We try the best we can to keep our expenses as closely in line with our anticipated income (donations) as possible. Praise God, without exception, the Lord has always provided the income needed to pay all of our bills on time. Any surplus is set aside for unexpected expenses (increases in insurance premiums, maintenance and equipment issues, etc.).

(NOTE: If you donated \$200.00 or more to the Ministry in 2024, you should have received a donation receipt and acknowledgment already. If you haven't, or need a receipt for a lesser donation amount, please let us know.)

In other news:

Our cookie collection and distribution event was a great success again this year. Due to some illnesses, we had to 'enlist' some new individuals to help deliver the cookies. This worked out well and one teenage helper said, "That was fun!" How could it not be fun when you're giving out free cookies! We had 91 churches and 9 other groups that donated cookies for a total of 13,849 bags.

Sometimes it seems like there's a healthy 'cookie competition' going on. One church dropped off several hundred bags last year, only to be topped by another group. This year, the first church dropped off 840 bags, only to be topped again by the other group with 1000 bags! Although not at all solicited, approximately \$1,800.00 was received in donations from cookie recipients. We know that the cookies are very much appreciated by the calls, letters and emails we receive from the recipients. One such letter from a large trucking firm stated, "Please allow me to take a moment to express our gratitude for your kindness and thoughtfulness each and every holiday season with donations of Christmas cookies. Your effort and time to do this is greatly appreciated by our drivers, dock personnel, and other staff." Thanks to all of you who donated your time and talents to bake and package all those cookies. They were certainly appreciated.

Throughout the year, we also receive many other encouraging communications from our supporting churches:

"We are thankful for the work your organization and volunteers accomplish and grateful that (we) feel called to support our mission partners."

"(We) want to express our gratitude for your work of spreading God's Word. We hope to strengthen our relationship with you in other helpful ways."

"May God bless your Ministry for the Glory of God."

"Thank you for all the good work you do in our community."

"Thank you for the tremendous work that you do, reaching out and sharing the gospel to the lost, broken and discouraged. May the New Year be filled with divine appointments, set by God where you can truly make a difference in the lives of those in need. May God continue to bless you and keep you in His care as you are out and about spreading His word and love with others."

"We stand in support of your mission and pray for the success of your service. We are delighted to partner with you in the work of our Lord. May God continue to bless you and the work of the Carlisle Truck Stop Ministry."

One of our Board's 'founding fathers', Harry Cleaver, resigned in 2024 after over 20 years of faithful service to the Ministry. Harry's presence and wisdom is surely missed. The Lord graciously supplied a new Board member, Dave Schreffler, who has also become our new bookkeeper.

And now, some words of encouragement from our chaplains:

Greetings Brothers and Sisters in the Name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.:

It's hard to believe that I am entering my ninth year as chaplain here at Carlisle Truck Stop Ministry. I remember in January of 2016 when Chaplain Dan Lehigh asked me if I wanted to be an assistant Chaplain. After prayerfully seeking the Lord's guidance in this decision, I happily said "yes". Unfortunately, Dan passed away 5 months later. All of a sudden, I found myself representing the Ministry to drivers, travelers and employees of the 'Miracle Mile'. I did a lot of praying that first year for guidance and wisdom and discernment on a daily basis. I still remember my first major 'divine encounter'. I was at the fuel island when I received a phone call from a woman needing help. I met her in front of the Petro and she shared with me that she had been kidnapped and assaulted in Virginia. I remember being very skeptical, but I listened to her and made some phone calls to verify her story and prayed a lot for wisdom. It turned out that her story was 100% true. She had been kidnapped and assaulted, but she somehow escaped from her kidnapper. After going to the police and reporting the crime, she started receiving death threats from the kidnapper's family. Fearing for her life, and with no support from the Virginia authorities, she fled north to try to get to a friend's place in another state. After verifying everything, the Ministry bought her a bus ticket and got her to safety. Little did I know at the time that this incident would just be the beginning of the many 'divine appointments' that I would experience here at Carlisle Truck Stop Ministry.

The years have flown by so fast. We weathered the COVID pandemic of 2019-2022. My wife became very ill in the spring of 2019. This was before COVID was even recognized as a contributing factor to the many respiratory issues that people were experiencing. She was in the hospital for 21 days. As I sat on the bed exhausted talking to Jesus, the Holy Spirit impressed upon me the story of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane. I realized that Jesus was struggling not only with fatigue and exhaustion and constant attack from the devil, but He was also aware of what was to come. I remembered the words of Matthew 26:39. Jesus fell face down and prayed saying, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet not as I will but as you will". The Holy Spirit brought these words to my heart, I knelt at the edge of the bed and prayed the same prayer. When my wife returned home, she had to be on oxygen for about three months, but I praise God for allowing me to experience that humbling moment.

Each day spent at the chapel is an opportunity to serve our Lord and Savior and to grow. I've shared the love of Jesus with folks, led some to accept Jesus as their personal Savior and planted seeds for other people to nurture later on. I remember one event in particular. As I was sitting at the desk in the chapel writing a report, the pen fell off to the floor and rolled under the desk. I knelt down to reach under the desk to grab the pen, and the Holy Spirit said to me, "David, when was the last time you prostrated yourself before me?" My heart broke. I'd been so busy doing the Lord's work that I lost track of worshiping Him. I placed my forehead on the floor and asked God to forgive me and to grant me the wisdom and discernment to continually worship Him.

As I look back over the years of daily logs that I have kept, I am so thankful for God's wisdom and discernment that He has imparted to me to serve Him here at Carlisle Truck Stop Ministry.

Blessings, Chaplain Dave

Choices

The Word of God is a collection of 66 God inspired books written by approximately 40 men. It not only tells a story about our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, it is also a blueprint for obedient living if we choose to follow God's commands. When we live out God's commands in our lives, He promises us many blessings. When we disobey His commands, He tells us that we will bring curses upon ourselves and our family.

We can choose to obey God's commands and receive life and blessings, or we can choose not to follow His commands and receive curses and death. On the surface this shouldn't be a difficult choice. However, it can be difficult following the word of God, and we often fail at even obeying the Ten Commandments. That failure can cause us to turn from Him and do the things that *we want* to do, when *we want* to do them and *how we want* to do them. This can lead us away from God and His protection, His blessings and life itself. We'll go down that broad road that will lead us to death and we will be unprotected against the schemes of Satan.

Chapter 28 of Deuteronomy gives us a clear picture of choosing how we can live life. The first 14 verses are about obedience and blessings. The final 53 verses are about disobedience and death. God has brought the Israelites to the edge of the promised land which He is going to give them. He has Moses gather them all together so he can tell them what God wants them to do. Moses said, "If you fully obey the Lord your God and carefully follow all His commands I give you today, the Lord your God will set you high above all the nations on earth. All these blessings will come upon you and accompany you if you obey the Lord your God. You will be blessed in the city and in the country. The fruit of your womb will be blessed, your livestock will be blessed, your basket and your kneading trough will be blessed, and you will be blessed when you come in and when you go out." This is Choice A. Remember God's word also tells us the gate is narrow that leads to life and few find it.

However, Moses also tells them, "If you do not obey the Lord your God and do not carefully follow all His commands and decrees, I am giving you today, all these curses will come upon you and overcome you. You will be cursed in the city and in the country. Your basket and your kneading trough will be cursed. The fruit of your womb, your livestock will be cursed. You will be cursed coming in and going out. The Lord will send on you curses, confusion and rebuke in everything you put your hand to, until you are destroyed and come to sudden ruin because of the evil you have done in forsaking Him." This is Choice B. I think I will stay with choice A. God's word also tells us the gate to destruction is wide and the road is broad, and many enter through it.

I am amazed when God gathers His people together and they read the Word of God. In Nehemiah Chapter 8 we see how God's word affects the hearts of people, how it moves them to do what is right even when they haven't been following the Lord's commands. The word of God is powerful and the more we obey it, the more God will help us to be obedient. The word of God is living and alive. Sharper than any double-edge sword, it penetrates, even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow, it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. (Hebrews 4:12)

Read God's word, spend time with Him in prayer, and your faith will grow, and you will receive God's promises for following His commands.

Blessings in Christ, Chaplain Mike