



BREAKING
POINT



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Book Reviews

"This is Marie; Kenneth's mom. I wanted you to know that your books have landed in the Cook County jail. Blessings, keep up the good work - by Faith! excel - exceed." Marie W.

"I would like to thank you for your series of Chronicles of Hope books. I have printed all 3 in hopes of sending them to my nephew in prison... praying he gets out with a new vision, thanks to you. God bless you my brother." Brenda A. Geater

BREAKING POINT



At the time of this publication, there are several standoffs, riots and hungerstrikes going on in prisons both nationally and internationally.

Wall Street Journal reports that both inmates and guards say that sick inmates are being placed back into general population in Oakdale federal prison, Louisiana.



A majority of these individuals have what we call an "out-date" or a day that they will be released from jail. The anticipation for this day, especially for somebody who is presently detained, can be overwhelming at times. Now couple that with the anxiety of knowing that there are people out there who don't really want them to come home. It can be a bit much.



Let's also be considerate of the fact that the Department of Corrections and local jails are dealing with something of which there has never been a drill or protocol. It's not as if they're trying to make matters worse for those who are incarcerated - that would in no way benefit them. But the question is - how can they make matters easier. How can we?



**"Open your mouth, judge
righteously, defend the
rights of the poor and
needy."**

- Proverbs 31:9 ESV

All of us are called to be empathetic. All of us have been commissioned to give people "another chance." Every last one of us should use our voices to speak on the behalf of those who are at their breaking point.



NO MERCY

*Mercy, detached from
Justice, grows unmerciful.*

- C.S.Lewis

One of our organization's initial investors once told me, "*If they did the crime - they should do the time.*"

He wasn't being insensitive, he was just simply trying to understand why I would want to help formerly incarcerated people.



A cancer survivor helping former cancer patients to stay cancer free seems admirable to me. But somehow it takes on a different connotation when you talk about people who are formerly incarcerated or people who are currently in the criminal justice system. We shouldn't pick and choose who deserves mercy and who doesn't.



Therefore, we have to be just as liberal with our justice as we are with our mercy.

We can't be a society that speaks of mercy, justice and peace but then shy away from actively sharing these virtues with those who need them the most. Therefore, mercy and action must coexist so that our words bear fruit.



Mercy should in no way be detached from justice.

Inmates at the largest jail in the Chicagoland region recently wrote, "*Help, we matter*" on a window. More than 450 inmates and staff tested positive for the virus. Now, if you were in one of those cells, wouldn't you want out? Or, should you continue "*doing the time because of your crime?*"



Incidents like the one I just described are happening in jails and prisons nationwide - some right in our own backyard. When will it become personal enough for us to embrace empathy.

Mercy has to be seen through the eyes of justice - we have to see ourselves in the picture. Or else, we can become unmerciful. We need mercy AND justice.



JUSTICE

**When justice is done, it is
a joy to the righteous but
terror to evildoers.**

Proverbs 12:15 ESV

The story of Joseph gives a graphic picture of his brother's terror when they found out who he was (Genesis 45:3). They were horrified because they knew that they had done him wrong.



In stark contrast, when Joseph's father Jacob found out that Joseph was still alive, his response was totally different (Genesis 45:25-28). The bible says that "his spirit revived" - he treated Joseph right so he had nothing to fear.

I personally believe that fear only arises when people know that they've been unjust.



For centuries people have feared certain races because they knew that that particular race had been wronged by their ancestors.

On the other hand, people who have conducted themselves justly often cheer on marginalized people, especially when they know that they've taken no personal part in their demise.



In other words, if you've personally done nothing wrong... then what are you afraid of?

Righteous people, or people who are right with God, don't have anything to fear. Usually, fearful people aren't right on the inside and society suffers due to the insecurities of some and the apprehension of others.



According to the **National Registry of Exonerations** there are currently 2,601 exonerations with 23,000 years lost. In other words, we have a broken justice system. Many of the people coming home from prison are innocent. Yet, many of us justify our fear of these people instead of rejoicing in their freedom. But the righteous rejoice in justice.



PEACE

**"Peace I leave with you;
my peace I give to you.
Not as the world gives do
I give to you. Let not your
hearts be troubled,
neither let them be
afraid."**

- John 14:27 ESV

What do we say to people
who are at their breaking
point? We say... PEACE.



I personally know people who have committed suicide and none of them were in a peaceful state when they left this earth. Some people might say, "*Well, they were at peace with themselves.*" Maybe so, but it's highly unlikely that they possessed "the peace of God."

God's peace is not the same as man's peace.



I know what it's like to live in an environment that's far from peaceful and yet experience tranquility on the inside. And that's why I believe that this kind of material should be shared with people in jail and with those who are being released from the institution. People need God's peace, the kind that even surpasses things that they might not understand.



**"And the peace of
God, which surpasses all
understanding, will guard
your hearts and your
minds in Christ Jesus.**

- Philippians 4:7 ESV

The Apostle Paul spoke of
"the peace of God" - the
kind that guards your heart
and mind in Christ Jesus.

That peace only comes
through intimacy - spending
time with God in prayer.



Combine prayer with meditation on God's Word (the bible) and you end up with God's Peace.

My point: I believe in helping people out with resources but that will do them no good if they are lacking revelation. We need a personal relationship with Jesus Christ (Romans 10:9,10) so that we can believe beyond breaking.