



MATTHEW 25

*“I was hungry...I was thirsty...I was a stranger...I needed clothes...
I was sick...***I was in prison***, and you came. Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of
the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.”*
(Matthew 25 NRSV)

For I was in prison and you came to me...

FACTS

- On March 12, 2021 *U.S. News and World Report* reported: the combined state and federal incarceration rate fell in recent years, decreasing by 3% between 2018 and 2019, according to the U.S. Department of Justice, to 419 people per 100,000, the lowest imprisonment rate in 24 years.
- On May 31, 2021 the *Columbus Dispatch* reported that Franklin County Ohio will open a new corrections center next year. The \$360 million dollar facility will replace the county's main jail.
- The current Franklin County facility reports about 3616 bookings yearly. It is supervised by 18 staff members under the authority of the Franklin County Ohio Sheriff, Dallas L. Baldwin. Prisoners housed here have either been condemned for a crime or are presently in the pre-preliminary stage.
- According to the Vera Institute of Justice, incarceration costs an average of more than \$31,000 per inmate, per year, nationwide. In some states, it's as much as \$60,000.
- According to Policy Matters in 2017 Ohio incarcerated roughly 50,440 people at an average cost of \$67.84 per inmate per day. Community corrections programs would receive \$23 per day from the Department of Rehabilitation and Corrections.
- Nationally 195,000 young people were placed in detention centers in 2018. The average stay is 27 days. (The Annie E Casey Foundation, March 26, 2021).

PERSONAL REFLECTIONS AROUND THE TABLE

Can you imagine what it must be like to live in prison?

Talk about the prejudices and judgements that exist against those who live in prison?

What Bible stories come to mind when you think of imprisonment?

In what ways can you personally or our church care for those in prison?

WAYS TO PRAY

Pray for all those incarcerated in prisons and jails across the country.

Pray for the people employed in the corrections system.

Pray for the families of the imprisoned.

Pray for all who have been wrongly convicted and imprisoned.

ACTION ITEMS:

1. Read a book on mass incarceration. The Columbus Metropolitan Library has an extensive collection of recent publications.
2. Explore ways to provide care packages to inmates.
3. Consider participating in books to prison program located in Athens, Ohio <http://athensbookstoprisoners.weebly.com/donate.html>.
4. Re-read Matthew 25: 31-40. How does this passage connect for you with the issue of being imprisoned? Does it change how you view the facts above, your prayers, or actions? If so, how?

Please interact with the links below to engage more with the topics of imprisonment and incarceration as well as learn more about resources dedicated to helping

Local Information

Demographic profile of Ohio's prisons <https://www.prisonpolicy.org/profiles/OH.html>

Ohio's bail reform, Local ABC 6 News Clip, May 18, 2021

<https://abc6onyourside.com/news/local/poor-people-in-jail-rich-people-go-free-ohios-cash-bail-reform-could-change-it>

Incarceration Trends in Ohio <https://www.vera.org/downloads/pdfdownloads/state-incarceration-trends-ohio.pdf>

National Information

Prison Policy Initiative racial disparities

<https://www.prisonpolicy.org/blog/2020/07/27/disparities/>

International Information

Amnesty International website <https://www.amnesty.org/en/what-we-do/detention/>

National Church Information

PCUSA Office of the General Assembly <https://www.pcusa.org/news/2019/5/14/i-was-prison-and-you-bailed-me-out/> and <https://handsandfeet-pcusa.org/cash-bail-march/>