

God's Intervention

Chaplain's Job

True Stories

By: Ronald Willis

Back in 1996, I was the only Assistant Chaplain for all of Lee County. I worked under Chaplain Jerry Camp. I had full access to all inmates at all times in Lee County! I finalized all inmates' requests daily. I also kept a log of all inmates' movements in and out of the Christian block. I reported to Chaplain Camp and Major Dowdy daily. I was respected by all the officers and inmates alike.

I taught two Bible classes during the week and preached to the men on Sunday morning and then preached to the ladies that afternoon. I scheduled pastor's visitation, handed out Bibles and wonderful Christian books to all inmates. I also dealt with people wanting to commit suicide. I loved my job even though it was heartbreaking in so many ways.

One of my jobs was to inform an inmate of a death in the family. I had to contact the coroner of the county where the person died, confirm the death and then take the inmate to a private location in order to inform them of the death. At that time, I would set up a free phone to allow them to call their family.

One of the hardest things I have ever done was to tell a young lady that her father had passed away and then one week later informing her that her son was driving too fast and crashed their car, killing himself. I literally held her and cried with her for more than a half-hour. I also contacted her judge and got her clearance for her to join her family at her son's funeral, chaperoned by two law enforcement officers.

I have to say the job was tough, but very rewarding!

One time I was asked to visit an inmate who was in the hospital. He had gotten bitten by a brown recluse spider while in our Christian block at the stockade. Apparently, many others had gotten bitten also, but this man was bitten in the face and was disfigured terribly. It was hard to look at him. When I walked into his room he was smiling and in great spirits. This guy was something else. I could tell he loved the Lord. We read some scriptures from the Bible and I prayed for him and his family. For about an hour I got to know this young man, and by I left the room he was telling jokes.

Later on, the spiders were eradicated and no more inmates were bitten.

Another time I was told that a young lady had breast cancer and she needed surgery right then. Every time the Captain scheduled the surgery we were told that security had been breached, someone knew where she was going to be. I intervened as much as possible, but could only do so much to get her the surgery she needed. After fighting the system for more than two months, she finally got her surgery and she is living today because of God's intervention.

One time I was asked by Major Dowdy to purchase a bus ticket for a lady who was to be released that Saturday morning. I went down to the bus depot and bought a one-way, non-refundable ticket for this lady to get home.

Saturday came about and as this young lady was to step out of the jail to freedom, she was told that she had a warrant for her arrest in another county. That meant she was not going to get out of jail until she dealt with this warrant. That also meant that the bus ticket that I purchased was for nothing.

Sunday morning, I found out what had happened. I went to Major Dowdy that Monday and told her what had happened. She cleared up the hold on the young lady and paid for another bus ticket. We got the lady on the bus and informed her family that she was headed home.

Many times, I would go to court to request a judge to allow an inmate to go to a long-term drug program versus prison time, and most of the time the judge would go along with it. One morning I was in court sitting in the front row, waiting for an inmate's case to be called. While trying to make sure I was ready to testify for this young man, an officer of the court came into the court room stating with a loud voice, Your Honor, Mr. Roberts cannot be brought to the court room. The judge asks, "Why?" The officer stated, because of health problems. That is when they looked at me and said, "Ron, what are you here for?" I stood up and gave him the case number. The judge asked me, "Will he complete the program?" I said, yes. The judge said, so be it.

Then the judge asked me to come forward. I took a few steps forward when the judge said, I need you to get Mr. Roberts out of jail now. He is waiting on you downstairs. Without saying another word I left the court room and went down to the jail. I told the captain that I had been working with for years what had happened. He said, I need the judge's signature on a form before I can release Mr. Roberts to you.

I went up to the judge's office to see if I could talk to the judge's secretary. As soon as I started telling the lady what I needed the Judge to do, he came into the room. He grabbed the phone and started screaming at the captain I had been talking to. He demanded the Captain release Mr. Roberts into my hands now.

The judge told me to drive my car into the security pickup area and that Mr. Roberts will be ready for you.

Sure enough, I drove in and got out of my car when the head nurse handed a large bundle of paperwork into my arms, while two officers put Mr. Roberts into the front seat and buckled him in. I drove out into the traffic and started talking to my passenger. That is when I looked over to see him with his head rolled back and his eyes rolled back into his head.

I was terrified! All I could say was don't you die on me. I put my flashers on and drove like satan was after me. I went through stop signs and red lights like they were not there. Even though the hospital was only a few blocks away, it seemed like we would never get there.

I drove up to the emergency room entrance, got out of the car and started screaming for help. Immediately I had the help I needed. I told them who I was and that I had just gotten him out of jail. A few minutes later a doctor came out and asked me some questions. I really didn't have any info on the man except all the folders that the jail nurse had given me.

An officer, at a desk, witnessed me opening Robert's billfold. There was no money in it, matter of fact there was only one small piece of paper in the corner of the billfold that was folded twice. It had two men's names on it and their phone numbers. I called the first number and left a message for them to call me. As I called the other number I prayed that someone would answer, and they did. I asked if the person who answered the phone knew a Roberts. She said, yes! I told her of the situation he was in. The lady told me that she was married to Mr. Roberts' son and that she would have her husband call me when he got home.

Sure enough, he called me that afternoon. He informed me that he and his brother would be up to see his father that night. I gave him his father's room number and informed him that I would meet them there that night.

Upon the two brothers and their wives getting there they did not recognize their father. They told me that their other brother had stolen a lot of items from a house and placed it in his father's car trunk. Someone

told the police where the items were and, because the son did not own up to stealing the items, their father was arrested.

A few days later a doctor that had been treating Mr. Roberts called me. He told me that he had been treating Mr. Roberts' cancer for some time and that he could not understand why all a of sudden he would stop getting his treatments.

I visited Mr. Roberts every day. He went from a jail cell to one of the most incredible rooms I had ever seen in a hospital. We got him shaved and a haircut. He was looking good, but we all new that it was only a matter of time before he would be gone. Concerned about his salvation I asked him point blank, "Do you know Christ as your savior?" He said, yes but can I do it again? I told him, "If you have asked God to forgive you of your sins, confess that you are a sinner and believe in Jesus, one day I would see you in heaven."

He said, I want to do it again. So, with tears in both of our eyes, I walked him through salvation as never before. I loved that old man and I know one day I will see him again in heaven. Shortly after, he passed away.

One long day, I was at the Stockade walking past several jail cells, heading home, when I heard a scream from an inmate. Even though I was exhausted, I stopped when this gentleman called my name. As I went over to the cell his voice became securer. He informed me that his wife was going to have his baby that afternoon. He asked me to look in on her. Since she was at the Cape Coral Hospital and I lived nearby, I told the man I would check on her before I went home.

Upon getting to the hospital, I entered the birthing center only to find it empty. I looked down the hall to my left and again no one was there. That is when I spoke with a loud voice, "Is there anyone here?"

All at once a nurse popped out of a room and asked if she could help me. I informed her that I was here to see a Miss xxxxx. She pulled me into a room where this lady was having her child. That was scary, but I immediately knew what to do. Having a cell phone, I called an officer at the jail, telling him the situation and asking him to take the inmate father to a free phone and asking him to call my number. With a grateful heart the father called me and I was able to allow the father to be with his wife, through the phone, as she gave birth to their child.

I think everyone there had tears running down their cheeks. That was an awesome evening!

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It is my sincerest hope that everyone who reads this, will reflect back on his or her own life. See where God has touched them and given them the ability to serve in other's lives.

Let us know how God has intervened in your life!