



Biblical & Theological Foundations for Sex Offender Sanctuary

Sex Offender Sanctuary is a 501(c)(3) non-profit, Christian organization founded on distinctly biblical principles of caring for those who are registered sex offenders in the State of Florida. We believe that genuine, practical compassion has been, throughout history, mandated by God of all mankind,¹ and that Jesus Christ will judge everyone based on their responses to those in need.



*Then the King will say to those on His right hand, ‘Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was **hungry and you gave Me food**; I was **thirsty and you gave Me drink**; I was a **stranger and you took Me in**; I was **naked and you clothed Me**; I was **sick and you visited Me**; I was **in prison and you came to Me**.’ “Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink? When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?’ And the King will answer and say to them, ‘**Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.**’*

*“Then He will also say to those on the left hand, ‘Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels: for I was **hungry and you gave Me no food**; I was **thirsty and you gave Me no drink**; ⁴³ I was a **stranger and you did not take Me in, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me**.’ “Then they also will answer Him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to You?’ Then He will answer them, saying, ‘**Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.**’ And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”²*

We believe, teach and aspire to practice the following seven principles:

Principle 1: Every person, regardless of their race, creed, nationality, sex or sexual orientation, economic condition, intellectual or physical ability, or criminal history are created in the “image of God.”

The Bible declares that mankind is uniquely created in the “image of God.”³

Hence, we believe every person, without exception, has immense worth, and treat everyone, regardless of their criminal past, with dignity and love.

¹ **Micah 6:8** He has shown you, O man, what *is* good; And what does the LORD require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?

² **Matthew 25:34–46**

³ **Genesis 1:27** So God created man in His *own* image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

Principle 2: Every person has sinned and missed the mark for which all mankind has been designed by God. ⁴

The same apostle who declared “If any other man thinks that he has reasons for which he might trust in the flesh, I more”, who submitted an impressive list of attributes, accolades and achievements,⁵ also declared he was absolute worst of sinners.⁶

Because all have sinned no one has the right nor the ability to condemn another.⁷ Crime is commonly considered a violation of law, it is fundamentally a moral problem. Crime is more than a behavioral disorder, a socioeconomic problem, or a lack of education. Ultimately, crime is the consequence of a heart in rebellion to God.

Hence, we believe everyone is, in some manner, an offender, having violated the laws of God and failed to fulfill the purposes for which He has created us.⁸ We view ourselves no better, valued no more, than those we serve. C.S. Lewis once wrote, “Think of me as a fellow patient in the same hospital, who having been admitted a little earlier can give some advice.”⁹

Principle 3: The judgment of sin is death.

As Newton's third law of “cause and effect” teaches us in the physical realm of nature, “For every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction”, so the Bible warns to us in the moral realm of human behavior, “Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life.”¹⁰ In fact, Paul cautioned, “the wages of sin is death.”¹¹

Hence, we believe everyone is guilty before God, and unless liberated by Christ, we are all on probation and remain in some form of bondage. We view ourselves as having accepted a “plea bargain” with God, having admitted our guilt and shame. However, instead of us accepting the sentence of death for ourselves, we have accepted the payment Jesus Christ made on the cross on our behalf.

⁴ **Romans 3:23** For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

Galatians 5:16-23 So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature. For the sinful nature desires, what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under law. The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

⁵ **Philippians 3:4-6** though I also might have confidence in the flesh. If anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I more so: ⁵ circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee; ⁶ concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.

⁶ **1 Timothy 1:15** This *is* a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.

⁷ **John 8:7** So when they continued asking Him, He raised Himself up and said to them, “He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first.”

⁸ **Romans 3:23** for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

⁹ **C.S. Lewis**, note to his friend, Sheldon Vanauken, after the death of his wife, Joy.

¹⁰ **Galatians 6:7-8**

¹¹ **Romans 6:23** For the wages of sin *is* death, but the gift of God *is* eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Principle 4: Jesus Christ, God in flesh, identified with the sin of all mankind, died in our place and resurrected from death.

Because Jesus is God incarnate,¹² who identified with all mankind¹³ and paid for sin by His death on the cross and His resurrection from the grave, every person can be saved from judgment for their sin and given eternal life.¹⁴

Jesus Christ is mankind's only hope¹⁵ and change is possible. Change is possible, regardless how broken a person is, regardless how sinful they are, or what crimes they have committed. The God who created them is also good and great – more than sufficient to transform them.

Hence, we believe no one is ever beyond redemption and hope. All sin and crime can be forgiven. We don't give up on people even when it seems they will never change. Instead we pursue and continue to encourage those God brings to us.

Principle 5: Transformation best occurs in the context of a Christian community of those who struggle with similar issues and equally committed to the same biblical goals.

The transformation of a life in Christ, sanctification, and healing from the past best occurs in the context of a community of those equally committed to the same biblical goals.¹⁶

To know God, it is necessary to repent, change thinking and direction in life; to believe that Jesus is Lord, and to receive His Spirit. To become godly, it is best to be in a community of other Christians, who encourage, excite, educate, exhort, and equip for serving God, each other and the world at large.

Hence, we believe that becoming godly is a life-long process, called “discipleship” facilitated through godly mentors who intentionally invest their time, their talents and themselves.¹⁷ We aspire to love as God has loved us through Christ, to teach biblical principles and precepts for Christian living, and to be disciple-makers.

¹² **John 10:30** I and My Father are one.”

John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

John 1:14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

John 14:9 He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, ‘Show us the Father’?

¹³ **1 Timothy 2:5** For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus,

¹⁴ **John 10:10** The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.

¹⁵ **Acts 2:26** Therefore my heart rejoiced, and my tongue was glad; moreover, my flesh also will rest in hope.

1 Peter 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

¹⁶ **Hebrews 10:24–25** And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, ²⁵ not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as *is* the manner of some, but exhorting *one another*, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.

¹⁷ **2 Timothy 2:2** And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.

Ephesians 4:11–13 And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, ¹² for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, ¹³ till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ;

Principle 6: Love and compassion to those in need characterizes those who are followers of Jesus Christ.

The essential nature of God is holy,¹⁸ life,¹⁹ and love.²⁰ It is impossible to understand these three attributes: God's holiness, His life or His love without knowing God. Yet, knowing God, it is impossible not to be holy, to live or to love. In fact, the apostle John wrote, "He who does not love does not know God, for God is love."²¹

Therefore, knowing God will result in living like Him, imitating Him,²² and loving others as He has loved us. God demonstrated His love in loving us when we were unworthy, unlovable and enemies of His.

Hence, we determine to be holy as He is holy, to live as Christ and to love as He has loved us.

Principle 7: The Body of Christ is called to minister to those who have been imprisoned or oppressed.

Unlike any other organization or ministry, the Church has been ordained to be God's instrument of grace and ministry in this world. The act of serving prisoners, ex-prisoners, and their families in the name of Jesus is both a ministry and a means of worship and spiritual growth.²³

A review of the New Testament indicates three key elements of the Church's ministry to those in prison and those on probation:

COMPASSION – which means, "to suffer with." The writer of Hebrews exhorts, "Continue to remember those in prison as if you were together with them in prison, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering."²⁴ In Matthew

¹⁸ **Psalm 99:9** Exalt the LORD our God, and worship at His holy hill; For the LORD our God *is* holy.

1 John 1:5 This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.

¹⁹ **John 17:3** And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.

²⁰ **1 John 4:8** God is love.

²¹ **1 John 4:8**; cf. also, 1 Corinthians 13.

1 John 3:10 In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest: Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor *is* he who does not love his brother.

1 John 3:14 We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love *his* brother abides in death.

²² **Ephesians 5:1-2** Therefore be imitators of God as dear children. ² And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma.

²³ **Luke 4:16-19** He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. And as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read. ¹⁷ And He was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written: ¹⁸ "*The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, Because He has anointed Me To preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed; ¹⁹ to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD.*"

Matthew 25:40-43 And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did *it* to one of the least of these My brethren, you did *it* to Me.' ⁴¹ "Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels: ⁴² for I was hungry and you gave Me no food; I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink; ⁴³ I was a stranger and you did not take Me in, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me.'

Galatians 6:9-10 And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. ¹⁰ Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.

²⁴ **Hebrews 13:3**

25:34–46, the Greek verb ἐπισκέπτομαι (*episkeptomai*), translated “visited” (*in prison and you did not visit Me*), means significantly more than an occasional visit to the county jail. This word carries the connotation of spending time, providing practical care for those in jail, and, if possible, redeeming them from their plight.⁴ Most poignantly, David questioned God in Psalm 8:4, “What is man that You are mindful of him, and the son of man that You visit him?”²⁵ Jesus did much, much more than spend an afternoon, deliver a sermon and eat a meal! Jesus completely identified with mankind, such that He “was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin”²⁶ and was “made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”²⁷

ADVOCATE – Our modern US prison system is an ongoing evolution of punishment, retribution, correction and rehabilitation. The Walnut Street Jail in Philadelphia was built by the Quakers in 1773 as the first institution in the US designed to punish and rehabilitate criminals. At first, the Quaker encouraged “penance” by offenders. Prisoners were to spend extended periods in isolation, to give them time to reflect on their misdeeds and come to contrition. The use of single cells and solitary confinement in these prisons drew upon practices employed in medieval monasteries for disciplining wayward monks. And undergirding the whole regime was a Christian theology that believed in the power of penitence, and the potential for harsh treatment to encourage it. However, very quickly penitentiaries became warehouses of inhumane torture and colleges for increasing criminology.

In June 2017, the incarceration rate of the United States averaged 2.3 million people on any given day -- the highest in the world. While the US represents about 4.4% of the world's population, it houses around 22% of the world's prisoners.

A careful understanding of the Bible reveals a consistently negative valuation of punitive and incarcerative responses to crime. Crime has never been resolved by incarceration. The biblical teaching of redemption and the testimony of the One who sets prisoners free, should compel all Christians to resist further expansion of the prison system.

COMMUNITY – The third and final element of the Church’s ministry to those in prison and those on probation must be a commitment to the reintegration of released prisoners into “communities of care.” Those who were in prison need a community of people who truly understand both the grace and the discipline of forgiveness, a community that loves its “enemies” and welcomes strangers, a community that breaks down the dividing walls of hostility and preaches “peace to those who were far off”. This is what Christ did, and this is what those who bear his name should also do. This is the mission of Sex Offender Sanctuary.

²⁵ The same verb, ἐπισκέπτη, is used in the Greek Septuagint (LXX) of Psalm 8:4.

²⁶ **Hebrews 4:15** For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all *points* tempted as *we are*, yet without sin.

²⁷ **2 Corinthians 5:21** For He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.