

Chapter 7

Finding Jesus in Jail

The most tragic words ever written about Jesus were that “he came unto his own, and his own received him not” (John 1:11). At Bethlehem, there was no room for him in the inn at his birth; at Nazareth, there was no room for him among his townspeople; at Jerusalem, there was no room for him to teach in the temple or even a tomb for him where he died. Jesus knew well feelings of rejection, loneliness, homelessness, and abandonment. He knew what it was like to be forced to move on, to be arrested, chained, mocked, and physically abused by prison guards. He knew what it was like to be paraded before the curious, to appear before judges and magistrates, and to receive a sentence even of death.

Thus, Jesus is uniquely qualified to succor those who are in the jails and prisons of the world. During his mortal ministry, he devoted much of his time to sinners, the sick, the poor and despised, and he has not changed his ways. Jesus does not appear only in sanctuaries and temples as some may believe. He also walks the halls and visits the cells of the world’s prisons. I have found him and the signs of his healing ministry in the Salt Lake County Jail.

Most inmates in jail have lost everything. Whatever material goods they possessed before their incarceration are