

# *From the King's Table*

So Jehoiachin put aside his prison clothes and for the rest of his life ate regularly at the king's table.  
2 Kings 25:29



## From the Director

### DR. BRUCE PERKINS

Welcome to the inaugural issue of *From the King's Table*, the newsletter of the Oklahoma Baptist University Prison Divinity Program. The title comes from 2 Kings 25:29 because it summarizes a brief yet powerful story of renewed hope. After 37 years of being held captive by the Babylonian king, Jehoiachin was pardoned. The Hebrew text literally says the king "lifted up the head" of Jehoiachin. In other words, he restored his dignity. He gave him hope. Yet, he remained in the presence of his captor. He was not completely free but he was given a place of honor and dined regularly at the king's table. Jehoiachin's elevated status also brought hope to the people of Judah that one day their exile might come to an end.

Likewise, the students in our Prison Divinity Program have been given a wonderful opportunity of hope. After receiving 172 applications from inmates across the state and interviewing 65 applicants, 40 men were chosen for the program. Some will discover renewed purpose. Others will find a new depth to their purpose. All will be impacted by this community of learning. So, although remaining in prison, for the moments we are in the classroom engaging with God's Word and God's world through a Christian liberal arts education, they can lay aside their prison clothes and feast at the table of our King. We also pray that OBU's presence in the prison brings hope to other inmates - the hope of opportunity but, more importantly, the hope in Christ.

*The Prison Divinity Program transforms the lives of incarcerated individuals to redeem both the self and the system through the resurrection power of Jesus Christ by providing a learning environment and program of study that leads to a reformed perspective on life which results in a redirected purpose for life.*

### Calendar

#### April 23

First exam in Introduction to the Prison Divinity Program

#### April 25

Dr. Perkins is preaching the morning service at First Baptist Church, Okemah, OK

#### April 28

Dr. Perkins is preaching the Global Outreach commissioning service in OBU chapel

## *Penned from Prison*

This section of our newsletter features comments written by our students shared with their permission from their journals and writing assignments.

I believe that hope is a spiritual necessity to overcome the anger, despair, addictions, and loneliness of prison. The more I study and search for meaning in the face of God, the less helpless I feel. This degree will not only help me to better understand a servant's heart, it will help me to apply God's Word to those around me. - Robert

*A lot of people have been counting me out my whole life so, even though I know this program will not be easy, I look forward to the challenge.* - Chris

The past couple of months I have prayed often asking God to give me a way to serve. I feel that this program is a door God has opened especially for me. - Brett

*My son has many doubts about God and the power of Christ and the Holy Spirit. If I could better explain myself to him and use material learned in college to back up what I tell him, I feel as if I could break through to him. I want my son to love Jesus as much as I do. I want him to have faith in the Lord and hope for a better tomorrow.* - Paul

*My reason for applying to the program is because I know God has a calling on my life. I believe this program will help me to be better prepared for my calling.* - Miguel

I answered God's call to salvation on February 21, 2000. From that time on, I have spent the past twenty years of my incarceration sharing the Gospel with the men in my community and discipling new believers in Christ. . . The in-depth biblical education that I can gain through the OBU Prison Divinity Program will give me the knowledge, training, and discipline needed to more effectively reach and disciple men in my community for Christ. - Vince

*I'm not sure why I'm applying [to the program]. I have been praying for my ears to hear. The Lord said all these years I have been listening to lies. Lies from the devil. I know that the devil has already lost. But now it's time to know the truth.* - James

I've been in a gang most of my life. . . These penitentiaries and my family are full of gang members, people that are hurting, confused and searching for Christ and don't even know it. With the completion of this degree, I'll be better equipped to speak to these people, to serve them, guide them to Christ, and be a better leader. - Delma

*It is ironic that, as a high school senior, I received a letter from OBU about attending the school for track and field. As a young man, I thought I didn't want to attend a Christian college. Now, I have the opportunity as a man of God to attend.* - Joe



Students gather for corporate worship prior to beginning classes and hold up their new Bibles.

### Spring 2021 Curriculum

- Introduction to the Prison Divinity Program
- Preparing to Engage Your College Education
- Christianity 101

### Classroom Core Values

Honesty  
Humility  
Holiness

***Remember the prisoners, as though you were in prison with them . . .Hebrews 13:3***

**Rejoice with us!**

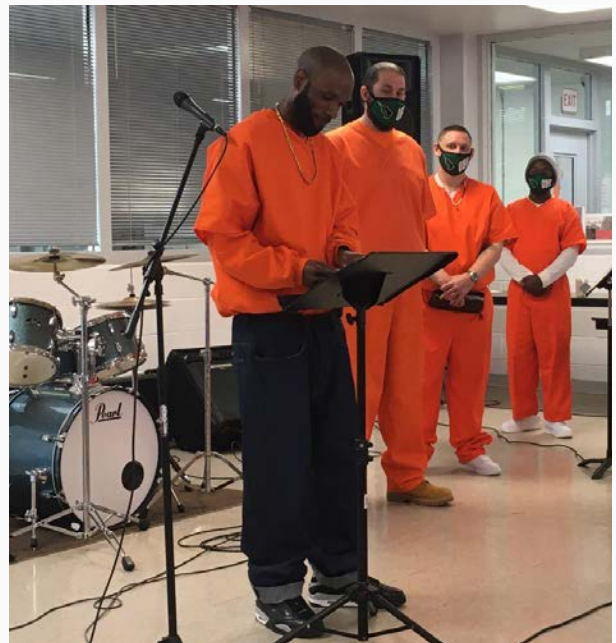
- Five men have been baptized in recent months!
- Classes began April 5!
- The Lord has raised up many prayer and financial partners!
- The Oklahoma Department of Corrections personnel are very supportive of the PDP!
- Several family members of our students have reached out expressing their gratitude and support!
- We were able to secure laptops for our students that met with Department of Corrections security standards and at a lower cost than anticipated!

**Petition the Lord with us . . .**

- for these 40 men to bond with each other in a strong, vibrant, supportive Christian community.
- for the students as they prepare for class, study for exams, and complete writing assignments.
- for the families of those who are incarcerated that they may be strengthened and supportive.
- for COVID to relinquish its grip that ministry volunteers might once again walk the prison yards.
- for the arrival of classroom furniture.
- for continued financial provision.



Each student came forward and signed our Covenant of Accountability and Encouragement prior to receiving his new Bible.



Students read Scripture and offered prayers of thanksgiving and praise during our worship service.

***Did you know?***

It costs approximately \$5,000 per student per year to operate this program. Visit [www.okbu.edu/pdp](http://www.okbu.edu/pdp) to learn about giving opportunities for:

Individuals

Sunday School Classes

Churches

Men's or Women's Ministries

Businesses