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## The Unexpected Ways of God

Friday, March 4, 2011 | Written by Carmen Camino

Isn't it amazing how God, through His Holy Spirit, acts, reveals His will, empowers people and discloses His personal presence in the Old and New Testament? Time and space cannot constrain Him. He is everywhere, close to everything, next to everyone. God is afar off and near at the same time, and in Him we move and live and have our being.

Three years ago I was invited to teach the Bible at a women's jail in Peru. My friend Nancy asked me, "What are you planning to teach?" I said, "I'll teach on Joseph – Genesis 39. I want the women in jail to know that just as the Lord was with Joseph, He is with them also."

Nancy and I traveled to Peru, and on the appointed day we arrived at the jail. As we waited for all the inmates to come into the chapel, one of the convicts began handing out Bibles to the other inmates. At that moment, a British inmate approached me (we will call her Victoria for the sake of confidentiality), and she said she could understand Spanish, but could not read a Bible in Spanish. "If you have an English Bible," I said, "Please bring it." She did.

Once the rest of the women made it into the chapel, I began to teach on Genesis 39. As you may remember, Joseph's brothers had sold him to some traders who took him to Egypt, where he became a slave in the house of Potiphar, one of Pharaoh's chief officers. In Genesis 39:2 it says that "*The Lord was with Joseph.*" Instead of getting angry because of his circumstances, Joseph trusted God. He was blameless in his behavior in Egypt. When he rejected the immoral invitations of Potiphar's wife, she bitterly turned against him and had him thrown into prison. But in Genesis 39:21 it says again that "*The Lord was with Joseph,*" and showed him mercy. Again his behavior was blameless, and soon he was given a position of responsibility over the other prisoners.

Isn't it encouraging knowing that God never forsook Joseph? In fact, God used this experience to prepare him for an even greater position in the Egyptian kingdom. God was intimately involved in Joseph's life. He guided him. God was the secret of Joseph's success. Luck had nothing to do with it.

I shared with the women at the jail that just as the Lord was with Joseph, He was with them also. That no matter what they had done, if they confessed and repented of their sins, Jesus would forgive them. Even though there were a lot of distractions in the chapel, little kids running in and out, women trying to talk to the leaders, etc., when I made the invitation of salvation, the entire room rose up to accept Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. It was a holy moment. They all prayed the sinner's prayer with such fervor. Many seemed so broken.

After they thanked us for coming, through song and tambourine, they all hugged and kissed us. That's when I noticed Victoria again, the British woman. She was in tears. I never did understand what a British woman was doing in a Peruvian jail so far away from home! She had been incarcerated for several years now, and still had many more to go. While in jail, both her father and mother had died, and she had not been allowed to travel home to offer her final respects. She said she was a Christian but obviously had fallen into sin. But she recommitted herself to the Lord on that day. The amazing thing is that the night before, she felt that the Lord was telling her to attend the Bible study the following day. She usually didn't attend religious functions, but that day, it was different. God had a message of mercy for her. When she read "in her own language" that the Lord was with Joseph, she felt the presence of God. She knew that He was with her. She broke down and couldn't stop sobbing. God had spoken words of comfort to her heart, and she believed Him. God works in the most unexpected ways and in the most unexpected places.

A few months later, I was informed that she was released from jail. It came as a surprise to many because it seems she had several more years to go. She is now surrounded and loved by her own family in England, and walking with the Lord. The Holy Spirit was working. He was everywhere, close to everything, next to everyone. He was afar off and near at the same time. And with Him there are no coincidences. The fact that He sent me to Peru, the fact that I was invited to the jail, the fact that He put it in my heart to teach about Joseph, the fact that Victoria went to get her English Bible, the fact that God burdened her to attend the study, the fact that she saw God in her circumstance, the fact that she could say full of emotion, "The Lord is with me in this jail." Is there anything too hard for the Lord? NOTHING!

Do you sense God's presence in every circumstance of your life? Even in difficult situations? God works in mysterious ways. In your darkest hour, He is with you... He holds you... He walks with you. You may have to experience the very worst before you are delivered, but you will be delivered! God may keep you waiting, but He will always remember His promise and will appear in His perfect time to fulfill His Word. His Word cannot be broken.