OUR MISSION  To offer life changing hope through the Gospel of Jesus Christ to homeless men, women, and children through programs to deliver food, shelter, counseling and discipleship

David Walley: Gone but not Forgotten

July 2022
David Walley was the poster boy for the “doer of things that need doing that nobody notices.” Walley, as we affectionately called him at Gateway Rescue Mission, answered the phone, handled the mail, and performed most of our New Life Program clerical work. When one of our residents needed a medical appointment scheduled, Walley called the clinic. Walley called the parole officers. Walley called the pharmacies. Walley booked Covid-19 tests. Walley did every program resident’s intake paperwork.

Walley was also our resident taxi driver. I knew that when he took a van load of our guys to a Brave’s game or to a Christian concert, David Walley would get them there promptly, would get them back to the mission safely, and wouldn’t stop at the liquor store on the way back. He was loyal, dependable, and believed deeply in the Lord Jesus Christ.

When the Lord called him home this past July 9, 2022, David was busy doing the Lord’s work. David had driven a group of our men to a Saturday night worship service. With about 350 people in attendance, the service was going strong at the halfway mark. A speaker had just delivered a powerful testimony about life-change through Christ and called on those in attendance to move toward a large cross in the center of the worship area.

David was standing near that cross when he collapsed on the floor from a sudden heart attack. People gathered around him, some praying fervently, while others tried resuscitation. David Walley took his last breath in this life near the cross during a worship service with fellow believers surrounding him in prayer.

As I looked down at David’s closed eyes that night, my initial thought was “this can’t be happening.” I had chatted with David just a few minutes before the service began. He was excited to be there. I was counting on him to get the guys back to the mission after the service.

Later that night, when the deputy coroner handed David’s personal belongings to me at the hospital, I thought about how quickly everything can change. This service had been planned for people in Christian recovery centers all over central Mississippi to have a powerful encounter with the Lord God. However, sometimes God’s ways are not our ways.

A local pastor who had attended the service dropped by late that night. He mentioned that we often spend big money bringing in big name speakers to have those in attendance leave and say what a nice message the speaker brought. However, he pointed out that those in attendance at this service would never forget what happened as long as we live.

In my humanity, I would rather David Walley still be with us. He had always been a loyal employee. However, David experienced a spiritual breakthrough over the last six months. He had broken out of his usually shy, somewhat introverted shell. He had joined a local church and became a contributing member of their singles department. He had begun smiling more at the mission and would often minister to others at Gateway Rescue Mission.

David knew I like a good cup of coffee in the morning. He took pride in having a pot of freshly brewed coffee available when I walked in. “Morning boss, we’ve got coffee if you want some”, he’d say with a smile.

David Walley was not perfect. He smoked too many cigarettes and could be a tad grouchy. He got hot with me a couple of years ago when I suggested he should stop smoking. However, he came back and apologized for his attitude a couple of days later.

David did all the initial intake forms for men coming into our New Life Program. He assigned their duties and made sure they understood program procedures. Now, I’m going out on a theological limb here with what heaven will be like. But I thought how cool it would be when I enter heaven, to have St. Peter show me to the intake table where David Walley will look up with his warm smile and say “hey boss, been waiting on you and I’ve got a fresh pot of coffee if you want some.”

Visit gatewaymission.org for more information on how you can help someone today.

Rex Baker
Executive Director (who sometimes shows up late)
Gateway Rescue Mission
FEATURE

Featured here is David’s last picture, taken before the start of the worship service during which he passed away from a sudden heart attack. (David is pictured in the back, center of the photo wearing glasses.) David’s last task on this earth was transporting a group of Gateway New Life Program residents to a Night of Hope at New Life Fellowship Church in Magee.

David would probably wonder why we’re making such a fuss about him. He’d be glad to know, as we want you to know also, that we continue to feed hungry people, shelter the homeless, and offer programs for men seeking life change. Brad can be seen on this page bringing a short gospel message to our lunch guests, who chowed down that day on red beans and rice.

We are doing our best to stay cool during a typical hot, Mississippi summer. We hand out plenty of bottled water during the day to keep people hydrated. We want to thank all of you, our friends, donors, and volunteers for continuing to support Gateway Rescue Mission during these summer days. When you take part in providing the basics of life to folks in need, you are serving God. Thank you for serving God through helping others at Gateway Rescue Mission.
Current Needs

- Laundry pods for washing laundry. We do laundry daily at Gateway Rescue Mission, and the laundry pods work great for getting the job done.

- Magnifying sheets to help people read smaller-print bibles. Many of our residents need glasses, but don't have them. The magnifying sheets basically act as reading glasses.

- Keep sending the water, cereal boxes, and coffee, along with basic nonperishable food items. (I know ya'll have been sending these already, and we sincerely appreciate it. But people keep eating the food and drinking the water and coffee. So, we keep needing more of those items.)

- Prayer: This is our biggest need. Please pray that God will provide breakthrough power in people’s lives. Also pray that God will convict people and draw them to Him through Jesus Christ. People on the street desperately need two kinds of help. In the immediacy of their crisis, they need physical help. Ultimately, they also need spiritual help to heal hurts and problems that only God can heal.

We want to thank everyone who continues to help us meet the needs here at Gateway Rescue Mission. Pictured here are boxes of cereal and bottled water that someone bought and shipped directly to Gateway Rescue Mission, 328 South Gallatin Street, Jackson, MS 39203.

Our numbers this summer are picking back up to pre-Covid levels, particularly in our New Life Program. Lots of people are seeking help kicking addictions, while others are trying to rebuild their lives after prison.

With more homeless people on the streets of Jackson, our work at Gateway Rescue Mission is vital. We offer immediate help through providing tasty meals so that no one who comes to us goes hungry. We also offer short-term, emergency shelter for the homeless. Finally, we offer a six-month, Bible-centered recovery program for men seeking long term life change. Thank you for joining in God’s work at and through Gateway Rescue Mission.

Follow Us on Social Media

Twitter: @gatewaymission • Facebook: Gateway Rescue Mission • Instagram: gatewaymission

For your convenience you may now donate online at gatewaymission.org/donate