

## *Marching by a Prisoner*

When Mrs. William Booth, whose husband founded the Salvation Army, was a little girl, she was running by the road one day with her hoop and stick when she saw a prisoner being dragged by a constable to the city jail.

A mob had gathered to hoot at the culprit, who walked with his head hung low – the picture of guilt and shame. His image of utter loneliness tugged at her heart. It seemed to her that he didn't have a friend in the entire world.

She quickly sprang to his side and marched, head high and a smile on her face, all the way to the jailhouse with him. She was determined to let him know that, guilty or not, there was at least one soul who felt compassion for him.

Too often, we are willing to let guilty people take the full brunt of their punishment, or wallow in their misery, without comfort or words of consolation and encouragement. The issue may not be crime, but may be divorce or estrangement. The best way to restore a person to a relationship with both God and the offended party, however, is not to let the person remain alone to become fearful or bitter, but rather to reach out in love and provide support.

This does not mean that you condone the action. It does mean that you refuse to condemn the person.

After all, those who deserve love the least need it the most.

--Beecher Hunter