

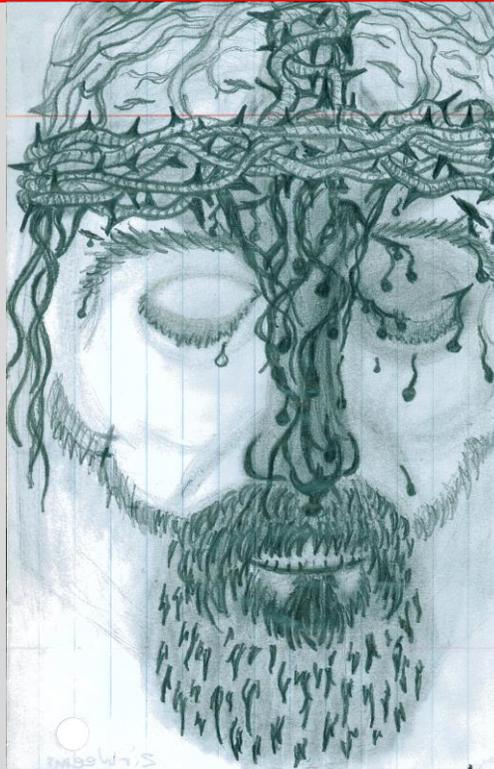


Life is messy, but Jesus gives hope
to all who need to be set free
behind bars of steel
and walls of bitterness.

FOR US!

June 2016 Newsletter

“He was despised and rejected,
acquainted with
We turned our backs on him
He was despised,
Yet it was **our weaknesses**
it was **our sorrows**
And we thought his troubles were
a punishment for his own sins!
for **our rebellion**,
He was beaten
He was whipped
All of us, like sheep,
We have left God’s paths
Yet the LORD laid on **him**



a man of sorrows,
deepest grief.
and looked the other way.
and we didn’t care.
he carried;
that weighed him down.
a punishment from God,
But he was pierced
crushed for **our sins**.
so **we** could be **whole**.
so **we** could be **healed**.
have strayed away.
to follow our own.
the sins of us all.”

Isaiah 53:3–6, NLT

Despised. Rejected. Sorrowful. Whipped. Pierced. Crushed. Does He understand my pain?

The troubled inmate who drew this picture knows He does. He didn’t trust the court, the officers, the mental health workers. I don’t think he even trusted me as a chaplain, but he knows that Jesus is on his side. He gave me this picture as a silent acknowledgement that Jesus, at least, knew what he was going through. He identified with Scripture’s portrait of Jesus, the Messiah, the suffering servant. Here, at last, was someone who “got it!” That opened the door for Jesus to come into his life, to take his hand, and to begin to show him the way out of his Hell.

What about us? As Jesus’ disciples, do we “get it?” Do we understand their suffering? Do we really want to? It takes time, energy, commitment. It takes emotional openness to someone whose story could unsettle us, upset our comfortable little world. That might demand more of us than we are prepared to give. Yet, if Jesus gave us that example, do we really have the option of saying “no?” “No, I don’t want to invest my time and emotional energy in people whose lives are messy, whose chances of “success” are sketchy at best, and who have all these problems to overcome. These people are the last, the least of my concerns.” But doesn’t Jesus call us to feed and clothe the last, to go and visit the least of these? And doesn’t this sound like a description of you or me, as Jesus looked at us before He saved us? He reached out to us, gave His life for us, and called us to do the same! Let it be so, Jesus!

Each one of them is Jesus in disguise. - Mother Teresa

Jesus Is At Work In The Jail!

I visited an inmate who told me he found Jesus in the jail. He knew he wanted to share his new life with others, so he began gathering guys in his pod to pray and study the Word. The first day he had three come. The second day there were 6. Then 10, then 16, and last count was 26 guys praying and studying together! The last meeting, he felt God prompting him to ask if anyone wanted to ask Jesus into their life, and three said “yes!” Great! Thank You, Jesus! The only trouble was, nobody knew how to help them do that! Finally, someone found step by step instructions in the front of a Bible, so they just followed that, and now there are three more souls in the kingdom! Praise God for the way He accomplishes His purposes in spite of our weakness! Since then, I have provided a study Bible, a concordance, a Nave’s Topical Bible, and some Navigators curriculum to help this inmate leader build a solid foundation in the Word of God for himself and his fellow Jesus-followers in that pod. Please pray for the Church in that pod, and the leader God has raised up to serve her!

Jesus Is At Work *Even More* In The Jail!

There are always people coming in and going out of different pods in the jail. New people are arrested, inmates complete their time and are released, those sentenced to state or federal prison are transferred out, and others are just moved around as good behavior (or bad) results in a change in classification or needs. One pod was difficult spiritually, and I tried three times to establish a group with a leader in it, to no avail. It was a matter of prayer for months. Finally, I got requests for baptism from two new guys in that pod, and the still, small voice whispered in my ear, “They’re the ones! It’s happening!” I visited their pod that evening, and these two guys were on fire for Jesus! Their faith and enthusiasm had lit up the whole pod, and we had a large group that night. I met with them each on the glass, and one was moved to another pod without a leader. I equipped them both with Bible study tools, and coached them in the skills of leading small groups, and God is blessing both their ministries with fruit!

And just in the last few weeks, I have had three new women step forward to lead studies in their pods. Again, I coached and equipped them, and they are leading the women in their pods into new and deeper life through prayer and the Word! Please pray for them – keeping a group can be harder on the women’s side due to smaller pod size.

Prayer Requests:

- Pray for leaders in the pods. They are respected, but watched closely by other inmates to see if their life matches their profession. Many are new Christians and have lots of bad habits to overcome. All need grace to rightly divide the Word of God, walk their talk, and to spend time on their knees in prayer.
- Pray for God to raise up board members who will work to help ARM, guide it, and listen to His voice.
- Pray for continued donations of Christian books, to help guide those who are spiritual seekers, and those who want to grow in Christ. Pray for continued spiritual revival in the jail!
- Pray also for Roxanne, who has suffered physically this past year. Pray that our God would ease her pain and restore her ability to minister the Word to women in jail and in our community. Please also pray for our daughter, Heather, who was diagnosed with breast cancer, has undergone four surgeries, is facing another, as well as a year of chemo and radiation. She has four children at home, and two of them have special needs.
- Praise God for our donors, who make this faith venture possible. “We thank God on every remembrance of you.”

Blessings to you all!

Jan and Roxanne Carlisle

