



*"For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope."
Romans 15:4*

It is hard to fathom that it's already January, 2024! The future is uncertain, but we know our lives are in God's hands! His Word brings us hope and comfort throughout our days. It always amazes me how God reveals Himself to bring hope and comfort to the men behind the walls!

Roger was mentioned in my last newsletter. He is young and influenced by other inmates. We talked about how important it is not to let other people control you, because you might leave prison with the same mindset you came in with at a young age. Roger told me how he had to have a personification of being a tough guy and act the way others expect him to act. We talked about how important it was to let the Bible teach us how we are to think and live. He disagreed with me. Then he saw my devotional book lying on the cabinet next to him and he asked me what it was about. I said, "Well I have not yet read today's devotion, you can read it to me." He read the devotional, and it was very similar to what we were discussing! Some of the content said, "So don't be disheartened by how the world may see you. Look to God for the true measure of your worth, and trust that He will favor you in His time." Roger could hardly believe that it supported everything I tried to tell him! God's timing is always right!

I have had a weekly one-on-one Bible study for several years with a man in mental health. He came to know the Lord in 2017. He grew up in the gang life and some other inmates still try to get him to come

back to the gang life. He has been verbally and physically assaulted for not wanting to go back to the gang or the "jungle", as they call it. He told them, "I am not going back to your jungle, because I am part of the Jesus Jungle and I rap for Him. I have lived life under the devil's control most of my life. Why would I want to go back to the darkness, I am free in Christ!" He shared some of his Christian rap with them and they were surprised by how good his Christian rap sounded, so they started with Christian rap as well! He shares a Christian rap song with me weekly that he has composed. I told him that he was a witness to these lost men and encouraged him to continue sharing his testimony.

I visited with Fred about the importance of knowing the Word and living by faith and not by sight. Fred said to me twice as we were talking, "Everything you are saying is what my mother tells me all the time!" I reminded him that evidently the Lord is trying to get his attention concerning these truths! God, His Word, and His truth will never change!

It was a blessing to be able to distribute the Christmas sacks to the inmates on December 19. They were very thankful as we gave them their sacks. Pastor Greg, other chaplains, and I loaded up the boxes of candy onto a U-Haul truck early that morning from Eastside Lutheran Church where the candy was stored. After getting boxes through the checkpoint into Jameson Annex, eight inmates helped fill 520 sacks in an assembly line for Jameson. Thanks to those who contributed financially to make it possible!

I thank you for your support throughout 2023, by your prayers and financially! You are all a blessing!

In Christ, Harlan

Please designate my name in the memo section of your check. Send them to: Prison Lighthouse Fellowship (PLF) or South Dakota Prison Chaplain's Association (SDPCA), 601 W 57th Street Sioux Falls, SD 57108. Your gifts are appreciated and tax deductible. My phone: 605-940-4220, Email: harlan@convergeheartland.org