

A MESSAGE OF HOPE, comfort and freedom in Jesus Christ

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“From the Outside” by Sean Moloney

I was released from prison May 22nd of this year after serving two years (which I know is not a long time, but it was long enough for me). While I was serving my sentence - like many of you - I did a lot of deep soul searching and spent many hours thinking about my life. I'm now 52 years old and the thought of starting over seemed like a daunting task. I'm the kind of guy who gets stressed out about major change in my life, and going to prison was definitely a major life-changing event, but the time went by and as the time grew closer to my release I began to get a bit overwhelmed about what the future would hold for me. My life as I knew it was going to be very different. My wife of 29 years left me and I had to sell my home, so I was not sure what I was returning to. I had no wife, no home, no job; to be honest I was kind of freaking out. What was my life going to be like when I get home?

I kind of got used to things in prison, which was odd, because let's face it...life sucks in prison. I tried to make the best of it while I was incarcerated. I spent a lot of time attending church and was blessed with being able to attend a Keryx weekend. I was a Christian prior to being incarcerated but my faith was, well, let's just say a bit on the sliding side. But, I renewed my walk with the Lord and was even baptized again. I played drums for the praise & worship team and I felt closer to the Lord than I had in a long time. I had a joy and love for Jesus in my

heart and I kept telling myself, “When I get out I will be ready to take on any obstacles that the world may throw at me with the Lord at my side. I am a child of God and no one or nothing can stop from being the person the Lord wants me to be.”

Then the day came of my release and after being home for a couple months that confidence I had seemed to fade a bit. The day-to-day craziness and my determination to make up for lost time consumed my desire to put God first in my life. I suddenly realized that I was starting to fall back into my old lifestyle where I was always determined to put my career and self-gratification before God. It occurred to me that I was digging once again for a lost and buried treasure; but it had already been found and was waiting for me!

Last week our pastor spoke on a topic that made me really think about my situation. He spoke on transformation, baptism and committing to change. This message hit home and I started to feel that feeling like the Lord has got my back and will always be there for me, through thick and thin. I have already been through the thick, so why did I ever think he wasn't going to continue to guide and bless me through the thin?

Things are getting better every day and I know that there is a plan for me and I'm ready to follow the Lord and

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Quarterly Scripture Focus:

Deuteronomy 31:6

“Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the Lord your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you.”

Message of Hope Jail and Prison Ministry

We wanted to share some brief updates on several areas of the ministry.

- Voices for Christ – we have unveiled a new logo for Voices for Christ. You can see it on the next page of the newsletter or by visiting the Voices for Christ Facebook page or website! The web address is: voices4christ.org
- Next Step Christian Recovery – the programs at Macomb Correctional, Carson City Correctional and Macomb County Jail are going well. Our members continue to draw closer to God through the use of the Bible and the twelve steps. We have been in prayer regarding the start of a Next Step program at Muskegon Correctional and ask you to join us in that!
- Social Media – if you aren't already doing so, we encourage you to check out the Message of Hope Instagram and Facebook pages. Pictures, messages of hope, events and other updates are posted weekly. Make sure to "Like" and "Follow" us! (The back page of the newsletter has the addresses of where to find us.)
- Correspondence Courses – we have had an influx as of late in requests from friends inside wishing to enroll in the courses. A long-time friend, Randy Fields, is one of the reasons for this. He has been actively making disciples at his current facility and many have signed up in an effort to be better men of God. Well done Randy!



Forgiven Ministries, Inc. recently held a One Day With God at Macomb Correctional Facility. One of our volunteers, Kyle, was blessed to attend. This is the 3rd camp this year he has had the opportunity to be a part of. We are pleased to share some pictures that were taken at Living Word Fellowship Church in New Haven, Michigan prior to all the volunteers heading over to the facility.



Gerry (left) Kyle (middle) Don (right)



Kyle with his blue mohawk done in honor of the camp at Macomb



Kyle (left) with Ken Smith of NorthRidge Church Prison Ministry

Message of Hope Jail and Prison Ministry



"Firmly Nestled"

By Tracy Leigh,

Huron Valley Correctional Facility, Ypsilanti, MI

Firmly Nestled
 the palm of His hand
 cupped to cradle vulnerability
 refuge for daunting brokenness
 veins pump sacrificial blood
 pierced by purest redemption
 hallow of adamant guidance
 recognized by his fingerprints
 solid pillars that encompass you
 firmly nestled eternally into
 the palm of His hand

"To Change or Not"

By Stephen Graham-Wright

Kinross Correctional Facility, Kincheloe, MI

To change or not
 That is the question
 That I should let God lead
 Is no mere suggestion
 I can't force change
 To be made new takes time
 It's a process
 Of renewing my mind
 Thoughts are where action starts
 So fill my mind with something pure
 Jesus, please take control
 And help me to endure
 The process is long
 It can be painful
 But You are beside me
 And forever faithful
 I want to change
 And, Lord, be like You
 Help me remain to You
 Always faithful and true.

"The Father"

By George K. Walker, Macomb Correctional Facility, New Haven, MI

"But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things and we by him" 1 Corinthians 8:6.

In my bible study group, our books to read this week are 1st and 2nd Corinthians. While reading the verse above, the two words the Father stuck out to me. The Holy Spirit began to minister to me that God is the Father and that He is who I should be celebrating today and every day.

Moses tells us in Genesis 1:1 "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." He continues in Genesis 2:7, "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." God, the Father created everything that was made and He gave us His breath of life. He gave us life so that we can honor Him and Him only. For in Him we live, and move, and have our being so he is worthy of all our praise and worship every day. So honor your heavenly Father today by celebrating Him with love.





An excerpt from "The Son of Hope"
By Kevin Bastian, Gus Harrison Correctional Facility, Adrian, MI

When things go wrong in life we often lose hope of things getting better. As Christians we forget that we will always have hope, no matter how bad things get or how terrible our choices are, as long as we believe, trust and obey Jesus Christ's death, resurrection and teachings. This is our eternal hope.

Sadly, living such a life is easier said than done, due to the emotions we feel and react to. When we are hurting we feel sad, when we're lost we feel alone, when we fail we become discouraged.

Colossians 1:27 reads "to them God has chosen to make known among all the glorious riches of this mystery which is Christ in you the hope of Glory." This means whether our human feelings or Christian morals are tested we can stand firm on one truth that Jesus Christ is our hope. Jesus' death on the cross is what many refer to as blessed hope, because when he died our souls were cleansed by his blessed blood. Not just for our past sins and choices, but for our future sins as well. This hope is solidified in his death and resurrection as in John 3:16 "for God so loved the world that He gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him shall not perish but have eternal life."

I personally can't think of a scripture that shows God's true and powerful love better than this. This scripture proves nothing in this world matters except believing, trusting and lovingly living for God and his son Jesus Christ. This doesn't mean we have a free card to do what we want. All of our worldly actions and choices have consequences. It does, however, mean that if we repent he will be quick to forgive us and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. A real dedicated Christian who only lives for God repents daily. We not only can believe in this, we can forever hope in his love, mercy and forgiveness because of his son Jesus Christ's death on the cross. Hope is a belief that things will get better, that things will change, something good will happen. My friends, that something happened when God allowed his Son to die for us. Jesus willfully died for us because he believed we could change. He believed we were meant for more than destruction. On the cross he asked his Father to forgive us, the very ones who crucified him. Biblical hope is God's grace, his undeserved favor, mercy, kindness, help and love.

Voices for Christ accepts and publishes works (such as testimonies, lessons, words of encouragement, and poems) from individuals currently behind the narrow windows of prison. Works may be submitted by mail or through Jpay. A completed Consent to Publish must be submitted before any works can be published. Before inclusion on the website, all works will be reviewed to ensure they meet a minimum biblical standard and adhere to the following criteria:

Must be less than 5,000 characters including spaces; must promote Jesus Christ (not a religion or denomination); must not contain any offensive language; must not be divisive or argumentative; and, must be original material (plagiarism is not acceptable)

If you are interested in becoming a part of the Voices for Christ ministry please mail (or email) all submissions, consents, and/or requests to be added to the Voices for Christ Jpay account to:

Voices for Christ PO Box 381054 Clinton Township, MI 48038



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trust that He knows my heart and loves me for who I am, not what I've done. All the guilt and shame is falling away and I know that I am forgiven and there are many great things ahead for me. I am ready to take my place back in the free world. I am not looking to be the man I once was, but to become the man the Lord wants me to be and I am excited to see what's next for me.

A friend of mine named Bear use to hand out little devotion slips at service every Sunday while I was in prison and he gave me one that really spoke to me. It said "God wants you to pray to have eyes that see the best in people, a heart that forgives the worst, and a soul that never loses faith in God." I remember memorizing it then tucking it into my Bible, and while I was writing this, I thought about that devotion and how much it meant to me and the perfection of those words and their meaning. I'm not sure what lies ahead, but I know I am ready for whatever it might be because there is nothing like knowing that you have someone to count on that will never leave you nor forsake you. There is no better felling than that! God Bless, Sean

****Starting with our January 2018 edition, we will be featuring a new section entitled "From the Outside." We hope to highlight the struggles and victories of our friends inside as they transition back into the community. Sean will be our lead writer and we pray that others will join in providing advice, encouragement and hope to those who are preparing for to join us on this side of the walls.****



In previous issues, we have featured other ministries that we support. One of those is the Teddy Bear Program at Macomb Correctional Facility (MRF). This program has been offered since 2005 due to the love and support of members of Grace United Methodist Church in New Baltimore, Michigan. Each week volunteers meet with our friends inside at MRF and make teddy bears, quilts and other handmade goods to donate to local organizations. Some of the recipients of these wonderful gifts of love have been:

The Cancer Treatment Center & Pediatric Cancer Center at Royal Oak Beaumont Hospital, Camp Rainbear (a summer camp for children affected by AIDS), Detroit Rescue Mission, Chesterfield Police (for first responders to distribute to children in crisis situations), and MCREST (Macomb County Rotating Emergency Shelter Team). Also, for One Day With God camps, the group typically makes quilts for their camp along with teddy bears and bags.

A major recent contributor to the Teddy Bear Program is a non-profit organization called **Humanity for Prisoners**. They have really come through this year in helping to keep the members supplied with the materials they need to continue to bless others.

In addition to their contributions, thanks to the generosity of the Crocheting & Knitting group at **Clinton Township Senior Adult Life Center** and **NorthRidge Church Prison Ministry**, Message of Hope was able to deliver a large supply of yarn and knitting materials to the volunteers of the Teddy Bear Program. Praise God for the way He continues to bring people together in this program to be a blessing to others! Below is a picture of our most recent delivery!



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