

# Berean Prison Ministries

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*The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek: He hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound.*

Isaiah 61:1

## THE SAME ONLY DIFFERENT

### *Director's Report*

2020 has changed BPM volunteer's ability to personally interact with prisoners in county, state, and federal prisons. There have not been any in-service bible studies, counseling, or church services since the stay at home orders were given. The many BPM volunteers look forward to returning to those relationships that have been nurtured over the years.

Even as personal contact has been halted regionally for now the need for bibles and bible studies nation wide has continued through correspondence. We continue to send 1000's of bibles a year to those that request one and we continue to receive 10,000+ completed bible studies a year from prisoners as they work toward a certificate of completion of all 50 studies.

BPM has also received requests for bibles in bulk from many states to meet the needs of the inmates. One chaplain said that fear is causing many inmates to request a bible because they have nowhere else to go. God continues to call all men to Him and can use the present circumstances for His glory. Thank you to each one that is part of this ministry.

### **FINE vs PANIC**

Being a volunteer in the Chaplain's Office at Peoria County Jail, I get to know women inmates. Depending on what they are incarcerated for, some of them end up being sentenced to the Illinois Department of Correction. To stay in contact with them, I write and often visit them in Lincoln or Decatur (the two Illinois women's prisons). Now because of the Illinois Shelter-in-Place situation, all prisons and jails are completely shut down to any visitors. So writing is the way I keep in touch with them.

This week, I received two letters from incarcerated women. The first letter I opened asked how I was doing and then said, "I am fine." She came to know the Lord in a powerful way while she was in Peoria County Jail and maintains her innocence, even

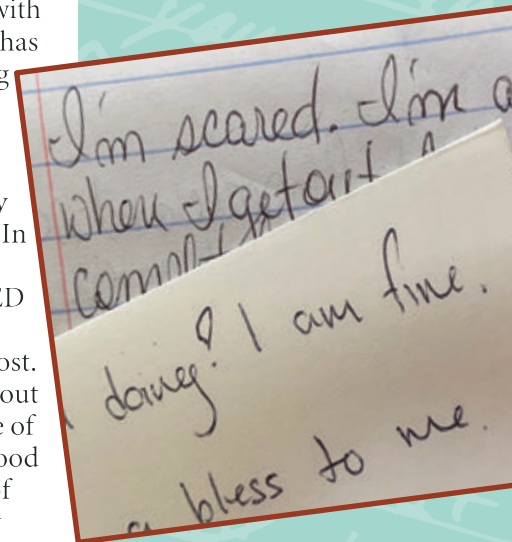
though she was sentenced to 19 years. In her letter to me, she went on to write that the letter was a blessing to her and since the women incarcerated with her are in "a panic", she put my letter on the restroom wall and it's being used to give the ladies hope in Jesus Christ. The other letter I received from an inmate literally opened with the words "I'm scared." So different! One has put her trust in Jesus and is even spreading the good news about Jesus. The other is scared and writes "I'm so sick of being spiritually dead."

These two women represent humanity across the globe. We see it over and over. In the aftermath of the Titanic disaster, there were two lists posted literally titled: SAVED and LOST. When Jesus died between two thieves, one was saved and the other was lost. And as we die (since statistics say that ten out of ten die), our name will be affixed to one of the lists. We will either hear "Well done, good and faithful servant.... enter into the joy of your Lord." Or we will hear "I never knew you; depart from Me."

I correspond with women who are incarcerated, but the awareness of being lost knows no gender. All of us are invited to know Jesus and live without fear and in relationship with Him, but many times it takes some event of awakening in a person's life to force a confrontation of our eternal standing with our creator. God uses those hard times of incarceration to awaken the soul to their need for Him. This is why one can say, "I am fine", and yet another is in "panic." God's truth brings hope so we can be "fine", and it removes the "panic."

If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved." Romans 10:9-10

"You will seek me and find me, when you seek me WITH ALL YOUR HEART." Jeremiah 29:13



## PRAYER REQUESTS:

- Wisdom for the volunteers
- Soft hearts for the inmates
- Joy in the journey no matter the path

## CONTACT US:

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## LETTERS FROM INMATES

While we anxiously wait for the time when we can once again meet face to face, our ministry continues via ongoing correspondence with those we serve. We wanted to share a few of the many letters and requests we've received during the past couple months. Despite the imposed limitations we face, God continues to change lives.



*"Hello,*

*I know y'all get tons of Bible study mail and I get it! The cost of a Bible, the postage has got to be a staggering amount! Not to mention a person to grade them and to return the lesson! Wow! And y'all come to a person when it's the darkest time for some people and you bring a message of hope, from a loving family of Christ-like people that care! I get so happy when I get my lessons from y'all... And when you send them back to know that some caring person took the time to correct it and paid money to send it back to me just so I could know that y'all really care! When I was in the free world I would have looked at a Bible lesson and it would have had little to NO affect on me at all, (I'm sorry to say) but I was given your address and what y'all are giving is a beautiful act of God's Love at work! I'm not high I'm very clear headed and focused. I want a better life and I've taken some steps to change. I just wanted y'all to know that there is someone on the other end of a envelope who really is thankful for who you are and what you are doing. Thank you all!"*

*"Dear folks at Berean Prison Ministries,*

*We are so thankful for the choice of yeilding to God's will that you make. Your ministry means more than words can express.*

*Some of us have been thrown away by society and feel like nobody cares. Your ministry brings light and hope to the hopeless.*

*Thank you. God bless you. I love and pray for you daily, please do likewise for us."*

*"I just wanted to thank you for all you do. not only for me but I can only imagine all the work that goes on behind the sene! I am glad to be studing with you all. God knows that I'm truly at the bottom of my sickness! He is always putting me in the Path of Repentance and covers me with love! Even though I get down and discouraged! I've alway quit or just pure lazyness. But I'm no longer a quitter I'm a son of God and I can do anything because he is with me!"*

*"Dear Berean Prison Ministry,*

*Please send me some bible study programs and so more reading materials to help with my study of God's Word. Thanks Again for Helping Supporting my ministry.*

*Sincerely,..."*

## BIBLE AND STUDY REQUESTS

*"Dear Brother in Christ,*

*I would like to recieve the bible study course you are offering. I got your address from another inmate. I have 2 1/2 years to do and just last year gave my life to Jesus. I'm excited to grow in the word and in my faith. Thank you!"*

*"We have something very special happening in our Pod in 2B Upper Tier. Every other night we join hands and pray and share scriptures out of the bible. A big movement is happening right before my very eyes. We just need more bibles to spread the words of God. Again, thank you."*