

Not the Man I Used To Be

November 2021



Sure the guys are a little old for balloons, but they get really competitive when it comes to games!

There are many factors any inmate could point to explaining how they found themselves behind bars. Some they didn't create and of course others, whether they want to admit it or not, came about by their own doing. Deep down though, each has moments they wish they could have back. Just like all of us!

That's what makes the theme for this month's teen jail (CEMI) retreat so relevant to these young prisoners. We'll be sharing with them what it means to be born again. One of the most precious truths wrapped up in the Gospel message is that because of the perfect blood of Christ our Savior, all our sins have been forgiven. When we put our trust in Jesus, He gives us new life in Him. And this new life lasts forever!

Being locked away, there's time to think. What will life be like when an inmate gets out? For quite a few, all they have to go back to is the environment and relationships that landed them behind bars in the first place. Some teens are so hardened that's all they want anyway. But there is such little hope in that. There has to be another way.

Our weekly Spectrum Bible studies every Tuesday are our chance to share with those who attend that there is another way. Carlos and Robin faithfully teach from the truth of the Scriptures and sure enough, just like He says, God's Word doesn't return empty but accomplishes the purposes for which He sent it. Carlos being a former inmate in the States himself, is the perfect instrument to exemplify the effect of what God's Word can do and what being born again looks like. Often these young men, when they give their lives to Christ, desire to serve God just like they see Carlos doing. God's Word describing new life in Christ brings ultimate hope for these young men and women for life after prison and beyond!

This is why I'm excited about our Spectrum Cemi retreat this November 23-24. It's the first retreat in almost two years due to Covid! Now the word "retreat" conjures up images of woods and cabins. Obviously that's an impossibility at the jail. So instead we bring the retreat to



We bring in various teachers to share with the inmates throughout the retreat.

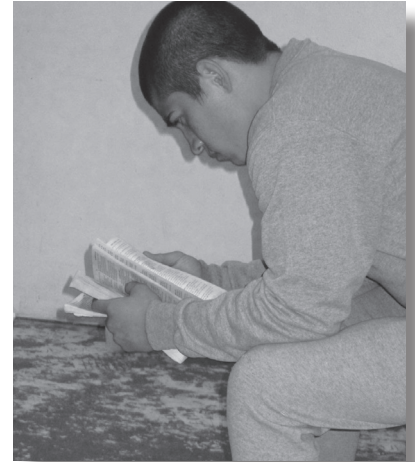


them. Games, home cooked food, singing, and solid Bible teaching are planned for the two day event which will be attended by over thirty prisoners. Approximately half of these inmates who will be there take part in the regular weekly Bible studies. Seven of them have become Christians in the last year and have asked about being baptized. So on the second day, these young men will take the plunge and be baptized in an inflatable pool we'll bring in for that purpose. What better way to proclaim new life than in the water's of baptism!

Everyone is so grateful for we can start having our retreats again. Two years without them is too long!

Please pray for this time we get to share with the young men and

women in the Tijuana teen jail. Ask the Lord to make clear to them that through trusting in Jesus, they can be born again. While the consequences of what they did remain, they don't have to be the people they used to be! And as Thanksgiving is upon us, we are always thankful for you who pray and give so all of our Spectrum ministry areas like Cemi can carry on. Through your gifts and prayers God is moving here in Tijuana and lives are transforming through the power of the Gospel!



We know the Word of God has the power to change lives!

From all of us at Spectrum, Happy Thanksgiving and many blessings to you and your family!

Matt Kooi
Director of Spectrum Ministries



While there are only a few young ladies on the women's side, we still do something special with them during the retreat. Angela has since been released from jail and is now attending Bible school!!

"Jesus replied, 'Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again.'" - John 3:3