



# Living Stone Prison Church

## Springfield, SD

### *Summer, 2020*

### “Disciples OR Pupils?”

“You need to run your church and quit giving the inmates too much power,” these are words an inmate challenged me with a few months ago. I heard him out, but I wasn’t willing to be swayed on this particular subject. I’ve heard it a few times from other inmates, they want me to have the microphone for the whole service and not allow any incarcerated person the opportunity to speak. In fact, I know of a handful of men that don’t attend Living Stone because I look for ways to delegate instead of dominating all tasks for the variety of programs we do inside Mike Durfee State Prison. I explained to the man, that from the very beginning we had felt the Lord asking us to launch a ministry in the prison in which the men themselves played an intricate role in all that God would lead us to do behind the razor wire fence. I politely told the man that he was always welcome at our gatherings but that we had to do what was best for the church instead of catering to his preferences. This man and a few others would prefer that we fill our seats with pupils that only come to learn instead of disciples who come not only learn, but to grow and serve in the church with us.

A disciple is completely devoted to a teacher. The relationship goes beyond a student or an apprentice. They don’t simply master a trade or a subject, they learn to emulate their teacher’s life. As Christians, we become disciples, striving to live according to the teachings of Jesus.

And Jesus disciples are called to make disciples (Matthew 28:19–20) which is the very thing we strive to do in the prison. I like the method for discipling that we learned early on in a church planting conference. It goes like this.

I do. You watch. We talk.  
I do. You help. We talk.  
You do. I help. We talk.  
You do. I watch. We talk  
You do. Someone else watches.

I think this is a good pattern to follow to learn any trade. I also believe that Jesus followed a very similar pattern as He taught and empowered His disciples to launch the Christian church. Jesus taught in a way that the disciples would be able to continue in the ministry after he ascended into Heaven. It is also a good outline for Living Stone’s ministry. Especially during this current time of quarantine in which we are not able to enter the prison. We are currently sending DVDs for a worship service, complete with a new sermon for the men to watch and have also been sending in letters and Bible study materials. But, these things lack the personal touch of having someone present to preach and teach out of God’s Word.

Pastor Jason hasn't been able to preach in person in the prison since March, but Living Stone did an outdoor service with Kingdom Boundaries Aftercare in Sioux Falls on Sunday, June 21. Many former inmates were in attendance. What a blessed day it was!



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So, the question is what happens when we are not allowed to go into the prison? The answer to that question is also a strong indication of the lasting effects that the ministry has on the men that are involved in Living Stone.

We were very encouraged by a letter we received that had an answer to that question about a month into the quarantine. The letter is from a man whom we have worked with for a several years. The next paragraph is an excerpt from that letter.

**“You never think of all the things you take for granted until a pandemic hits and everything changes. I must say that I miss the fellowship and the weekly gathering times. It becomes a routine but when that routine is taken you really understand how precious it is to gather with likeminded men. So, I appreciate the emphasis you placed in Living Stone to train up men to be leaders. Some would say we are just inmates and are supposed to come and listen to the message, but you understand that there comes a time where the pastor may not be there and you still want the message of Christ proclaimed. You have prepared us, and I want to thank you for this.”**

The letter went on to talk about how they are holding church services in the prison yard,

even while some inmates mock and hate what they are doing. This is a report from a disciple, not just a pupil. If I ever had a doubt about our philosophy of ministry to do it with the inmates and not just at them, those doubts are gone as it is our joy to report that the Gospel is being proclaimed in Mike Durfee Prison, even in the weeks we have been absent.

Our prayers are that God will bring quickened resolve and healing to the COVID-19 epidemic. But, despite the difficulties of the present days, God continues to shine in the lives of those whom He has called out of darkness into His marvelous light.

Thanks for all your prayers and support!

Blessings, Pastor Jason and Ruth Wiersma and the Living Stone crew

Please prayerfully consider how you can help us meet our annual budget.

Please pray-

That we stay faithful to the job God has called us to do.

That God would work in the hearts and lives of the inmates at the Mike Durfee State Prison.

That God would continue working in the lives of the men as they are released from prison.

Please make your **tax deductible checks** payable to Living Stone Prison Church.

All contributions can be sent to our treasurer:

**Scott Lee, PO Box 415, Yankton, SD 57078**

God bless-

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