

July 2024

Living Stone Prison Church

Mike Durfee State Prison - Springfield, SD

Freedom's Gate Church

4800 S Tomar St, Sioux Falls, SD

"TRANSFORMATION"

One of the things I have loved to do since I was a child is to go fishing. If you were to ask me to describe my ideal day, it would involve a cool day, a fishing rod, and a body of water. About 15 years ago Natalie's cousin retired from the boat sales and service industry in Eastern Iowa. He decided to gift us an older fishing boat that had been well used, but had solid bones. It is a 17 foot with a 90-horse motor perfect for navigating much of South Dakota's waters.

My family and I have had great memories on that boat and many fish have been caught over these past years. This past fishing season I noticed the decking was getting soft, the carpet was worn through, and there were deep cracks in the dashboard and instrument panel. I decided it was time to put a little TLC into the craft that has allowed us so many good memories. I took off the old decks, steering console, and seats, and replaced them with shiny new parts. After starting the project, I realized something that should have been abundantly clear from the beginning —I was in over my head. After taking the decks off I realized there were cracks in the livewell, the wiring would need to be replaced, and the transom (the board in the back of the boat the motor mounts to) was getting weak, potentially creating a serious safety issue for my family. I also realized I needed a new throttle and ignition which is a tad bit above my boat

MARK YOUR CALENDAR TO COME WORSHIP WITH US EVERY SUNDAY NIGHT AT 5:00

Please call Lauri at 712.470.4165 to set up a date to come worship with the men at Mike Durfee State Prison! **Visitors are always appreciated!**

Would you be willing to make a meal and worship with us at Freedom's Gate? Please call or text Ruth at 605.366.3624 to find a date that works for you or check our MealTrain link on our website.

Check out our updated website for the calendar of open dates.

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

knowledge paygrade. Very quickly this project was turning into another piece of equipment that would sit indefinitely in the backyard with a million good intentions attached to it. Thankfully, I had a good friend who is knowledgeable in these things. He offered to take on this challenging project. It is already shaping up to be a brand-new boat with a lot to offer thanks to the expertise of my friend.

In the time that I've had the privilege of serving Living Stone Prison Church at Mike Durfee State Prison, I have come to realize that our lives are very much the same way. Quite often, people look at their lives and do an effective job convincing themselves that everything is good except for those pesky, pet sins that keep hanging around. If we could just touch up our lives a bit, try a little harder, or ascribe to the latest methods of self-betterment, everything would be ok at the end of the day.

Quite often the question I get asked is, "Will you give me 3 or 4 steps I can take to kick my meth addiction or problems with sexual immorality?" This is not just a problem with the men on the inside, rather it is a problem that is normal to all humanity that is in rebellion against God. On the outside of the prison, we have a tendency to not look at serious sins such as dishonesty or gossip, because we fail to realize just how serious it is in the eyes of God.

There are two major fallacies in this way of thinking:

1. We fail to realize that sin always progresses. The Bible teaches us that sin is not something we can control or bridle, rather it enslaves us as we continue to give over to it just like that boat which over the years got worse and worse.
2. It fails to acknowledge the drastic measures needed to overcome these sins.

If I were to put a new wood decking and some carpet on the boat, it would have looked a little better, but ultimately would not have been seaworthy. There are no simple steps, or trying harder when it comes to our life in sin. Self-help methodology and trying harder will always fall short as it pertains to being free from sin.

What is needed is a complete strip down and overhaul of our hearts. God did not send His one and only Son into the world to die on the cross and rise again for something as insignificant as behavior modification. Jesus came so that we would be made new. II Corinthians 5:17 says, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come…" Salvation is not easy as some would make it seem. In fact, it is so incredibly impossible that only Jesus, dying and rising again, is able to provide it. The Good News for you and I, and the brothers on the inside, is that Jesus willingly provided all that is needed for this to take place, and by His grace He extends it to His people. Let us take comfort today in knowing this completed work of Christ towards His people. Please continue to pray for this transformative work to continue on at Living Stone Prison Church and Freedom's Gate Church.

God bless
Dan Ebbens

All contributions can be made payable to Living Stone Prison Church and sent to our treasurer: Brad Whitsell, PO Box 415, Yankton, SD 57078

LivingStonePrisonChurch@gmail.com
www.LivingStonePrisonChurch.org
Pastor Dan— 605.630.1807
Pastor Jason—605.667.0312