



“He is not here, but is risen! Remember how He spoke to you when He was still in Galilee, “Saying, ‘The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and on the third day rise again’” Luke 24:6,7

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March

Greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,

If you were to meet Parker for the first time odds are he would introduce himself with a joke. This morning, when we sat down to talk about his testimony he gave me this one. “How do flowers kiss? With their Tulips.” Parker is one of the gentlest people I have ever had the pleasure of meeting. That was not always the case. In fact, Parker is his last name. Before God laid His healing hand on him and transformed him into the person he is he went by Jeff, his first name.

Jeff grew up in a dysfunctional family until the age of fourteen when he was kicked out of the house. Angry and bitter, forced to be independent before he was ready he started to experiment with drugs at the age of seventeen. He spent his eighteenth birthday in boot camp having enlisted in the National Guard where he would serve four years. He was married and had a job with Forestry Management. On the outside looking in he appeared to be a young man that was making it ok except that drugs were still a part of his life and by the age of twenty-four his addiction would become unmanageable.

At twenty-four years old Jeff was divorced and using drugs every day. After being awake for several days on a “bender” Jeff shot his roommate with a twenty-two Magnum in a drug deal gone bad. His roommate, who was also a friend, had been trying to save Jeff from making a bad decision and accidentally ended up the victim.

When Jeff sobered up in jail he was stunned by what he had done. He didn’t fight the charges. He pled guilty and would be sentenced to more than thirty years in prison.

Jeff spent the first few decades in prison bitter and full of remorse and guilt. He became angry and violent. He was sent to IMU, the Intensive Management Unit many times, a place for, among other things, inmates that cannot control their behavior. He would even have time added to his sentence.

*2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things become new.*

Sometime in the many years in prison Jeff decided that he wanted something different for his life other than misery. If the Apostle Paul could experience joy while chained to a wall and be forgiven for persecuting the church and call himself Chief among sinners then Jeff wasn’t passed saving. He began to read the Word, pray everyday and started doing a lot of work on himself.

He made the decision he did not want to be that mean and angry man no one wanted to talk to but wanted to bring people joy and make them smile. He did this by memorizing silly little jokes that will bring a smile to your face.

“It was hard at first,” he said, “and I wasn’t very good at it.” But he kept practicing and memorizing new jokes and soon even the Corrections Officers looked forward to hearing his jokes. Jeff was gone. Parker was reborn in Christ and was looking to glorify our Father in Heaven by loving on others even on the inside of prison.

Six months before his release date Parker told his release counselor the most important part of his release was to be

February

Meals: 1848  
Overnights: 702



## Desperate For

Food; Breakfast Cereal  
Hot Dogs  
Sugar

Other Items; Razors  
Ibuprofen  
Tylenol

connected to the right church. He was going to be released to Coos County and he wanted to make sure he stayed on the right spiritual path. That was the first time he heard about the South Coast Gospel Mission when he and his counselor were looking up churches in our area and the Mission popped up. Excited at the prospect of not only finding a church but also a home where Jesus is the center of everything he called the Mission. Two weeks later he received a letter from the Care Coordinator at the Mission telling him there would be a bed available for him when he got out, part of the Inside Out program.

The transition from so many years in prison to life on the "outside" hasn't always been easy for Parker. There were many new things he had to learn when he was released such as cell phones and the internet. Through the difficult transition of living outside of incarceration he has always kept his favorite bible verse at the forefront. Proverbs 3:5,6 Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him and He shall direct your paths.

Today Parker's path is definitely divinely directed. He has been sober and at the Mission for almost a year now, has a job at Dairy Queen and is on the housing waiting list. His Calm joyful presence is a blessing at the Mission. He had one more joke for me as we were closing our meeting in prayer. "What do you call a sad Strawberry? A Blueberry!" Thanks Parker you are a light.



## *Easter Dinner*

**April 20, 2025 from 1:00 - 2:00 pm**

### Easter Needs

- Spiral Cut Hams
- Frozen Hash Browns
- Shredded Cheese
- Cakes and Cookies
- Cream of Chicken Soup

Thank You and God Bless!

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