



Little Lambs Inc

A John & Eileen Sala Prison Ministry

www.littlelambsinc.org

710 S Eucalyptus St Sebring FL 33870 @ PO Box 504 MAY 2015

Graduation at Avon Park Correctional Institution

As I read the essays from our test at the prison last week, I am again awed at the work of God in their hearts. Sometimes I feel like I am teaching and maybe no one hears, but actually they are quiet because God is fingering their flaws, their wounds and their pain. Then I get the heartfelt comments of the work that God has done or begun and I want to rejoice. It is all going according to plan, His plan. You just show up and be faithful.

Our ceremony on Tuesday the 28th, was a wonderful event. We were able to bring in cake and soda and the prison provided the camera and a 'photographer' (a guard). We had the nicest guard who stayed for the whole event and listened to all the testimonies.

It seems that there were a number of lifers in this class. One special moment occurred when one of the Chapel Orderlies, a huge, black man named Willie, very loving and godly, who was serving the cake, had one piece set aside and he asked if he could 'award' the cake to someone. It would be someone who had completed the class. He knew this particular inmate, a lifer like himself, and at the beginning of the class in November, he doubted that he would stay for the course, he said. He did, **and he changed!** The clerk presented the cake to him as an award for the work done in his life! What a tender moment and what an encouragement for that inmate! It is God ministering through these inmates to each other. You cannot comprehend the sometimes hopelessness for a young man knowing that he will never get out, never have relationships or family, especially if he has no one on the outside. We have an absolutely great group of chapel clerks!

It was testimony time! We give time after refreshments for the inmates themselves to come up and tes-

tify or give an encouragement to the class. We had a number of men and each one was encouraging the group in the Lord. We had a 'guest' who attended the ceremony. Jose M. has attended the class twice previously and had started the Bible Study during that time. He had just graduated the Bible Study and brought his Graduation Bible for me to sign it. We were able to share this with the men and let them see and handle the bible. Jose later asked me if his wife could come and talk to me. I said of course she could. She called the very next day and will be coming in on Saturday! Please keep these photos and pray for these men as often as you can, that God will have his way in their lives.

The week culminated in a great Volunteer Banquet hosted by the administration and staff at Avon Park Correctional. Warden Timothy Sheffield, gave us a warm welcome. Chaplains Clark and Weaver were assisted by the Regional Chaplain Abdurrahim Al-Khatib. This was the largest ever volunteer gathering at Avon Park Correctional that I can remember since 1999. Amen.



Overcomers Addiction Recovery



Marriage, Family & Parenting

I want to truly thank God for you! I've learned so much from your teachings. I have been married 10 yrs. And I've learned more about the importance of marriage in these past weeks than I've experienced. I truly know the importance of being a husband and father, thanks to your teaching. I've truly learned in order to break the cycle of the way you were raised with bad values you have to change the course by being aware of what needs to be changed. My wife is experiencing a totally different me and she's loving it more and more. My wife and I's communication level was already growing, now we talk about any and everything because I've learned how important me talking to her about the smallest thing she wants to talk about means to her and how happy she is just talking to me about it. I've always been good with our daughters but with what I know now has enhanced my knowledge. The most important part of it all is God and love and the role of parenthood.

What I learned in the Marriage , Family & Parenting Class!

This is what I've learned in the family and marriage class. I learned how obsessed I was with other human beings. This behavior of mine was manipulation by buying: gifts, clothes and cash. I stayed with my uncle most of the time and I didn't realize that I was subconsciously following in his footsteps. He was my role model and I grew up around a lot of violence. To be in control, you had to show the woman who was the boss in the relationship, even if you had to yell at her or slap her across the face. I was so obsessive with my girlfriend until she was scared to go anywhere before she asked me. My mind couldn't rest because I wanted to be in control of everything in my house. I didn't know anything about detaching myself from these kinds of emotions back then. My emotions would lead me to be very abusive sometimes. In fact, I really didn't know anything about a loving relationship. All I knew was, I was the boss in this house and whatever I say, goes. I wasted a lot of energy hurting people because I grew up in a poor environment and a lack of education. I ran wild in the streets because I didn't have a father figure. Therefore, I was never disciplined like the average child. My mom and dad separated when I was about 12 years old. My mom struggled to raise six of us by herself. Then the burden got too heavy. That's when my uncle started raising me..... Then I picked up a lot of bad habits and bad examples from him. I guess I was codependent on him for food and shelter, therefore, what he did must be how the manhood life works. There's no doubt that we had a dysfunctional family. I was only doing what I seen. I also was very obsessive with my car. Nobody drove it except me. Nobody washed it, worked on the engine, or even sat in it without my permission. I felt like I had to control it because it was mine. How wrong I was ! I also had an obsession with a friend in here. I wouldn't give him any space to breathe. I wanted to be in charge of everything we did. I only wanted to help him because he was 'green ' to the prison system. I went to far with the controlling situation. This class has helped me get a good understanding about obsessive behaviors, boundaries, self esteem, shame, anger and self control.

This program has re-affirmed for me that life has rules; that all rules descend from God's original top ten; and prison is an excellent place to become a role model.

God created a world of order. Order is maintained by establishing and enforcing rules. These rules are an effective guideline on how to joyfully pass through this world and how to be a good neighbor.

All rules are connected to God's Hit Parade of chart busters. For example: don't drink to excess. You are probably not at home (statistics show : in a bar) so you'll get in your car and drive. You may run into your neighbor in a most inconvenient way ending his or her existence. A bad day all around. Thou shalt not kill. See the connection? If you don't, you may end up in prison. Prison has rules too: Don't escape, don't slap the guard, no contraband, etc. Unfortunately most of the rules have no enforcement. My favorite saying is: rules without consequences are broken. Broken in two ways. One, if there are no consequences they won't be obeyed. An unobeyed rule is broken. It doesn't work. Two, a rule without consequences is unenforceable therefore often disobeyed, broken. Semantics, I know, but a good point and a catchy saying.

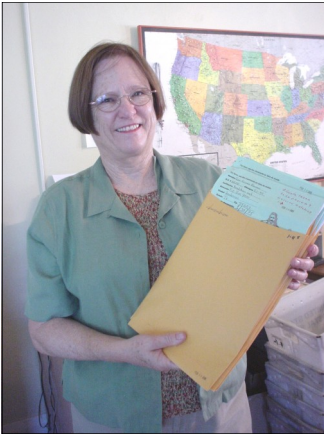
So I applaud this program for reiterating what I have known (but not always obeyed) since childhood. Life has rules, all rules stem from the Ten Commandments and prison is an excellent place to become a role model, there are so few.

I originally signed up for this class because it was recommended to me by a good friend who took it here. I found it to be very eye opening and educational. It helped me see character flaws in myself and showed me what I need to do in order to correct them. It has also shown me behaviors to watch out for in others. My favorite part was the real life examples given by the instructor. I learned that I am a codependent who is always trying to please others and has a hard time saying no. I have gotten a lot better at saying no and detaching from others since coming to prison and even more so since taking this class. I also learned that my role in the family was the scapegoat since I was the second child and met the criteria discussed in class. This course also shed light on the reasons why I drank alcohol to escape and be somebody I was not since I was uncomfortable in my own skin due to insecurities and abuse. I also learned where anger comes from and how riddled our population is with venereal diseases. I had no idea that this country's population was so immoral and polluted with nasty diseases. All in all I thoroughly enjoyed this class and feel that I am better equipped to deal with life's trials and be a better person, husband and father.

What I learned in the Marriage , Family & Parenting Class!

I have learned so many things that were never a reality to me until now. I always seen where my life was going, yet to me it was never my fault, but always those around me. Even more, the women I was with were always to blame and fell short in so many ways. I always believed in God, but lacked the personal relationship to the point where I never wanted him or even thought I ever needed him. I listened to you speak about being co-dependent and I could see myself so clearly, yet I realized it didn't stop there. I also had to be in control of everything around me and when I wasn't I felt lost and burst in anger to those I was supposed to love. I thought having a child would bring love, or make love grow between those women I was with, but it never did. I learned of boundaries for the first time in my life. A subject and fact that I never knew existed. Not only did I have no idea what love was, but I had to have it my way or none at all. The issues and brokenness that I've had all my life, you've allowed me to see these same things not only in my life, but also in my parents and family as well as the mothers of my children. You have shown me the hidden anger which started as a child and the importance of bringing all this out so it can be given to God for true healing. This anger has been identified by you helping me see it in my actions and the feeling that became action by others. It was always expressed in my daily life. I learned that my sexual behavior was so much more than I accepted as normal. It was a sickness, an addiction that expressed so many other areas of my life as well. I learned that even the drugs that I thought to be normal and accepted were doing so much damage not only to me, by body and mind and spirit, but hurting and being passed down to my children. I learned that I have to detach myself from so many people and places that I once again thought it to be normal in my old lifestyle and way of thinking. Now I Detach, Think, Decide and Act. Things I never did before. I only had a thought and acted without regard of outcome. I've learned what a dysfunctional family is and how to change it. I've learned so much and I want to thank you for helping me see the truth and how broken I was and even more, that I don't have to live this way. I am and can change these things in my life.

This class has been very helpful in my life in many ways. Yet the area of most value is what I want to talk about: Boundaries. Not just any man made rules. It's the word of God that has the correct boundaries for all areas of life. In the past I considered boundaries given to keep me from the good. Many choices in my life that seemed to be good for the moment, yet created pain & hurt for myself and loved ones in the long run. I began to somewhat understand that some things that seem good, aren't always best. I could not really see how to live right in some areas. Then, in class, talking about boundaries according to God I learned that all God's boundaries are for my greater good, protection and safe keeping for me and my family. One great fact that I now understand as well as live in is that God sets the boundaries in His word. And provides us with the ability to live accordingly. His Holy Spirit is real and active to lead us in all areas. The key is being able to focus in the Spirit. Even in the areas that I am weak to stay with these boundaries because of the pleasures that may be present. God by his Grace will empower me to overcome the weakness by choosing His power. This all has been helpful for me in my relationship with my wife and my kids. Helps me understand emotional scars in my life and their lives, allowing God's love to heal me and show me things.



Shirley Dowling, Home to be with Jesus....

Our dear friend and volunteer, Shirley Dowling died this past week after a brief illness. Shirley and Monte Dowling have been volunteers with Little Lambs for about 10 years now. They came to us as a family with her father, Jay Chase who helped us until his death several years ago. Monte became our printer and Shirley served on and off with eye problems. She had returned to the office lately with Monte on Mondays. We are indebted to Shirley and Monte for helping us so devotedly. Monte prints all our tracts, lessons, cards, everything. Their deep and abiding friendship has been such a blessing to Little Lambs. Their home and church are in Lake Placid, the First Presbyterian Church. Please keep their family in your prayers. Monte's address is 209 E Bellevue St., Lake Placid, FL 33852

Dear Partners,

It has been a very very busy time for us. We are being stretched somewhat as the snow birds leave and we take in the events of this past week. Our precious sister in the Lord died suddenly and we miss her. Right now I am waiting for the birth of two grandsons! Danny and Natalie are both pregnant, so it will be a very busy year as well. Jan has returned from attending a Foundation Awards honoring her late husband, Dwight Ryan, in Raleigh.

We have had bibles to the jail courtesy of Tanglewood Community Church and completing our graduations at the Avon Park Prison, and new bibles coming in and bibles going out, bibles, bibles everywhere. We have had a tremendous uptick in the number of new students, especially female inmates, which is a very good thing.

We had a great week at the prison this week! It is just another reminder of why we do what we do and how you all are a huge part of that! Without you it would be impossible to carry the Word of God to these men and women, often in the worst time of their lives. I am often reminded how much I like prison or jail! It is not necessarily a bad thing! It is an agent of CHANGE. I find that it affords a unique time of "chastisement, correction and consequences" that can break a man or woman's heart so that the Word of repentance and forgiveness can enter and absolutely change their lives, if they allow the Word and God to do this work in their lives.



Here is our new Chaplain Weaver. Both Dean and myself have enjoyed working with him. We especially like having the Chaplain at the Chapel during our classes. Usually, Tuesday night we are unaccompanied except for guards. Now Chaplain Weaver has a class during this time and it's great. It makes things work so much better. We are a blessed people. Thank you for helping us bless others! Your servant, Eileen Sala

MAY SCHEDULE 2015
Happy Mother's Day

Mondays: Bible Study
Avon Park Prison
Tuesday: **Overcomers Graduation**
Avon Park Prison
Tuesday: Marriage, Family & Parenting, **Prison Graduation**
Wednesdays: Anger Management & Biblical Boundaries
New Class Beginning May @
First Presbyterian Church
319 Poinsettia, Sebring FL
Call to register 863-273-7388

CPR Electronics

I had a bad experience a few weeks ago. My new cell phone 6 was run over on the street (no questions). This young man, Paul, from CPR Electronics near the library, fixed it with a minimum of pain and cost for me, even getting new parts quickly and efficiently. I could not believe that we have this excellent service here in Sebring as I had expected to go all the way up to I-4 to get it fixed and leave it there. But here, Turn-around time was less than a week. Thank you so much!
But it was nice to have a 'phone holiday'!!!

