

Healing Testimony at Sussex II State Prison (Joe's Testimony)

Lifting Up Jesus at Sussex II State Prison: In August at Sussex II we shared from John 12:32. Jesus is speaking. "If I be lifted up from the earth, I will draw all men unto me." Verse 33 explains that he said this signifying what death he should die. This same phrase is used John 3:14, when Jesus says "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so the Son of Man must be lifted up." This verse refers to a story in Numbers 21. The Israelites were journeying in the wilderness and they were discouraged. Verse 5 says they spoke against God and against Moses. Then God sent fiery serpents that bit the people and many died. When God's judgment came, the people went to Moses and repented and asked that the serpents be taken away. Moses prayed for the people and God's answer was to instruct Moses to make an image of a fiery serpent and set it on a pole, and "it shall come to pass that everyone who was bitten when he we looks upon it shall live." Moses did as he was instructed, and all those who had been bitten were healed.

The day we delivered that message to the inmates at Sussex II, a story was unfolding. An inmate there, we will call him "Joe," came up to us after the service on Sept. 9 and told us his story. That same night, August 14, after we had shared this message at Sussex II, Joe's spleen ruptured. Joe was lying on the floor in his cell bleeding and in tremendous pain. He cried out for help and while he was waiting for help to come he remembered the image of the serpent on the pole, its correlation to the image of Jesus on the Cross, and prayed that God would help him. Joe said that this image was all he could think about while he laid there waiting. One month later, after emergency surgery and five days in the hospital, Joe was back at Christian service on Sept. 9th giving praise to Jesus for his healing and for getting him through the waiting and the pain while he was crying out for help, bleeding and afraid.