

## **TFD#80 27APR22 "A day in prison"...**

Thankyou Mark. Well last Friday I went to prison. Don't worry I haven't been getting up to some illegal activity on the side of being a vicar, but rather I had the privilege of shadowing the chaplaincy team at a prison in East Anglia.

I am very grateful to the Lead Chaplain and his team for showing me around, and to the many prisoners who I spoke to, who were willing to give up time to talk, including some of those who went to the Church of England service, and others who welcomed me to the Islamic prayer service, a first for me.

Now there are a lot of things you aren't allowed to take into prison. On arrival I had to leave any mobile phone, smart watch, cigarettes or cigarette lighters in the car. That's all very well. And of course, routinely there are searches to check that visitors to prison aren't bringing illegal drugs. But can I tell you two things that can get into prison.

The first is ducks! Yes I was quite amazed to see a family of ducks with around 8 ducklings waddling around the prison grounds. You see the ducks are very safe there, there are no predators within the prison walls, and so the ducklings have grown up very safely within the shelter of the prison grounds. It was a nice reminder to me, and I guess for the prisoners that even in tough locations, God's creation can remind us of the beauty and new life that he brings.

The other thing that can get into prison is the good news of Jesus Christ. Christian chaplains and the prison fellowship have the privilege of talking with the prisoners about the forgiveness that Jesus brings. It was wonderful to hear in a reading in the prison chapel words from John's gospel of the peace and forgiveness that the Jesus brings on the day of his resurrection. They take on a new resonance in prison.

We have all done things that we regret. For some that may have meant hurting others in a catastrophic way, for others there are more respectable and middle-class sins of selfishness, pride and thinking of yourself as better than others, which still leave us guilty. But Jesus said of himself "if the son sets you free you will be free indeed".

A Christian is not someone who thinks of themselves as better than others. It's someone who has come to discover the forgiveness and new life that Jesus brings. "If the son sets you free, you will be free indeed". You don't have to be in prison to need setting free.

Thank you for listening, and have a great day.

Followed by "[I want to break free](#)" by Queen.