



International Bible Society



Prison ministry in Czech Republic

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Behind Bars

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience...”

Galatians 5:22-23 [NIV]

Any changes are accepted with mistrust here. Usually things turn for the worse, and Jaroslav, walking along the corridor, is fully aware of this. He was unhappy and angry when he was given the word to move to another cell. But an order is an order, and as a prisoner he must obey it.

He is hardly twenty- rather a boy than a man, living in the Czech prison called Vinarice. He is trying to give the impression to others of being a strong and rough man, but he is not too successful in doing that. It is easily recognizable that he is shaking in his shoes. “I wish it would be all over”, he was saying to himself while walking along the corridor.

“How will I be welcomed? Who is the leader of the cell? He is usually difficult to be please.”

The last meters before entering the new cell are the worst. His heavy steps are not caused by baggage, but rather by dread and fear.

“It all starts now,” Jaroslav murmurs to himself, while entering, “Who is running the show here? Who is **the lord** of the room?” He remembers previous “entrance procedures” too well. So now is the time...

But what a surprise! No “reception committee” is waiting for him. There are no voices shouting at him, trying to show who is **the lord** here. Instead, peace and quiet prevail here. “What does this mean?” “How should I understand it?”, he wonders.

The first sentence that Jaroslav hears includes only three ordinary words: “Are you hungry?” Then comes, “Can we serve you something to eat?” And what is more, it seems

that the questions are sincere. “No, no,” he responds diffidently. He is completely confused but happy and curious to understand it all. He has to find out how and why everything is different in this cell...



Later on Jaroslav begins to understand that everything is somehow connected with one book, the Bible. He soon sees that the Living New Testament provided by International Bible Society is what makes the difference in his cellmates' behavior. The truth of the message has changed their lives. Jaroslav develops a strong desire belong to the **Lord** as well, because he realizes that by not serving the **Lord** means that one obeys other **lords**.

Jaroslav can be counted as a beginner in the faith, yet he has already tasted the fruit of the gospel – love and peace given by the **Lord** Jesus Christ. And it works even behind bars. As we read in Galatians 5:22-23 [NIV]: *“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.”*



Now he is growing step by step in knowing Jesus as Savior and **Lord**. By reading the Living New Testament, he understands more and more about His love and sacrifice. Jaroslav recognizes that he was hungry indeed, but for spiritual rather than physical food. Because of the IBS ministry of giving Bibles to people behind the bars, the deepest need of man can be met.