

Chronicles of April

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I've shared a lot of excerpts of my journal, some of small situations, some of greater. Life in prison is about an ebb and flow of situations small and great. Some days are pretty good, you end the day thinking "Thank God for getting me through", and some days are tough, where you end the day thinking "what else can go wrong!"

Today's entry is more in the middle, written on April 28th of 2015. I'll share this short entry, and as I always do, I will "pause" in between to add in some color, or clarification to what I originally wrote. Ok, let's begin:

April 28th, 2015: Take Five is on!! I love this piece, by the late Dave Brubeck... oh I hope I spelled his name right. It's on KTUC, 1400AM, at 7:16am, on a Tuesday morning. A great way to start the day, I could listen to this tune 100 times straight.

(PAUSE: I like waking up to good, positive music, because in prison, you REALLY need a way to start the day on a good note. While I do have an MP3, often I have to charge it up in the morning, so I go to my radio. Here in Arizona, there is a variety of radio stations I can bounce to, looking for

that morning pick-me up. I love jazz, and "Take Five" is a classic piece that I listened to quite often at home...kinda reminds me of home when I hear it too...let's continue...)

I got back from breakfast (coffee cake, coffee and a slice of Honeydew melon) and heard "Lowdown" by Boz Scaggs. Another great song. It's a good way to start the day, no telling what obstacles are in wait for me. "Take Five" is still on, I really like this song; why isn't this on my MP3? It's certainly on the music library, as well as Grover Cleveland's "Take Another Five". Classic music... not to be confused with "classical music", which I also like.

(PAUSE: As you know, I'm a big jazz fan, and even now...embarrassingly, I STILL don't have "Take Five" on my MP3. (Writing this as of August 2016). I have discovered so many songs on the Music Library, and I can only spend so much on music, so it is certainly on the list to buy, I just haven't gotten around to it.

I mentioned "Lowdown" by Boz Scaggs, a cool tune too, you oughta check that one out too. Not jazz, kinda smooth top 40...hmm, how would you categorize that? It was kinda R&B, kinda jazzy, kinda other stuff too, but a great song. As you can see, music has a very important part of doing time, it sets the mood, and can help you when you're not feeling upbeat. It would be much harder to do time without a radio, and my MP3. Anyway, let's continue...)

Well, now that my brain has been stimulated, what was that verse I read from Luke yesterday? Luke 3:14 is quite interesting: "Likewise the soldiers asked him (John the Baptist) saying, 'And what shall we do?' So he said to them, 'Do not intimidate anyone or accuse falsely, and be content with your wages'". As I now listen to "Only Sixteen" by...gosh, who does this song. Not Al Green...oh, Sam Cooke! Anyway, the scripture tends to highlight an idea that soldiers- or those in authority, like these officers, should not intimidate those that are over, or lie about what they do... this goes triple here. I may have to incorporate that in future essays.

(PAUSE: I try, as best I can, to incorporate scriptures in what I do, and what I write, so that I can try to keep my faith forefront in my life. It is critical to keep the word of God in front of all we do, and it can be hard while in prison, but my writings try to show that it is possible, and that there ARE benefits for doing such.

The scripture is a reminder that even officers that work here have to be honorable, something they often forget. It certainly applies to future situations that I would write about; maybe I'll share those soon with you. Anyway, let's continue...)

Last night, Roosevelt came by to pray for the new rules about open cell doors and stuff. Everyone is upset about it; I hadn't though much about it, but we prayed last night

that God will help us out. These rules only create oppression, and frustration, as Lavant is now up, and popped on the lights... I was using the LED light until now. Well, as "I Can't Stop Loving You" by Ray Charles comes on, I'll end this entry, as it is 7:27am, and my ministry that I listen to is about to come on-

(PAUSE: The rule then was that all cell doors had to be kept open...for ~~some~~ security issue, but with that rule comes a LOT of problems. Our cell doors are heavy steel doors, that when closed, cuts off a lot of noise. When you've got 120+ inmates in a dorm, there can be a LOT of noise. It's hard to rest or concentrate in your own cell if all the noise from the common area is coming in your cell. It was a question of inmates having peace and quiet in their own cells. If not, it certainly will lead to arguments and fights.

When you're trying to sleep, or writing, or just chilling out in your cell, you don't need your door wide open. There are many prisons where you CAN'T sleep when the cells are unlocked, because it is very violent. You'd be a potential victim if you lose you guard. But here at USP Tucson, that isn't necessary, so why enforce rules that don't apply? Every prison is run differently, and as such, the rules can be relaxed if the prison has demonstrated a non-violent behavior, of which USP Tucson certainly is. There are inmates across the country that would do anything to get to a prison where they can do their time safely, without fear of attack. So here, it isn't as bad as you see on television, and for that same

reason, the rule of open cell doors didn't make sense to us. It doesn't promote good morale, so guys like Roosevelt, a good Christian guy, wanted to pray on that.

I ended this entry on the Christian idea of prayer, which I wish I could end EVERY entry with, prison life isn't always that easy. In this case, I noted the importance of prayer, and in fact, the prayer did work, the rule applied then no longer applies, or is greatly relaxed. Shows the power of prayer, something I experienced MANY times while being here, some I have written about, some forthcoming.)

Anyway, that's all for now, until next time...

Frederick Mason

PS: Received a letter from you, wanted to remind you that I have filled out your questionnaire before, if you need me to fill it out again, I'd be happy to do so,
Jim