

#missiontomissiontx

July 9, 2017

John 13: 31-35

31 After Judas had gone, Jesus said: Now the Son of Man will be given glory, and he will bring glory to God. 32 Then, after God is given glory because of him, God will bring glory to him, and God will do it very soon. 33 My children, I will be with you for a little while longer. Then you will look for me, but you won't find me. I tell you just as I told the people, "You cannot go where I am going." 34 But I am giving you a new command. You must love each other, just as I have loved you. 35 If you love each other, everyone will know that you are my disciples.



Two weeks ago, sixty youth and adults spent four days serving in the heat and humidity of southern Texas. We had three crews putting on new roofs, one crew running wire and installing sheetrock, one crew drywalling and painting the interior of a house, and one crew repairing a ceiling, fixing windows, and installing a linoleum floor. Each of the houses we worked at were what Roland, the VIM projects coordinator, called "FEMA rejects". Each of the families we worked with were immigrants from Mexico and spoke little or no English. Their inability to complete the required FEMA forms for disaster relief made them ineligible to receive assistance. This morning we would like to share the ways this trip impacted each of us and to allow you to experience how God was at work in and through us as we served the people of southern Texas. Let us pray.

Our journey began on Saturday, June 24, as we departed from Sioux Falls.



We spent two days on a bus and in a van as we worked our way through Nebraska, Kansas, Oklahoma, and Texas. Along the way, we napped, we got to know each other, and we began to become friends. While we

were there we spent four nights at Camp Loma de Vida – a non-

denominational church camp in Edinburg, Texas. On the way down and

back we spent several nights like this one - on the gym

floor. We were hosted by gracious and welcoming

United Methodist churches all along our journey. Some

had one shower for males and one for females. Some

had no shower facilities at all. At our last stop, in Topeka, we experienced

radical hospitality. Some folks from the Topeka First United Methodist

Church made us a wonderful home-cooked dinner and then sent us off in

the morning with little lunch sacks each containing a juice box, a

clementine, and two granola bars – just enough to get us to our brunch

stop a couple hours up the road in Bellevue, Nebraska. Even though I had

said we would be okay until breakfast, they insisted that we take the

bags, saying, "That's just what we do". Radical hospitality.



Our church had youth and adults on five of the six teams. Five of the

teams had ten people on them and one team had nine members. The

larger group consisted of youth and adults from Winner, Pierre, Montrose,

Piedmont, Spearfish, Huron, Yankton, Valley City, and Sioux Falls. To give

you a point of reference as we continue to share this morning, here are a quick look at our teams.

My team,
Team 1:



Team 2,
Hannah's
Team:



Team 3:



Team 4, Austin
& Todd's team:



Team 5,
Macie's team:



Team 6,
Marlee's
team:



As we continue this morning, we would like to each take a little time to share how the trip impacted us personally and to share what the trip meant to each of us. To begin, I invite Marlee Schaeffer to share...



For one team in particular, the depth of the relationship that formed was simply amazing. To share about her experience with Edith and her family, I invite Hannah Peterson to share.



Thank you Hannah. Before Todd Bicek, our high school youth director, comes up, I would like to share one of the most meaningful moments of the trip for me. As we neared the end of our trip, Todd came up to me and had a confession of sorts. He told me that he was a bit skeptical and was a little reluctant to come on this trip. He shared that he had his doubts. Then he thanked me for the experience he and all the youth had and was very grateful for the opportunity to be a part of the conference trip. Then he asked for a piece of paper. Please come and share what you wrote on that paper Todd.

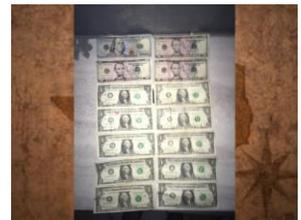


On the first night of the trip my fellow leader Steve found a dollar on the ground in the parking lot. After they got on the bus, he asked a few of the youth what they thought we should do with it. He was just planting seeds. Steve sat the dollar on the little counter in the front of the bus and left it there. The next day another dollar joined the first. The next day, Tuesday, the two dollars became four dollars. That night in worship, one of the youth asked about the pictures of dollar bills that kept appearing in



our videos each night and Steve explained that the money was multiplying and that we were discussing what to do with it. On Tuesday night we asked Corey Enfield, the youth pastor from Yaknton, to share the message. I had known of his youth group's radical generosity at Christmas time – they handed out \$450 worth of gift cards at WalMart – so we thought he'd be great to share about the part of John 13 that speaks of loving others as Jesus first loved us. Corey was awesome in sharing his story of how God loved him and how it has led him to love others in the same way as Jesus first loved him.

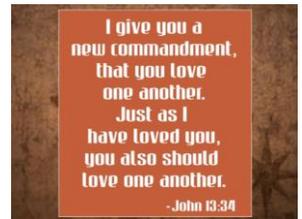
Later that night, after worship, we were enjoying an ice cream treat when two of the young men on the trip cornered Steve and I and said they needed to talk with us about something very serious. We found a quiet corner of the kitchen area and they began by handing us a wad of money. These two boys donated over \$120 and as we talked with them a plan was born. The next morning we posted this picture and simply said, "Look what happened". We briefly shared that two youth had made a big contribution and that we had a plan for the multiplying money. We invited the rest of the youth and adults to be a part of it. To continue the story of what happened next, I invite RaeLynn to come and share what happened with the family her team served...



The stove that Hannah shared about and prayers with the families and the gift cards are just a taste of how God was at work during our mission experience. All throughout the trip, we experienced God at work. The phrase, “then this happened” became a popular refrain. On the way home to South Dakota, we were supposed to make a lunch stop at Exit 229 just south of Moore, Oklahoma. But there wasn't an exit 229. Somehow the guy planning the trip misread the Google map. We were supposed to take exit 230. Oops. And “then this happened”. Macie...



Sometimes God places us in unexpected and unplanned circumstances so that we can be the face of Jesus to others. And as God does this, it changes us. As we share His love with others, it makes us more and more like Him. Our key verse for the trip was John 13:34 and it reads, “I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you should also love one another”. Winner United Methodist Church, thank you for both your financial support and for your prayers as you allowed us to live out this command on our mission trip to Texas.



This wonderful group of youth and adults was blessed in so many ways as we traveled and as we served amongst the people of southern Texas. I am thankful and each who shared today are thankful for the ways that God moved in and through us on this trip.

We will never be the same. Our faith and our relationship with God has grown and become so much richer and deeper. So again, thank you so much for the opportunity to be a part of this trip. Let us pray.



GPS – Grow, Pray, Serve

- 1) Where could God be calling you to be in mission?
- 2) What experiences that the team spoke of today speak to your heart and passion for others? How could this be a ministry for you?
- 3) In your day to day life, how do you live out the command to love others as Jesus first loved you?