

Changed Hearts, Transformed Lives, and a Future Hope in this Life and the Next

4/29/08 | Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ... - 1 Peter 1:3



The UNLCru Staff Team: L-R, Back: John Matthews, LeAnne and Kent Pierce, Missy and Bill Kollar, Jenni Robinson, Becky and John Webb; L-R, Front: Matt Meschke, me

| Prayer Requests |

- For Willie, Joe, Brendon, and others that I have invested in this year and will continue to invest in through the fall semester.
- That we'd finish strong in the last two weeks of the year; that May and June would be fruitful months for personal development and working with students who are staying in Lincoln.
- That I would desire Christ more than anything and he would work holiness and gospel transformation in me each day.
- For the support raising process I'm starting on for STINT to South Africa.

| Year-end Reflection |

The most significant thing I have learned in my study of Scripture this year is that the whole Bible reveals God redemptive solution for man. Not every Scripture reveals it evenly however. Some passages are in full bloom and give the plain, clear account of Christ's work on the cross for our sins. Other passages (most Old Testament passages) are in "seed-form" that are in some way connected to the tree-sized message of God's redemption. Bryan Chapell provides a vivid illustration in his book *Christ Centered Preaching*.

"You do not explain what an acorn is, even if you say many true things about it (e.g., it is brown, has a cap, is found on the ground, is gathered by squirrels), if you do not in some way relate it to an oak tree. In a similar sense, preachers cannot properly explain a seed of biblical revelation, even if they say many true things about it, unless they relate it to the redeeming work of God that all Scripture ultimately purposes to disclose."

Lately, I've been telling my students, "If you hear a sermon at church that's not about Jesus, it's a bad sermon." What or who else could it possibly be about! I want everything I write or say to glorify Jesus. My goal is to spread a passion the supremacy of God and everything he is for us in his Son Jesus.

Wow! I can't believe the year is almost over! God has brought me on a wild journey this year and I've been blessed to see him change so many lives over the past nine months. I've seen people go from death to life, darkness to light, despair to a living hope! I wanted to share stories about three students that are close to my heart. They are at different mile markers on their spiritual road trip, but the same Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead is working in them today!

Willie Buller

I've known Willie since the second day he was on campus in 2005. Willie is a junior from California. He was in my Bible study his freshman year and the next year, I was his Bible study coach. For three years, I've been able to disciple Willie—though most times, he's more



friend than pupil!

Nevertheless, it's been a privilege to see him grow from an 18-year old boy to a 21-year old man who loves Jesus and desires to see change on the UNL campus and most importantly, in his own life. I joke around with Willie because he seems to be taking after me so much. He's always reading a commentary as he prepares for his Bible study. A man after my own heart, haha!

This year, by God's grace, Willie has been bearing so much fruit in Schramm Hall, where the soil has typically been hard. "I've learned to be patient; God has been faithful," he said. "We had one guy last year in our study. By the end of this year, we've had 10 or 11 guys. I love to encourage them and that they encourage me. I wouldn't have met these men if I didn't wait on God and trust him for fruit."

What a joy it's been to spend time with Willie and teach him so that he will be able to entrust other faithful men with the gospel.

Joe

I met Joe for our first meeting as conversation partners in October. I was supposed to help Joe learn English, but I wanted to share Jesus with him as well. At the end of our first conversation, Joe asked, in broken English, "Jared told me you know lot about Jesus story." I smiled and said, "I know a little bit, yeah." Since then, Joe's English skills and love for Jesus have grown.

Joe is a grad student from East Asia and really had no true understanding of who Jesus was when he came to UNL. For security purposes, I cannot put his picture or his real name in this prayer letter. As time went on, Joe be-

came more intrigued with Jesus. During one conversation, we happened upon spiritual things. Then we met with John Matthews, another staff person here, and shared the gospel with Joe. Joe came home with me over the Christmas break and saw the love and change that Jesus brings through my family. Six weeks later, Joe received Christ into his life.

Now Joe is reading his Bible and praying to Jesus. He has a profound understanding of his own sinfulness and need for forgiveness. Joe also knows that the Bible is powerful and active in his life. "I want to read the Bible everyday because when I do...it moves me. I know it's a sin when I don't read my Bible." Truly, God has replaced Joe's heart of stone and given him a heart of flesh. It's not a perfect heart, but it's a heart that desires to know Jesus as he really is: Lord, Savior, and Treasure.

Brendon Mizner

At Fall Getaway last October, I gave a little reaming to some guys at my lunch table. I told them the importance of getting into the Bible everyday. Meditating on Scripture, I said, is essential for spiritual growth. Later that night, Brendon walked up to me after a service and said, "I'm not doing great at reading the Bible. Can we meet every week and read together? Can you disciple me?" My face, no doubt, was beaming with excitement.

Brendon is a freshman from Norfolk. During the first semester, Brendon and I would get together and study the Bible, examine doctrine, and pray for life-change. After we got to know each other more, we started doing more outreach on campus. The first time I took Brendon out to share his faith on campus, he was a bit nervous. I did most of the talking that time, but he no doubt has grown since then.

"Discipleship has been a huge spiritual tool to help me grow closer to Christ," Brendon told me. "It's been awesome to learn how to dig deep into the Bible and that has helped me learn how to share my faith. Being in the Word has helped me learn how to relate to people."

I know that Brendon will be a future leader here, so it's been such a blessing to come alongside him in his spiritual journey!

Rejoicing in the Living Hope that Christ gives us,

James