

Being Generous with the Gospel

One thing our church body does to help new pastors get acclimated to life in the church is Post-Seminary Applied Learning and Support (PALS). I have been participating for the two and a half years that I've been out of seminary. For this last session in January we did a study on Stewardship. Usually, when we talk about stewardship, we talk about how God is the owner of all things (Psalm 24:1) and that we are his stewards or managers of all the resources with which he has entrusted us. We are to use our time, talents, and treasures to glorify him in all we do. Much to my initial surprise, one of the segments we studied was all about evangelism. "What does evangelism have to do with stewardship?" I thought to myself. Well, Dr. Joel Biermann, from Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, explained that sharing the gospel with others is arguably the most important aspect of stewardship. We are the stewards of the mysteries of God (1 Cor. 4:1). As he explained it and as I have now reflected on this thought, it makes a whole lot of sense! The greatest gift God has given us is the message of salvation in Jesus! Unfortunately, we all, from time to time, can be rather stingy with sharing this gift of the gospel. We wonder if people are ready for us to share the gospel; we're shy; we're not sure if we know enough, etc. I have to share a story of when God really made it clear that I needed to share this gift.

Last week I was at the Trailpoint, the gym that is connected to Des Moines Metro Community College (DMACC) here in Ankeny, doing some deadlifts. These two students I've been getting to know walked up to the rack next to mine. I asked them how school was going and what they've been learning lately. They had just gotten out of Philosophy class and had been learning about the philosopher, David Hume. I asked them, "What was his big idea?" "He said that all we can know for sure is what we have learned from experience or inductive reasoning," they said. "Where does that get us?" I asked. "Well, all that we can know about the world and what is right or wrong is what people tell us and what we find in nature." "Hmm. That's interesting," I said. They then told me that they didn't really like how he came to his conclusion about God's existence. "Oh man," I thought to myself, they just opened up a door for me to talk about Jesus. I was working out and was under a bit of time crunch. I didn't really feel like having a theological discussion, but I gave into the Spirit's nudging. I asked, "Well, what do you guys think? Does God exist?" One of them said, "Uh, I don't know. The verdict is still out, I guess." Then I asked, "Do either you have a church background?" They both said, "No." I then said, "Would you like to hear the Christian story of God?" They said, "Sure." In about 2 minutes I shared with them the story of the Bible; creation, fall, redemption and restoration. "Hmm, that's interesting," they said, "never heard it all quite like that." I'll let you know how this story ends later. The harvest is plentiful, folks! Let's not be afraid to share the gift of the gospel!

Prayer Requests

- For a fruitful response to our series on Generosity series during Lent.
- We are collecting names of those we know who are disconnected from church with the challenge to invite them to worship on Easter. Pray God works through this to bring more people into his family!
- For safe travel for my family and me as we head to the Exponential church planting conference in Orlando (Feb. 26-Mar 1). Pray we learn and grow too!

Upcoming Events

- Worship service and fellowship time with the residents of Mill Pond Senior living every fourth Sunday (Feb. 25th)
- March 23- Faith and Family Night with the Iowa Wild hockey team.
- April 1- Easter Worship Celebration with brunch and games to follow.