

The Sillysheep Pen

Finding the Lost, Binding the brokenhearted



Remembering Dad

Aug/Sept 2015

To our dear friends and ministry partners,

This past month and a half since I last wrote has been one of the most difficult in my life. At the age of 75 my father passed away, 2 weeks after I started my work at the National Campus Office (NCO) of Cru in Orlando, FL. It was a complete surprise for myself and for my entire family. The excitement and energy that came with the start of new things suddenly drained, and in its' place the pain of death and separation rushed to fill the void. Mark Gauthier, my new boss and head of the campus ministry of Cru, has been coming along side to comfort me. "We were never meant to experience death", Mark reminded me. No, we were never meant to experience death, but we live in a fallen world. And in the confusion that comes with grief and loss, I am challenged to "in all things give thanks."



I loved my dad. And for many years, he lived his life for the sake of the gospel. As I remember my dad, many stories flood my mind. Most of them have to do with how he shared the gospel in and out of season. From sharing the gospel with random strangers, students and scholars from China, to training and equipping pastors in closed countries, my dad had a prodigious life of ministry. But, in the days after his death, I reflected on all these memories, and a passage from one of Henri Nouwen's books came to mind. In the gospels, Jesus was baptized by John, and as Jesus comes out of the waters, the Spirit of the Lord descended upon him and out from the heavens the Father's voice thundered. "This is my son, with whom I am well pleased." Jesus, Nouwen argued, lived his entire earthly life out of that moment. Complete sonship, complete approval, receiv-

ing complete and unending love from the Father. All of Jesus' life and ministry flowed from being completely loved by the Heavenly Father.

When my dad was only a teenager, he would seclude himself and pray for hours daily. During this intense time of seeking the Lord, the Lord revealed Himself to dad and in a special and tender way. God expressed to dad that He love him. My dad was not perfect. To be sure he had his flaws and foibles. But one might look at my dad and mistake that he lived a life full of fruitful ministry, I would argue however that my dad lived a life of continuously being filled with God's love. He wasn't perfect in this either, but out of that love received by grace, out of his growing knowledge and experience that he was completely approved by the God of the universe, flowed a life of growing love, peace, grace, beauty and discipleship. Closing his eyes and covering his heart, my dad would often marvel and remark to me, "How He loves me so?!" And indeed he was so loved. He is still so loved.

So, though it may be hard at times, I give thanks for my dad and the years I was given to share with him. And I give thanks for the sovereignty of our Heavenly Father who loves with an everlasting love. Please pray for me as I grieve. Please pray for me as I start to lead our national operations team. Thank you all for your love and encouragement.

Humbly Yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Joe Chau'.

Joe Chau

"For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality. When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory." "O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?" The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Cor 15:53-57



Together - Cru15

“Being new to all there’s just a ton that I don’t know yet and when I don’t know what to do I pray.”, I opened. The room replied with knowing laughter.

I was in the Longs Peak room of the Lory student center of CSU where Jen and I were hosting a dinner for our new team, 20 or so couples, each of whom were directors of operations for a region or national ministry. The mood was relaxed, as we each shared from our experiences and enjoyed the process of getting to know one another. Of course, we were the new ones in the room, so it was mostly us getting to know everyone and vice versa.


I continued, “And as I’ve been praying, the Lord has been showing me 3 things.” Looking down at my notes on my phone I corrected myself, “I mean 4 things.”, and smiled. It was our first official address to our new team.

“The first is that the Lord reminded me of how operations has played such a significant role in the process of Jen and I coming on staff.” And I recounted the stories of how God used a video that Cru Operations produced to move our hearts for a greater vision of laboring for Him, and how God used Cru conferences to create the space and opportunity for us to encounter Him.

“The second thing is that God is increasing my heart for every student and every professor on every campus.” It’s God’s heart for the lost, so it has to be my heart too.

“The third thing is just how much faith it takes to do operations.” In many ways, operations is making hard choices, and weighing opportunity costs. Whenever we operationalize anything we are practicing James 2:17, we are combining our faith with work. When the rubber meets the road and we have to sign a contract for hundreds of thousands of dollars, not knowing if students will show up to a conference or where the Lord will supply, it takes biblical faith to act. Or when we create systems and processes to send thousands of staff and students to the ends of the world each year, accounting for the raising and distribution of finances, selection and transmission of materials, travel and other logistics, international legal nuances, possible evacuation, and technologies that are needed to make it all happen, we have to move in faith.

“And lastly, that God would increase my capacity to love and honor each person on my team.” Gathered in that room, were world class leaders, and humble servants. Each could have had a successful career in business or engineering, but they chose to answer God’s call, and yielded their lives for the sake of the Kingdom. I need to be filled with God’s Spirit to lead in such a way that would honor their calling.

And then I closed us in prayer. And so, I invite you to pray for Jen and I and our new team as we pursue the lost because it’s God’s heart. Pray that we would lead well, and move in faith to create the vital infrastructures that are needed to reach every student and every faculty on every campus in every nation. 



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