



JULY 2019

July 14th - I was in the middle of practicing my talk on Mark 4:35-41 when my phone rang. Caller ID showed it was my mom, so I put my notes down and answered the call. On the other end, I heard her say, "Grandma's gone."

My Grandma (my Dad's mom) had been ill with terminal cancer for a few months, but none of us expected her to go so soon or so quickly. It was shocking and jarring. I got some details for the funeral, said I love you, and then hung up the phone. I sat staring at my notes for some time, unable to process all the thoughts and emotions that were in my head.

We'll have to buy flights to get out there and back - that will be expensive. How will we finish our classes? How did this happen so quickly? I didn't get to say goodbye. We can't afford a last minute hotel. I wish I had called her yesterday. I'm so glad I went up to see her before we left for Colorado. Do I even have a black dress with us?
The thoughts kept coming in a flood.



I Believe; Help
My Unbelief!

In the end, I decided to finish practicing my talk before I did anything else. It only seemed fitting in light of the howling storm that had seemed to very suddenly whip up around me, just as it had whipped up around the disciples, leaving them terrified and wondering if Jesus even cared about them at all. I'd like to share just a short excerpt of that talk that I wrote (and then gave in a hurry before jumping on a plane to try to make it back to Michigan in time for the wake), as it has given me both insight and comfort in these days.

"We often think the correct response to a lack of faith is "try harder." Muster up some faith! I think if we were asked to rewrite this passage, many of us think the disciples' correct response should have been to swallow their fear and sit down quietly while their boat sank. NO! That's a terrible story. I think what we see later in the book of Mark shows us what Jesus desires. In Mark 9, we see the story of a man who comes to Jesus to ask him to heal his dying daughter. However, the way he phrases his request shows that he doesn't actually believe Jesus will do anything for him. Jesus rebukes him for this, and the man's response - it's so beautiful - he falls to his knees and cries out "I believe, help my unbelief!" That's what Jesus wants. He wanted the disciples to come to him and say, 'Jesus, we're terrified! We don't understand you or this storm, or anything else. But we want to trust you. We want to have the calm you have right now. Will you help us?'"



The last photo I took with my Grandma, when I went to visit her before we left for Colorado.



An exhausted Elliott passed out on his Daddy's lap on the flight back from the funeral yesterday.

I don't understand Jesus, or the loss of my Grandma, our finances, or anything else that is happening right now. But I want to trust Him. I want to have the calm that Jesus has. Lord, will you help us?

Yours in Christ,

Clay + Emily

FAMILY UPDATE

SUMMER IN COLORADO

On the weekends, when we were not in class, Clay, Elliott, and I took full advantage of the incredible hiking opportunities all around us. Fort Collins is only about an hour from Rocky Mountain National Park, so we've gone several times to do day hikes on a Saturday.

We've seen elk, marmots, rabbits, and fortunately no bears! As avid lovers of the outdoors, this summer location has been an ideal one for us.

Additionally, we've found our classwork to be incredibly refreshing and encouraging. We were all put into small "coaching groups" to receive instruction and guidance as we interpreted our assigned passages and wrote corresponding Bible studies and short talks (like a sermon) on them. We found our group to be a "soft place to land" in terms of some of the hard things we've been experiencing over the past school year and this summer.

They were truly a blessing and an encouragement to us. We couldn't think of a better summer assignment for this point in our lives than this one.



PRAISE + PRAYER REQUESTS

- Pray for Emily's family as they grieve, especially for her Grandpa. Pray also as they do the hard work of ironing out the logistical issues of what to do with all the "stuff", etc.
- Pray for us as we finish up our summer. The Cru19 conference is from July 19-26th. Then we will be on vacation for a week, then we will go to Emily's family reunion, and then we will be home for the beginning of the next school year.
- Pray for us as we are in continuing need of raising more financial partners to join our ministry to replace some partners who have had to step down. Our need has become acute and we are in the process of determining next best steps to stay healthy and in ministry for the long haul. Please pray for discernment, wisdom, and peace.
- Pray for the heart of students, especially freshmen, who are preparing to return to campus. Pray that God would see revival happen. **School for OU starts on August 26th.**
- Praise God for His faithfulness to us, even in the midst of storms.