

Change Boston & Beyond

Brian & Malisa Ellis – Serving with Cru

April 21, 2026



The Gospel offers us all the best way to live

Do you ever wonder what it's like to sit down and see someone's life changed as they begin to walk with Jesus? Wonder no longer. Join me on campus two weeks ago...

"Simon" wants God to be involved in his life. As a varsity rower, he has figured out the best way to work out. He has figured out that there's a particular angle the oar needs to hit the water. And that all of the oars on the boat need to be perfectly timed. When you get everything right, the boat sings. Simon knows all of this when it comes to his athletic life. But what about his spiritual life? Simon told me that he really wanted to know the best way to live.

Normally I might summarize: "I shared the gospel with Simon, and he prayed to receive Christ." Which I did. And he did. It's a great story! Keep reading...

When I asked Simon to explain the basics of what it means to follow Jesus, he shared a really muddled adventure and so I asked him if I could clarify. I walked through a really basic outline of the gospel called "Two Ways to Live," and Simon had great questions throughout.

I shared Jesus' prodigal son story from Luke 15. "There are lots of people on campus like the younger brother in the story – running away from God by being really really bad." (Simon Nodded) "But there is another way to run away from God – like the older brother in this story you can run away from God by being really really Good."

"Wait a minute," Simon stopped me. "If living really, really bad is running away from God and if living really, really good is running away from God (because you're trying to save yourself), is there something in the middle that isn't running away from God?" That's a great question.

"How would you do that? How would you go about living differently?" More great questions.

We talked about Jesus' death on the cross and His resurrection and talked about the Holy Spirit coming into us to direct us and empower us so that we actually can live differently.

We talked about bringing the different spheres of our life: academics or sports or relationships before Jesus and asking him: "How should we do this differently?"



We are so thankful for each of YOU for the ways you pray and support this ministry to students! -Brian & Malisa

Simon said, “I would like to say that Jesus is the Lord of my life, but some of those spheres of life, I just have not given over control of those areas to Jesus at all. But I do really want Jesus to be the Lord of my life.”

We talked through a brief prayer:

“Dear God, I know that I am not worthy to be accepted by you. I don’t deserve your gift of eternal life. I am guilty of rebelling against you and ignoring you. I’m sorry, and I need your forgiveness. Thank you for sending your Son to die for me so that I may be forgiven. Thank you that he rose from the dead to give me new life. Please forgive me and change me, so that I may live with Jesus as my ruler. Amen.”

I asked Simon if he’d ever prayed anything like that before. “No,” He said.

“What do you think about it?” I asked.

“I think it makes so much sense. This whole outline of the gospel is just what I needed. **It really makes it so much clearer than it ever has been for me.**”

“Well,” I told Simon, “I’m gonna pray this one more time. Would you like to pray it with me?”

And he said “Yes, I would.”

“Simon, Jesus has clearly been at work in you drawing you to himself. Certainly all this year in our AIA bible study, but probably for longer, and he’s going to continue to work in you - working out all the implications of this for the rest of your life. So, it’s not like every bit of significance is on this one moment when you pray this prayer, but this is a significant moment.”

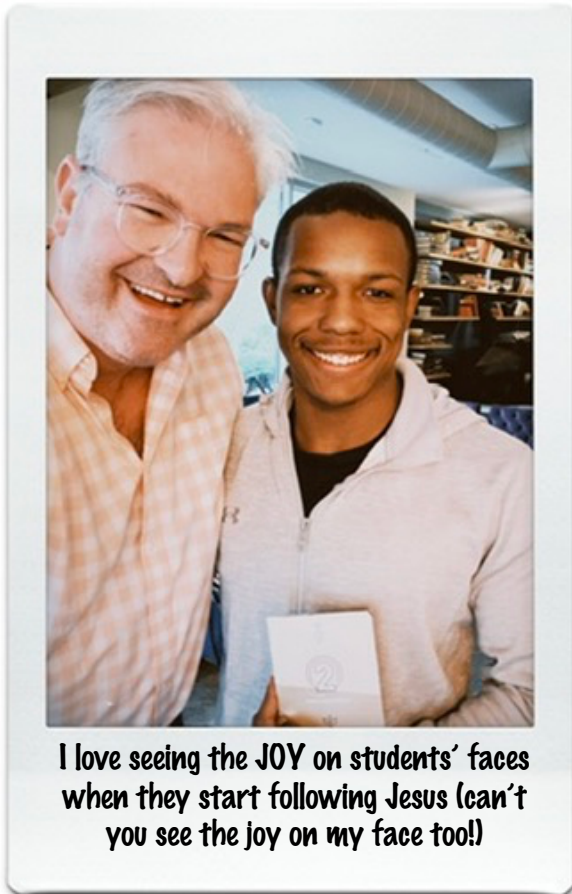
At that point in the little coffee shop on campus, **Simon prayed to make Jesus his ruler.** He was so thankful that I would meet him and talk through the details of this. Here’s a selfie of us just a moment later.

This week, Simon was reflecting on the Prodigal Son story we had talked about. Simon calls this story “The Big Brother” story – and Simon said, “So does this mean that we’re now supposed to be like the perfect older brother? Like if Jesus I came from heaven to earth to save us, now are we supposed to be trying to help others know Jesus?” It was another great question.

Loving our adventurous Lord, *Brian & Malisa*

Would you pray:

- For Simon and the other 180+ students that have begun relationships with Jesus this year here in New England in response to your prayers!
- For Malisa and me and our family as we prepare to take students and staff to Marseille, France on a summer mission trip. Look for a letter with more information in just a couple days. We’re excited and we need your help.



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