

JOSHUA'S JOURNAL

OCTOBER 2006



THOUGHTS OF CONVICTION:

-When God created time, He made enough of it.

-Celtic Saying

I could more easily contain Niagara Falls in a tea cup than I can comprehend the wild, uncontainable love of God.

-Brennan Manning

Where, except in uncreated light, can darkness cease to exist?

-C.S. Lewis

*Jesus I am resting, resting
In the joy of what Thou art;
I am finding out Thy greatness
Of Thy loving heart
Thou bid me to gaze upon Thee
And Thy beauty fills my soul,
For by Thy transforming power
Thou hast made me completely whole.*

-Jean Sophia Pigott

Everyone feels benevolent if nothing happens to be annoying to him at the moment."

-C.S. Lewis

For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea. -Habbakuk 2:14

SPANISH CLASSES

One of the obvious obstacles between our interaction with Mexican students is the language. On our team, 1 out of the 4 of us is functional in the culture. So to combat this issue we signed up for Spanish Language Classes. After struggling with 3 weeks of frustration, we found an option to learn and dove into a month long program of 36 hours of classes — 3 days a week for 3 hrs a day for 4 weeks. It has been one of the most humbling experiences in my life. I am constantly needing to be corrected and making a fool of myself, even in real life. Mistakes are a great way to learn. It has been fun as well, and after a lot of work it has become rewarding.



Above: My teacher, Elisa Cabrera and I.

I took my first solo taxi ride a few weeks ago and got to the destination successfully and still believe to this day that I paid a fair price. I'm beginning to hold my own in conversations. I'll pick up 2 or 3 words and in the context of the convo be able to understand the person and then create a response. It's a cool feeling to operate in a new language.

ENGLISH CLUBS

As it turns out, one of the primary ways we are exposing ourselves to campuses across the city is by offering English Clubs. English is a huge commodity to students, so they have motivation to learn. As well, it is super easy to provide such a venue for them. We speak it, and they want it. I've found that teaching the language is one of the safest ways to enter into someone's life. Week after week we consistently see a good number of students and learn about their lives. We invite students on campus for 30 minutes and hold two one-hour sessions. The biggest draw for them is that this opportunity is free. And to encourage consistency, if a student comes 3 times in a row we offer to take them out to lunch. After about 6 weeks of English Club I'm finding that this is one of my favorite things we do. A group of us got to share the gospel with a student, Angel, a week ago. Although there are still a few barriers in the way to him believing the gospel, he still comes back and wants to be around us and is being exposed to the life of gospel.

Below: Classroom of Mexican students we visited.



A BLESSING FROM GERMANY



One of the biggest blessings in MX has been meeting a German student studying abroad named Steffen. I met Steffen in mid-September at one of our English Clubs. At first glance, I thought he was an American, but after hearing him speak I was very confused. Steffen is a 24 year-old mechanical engineer and speaks 4 languages: German, English, Spanish, Croatian. He is brilliant. It took us about 20 minutes to figure out what each other was doing, and we were both encouraged by each other's presence. The joy that has come from knowing him is found in his desire to make much of Christ with his life. And in this still strange environment for both of us, we are sharing a deep fellowship in that. This is somewhat of a new experience for me, but one that is covered in the goodness of God and akin I'm certain to the worship in heaven. To meet someone of such a different background who loves Christ is quite special. It has been so much fun getting to know him, sharing our hearts, praying together, and cherishing Christ together. Steffen has brought more of his unbelieving classmates to our events than anyone else, and his faith and outlook on life is constantly sharpening me.

REAL BULLS, REAL CONSEQUENCES

One of the most fearful, and for that reason, stupidest thing I've ever done in my life was deciding to take part in a tradition of running with the bulls on Sept 23. It is a reenactment of the Pamplona, Spain event. I have too little room to communicate the

PRAYER
No great spiritual awakening has begun anywhere in the world apart from united prayer.

Praise God for:

-Countless venues for fellowship and friendship among students and staff here. I thought I'd be

lonely, but it has been a very rich and joyful experience thus far.

-His intimate presence manifesting itself through His word.

-Our team reaching a vision and goal to work toward: "Fruitful movements of faith everywhere in Puebla."

Ask God for:

- My faith to increase in the midst of challenges

and hardships so that might attitude would reflect Christ and my understanding would promote growth in my heart.

-The Enemy to be stifled in the hearts of our team and ministry.

-Our team to continue to love one another and grow in grace and truth.

-An attitude of worship to exist in my heart in work and ministry derived from the joy of salvation.

entirety of the event. In short, I successfully ran for my life among a barbaric crowd of 10,000 people (half



of whom were inebriated) and 8 very large bulls, and saw people get mauled and bucked. It looked exciting on paper, but shattered every category of safety measure and precaution my American mind cherished. It was insane. I'm not entirely sure I'm glad I did it, but it is a cool story to tell.

HOW AM I DOING?

The transition into a new culture has not been an easy one. I had imagined that it would be challenging before I came down, and honestly that was one of the leading reasons I chose to be a part of this glorious mess. I felt the Lord asking me to walk through difficulty with Him, and experience His presence in the midst of not having all the comforts I've known. The first 6 weeks I was concerned that anything I ate would make me sick. Consequently, I've had a suppressed appetite and maintained a consistent diet of trusted street tacos and granola bars. I miss the flavors of home. I've

experienced some new emotions of loneliness being the only single guy in the city working with Crusade. Operating in Mexico is challenging. It takes so long to do the most simple task like making copies, or traveling to a campus. The lies of the Enemy and his talent of discouragement is incredible. I've sensed a profound incline to the spiritual world being down here. However, this hasn't been and all-bad experience. These challenges have forced me to depend fully on Christ like I've never known before and his intimacy has been sweet. I've found myself on several occasions just broken in spirit, yet weeping in joy over Scripture and the wonderful truth of the gospel. I have a hard time referring to my experience as suffering knowing that so many have been through so much more. Yet in the middle of this fallen world, I have seen suffering as a gift from God that has brought me into his presence. This is an incredible grace.

"Sorrowful yet, always rejoicing..." 2 Corinthians 6:10 has been a rich life lesson. To know that even deep joys in life are accompanied with tears has made the gospel a precious, hopeful treasure in the realm of this difficult season. Life is good because He is, and I have absolute confidence in his nature. I've seen countless blessings and I'm mindful of the role of prayer and grateful for your presence in my life. Thank You! My heart is glad knowing that I am being sustained by His grace through thousands of prayers asking Him to move.