

The Sharing Org

Ministry to the Adult Foster Care Community

NOVEMBER, 2014

MINISTRY MOMENT:

BY: John Rock

I walked in and was greeted by a group of people. One woman shook my hand and proudly announced that she had become a (insert name of a religious group). I said “Great?” as I kept moving to put down the things that I was carrying. And she followed.

“Now I am reading (insert non-biblical religious material) and learning about (insert anything that is not specifically about Jesus and Him crucified).”

I continued to politely respond to her announcements as I set up the music speakers and passed out the hymnals.

I started the service with a short prayer and then music. While we were singing it dawned on me that I was offended. I was offended by the woman’s announcement to me that she had become such-and-such. I am not sure what I had planned to talk about that day but somewhere in our singing everything changed. After the music was finished we all sat down to listen to the word of the Lord from the scriptures but still I was offended.

“Jane?” I addressed the woman who had greeted me as I walked in. “Jane, how long have I been coming to have services with you?”

She thought a moment and guessed about five years. I corrected her and reminded her that it had been just about 10 years.

“Jane, in all that time have I ever asked you to have faith in anything but Jesus alone, to accept my pet doctrines or beliefs?”

I talked directly to her but I was looking around to the nine or ten other people who were present.

“No.” she said.

“So please forgive me for being just a little bemused as you tell me that you have become (insert religious group). Can you tell me, any of you, what is the one thing I have ever asked of you?”

At this all the faces went blank and nobody answered. So it was time to get over my offense and deal as directly with this oversight as I could.

“Everyone, please hear me now, do I have everyone’s attention? Is everyone focused on me and listening to my words right now? There is only one thing that matters in our lives and that is Jesus Christ and Him crucified. Our faith in believing that God sent Him in the flesh to die for the sins of the world and redeem us as sinners is the only belief that matters. Nothing you can physically do, not the type of Bible that you read, the money that you give, the church you belong to, your style of baptism, or even your church attendance has anything to do with the call to faith in Jesus Christ alone: Just simple trust in Him!”

That single announcement uncorked a flurry of questions from the residents: good questions; thoughtful questions. I made an inroad with many of them for the first time in too many years, and it was as if a veil had been lifted at long last.

So the next time I arrived at this particular home I was greeted by the same group of people telling me what they have learned from this new religious group that was coming into their home... (sigh)

I do realize that I am ministering to people with a variety of mental illnesses and that my job of properly communicating the gospel of Jesus Christ will always be a challenge, but I think for the first time in over 10 years of ministry I am recognizing that there are a lot of forces at play in this ministry. From tele-evangelists to cults to religious groups who mean well (but who are clouding the waters of “Christ alone” in the minds of mentally ill people), the Evil One is working hard to prevent the residents from understanding and receiving the message of peace and comfort that comes with trusting in Jesus alone.

I don’t know if recognizing this earlier in my vocation would have changed anything but recognizing it now gives me new passion for the goal.

~John

PRAYER LETTER:

FROM: The Rocks

I am not the type of person who sees a devil under every rock. In fact, I am so *not* inclined to recognize the Evil One that I am quite clueless and (I have to admit) perhaps quite irresponsible in my position as a Christian minister. So when I recognized how much Satanic attack my family and I and this ministry are under lately, I was amazed.

I announced a few months ago that I started a new business and would soon be off of the ministry payroll. Well, it happened. As of July I was completely off of the Sharing Org's payroll and being supported purely by the new business. The business (dealing in foreign currencies, also known as the Forex market) was doing so well that our family was able to do some much needed catch-up from the past decade of doing without. We were able to lease a company vehicle so that we were once again a two-car family, order a real cell phone (the first one with a contract since 1997), order half a butchered cow, anticipate being able to pay for the kids' orthodontics and speech therapy, and even talk about taking a family vacation before the MS more severely affects my mobility. The business did very well, and we were dreaming about the ways we could bless other people financially (giving has always brought Megan and me great joy!). Over the five months of operations, the business had accrued a significant value, and we did not anticipate that we would see the company's value drop even more quickly than it had risen.

However, in a span of just three weeks, everything that we had earned completely disappeared and left us in a worse financial position that we were in when we started. I was destroyed internally. I went into a depression that I had never known before, I had thoughts that I had never had before, I cried out to Jesus like I had never cried out before, and my wife actually wondered if I needed psychiatric help.

While I was going through this depression, I knew the truth was that God would get us through, but I physically ached and knew an anxiety that would not be reasoned away. I slept restlessly in little spurts, I had no appetite, and I was unreasonably fearful for the future. I had shame to a level never experienced before and thought I would rather never have to face the world again.

Then on October 12, 2014, I woke up with no intention of going to church with the family. I was contemplating the extreme pain in my limbs and the anxiety in my chest, and in a dream, I had a single thought about how to end the pain. Just the thought made me feel a little better. It was then that I recognized that I was under attack from the Evil One, and I immediately began to pray that Jesus would protect me.

Once I began praying for the Lord's protection, the pain left my limbs and the anxiety was lifted from my heart. I

sprang out of bed knowing that I needed to be prayed over by my brothers and sisters at church. Yes, our loss was very real, but Satan desires that I stop sharing the Gospel at the homes. I realized that my family and I are marked as people the devil hates because of the gospel message that we share. How could I have never truly realized that before?

So, since that time, we are picking up the broken pieces surrounding our lives but are more invigorated to go to the homes and share the message of God's redemption and love through Jesus Christ our Lord. Even though I am not thrilled with the experience, I do recognize that this experience has taught me loads about how many of the residents feel as they face illnesses that they cannot control and are at the mercy of the many doctors and caregivers that they have. That their depression is not necessarily just a mental illness but one that manifests itself in very physical and very painful ways that they just cannot control. Even with simple faith they often struggle against real physical pain and minds clouded by medications. If I had not gone through this experience, I don't know if I ever would have been able to truly hear them when they ask for prayer.

This then is my first prayer request of you. Please pray for the spiritual needs and warfare that the residents are facing everyday – and pray for my family even though we are getting just a small taste of it.

Second, please pray for the Davies as they move to California and for their daughter Kayla as she is being led by God to take the love of Jesus to the three homes that Jenn and Drew were ministering to. I will send more information about Kayla next month, but in the meantime please pray for her as she is embarking on this new spiritual journey.

Third, and finally, please pray for us as a family. We are certainly stronger in our faith and more united in our mission than we have ever been (just recently my two oldest children have informed us that they want to be baptized!). However, we need to pick up the financial pieces that are left. Thank God that we were able to cancel the beef we ordered, as well as the cell phone, but we still have an urgent need to find someone to take over the lease on the car. We can no longer afford this vehicle, and if you or anyone that you know is in need of a great 2014 Ford Taurus for an amazing price with under 5,000 miles, please let us know. We've put out an ad and are praying that God brings just the right person to take this burden from our budget before the repo man does.

Well, that's finally it for the month. I pray that you will know the peace of the Lord in your own lives.

Blessings!



John Rock