

Dear Saints in the Lord,

It's my birthday month!! I have been in a wintery wonderland state of mind. It is March and there is still tons of snow on the ground and this I am told is a mild winter! On average Fargo ND receives 51.4 inches of snow per wintery season. As of March 1st, we have received 28 inches of snow. I look out and it seems like so much more snow than 28 inches. That in Ben's book of measurements is a lot. Then again who really cares. It may be ice cold outside but the Lord is starting a fire in some of the hearts of some of these teens. The Lord is an Amazing God the way He works on our hearts. A verse I hang on to and lean on a lot that points to the Lord and His transformation He works in hearts is Philippians. 4:13 For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him (NLT). God is shaping us and molding us into the people He desires to use that desire to please Him. I love Him so much. Anybody can be used by God to bring change, hope, and love to someone in need. Change is something I think about often especially when I am dealing with youth who share stories of heartache and sorrow and pain and wonder if they can ever recover. Or parents who want retribution for their lost children that were taken by the hands of another youth who just found Jesus in repentance and brokenness.



I strongly believe my God changes lives no matter what you've done or where you come from. This is my message to all youth. The Last week of January we went to Florida for the Youth for Christ National Leaders Conference. It was cool to see parts of Florida I've never seen and meet new people. I got to meet people from all over who are working in different areas and doing the same kind of work and to get advice and pointers for ministry was awesome. We are also going to start training and teaching a new curriculum to address trauma and mental illness that is experienced by a lot of these youth. It is so cool to see these opportunities arising for us in so many ways. They will help us minister more effectively. I have been working in the West Central Juvenile Center for about a year and I have been hearing all kinds of heart-breaking stories but I have seen some victories. The turnover rate is hard, but it in my opinion, is not as bad as I thought it would be. Some teens do darken the doorways of the center again after some time passes. I just pray the Holy Spirit gets a hold of their hearts so they really seek change the second or third time around. Some genuinely want change, some don't. God has put me here for those who do. That's enough about that. It's a new year with new opportunities. YFC is taking full advantage of them.



Our team at the YFC National Leadership Conference

We just finished our second largest fundraiser, Giving Hearts Day. This event falls the second Thursday in February and is a 24-hour fundraising event. There are over 600+ non-profit organizations in Minnesota and North Dakota that participate. Donations \$10 or more up to \$26,300 were matched by friends of Youth for Christ making each dollar given reach farther. We were able to raise \$65,746 dollars for Youth for Christ! Some of you participated, thank you so much! God took care of us. This goes toward programming and the work we do. Praise the Lord! While this was 82% of the way to our God-sized goal, it was our best Giving Hearts Date fundraiser to date.

Note: Names of kid's are typically changed for privacy purposes.

Deborah and I are doing well! We had her birthday celebration in December, and we went out for Valentine's Day. If you are ever in the area, try this great seafood restaurant, Beer & Fish. Get the lobster roll or lobster tacos, they are fantastic! We have been praying for a schedule change for Deborah to have a couple days off in a row and through much prayer she got it. Praise the Lord!

I'm in the Moorhead ALC High School three times a week and that has been going well Randy* is a guy I have really enjoyed getting to know. He seems to be a troubled student to some of the teachers but he is a good kid. He has asked me to pray for Him several times. It has been really cool being asked to pray for him in school. He always asks how I am doing and enjoys walking around the building as we talk. Please pray I get the chance to share the gospel with him. He is living with his girlfriend and doesn't have a job but is looking. Please pray he finds a job and I continue to build trust with him.



I'm in and out of the Juvenile Center 3-4+ times a week. I am now discipling two young men in CLIPS Mike* and Cliff.* I am also continuing to work with treatment and detention boys. Do you remember Ted* in detention from my last letter who felt uncomfortable about praying to Jesus and wanted a sign from God? I have met with him several times. The day he was getting out he came up to me during a Bible study and said, "Hey you know that comic book Bible you gave me? I read it last night and I get it now! You were right, Jesus is the sign! He is the image of God, He is God in the flesh. People were getting it wrong this whole time, worshiping God in the wrong way. God revealed Himself through Jesus." I said, "Yeah! You got it!" He said, "Thank you for being so patient with me and helping me understand!" Sometimes you just have to let a kid get with the Holy Spirit and a Bible.

It is cool to see God move in ways like this. Jeff* is another one I have got to see bloom. When I first sat down with him, I learned he was looking at life and not even 16 years old yet. I shared the gospel. He started crying and said, "I don't want to be a sinner." When I shared Romans 5:8 with him he lost it. He couldn't understand why God would love him. I opened the Bible to John 3:16. I asked him to read it; he couldn't finish the verse without crying. He has been one of my star students. He is eager to hear the word and read and apply it to his life. It may seem small to some of us who may have known all our lives or heard all our lives Jesus loves us but these kids DON'T KNOW THESE THINGS! Honestly it breaks my heart! Thank you all for walking alongside me in this ministry! I sincerely could not do this without you and your prayers! Y'all are awesome! Please pray for them. Please Partner with me in this ministry. I need your help! If God puts it on your heart, follow! You can partner with me by giving a onetime gift, weekly, monthly, or yearly. I also desperately need your prayers. Pray against the enemy working to hinder me from getting into the juvenile center more. Pray I can start a Bible study in the Moorhead ALC High School and that God will raise up students to join. Pray, that I can get a Bible study started with ALL of the CLIPS boys. Pray, for these students, they have motivation and eagerness to get done with school and finish strong. Pray for volunteers. This is a ministry that is growing and we need a helping hand from others. Pray, for Northland for growth and a place for the youth to meet as we start a youth group. Pray for Deborah and I and our marriage and our peace and rest. We love you all!



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In His Grip,

Benjamin A Talley