

Camp Update

We sat in the back of chapel on Monday evening. It was the last week of camp for the summer, but it was our first – ever. We had arrived in Alaska only one week earlier and had spent most of the time in between unpacking boxes and trying to get settled into our new surroundings. This evening, we decided to attend chapel to get a taste of what God was doing at Victory. We looked around at the hundred or so teenagers who had gathered. They had been having fun all day – riding horses, swimming, playing ridiculous games, and generally having a great time. As the speaker was starting his message in James where it says, “Consider it pure joy my brothers whenever you face trials of many kinds” I thought about the trials that these kids were facing. I figured that their trials were probably: has the cute boy/girl in front of me noticed me yet, will I make the varsity football team in few weeks, I need to pass algebra this quarter, or other trivial “teenage” things like that. I thought that the stress of our recent move and all the adjustments that living the “missionary” life would require were much more demanding than anything that these kids could imagine. As the speaker told the kids to write down on a piece of paper what their trials were, I had no idea that they were writing things like

- “Recently, I tried to commit suicide”
- “I am addicted to drugs”
- “My dad died”
- “My dad beats me”
- “I had a baby last year”

These were kids that looked normal. Some were raised in Christian families, but not all. Suffice it to say, though, that they were all average, most of them were hurting, and no one would ever know it by looking at them. As the speaker progressed through the passage during the week, he took them down the path to joy. The path starts with Jesus Christ and his death on the cross. Although we do not know the exact numbers, many youth trusted Christ as their personal savior that night. It was an amazing week as the speaker showed how, like a horse has to be broken in order to be used, God can use trials in our lives to bring us to Him. At the conclusion of the week, the speaker asked the teenagers if they were able to see Christ, and thus joy, out of their trials. If they could, they were invited to write “Pure Joy” on the same paper that their trial had been written on Monday and pin it to a wooden cross. Hundreds of papers, like the ones quoted above, were pinned to the cross that night.

God has been at work at Victory Bible Camps this summer. We have seen it in the decisions made by campers, in the letters of thanks sent by their parents, and by the lives that have been noticeably changed for His glory. We are thankful and blessed to be a part of what God is doing here in Alaska. Thank you for your interest in our lives and your prayer and financial support of our family.