

What is the Madness going on in your Life?

Jesus literally brought peace to the crazy demoniac who no one else could help. When we have a true encounter with Jesus we can go from Chaos to Serenity and be sitting at His feet in our right mind. This is the story that a team of friends/co-workers and I choose to use to open up a March Madness event at a local youth outreach in which we partnered with a local church in Waynesville, OH. Not only did four of us Chris Rainwater, Matt Spitz, Clint Mahan and I get to share the gospel but we refereed a 3 on 3 basketball tournament for the same group of youth the rest of the evening. The whole event went from about 6p.m.-12a.m on Friday, March 9th. We were able to clearly preach the gospel of Jesus Christ by using the “March Madness” theme and a good basketball analogy put together called “Meet My Head Coach” featuring John Wooden that we use within Athletes in Action. These middle school and high school students in this Sports-oriented small town got to enjoy an amazing band, four great speakers, food and the winners of the tournament got \$150 cash reward! It was a privilege to partner with the church.

Lives were changed when it comes to preaching. The youth pastor wanted me to do a bold altar call for the students to respond to Jesus. No one came up at first, so I walked into the seats and got on my knees and started praying and gently challenging them on the mic

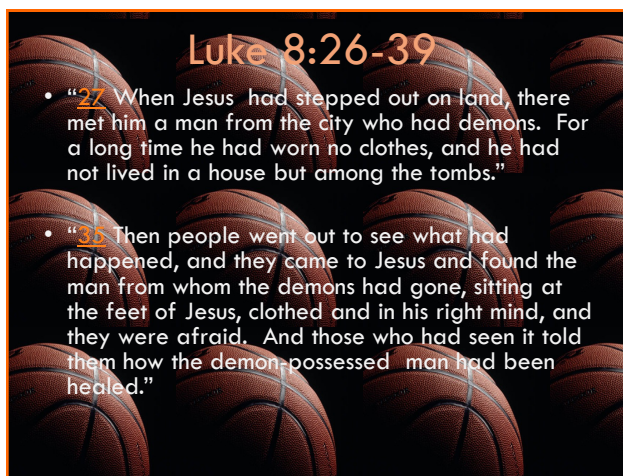
to make a decision for Jesus. I told them I don’t believe in spiritual manipulation but did

know this moment for some of them is a eternity changing moment and we can not let it pass by. I could feel the prayers of many saints and the rest of the team and youth leaders. I closed my eyes and told them I wasn’t going to watch but that some of them needed to respond tonight. Whether it was rededicating their life to Jesus or for the first time they started to respond. I also talked to the students that didn’t come up and let them know it is ok to be exactly where they were. If the Holy Spirit was not knocking on their heart they did not need

to feel bad. I think about 10-15 kids came up front after that. All they did was walk forward ,the key is what was the faith going on in their heart and how are they growing and responding to Jesus daily since then. I have had a lot of friends supposedly give their life to Jesus but who don’t walk with him now. I usually feel cynical about these

events of who is genuine and who isn’t. The funny thing is I was challenged similarly on January 19, 1997 and I have been different ever since. I know Jesus uses those moments and I pray he used this one in their lives.

We are told that when one sinner repents all of heaven rejoices; That is truly an awesome party! But I found some greater joy that night.... Team Ministry! I got to share the gospel with some of my closest friends out here in Xenia. That was my choice. It would have been less preparation and probably easier if I chose to preach on my own. But the body of Christ and the different gifts and perspectives that Chris, Clint and Matt brought to the table made us very effective. Jesus sent his disciples out in twos and there is power in numbers and in the body of Christ.



Clint (left) and myself (right)

Matt Spitz's (far right) doing an illustration on sin with students.



Not only did the four of us work together to share the gospel but there was a band, the different youth pastors, all the volunteers which helped make this event happen. Different people using different gifts. The hero preacher has to go, we need to continue to get others involved and I was very thankful that we were all able to be apart of such unity and cooperation.

Rewind to one day prior...This story about Carlos really helped launched my faith to believe that Jesus was going to change lives at the March Madness outreach. The day before I went to Sinclair Jr. College to lead a Bible Study with some of the baseball guys. Carlos is from Columbia, South America and is a pitcher for Sinclair Jr. College in Dayton Ohio. He has come to many Bible Studies that we have had as I chaplain for Sinclair. Carlos waited for about a year to get the proper paper work for him to be able to play baseball in America. He was leaning on a phrase from a song, "Strength will Rise when you wait upon the Lord." He had a quiet confidence that God would come through, and he did. Carlos got permission to play. Over Christmas he called me and was hungry to learn about prayer as he wrestled with some issues and concepts about God. He then asked me if as a Bible Study we could go verse by verse through a book of the Bible so we started in John. Meanwhile some sin in his life and other things started to harden his heart. For the last several months I saw a bitter man with a hard heart. Last month he found out his little five year old brother had cancer. This help put him over the edge.



I knew all this story as I came for Bible Study and Carlos was the only guy who showed up. I was not

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excited because I knew I would have to give him some hard truth and challenge him to repent and change his attitude. After about an hour and a half Carlos face and demeanor completely changed which I did not expect. How does that happen? Remembrance and Praise! In the midst of his depression he started to remember how God had changed his life, he also started to speak the words of song lyrics out loud and we sang them as best as we could and he started to believe them! Joy started to return to his face!

He immediately wanted to have a plan for others to remind him to look up to Jesus and not at his own problems. He apologized to the head coach for his bad attitude. I couldn't believe how Jesus showed up and I



Carlos

watched his hard heart transform to joy. It has been about two weeks and Carlos is still holding onto songs to help him to

look up to Jesus. Please pray for him, his family and all the Sinclair Baseball team.

Upcoming Travel

New Orleans	Final Four Outreach 3.27-4.1
Rochester, NY.	ALA Baseball 5.28-8.10.11

If you want to join in fasting for our baseball guys this summer let me know and I will send you the schedule.

I am thankful for ...broken leadership within AIA, the birds' worship songs in the morning that wake me up! For Jesus consistent mercy even in the midst of Chaos. For incredible friends, for good stories, for purity and the opportunity to breathe.

Jesus, you are our keeper! Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy, to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen (Jude 24)

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