

Alone with the Lord



Friday, June 25, 2021

On this first day of Choir Tour, I want to encourage you to think about why we take these trips. A lot of times it's easy to focus on the trip itself instead of the reason for the trip. While there are good sights, fun activities, and you get to be with your friends, that's not why we go.

First and foremost, we go to be servants for Christ. The Bible mentions servant leadership many times, one being Mark 10:45, "***For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many.***" However, even if there wasn't a verse that made this clear, the way that Jesus lived His life on Earth showed that He came to help the lost. He reclined with tax collectors and sinners. These were not the kinds of people that a king would be expected to befriend, yet Jesus did because it is not those who are well who need a doctor, but those who are sick (Matthew 9:12).

So as you enjoy time with your friends this week and enjoy doing cool things, remember that the reason you are here is to serve the people of Washington, D.C. I challenge you to be conscious of this while we are serving and to see it as an opportunity to live like Christ and not as a chore.

— Lara Fisher



Saturday, June 26, 2021

Hey guys! I hope you are having a great time on this Youth Choir Mission as it is a great way to connect with God and your fellow peers. While you explore Washington, D.C., you may notice that many verses are displayed on landmarks and buildings across the city. A notable verse that was spoken at the Lincoln Memorial during Martin Luther King, Jr's "I Have a Dream" speech in 1963 was Isaiah 40:4-5.

*Every valley shall be raised up,
every mountain and hill made low;
the rough ground shall become level,
the rugged places a plain.*

*And the glory of the Lord will be revealed,
and all people will see it together.
For the mouth of the Lord has spoken.*

Isaiah 40:4-5 (NIV)

As I searched several verses that are connected to the great city that we are privileged to serve in this summer, this verse resonated with me as I believe that the message that it is trying to convey is extremely strong and significant. While this mission tour has so many exciting opportunities and adventures that we get to partake in, I encourage you to focus on spreading the love of God and uplifting those who are in need of it.

These verses are a great reminder of the Kingdom that the Bible promises, reminding us that even when we face the rough ground and rugged places, Jesus can instill the peace in our lives that levels the ground that we have been stuck on. While it may seem that there are mountains we cannot climb and valleys that we cannot pass, it is important to take time to reflect on verses like these. This not only applies to ourselves, but it is also a constant battle that everyone around us is fighting. During our time here, we will encounter many who are struggling, not only physically, but spiritually, as well. I urge you to take the time that God has given us in this wonderful opportunity and encourage others with these verses.

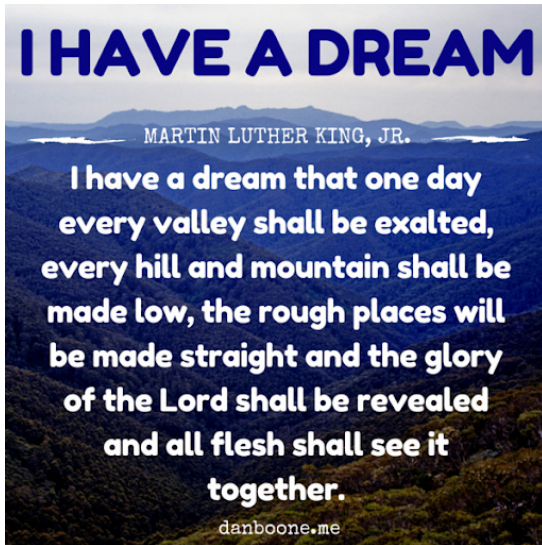
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You will find that if you spread the joy and peace that God has allowed us to show during this mission tour, you will also be able to grow as well, experiencing that same love that you have shown.

As YCMT is a great opportunity to focus on these different aspects of life, it may seem hard as we come back to our daily life at home in Tennessee. I challenge you to make sure that you continue to practice these same forms of God's love in your everyday life, as with practice, it will start to become a natural form that will take place.

— Jasmine Jordan-Lake



Sunday, June 27, 2021

Romans 15:5-6 reads,

“May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude of mind toward each other that Christ Jesus had, so that with one mind and one voice you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

This reminds us that we have a lot of pressures and unknowns to “endure” especially on our Youth Choir Mission Tour. There may be unexpected events or delays. People may not always be receptive of us or want to hear the gospel.

Our “encouragement” should come from God, we look to Him to shape our attitudes. When you think about all Christ did for us and how He modeled servant-leadership, you realize we too should see how to love and serve one another. When we all work together, despite whatever pressures we endure, ultimately we glorify God. True unity comes when sing with “one mind and one voice.”

My prayer for each of us is that we grow more like Christ, lift each other up, and work together while on this trip.

— Mary Shull



Monday, June 28, 2021

I'm as guilty as the next person when it comes to assuming I can do everything by myself, not really asking for advice or help from anyone. Whether it's out of pride, fear, etc., it's not a healthy mindset for how you choose to live life. With a week as hectic as this one, sometimes we forget who is truly in control. Likewise, a song that I really connected with is "Control" by For King & Country, and the first verse of it reads:

"You asked me to let go but I thought I knew better,
Afraid of surrender and what I don't know.
I've always had a plan but now I'm so weary
And I can't see clearly, forgot who I am."

This song calls the listeners to wholly trust God by letting Him take the reins on your life which can be intimidating at first and understandably so. 1 Peter 5:7 says to "Cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you." We need to understand that God's desire for us to willingly give up control is out of love. Similarly, like the lyrics say, sometimes we think we know better than the Creator of the universe, God, who wants nothing more than for us to experience the best from life. He wants us to trust Him enough to give up control because He cares for us deeply and wants to help us through life. I know, from both personal experience and from hearing from others, that sometimes it's hard to realize and/or accept that you can't control everything, especially on a fun yet hectic trip like choir tour where we are all exhausted and stressed at certain points.

While this week can be challenging sometimes, it is also undeniably exciting. Don't dwell on small things that you can't control. I hope that you will take a second to just recognize how much God cares for each one of you and the drastic difference it makes to put full trust in His judgement. As Psalm 46:10 states, "Be still and know that I am God."

— Kee-Lee Overbeck



Tuesday, June 29, 2021

You Always Have Something to Give

— Luke 21:1-4

“Jesus looked up and saw the rich putting their gifts into the offering box, and He saw a poor widow put in two small copper coins. And He said, ‘Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all of them. For they contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty put in all she had to live on.’”

This is an amazing passage about the spirit of giving, but I believe it has an even greater message for us as we serve the people of Washington, D.C.: you always have something to give. In contrast to worldly standards, we see that Jesus appreciates the small gift of the widow more than the large gifts of all the rich people of the church. This revelation translates directly to our other forms of service, outside of monetary contributions. When we serve out of our time that we could be spending doing things for our own benefit, we are serving in an extremely powerful way. Even the smallest contribution made with personal effort is worthy in the eyes of God.

As we serve in Washington D.C., remember to seek out small ways to serve those around us. You always have something to give.

— William Lankford

You can always give
something, even if it is
only kindness.

Anne Frank



Wednesday, June 30, 2021

James 1:19-20

Let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger, for anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God.

You might remember some of the times when you were so angry and quick to judge, that just a few words led to something you would regret forever. I think that a lot of times we are so fast to think as just humans and not as children of God. If we were to do as the text says—quick to listen, slow to become angry—we could understand the full story or start to understand each other better. God reminds us to be kind and to have patience with one another. And after reading this verse, I hope that I, more we, can learn from this, to react less and become more loving to others in the eyes of God!

— Will Galloway



Thursday, July 1, 2021

As we drove through our nation's capital after first arriving in D.C., I remember looking out of our bus' window, as the cemetery came into view, filled with identical white tombstones. At first I thought nothing of it, but as we kept driving through the city, the graves continued, and continued, and continued, and continued, seeming to never end.

Arlington National Cemetery is one of the biggest cemeteries found in the United States, with somewhere around 400,000 soldiers buried there. In addition, Arlington is also home to the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, which is used to honor the many soldiers of the U.S. military whose names were lost to time.

Romans 13:7 says we should “respect to whom respect is owed, honor to whom honor is owed.” While Arlington National Cemetery is what stuck with me the most from my first trip to Washington, D.C., there are multiple other memorials located here that we will be visiting on our mission tour. Just as Paul writes in Romans, it is our duty to give the honor and respect that is owed to the individuals these memorials are created for, who died for something they believed in. Similarly, we have a duty to give our honor and respect to Christ, who gave up His life out of the sheer love He had for us.

— Jacob Meadors



Friday, July 2, 2021

I've never been a huge roller coaster fan. You can ask my whole family. Don't get me wrong—I want to be. It sounds fun, but I look at it and I immediately build this wall of fear around me. I think the biggest roller coaster I've ever been on was 2020. At times I wanted to scream or just hold onto something. At least on a roller coaster you get the chance to strap in, but no one saw COVID-19 coming. Even though looking back it was a blur, I can still remember the fear I saw in everyone.

I know everyone lost something due to the virus. I lost the end of my eighth grade year. Others lost their high school graduation. Some people even lost friends and family. It shook the whole world, and there were so many unknowns. Whenever I was uncertain or afraid, I would remember Psalm 56:3. It was a verse most of the students learned in Bible Drill. “Whenever I am afraid, I will trust in You.” It would always lift my spirits and I held it close to my heart.

My goal for us on tour is to remember that these people just experienced the same thing we all went through. (Who knew we could have something in common with the whole world?!) My challenge for us moving forward is that we won't fear the future. God has a plan for us, and we can trust in that plan. Let's keep praying for our leaders, students, and everyone we will encounter on mission in D.C.

— Alysa Owens



Saturday, July 3, 2021

“Jesus answered them, “Do you now believe? Behold, the hour is coming, indeed it has come, when you will be scattered each to his own home, and will leave me alone. Yet I am not alone, for the Father is with Me. I have said these things to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.” — John 16:31-33

These verses are important to me because of their practicality. It is so practical of Jesus here to simply have the foreknowledge to know that everyday people have troubles. Ultimately, He wishes Christians to leave those problems to Him and not worry about it.

Why? Because He’s already died on the cross and paid for everyone’s sins. So, in the end, Jesus is saying to not worry and to smile wide every day! Despite the trials ahead that you will be under, persevere through it, knowing that God and Jesus have your back!

— John Schremmer

TAKE HEART!

I have overcome the world!

John 16:33



Sunday, July 4, 2021

The past couple of years I've spent my 4th of July at church with friends to watch the massive fireworks display that the city puts on every year. Holidays like these are made even better when spent with friends and family with all the memories created and shared. This year we get to spend it with our friends and family and also while serving God and spreading the word across D.C.

One of the main ideas celebrated on the 4th of July is freedom. In America, we have the freedom to become anyone we want to be, talk however we want, and believe whatever we want to believe. Normally when you hear of freedom, this general term is thought of, but the Bible tells us of another freedom—freedom in Christ. In the book of Galatians, Paul talks about this freedom, “For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery” (Galatians 5:1). This freedom in Christ is a different type of freedom. This type of freedom can help us get eternal life. In the book of John, Jesus tells Pharisees, “Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin” (John 8:34). We all sin and are sinners which means that we are all in need of freedom to fight back. We find that freedom from sin in Jesus and by looking more to Him. The more we put our trust in Christ, the more free we become from sin. When we are free from sin, we won't have to worry about the temptations that Satan throws our way, because Jesus will give us the strength and courage to overcome the temptations we face. With this freedom we must hold strong in our faith and not fall back as Paul stated (Galatians 5:1).

Throughout the end of this trip and as we live on, we must remember to share the good news with others so that they too can become free in Christ.

— Daniel Clay



Monday, July 5, 2021

Every year, we spend one hour a week singing songs, sometimes presenting them in worship, but overall not letting it change any other part of our week. We tend to file away “Youth Choir” until right before we need it each week. To what end, though? Is it so we can go on a cool trip each summer? And instead of doing what we want to do on said trip, we spend most of the time singing the songs we practiced all year, or putting on a VBS, or doing various service projects. Why would we choose to do this: to spend countless hours practicing and pay a whole bunch of money only to do things for other people with little to no compensation? What’s the point?

The point is missions. John Piper, the long time pastor of Bethlehem Baptist Church in Minneapolis, MN, put it this way:

“Therefore, worship is the goal and the fuel of missions: Missions exists because worship doesn’t. Missions is our way of saying: the joy of knowing Christ is not private, or tribal, or national, or ethnic privilege. It is for all. And that is why we go. Because we have tasted the joy of worshipping Jesus, and we want all the families of the earth to be included.”

Psalm 22:27. That is to say, missions must continue to exist and thrive while there are still those that do not fall down in worship. Until that day when every soul will sing and every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord, we must continue living out the great commission through missions so that that day will come.

As we go forward from this missions-filled week, let us not forget that worship is the **goal** and missions the **fuel**. If we want to see the Church catch fire, we must fuel it, not just one week out of the summer in some distant city, but right where we are everyday of every year. Let us continue into our world with mission mindfulness for the cause of Christ.

— Sara Owens

