



## “Tell of His works with songs of joy...” – Ps 107:22

When trying to explain Dunklin and what transpires here, it can be difficult. Yes, we are a drug and alcohol regeneration program, which explains our purpose and mission. We exist to provide a “refuge” for those who are lost, downtrodden, and without hope. We welcome those whose lives have been self-destructed and it seems as if there is no way out. Psalm 107:4-7 provides a clear picture of the divine intervention that actually takes place:

“Some wandered in desert wastelands, finding no way to a city where they could settle. They were hungry and thirsty, and their lives ebbed away. Then they cried out to the Lord in their trouble, and He delivered them from their distress. He led them by a straight way to a city where they could settle.”

Currently, we have 65 men who have been led by the Lord to this city of refuge. All their stories are a bit different, yet, they are the same. All of their lives “ebbed away” and, eventually, they cried out in some way wherever they found themselves. They came to their senses by God’s grace and turned their focus unto Him. Ps 107:20 communicates, “He sent out His word and healed them; He rescued them from the grave.” They are now in this sanctification process, which brings salvation, life, and wholeness. There are different testimonies with all of them uncovering this beautiful truth of power, love, and mercy.

The picture goes much deeper as verses 35-38 specify, “He turned the desert into pools of water and the parched ground into flowing springs....They sowed fields and planted vineyards that yielded a fruitful harvest.” Verse 41 typifies the result, “But He lifted the needy out of their affliction and increased their families like flocks.”

I found myself smack dab in the middle of this harvest mentioned just this week. I was on vacation with my family on the west coast of Florida and was invited to a friend’s house who lives in the same area. This friend was directed to Dunklin a few years ago and has since then continued walking with the Lord and growing in his faith, experiencing what the psalmist mentions above. My eyes were able to witness the Lord’s healing not only in this man’s life, but in his marriage, and in his extended family. This man’s Father and three of his siblings were there, along with their spouses and the kids attached to each of those. My wife and I, along with our own two kids, were welcomed into their home. We were fed, we fellowshiped together, and we sang praises to the Lord with one another. It was a beautiful experience and one that will not soon be forgotten. What transpires at Dunklin is only the beginning; where He leads each man and what He does in them and through them is a beautiful story that unfolds chapter by chapter and page by page.

This man’s Dad and I corresponded the next day by email, sharing gratitude with one another. A part of his email read, “Nobody appreciates more what you all do in your ministry than I do. I thank you for the dedication Dunklin provides for those who are down and out, and desperately need Jesus. I could never express to you how important what all you do is and has been for my family.”

“Let them give thanks to the Lord for His unfailing love.” – Ps 107:21



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In Ezekiel 37 the prophet was called by the Spirit into a valley that was full of dry bones. In this apocalyptic vision, the Lord led Ezekiel in and amongst the mounds of bones that were dried out, without any meat on them, and bleached from the sun. There was no evidence of life or the possibility of life for that matter. The Lord asked Ezekiel, “Son of man, can these bones live?” He wisely responded, “Lord, you alone know.”

This picture of death, and the impossibility of being renewed, reflects our own lives; all of us who enter through the doors of Dunklin can identify with this scenario. We were dead in our transgressions, for sure. A new life was far from the realm of feasibility or expectation. The majority of us reconciled within ourselves that we would die in our addiction. We had no hope of anything different; we were lifeless. Ezekiel 37: 5-6 says, “This is what the Sovereign Lord says to these bones: I will make breath enter you and you will come to life...Then you will know that I am the Lord.” There is so much to say here, but I want to focus on one element of truth that is highlighted. We are miraculously brought to life by what the Lord chooses to do. He takes that which is dead and without hope and breathes in an entirely new life. At one point in this section of scripture it says, “My people, I am going to open your graves and bring you up from them...I will put my Spirit in you and you will live.”

This divine miracle of regeneration and revival is precisely what we celebrated this past weekend during our 59<sup>th</sup> Annual Homecoming. Despite the many challenges in making it here this year, alumni made every effort to return home. Dunklin is the place that the Lord chose to bring us and breathe this new life of His Spirit into our being. We rejoiced together relationally while praising and glorifying what the Lord has done. The chorus from a well-known praise song has been jumping within me as I write this. I’m sure you will find the lyrics familiar as it’s an oldie but a goodie: “Look what the Lord has done. He healed my body, He touched my mind, He saved me just in time. I’m gonna praise His name. Each day, He’s just the same. Come on and praise Him. Look what the Lord has done.” This identifies what we set out to do with our time together whether it was around the campfire, sharing a meal under the pavilions, or testifying in the tabernacle. We celebrated in a great way, remembering Him and the awesome things He has done in each of us.

“Look what the Lord has done!”

Nick





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