

Resurrection Day is coming!

I say Resurrection Day because the word Easter is used in reference to the spring celebration with eggs and easter bunnies. Resurrection Day rather refers to the holiday we Christians celebrate at the same time, the resurrection of our Lord, Jesus Christ. He was murdered on a cross by a reluctant Pilate at the insistence of the Jewish leaders who were blinded and could not see that He really was the Messiah they were waiting for as He came in humility rather than in power, to teach rather than to conquer. There *will* come a day of course when He does finally come to destroy the ones who reject him and build a new Heaven and Earth for Him and His people, but for now we wait and celebrate what He has done so far in offering a way out of the darkness we call sin. That He was resurrected shows all that He has victory even over death, what many think of as the final conclusion to ourselves.

First of course we must remember His death- His unfair trial, His suffering, and his being nailed to a cross in the most brutal form of execution know in those days. Good Friday, as it is known except by school districts that now refer to it as a "non-attendance" day, is the day we remember this horrible death. I of course have the bonus of it being a day-without-pay so I can really feel the suffering. ☐ Kidding of course, but it is a serious day. Our church is actually doing something a little bit different this year. We are still called to attend wearing black, but instead of a drama (I was in it 7 out of the last 8 years!) and a message it is apparently an open-ended service where we can come at any time within a 5-hour window. More on this after Friday as I really don't know anything more about it.

We are preparing for Easter with the choir and it is coming along nicely. Of course tonight we will probably have a train wreck as we're told to sing from memory- no sheet music for us

when we're up there! Of course the train wreck will be followed by further improvements as we improve in our confidence of the music and, just as important, will actually be looking at the choir director instead of the music! ☐ And once it's over, a week of (unpaid) rest follows...

Reflections

Well, this weekend it was mentioned that the next church anniversary in September is the its 20th. Yes I know that is nothing compared with some churches celebrating centennials and more. The church I grew up going to is a church like that, but the one I go to now is kind of mega-ish. That is, it is quite large, expands four campuses, and has a couple dozen "plants" following its doctrines and leadership style, but is still nothing compared to the likes of Willow Creek or Crystal Cathedral. Anyway, When I first started going to the church it hadn't yet celebrated its 10th anniversary. I remember that celebration was done in the school it originally met at before they got their own building. It was still on only one campus, its campground was still in the hands of its previous owners, and even the building they were in wasn't yet fully utilized. Inside was a big fenced in area of, well, *nothing* which would soon become the second half of a new improved worship center. Since then much has happened. Besides being on four campuses now (one of which used to be a plant but joined up for a reason I never found out) and having a campground, it has a chapel that didn't used to be there, used mostly for weddings, a second floor in part of the building (the building was always one floor, with a roof high enough for two), a school, and has undergone much remodeling.

As for me, around that 10th anniversary was when I started

working in the children's ministry. It started with an ambitious children's drama which took up much of the service time and was scaled back the following year due to the teaching volunteers wanting to, well, teach. I of course knew God wanted me there and so was part of the first cast. This lasted about three years. I even had a short stint at directing in the third year. Well, after the first year I wanted more so I started teaching as well. They put me in fourth grade with another teacher and we took turns week to week teaching the lesson. On the weeks I was also in the drama (there were four casts- one per week of the month with any fifth weekends generally without drama) I would walk the kids down and then go backstage and get into my costume. Believe it or not, I wasn't the only one who did this. About that time a new combined program for 4th and 5th grades was just getting started. The prior year they had it as a Friday night program as a supplement to the weekend services, but now they were making it the weekend service. They started off with just one service on the weekend, but it wouldn't be long before it expanded to all weekends. Just why they did it this way I am not sure. Anyway, I switched to this service eventually. As I recall they went through a few staff members running it over the years to where it is at now with the current pastor hired about six years ago. I think I am the only one left still volunteering in that ministry from that first year (discounting the Friday night program). Like the church itself, this program has grown and is definitely in a mature state. I reflect on this because there is a high school student who volunteers in one of the services who was one of my first students in fourth grade. He is a senior in high school now. Well, actually from what he says he was a senior because he graduated in January.

I really enjoy working with the kids, and I know God placed me there and has kept me there. In fact, my best spiritual time I think was last summer when I volunteered as a camp counselor for 4th and 5th grade. Also the two summers before. I just

wonder if God will ask me to move on soon like the others have, and if so where to? I am still involved with kids ministry drama as well, which after a hiatus of a couple of years came back as a different sort of program. Really, I am deeply immersed in this church and currently have no plans to move on, but eventually God may ask me to. Will I be able to if and when he does? Will I be willing to go where He wants me to? Would I be able to shepherd children myself as a pastor if called to do it somewhere? I can only make sure be ready I suppose in case He does. And how about my own family? Has He been leading me toward this in a way? That is, I am single right now, but is this practice, along with subbing, to lead a family of my own one day, soon I would hope as I am not getting any younger...

No teaching today

Normally I teach first weekend of the month at one of the morning services, but this month for some reason they have me down for next weekend instead. Of course I did have a surprise last night as I wrote. Today there was no leader problem either, just a normal day. For some reason though the boys are more rambunctious at the second Sunday service than Saturday night. I suppose it is probably for the same reason I tend to have more energy in the morning myself. The lesson if I didn't say was an introduction to the book of Judges. The kids were taught about the cycle that happened seven times in Judges and still happens today. When we get comfortable we tend to forget God and sin. Once in that trap, it leads to suffering. As we suffer we remember God and cry out to him to help us. He hears our cries and saves us, bringing us back to him. Unfortunately the cycle starts over from there. The message we got in the main service was part of the series on family first aid. It

was about wrestling with God just as Jacob wrestled with God. While God could just crush us when we choose a path other than that which leads to Him (read: sin), He chooses instead to be gentle and let us wrestle a bit. However, no mistake is to be made on this: He leads us, His children, to a place of submission so we get back on the right path. The message can be heard here:

[This Week's Message](#)

When teachers go missing

Okay, they didn't go missing they just got sick, but "when teachers get sick" didn't quite have the same ring to it. Besides, they were missing tonight because they got sick.

So when I arrived at church tonight there were already about five kids waiting outside the door. Not a good sign as I was a few minutes late myself and someone more punctual than myself should have been there. I checked the kids in and waited for other leaders to arrive. And waited. Eventually Steve, the one in charge of the kid's ministry, popped in and informed me that the one set to teach the lesson tonight called in sick and asked another leader to fill in for him. And she was, up until about an hour and a half before the service, then *she called in too*. Now this was a bit unusual, and ordinarily Steve would then fill in since it was so last minute, but tonight he had other obligations, so the duty of teaching the lesson passed to me. Well, I didn't study the lesson beforehand knowing I wasn't on for this weekend, but I could do this- I've done it before. Hey, I'm a sub, remember? Thinking on my feet is normal practice :). So I had to miss the game time and study the lesson. No biggie- just another

game of dodge-ball and I'm usually doing drama at this time anyway (we're off this month). Oh, I guess I should mention that another leader finally arrived and handled the game time. So anyway, They got back up, sang a few worship songs while I kept on studying, and ready or not I had to teach. It didn't go too badly but when we broke off into small groups (well smaller than the large group anyway, there were only the two of us after all ;)) a couple of the boys mentioned they thought I was boring. Sigh.

Fortunately the other leader saved my ego and said she thought the lesson went well :D.

Running into acrylics

Erm... Running into what?? It sounds like I mixed up two topics here... Well as to the second, since it's the least interesting, the position I wound up subbing for was art. After patting myself on the back for actually arriving a little early for once I ashamedly dragged my tail out the door and over to the school I was **supposed** to go to. Okay, though that scene has actually happened before, this one wasn't my fault. Really. You see, many of the specials positions in this district are itinerant, or traveling jobs. That is, the teacher works out of two schools. Having been burned before I meticulously checked, and rechecked both the message ("special instructions") the teacher left and the online system so I would *really* know where I was going. Real- okay, enough of that word. Anyway, the message told me all about how there was a student teacher and I would leave the teaching to her... yada yada. Been there, done that. No school mentioned. Check. Over to the online system, looked at the school, check. Go to the school, sign in, drop my lunch off, pass over the store-bought

bagels someone brought in, go to the art room, and... another teacher is there who says she has the room Friday mornings. Check in with the office, and sure enough all my careful detective work is shattered when they (now) inform me the teacher I am subbing for works out of a *different* school on Fridays. Oops... Sign out, collect my lunch, pass over the bagels again, travel to the other school which is fortunately only five minutes away hoping all the while it wasn't one of *those* schools that closes their parking lot when the buses start to arrive (seriously), fortunately again find out it is not, check in, put my lunch away, pass over... wait- *Panera* bagels? Grab bagel, go to art room, carefully verify with student teacher that I am indeed in the correct place this time, then finally take my coat off and plop down with relief. Hey, at least someone brought good bagels over here. ☐

So, it turned out there were eight classes to teach: four 5th/6th, and four 3rd/4th. Apparently all classes except kindergarten are multiage at this school. Well, the 5th/6th classes were in the middle of a project involving Crayola®-clay animal pots and acrylic paints. Yes, they looked better than that just sounded (most of them...). I of course assured them that yes, the olive green and yellow plaid shirt I was wearing was on purpose because I hate it and don't care if it got messed up in art. Through all four periods unfortunately it didn't. I guess with three wins ("fortunatelies?") I was bound to lose one.

The 3rd/4th grade classes started a new unit on movement. No, this wasn't PE or performing arts. Movement as portrayed on the canvas. They even got to draw a little, well, er, two of the classes did. Such a crime- art class and some didn't even get to do art! Well, that's unit introductions for you.

Okay then, until next post.

Wait, I'm forgetting something aren't I? Yes, really (didn't I ban this word earlier?). "Running into" doesn't actually refer

to the movement, as they weren't allowed to draw people today anyway, only objects. Drawing people and showing their movement is apparently for more advanced students, more advanced than 8-10 years anyway. And besides, I had to have added the church category for this post for *some* reason.

In this case "running into" refers to me running into someone I actually knew from church. No, not *really* (that word again!) running into him, adults don't run in school rooms now, do they? So anyway, It had been a couple of years, and memory for names and faces isn't exactly one of my strengths, or even neutral features (you know where I'm going with this...). Apparently his memory was only slightly better as I just "looked familiar" like maybe someone from camp. I one upped him and said "church camp?" still not recognizing him. Then *he* one upped and gave the name of the camp and his name. I of course pretended to recognize him before he said his name (secretly grateful he said it, ~~reall~~ truly recognizing him only *after* he said it). As it turned out, he was the one student from my cabin I spent a week with (yes I truly am pathetic...) and never saw again after that summer. There were two like that the following summer, but at least I *knew* I wouldn't see them again when they told me that the one was from another church and the other was a friend he invited to come with him. Anyway, since you have suffered through this entire post I will provide an obligatory picture of my cabin from that year, but you will have to just guess which one he is. All I'll tell you is he isn't the one on the right (that would have been a *really* (sigh) big 5th grader). The one on the right was actually my junior counselor (I was the adult counselor). I of course am behind the camera, so no picture of me- sorry! ☐

Note: The thumbnail picture is not so good, so click on it to see it in it's full glory!



Church

Yes, tonight I went to church service. It was actually a sort of unusual service in that all of the children's ministry was asked to attend the main service. Ordinarily the 4th and 5th grades would be in service anyway as the last weekend of the month they go to service with their parents (in preparation for junior high when they always attend regular service), but this time it was kindergarten all the way on up in a family service. It made sense though- the series my pastor is currently in is about family. What this meant though was there was no drama and no kid's ministry for me to be involved with this weekend. In fact, there is no drama for the next month. Though drama is fun, I appreciate the break.

Tonight they also did an "impromptu choir," meaning they called on people to come up front and sing the worship songs in the choir risers, children included. Well, because the children were part of the service, they chose a few children's worship songs in addition to some regular songs. During the kid's songs, they had one boy who came up, a 4th grader, stand in front of us (yes, I came up to sing!) and show the motions that the kids do when singing the songs. It was so cool- this boy has no trouble in front of large crowds- he actually has been doing drama with me for the last couple years. Incidentally, his dad was one of the worship leaders which probably gave his confidence a boost as well. His dad must have been quite proud of him (the *good* type of pride for another, not the selfish pride the Bible speaks against). Unfortunately he ran off the stage before I could give him a high five for doing it (and doing a great job at it too!) so I guess I will have to catch him next week in class.

Not just a sub...

Well, I suppose since this is my blog I can write about more than just subbing. There is the retro-gamer in me, and I might say a few things here and there about it, but I think I should really just start another blog about it once this gets going. There is also the church-goer in me. I sing, do drama, and teach 4th/5th grades there, so it is sort of on-topic anyway, not that on-topic is a requirement for me... ☐

Tonight is the first night for Easter choir rehearsal. Now, my church is a very large church meaning I will be one of 100+ in the choir, or one of about 30 men. I will find out tonight whether or not I can actually do it- it all depends on whether or not we would have to sing at the end of the service- they do that from time to time. If we do, then it would conflict with the kid's ministry. I can always be a little late to the class (I am one of several leaders actually as there are around 40 kids in the class each service) especially since they start with a game time, but it would be irresponsible of me to not show up for the teaching and small group times. This is especially true on Easter, one of the two days of the year when typically more people show up than the norm. To you who do: Jesus wants to see you in his house more! ☐

Beyond choir, I also do drama for the younger kids, but we have next month off from that so there is no interference with it. Well, gotta go. It's nearing rehearsal time.