

Paraguay: Hungry and thirsty for truth

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My first night in Paraguay, I was reading in the book of Job and came across a passage in chapter 24 in which Job claims the wicked people of the world tend to be better off and not go through as much suffering as someone who is living a righteous life.



Thomas Wirth However, Job goes on to say that those same people who are wicked “carry the sheaves, but still go hungry...they tread the winepresses, yet suffer thirst.” It suddenly all made sense to me. There are many people in the world who are lost, searching for answers, searching for something “more.” I had always known lost people need the same saving love I found in Christ Jesus, but it suddenly became clear to me is that those same people are actually “hungry” and “thirsty” to hear about the love I have been commanded to share with them.

With this new perspective, I became so much more confident in God’s ability to share his story and his love for others through me, whether in English or Spanish.

As the week progressed, I was able to share the gospel with a few kids at different times in Spanish. I was very encouraged and thrilled to learn at

the end of our talks that those particular kids had heard this before and had already accepted Christ as Lord.

However it also left me confused. Why would God so vividly point out that there are lost people in the world who hunger and thirst for his love, only to have me go through conversations about the gospel with kids who already were saved? Understand, I am still grateful God gave me those opportunities to talk with those kids and encourage them further in their walk with Christ. But I was kind of confused.

Crowded flight

Then came my plane ride back to the States. After not getting much sleep on the crowded flight from Paraguay to Panama, I was looking forward to resting on the flight back to Houston, but God had other—better—plans for me. I was seated next to a girl who was attending college in California but had been visiting her family in Columbia. God kept tugging at my heart: I needed to talk to this girl.

We engaged in small talk. She knew basketball and was a Golden State Warriors fan, so talking wasn't too difficult at all. I made an attempt to shift the conversation by asking about the book she was reading. From her description of the book and the concepts mentioned, I immediately knew she was very postmodern in her beliefs.

As I expected, she asked about the book I was reading. I replied that I was reading *Crazy Love* by Francis Chan. I explained to her how convicting it had been for me to read. She asked me to go into more detail. Eventually, I had an opportunity to ask if she had ever heard the whole story of the gospel. She replied, "Well, I have heard a couple of Gospel songs before." I excitedly began tell her about the gospel, explaining the hope that it has given me—the hope available to anyone and everyone.

Sharing beliefs

After I concluded, she said it was a good story, but that was all it was—a good story. I asked for her to share her beliefs. I listened and listened. She went on to tell me she liked religion and even Christianity, because she had seen it give people who were close to her hope when it seemed that they had hit rock bottom. She thought religion was great for “people like that,” who needed to hope in something. It broke my heart to hear her say the major reason she wouldn’t become a Christian was because she did not want to give control of her life over to someone else. She wanted to be in control.

We spent more time talking about different concepts and flaws she had found in Christianity. I was amazed at how God continued to supply me with honest and respectful answers to her delicately complex statements and questions. I knew I was not going to change Carolina’s mind in this one plane ride, but I definitely could see God at work.

To hunger and thirst for something more

It may not have been completely obvious, but I believe deep down, she does hunger and thirst for something more. I pray that the words God spoke through me and other people that God places in her path will eventually lead her to God, the only One who can truly satisfy her hunger and thirst.

Speaking with Carolina allowed me to better understand lost people, to better understand that they hunger and thirst for the love of God, to better understand that it’s going to take time. It’s going to take time of peeling back layer after layer of hurt, guilt and shame, before they truly realize that they do indeed hunger and thirst. And it is our job to be right there alongside them listening, encouraging and loving them through it, no matter how long it takes. Remember, God’s timing is perfect.

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