

# Three life-changing hours

August 16, 2012

The preview was a free one-day event where kids got to come and play soccer, football and basketball, make crafts and hear about the love of Jesus. We had about 100 kids show up, and just three hours 17 kids gave their lives to Christ. Those 17 kids who came from all walks of life and backgrounds now have a basic understanding of the gospel, and of what true, unconditional love actually means. Their lives have radically changed, and the impact that they will have on their own friends and family will be immeasurable.

I was soccer coach of the camp, and one little girl in particular caught my eye and captured my heart. She was one of the first to raise her hand after the devotion to say that she wanted Jesus to come into her heart. After one of the counselors explained what that meant and they prayed together, she made her way over to the bench beside me. She then proceeded to plop down with a huge sigh, and look at me with a frustrated scowl on her face. I asked her what was wrong and after a huff and a few more sighs, she said: "I prayed that prayer to Jesus and stuff. And they said he is in my heart now, and all my bad stuff is forgiven. But does he know I hit my brother last week? My mom said that's real bad, and I don't know if Jesus will forgive that. Do I have to do extra stuff for that one?" I immediately explained that all her past and presents mistakes are forgiven — even the really, really bad ones. She was relieved, and I couldn't help but laugh as she skipped off towards her friends.

I sat there pondering the implications of her words, because although her innocence was precious, she voiced something many people struggle with: Am I clean enough for God? Am I too far gone for redemption? Am I really forgiven?

The reality is that Jesus covers all of our sins and all of our mistakes so we don't have to be clean enough. How can we even question this gift? We keep letting the burdens of our past reappear as if they hold some value, when in actuality they mean nothing and are worthless in the face of Christ.

I reflect on my own life and know that I am guilty of this, and that makes me want to fall on my face in shame. I've done it. I do it all the time. We get so caught up in our own selfishness and doubts, we distract ourselves from the simple, pure, beautiful point of it all. His grace is sufficient for us. His sacrifice was enough. We have to rest in this, because if we can't even accept his boundless love for ourselves, than we can't even begin to show his love to others.

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