

Greetings, FUMC!

First of all, thank you so much for your support over the years. I can't begin to express how grateful I am and pray that God will "credit your account" (Phil. 4:17) with the help you have given me in ministry.

Wow, where to begin? We are certainly seeing and feeling the Lord's favor on us this semester at Iowa State. This story might help you get a glimpse of God's hand moving here at ISU. A month or two ago, I received this email from a student named Courtney.

*Hi Jill- I was hoping you could help guide my relationship with God. I have been attending Salt Company and Sunday services at Cornerstone for about 6 months now. I am really looking to get more involved with the church, understand the Bible better and learn more about the Christian life...Any advice would be appreciated. Thank you!*

So, I responded to Courtney and we met at Panera on a Wednesday morning. She told me about her background, a couple of knee surgeries, and some tough situations in her life through which it was clear that God was getting her attention. I asked her if she would like to see an illustration from the Bible about how to know God and she was very eager to listen. I showed her "The Bridge" illustration that comes from Romans 6:23 - "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." We talked through each aspect of that verse and then I explained how you cross the bridge to gain forgiveness and eternal life. Courtney was very responsive and excited, so I said, "Would it weird you out to pray right here in Panera so you can cross from death to life?" She happily responded, "No! I really want to!" Then, she prayed a beautiful prayer of acceptance, belief and commitment to Jesus. What a joy to witness Courtney become a child of God that morning!

First Corinthians 3:7 is so true - "So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow." I neither planted, nor watered, but God had been growing and preparing Courtney to hear the message of salvation that morning. What a gift to be a part of His work! Courtney has now joined a small group Bible study, is sharing with others about her new faith in Jesus, and is attending our Winter Conference the last weekend of February.

Courtney's story is one among many here at The Salt Company. As a staff team, we often talk about how it seems that we are in a season of God's favor and blessing, and we are so thankful. I hope that you are encouraged by God's work at ISU and know that YOU, FUMC, are all partners in the gospel here through your prayers and support. Thanks again and Go Cyclones!

Jill Paullus, Salt Company, Ames, IA