



The Jimmy Brazell Community Impact Scholarship Award 2012 Second Place Winning Essay by Morgan Werk (AL)

BE IMITATORS OF ME, AS I AM OF CHRIST

“The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.” Jimmy Brazell was a man obedient to God’s Word. Jimmy Brazell realized the urgency of the mission. Jimmy Brazell knew that true, saving, faith motivated action. Jimmy Brazell was the laborer the disciples prayed for. When I think of Jimmy Brazell and his willingness to go to the hard places for the sake of Christ’s name and renown, I am reminded of a quote by C.T. Studd that states, “Some want to live within the sound of church or chapel bell; I want to run a rescue shop within a yard of hell.” Jimmy Brazell selflessly gave of himself so that others could experience the immeasurable joy of knowing Christ Jesus our Lord. In response to God’s command through his Word to make disciples of all nations, I have had multiple opportunities to serve Christ and His children in foreign contexts. Through those experiences, God has revealed that He desires for me to spend an extended period of my life as a missionary overseas. Realizing that calling, the example of Jimmy Brazell has given me encouragement and confidence to be obedient to go to the hard places, knowing that by God’s grace He will be faithful to draw people to Himself.

For the majority of my “growing up” years, I convinced myself that I wanted to work in the church or in a ministry that would secure the comfortable family living lifestyle that I had always dreamed about. Don’t get me wrong, I am completely confident God calls some people to those vocations and they are most effectively making the gospel known in those capacities, but for me, it was a wall I was hiding behind instead of handing God a blank check with my life. In the fall of 2009, God began breaking down the wall that I had built around my future and whispering in my ear, “Morgan, it is not about being comfortable or even being safe. It is not about you, it is about me and my glory being made known to all people. You are my child, let go and go to the utter most parts of the earth. That is where you will bring me most delight. Be obedient to the Word I have set before you.” Realizing the urgency of God’s command to make disciples of all nations, I had the privilege to spend the summer in Namibia, Africa, teaching teenage girls the true gospel on a daily basis. Sadly, the African, teenage girls I came to know and love were deceived into thinking that Christianity was made up of rituals and rules. After seeing the massive confusion of truth and scripture these girls were constantly bombarded with, I felt strongly that every night we should study a different passage that clearly explains God’s redemptive power, because in my opinion, you can never get enough of the gospel. We were able to share life together and, by God’s grace, He opened up opportunity for me to speak about His greatness in every circumstance, whether that was cooking dinner, doing hair, hanging out clothes to dry, or walking down the street. Opportunities like those remind me of Jimmy and his constant desire to share about Christ in every circumstance.

During my time in Africa, the Lord completely reaffirmed his calling in my life to spend an extended amount of time serving the poor and the needy in a foreign country. However, in preparation for that part of my journey, there are days I find myself discouraged. When I realize the size of the mission, I sometimes find myself discouraged by the lack of laborers. This is the area where Jimmy Brazell’s life has inspired me to make Christ’s name known the most. Jimmy’s life reminds me that though the laborers are few, there are believers dedicated to Christ and His Word and because of that dedication they are literally giving their lives so that others might know God. I truly believe that God has chosen to make His followers the means by which His gospel will go forth and there is no plan B. Jimmy Brazell lived with that reality in mind. When the mission of Christ feels overwhelming, I am reminded of how big my God is and how He uses people like Jimmy Brazell to encourage the body of Christ to press on in the mission of winning souls for Christ. Jimmy Brazell’s life motivates me to press on in a world that sometimes seems hopeless.

In 1 Corinthians 11:1 Paul writes, “Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ.” As Paul strived to be more and more like Christ, he encouraged others to follow his example and portray the image of Christ as well. Similarly, Jimmy Brazell spent his life dedicated to the mission God had set before Him. God has given the same mission to every follower of Christ today, to know Christ and make Him known. Just as Paul influenced the church at Corinth, Jimmy Brazell is continuing to influence the church today. Personally, Jimmy Brazell has influenced my life by providing reassurance and encouragement in the calling God has for my life. I am convinced that if this generation of young people sacrificially gave of themselves the way Jimmy did, this culture would be radically transformed for the sake of Christ. Therefore, let us be imitators of Jimmy Brazell, as He was of Christ.