Relationships

Love / Kindness

Ivy

In 10th grade I read a story about a war-torn world, where human depravity was so normalized that to interact with another human being and walk away with your life was considered a miracle. The protagonist was someone who insisted on being better, and something about that deeply resonated with me. Even though we don’t live in a world where people shoot each other in the streets, I felt that there was something deeply lacking in my life. I desired to be better. I wanted to be kinder than other people and to go the extra step. Why? I didn’t really know. I think, just like the character in the story, I desired a better world. Somehow, my small actions would make a dark world brighter. This was the way that I went about most of my life, and there is a certain hope in it. Often, I feel that I cling to that hope. To believe in God requires a certain hopelessness. I often feel that believers often feel pity for non-believers, but often non-believers believe in the only thing that they can. Nobody believes that they live a hopeless live, or they would fall into despair. A lot of people come to Christ through despair, but a lot of people don’t.

High school was a very lonely place for me. The school was one of those schools where everyone was always doing something, whether it was studying or sports or other extracurricular activities. Thus, social activities were always on the back-burner. I didn’t make time for my friends, and my friends didn’t make time for me. High school social life was a series of friends of convenience. I had homework friends and track friends and band friends, but I didn’t have friends. My best friend was a girl named Ivy Chen. We met in 9th grade (her 10th grade), and we connected instantly in the way that some people simply do. Throughout high school, we were constant comforts to each other. We were together through the highs and lows of high school, and we saw each other grow and shape each other. I loved her, but this love was a selfish love. I still felt a deep loneliness, and I somehow expected that Ivy would make me feel less lonely. To some extent, that was what Ivy was to me, a means to an end: an end to loneliness. When she didn’t fulfill that purpose that I had set for her, I became bitter towards her, and that caused a deep rift in our friendship. This bitterness reached a climax in summer before college where her job occupied her to the point where we couldn’t talk. I was convinced that she wasn’t making a big enough priority in her life for me. I stopped talking to her for almost a year. In that year, God revealed to me a lot of my own hypocrisies and taught me about love, about how love is patient, and how love is not self-seeking. God called on me to forgive her, and by God’s grace alone I was able to forgive her. I was a person who loved because I wanted to be loved. God told me that I was loved simply because of who I am: because I am His child, fearfully and beautifully made in His image.

-I love my friends in high school, or I thought I did. Talk about Ivy

-Coming to college, my friends would confide in me, and I wanted to pray for them to a God I didn’t even know them, coming out of my own love.

- Ivy and I stopped talking because she didn’t love me in the way I thought she should.

- I found a community that was loving more than me.

- I wanted to learn more about this God who loved more than me.

- I thought I was doing well, but then someone told me to forgive Ivy, but that’s where I thought love couldn’t go. When I shut the door, God kept going

- God pursued me even more, through class and accountability and discipleship

- Through God’s pursuit, I realized that my love was self-seeking and to get away from loneliness, but God’s love started to become bigger than my loneliness

-The Gospel was presented to me many times before through family groups and sermons, but as God’s love became greater than my loneliness, the gospel became more and more real to me.

- I thought I couldn’t forgive Ivy and at all, but experiencing God’s love, my heart forgave her.

- talk about forgiveness

- I thought I could love people my way, but people are limited and God is eternal.