

God has been faithful throughout the beginning of this year, as he always is, both in the joyful parts of ministry and in the painful parts. I've been encouraged by the continued development of some of our ongoing relationships, and one in particular stands out.

I've been getting to know an elder over the past year or so and in 2025 we had some conversations that delved into spirituality, how we live, and what comes after. At the beginning of this year, he was diagnosed with cancer and was life flighted to a hospital in Washington as he wasn't doing well. God preserved him and his treatment has been fairly effective so far.

During these last few months, I've had more chances to spend time with him, including driving him to appointments. Getting to know his story better has been a blessing, but even more encouraging has been seeing his interest in the story of Jesus grow. While we were driving together, he told me that he and his daughter (who is involved in Young Life) had started watching "The Passion of the Christ" on YouTube, but the video didn't include the whole movie. Providentially, I had a DVD copy at home that I could offer him so they could finish the movie - the ending is pretty important! I pray that he and his daughter might be some of the first to be part of the adult Bible study that we plan to start soon. Please pray for both his physical and spiritual health and pray that our relationship would continue to deepen.

I've also been filled with joy seeing a young man - a senior in high school - who is a relatively new believer stepping up to the plate in our Young Life group. He has a group of young people he brings with him every week and recently led a couple of them to faith in Christ. Just the other day, on his own initiative, he gathered a group of young people from Young Life to go on a "prayer hike" after club. Watching God slowly grow him into a leader and having the privilege of being involved in his life is an awesome blessing. Pray for continued spiritual growth, protection from Satan's attacks, and stability in this young man's life. Also, please pray that we would have wisdom on how to faithfully disciple him and help him in his walk.

These reminders of God's faithfulness are important to notice and be thankful for, as the difficulty of life on the reservation can sometimes be overwhelming. There have been many, many funerals of loved ones of people we are close to throughout the first part of this year, some for elders who have passed away and some for those who were far too young. There are also some very painful and difficult situations that some of the young people in Young Life are dealing with on a regular basis. At times, it feels like we are only putting a bandaid on a wound that goes so deep it would be impossible to heal.

But that's the hope that we have - we trust in a God that heals impossibly deep wounds and changes lives when they seem unchangeable. Our God is the great physician who "desires all people to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Timothy 2:4). We pray with faith that His will be done and His kingdom come here in Warm Springs. I often find that songs help me pray when it is difficult, and I am reminded of a hymn written nearly two centuries ago by a man who was well acquainted with grief, having lost his fiancée the day before they were to be married:

"What a friend we have in Jesus, all our sins and griefs to bear!
What a privilege to carry everything to God in prayer!
O what peace we often forfeit, O what needless pain we bear,
all because we do not carry everything to God in prayer!"

Thank you for praying with us!

Evan Shaw

for the Sacred Road team in Warm Springs