



GOD'S WORD DOES NOT RETURN EMPTY

ISAIAH 55:11

Greetings Family & Friends!

Now all glory to God, who is able to make you strong, just as my Good News says. This message about Jesus Christ has revealed his plan for you Gentiles, a plan kept secret from the beginning of time. But now as the prophets foretold and as the eternal God has commanded, this message is made known to all Gentiles everywhere, so that they too might believe and obey him. All glory to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, forever, Amen. (Romans 16:25-27) NLT



April 12, 2025 - MIAC Year-End Chapel Celebration

First of all, "**A BIG THANK YOU**," for your prayers and financial support for the chapel season. Without your sacrifice and partnership, what happened this season simply would not have happened. Included in this update of thanksgiving for all the Lord has done, you will see my mother (Viki Erickson) pictured above. She was dead on Jan 28th, 2025 and now she lives for the glory of Christ more than ever before. She was my coveted guest speaker along with dad accompanying her. What a blessing having my parents share with these young men! Many of these men came up afterwards and spent time with my parents. It was a very special time for me to watch from afar as I was playing pickleball with the chapel guys. This has always been a family ministry. I will have another update coming this summer with more details on mom and hopefully a video to accompany it.

The chapel season has had tremendous growth. I served 7 different MIAC Schools from August 27th - April 30th. I met every week with each team. Most weekends I attended 1 game, sometimes 2, being available to these young men. Mariana and Oliver attended as they were able. Ask Bill Butters about the strain it can put on a family. But as Bill knows, having a wife that understands the calling on his life and supports him faithfully lessens the strain and stress of being gone. Bill and Debby, you are great examples for us all - Well done!!

Gustavus won the MIAC regular season, plus they won the MIAC playoffs and made the NCAA Division III tournament and then lost a heartbreaker to St Norberts College. It was another hard fought MIAC season - the league gets stronger each year.

Pictured below, are members of each of the 7 schools represented: **Augsburg, Bethel, Gustavus, Hamline, St John's, St Mary's, & St Olaf**. Having just finished my 18th year serving the MIAC specifically, this was our best attended Year-end Chapel event, which was held at Chip's Pickleball Club in Eagan, MN. It was a very special time of fellowship and the players really enjoyed it. I split all the players up to play with another member from another team. Many players thanked me for making this a very purposeful event where they were able to finally intermingle with other schools. They built deeper relationships and re-connected with players they knew from juniors in a more meaningful way, some of which now know Jesus as their Lord and Savior. When they weren't playing, they were breaking bread together, eating Buffalo Wild wings til they couldn't eat any longer.

As the event finished, one player came up to me afterwards and specifically asked for prayer for an upcoming surgery and that he was a little nervous about it. As this player shared about his upcoming surgery a few people gathered around including Mariana and Oliver who also prayed over this young man. I can't begin to tell you, how incredibly special it is to have my whole family apart of this. As a Father, it brings great joy to have my son see other young men who care about Jesus and desire to learn, walk, and grow in Christ and leave an impact for Christ in this world. Oliver is a sponge and if we want him to emulate anything, may it be the witness of Christ in what Mariana and I do and the lives of all these young men that God has entrusted to us to serve, love and equip! In addition to all the fun, many books from (Answers in Genesis) were given away, along with Ray Comfort's Evidence Bible and other Study Bibles, Chapel T-Shirts, and HMI Hats. Over 150 items were given and taken and I know they will be used to help equip and grow young men in their faith in Jesus.

One side note on the giveaways that you faithful supporters help us with. I

received a text message from a young man from Texas a few weeks ago who I had in chapel for four years at St Mary's. I had given him the book "The Day Approaching, by Amir Tsarfati a few years back. He reached out after he saw the chapel pictures. He was so encouraged, he responded by saying, "I just finished Amir's book and loved it, I couldn't put it down." I need to get the Last Hour by Amir." I said, I have one and I will mail it down to you. It is nice to get little notes of encouragement to know that these books and bibles are being used and helping young men grow in Christ. **YOU HELP MAKE THIS A REALITY!!!. THANK YOU!!!**

A QUICK SNAPSHOT OF THE CHAPEL SEASON:

Total chapels for the year from August 27th, 2024 - April 30th, 2025 -**202 Total Chapels (including coaches chapels at SJU)**

Total games watched in person - **25**

Marriage counseling for two couples - **I am officiating both in July.**

Players that came to faith in Christ - **2**

Other miscellaneous discipleship meetings and 1 on 1 - **multiple throughout the year**

Total Ministry miles for the year of 2024 - **29,400 miles**

Total players that attended at least 2 chapels during 2024-2025 -**85**



Year-end Chapel celebration 2024-2025
@ Chip's Pickelball Club - Eagan, MN



Year-End Chapel 2024-2025 - CHIP's Pickleball Club - Eagan, MN



St Norberts and Gustavus praying after a hard fought first round NCAA game.

Through the lens of Tommy Carls - A Hamline Piper testimony





Tommy Carls - Watch Video of him surrendering his life to Jesus!

The Bible: A Living Testimony, Not just a Story

Over the past year, I've come to a powerful realization: the Bible is not merely a storybook -- it is a living, breathing, historical account of the past and the divine Word of God. This understanding has reshaped the way I view not only Scripture but also my relationship with Christ. Through Chapel with Max and the incredible community of men on the Hamline Hockey team, I've been blessed with the space to grow in faith, to be challenged, and to be deeply encouraged. Together, we've explored the truth of the Bible and how it's words guide us through both the most challenging storms and the simplest, quietest days.

One of the recurring conversations we've had is this idea that the Bible is not just a collection of stories, but an eternal testimony - a historical and spiritual compass that transcends time. Stories, as we typically understand them, have a beginning, a middle, and an end. They are composed of narrative elements; characters, setting, plot, theme, conflict and resolution. They are crafted to be read once, perhaps revisited for nostalgia or entertainment, but they ultimately remain static. The Bible, on the other hand, is anything but static. It is dynamic, alive and ever-revealing.

As my faith has deepened, I've come to understand that the Bible offers endless layers of truth and insight. It's not something you simply read once and understand fully. Instead, it's something you return to, over and over again, and

each time - through the seasons of your life - it speaks something new. The most important word I've come to associate with Scripture is continuously. Scripture continuously speaks, teaches and reveals. The same verse you read a year ago may reveal a completely different message today, depending on where you are in your walk and yet keep the same Biblical truth consistently. I am seeing how consistent God's word is and unchanging; and it has been transforming me continuously.

A vivid example of this in my own life is our chapel group's ongoing study of Genesis - particularly chapters 6 through 9, which recount the story of Noah and the Ark. The first time we dove into these passages, I was struck by Noah's righteousness and unwavering obedience. Here was a man who listened to God despite ridicule and disbelief from those around him. His faith, his courage to follow God's voice even when it defied human logic, was a lesson that anchored me. **It taught me that true faith sometimes means standing alone, trusting God's plan when no one else does.**

Fast forward to today - we found ourselves once again in Genesis 6-9. I had read it before, discussed it before, and reflected on it deeply. But this time, something new stood out: judgement. The weight of God's judgement upon the earth became undeniable. I saw not just a story of obedience, but a revelation of God's justice - His power to bring order and righteousness, even through destruction. It reminded me that God is not only merciful, but Holy, and he holds the authority to judge. That realization struck a deep chord in me, one that reminds me to be continuously urgent and intentional in my faith with the Lord.

But even in the midst of that overwhelming judgement, another truth became clear - God's mercy. Yes, He brought the flood. Yes, He wiped out a world overcome by wickedness. But He also extended mercy in the most profound way: through Noah. In preserving Noah and his family, God was preserving humanity itself. He didn't abandon His creation; He offered a way forward, a second chance. That act of mercy, woven directly into a moment of devastation, showed me how deeply God desires redemption, not destruction. It revealed that even when we are surrounded by brokenness, His heart leans towards restoration. He didn't have to save Noah - but he did. And through that, He reminded me that mercy and justice are not opposites in God's character - they are perfectly balanced in a Holy God.

This dual reality of justice and mercy in Genesis reminded me that God is always working for both truth and grace in our lives. He doesn't simply judge to punish - He judges to cleanse, to renew, to forgive and to draw us closer to Him. Even in the most difficult seasons, His mercy finds a way to shine through.

This is just one of countless examples I could give. Scripture has a divine way of meeting you where you are. It speaks to the brokenhearted, the joyful, the confused, the hopeful. It brings comfort, correction, challenge, and conviction. It is a lifelong companion in our walk with Christ. And every time you return to it with an open heart, it reveals something new, something timely, something sacred, tested and trustworthy.

That is why I do not believe the Bible should be viewed as a story. Stories can be put back on a shelf, their lessons often fading over time. But the Bible is the Word of God - it's living, eternal truth that transforms your life again and again. It's a guide for how to walk in faith, how to love others, how to face trials, and how to honor God. It's a mirror that reveals who we are, and a window that shows us who God is.

So, I challenge anyone reading this: don't just read Scripture once and set it aside. Read it again. Reread it in different seasons of life. Let it challenge you. Let it change you. You might think you know a passage, but return to it with fresh eyes and an open heart, and you'll be surprised at what God wants to show you. The Bible is not a story. It's the divine heartbeat of God's Word - spoken to us, for us, and through us.

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In His Grip,

Max, Mariana & Oliver Erickson

Thanking and praising the Lord for you!





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