



I SOUGHT I FOUND

*We are looking forward to
a home yet to come!*

Hebrews 13:14-15

By Max Erickson

Where has the summer gone? It's the middle of August and I can almost smell the fresh zambonied ice, clean and crisp, waiting to be carved up as young men play the greatest and fastest game in the world! It's a sign of the times that the College hockey season is quickly approaching.

Much has happened since the chapel season ended; on April 24th we had our year end chapel at Top Golf in Brooklyn Center. I met with Augsburg, St Olaf, St John's and St Mary's during this past season. Augsburg and St Olaf invited a few players from Bethel and they joined our year-end chapel celebration. Because of the invitation from the Augsburg and St Olaf chapel, Bethel is back on the docket for this fall with a chapel program. Hamline, after not having a chapel this past season due to a coaching change may also be on my chapel schedule. Please pray for a schedule that can accommodate 5-6 teams in the fall on a weekly basis.



Year End Chapel at Top Golf

I have been serving the MIAC student athletes for 15 seasons - **time flies!** During this time, I have always maintained a **respectful** distance from the coaches, to not push the chapel agenda too hard but still be available to them for whatever their needs may be. Over the years there have been instances where coaches have reached out and asked for prayer and even visited one coach in the hospital; but this season has been so unique (more on that later).

Colossians 4:5-6, "Live wisely among those who are not believers, and make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be gracious and attractive so that you will have the right response for everyone."

Following the second round of the MIAC playoffs between St John's and St Olaf, in which St Olaf won 3-1, I headed down to greet both teams and coaches. The St John's coaching staff invited Mariana and me down to their room to discuss life and what was going on in the world. **They did not want to talk hockey.** They wanted to talk about what the Bible had to say about world events etc. **(The game was only a game... but eternity is no game).** The hockey game ended around 9:30 but we didn't leave until midnight after sharing the gospel with the coaching staff. I then asked the coaches if they would be open to a coaches Bible study and they said yes. Even though the season was over now for them, I continued meeting with the coaches for 5 weeks privately after their season ended. The St John's coaches are committed to doing bible study this Fall and the Augsburg coaching staff is also on board to start a coaches Bible study. It's amazing how difficulties, war, inflation, persecution, food shortages, lockdowns, pandemics, insane gas prices etc... opens the door to what the apostle Paul says in **2 Corinthians 13:5, "Examine yourselves to see if your faith is genuine. Test yourselves. Surely you know that Jesus Christ is among you; if not, you have failed the test of genuine faith."** God uses it all to draw people to himself. Just as Christianity grew through persecution, I see the same things happening now. I encourage us all to use these days that lie ahead to be about our Father's business as the day draws near of **Christ's soon return!** It has taken 15 years for this door to be oiled and unlocked and then it opened very easily. I have said this before, but I look at Covid, vaccines, lockdowns, supply chain issues, food shortages, war and rumors of war, high inflation and the list goes on and on, as a blessing and a means that God is using to open people hearts and eyes to the reality of their need for Him. Thank you for your support and prayers, it is helping open doors into new avenues to share the Gospel.

It's hard to put into words just what God has been doing. Typically what happens once school is over, is guys disperse, many going home to other states, Canada, or even Europe. For example, I was at Back to the 50's with my family at the St Paul Fairgrounds the third weekend in June when I received a call from a St Mary's player who had just finished his freshman season. His quote was,

"Max, I need fellowship, I miss the chapels, I have no church back home to attend, can we start chapels with the boy's on Zoom for the rest of the summer, weekly?" That was the easiest yes I have ever said. Since that time I have been meeting with St Mary's weekly. The players see their need for authentic fellowship with believers in Christ. Some have a church back home, most do not. This is why the chapel ministry to these college students is so vital, its a place to learn about Jesus and learn how to walk as a godly man in Christ.

Thank you for sending me to do this - it is a tremendous honor!

For many, Summer is the time for family vacations, BBQ's and heading to the cabin on the lake, but for me summer is the time for golf and classic car shows. Golf is a great way to connect with current and alumni players who have attended the chapels over the years. I typically play in 2-3 MIAC hockey tournaments each summer. I network and build on past relationships and continue to build new ones. On top of those tournaments, I partner with the Crossroads Chapel at the Minnesota State Fair grounds, and for the last 8 years my dad and I have done car show ministry the third weekend in July at the Summer Nationals. During this car show on Sunday mornings we hold a church service. This year I had been asked to give the message.



Crossroads Chapel Golf Fundraiser with my St. Olaf and Augsburg leaders

While talking about cars at the show and passing out Bibles and sharing about Christ, I met a retired pastor of 78 years old on Saturday his name is Larry. I met him while giving away free Bibles at the chapel. I was wearing a T-shirt depicting God remembering Noah as he remembers us. Larry asked if he could have my shirt. I thought he was joking but he wasn't, **"I really want your shirt"**, right now I asked? Yes, he exclaimed! Larry said, he has a grandson named Noah and thought it would be a great shirt for him. I made a deal with him that I would only give him the shirt if he came to the church service on Sunday. In order for Larry to receive the gift of the t-shirt off my back, literally, I put the responsibility on him to show up and receive that gift (**Sound familiar?**)

Saturday night, Mariana had gone to bed early and we prayed for the next day that the Lord would give me clarity and concise words to convey the gospel clearly. As I was preparing for my sermon, I was listening to a sermon from John MacArthur from 3 months ago, it was exactly what the Lord was pointing me to do, **I mean exactly.** It was from **1 Corinthians 6:9-20 (Please Read this section of scripture).** I was up until 2 am Sunday morning preparing and then God shifted what I had been preparing for months concerning this sermon. I typically listen to sermons when I prepare because the Lord usually brings something to either confirm what he has already laid on me to share or change my course to whatever He wants. I have to be honest, I was not excited with what He was changing because it's nerve racking to talk about sin in an open air environment. It wasn't just a small group of hockey players that I'm speaking to about what the Bible says about sin. I realize now, that God was stretching me to trust him. What happened next is truly a work from the Lord!

Early Sunday morning, we arrived before the fairgrounds were open to the public to set up the chapel for church. First we had to move a race car out of the chapel which was being stored there overnight. We were displaying it outside next to the chapel as a magnificent work of automotive art and a great conversation starter.



Home built race car by Don Groff, paint and bodywork by Wayne Erickson



We set up the chapel and placed the Crossroads Chapel magazine publication on the tables and chairs. As I was setting up, my dad, sat down and flipped open to an article (you will see the article attached to this newsletter). As he read it, he said, **"Max, you are going to want to read this before you speak, you might want to use this in your message."** I had a lot going on that morning, the last thing I wanted was to change my message again. However, the prayers that had been prayed were coming true before my eyes, and as I read the article God made it abundantly clear I had to trim my message and read a portion of this article, everything was fitting together perfectly. I often joke, that I am so glad God did not make me a Pastor, because He changes so much of what I plan to do and usually at the spur of the moment or just after I have spent weeks or months preparing for something. I have realized there is a vast difference between the work of a pastor and a chaplain. For one thing, I go to them and they can tell me when the "service" is over, and that is why many of my chapels last for 3 or more hours. They are hungry to know and just keep asking questions. I answer them verbatim from the Bible. I don't need to guess or make things up. I have learned to run the race God has set before me, not someone else. He has given me the race of ministering to a "lost people group," hockey players in our "Christian Colleges." Well I digress.

My message theme was on, "The Great Exchange", from 2 Corinthians 5:14-6:2. As the service began, we sang a few worship songs as people strolled in. As the second song started, in walked Larry. There was one table directly front and center of where I was going to be speaking, Larry sat front row center, with pen and pad in hand to take notes. I walked over and greeted him and told him I brought his shirt, that sure brought a smile to his face. It was now my turn to deliver the message. I opened with a short 45 second Youtube video from Jordan B Peterson, a former atheist psychology professor now a brand new believer in Jesus Christ.

Go Here for video:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e7ytLpO7mj0>

Start his message on "Message To The Christian Churches" from the 9:59 minute mark to the end to get the gist of where my message started from.

This message from Jordan Peterson set the tone. As I went through the message, God prompted me to ask the audience if anyone had a \$1 bill and to play the "Greater than game." The first person to bring a dollar bill and put it in my hand would get to play with me. Low and behold, the 78 year old Pastor Larry jumped out of his chair, like someone poked him with a pin. He even tripped coming up on stage; he was so excited. This was not planned I assure you. However, one of the greatest phrases in the Bible **"But God"** intervened, God sure had this planned out! I grabbed the t-shirt and handed it to Larry (the Noah t-shirt); I then proceeded to ask him if he trusted me to give him something of greater value, he said, yes. I asked him if my bringing the t-shirt helps him trust me more to play the game, again, he said, yes. What if I wouldn't have brought the t-shirt, would your trust in me wane?



Pastor Larry at the Summer Nationals Car Show Church Service

Yes, he said, and **rightfully so!!!** Upon giving me the dollar, I issued a warning that he is not allowed to return whatever I was going to give him. He agreed. I then pulled out some cash, started with \$100, then \$50, \$20 and the look on his face was jaw dropping. I then asked, I still have a \$10 and a \$5, would you like them, emphatically he said, "yes of course", as the congregation howled in laughter. I gave it all to him \$185...you may be asking why?? What is the point of this for a sermon? The \$1 represents our lives, which have tremendous value, but God has so much more to give to us that far outweighs what we could ever earn or do with our life. Larry is a retired pastor, he was blessed that Sunday morning and there were no strings attached; he received the gift with Joy and all the while, God was using us to do something I was not expecting.

God is a multiplier of the resources **He** gives each one of us to use for **HIS** purposes. Everything we have is his (we are to hold everything loosely with joy and gratitude). As a missionary, I can use that \$185 dollars to buy groceries, put gas in the car or buy bibles for people. God had a much different use. After the chapel service ended, Larry pulled me, my dad and mom aside and wanted to share about a young homeless man named Alejandro who at that moment was sitting in Larry's car in the parking lot not feeling well. Larry asked if I would accompany him and pray over him, sure. When we got out to the parking lot, we approached the car. Alejandro, with tears streaming down his face while listening to worship music said hello to us. I introduced myself to Alejandro, and said, "Larry asked me to come and pray with you." Do you have any prayer requests? No. How about any prayer needs? Yes, that God would provide some money for me. Larry had already told me what he wanted me to do. He had grabbed an "Our Daily Bread" from the Crossroads chapel and slid the \$50 bill inside for me to give to Alejandro. I started praying for his needs and then turned to Alejandro and gave him the "Our Daily Bread" and said, "God answered your prayer before you even asked," and then as I gave it, God prompted me to give him another \$50 out of my pocket. Alejandro, shocked and in disbelief burst into tears of gratitude. There are so many more details to this story that I don't have room for. It sounds crazy to give away \$235. But who supplies all our needs? Think of this, God multiplied \$235 for me, Larry and Alejandro. I have no idea how far the blessing and money will go for those two men, but I know neither of them will ever forget God's grace and provision at a Sunday car show at the fairgrounds...and I had the privilege to witness the joy. Talk about efficient use of God's funds. In addition to this incredible morning; 9 people came

into a forever relationship with Jesus Christ that Sunday and God shook loose \$1,000 from car guys and gals for an offering for the Crossroads chapel, THANK YOU LORD! Paul reminds us in **Ephesians 3:20-21**, "Now all glory to God, who is able, through his mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think. Glory to him in the church and in Christ Jesus through all generations forever and ever! Amen." There is a unity that is happening in the chapels in the MIAC, that we have been praying for, for 15 years and we are just starting to see some glimpses of more open doors. The enemy of God hates what I am doing, because Jesus brings this unity. We need your support! We need your prayer cover for us and the players coming in attendance. We thankfully request your continued financial support for us. It is hard for me to ask for support, especially now with such high inflation and other things; we all feel the pinch these days. I will tell you, whether we have finances to get to the chapels or not they will continue either in person or on Zoom. God provides in multiple ways. Your support is huge! Thank you for choosing to partner with us as we serve in this capacity. It certainly is not easy but it sure is exciting and rewarding to see the Lord move on the hearts and minds of these players! Here are a few events to keep in your prayers; Our first annual pre-season chapel leader gathering happened on Monday August 15th (most chapel leaders were in attendance). This was a time of planning for the season, a short message, lake fun and some food. The Chapel leaders, from each school, are the ones that requested this. They want to bring their Christian teammates and non Christian teammates together, **(that's exciting)**. I led a group of 10 people to the Ark Encounter and Creation Museum on August 21st-August 27th. We had a fruitful time of growth and fellowship.

To God be the glory for the good things he has done. We thank God for you and pray for you as you partner with us in sharing the Gospel. Please pray protection over this upcoming school year, who knows what lies around the corner with all the craziness of this world.



First annual pre-season chapel BBQ


I leave you with our upcoming chapel season theme verses from **Hebrews 10:23-25**, "Let us hold tightly without wavering to the hope we affirm, for God can be trusted to keep his promise. Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works. And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of HIS return is drawing near." The Apostle Paul adds to the above scripture in **Colossians 4:5-6**, "Live wisely among those who are not believers, and make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be gracious and attractive so that you will have the right response for everyone."

**Be encouraged Jesus is coming soon!
In His Grip,**

Max and Mariana Erickson



P.S. - This fall we are moving our newsletter to an e-mail format. If you wish to be included on our e-mail newsletter please send us an e-mail to max@isoughtifound.com and we will be sure to place you on our newsletter list, Thank you!



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