

Hi Damian and Mark,

Once again thank you for your vision and ministry. The Kings Men ministry that has evolved from the roots of your original idea has probably grown in ways you have never imagined.

I told Mark many times that I did not want to be a leader in the Kings Men ministry. That I just wanted to be one of the men. A misfit follower. I was honored that I had been asked to be a platoon leader but yet I feared the responsibility for reasons I can yet put into words, but I know the feeling was there. I knew it would a challenge.

I requested to be placed on the chapel building team. I didn't know why. It would be sweat and toil. I sweat enough in my daily job that it was not something I was going to look forward to. Once we got to the site where the chapel was to be built, Marl P. instructed me that I was to be responsible for constructing the cross. I can tell you that tears are forming in my eyes as I now tell you the rest of this story.

I found laying in the woods a beautiful piece of fallen timber. A tree with majestic colors that had been exposed by deteriorated bark. I measured it carefully because the log was long enough to make the cross life size. As I started to saw through the wood with a hand saw I began to realize that I was making the cross in the same fashion that it was done in the time of Christ. It was a hard wood and tedious to cut. As I toiled, the reality of which I was doing made me want to stop. The thought entered my mind that if I had been alive at the time of Jesus death I know that I would have been among the crowd saying, crucify Him, crucify Him.

I persevered. The sweat was pouring out of my body, ignoring my own pain as I cut through the wood. I was saying out loud; forgive me Lord, for I know not what I am doing. I lied on the ground with my arms stretched across the log making sure the cross piece would be long enough to attach Jesus' arms. When the two pieces were finally cut, I went back to the other men constructing the chapel and I assembled a team to remove the cross from the woods. It took 8 men to carry the standard from the woods. I was in the rear, the last one holding up the symbol of eternal forgiveness and I said to Tony in front of me, do you realize we are carrying Jesus cross for Him. It took all I had to keep from weeping. He thanked me for putting that thought in his mind.

I assembled a team of four to return to the woods to retrieve the cross piece. The reality of it all had already filled my soul of what I was now part of. I was doing a task that I would be forgiven for. I was among the ones that built the cross on which Jesus had died and in his last breath he forgave me for that sin and all of my sins.

When I went up for communion Sunday morning I wanted to embrace the cross. But I was afraid! I have sung so many times, Be Not Afraid, but I was afraid! It is worth repeating. This experience has exposed a weakness in my soul. As Mark H. and Monsignor Mike had said in lectures over the weekend, it is from this weakness from which I will grow. Why was I afraid? The question from which I must grow.

I thank God for the gift of a creative mind and allowing me to imagine this scenario. The fantasy world that I used so many times to sin, He now has used for His good and to draw me nearer to Him.

Thank you gentlemen for this once in a lifetime opportunity. May God bless you, and your work. May God bless forever The Kings Men and all the men it touches.

Your Brother in Christ

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