

I am a 'Herald of Grace'

Azueta By Edgar Azueta, Lt. –

I am who I am because of the grace of God. I can say with confidence that I am not the same person who walked in to The Salvation Army's College for Officer Training on August 13, 2013. Many times we don't understand the concept and importance of grace.

I wasn't raised a Christian or a believer of any kind. However, my parents taught me to never give up and to always do my best in all I do. It was still a struggle in many ways, particularly at school; kids at school are bullies. At school, you see, there was discrimination, broken people pretending to be popular, and girls doing whatever they could to be popular. This was normal for me, but one day a woman came to me talking about her God, how amazing and loving he is. All I said was, "I don't believe in your God." That year I had to find a job because my dad went for a vacation in prison. I was angry at God even though I didn't believe in him. After the encounter with that woman, I began thinking about this God. I was so angry one time that I said this to him: "If you actually exist, if what the people say is true and you created everything including me then why am I suffering, why aren't you doing your job, why are you quiet?" Later, I started to attend The Salvation Army as a volunteer and I heard of this God once again. Even though I cursed his name and turned my back on him, he was still seeking my heart.

One day as I walked from school to my house I prayed this prayer: "If you exist please help me, please save me, take me to a place in which I can see you face to face." As I continued to walk home, my corps officer drove by and gave me a lift to my house. He sat me down and he told me that if I wanted to, I could go to camp for a whole week in which I could encounter God in a personal way. That was first time I understood grace because even though I cursed God's name, he showed me grace and even to this day he has been good to me. As Samuel Logan Brengle once said, "He has been light to my darkness, strength to my weakness, wisdom in my foolishness, knowledge in my ignorance. When my heart ached he comforted me, when my feet had slipped or were backsliding as the 'saints will say,' he held me up, when my faith trembled, he has encouraged me."

That is why I am who I am because of the grace of God. We all have those moments in which we went against God but he still offered us love and mercy and salvation. This is grace, a gift we don't deserve but yet given to us.



So here we are today: The Heralds of Grace, ready to share that grace. I know for a fact that God is not done with us today because moment after moment, I see the Holy Spirit working in each one of us. My session has been through two years at CFOT, but you know what? God is just beginning his work in us. We have so much to learn but one thing is evident. We are Heralds of Grace because it was his grace that allowed us to be here today, it was his grace that allowed us to rise and to keep moving forward even when we fall short, it was his grace that allowed us and showed us that we may fall short of his glory but he still there to lift us up. I believe in the work of The Salvation Army as does each member of my session. God has given each and every one of us a taste of his grace and it is up to us to share it with the rest of the Western Territory and the world. God bless that woman who spoke to me about Christ. In a few days, I will be that person who will tell people about our amazing God. That is why I am who I am because of the grace of God.

I am an officer of The Salvation Army. I am a Herald of Grace.