



FRANKLIN ROAD

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NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 19, 2017

HITTING THE MARK

PASTOR ANDY JOHNSTON

FOR THANKSGIVING WE WERE IN PENNSYLVANIA AND LIZ'S BROTHER, JEREMIAH, OFFERED FOR US TO SHOOT CLAY PIGEONS (LITTLE ORANGE CLAY DISCS – NOT REAL BIRDS) AFTER OUR MEAL. THEY HAPPEN TO LIVE IN AMISH COUNTRY AND BEING FRIENDS WITH MANY OF THEM, A FEW OF THE AMISH CAME OVER TO SHOOT AS WELL.

THEY WERE OUTSIDE BEFORE WE WERE AND HAD BEEN SHOOTING FOR A WHILE. THESE PARTICULAR AMISH HAD NEVER SHOT BEFORE AND WERE MISSING CLAY PIGEON AFTER CLAY PIGEON EVEN THOUGH JEREMIAH WAS CONTINUING TO SHOW THEM WHAT THEY WERE DOING WRONG. IT DIDN'T SEEM TO BOTHER THEM THAT THEY WERE MISSING BECAUSE THEY HAD MORE THAN ENOUGH FUN MISSING AS LONG AS THEY GOT TO SHOOT THE GUN. THIS WAS BOTHERING JEREMIAH BECAUSE THEY WERE SHOOTING ALL THE AMMUNITION WITH NO REGARD FOR ITS COST, NOR HEEDING HIS INSTRUCTIONS.

WHEN WE DID COME OUT TO SHOOT, I TOOK A GUN AND HIT MY FIRST CLAY PIGEON. .THEN MY SECOND. .THEN MY THIRD. .AND SO ON. EVERY TIME I SHOT AND "HIT THE MARK" I WOULD RECEIVE A STRANGE LOOK FROM THE AMISH. THIS LOOK WAS GENERATED FROM A NEW FOUND IDEA: IT WAS MORE FUN TO HIT THE MARK THAN TO MISS. THE BOOM OF THE GUN WAS GREAT BUT SEEING THE CLAY DISINTEGRATE WAS BETTER. ONCE THEY SAW THIS, THEY PAID A BIT MORE ATTENTION TO JEREMIAH AND ACTUALLY STARTED TO HIT THEIR OWN AND WERE HAVING A BLAST.

MY THOUGHT AT THAT MOMENT WAS THIS:

WHAT IF I HAD NEVER PRACTICED, WAS TERRIBLE MYSELF, AND COULDN'T SHOW THEM WHAT HITTING THE MARK ACTUALLY LOOKED LIKE? I KNEW WHAT IT WAS SUPPOSED TO LOOK LIKE BUT I COULDN'T. WHAT IF I FELT BAD FOR THEM AND DIDN'T WANT THEM TO FEEL BAD OR OVERSHADOW THEM, AND DECIDED NOT TO HIT THE MARK AS OFTEN AS I DID?

I THINK THE CHURCH COMES DANGEROUSLY CLOSE TO THIS IN HOW WE WALK WITH CHRIST: WHAT IF WE DID NOT DESIRE TO PRACTICE OUR WALK WITH A PURPOSE (TO HIT THE MARK)? WHAT IF WE BECOME MORE SATISFIED WITH THE BOOM AND NOT THE GOAL? HOW FRUSTRATED WOULD GOD BE WITH US: KNOWING HE HAS GIVEN US THE GUN, THE AMMUNITION, AND THE INSTRUCTION, BUT WE DON'T USE IT PROPERLY TO LIVE OUR LIVES TO THE FULLEST. WHAT IF WE WANTED TO RELATE TO THE WORLD (CONVINCE OURSELVES IT'S FOR GOOD REASON – TO REACH THEM FOR CHRIST), SO WE LOWERED THE EXPECTATION OF WHAT HOLINESS ACTUALLY LOOKS LIKE? WE DON'T WANT TO HURT THEIR FEELINGS SO WE BRING GOD'S STANDARD DOWN INSTEAD OF LIFT HIM UP WITH. THEY NEVER WOULD SEE WHAT TRUE REPENTANCE LOOKS LIKE. ALL THEY WOULD SEE IS THAT THEY SHOOT JUST LIKE US (MISS) SO THEY MUST BE DOING IT RIGHT AS WELL.

PHILIPPIANS 3:14 - I PRESS ON TOWARD THE GOAL FOR THE PRIZE OF THE UPWARD CALL OF GOD IN CHRIST JESUS. PAUL IS TALKING ABOUT CONTINUALLY BEARING DOWN ON THE GOAL; THE PRIZE OF CHRIST-LIKENESS. EVERYONE WILL SAY THAT THIS IS GOAL, BUT MANY WILL SUCCUMB THAT SINCE IT IS NOT ATTAINABLE UNTIL CHRIST BRINGS US HOME WE DON'T HAVE TO WORK ON IT THAT HARD. MANY WILL CONTINUE TO SAY THAT I AM NOT PERFECT AND USE IT AS AN EXCUSE TO STOP WORKING ON HITTING THE MARK.

I CORINTHIANS 9:24 - DO YOU NOT KNOW THAT THOSE WHO RUN IN A RACE ALL RUN, BUT ONLY ONE RECEIVES THE PRIZE? RUN IN SUCH A WAY THAT YOU MAY WIN. AS WELL, RUN IN SUCH A WAY THAT OTHERS WANT TO RUN WITH YOU IN THE DIRECTION OF CHRIST. NOT ON SOME OTHER MAN-MADE COURSE THAT IS SUBPAR AND MISSES THE MARK. LET'S BE STEADY AND READY.