

County-Wide Chaplaincy

Thanks you!

November 2025

Why Me?

Just last week we were able to see the movie, “Soul on Fire,” which I highly recommend. This is based on a true story and has so many valuable lessons. John O’Leary was burned on 100% of his body as a child and was not expected to survive. In the hospital, bandaged from head to toe, he was able to communicate this question to his Mom, “why me?” The assumption is that this question is in response to excruciating pain, a severely damaged body and overwhelming confusion.

As the movie progresses and flashes back and forth from childhood to his present life, there are so many things to witness. Just a few of these are a family filled with love, a faith in God through it all, the goodwill of people, willingness to do the very very hard and learning to be thankful. What?!?! Thankful? Yes thankful, and thankfulness really does change everything.

The first time John spoke publicly about his injury was to a troop of young girls. One of the girls asked him that if he could go back and change what happened that day, would he? When asked the question as a young adult at the time, he said that “yes” he would absolutely change it. One of the beauties of this story is that as he grows and changes, he finds himself speaking publicly more and more. He ends up talking about gratefulness and how this can be life changing. He spoke to a room full of prisoners and was able to help them express gratefulness for where they were, even in prison. Ann Voskamp says that, “thankfulness precedes the miracle.” I see this in a new light after watching this movie; the miracle is the change in our heart, mind and soul that happens when we choose thanks.

As the movie progresses John sees how many truly good things in his life happened because of his accident. His wife, his children, his ministry, just to name a few. His “why me?” clearly becomes, “Why do I deserve all this goodness, all these blessings, all this unconditional love?” And—he comes to the conclusion that no, even if he could, he wouldn’t change a thing that happened.

I observe this type of gratefulness in our chaplains. They are grateful to serve, to offer care and concern and hope, to be there when it hurts, no matter the time of day or night. No, it isn’t easy, but it matters. It matters to those who are in the depths of despair, it matters to those who are watching and it matters to our chaplains. They are called and they are willing, and for that I am thankful.

In this season of Thanksgiving, I encourage all of us to look at our “why me’s?” in a positive way. We have so very much to be grateful for!

Countywide Chaplaincy is very thankful for your continued support. We hope your Thanksgiving is filled with family, friends and many reasons to be grateful!

Jan Richards, Friend of Chaplains

County-Wide Chaplaincy is a non-profit 501(c)(3) ministry

Tax-deductible contributions can be given online at

<https://911chaplain.churchcenteronline.com/>

or mailed to:

County-Wide Chaplaincy
2500 NE 78th St.
Vancouver, WA 98665
