

Senior Pastor

By Brandon Lemons, Senior Pastor

God @ Work @ Friedens

The reason I do what I do is because I love to see God work in people's lives. To me, there isn't much that compares to witnessing Gospel-centered life transformation. That's what first gave me a heart for ministry as a college student, and this passion to see God work is what continues to drive me today. I'd like to share with you a few ways I've seen God working at Friedens in recent months. The work I've seen Him do is right in line with our mission as a church (see the box to the right).

A Gospel-Centered Community...
*Loving God
Connecting with one another
Sharing God's love*

Loving God

It is exciting to see a person growing in their love for God. One example that comes to mind is a person I got to know early in my time in Port; God was really working in his life, but then this person slowly began to pull away from God. Then he went through some very difficult circumstances that showed how God was still at work in his life. Listen to what he recently wrote to me: "Some people may see a negative event as God not caring and only think negative, but I have seen it as an unmatched love which helped me.... I am actually grateful for everything and feel I am closer to God than ever." I'm so encouraged to hear how he is growing in his love for God, and this is only one of the many stories at Friedens of God working to draw people closer to Himself.

Connecting with One Another

Connecting authentically with other Christians is so important in our walk with God. I believe we're seeing significant growth in the connections people are experiencing within the Friedens community. I think of the 50 adults who have become involved in the Sunday morning classes in the past few weeks. I also think of the Young Adults' LifeGroup; we started the group with five people in early 2010, and we are now up to twelve people who regularly participate! I also think of Ingrid Sheggrud's testimony of how God worked so powerfully through a women's LifeGroup last spring to help draw her to faith in Christ. The

love and support Ingrid experienced from the women in that group were instrumental in Ingrid's decision to place her faith in Christ in July 2011. Connections are so vital, and I'm deeply encouraged to see God working at Friedens to help authentic, Gospel-centered connections grow.

Sharing God's Love

There is no way we can fulfill our God-given mission if we don't reach out to those who don't currently know Christ. As I listened to the testimonies that were shared at the Baptism Picnic, I couldn't help but stand in awe of how God works through normal people to transform others' lives with the Gospel. Here's one example: Jamie Wedereit is a senior at Port High who is involved with Blaze and came to faith in Christ in January 2011. Jamie was baptized at this year's Baptism Picnic. Last year, she was invited to Blaze by Hayley Trier. Hayley came to faith in Christ in 2009 after she was invited to Friedens by Lindsay Kopp, who grew up at Friedens. Isn't that a cool "chain" of women sharing God's love with others? All it took was Lindsay befriending Hayley and inviting her to church, and then Hayley doing the same with Jamie. Then God did the rest. But that's how easy and exciting it is when we are intentional to share God's love with those around us!



God @ Work

Praise God for the way He has been working at Friedens, and it's exciting to anticipate what we'll see Him do in the months to come. I encourage you to consider how God wants to work in and through you to expand the influence of the Gospel all around us. I have three questions for you to consider: 1) What is one step you can take to grow in your love for God? 2) How can you go deeper in your connection with other Christians? 3) Who is someone you can invite to church?

My prayer is that God will continue to work through Friedens so that we will see "the gospel bearing fruit and growing" (Colossians 1:6) through us and all around the world!