

Multiplied

I Corinthians 13 & Ephesians 3:14-21

Rev. Jo Ramsey ~ October 19, 2014 ~ Highlighting Fresh-Brewed Faith



It's hard to imagine we've come to the final installment in our fall sermon series. We've been thinking together about the many opportunities to learn and grow in our faith here at East Union.

We've **considered** what it means to say 'yes' to God, **explored** the things that make for peace, **rediscovered** with Joseph that God can make all things work together for good and **learned** that we are part & parcel of God's plan, **called** like Abraham and Sarah to travel with faith into a new land.

Each and every one of our classes in some way speaks to the journey that East Union is on. **Taking stock** of where we are and how we got here, and **saying yes** to the plans God has for us, to give us a future with hope. We are doing that through our Strategic Planning Process. Behold, God is doing a new thing in us and through us!

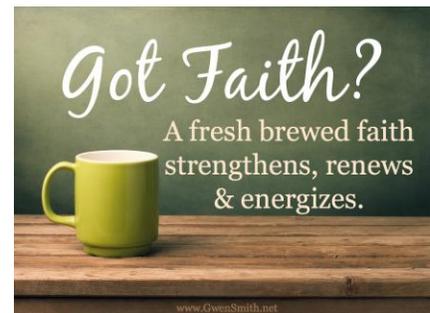


Well, we are trying a new thing this fall in our youth Sunday School class. For many years, Jan Blinn has taught our youth -- week in and week out,



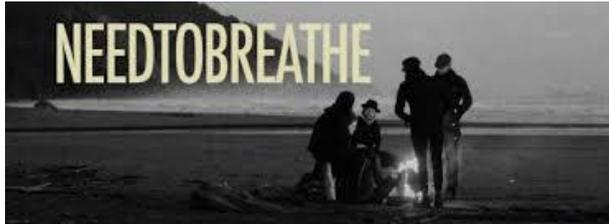
planning and leading lessons on topics like our **ancestors** in the faith, **gross stories** of the Bible and most recently, **Reel to Real** – a class that used movie clips to explore spiritual issues.

This fall, Jan suggested we try using Christian music as our theme. Vonna May Miller had the great idea of creating a coffee house atmosphere and so, a new class was born---Fresh-Brewed Faith! We bought a Keurig, moved into the Spot and have welcomed a steady 10 or 12 teens each week. We listen to a contemporary Christian song, chosen by whoever leads the class, we discuss it while the kids drink cocoa and cider.



Now, music is a highly personal thing. It has the power to touch our spirits in a deep and meaningful way. That's why music is such an essential part of worship. But, music can be polarizing. We like what we're used to, what songs come from our generation, and when it comes to faith, we may feel one type of music is actually more

faithful. That's why people are so attached to Fannie Crosby hymns or sacred arias or Hillsong United or Chris Tomlin. I love it all and today, I'm asking you to listen with an open mind to a song we used this past Sunday at Fresh-Brewed Faith. Multiplied by NeedToBreathe. You may love it. You may hate it. But, either way, you'll get a taste of how our youth are learning about God, and see if it speaks to you.



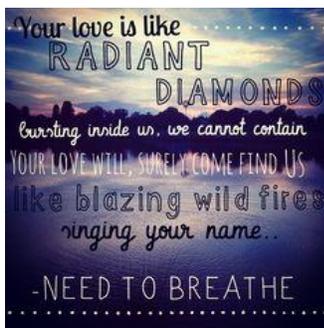
I want to start by introducing the band to you. NeedToBreathe is a small band from South Carolina. The core is two brothers – Bo and Bear Bryant, and Seth Bolt. NeedToBreathe is what we call a cross-over band. They have a

Christian label and a secular label. They've recently been featured on CBS This Morning, The Ellen Show, and David Letterman. Their music has been played in the background of the movie, PS, I Love You, Hawaii 5-0 and others. They won the Dove Award for Group of the Year three years in a row and were nominated 6 times for song of the year, and won 5 of those years. Since they formed in 2004, they've known great success.



But after nine years in the business, Bo and Bear got off track. Something happened and the brothers didn't speak for 6 weeks. The drummer quit. After the dust settled, Seth and Bo and Bear realized they were at cross roads. They had let success become more important than purpose---more important than the need to breathe. The song we will listen to in a minute grew out of a season of introspection, renewal and recommitment. The title of their new album comes from Isaiah 43 -- "God is doing a new thing and makes **rivers in the wasteland.**" Let's listen!!!

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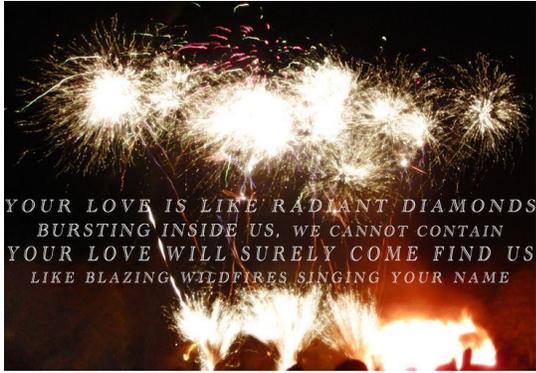


Your love is like radiant diamonds
 Bursting inside us, we cannot contain
 Your love will surely come find us
 Like blazing wild fires singing Your name

God of mercy sweet love of mine
 I have surrendered to Your design

May this offering stretch across the skies
 And these Halleluiahs be multiplied





Your love is like radiant diamonds
Bursting inside us, we cannot contain

Your love will surely
come find us
Like blazing wild fires
singing Your name



God of mercy sweet love of mine
I have surrendered to Your design

May this offering stretch across the skies
And these Halleluiahs be multiplied



Multiplied

Oh Multiplied



God of mercy sweet love of mine



I have surrendered to Your design
May this offering stretch across the skies

And these Halleluiahs be multiplied



These Halleluiahs be multiplied

Your love is like radiant diamonds
Bursting inside us we cannot contain



Your love will surely come find us
Like blazing wild fires singing Your name

What an awesome song! I love the way Bear just belts it out and how the guitar plucking creates this sense of momentum. Here are just a few of the ideas and insights we shared at Fresh-Brewed Faith last Sunday.



Multiplied starts out as a song about God's love...Love that pursues us and transforms us. Love that's like radiant, beautiful, brilliant, sharp, sparkly diamonds. Diamonds that reflect and scatter light. Diamonds that we exchange as a symbol of great love and commitment. God's love is so big, so beautiful, so amazing, we cannot keep it inside. It floods us with light, shining into our dark places, filling our hearts and spilling over into all we do!

The next line says God's love is like blazing wildfires. What is fire like? It can be good or bad. Fire can warm you or burn you. Cook your food or destroy your house. Wildfires consume things, refine things, burn the off the underbrush. The youth were quick to remember **the story of Pentecost**, when the Holy Spirit came down in flames of fire. God can set our hearts on fire, igniting in us a passion to share his love and grace. Sam Smallwood reminded us that wildfires also have the **power to bring new life**, even when everything looks dead. Certain grasses and pinecones remain dormant for years and will only release their seeds after a wildfire moves through and turns everything to ash.



The next verse shifts from God's love to our response. God has pursued us, filled us, set us ablaze. Now what? We respond by giving our lives to Him. Again I asked the kids -- Is surrender a good thing or a bad thing? Depends on whose side you're on, the kids joked with me. But what does it really mean to surrender to God's design? Does it mean that we 'give up?' Does it mean God will dominate us like an enemy, force us to do his bidding or ask us to be something other than what he created us to be? I don't think so. I think it means willingly offering our life to God, day in and day out -- lifting our worries, our hopes, our plans into his hands and asking him to guide us. Partnering with him in the unfolding of our lives.



This song is called Multiplied for good reason. God is a multiplier. He has a way of taking what we give to him, and increasing and expanding it. Whatever we surrender to him -- the offering of our life, the offering of our praise, our Hallelujahs... our future, maybe even our literal offerings. Remember the story of the five loaves and two fishes? God transformed that humble gift into not-just-enough, but more than enough, full tummies and overflowing baskets! In the same way, God will multiply all that we offer to him.



A few weeks ago, Elder Keith Russell introduced our new 5-K challenge. We have received a very generous offer to multiply resources -- every financial gift made over and above one's usual offering will be matched, doubling our efforts up to \$5000. \$50 becomes \$100, \$500 becomes \$1000. (We'll give you an update on how it's going next week!) Keith reminded us that Christian community divides our sorrows and multiplies our joys. We worship a God who multiplies things -- our joy, our faith, our resources.

What is it that **you want and need God to multiply** in your life? Naturally, the youth shared a few funny answers -- days off from school, their allowance, shots on goal, touchdowns. What about you? Maybe if you're dealing with chronic pain, it's more good days than bad days. Maybe you need less anxiety and more peace. Maybe it's less fear and more freedom. Maybe you need God to multiply your strength and support so that you can step away from something that is hurting you



-- food or alcohol or an unhealthy relationship. Maybe you need God to multiply your patience and divide your frustration, divide your discouragement and multiply your hope. God can and will multiply all that you let go of and give to him. He can stretch across your sky and fill it with promise.



A few weeks ago, Joella and Hannah led Fresh-Brewed Faith. Through a song called Beautiful things, the class explored letting go of the past and claiming the beautiful things God has done.



Watch how they brought the song to life, as we close with prayer:



God, Your love is like radiant diamonds,
bursting inside us, we cannot contain...
So fill us up with your light and your love.

Your love will surely
come find us, like blazing
wild fires singing Your
name...
So sweep over us
now and bring new life
from our ashes.



God of mercy sweet love of mine, we have
surrendered to Your design...
So guide us in the path you would have us go.

May this offering stretch across the
skies, And these Halleluiahs be multiplied...
So take all that we are and have, and
multiply it into something amazing and
abundant.



In Jesus' name, Amen.