

Coffee Connect | It's All About the Journey

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

Journey, appreciation, storytelling, sacred community, shared experiences, welcome and inclusion

SPEAKERS

Blake Smith

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Hello and welcome to Coffee Connect, a Project Zion Podcast series where we share inspiring stories and thought-provoking reflections of life and ministry that remind us of God's loving presence in the world. I'm your host, Blake Smith, and today I want to share a reflection called "It's All About the Journey."

I want to begin with a quote from an unknown source...

"We are so often caught up in our destination that we forget to appreciate the journey, especially the goodness of the people we meet on the way. Appreciation is a wonderful feeling. Don't overlook it."

A couple of years ago, I was at a family camp, and we had an incredible opportunity to enter a journey together using paint and canvases, imagination and creativity, hopes and dreams. When it was time to begin, those who had gathered took their place at one of 18 canvases with three to four other persons from around the mission center, some with great anticipation, and others with absolute fear and trepidation. The age spectrum of participants was broad, as was their artistic abilities. Luckily, the point of our time together was the journey of storytelling rather than the destination of Louvre worthy art pieces. Our purpose was to work together to create beautiful art that represented us, God's children in this place and time, art that is more than worthy to hang in God's house.

When the painting was done, we hung the canvases on a wall together, and not long after we hung the canvases together on the wall to form a mural of sorts, people began to come and see what we had done together. They pointed out things in the paintings they had helped to create, and pointed to things they saw and interpreted in the creations of others. Conversations started up, and stories hidden in the paint began to be unveiled. What seemed to one person to be a "mess" became something special as they saw it through the eyes of another.

This is a great analogy of what ought to happen as we gather in sacred communities across mission centers and across countries and even across the world, communities formed by the common story of Christ's unconditional love and grace. It is in sacred community where the stories behind the paint are unveiled. It is where the beauty and special worth of messy people are brought to light. It is the place where we are able to view the world through the eyes of others and see with new perspective and expanded lenses. It is where the children of God journey together, grow together, share together, pray

together, care together, laugh together, cry together, love together and experience welcome and inclusion together.

The canvases that we paint together in community may not be perfect, but neither are we, or the people whom we are called to invite into that community. The canvases remind us of who we are and the ways in which we can grow and improve. Our story is still being written, and the canvases of our lives are still being painted. Let's make sure not to get so confused on the destination that we forget to take the time to appreciate the journey with all its messiness and imperfections. There is lots of beauty to be found in the process if we will only open our hearts to see it.

May you be blessed as you continue on your journey, both individually and in community. And may the canvases that you paint in community be reflections of the beauty that lies within.