

jun 22

the parable of the donuts

there was a certain professor of religion named dr. christianson who taught at a small college in the western united states. dr. christianson taught the required survey course in christianity at this particular institution. every student was required to take this course his or her freshman year regardless of his or her major.

although dr. christianson tried hard to communicate the essence of the gospel in his class, he found that most of his students looked upon the course as nothing but required drudgery. despite his best efforts, most students refused to take christianity seriously.

this year, dr. christianson had a special student named steve. steve was only a freshman but was studying with the intent of going onto seminary for the ministry. steve was popular, he was well liked, and he was an imposing physical specimen. he was now the starting center on the school football team and was the best student in the professor's class.

one day, dr. christianson asked steve to stay after class so he could talk with him. "how many pushups can you do?"

steve said, "i do about 200 every night."

"200? that's pretty good, steve," dr. christianson said. "do you think you could do 300?"

steve replied, "i don't know ... i've never done 300 at a time."

"do you think you could?" again asked dr. christianson.

"well, I can try," said steve.

"can you do 300 in sets of 10? i have a class project in mind, and i need you to do about 300 pushups in sets of ten for this to work. can you do it? i need you to tell me you can do it," said the professor.

steve said, "well ... i think i can ... yeah, i can do it."

dr. christianson said, "good! i need you to do this on friday. let me explain what i have in mind."

friday came, and steve got to class early and sat in the front of the room. when class started, the professor pulled out a big box of donuts. these weren't the normal kinds of donuts, they were the extra fancy big kind, with cream centers and frosting swirls.

everyone was pretty excited it was friday, the last class of the day, and they were going to get an early start on the weekend with a party in dr. christianson's class.

dr. christianson went to the first girl in the first row and asked, "cynthia, do you want to have one of these donuts?" cynthia said, "yes."

dr. christianson then turned to steve and asked, "steve, would you do ten pushups so that cynthia can have a donut?" "sure." steve jumped down from his desk to do a quick ten. then steve again sat in his desk. dr. christianson put a donut on cynthia's desk.

dr. christianson then went to joe, the next person, and asked, "joe, do you want a donut?" joe said, "yes."

dr. christianson asked, "steve would you do ten pushups so Joe can have a donut?" steve did ten pushups, and joe got a donut. and so it went, down the first aisle, steve did ten pushups for every person before they got their donut, and down the second aisle, till dr. christianson came to scott. scott was on the basketball team and in as good condition as steve. he was very popular and never lacking for female companionship. when the professor asked, "scott do you want a donut?"

scott's reply was, "well, can i do my own pushups?"

dr. christianson said, "no, steve has to do them."

then scott said, "well, i don't want one then."

dr. christianson shrugged and then turned to steve and asked, "steve, would you do ten pushups so scott can have a donut he doesn't want?" with perfect obedience, steve started to do ten pushups. scott said, "hey! i said i didn't want one!"

dr. christianson said, "look, this is my classroom, my class, my desks, and these are my donuts. just leave

it on the desk if you don't want it." and he put a donut on scott's desk.

now by this time, steve had begun to slow down a little. he just stayed on the floor between sets because it took too much effort to be getting up and down. you could start to see a little perspiration coming out around his brow. dr. christianson started down the third row. now the students were beginning to get a little angry.

dr. christianson asked jenny, "jenny, do you want a donut?"

sternly, jenny said, "no." then dr. christianson asked steve, "steve, would you do ten more pushups so jenny can have a donut that she doesn't want?" steve did ten, and jenny got a donut.

by now, a growing sense of uneasiness filled the room. the students were beginning to say "no" and there were all these uneaten donuts on the desks. steve also had to really put forth a lot of extra effort to get these pushups done for each donut. there began to be a small pool of sweat on the floor beneath his face. his arms and brow were beginning to get red because of the physical effort involved.

dr. christianson started down the fourth row. during his class, however, some students from other classes had wandered in and sat down on the steps along the radiators that ran down the sides of the room. when the professor realized this, he did a quick count and saw that now there were 34 students in the room.

he started to worry if steve would be able to make it.

dr. christianson went on to the next person and the next and the next. near the end of that row, steve was really having a rough time. he was taking a lot more time to complete each set.

a few moments later, jason, a recent transfer student, came to the room and was about to come in when all the students yelled in one voice, "no! don't come in! stay out!" jason didn't know what was going on.

to be continued

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another one of my little stories. sorry to leave you hanging, but it was just so long i decided to split it. can you figure out where the story might be going? well, you'll just have to tune in tomorrow to find out for sure.

in the meantime, i leave you with this from the word of God. "i have learned in whatever state i am, to be content: i know how to be abased, and i know how to abound. everywhere and in all things i have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. i can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." phil 4:11-14

indeed we can. what a mighty God we serve!