

Grace Soaked Soul

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Ashley Hanney

Serving God in Italy with Vera Vita Ministries
www.VeraVitaMinistries.org

Thanksgiving Dinner in Italy

Thank you for your prayers over our evangelistic Thanksgiving meal on Thursday night. They were powerful and effective. May you be encouraged by this update to keep praying with us.

We enjoyed a traditional Thanksgiving meal together and then had a time of going around the table and sharing thanksgiving to God for various graces which He has given us. The truths shared by the believers present were powerful, truths centered on the finished work of Christ and the gift of salvation in Christ and the fact that we are new creatures in Christ. Following this time of sharing by the believers, Marco recounted the history of Thanksgiving. He then gave an evangelistic message, proclaiming the Gospel, the ultimate reason for which each of us who is in Christ has to be truly grateful.

There were four non-believers present for the festivity. There couldn't have been four more diverse reactions to the evangelistic message that evening.

Gianluca has been attending our current English Course and has also spent some time over at Adriano and

Roberta's house. He is a recent divorcee and very much alone. He seems to enjoy coming for the company and fellowship. Thursday night he stared off into space as Marco shared. He had little to contribute in conversation around the table and seemed distracted the whole evening.

Angela had been doing Bible studies for a time with me, Deni and Dori, but after a few months quit coming. We have maintained contact with her through the English Course and recently she has seemed more interested in knowing what God has to say in His Word. On Thursday night she was obviously content to be present but made very few comments. She listened attentively, not distractedly, but afterwards didn't share her thoughts.

Roberta (34, single) is a contact from our first English course and back in August, I spent three days with her at her family's cabin in the mountains. There, she and I spent hours talking. Roberta's "faith" is founded on her good works. She is a good-natured person, not argumentative, one who listens willingly. However, Roberta nods too easily. She intellectually agrees with everything we (Marco, Sherrie, other believers, I) have



Petra sharing with Angela



Me sharing with Roberta

told her. Thursday night she listened actively and made several comments about the message. “Oh, how important it is to thank the Lord for every thing that we have”, she reflected. She thinks about what is shared but she does not have saving faith in Christ. In fact, I don’t believe I’ve ever heard her mention Him in conversation. So, she shares her thoughts but I don’t know how much is entering in.

Marco P. has been coming regularly to our Wednesday night Bible study for a little over a year now and has been to Adriano and Roberta’s house numerous Friday nights for dinner and Bible study. In the past few months there has been a change. He has begun to ask more pointed and serious questions. On Thursday he not only listened actively but afterwards, he grabbed a Bible and began to ask Adriano more in-depth questions. He is hungry to learn more.



Marco P. Across from Roberta and Adriano

Observing these four reactions brought several thoughts to my own mind. First, the profound and unexplainable truth that only God can change hearts. Each of these four people is no different one from another. They have all heard the Gospel clearly explained in past months. Thursday night they were present for the same evangelistic message. And yet, their reactions to the Gospel could not have been more drastically different.

Another thought that came to mind is the importance of being faithful in the proclamation of the Gospel, and not presuming that a person will react in a given way. I have the tendency make the excuse that it is not worthwhile to share about Christ with someone because I presume that “they won’t listen”. Marco was faithful in

proclaiming the Gospel Thursday night. Each person heard. But all had different reactions.



Marco P. Is very at home with the Vigo family, having spent many Friday evenings in their home.

Potential reactions don’t determine my faithfulness in proclaiming Christ. God’s faithfulness to me means that I have good news to share, regardless of the reaction. We are to be the fragrance of Christ, which to some is the aroma of death, to others the aroma of life!

Finally, I must remember the amazing truth that God **has** changed my heart. He **has** touched me. Upon hearing the Gospel, I **was** changed.

Oh, **this is the reason** that we can be thankful daily and fulfill (with joy!) the commandment to

“give thanks in all circumstances ...
... for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.” 1
Thessalonians 5:18

Thankful for His touch,
Ashley

Contact Information

Ashley Hanney
Via Piave 2169
Lama Polesine RO, Italy
(+39) 0425 937.441 (landline)

Skype - ashleykyle13
ashley.hanney@gmail.com

Send support to:

Vera Vita Ministries
7001 St Andrews Rd
Suite 233
Columbia, SC 29212

www.veravitaministries.org