

We are Living Loved

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Recommended Citation

Moss, Sarah (2020) "We are Living Loved," *The Voice*: Vol. 65 : Iss. 3 , Article 10.

Available at: <https://digitalcollections.dordt.edu/voice/vol65/iss3/10>

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We are Living Loved

In Issue, News, Spring/Summer 2020 by Sarah Moss July 1, 2020

Last summer, Kade Krosschell missed a flight. This wouldn't have been a big deal, except that all the other flights to his destination were booked for the day, so he and his colleagues ended up having to fly to a different city and then make an hour-long drive to get to a meeting.

"I was on the wrong plane, at the wrong time, going to a place I wasn't supposed to be going, sitting next to someone I wouldn't have met otherwise," he says.

Part of his summer internship with Game Plan for Life out of Charlotte, North Carolina, was to fly around the country to help with faith-based networking connections, evangelism get-togethers, and prison ministry opportunities. As a theology major at Dordt University, Krosschell was thrilled for the opportunity – he loved sharing his faith with others. Through his travels and interactions with other Christians, he felt God calling him toward a dream he had been fostering for nearly a year.

"I wanted to provide a community of people who had the freedom to be vulnerable, to be bold in our weakness, and to proclaim that, as Christians, we are saying we're not good enough to do it on our own—we need Christ."

Krosschell felt that God had laid a name for this community on his heart: "living loved."

"'Living loved' sounds like a sign a mom would put in a kitchen, so I was a bit skeptical at first," says Krosschell. "So, I said, 'Well, God, if this is what you're leading me toward, then you're going to have to make it so blatantly obvious that I don't doubt.'"

On his flight to the wrong city, Krosschell struck up a conversation with the woman sitting next to him. He quickly found out that she was a "spirit-led Christian woman, on fire for the Lord."

"She—a complete stranger—ended up speaking into my life, and she encouraged me so much that I took out my journal and asked her, 'Would you mind writing a word of encouragement? Whatever the Lord puts on your heart in prayer.'"

When the plane landed, they went their separate ways. When Krosschell read the woman's note days later, he was shocked to see the words "live loved" circled at the end of her note. He hadn't mentioned the phrase to her; still, there it was on the page.

"I got shivers, because I felt it was a direct answer to the prayer I'd been praying for six months," says Krosschell. Shortly after, he called some of his Dordt friends, and they began the organization called "We are Living Loved," or Living Loved. Called to love God and others, to step in boldness, to boast in weakness, and to pursue God, Living Loved shines a light on what is vulnerable in their faith journeys.

"Every single day, I make mistakes, and every single day I get to see a new side of Christ because of his grace and mercy that is so abundantly given to me," says Krosschell. "The enemy will continue to pursue me—to steal, kill, and destroy—until I see Jesus face to face."

The Living Loved team began creating and posting videos of their personal testimonies, which included the struggles they had experienced and the ways God was working in their lives.

"We hoped others would watch and say, 'I'm not the only one who has this struggle, and I am loved by God,'" explains Krosschell.

They began holding events at high schools and youth groups in Northwest Iowa. They also received invitations to speak at schools and churches in Michigan, Wisconsin, Florida, Arizona, California—even Indonesia. Their in-person events range from a 20-30-minute chapel session where they share testimonies about God's work in their lives to a multi-day event focused on spiritual gifts and calling, where they encourage students to find community in the church.

As he and his friends continue to build Living Loved, Krosschell is especially thankful for the Dordt community.

"The people who come to Dordt are willing to talk and grow together," he says. "We want to share and to love one another."

And that goes for Dordt faculty and staff, too.

"My theology professors are also my mentors. They provide accountability and friendship. Also, Campus Ministries and Student Services staff are available and want to

talk with us. I can see the Christian influence in my education and in my community here, and I feel like that's helped to grow my faith."

With more than 20 testimonies, a podcast series, and plans for in-person events post-COVID-19, Living Loved is what Krosschell hoped for and more.

"None of us are professionals. Imperfectly, we're pursuing Christ, and we're inviting people to come along with us. It's a blessing to see it grow."