

We live in a liberal world and in liberal times, and for many of us, myself included, we find comfort in hiding different parts of ourselves simply because it's far more comfortable. We're satisfied with presenting our morals and virtues as something that comes from ourselves, rather than originating from God, and we placate the tugging at our heartstrings to change the world around us by citing reasons like inadequacy or ignorance. But there is so much more to life with Jesus than that.

COME TOGETHER

Kintsugi is the Japanese art of repairing broken pottery, patching the fractured pieces together with gold. It became part of the culture and was something to be shown off, the unorthodox beauty and value found not in the pieces, but in what binds them together. It is comfortable to live a life where we hide our faith, where we chameleon to fit with those around us, and rather than holding on to a life has Jesus written all over it, we adjust in the way our current environment deems acceptable. Unity, in this sense, is about first bringing together our church/fellowship life and the rest of our life into one: life with Christ. And much like the Japanese, to take pride in where we come short, for that is why we need Christ.

TELL YOUR STORY

There is great value in a person's story, and this past year, as I've interacted and dialoged with friends and strangers alike, God has come to life not just as a Bible verse to discuss, but as someone very real and active in myself and those around me. Sharing our stories first humbles and reminds us that we didn't get to where we are on our own strengths, but by the grace of God. But it also acts as another form of hope, telling the story of how God was very much present through impossible trials and tribulations.

HUMANS OF TORONTO

We often forget that there is more to the kingdom than just the fellowship/ church. In the words of Stalin, "When one man dies, it's a tragedy. When millions die, it's a statistic." As followers of Christ, we are called not to remain sedentary in our academic careers, but to look outwards and to care about the people marked 'other', such as the Indigenous, the transgender, the refugees. And much like how we have individual stories that make us more than a stereotype, they too are more than a number. Whilst we lack experiential knowledge to bridge the gap, we have something so much bigger: we have a loving and caring God whose heart breaks for the world, and calls for our hearts to break too. Hope isn't promised just to the privileged, and we are called to reach out to the ones deemed unwanted and unworthy.

Outreach isn't just reciting Bible verses or talking about parables, but living it out in our daily lives. It's letting the hope that we find in Christ resonate in all that we do, and for our actions and decisions to be directed back to the Word.

We love because we were first loved. None of what I just talked about, joy in brokenness, unity across cultures, seeing value in people rather than statistics, can happen had He not loved us first. And at times in which we find caring for others challenging, we must remember how we were shown grace and love at our darkest, and acknowledge that the only way we can love everyone as they should be is through Christ.

It's time to rise up from our comfort to go into the unknown, so that we may love as we were first loved.