

BRAYING DONKEY

-Ryan Parsons-

Out behind our present dwelling, there is a donkey somewhere. While Amanda and I were sitting on the back porch the other night, that old donkey started braying. It's a peculiar sound. I don't know if anything else on earth is quite like it. When we heard it, we immediately looked at each other and began to laugh as our hearts and minds were transported a couple of thousand miles away and two decades back to a Caribbean island named Antigua.

All those years ago, we were together with a team of about 24 Christians sent to work with the church and study the Bible with local community members. We lived in a two-story home that we filled with old army cots. The boys lived downstairs, and the girls lived on the top floor. We would lay in the sticky heat and humidity at night as we drifted off to sleep. We didn't know that there was a donkey behind that dwelling. As we were winding down, that thing started to bray. It was so loud and obnoxious. One of our team members was an elder named Farmer. When Farmer heard that donkey, he began to laugh. It was a distinct laugh that started to grow and grow with intensity. Within moments everyone in the house was wailing with contagious laughter. About the time everything would calm down, that donkey would start braying again. We all laughed for a solid hour with few breaks in between. My stomach hurt, but my heart was full. When that silly donkey finally stopped braying, we drifted off to sleep with smiles on our faces.

Acts 4: 32

Now the full number of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of the things that belonged to him was his own, but they had everything in common.

Few experiences have brought me joy like that one.

The story's irony is that we were on an island fighting a spiritual war faced with a foe who did not want us to succeed. In addition, we were assaulted by heat, mosquitos, and centipedes that could bite us and make us sick. Moreover, the food wasn't all that great, and sickness plagued some of us. Yet, there we were in the dark, laughing at braying donkeys. Why? Because the joy of the Lord was our strength!

There is something strangely satisfying about Christ's disciples merging focus and stepping into God's mission. It is unifying and joyful.

Hesed,
Ryan