

The Paradox of Progress, Plus the Reminder of Humility

“Progress means getting nearer to the place you want to be. And if you have taken a wrong turn, then to go forward does not get you any nearer. If you are on the wrong road, progress means doing an about-turn and walking back to the right road; and in that case the man who turns back soonest is the most progressive man.”

This statement by C.S. Lewis gives me a new perspective on the word progressive, which in today's world seems to only have a political connotation. It seems to me that a reminder of taking a wrong turn is an important one to consider. But for today, I want to remind us of “right turns.”

I heard someone say this week that Sabetha seems to be on the right path (road) and I agreed with them. Many progressive things are in the works or have been completed. I like to listen to podcasts and one called “The Paradox of Progress” by Steven Furtick, was very interesting. Furtick said “A lot of the changes that will happen in your life that are the most important, won't trigger many compliments. Because once you get really consistent at something - people stop complimenting you about it.” Society has a tendency to not compliment consistency of action, but compliments come to those things that are rare or inconsistent. If your child FINALLY does his homework on time, he gets a compliment or a pat on the back to encourage repeat of the behavior. But, the child who consistently does homework on time often gets no praise or compliment. So, compliments are given for inconsistent than consistent behavior or action. So, our community is now being recognized as one where good things are happening. But it might be that someday, many good things are still happening, but now it is the expected or the consistent progress that gets no recognition. So, being set free from the need to impress is actually the highest compliment.

Back to C.S. Lewis who said, “There is one vice of which no man in the world is free... The vice I am talking of is Pride or Self-Conceit: and the virtue opposite to it, in Christian morals, is called Humility.” So then, it is a compliment that our community is progressive but we must be careful that the result is not pride or self-conceit. And we must realize that as our progress becomes more consistent, it might not be recognized by others.

GSCF is making progress and that progress has led us to this time where we will have a “place.” An offer from a local business to donate us a physical space, we hope, will allow more people to “see” us and join us. Our new location is a work in progress! The former True Value Hardware store will be our office and meeting space. A space to meet, to collaborate, to visit, to share visions or goals and to remind ourselves of the root of our progress. It will be a place of consistent progress toward the goal of community. People taking care of people. Community taking care of people. A progressive and humble place.