**Micah Mission Story #19**

In Wilmington Delaware I was doubled in (meaning two brand new elders) with an elder who had just spent the last three months being trained by the same person who trained me. He had been on his mission three months and hadn’t baptized a single person (which was and is common for a lot of missions). I promised him that we would get a baptism this transfer, and he was hopeful but was struggling with belief- meaning he wanted to baptize and did long for it, but he wasn’t holding his breath- that was his current state. I felt inspired to do something that I’ve done ever since, even being home from my mission, if the elders want to work with me, I do this. I went out on the first P-day and bought a bottle of sparkling cider, the stuff that comes in a “wine” bottle, has a cork, and comes in flavors like apple or peach and is non-alcoholic. And I put it up high on a shelf in our apartment and I told him to look at it and I told him “we will open that when you get your first baptism.” In the weeks that followed (which were tough, I had just come from West Philadelphia which had in it one of the best bishops I have ever been graced to shake hands with in my entire life, while Wilmington Delaware had one of the worst bishops I’ve ever had the misfortune of having to work with) we had a lot of opposition, struggle, there were a lot of days we both felt like giving up, but having that bottle there as a physical reminder kept us going. We got our baptism lined up and we spent an entire week trying to find somebody in the ward who would give this individual a ride to her baptism, and we couldn’t find anybody. I called the bishop, I asked him what was up, and he said “I told the members that if she can’t find a way to get to church on her own she shouldn’t be baptized.” It just so happens that this was one of the few areas my entire mission (two) that I had a car. You guessed it, I broke mission rules and we drove this individual to their baptism. There were about 20 people there and all of them asked us “who drove her?” We told them, “the Lord drove her.” Shortly after her baptism a miracle took place and she acquired a car. She said at the time “I know this is against your rules but I know I need to be baptized and no one has ever done anything like this for me”. That night the bottle was opened and to this day thinking back to that moment in that apartment, I can still vividly remember the feelings of gratitude that I had that I in some small way was able to help or facilitate or take part in this experience for this individual and for my companion who did the baptizing.

**Things we can learn from this**: the power of visual reminders and the power of hope. It’s easy to get side-tracked, it’s easy to get overwhelmed, but hope truly is an anchor for the soul. Celebrate the good times. Sometimes we chase the next plateau too intently and we miss the opportunities at each plateau to take a breath, look out over the horizon, thank God for how far you’ve come and celebrate. The power of the keys cannot be understated. The effects of a righteous priesthood holder with keys on a branch, ward or stake are visibly seen. And the effects of a key holder who “buries the talent” are also painfully obvious. Are you doubling or are you stagnant? Look to the keys for the answer and look to the Parable of the Talents for the ending of the story. “When ye are under the spirit, ye are not under the law”- I know because I am the letter of the law kind of person, I don’t even have a parking ticket, the importance of being exactly obedient, but I also know that when the Spirit tells you to do things differently and you feel comfortable reporting that decision to the keys above you, you follow through on those promptings.

I testify that this is a true story and share it with you in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.