

Rhett's Seminary Graduation Talk

May 22, 2016 - Willow Creek Stake

As I was thinking about this talk and reading some talks about seminary I read this story. I felt like it has a major meaning on what seminary teaches us so I want to share it with you guys today.

Brother Christianson taught Seminary. He had an open-door policy and would take in any student that had been thrown out of another class as long as they would abide by his rules. Steve had been kicked out of his fifth period and no other teacher wanted him, so he went into Brother Christianson's Seminary class. Steve was told that he could not be late, so he arrived just seconds before the bell rang and he would sit in the very back of the room. He would also be the first to leave after the class was over.

One day, Brother Christianson asked Steve to stay after class so he could talk with him. After class, Brother Christianson pulled Steve aside and said, "You think you're pretty tough, don't you?" Steve's answer was, "Yeah, I do." Then Brother Christianson asked, "How many pushups can you do?"

Steve said, "I do about 200 every night." "200? That's pretty good, Steve," Brother Christianson said. "Do you think you could do 300?" Steve replied, "I don't know. . . I've never done 300 at a time." "Do you think you could?" Again asked Brother Christianson. "Well, I can try," said Steve. "Can you do 300 in sets of 10? I need you to do 300 in sets of ten for this to work. Can you do it? I need you to tell me you can do it." Brother Christianson said. Steve replied, "Well. . . I think I can. . . yeah, I can do it." Brother Christianson said, "Good! I need you to do this on Friday."

Friday came and Steve got to class early and sat in the front of the room. When class started, Brother Christianson pulled out a big box of donuts. Now these weren't the normal kind of donuts, they were the extra fancy BIG kind with cream centers and frosting swirls. Everyone was pretty excited—it was Friday, the last class of the day, and they were going to get an early start on the weekend.

Brother Christianson went to the first girl in the first row and asked, "Cynthia, do you want a donut?" Cynthia said, "Yes." Brother Christianson then turned to Steve and asked, "Steve, would you do ten push-ups so that Cynthia have a donut?" Steve said, "Sure, and jumped down from his desk to do a quick ten. Then Steve again sat in his desk. Brother Christianson put a donut on Cynthia's desk. Brother Christianson then went to Joe, the next person, and asked. "Joe do you want a donut?" Joe said, "Yes." Brother Christianson asked, "Steve would you do ten push-up so Joe can have a donut." Steve did ten push-up, Joe got a donut. And so it went, down the first aisle, Steve did ten pushups for every person before they got their donut. And down the second aisle, till Brother Christianson came to Scott. Scott was captain of the football team and center of the basketball team. He was very popular and never lacking for female

companionship. When Brother Christianson asked, "Scotto, do you want a donut?" Scott's reply was, "Well, can I do my own pushups?" "No, Steve has to do them." Then Scott said, "Well, I don't want one then." Brother Christianson then turned to Steve and asked, "Steve, would you do ten pushups so Scott can have a donut he doesn't want?"

Steve started to do ten pushups. Scott said, "HEY! I said I didn't want one!" Brother Christianson said, "Look, this is my classroom, my class, my desks, and my donuts. Just leave it on the desk if you don't want it." And he put a donut on Scott's desk. Now by this time, Steve had begun to slow down a little. He just stayed on the floor between sets because it took too much effort to be getting up and down. Now could start to see a little sweat coming out around his brow. Brother Christianson started down the third row. Now the students were beginning to get a little angry. Brother Christians asked Jenny, "Jenny, do you want a donut?" Jenny said, "NO." Then Brother Christianson asked Steve, "Steve, would you do ten pushups so Jenny can have donut that she doesn't want?" Steve did ten. Jenny got a donut.

By now, the students were beginning to say "No" and there were all these uneaten donuts on the desks. Steve was also having to really put forth a lot of effort to get these pushups done for each donut. There began to be a small pool of sweat on the floor beneath his face, his arms and brow were beginning to get red because of the physical effort. Involved. Brother Christianson asked Robert to watch Steve to make sure he did ten pushups in a set because he couldn't bear to watch all of Steve's work for all of those uneaten donuts. So Robert began to watch Steve closely. Brother Christianson started down the fourth row.

During his class, however, some students had wandered in and sat along the heaters along the sides of the room. When brother Christians realized this; he did a quick count and saw 34 students in the room. He started to worry if Steve would be able to make it. Brother Christianson went on to the next person and the next and the next. Near the end of that row Steve was really have a rough time. He was taking a lot more time to complete each set. Steve asked Brother Christianson, "Do I have to make my nose touch on each one?" Brother Christianson thought for a moment, "Well, they're your pushups. Yu can do them any way you want." And brother Christianson went on. A few moments later, Jason came to the room and was about to come in when all the students yelled, "No! Don't come in! Stay out!" Jason didn't know what was going on. Steve picked up his head and said, "No, let him come." Brother Christianson said, "You realized that if Jason comes in you will have to do ten pushups for him. Steve said, "Yes, let him come in."

Brother Christianson said, "Okay, I'll let you get Jason's out of the way right now. Jason, do you want a donut?" "Yes." "Steve, will you do ten pushups so that Jason can have a donut?" Steve did ten pushups very slowly and with great effort. Jason, bewildered, was handed a donut and sat down. Brother Christianson finished the fourth row, then started on those seated on the heater. Steve's arms were now shaking with each pushup in a struggle to lift himself against the force of gravity. Sweat was dropping off his face and, by this time, there was not a dry eye in the room. The very last two girls in the room were cheerleaders and very popular. Brother

Christians went to Linda, the second to last, and asked, "Linda, do you want a doughnut?" Linda said, very sadly, "No, thank you." Brother Christianson asked Steve, "Steve, would you do ten pushups so that Linda can have a donut she doesn't want?" Grunting from the effort, Steve did ten very slow pushups for Linda.

Then Brother Christians turned to the last girl, Susan. "Susan, do you want a donut?" Susan, with tears flowing down her face, asked, "Brother Christians, can I help him?" Brother Christians, with tears of his own said, "No, he has to do it alone, Steve would you do ten pushups so Susan can have a donut?" As Steve very slowly finished his last pushup, with the understanding that he had accomplished all that was required of him, having done 350 pushups, his arms buckled beneath him and he fell to the floor. Brother Christians turned to the room and said, "And so it was, that our Savior, Jesus Christ, pleaded to the Father, "Into thy hands I commend my spirit." With the understand that he had done everything that was required of Him, he collapsed on the cross and died. And like some of those in this room, many of us leave the gift on the desk, uneaten."

I am thankful for Seminary. It has always been one of my favorite classes. I am thankful that it is so convenient for us just to walk to a building across the parking lot, instead of having to get up super early and drive somewhere far away to go. Seminary has helped me learn a lot more about the gospel and has helped me grow and strengthen my testimony. I am thankful for all of you guys and all of the great friends I have made being able to go. I am so thankful for this church and I know that it is turn. And I say these things in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.