

Cornerstone University Chorale Florida 2024 Tour Student Reflections

Each paragraph is a separate, personal story of the way God worked in a student's life.

I went on this tour prepared to perform the best possible music we could for our audiences, not really thinking about what it meant. That changed after the first concert when I saw the reaction of the audience. I realized that while we are always going to do our best to perform with excellence, the main reason we were there was to bring hope to those who attend. This was an eye-opening realization for me, and it gave me extra motivation to do my best to not only sing well but to also express the message of hope to the audience.

Cory Mitchell, sophomore finance major from Hudsonville, MI

Chorale tour both emptied and filled me. Through time spent with host families, singing, and interacting with concert attendees and fellow Chorale members, I was emptied emotionally, mentally, and physically. I think my biggest takeaway was the realization that I must be emptied of my tendency to rely on my human strength to allow room to be filled spiritually. I learned what Phil 4:13 means: "I can do all things through Christ, who gives me strength. Over tour, I practiced relying on the strength of Christ rather than my own strength when I was emotionally, mentally, and physically emptied. It was through this practice that I experienced the strength of the Lord and was filled spiritually.

Claire Woodrum, freshman music education major from Muskegon, MI



Tour was incredibly life-changing in how I interact with others, how I view myself, and my walk with the Lord. During the tour, the Lord began breaking down walls within me that I didn't realize were there. I've start handing my entire self over to God so that I might live in his vision for me, not mine. He's finally getting through to me and it started because of the wonderful, safe space that Chorale has become for me.

Makayla Weaver, freshman music education major from Allendale, MI

I began tour with a hardened heart. I was struggling with self-worth, confidence, and connecting with others. I had been denying God's tugs on my heart to trust him and open my heart to what he had planned for me. On this tour, God completely reworked my heart. On the first day, God revealed to me that I needed to let go of control and to and trust his plan. Once I submitted to that call, I immediately received his grace. He surrounded me with people in Chorale full of his Spirit and his love. He used them to show the love, beauty, and detail he created in each of us. He completely wiped away my doubt about how he created me, he filled me with confidence in his plan, and he surrounded me with deep and true connections that have rewired how I see friendships. God turned what I had been dreading into a life-giving and soul-refreshing experience.

Riley Bares, freshman Pre-Med major, Freeport, MI



"And when I want to sing, give me Jesus." The Holy Spirit blessed me with this line from one of our songs during our concert in St. Augustine. I have Lyme disease, and after having a week of almost no symptoms (Praise God!), I started to feel very weak in my legs and arms. I prayed to the Lord knowing there was no way I would be able to stand for the concert in my own strength. It had to be His. God gave me the strength to sing and praise Him in that concert even through the pain I was facing. When we sang "Give Me Jesus" the words sang sweeter than ever. I will always think of this song as a reminder of God's strength. When my flesh fails me, He never does.

Bergen Lindahl, junior social work major from Fargo, ND

I deeply cried on this tour and not just a couple tears. Why? Because I let go of my girlfriend. The song, *Fare Thee Well, Love* hit me especially hard because I am going to be moving long distance from my love. I did not know at the time, but I was holding on to her so tightly that she had taken the top spot in my heart—a spot that should be reserved for God. The Lord confronted me with this during our pre-concert prayer time in Venice. Dr. Walters prompted us to listen to God and release to him anything that was keeping us from freely sharing joyful hope in our concert that night. So, I released her to the Lord. *Fare Thee Well, Love* took on new meaning for me that night. I was no longer saying goodbye to being near my girlfriend, but goodbye from her in the most important position in my heart. Every song in the concert that night took on new meaning. The next night, I stayed in the home of a godly couple who had been married over 50 years. They expressed the hard times they had experienced and God's faithfulness. God showed me a picture of what my relationship with my girlfriend will become if I follow his precepts and keep him first as Lord of my life.

BenScott Minier, exercise science graduate from Johannesburg, MI

I am in awe of how the Lord worked while on tour. Over the first two days of the trip, I was full of doubt, fear, and anxiety. During our first concert, I felt trapped and fearful. After the first half of the concert, I didn't come back on to sing. I called my mom begging her to come pick me up. Thankfully she said no.



After the concert, I was surrounded by friends who encouraged me and spoke truth to me. After communicating what I was feeling to Dr. Walters in a text that night, he responded by saying, "I'm praying for peace. Perfect peace." I went to sleep remembering that peace is a gift and that I really needed to ASK God for it. That night was the last time I felt all those heavy and negative feelings. I woke up feeling joyful and excited to sing praises to the Lord. The Lord simply handed me that perfect peace I was desperate for. God revealed to me that he is a God of comfort. He is near and does not leave me despite my brokenness. Because of God's grace, I went from feeling alone and trapped to feeling an overwhelming sense of perfect peace and a new awareness of God's presence in my life that last the rest of the tour!

Jaclyn McGraw, junior digital media major from Dekalb, IL

Chorale's Florida Tour was a deeply formative experience for me. God showed me that I had little faith to believe he could do great things beyond my imagination. I had little hope that he would heal and restore the most broken parts of my life. God grew my faith by answering prayers that I doubted he would answer. He showed me in numerous ways that his power is beyond sufficient to heal and restore anyone, and his grace is beyond sufficient to reach even those who are furthest from him. More than that, he reminded me that even if he doesn't heal all of the brokenness in my life now, he surely will when he returns. God renewed my hope and increased my faith on this tour.

Brandon Cunningham, senior worship arts major, Jenison, MI

