

Devotions - August 12-18, 2007
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Our Redeemer, Champion

Sunday, August 12

“The greatest of these is Love” 1 Corinthians 13:13

Seven years ago I went to Moody Bible Institute in Chicago for Founders Week with a group of friends from Wisconsin. We were there for 3 days and finished up on Sunday at the huge Moody Church Service. This was a great time of preaching and singing and having fellowship with others from around the country.

During the Sunday service they have a greeting much as we do when we pass the peace. Just before services started a man came in and sat in the seat in front of me. He was clean but ragged looking. His teeth were stained and his clothes mismatched. His clothes did have a bit of odor to them. During the greeting to each other the man turned to me to shake hands and the Spirit spoke to me, “Hug him and put some money in his pocket, don’t just shake hands.” I am a hugger but He was asking me to do something that would involve close contact to this man. “Hug him,” there it was again. I looked at the man and an overwhelming feeling of love came over me and I gave him a hug of sincerity. He smiled and shared with me that this was his church and he walks two miles on Sundays to get to the church. I could see the love of Jesus in this man. I was blessed.

Sometimes we miss out on a blessing from God because we refuse to be a blessing to others. I’ll never forget his beautiful smile. I would have missed that if I’d given him a handshake and not a hug.

Monday, August 13

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart, lean not on your own understanding, In all your ways acknowledge Him and He shall direct your path” Proverbs 3:5-7.

The year 1975 was the start of a new walk with Jesus. I went from being religious, to falling in the outstretched arms of my Savior. The Lord gave me a hunger for the written Word and I began digesting it. My cousin suggested I start memorizing as we should have His Word hidden in our hearts and there may come a time when I can't read anymore or the Bible may be taken from us. Within six months of reading and memorizing several scriptures, I knew that I wanted Jesus to be Lord of my life.

My personal life was in shambles and I was a young mom with three children and a marriage gone bad. The bad times teach us to look up. I drew my strength from my heavenly Father and the family and friends that loved us. Sometimes we don't understand why God allows things to happen but I knew he didn't cause the problem but He would be with me through it. God can pluck us out of our hole of deep despair but he will also walk through our despair with us. I was learning to trust the Lord with all my heart.

Tuesday, August 14

“I waited patiently for the lord; and He inclined to me, and heard my cry. He also brought me up out of a horrible pit, Out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my steps. He has put a new song in my mouth-praises to our God; Many will see it and fear, and will trust the Lord.” Psalm 40:1-4

This is another psalm that I love. The psalm is one describing being rescued by a Merciful God. He hears our cries to Him. By his grace He puts us on sure footing which I believe for me is the rock, Christ Jesus.

Psalm 33 says, “Sing to Him a new song.” In 1982 I began singing and speaking about the love of God in Christ Jesus and sharing His love and deliverance to groups and churches of all denominations. We need to be that light to people. We need to be able to share what Jesus has done for us. Let the people know that they can “trust in the Lord”

Wednesday, August 15

“Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘come, you are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in Prison and you came to visit me.’ Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go visit you?’ “The King will reply, I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me” – Matthew 25:34-40

In the verses above we have a great list of different ministries we can become involved in. Feed the hungry, visit the sick, clothe the needy. We do quilting in most of our Lutheran churches and share our talents God gave us with others. One ministry the Lord called me to is the prison ministry in Marquette. I didn't know that women were allowed in the prison. I had gone to the prison in Green Bay twice. Once was to do a concert at Christmas-time and the other time was through Prison Fellowship. They asked me to come and speak, pray, and sing for the fellowship of Christian prisoners. I left the prison both times totally amazed to be in the presence of God. There was such joy in my heart to see how God is working in that environment.

This last year and a half I have been doing prison ministry at the Marquette Prison. I go in about every two months and do the service. There is one service for an hour in unit five and then I do two services in unit three. I am so blessed that the Lord called me to this ministry. I have no fear as I believe the safest place to be is in the will of God. Most of these men have met Jesus as their Savior and Lord. There are about 25-30 in each group. The two later services last one and a half hours. They love to sing! I am so blessed when I'm there because the presence of God the Holy Spirit is there with us. “I pray Father that you will continue working in the hearts and lives of the men in the prison systems and they continue to be witnesses for You in that place.”

Thursday, August 16

“Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you now dismiss your servant in peace. For my eyes have seen your salvation which you have prepared in the sight of all people, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel” – Luke 2:29

This is a great and favorite story of mine. Mary and Joseph brought Jesus to the temple and placed him in the arms of Simeon, a righteous and devout man. Simeon was waiting for the consolation of Israel. The Holy Spirit was upon him and revealed to him he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Christ. Overwhelming peace came over him, and he knew who he was holding. Beautiful is the only way to describe how God acts in our lives. He fulfilled and answered Simeon's prayer.

We need to lift our voice to the Father and believe He hears us and wants to care for us and guide and direct our lives. Don't give up on unanswered prayer. Keep asking and praying and blessing God.

Friday, August 17

I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God unto salvation of everyone who believes; first the Jew, then the Gentiles. For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: “The just shall live by faith.” – Romans 1:16

One of my favorite songs that I sing is called “I am not ashamed” It pretty much sums up my feelings towards a living, loving Savior, and the song expresses deep commitment to Him. I think back in history and even today of the ones who have died because they were not ashamed of their faith in the one who died for them. The martyrs who were burned at the stake or hung or stoned as Steven was, died for their confession of faith. If our belief is shallow and we don’t have time for “all that stuff” like Bible study, prayer, fellowship around the Word, are we going to be Spirit filled and strong in our walk?

Jesus says, “You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” Acts 1:8 We need the power of the Holy Spirit. God’s Spirit indwells the believer and he will guide, direct us, and teach us.

Help us oh Heavenly Father to walk the walk you called us to and not be ashamed to witness about your love, forgiveness, grace, joy, and your power, Amen

Saturday, August 18

The church was strengthened and encouraged by the Holy Spirit, it grew in numbers, living in the fear of the Lord. – Acts 9:31

The book of Acts is a story of the church on the move, giving us a Spirit-inspired model for today. Read Acts chapter 4: 24, 29-30. These believers really prayed, “let us speak your words with great boldness. Stretch out your hands to heal and perform miraculous signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus.” What a model for today. Peter and John had just been released from prison and these people weren’t praying for a hiding place but for boldness to continue proclaiming His name. What did God do? He filled them with the Holy Spirit and they spoke the word of God boldly.

We serve the same God as they did and the same Lord, He is the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow, and we can expect Him to do the same things as yesterday.

God calls us to do his work, proclaiming his Word, under the anointing and power of the Holy Spirit. Only God can produce the results. The glory goes to him alone.

Heavenly Father I ask that you fill us with your Holy Spirit with power to live the life you have called us to, to be witnesses for you and we give you all the glory Amen.