

THURSDAY, APRIL 30, 2009

Mission Tuesday #9 Part 2

As I mentioned from yesterday's post, I have a couple stories from my Mission Tuesday this week I couldn't fit into yesterday's entry without it being way too long!

Right before lunch, I was standing in the small walkway in between the two counters that allows you to get into the kitchen. Phyllis asked me if I would say the blessing before the meal, and as I was about ready to, this small boy, probably about 7 years old comes flying by me and was headed straight for the kitchen. His running ended in a slide on kitchen the floor on his knees with his feet tucked under him. I had not seen this child at all during the morning, and I have to say I instantly got irritated and thought to myself, with I'm sure a stern look on my face, "Where did this kid come from, what is he doing in the kitchen, and where are his parents!?"

I was instantly ashamed of my thinking when I saw this frantic mother, who looked like she was at her breaking point, coming through the crowd trying to find her son. She said to whomever was listening something like, "My son is autistic. He doesn't understand. I'm so sorry." She took her son by the hand, Phyllis led them to the sanctuary and out of the crowd and lunch went on as normal. I prayed, food was served and it seemed like all was well. I could hear every now and then this boy's outbursts from the other part of the building, but thought nothing of it.

While we were eating lunch, Phyllis shared with me what happened with the mother and her son. I felt even more ashamed of my first reaction. Evidently this mother left her home and domestic violence situation yesterday morning. She has three children, two of whom were with her yesterday. I never saw the second one. Her husband, or significant other, has been physically abusing her. She had strangle marks on her neck, and bruises and marks on her arms. Phyllis took the mother and her children to the local crisis center to get some help. My heart went out to this woman. I pray that this dear woman can get the help she needs to keep her and her children safe. I thank God that Mission of Hope is a place people can come to get help, like this mother did.

How terrible it was of me to react at first in such a negative way when I first saw the boy in the kitchen! How hard it must be for this mother to give to her family, especially to her son who really needs her, as she is being abused physically! I cannot imagine what she must go through

on a daily basis! How ashamed I am that I judged her and her son! Phyllis said that this dear woman has stayed in the relationship with her significant other for so long because she can't handle her son on her own. My heart breaks for her.

I had a conversation with one of the Mission's patrons right after lunch. This patron is a young woman, I'm guessing in her late 20's or early 30's. I'll call her Jane. I've seen her each week I'm there. She has always been very pleasant to me, and she's one who carries on a conversation with me. She seems to like lots of attention, especially from men. After yesterday's encounter, I'm now realizing, without going into detail, that she is addicted to drugs and is choosing an illegal and dangerous lifestyle to support her habit. My heart breaks for her, and goes out to her too.

God loves these two women, just as much as He loves me. Jane is not too far gone for Him to reach her. No one is. I am praying for the people that are served by Mission of Hope, especially these two women. I consider it a privilege to do that, and I'm grateful that I can possibly play a small part in their lives. If I can give just a glimmer of hope to people who are hurting, struggling, trying to find their way in life...to me that's a HUGE deal! Right now I feel that is what God is wanting me to do!

God is touching lives through Mission of Hope...including mine!