

TUESDAY, AUGUST 18, 2009

Mission Tuesday #24



Ali and Zach gave me a calendar for Christmas this past year. It sits on my desk, and each day is a different scripture verse. Today's read,

"Be imitators of God...as dearly loved children and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us..." -Ephesians 5:1,2.

I looked up The Message translation of that verse at it read,

"Watch what God does, and then you do it, like children who learn proper behavior from their parents. Mostly what God does is love you. Observe how Christ loved us. His love was not cautious but extravagant. He didn't love in order to get something from us but to give everything of himself to us. Love like that."

Two thoughts resonated in my head all day after reading those...

"Live a life of love."

"His love was not cautious but extravagant."

I began to question myself..."Am I living a life of love? Is my love cautious or extravagant?" Hmmm....

Today was the last day Ali and Zach will be joining me on Tuesdays at Mission of Hope for awhile...they start back to school Thursday. It was another joy-filled day for me working alongside of them. I know that they probably felt on many Tuesday mornings this summer, having to get up early to go to the Mission was not something they always "felt" like doing. I heard a few grumbles and complaints every now and then, but for the

most part they accepted that going to Mission of Hope on Tuesdays is "just what we do."

I asked Zach tonight if he enjoyed his days at the Mission this summer. His response was, "Some days I liked it and some days I didn't. But I liked helping people." Helping people...that's living a life of love!

I tried to soak in today all the ways I saw people living a life of love at Mission of Hope. There were too many to mention...

I heard people talking about Steve and how much he will be missed. *Steve certainly lived a life of love.*

Many people came to the Food Pantry to get a sack of food today. *Even a sack of food is a gesture of love.*

Ali was asked to find a shirt and a size 8 pair of shoes upstairs in the Clothes Closet for a man. She came down with a nice t-shirt and a pair of work boots. We took the man's name for our records, and he added, "I don't have an address...I'm homeless." I heard him later talking to a Mission of Hope staff member, asking how he could help at the Mission. Clothes for someone who needs them and asking how one can help...*more gestures of love.*

Concordia Lutheran Church brought in a wonderful meal. The men and women who prepared the meal and came to serve it were so friendly and helpful. They served goulash, biscuits (Zach said they were like KFC's biscuits!), fruit cocktail, lettuce salad, brownies and pink lemonade. It was a wonderful meal! They served 114 people lunch today. *They certainly showed love to everyone who came through the line for food!*

Each volunteer there today, lived a life of love in his or her own way. Kathy spent most of the day organizing and cleaning up the kitchen. Wilbert kept the back pantry organized and helped restock the Food Pantry. The women who vacuumed the entire main floor...even they were showing love in that small way! Each person who helped in some way, big or small today, helped out of love...whether they realized it or not. :-) It's

a choice for many of them to be there, and they are choosing to help others! The Mission couldn't function without each and everyone of these people!

The man from last Tuesday whom I mentioned in last week's post I had a conversation with about his desire to walk with the Lord again, and turn his life around, came up to me while I was in the kitchen. I was blessed to hear he recommitted his life to Christ at his church on Sunday. He said he hadn't felt this peaceful in a very long time. He called me his "hero," but I said Jesus was his real hero, not me. :-) I'm just thankful I was the one He used to listen to and encourage this man. I feel I now have a new friend because of our interaction last week.

I had a fun conversation with a woman who I've known for a very long time from the Mission. I've mentioned her before. We laughed, joked and I really enjoy her company. At the end of our conversation she had asked if I had seen a couple of the Mission patrons in awhile, and I hadn't. She had heard that for different reasons, they were in jail, and one might be going to prison. My heart sank for these two men. I've known each of them, too, for a very long time. I realize they each have addictions, which probably are the causes for their jail sentences. But my heart has been troubled for them ever since today. I can, and will, pray for them. God hasn't given up on them...I won't either. This is a perfect example of how loving someone extravagantly, rather than cautiously, can be risky and can hurt. But I believe it's worth it. I will look forward to the day I see them walk through the front doors of the Mission again.

There is so much that I get to experience each time at Mission of Hope. My posts can't possibly do my experiences justice. I would love for each and every person in our local area to witness what I get to each Tuesday. *Extravagant love is alive at Mission of Hope!*

I have a few questions for us tonight...

Are you and I living a life of love? If so, how? Can we do better?

Is your and my love cautious or extravagant? How can we love more extravagantly?

May we all live lives of love this week and love more extravagantly! :-)