

SATURDAY, AUGUST 28, 2010

Mission Tuesday #77



Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke?

Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter--when you see the naked, to clothe him, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?

Then your light will break forth like the dawn, and your healing will quickly appear; then your righteousness will go before you, and the glory of the Lord will be your rear guard.

Then you will call, and the Lord will answer; you will cry for help, and he will say: Here am I. If you do away with the yoke of oppression, with the pointing finger and malicious talk, and if you spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light will rise in the darkness, and your night will become like the noonday.

The Lord will guide you always; he will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land and will strengthen your frame. You will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters never fail.

Isaiah 58:6-11

Isaiah's words have been penetrating my heart for a few months now. When I read the above passage this week, I stopped and stayed there, and haven't moved on from there

yet. The words "*...to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter--when you see the naked, to clothe him, and not turn away from your own flesh and blood...*" and "*...if you spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light will rise in the darkness, and your night will become like the noonday*" have been in the forefront of my mind this week as I've spent time at Mission of Hope.

This week, as with every week at the Mission, I witnessed and befriended the hungry, the poor wanderer, the "naked," and the oppressed. I talked with them, I helped them, I hugged them, I laughed with them, I prayed with them, I ate with them, and specifically tried to bless them...but I know I was blessed all the more.

I watched this week, as two new college interns and one of my friends who came to volunteer for the first time, witnessed for themselves the impact Mission of Hope has in people's lives. I happily fielded their questions about the Mission, the Mission of Hope Shelter, the people we serve, and what Mission of Hope is really all about. I could see their countenance change, and their smiles increase, the more comfortable they became as they spent time learning and getting familiar with it all. I saw them reaching out to others and doing what they could to help those we serve. I SO enjoyed seeing that!

At one point on Thursday, I noticed my friend who was volunteering wandered to the front of the building. I saw her visiting with a man I hadn't met yet. She talked with him for quite awhile. When she returned to my side (I joked with her in the morning that since it was her first time there, she could be attached to me at the hip all day), she filled me in a little on their conversation. This gentleman was in the process of writing a book, and had very limited supplies. Her heart was touched...she wanted to help him and asked me if that was ok. She introduced me to him later, and told us both that she would be sending with me on Friday some things that might help him. Bless her heart! Friday morning, when I handed him the things she gave to me to give him, his face lit up and he said with much excitement, "You tell her thank you and that I have her in my heart. God really blessed me today!"

Friday night she sent me a message telling me how being at Mission of Hope on Thursday was a huge blessing for her, and that she wants to come back again weekly. She also said she went to bed Thursday night thinking of a handful of people she met at the Mission, who she listed by name, who really touched her heart. She found what Isaiah is referring to in chapter 58, verse 10...*if you spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light will rise in the darkness, and your night will become like the noonday.* Wow!

I love seeing other people "get it!" I enjoy watching others begin to understand *really* what is happening at Mission of Hope, and how God is changing lives through this ministry. This is priceless stuff! I get excited to have college interns spend weeks at the Mission, because what they get to be a part of is nothing you could ever learn in a text book or a class. They will learn and experience more than they will ever expect...they will be touched beyond what they can now fathom, and will never be the same again with love for an aching world. It happened to me, it happened to my fellow co-workers and volunteers, it's happening to my friend, and it'll happen to these interns.

...if you spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light will rise in the darkness, and your night will become like the noonday!

AMEN!