

Mission Tuesday #93



"This Mission is a safe place for me."

God touched my heart yesterday at Mission of Hope. That's something I can count on almost daily.

When I arrived at the Mission in the morning, Betty, one of our staff members was sitting talking to a man who I had met before. The visions of the last time I saw him flashed through my mind for that split second...I remembered he was struggling with an addiction, and under the influence of it when I saw him last.

I joined them at the table, and Betty briefly filled me in on what was going on in this man's life. His girlfriend struggles with the same addiction as he, but it sounded like it is even stronger for her. My heart broke for him as I could smell alcohol on his breath as he talked to us. He shared with us that he loves his girlfriend, and wants to get her help. He wants to make positive changes in his own life, and desires to have victory over his addiction. He said he's tried every program under the sun, but nothing has worked for him. Betty and I encouraged him to come to All Addictions Anonymous which meets on Tuesday nights at 7pm at the Mission. We also encouraged him to come to church this weekend either at 5pm on Saturday night or 10am on Sunday, as I've seen him in our worship services before. He indicated he really wanted to come back.

I loved hearing what Betty said to encourage him. She loves the people that come into the Mission, including this man, and the people love her. I saw and heard the Lord's compassion flow through her as she spoke with him. He also shared with us something that has rung in my ears ever since. He said, "I have no one to talk to but you. This Mission is a safe place for me." We encouraged him to stay as long as he liked, and encouraged him to come back today. I was hoping to see him today, but didn't. I pray he's safe tonight. I pray God draws him back to Mission of Hope. And I pray for God will break this all-consuming addiction for him.

The days seem to get busier and busier as winter sets in. At one point yesterday about an hour before lunchtime, I stopped what I was doing, and I looked around...I was amazed by how many people were in the Mission at that particular time. The fleeting thought ran through my mind of, "Will this get to standing room only?" (Today was very close to that.) What would people do without Mission of Hope?

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At lunchtime we have our normal routine of welcoming everyone, doing a few announcements, introducing the group that's serving lunch (if applicable) and saying the blessing before the meal. After the announcements yesterday, one of our Mission friends, Dan, stood up and wanted to say something. I consider this man one of my friends. As I listened to him, I was totally taken by surprise. He addressed Tom, Kimmie and I, and thanked us for all we do to keep the Mission doors open each day. He encouraged us by sharing how much the Mission means to so many. He had some white envelopes in his hand, and held them up as he shared that most of the people in the lunch line signed these cards for us and wanted to thank us for what we do. Then everyone applauded.

Standing in the kitchen, tears began to well up in my eyes. I smiled at Dan, and gave him a great big hug after he spoke. Then to top the moment off, Ron, another Mission friend said the most amazing prayer and blessing. I thanked God at that moment for allowing me to experience what I had just experienced. I opened the card, and love seemed to pour out of it...notes of love, signatures of my Mission friends, small sentences that made me smile. (Tears come to my eyes again now as I relive it through writing about it.)

Lunch began to be served, and I walked over to Dan. I shared with him how much what he said meant to me, and how much I needed this encouragement on that very day. I shared with him that my mom passed away four years ago to the day, and how I was struggling with missing her presence in my life. The men who were sitting at the same table as Dan were listening. I looked to one, and he had tears in his eyes. If I could have called "GROUP HUG!" right then, I would have. :) Dan said this was the only way he could think of to thank us. It meant so much to me...more than I could even begin to express.

I then saw Kimmie, and her eyes were filled with tears too. This moment touched her heart as well.

I will live off of that moment in time yesterday for a very long time. I've thought about it again and again throughout my day today. I think that helped me get through a very full day today at the Mission. I can't imagine my life without Mission of Hope, and more importantly, I can't imagine my life without the people of Mission of Hope. God has changed my life through them!

So in closing, I say with much thankfulness tonight,

"This Mission is a safe place for me."

Amen!