

## Mission Tuesday #102

*For the Lord comforts his people and will have compassion on his afflicted ones.* Isaiah 49:13

Have you ever had one of those weeks where you needed God's comfort? This week seemed like one of those weeks to me. Death, saying goodbyes, and watching some struggle through life seemed to invade the bubble of my little life.

My days at Mission of Hope are blessings. Not every day is a walk in the park, however. Some days are very trying. Some days are exhausting. Some days are overwhelming. But the blessings that come from walking through life with the people that I get to each day at Mission of Hope outweigh the trying, exhausting and overwhelming times.

I continue to find when we reach out into others' lives and show them the love of God, our hearts get attached to those we are showing love to. We open ourselves to being vulnerable when we show love to others. When we do, we are most likely going to get our hearts bruised, and even broken at times...my heart feels a little bruised (and broken) today.

Calvin, a friend of Mission of Hope for a few months now, shared with me a couple of weeks ago that he would be leaving us and going to another state for a few months. Honestly, I passed his comments off, and I guess I was secretly hoping that wasn't going to be the case. Calvin stayed at our Shelter for a time this fall/winter. Every day, one would find him at Mission of Hope helping out...vacuuming almost every afternoon, cleaning bathrooms, pitching in any way he could. He had been such a blessing to all of us for so long!

Last Thursday he mentioned to me that he would be leaving Iowa Thursday this week. His words stopped me in my tracks. I could see he was serious. I shared with him what a blessing he was to us, and to so many, and how I personally appreciated his help and his friendship. He said that he had never felt so welcome anywhere in his life, and he appreciated all we had done to help him get back on his feet. He said he knew no one when he moved here, and now he has friends here and will return back within a few months. I pray that is the case. Kimmie and I wanted a picture taken with him before he left, so my son took this one of us Wednesday. Calvin didn't come in Thursday...I wish I could have given him one last hug before he left.



Also on Wednesday, I was told that David, a friend of ours who I met late summer/early fall at the Mission was found under a bridge in Des Moines last week. He had passed away of causes unknown. David was a man most would have steered away from. He wore camouflaged clothing every day. His hair was greasy, and some days he didn't smell that nice. He struggled with depression. But when I would talk to him, his eyes showed he just wanted to be loved and

to be a friend. David was one of those who made a way into my heart. His smile, which we didn't see that often, was genuine and joy-filled. He was quiet, and stayed to himself most of the time. This brings to mind 1 Samuel 16:7 *The Lord doesn't see things the way you see them. People judge by outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.* I remember him saying in one of our last conversations about a month or so ago, that he didn't want to be here anymore. He wanted to "go home." I only wish I could have told him goodbye, and I am regretful that I didn't check if he really knew where "home" was. I am going to miss David.

Another friend of ours at the Mission, Jerome, found out a relative of his was found in his bed Thursday morning and had passed away in his sleep. He suffered with diabetes and had been sick, but this was still a shock. His survivors included six young children. In talking with Jerome Thursday, tears filled his eyes as he said "this is tough." I could relate. Struggling with a death of a loved one is very tough...harder than words can express. It's unbelievably painful. Later that day, Kimmie was told who this man was who passed away, and she personally knew him as well. Receiving the news was difficult for Kimmie also.

Thursday night as I watched the 9pm news, a picture of one of our Mission friends appeared on my TV screen. She had been arrested for hurting someone physically. My heart went out to her. She has seemed to struggle for a very long time with many things. God's loves her just as much as He loves me.

Unrelated to the Mission, a good friend of mine's mother passed away on Tuesday. I am praying for each one of these dear people in my life...Calvin, David's friends and family, Jerome, Kimmie, our friend who was arrested, and my friend Jill. May our Mighty God protect Calvin and bring him back to us. May those who are grieving the death of a loved one be comforted by our Prince of Peace. May God reveal Himself to our friend who was arrested, and may she be sensitive to His presence. May ALL of us be sensitive to God's presence in our own lives!

I say this often in my Mission Tuesday posts...God is changing lives and hearts at Mission of Hope (including mine!)...even through the painful things. He comforts us, He loves us, He never gives up on us. He helps us, He protects us, and He is present with us. I thank God today for all of these things, and I thank God for Mission of Hope!