

Mission Tuesday #121



If you didn't see a "Mission Tuesday" on my blog last week, it was because I was on vacation with my family. And what an enjoyable and refreshing vacation it was! It was one of our family's most favorite getaways...ever! But as I was away, I couldn't help but miss my Mission of Hope family. They are such an important part of my life!

Since I try to write each week about my time at Mission of Hope, I thought I would make up for last week's post this week. I thought I would share in some things I reflected on while we were away about Mission of Hope. I've shared recently about the things God is doing there, and I'll never get tired of that. I've shared recently about what an incredible staff I get the honor and privilege of working with. I've shared about the blessings we have received in having such a God-loving leadership team. I've shared stories of some of our friends, some of our Bible studies, and some of the great things God allows us to experience there. But I haven't shared lately on the difference Mission of Hope has made in my life and my family's life.

Mission of Hope has been a part of our family almost since its beginning! Bill and I decided to support Pastor Barb and her husband Jim (dear friends of ours), at Mission of Hope's first Worship Service...and we've never left. Mission of Hope is still our church today...almost 11 years later!

God gave Bill a heart for helping others, so he was naturally drawn to helping at the Mission. I see him go above and beyond to help anyone time and time again. He never thinks about himself...he always puts others first. Each day I get to work around Bill's handiwork (namely our serving counter) that he built at the Mission years ago. Bill used to be a staff member at Mission of Hope's Shelter...he would get off work at his full-time job at 7am, and work at the Shelter until noon. He loved making a difference in the resident's lives. His schedule changed a couple years ago, and he was unable to keep helping out there. He misses it. But he still is an active part of our Worship Services, and he's still very much a part of supporting the Mission, especially as he supports me and encourages me in my work there daily. God gives him such wisdom, discernment and compassion, which Bill passes on to me.

Ali and Zach have no recollection of attending any other church but Mission of Hope. They've grown up through Children's Church each Sunday with Cathy as their "teacher." Cathy is still there today. What an impact she has had in Ali's and Zach's lives! Ali and Zach have seen and experienced so much through their involvement at the Mission. They've seen how those who come to church dressed in dirty clothes are treated just as nice as someone in a business suit. They've seen people struggle with addictions, and what life-altering consequences often follow

addictions. They were able to experience that first-hand from Steve, a close friend of ours from the Mission who had a very special place in Ali's and Zach's hearts. They still talk about Steve today, even after his passing three years ago. As they come in during the week, they have also learned how to love unconditionally through watching others love the way Jesus would love at the Mission. They have learned more there than Bill or I could ever have taught them at home. God has given them hearts that are tender towards others.

In fact, on our vacation, we saw homeless, elderly, lonely and hurting people wherever we went. Maybe we were more sensitive and aware of the hurting more than normal, but watching Ali and Zach love "those kind of people" with their eyes, melted my heart. I can't wait to see what God has in store for Ali and Zach in their futures!!

I think I was the toughest pot to crack...but eventually God broke through my tough exterior and softened my heart. Never, ever did I think I would be the supervisor at Mission of Hope...EVER! My dream was to continue my quest for success...worldly success. Being a Mary Kay Sales Director (and I still am), driving a pink Cadillac, wearing skirted suits and heels everywhere I went, leading women to our next sales goal (we sold \$1,050,000 retail in three years), wearing diamonds and not a hair out of place...that was me. I didn't have time for anything but me, my business and my family.

But God used situations and struggles to break me, to mold me, and to transform my heart. My heart was never the same from the first day I walked into Mission of Hope's doors to volunteer. Worldly things have become unimportant, as I have seen life through the eyes of those who would be considered the least, the last and the lost. My personal goals have changed...to helping one more person feel of value and worth today, and asking "who can I love today?" God has turned my focus from myself onto Him and His will for my life. I still enjoy my Mary Kay business, but it doesn't consume me like it used to. Call me strange, but God's calling for my life consumes me. It doesn't matter anymore what kind of car I drive. What matters is what matters to God. Mission of Hope and the people there matter to Him. Showing the love of Jesus matters to Him. Feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, encouraging the lonely, giving shelter to the poor wanderer...all matter to Him. I certainly am not the same person I was, even just a few years ago. Thank the Lord for that! :)

God has used Mission of Hope in our family's life in so many ways. He has strengthened us, encouraged us, and taught us through our involvement and through the Mission's Worship Services. He has given us a new perspective on life, on love, and on our family. He has grown our faith, our love for Him, and our desire to serve Him. Who would have ever thought that a mission, designed to help the formerly incarcerated and others in need, would have such an impact on our family?!?! I never imagined it. But I'm so grateful God continues to call us, to use us, and to equip us to serve Him the way He does!

I encourage you and your family to come get involved at Mission of Hope. I guarantee you, you'll be blessed like the Lefebures have!!