

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 2010

Mission Tuesday #80



Each year I participate in a worldwide Bible study called Bible Study Fellowship (BSF). This year in BSF we are studying the book of Isaiah. This past week was our first week of the study, and I'm so excited for God to teach me through it!

So...what does this study have to do with Mission of Hope? Well, in the very first chapter, which is what we are studying this week, I already see some strong correlation between God's Words in Isaiah and Mission of Hope! I about jumped out of my skin reading it!

Isaiah 1:17 reads, "...Seek justice, encourage the **oppressed**. Defend the cause of the **fatherless**, plead the case of the **widow**." In The Message translation it reads, "Work for justice. Help the **down-and-out**. Stand up for the **homeless**. Go to bat for the **defenseless**." This is EXACTLY what we do at Mission of Hope!!

Later in that chapter in verse 23, Isaiah talks about how the rulers of the people don't defend the cause of the fatherless and the widow's case doesn't come before them. Again, The Message reads, "They never stand up for the **homeless**, never stick up for the **defenseless**."

These words struck a chord in me. Mission of Hope encourages the oppressed. Mission of Hope stands up for the homeless. Mission of Hope sticks up for the defenseless. I looked in my cross-references and wanted to search for more scriptures that talked about the fatherless (the orphan), the widow, and the oppressed (the helpless). I found:

Deuteronomy 14:28-29 "...At the end of every third year, gather the tithe from all your produce of that year and put it aside in storage. Keep it in reserve for the Levite who won't get any property or inheritance as you will, and **for the foreigner, the orphan, and the widow** who live in your neighborhood. That way they'll have plenty to eat and GOD, your God, will bless you in all your work."

Job 22:6-11 "When people came to you for help, you took the shirts off their backs, exploited their **helplessness**. You wouldn't so much as give a drink to the **thirsty**, or food, not even a scrap, to the **hungry**. And there you sat, strong and honored by everyone, surrounded by immense wealth! You turned poor **widows** away from your door; heartless, you crushed **orphans**. Now you're the one trapped in terror, paralyzed by fear. Suddenly the tables have turned! How do you like living in the dark, sightless, up to your neck in flood waters?"

Psalms 82:30 "Defend the cause of the **weak** and **fatherless**; maintain the rights of the **poor** and **oppressed**."

Isaiah 10:1-2 "Woe to those who make unjust laws, to those who issue oppressive decrees, to deprive the **poor** of their rights and withhold justice from the **oppressed** of my people, making **widows** their prey and robbing the **fatherless**."

Exodus 22:22 "Do not take advantage of a **widow** or an **orphan**. If you do and they cry out to me, I will certainly hear their cry. My anger will be aroused, and I will kill you with the sword; your wives will become widows and your children fatherless."

Ezekiel 22:7 "...in you they have oppressed the **alien** and mistreated the **fatherless** and the **widow**."

James 1:27 "Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after **orphans** and **widows** in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world."

WOW! God seems to be very serious about these who are considered the least, the lost, and the last to be taken care of. His words in the Bible aren't just for the people in Bible times...they are for each of us today. God doesn't change His mind about such things, just because these Words of His were written thousands of years ago. These scriptures may challenge us...What are each one of us doing to take care of the oppressed (helpless), the fatherless (orphan), and the widow? Mission of Hope helps take care of these dear ones of God.

I had conversations this week with some who would be considered oppressed. One man in particular stands out in my mind. He's always kind to me, always smiles at me, and always asks if I've talked to Phyllis (our friend who used to work at the Mission). He tends to be under the influence of alcohol often.

Many, I know are fatherless who come into the Mission. They may be orphans because of their fathers or parents have died, or fatherless because they no longer have a relationship with their earthly father or parents. They are considered orphans. These people need to feel loved and accepted, just like you and I do. They may not have gotten that from their parents, but we can love on them at Mission of Hope, and help the healing process of past hurts.

And widows...I see so many women who are alone, who have been abandoned, who have to fend for themselves. One woman who I befriended at the Mission awhile ago would come in before lunch, grab her cup of coffee, sit in the sanctuary area at a table with her coffee, and about 15 minutes before lunch was to be served, she would go move to where the lunch line would begin. She usually was first in line daily. She would talk about trying to find a cleaning job in her broken English. She needed to fend for herself, as she had no one. She has seemed to disappear though. She no longer comes into the Mission. A couple of weeks ago I saw her walking downtown as I drove by. I was very excited to see her, but I regret not stopping to see how she was. Next time I certainly will! I'm hoping the reason she doesn't come in anymore is because she found a job.

After doing my search of scriptures about how God wants His dear ones...the oppressed, the fatherless and the widow...to be taken care of, I can't help but see how Mission of

Hope is a part of His plan in doing that in this area. And I can't help but realize how God continues to bless Mission of Hope and His people He has placed there because of how they take care of these dear ones of His. It's exciting and humbling all at the same time to be a part of God's plan in this way!

Julie