

1.29.12

Walking Dusty...

teacher: Dan Crist

As I read through chapter four of *Radical*, I was really challenged by the thought of spending money to go on a mission trip. I kept struggling between the thought of using the money on myself to go and serve short-term, or wondering if it would be better to spend the money to feed starving kids around the world. Mosaic has the privilege to sponsor Laura Mitchell from Redeeming Africa's Hope (R.A.H.) When Dan presented this same question to her, she responded by saying that God would take care of the financial needs. Then she challenged Dan by saying that you can't put a price tag on what God will do in your heart when you've seen poverty and brokenness up-close. Often that experience generates more resources once you get back home. Dan finished his message by reading through Jamie's story from the book. I previously quoted Kristen Welch from her blog "We are THAT family." I think she drives home the point equally well, so I'm including it again here:

"When I sat in his closet-sized home in the middle of Africa, I couldn't take my eyes off the pathetic interior or ignore the dripping rain on my head. I tried not to imagine the "community toilet" he shared with neighbors adjoined by paper-thin walls or how far he walked each way to school everyday, in the dark, both ways. The peace on his face was undeniable and the light that radiated from his eyes filled the dark room of his orphan-led home. I didn't understand how he could be so content with so little. And I couldn't stop the question, "Why are you so happy? Why aren't you afraid?" He looked at me as if I'd missed it entirely and said, "Because I have Jesus." He didn't say anything else. It was a heavy statement. It was enough. He was right, I had missed it. Entirely. I equate Jesus to comfort and blessings. And when I sat in a hovel, a young boy called home, void of every comfort, I was envious of his contentment. I returned to a lifestyle with every blessing, only wanting more. I add Jesus like salt and pepper to a tasteless dish. He isn't the main course, just an extra on the side. Jesus isn't enough for me. I think about my happiness that is clouded with every storm that blows into my life. I think about my happiness that is contingent upon what I have versus what I want. I think about my happiness and the strings I attach to it. I think about a young boy who taught me more about Jesus and myself in a single sentence than my entire Bible College degree and 37 years of living. One of the great lessons I learned in Africa: When Jesus isn't enough, something is wrong. I'm on a quest to make it all about Jesus. It's easy surrounded by the comforts of my American life to melt back into the The American Way-bigger is better, more is what matters. This is a painful journey, but more than anything, I want Him to be enough for me. Is Jesus enough for you? If your happiness, like mine, is determined by how much or how little you have or the next exciting thing in your life, can I gently remind you to return to Him? He is waiting to be enough."

Friends, I read through Jamie's and Kristen's stories and my heart is pricked and my throat is tight. Tears puddle in the corners of my eyes. And then I get distracted or comfortable and I do nothing. I'm tired of saying I love Him and not always show it. I've experienced so much grace from God! And as an American, I've been financially blessed more than the majority of the population of the world. God wants me to use that blessing to bring Him glory. As a response to her experience, Kristen founded The

Mercy House in Kenya, a place to help, heal, and offer hope for pregnant girls. And ladies, Kristen is “just” a mom like you or me. She doesn’t have a Ph.D. in humanitarian aid, and she isn’t the heir to a multi-million dollar estate. She has a head that’s focused on her love of Jesus and a heart that’s willing to serve where the Holy Spirit moves her. Kristen was “called” to bless Kenya. But where is God calling me? Where is He calling you? Are we listening? He IS calling!

Questions to Consider:

The Greatest Commandment is “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. And love your neighbor as yourself.” (Matthew 22:37, 39) Will I allow God’s love to impact my heart so deeply that I respond with love to others around the world and give Him the glory?

Dan said that where we are serving never trumps who we are serving. In other words, it’s not more important to share the Gospel overseas than to share it in our own community. Where am I sharing the Gospel? With whom am I sharing the Gospel? Am I supporting any Christian ministries locally? Am I supporting any overseas Christian ministries? Is this so that I don’t have to go and serve there?

“How many of us are embracing the comforts of suburban America while we turn a deaf ear to inner cities in need of the Gospel? How many of us are so settled in the United States that we have never once given serious thought to the possibility that God may call us to live in another country? How often are we willing to give a check to someone else as long as we don’t have to go to the tough places in the world ourselves? And how many of us are devoting our lives to taking the gospel to people in hostile regions around the world where Christians are not welcomed?” (p. 64)

“How many of us parents are praying that God will raise up our children to leave our homes and go overseas, even if that means they may never come back?” (p. 64) If I’m a student, how am I praying that God would use me? If I’m single, how am I praying that God would use me? If I’m a senior, how am I praying that God would use me? Where am I willing to go?

“Enjoy his grace and extend his glory.” (p. 65) How have I experienced God’s grace? Am I sharing this experience with others so that God gets the glory? Will I choose to bless God?

“God really is in the business of blessing his people in unusual ways so his goodness and his greatness will be declared among all peoples.” (p. 67) Have I acknowledged being blessed in unusual ways? Did God get the credit, or did I give myself all the credit? Whose name was uplifted in the process?

Another way of saying it is: “God blesses his people with extravagant grace so they might extend his extravagant glory to all peoples on the earth.” (p. 69) Have I thought of grace as extravagant or did I take it for granted? Did I share this gift with others?

“The message of biblical Christianity is ‘God loves me so that I might make him – his ways, his salvation, his glory, and his greatness – known among all nations.’” (p. 70-71) How have I done this? How am I doing this? How can I do this better?

“But what if we don’t need to sit back and wait for a call to foreign missions? What if the very reason we have breath is because we have been saved for a global mission? And what if anything less than passionate involvement in global mission is actually selling God short by frustrating the very purpose for which he created us?” (p. 75) Am I selling God short?

Platt writes, “our hearts should be consumed with making the glory of God known in all nations.” (p. 77) With what is my heart consumed?

“ . . . Every single man, woman, and child in the church . . . is intended to impact nations for the glory of Christ, and there is a God-designed way for us to live our lives here, and do church here, for the sake of people around the world who don’t know Christ.” (p. 77) What am I “God-designed” to do?

“What if a global, God-exalting, passionate idealism is exactly what is needed in the lives of individual Christians today? What if these radical Christians joined together in communities of faith called churches that were surrendered to the purpose for God’s people that has been primary from the beginning of time?” (p. 83)

Does my heart get pricked when I see people hurting? What do I do about it?

Dan said we should all be missional – it is not optional. What does this mean to me? How am I living this out? How can I do it better? Have I told God “no” to serving in a particular place?

This month’s memory verse: “Anyone, then, who knows the good they ought to do and does not do it, sins.” James 4:17

Additional verses: Genesis 12, Daniel 3, Matthew 28, Matthew 11:28, Acts 1:8, John 10:10, 1 Peter, Jeremiah 29:11, Ezekiel 36, Romans 1:14-15