

11.27.11

Walking Dusty...

teacher: Dan Crist

I don't usually copy other people's writings for Walking Dusty, but this morning I read the following note from a dear friend who is serving in Uganda. I think it perfectly sums up the struggle we have to stop just reading Scripture, and to actually have it impact our heart, pour out through our actions, and bless others:

Each day I wake up and ask Jesus to help me love Him with all my heart, soul, mind and strength and to love my neighbor as I love myself. I love spending time learning from Jesus, following Him, simply being with Him in these last few months as I am "chewing" through the Gospels. I have asked Him to be my teacher just like He taught the disciples. And more specifically I have been hanging out in Matthew 5-7 and Luke 6....The Sermon on the Mount. I have been asking Jesus to help me to see what life should look like in His Kingdom and help me to DO what He says. Well....I am realizing more and more that I am completely TOAST in being able to live out His ways except that I have the indwelling Holy Spirit in me enabling me to love and live out these principles. I am learning that it is so easy to say Scripture....saying I want to love you with all that I am and love others rolls off the tongue so nicely but living it on a minute to minute basis is utterly impossible except for the help and enablement of the Holy Spirit! It is a constant denial of self to look for how to serve others and when I serve others I am loving God!

So last Monday rolls around and I had just come off of a very busy Sunday of Bible study at home and then leaving with my students at 8pm to go and teach students on campus in one of their fellowships till 10:30pm, and then having a girl spend the night. It was a very late night. Monday morning came with language lessons bright and early. My brain was already moving so slowly and language learning is hard work....then back-to-back meetings with students all day where there was a lot of listening involved to hear what is going on past their words and seek to understand what is going on in their hearts so that I can know how to counsel them.

It came to 6pm and I hadn't eaten all day and was so weary. I ran to a shop to buy a few things to make for dinner and then go home. When I walked into this place I smelled pizza. Oh my goodness....I haven't had pizza since I left the States back in September and it SMELLED GOOD!!!! The budget was tight but I splurged and went and bought a pizza and a milkshake which they make THICK like back home. Then I hop on my boda with my pizza and milkshake and the smell was too much! It was all I could do to not pop it open and devour a slice right there on the back of this bike. I was willing this driver in my mind to get home fast because I was so hungry and wanted to get to my house and be quiet and not have to listen or talk to ANYONE!!!! I think you know those types of days!

Now I live in a pretty big slummy area which means that there are a lot of poor children everywhere who are not in school, are abused, hungry, and who work very hard all day long carrying big jugs of water up to their homes from the well in the village. I love these children and we are good friends and hang outside the gate and talk and joke. There are two brothers who I just have such a sweet spot in my heart for, Stephen & Andrew. They have huge bloated bellies full of worms I am sure, they are so dirty

and are always hungry. Well I turn on my road and don't see any kids and am thinking....Oh Lord....let us get to the gate fast and let me get inside! And then just like usual....Stephen sees me and comes running down behind my bike to greet me. I was like....OH DRAT!!!! Lord....I don't want to give him my pizza!!!! Please Lord....don't ask me to give him my pizza.

So we reach the gate and I am all sheepish trying to hide this steaming hot box of wonderful smells behind me along with my milkshake! I talk to him a bit and he is standing there all dirty with these big brown eyes looking up at me and just can't turn him away. So I tell him to come inside the gate. I sit down and give him 2 pieces of pizza. He starts devouring them so hungry and then stops midway and says he wants to take the other piece home to Andrew. Here I am sitting with 6 pieces feeling that I should just give it all away....but what do I do? I take out my milkshake and give him the bag to put the piece in and send him on his way. I go up to my lovely, clean, quiet palace and eat and drink till I am stuffed feeling guilty but shoving that away with lots of excuses.

The next morning I get up and am washing dishes while my coffee brews and I am like, "Good Morning Lord. Is there anything you want to say to me this morning? :-)" He was like, "Ummm, Heidi. THE PIZZA???" In what way did you sacrifice for me yesterday? That little boy has nothing and you have so much? In what way did you serve me by serving him? Yes you gave him some...but Stephen took the little he had and willingly sacrificed it for his brother. He gave all he had.....you didn't." Wow! I was so convicted and grieved at the state of my heart. For the Son of Man (Jesus) did not come to BE SERVED....but TO SERVE...and GIVE HIS LIFE as a ransom for many! I confessed my sin to Jesus and asked for His forgiveness and another chance to do the right thing for Him and give up what I treasure....(it shows I treasure comfort and personal satisfaction and pizza more than obeying Jesus and seeking to model Jesus to my wee neighbor!). I am asking for another chance to LOVE as Jesus loves....lavishly! I want to live this out for Jesus who loves me so lavishly, "Heidi, A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." John 13:34-35

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) Do I wake up every morning and ask God to help me love Him with all my heart, soul, and mind?

Do I love being with Jesus? Have I asked Him to teach me like He taught the disciples?

Have I asked Jesus to help me see what life should look like in His Kingdom and help me DO what He says?

Maybe it wasn't a pizza, but have I denied myself anything so that I could bless someone else?

Heidi said, "There was a lot of listening involved to hear what is going on past their words and seek to understand what is going on in their hearts so that I can know how to counsel them." Do I listen when

others are speaking? Do I seek to see what's going on in their hearts, or do I just want to quickly fix the problem?

Have I ever been convicted and grieved at the state of my heart? What did I do about it?

Heidi's story could be each of our stories. There have been times when I acted selfishly and refused to submit to what I knew God was telling me to do. How do I respond when this happens? Does my heart become more calloused, or do I allow God to soften it and make me more like Jesus? Do I ask forgiveness when I have wronged someone?

Am I filled with a lot of head knowledge, meaning I know a lot about Jesus and the Bible? How do I get it to move from my head to my heart? Have I asked God for help?

What is my most valued possession? Have I filled my heart with things?

"How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him." 1 John 3:1 What does it mean to love lavishly?

Dan described his shopping experience on Black Friday and asked what things we are putting in our heart. He asked, "Why doesn't church ever look like Walmart on Thanksgiving when people are dying to get in? Why aren't we ripping open the Bible like we rip open Christmas presents?"

What healing do I need right now?

This month's memory verse: "I the LORD search the heart and examine the mind, to reward everyone according to their conduct, according to what their deeds deserve." (Jeremiah 17:10 TNIV)

Additional verses: Romans 10:9-10; Proverbs 4:23, 117:22, 27:19; Matthew 13:15, John 13:34-35; 1 John 3:1

REMINDERS:

Don't forget we meet at **Dominican Hall on the campus of Siena Heights at **10:00 a.m.** on Sunday, December 4!