

Friday June 25th, 2010

So again here I find myself – another “last night” in Haiti. Tomorrow the team packs up and flies away home, and I will make my way to the DR border, across the island, and home on Sunday. It is never easy to leave this place – not now, not 17 years ago. I experience my loss of Haiti as a death – and I grieve until God is gracious to bring me back.

I have had a hard time focusing on what God would have me journal about tonight. This has been a beautiful week with Clear Creek – and a healing week for me, too. The cracks and the wounds from the January earthquake run deep in this place and in me. I could write to our dear brothers at home of how God was in the midst of disaster – but I won't. I won't write of dead bodies 230,000 deep nor of broken children with mortal head wounds nor of fear and repentance that struck a nation. That is a story for another night. But I will write about Israel and God's promises to us today.

As Luckson said previously, there are few Haitians who do not long to leave their homeland. As a young child, the Haitian dreams of escaping the poverty and suffering that is experienced daily. To Miami, NY, Bahamas, Turks and Caicos, Canada, France, the DR... it does not matter. They often even leave on boats doomed to death, the cost to escape never seems too high. Those that make it out are called children of the Diaspora, and their homeland Haiti is their Israel.

And so God has been calling me to read the prophets over the past months – and I see parallels from the children of Israel's diaspora to Haiti today. In the prophets God speaks of poverty, oppression, the lame, the blind, and unjust scales. He calls us in Isaiah 58 to cast off empty worship and to share our food, our shelter and clothes. He calls us to SPEND ourselves in behalf of the needy, and to satisfy the needs of the oppressed. And so we come here to this place – this pile of sand. We go home spent and half-sick and wondering if we made a difference and if God has used us in His kingdom.

I want to share a passage God laid on my heart the last morning I was here in Haiti – 6 weeks after the earthquake and at a time I was seeking God's comfort. God was speaking to the returned children of Israel who were called to return and rebuild the broken temple. God surprised me with these verses from Haggai – I have never spent much time there!

“Who of you is left who saw this house in its former glory. How does it look to you now? Does it not seem to you like nothing? But now, be strong all you people of the land, declares the Lord, and work. For I am with you, declares the Lord Almighty...and my Spirit remains among you. Do not fear. This is what the Lord Almighty says: In a little while I will once more shake the heavens and the earth, the seas and the dry land. I will shake all nations, and the desired of all nations will come, and I will fill this house with glory, says the Lord Almighty. The silver is mine and the gold is mine declares the Lord Almighty. The glory of this present house will be greater than the glory of the former house says the Lord Almighty. And in this place I will grant peace, declares the Lord Almighty.”

And so, ultimately – we are all part of God's Diaspora – called out of all nations to be a holy nation then scattered again to share Christ's love in a broken world. We will serve and we will work and we will wait, knowing we serve a BIG God who will keep His promises to us, His precious children. – Holly Eckhart

First of all I have to say that I think that this group of people has bonded as a team and as a family. Second, even if I didn't say anything, I saw Jesus in everyone everyday.

The week started out a little rough, but God got me through it and I have enjoyed every minute of being here. God has blessed me with getting to come with such a fun, energetic, crazy, loud, and God-loving group.

Today had to be one of my favorite days because we went to the beach. It was a view that could be on a postcard. The water was so clear you could see the bottom. After a delicious lunch, we all sat down and listened to Brian Wallace talk about his walk with Christ. This has been an experience that I will never forget and I hope I get to go on another one soon. – Reagan Bullington

It is fitting for me that our last day in Haiti was spent on the beach. Not for the obvious reasons but because, for my entire life, it is the place that I have felt the closest to God.

Each year my family travels to the beach in Destin and while we all enjoy the sun, surf, food, and fun, it has become so much more than that. I am always aghast at God's creation...the power of the sun, the luster of the trees, the majesty of the surf, and the elegance of the tides. I sit at the edge of the water, where I can feel the breeze in my face, and marvel at the vastness of the earth. We are so small, so insignificant yet trips like this one, and outreach to one of the most troubled places in the world, puts all of this into perspective. While I may be small, together we are mighty. While I may be one, together we are many. While I may be alone, together we are family.

A family has many parts. I am blessed with a wonderful family. They are loud and caring, boisterous and involved, energetic and kind. They are the song in my heart and I would not be who I am today without them.

We have talked a lot this trip about "our Father in heaven". This has always in the past been a hard concept to grasp. As a child, what I knew about fathers was simple...they leave. As an adult, I have the maturity and perspective to see that I was never without. While there are things that I still struggle with, the knowledge that there is a God in heaven has never been in doubt.

This trip fell into my lap when I was not expecting it. As many of the greatest experiences are unplanned, I decided to take a risk and join this mission hoping to contribute in any way that I could but also with the greatest hope of finding answers to questions that I have struggled with.

What I found were kind hearts, warm rich voices raised in song, the finest examples of mothers, fathers, neighbors and friends, and lots AND lots of prayer.

I found magic in the laughter and smiles of the children; patience, kindness and perseverance in those who embrace the greatest of challenges. I found goodness in the smallest of gestures and peace in the quietest moments when there are absolutely no words.

I have not found the answers to the questions that I have but just as this gorgeous beach sits mere miles from great struggle, it is as if it is God's promise that answers will come for me and for Haiti...we just have to have the faith to keep looking.

– Jessica Van Meter

My Clear Creek Family,

How wonderful it has been to be here in Haiti again with some of the people I love most in this world! Bondie si Bon. God is good. In attempting to put words to my experience this week I feel as though I should give some background.

Nine years ago through the encouragement of Jake, Shelly, Sean, Nathan, Mrs. Holt and Mrs. Hannah I went to Guyana, South America on my very first international mission trip. There God opened my eyes and heart to missions. That summer He brought me to Haiti for the first time. It was here two years later later that I decided to become a nurse with the hope of doing long term mission work someday.

This week, for the first time since graduating with my nursing degree God brought me back to Haiti. Talk about full circle! For years I have watched Mrs. Golden, Kris Marlowe, Bobby Ray, Allen Coffman, and many others show Jesus to the people of Haiti by listening to their hurts of this world and attempting to meet their physical needs. What a blessing it has been this week to let God use me as that vessel. One thing that stood out to me while seeing patients is how small we really are. There were so many things this week that I could do nothing about, but instead of feeling helpless and frustrated Bobby encouraged us to focus on what we could do.

Through Christ we *can* encourage our fellow brothers and sisters by simply being here, we *can* tell the children the story of Jesus through VBS, coloring sheets and crayons, we *can* shine the light of Jesus through our smiles,

we *can* spread God's love by playing soccer on the equator, we *can* relieve the temporary aches of this world with tylenol and tums because we *know* that though we are small God is mighty and God is good. I have been overwhelmed by His presence this week. There is no doubting that God has each of us here for a reason. That was made evident when my friend Jessica and I made it off the Haiti trip waiting list. I have seen Jesus all over the place this week! I see Him in the precious teenagers that I babysat as children who are now unbelievably mature in their faith. I see Him in every single person on this team that I have come to know and love that have taught me so much about what it looks like to be a Christian woman, mother and wife, and what I should expect in a Christian husband. I see Him in the missionaries here who have truly surrendered their lives to him and take up their crosses daily. I saw Him in Brian today as he opened up the most vulnerable parts of his heart to us so that we could see the power of the Lord to transform lives. I saw Him in our Haitian brothers and sisters as they patiently waited to be seen by the medical team, to receive their one meal for the day, and everyday as they patiently wait for the Lord. As always I have been overwhelmingly blessed by my time here, and I praise God for each of you and your prayers this week. I pray that God will continue to heal this land of Haiti, and that we will not soon forget the power that was shown this week.

I love you all!
Morgan Booth