

Fishers of Men

June 2011



Muddy Mercies

The other day, while doing devotions, I read Psalm 123. The first verse says: "I lift up my eyes to you, to you whose throne is in heaven." Beth Moore commented on this verse by saying that where we look determines what we hear...what we hear determines what we feel...what we feel determines what we expect. So, I will look UP!

"Lord, I will look up to Your throne that is in heaven. You are way beyond this world where we daily muddy our feet in the messes of life! But, you know what? There is mud under the throne of heaven because You sloshed around down here too! You took some of that mud into heaven with you, at least the memory and experience of the mud, and are now our perfect intercessor before the throne of God."

*"For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus."
1 Timothy 2:5*

"Therefore he (Jesus) is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them." Hebrews 7:25

"Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are-yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confi-

dence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need." Hebrews 4:14-16

In Hebrews we are told to approach that throne of grace. In Psalms we are told that we are to "look to the Lord our God, till he shows us his mercy." This implies that He WILL show us His mercy...in His time, in His way and after much perseverance! Hebrews tells us that when we approach that heavenly throne we will "receive mercy and find grace."

Praise the Lord for the consistency of His Word from Psalms to Hebrews, from century to century, from David's palace to Paul's scroll to my office to your hands!

As I bend down before this heavenly throne, kneeled before my Daddy's armchair, when I get up caked mud may just fall from knees! Mud that Jesus tread as He healed lepers, loved prostitutes, restored tax collectors and taught fishermen...mud that He then tracked into heaven where He now intercedes for ME!

Part of what I bring before His throne today is asking for mercy to cover approximately \$14,000 of debt in ministry expenses and then \$2800 a week to cover all that is needed to make ministry possible here at Refuge Ranch, not to mention the nearly \$3000 that each EMMC costs. While

I plead for His mercy in finances, He brought mercy to me in a little red bird and a box of milk!

A few nights ago, Angie was apologizing for a situation that had happened earlier in the day. As she apologized, she shared with me that when she was upset that morning she had walked down to the lower part of our land, praying and asking God for help, when a little red bird appeared. This little red bird (a red finch?) has been around our property for several years and seems to have a love affair with our red 15 passenger van. I



have noticed him on many occasions, but never paid real particular attention. Angie shared with me that while she was praying this little guy would appear, fly away and reappear. Come to find out, this was not the first time that he had visited her while she cried out for God's help! She took the little guys' presence and persistence as a

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sign from God of His presence with her. As she shared this with me, I just couldn't believe it!

That afternoon, several of us had gone up to the property next to ours to play soccer. It had been a very difficult and long day, my heart was heavy, and I didn't want to play soccer. In my mind, I basically just breathed, "Lord!" Instantly, the little red bird flew in front of me and sat in a small branch on the edge of the soccer field. Unconsciously, the following thought came to my mind: "Julie, you know that I am with you." I had never considered that little red bird being a messenger from God, but he certainly was yesterday afternoon. Then, that same night, Angie shared her experience with me! Wow! Mercy that looks like a red finch!



That evening, I was getting the kids ready for bed and realized there was no milk for their evening chocolate milk. It was really too late to go the store and was just another thing in my long list of "poor me's" – after such a hard parenting day and now no milk! That would just mean more discontentedness to handle from the kids at bedtime—an already challenging time of day! I was slightly irritated with God. (Stupid, I know, but true!) A few minutes later, Rosa, the Refuge Ranch cook, came into the house saying: "God has provided!" I looked down through the balcony and there she was, with her

arms full of individual milk cartons! Her niece had arrived to go on the local crusade the following day and had brought along about 30 individual cartons of milk that her family gets from the government, but that they don't use! So, all of my kids got their own carton of milk at bedtime! Jesus to Julie: "Sweetheart, I love you! I love your kids! I love you enough to make sure they have milk to drink at bedtime. If I can provide cartons of milk, then I can provide \$14,000! Just wait on me! I had to move people's hearts to get you this milk, and I am moving people's hearts to pay off the debt. Just know, please, that I love you."

So, mercy came yesterday in little red birds and individual milk cartons. I even think I saw some muddy footprints around the place!

A Great Trip!

In early May, Josiah and I (Julie) made a trip to the Toledo area, which means that we got to stay at



Grandpa and Grandma's house (Dave and Diann Claassen)! This time was such a huge blessing for many, many reasons:

- preaching at my home church where Dad has pastored for 36 years (since before I was born!)

- visiting my brother, sister-in-law and nephew and meeting my nearly 2 year old niece for the first time!
- visiting McCord Rd. Christian Church and Summerfield Baptist Church
- seeing my best friend from junior high, Julie Faulkner, and one of my best friends from high school, Michelle Polishak
- seeing Ashleigh Weis (Refuge Ranch staff member for 2 years)
- being treated like a king and queen at the dentist's office
- celebrating my 35th birthday at Chuck E. Cheese's!!!
- being actually present in person for a board meeting (rather than via video conferencing on

the internet)

- seeing my childhood piano and violin teachers



- Josiah spending special one-on-one time with Grandpa and Grandma riding bike, shooting off model rockets, playing Monopoly, going to the library, etc., etc., etc.!
- Having a mini-retreat by myself at Maumee Bay State Park. It was a great time!

Vacation Bible School 2011

Each summer, in churches around North America, it comes time for the annual Vacation Bible School adventures! I remember those days fondly from my years of growing up, first as a student and then as a teacher...those muggy summer mornings when we had to get up early again, like during the school year. We would pull into the church parking lot just as the dew began to dry. By the time we were released around noontime we had sung the theme song that would nearly drive my mother, the music director, insane by weeks' end; we had played sports

Christian growth as a child and even as an adolescent as I began to participate in VBS as one of the teachers. Part of that growth came through the missions emphasis of the week. We would learn about a particular mission or missionary and bring in our daily offering to help provide for whatever was needed to tell others about Jesus through that ministry.

I specifically remember one year watching a pile of diapers, baby formula and other baby items grow each day for the local Crisis Pregnancy Center as the staff purchased supplies each afternoon with our offering.

We would like to invite you to consider making Fishers of Men your 2011 VBS missions emphasis at your church! The creative possibilities to this venture are nearly endless! Whether it be sending children home with an empty, clean soup can at the beginning of the week to fill with change (you can download printable "Your Change Can Make a Change" can labels

on our website: fishersofmenmexico.org) or taking up a daily offering; whether the offering be for the Evangelistic Medical Mission Crusades or Refuge Ranch or for Fishers of



Men in general – you can tailor the offering to your church's and VBS' needs and desires!

We'd love to help you make missions real to your children and, at the same time, bless this ministry with your offering!

Contact us at: fishersofmenmexico@gmail.com or call (734) 206-2392. We'll provide you with pictures, videos and/or other materials to help make missions come to life for your VBS!

We Need YOU!

Fishers of Men has been blessed with the honor to be a recognized non-profit (501(c) 3) organization in the United States. This gives us the unique opportunity to explore the possibility of receiving grant funding from other organizations and companies in order to help fund various aspects of the ministry. This is where we need you! Searching for grant funding and then applying for the grants for which we may be eligible, can be a time-consuming process. This is time that those of us who carry out the ministry here in Mexico on a daily basis simply do not have, yet resources that we truly need! (If you have already thought: "I could never do that." - DON'T STOP READING NOW!)

If you have access to the internet, can read and have a willing heart – then you can help meet this need! We will be holding a training session in the Toledo area on Saturday, July 23, from approximately 8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. The session will be led by Cindy Pisano, a Toledo area social worker with much grant writing experience and success!

If you are interested in attending the training, or if you do not live in the Toledo area, but are interested in a video copy of the training, please RSVP by writing us at fishersofmenmexico@gmail.com or by calling Lorraine Kenter at (419) 882-8086.

Connecting Your Kids to Missions

games that the teacher tried desperately to tie-in with the VBS theme; we had heard Bible stories, made a take-home craft and feasted on sugary cookies and McDonald's orange drink.

Those days played an important role in my

We're on the web!

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EMMC to the state of Michoacan

The goal of the Evangelistic Medical Mission Crusades is to share the Good News of Jesus Christ and offer individuals the opportunity to pray and accept Him as their Lord and Savior and receive the free gift of eternal life. The free medical and dental care, as well as haircuts and other services, are, of course, the avenue through which we are able to share the reality of Jesus Christ. Each crusade provides its own testimonies of individuals who come for physical healing, but leave having been spiritually healed and having begun an emotional healing process. One such individual was a woman who came and was seen by one of our gynecologists. She was given free, professional, respectful care and, through the process, learned of God's unconditional and passionate love for her, which began her healing process after having spent her adult life being told by her own husband that she was a "piece of garbage."



From May 15-21, twenty-three volunteers served the Lord through an Evangelistic Medical Mission Crusade to the state of Michoacan in western central Mexico. The team spent the first part of the week ministering in a neighborhood of the capital city of Morelia.

The second part of the crusade was spent in the village of Copandaro. One hundred and eight (108) individuals accepted Christ during the days that the team spent in Copandaro. These individuals included two prostitutes, an elderly man whose children had been sharing the Gospel with him for a long time, but who hadn't wanted to pray to accept Christ, and an elderly woman who turned out to be the right-hand aid to the local Catholic priest. As many of you may be aware, Catholicism in Mexico consists of an interesting mix of Catholicism, pagan Indian practices and modern spirituality that does an effective job of hiding the truth of Jesus Christ that can set us free!

We praise the Lord for all that He accomplished during these five days in Michoacan and thank Him for the incredible opportunity to serve Him and witness Him at work!

EMMC May 15-21, 2011 Statistics

General medical visits: 301

Gynecology visits: 47

Dental visits: 100

Haircuts: 127

Children's ministry attendance: 52

People who accepted Jesus Christ: 205