

February 2016

Dear Sustaining Partner,

“Hope is the thing with feathers---That perches on the soul---And sings the tune without the words---And never stops ---at all.” ~Emily Dickinson~

When I feel desperate and trapped the last thing I want or need is someone pecking away at me with their words: “I told you this would happen;” “I was afraid you’d find out he’s a rat;” “See! Going there turned out to be a big mistake.” Often even words said to be encouraging: “It will all work out for the best;” “God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life” make me want to scream. Can you relate? When I am afraid, hurting, depressed, disappointed and discouraged, words of any kind are almost like mosquitoes---just a nuisance. There is no comfort and reassurance in mere words.

HOPE! What we all NEED. Studies have proven the primary reason people commit suicide is they have no hope. Depressed people can’t even begin to hope there is hope. So, what to do? What to do when I have lost hope? What to do when someone I love has lost hope? What to do when someone whom God has called me to serve has no hope? It’s dicey---because hope is feather-light---you can’t grab hold of it because you want to feel better. Just when you think, “I’ve got it” a breeze will come along and off you’ll go chasing it again. Hope apart from God is wishful thinking which like words, never help when you’re in a no win situation.

Today I read Luke’s account (chapter 24) concerning the two followers of Jesus who took off for Emmaus after things turned sour in Jerusalem. They lost hope and left town. Along the way Jesus showed up to walk and talk with them to teach the scriptures from Moses on and the fulfillment through what had just happened with Jesus. Though He spoke of Himself (They knew Him well.), they didn’t recognize Him. Hearing words didn’t restore hope---words alone did not lighten heavy, discouraged hearts. When I am in a hard place I often read and study like crazy because I’m desperate for words which I think will make sense. Why? Because I want an answer---not the answer. I want a band-aid, a quick fix, something to make me *feel* better...to *feel* hopeful. God wants me to have more than good feelings. His plan is for me to experience real hope from faith when I know and believe Him. There is one source of real hope. When I sit still long enough before The Lord I understand HE is The Answer in every situation. Authentic HOPE does not ever disappoint.

Today, after several months of struggle to make sense of some very painful circumstances in my life, I realize God’s desire for me is not that I’ll feel better, but that I will grow to know and trust Him more with every step of my journey. I pray my discovery will also benefit those around me. Especially, our clients who will walk in our door without a clue. They need HOPE. Many of them have none. They’ve lived desperate lives for so long a hope and a

future is not even on the radar. In almost every case, the first thing we must pull out of the “tool box” is honest to goodness HOPE! Until one has motivation to move forward, to discuss anything else is pointless.

It's also necessary that we who serve have genuine hope---to suggest there may be hope in the future isn't very convincing. That I have hope proves it's possible. We'd be done before we start. In this arena the failures would be spectacular---and of train wreck proportion. In such a situation our clients would come expecting help and answers, but will continue to fail. Their efforts will reap only minimal results. We cannot substitute anything else however attractive for HOPE.

It is important to me you have hope for and confidence in what we do as you partner with us. Thank you for your sure agreement made evident by your support, you believe our clients are worth all we are able to pour in to their lives and families.

Hope is elusive and delicate and uncommon. You can't pounce and claim it in Jesus' name. God economy doesn't work that way. Hope comes over time with experiences which become “songs in the night.” When that happens we never forget. Hope becomes part of our identity---our spirit's DNA. I'm looking forward to that reality for myself. I want to from my heart echo Job's declaration, “Though He slay me, yet will I hope in Him.”

January was just about our busiest month ever with 310 client visits. Thanks to many of you we've begun the year with a full warehouse. We have had the great blessing to be able to give liberally to our clients those things they need, as well as few luxuries. Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!

I hope your new year is off to a good start. The spring newsletter will be in your mail box the first part of March. Check it and our website (www.pregnancyfamily.org) for coming events and updated information. Pass both along to folks in your community who agree “Life is sacred.”

Happy Valentine's Day! I pray you will know and experience the limitless love of the Father.

For Life!

Lisa J Stiefken
Executive Director