

May 2016

Dear Sustaining Partner,

“And now, Finally, God answered Job from the eye of a violent storm.” Job 38:1 (The Message)

If you know about all I've experienced in the last few years, probably you're not surprised to know I've been studying Job over the past couple of months. I decided to read slowly through the book of Job without consulting any commentary. I simply want God to reveal to me what He wants me to know about how to authentically seek Him in loss and suffering. Job was a righteous, not a perfect, man---his heart was tuned to God. I am a woman who is far from perfect to whom Jesus has imputed His righteousness. Why or how the loss comes is not the question. My desire has been simply to understand God's heart for me as my spirit is broken, hurt, beaten down and tempted to abandon all thought that God is sovereign and God is good. Is He REALLY a “Good, Good Father?” When I am in pain I have to know.

There is not room in this one letter for a condensation of a significant book of The Bible. I trust if you're curious and/or this resonates, you will read for yourself. To give us a starting point: Job was a man who inexplicably suffered beyond what most of us will experience. Maybe far worse than his confusion and loss was the way Job's friends shifted away from him. Each one takes a turn to explain what he thinks is true about God, only the pontifications are not presented as “I think,” but “I know.” It is clear each does not believe the “Good Father,” concept. They begin to look for fault in Job to explain all the truly bad stuff. Let me point out at this juncture something “bad” doesn't become “good” even when God uses it for good.

I want to be angry at Job's friends and people like them; however, the truth is we are all prone to believe God deals with people as human to human, when in fact, He does not. I know He does not base His acceptance of me on my behavior. But if I'm honest, and that's the point here isn't it, I have to admit even I look at my life and think what the heck did I do to bring all this catastrophic loss in to my life? A choice? An idea? An attitude? I cut my eyes a certain way? Bad JuJu? Believe me; you get desperate to know why it is--- One. Thing. After. Another--- Comes to visit, overstays its welcome and leaves with the valuables.

I've made it almost to the conclusion of Job's story. The friends are frustrated. Job is frustrated and up till now, God is frustratingly silent. Then...in the middle of all that “Sturm und Drang” God speaks from the eye of storm--

-the quiet, and...after all that finger-in-the-sternum” discussion, He didn’t answer as I would have expected. I would have unloaded. I would have set them straight. I would have made it very, very clear I, God am offended by what they think. Of course God approaches the whole issue in His own unique way—He asks Job some tongue-in-cheek questions about creation...in the whole of chapter 38 we see a tender, playful Father describing to His child how the world works. Beautiful! It moved me to tears when I consider my “Good, Good Father” who is attentive to me...to you...to all of creation. Nothing slips past His notice. Nothing! What a reassurance for those of us who wonder, because we’re human and can’t help it, if God is aware. Does He really see me in this terrible place?

I hope you are curious enough to slowly and carefully read at least chapter 38 of Job. I pray you come away absolutely convinced your life is in the loving, capable hands and sight of the God who created you, planned your life and is actively involved. Yes, He is Good. Let’s live in that truth every day.

The summer newsletter with lots of important information about our coming events will be in your mailbox the first week of June. Our friend, Nazareth is bringing “Laughter for All” back to San Bernardino, July 23 with giveaways, music, food and of course, comedy. I’ll be speaking to the crowd of around 5,000 about our center. Interested? Call for details. It’s FREE!

We look forward to Saturday, August 6-11 AM-2 PM: Our annual women’s tea, “You’re a Beautiful Bride.” Vintage wedding gowns, great food, silent auction and a very rare treat—our own intimate time with my dear friend, Christine Wyrzten, founder of Daughters of Promise (Daughtersofpromise.org) **Seating is limited.** Tickets available for women 16 and older on July 1. \$25. per person donation. Save the date now. You will not want to miss this special event.

And of course coming up on Friday, October 21 is our Annual Fall Gala with Keynote, Lauren Roman. More about that in our newsletter and coming letters as we move toward fall. Begin now to build your guest list and plan to host a table of eight. Underwriters always needed.

I’m leaving soon for a three-week-long road trip across country to visit friends and see my family. I don’t need to worry in my rush to leave I will forget my monthly donation to this or any other ministry I support. I plan ahead through automatic giving or a check for the whole summer up front. Can I ask you to please do the same so services to our over 300 clients each month will continue without a hiccup? Because of you, we’re in good financial shape. We need to stay that way to ensure we’re here to provide a healthy, life changing alternative to our neighbors, Planned Parenthood and Family Planning, Inc.

Have a wonderful month with lots of family, friends, BBQs, travel or whatever else floats your boat. Don’t forget the sunscreen!

For Life!

Lisa J Stiefken
Executive Director