



October 2013

KATIE'S KORNER

NEWS FROM EQUADOR



March 3rd, 2014

Back to Basics



Katie Bolgiano

I think sometimes in our walking and talking with God, we forget to go back to the basics. When we walk with Him daily, God is constantly molding us to His heart and His character through His Holy Spirit in our lives. But this past week God has brought me back to the basics and has touched my heart deeper than I can remember.

I am doing a Bible study here at school. One of the verses that caught my eye and my heart was one that I have probably heard more times that I can count. Hebrews 12:2. "...fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before Him He endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God." This verse probably sounds familiar to most because of the verse that precedes it and is concluded in this verse. ¹Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with

perseverance the race marked out for us, ² fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith." It's a great set of verses and a wonderful encouragement to us as believers. But when I read verse 2 something new struck me this time that I had never really grasped with all my heart before.

"...fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. **For the joy set before Him** He endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God."

You see, I think that most of us would agree that if we were asked to die so that others could live...knowing they might go on living messy lives (Romans 5:8), knowing that even on their best day their best efforts would come up short (Isaiah 64:6)... when we are completely honest with ourselves, I think very few of us would consider it. Then knowing how we would have to die - knowing it would be beyond painful, humiliating, dehumanizing - I for one wouldn't do it.

But Jesus did. He didn't just live a good life. He wasn't just a good guy when it was convenient. He was spotless. He said no to every temptation thrown His way. He didn't just try to be Holy - He WAS Holy as God is Holy. When I think about how many times I am tempted to even THINK a bad thought... Jesus didn't do that. He was blameless. He was CONSTANTLY filled with God's Spirit. Then, to die when He did nothing wrong EVER. He achieved holiness and perfection EVERY DAY. But He died for those who would never even strive for it. He died for a people enslaved by their sinful human nature. He died for all us - people bent on finding their own way to satisfy their desires.

And He did it because there was JOY in the cross. I don't think this is talking about our joy. He found JOY in the cross.

Let that sink in for a minute. He joyfully died for you. When this concept sunk into my heart, I cried.

I don't always look at myself with love and joy. Often times I don't like myself. I certainly wouldn't joyfully lay down my life for me. I struggle with the same thing over and over. I have battles that I

can't seem to win no matter how hard I try. There are mornings that I wake up and wish I could just go right back to sleep because I don't want to face ME. I have my fair share of insecurities. And I had always been told that Jesus died for me, which is 100% true and a nice notion. It makes me feel good to think that I was that special. But now, this...

Not for obligation, or the guilt of not doing it, or pressure from God but **FOR JOY** He died for me. **JOYFULLY** He suffered for me. That is passion. That is love. That is grace. And I don't deserve it.

When I really stop to meditate on this, the only verse that I can think of is Isaiah 64:6. "All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags; we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away." On my best day my very best effort is like gross, smelly menstrual rags to Him because on my best day He is perfect and holy and I am not. I fall short. I will never measure up. And when I think about that, the first thought that comes to my mind is that I am not worthy. I was not worth it.

But Jesus says, "Yes, you were. And if you could truly understand the depth of my love for you, you would never doubt your worth. You would never doubt your value. My love for you is unconditional. No matter how many times you walk away from me, no matter how many times you look in the mirror and devalue my beautiful creation, I will never stop loving you. I will never think of you less than I already do."

We are just about to start Lent. Many times we see it as a season of sacrifice, a time to start new disciplines. It is a time to draw close to God. But I also encourage you to let this time be one of falling more in love with a God whose love for you knows no bounds. Let Him woo you. Let Him speak to you in the quiet of a snowfall or the rain. Let His love ravish your heart. Let yourself be completely undone as you fall head-first and heart-first into the endless depth of His everlasting love.

*I would encourage you to check out this video. It touched my heart.



How He Loves Us - David Crowder (Matt Chandler & John Piper)

Updates

THANK YOU! (Santy Mamarandi):

If you are a part of the All Saints' prayer chain, you heard about Santy. He is Galo's cousin, and he considers the two of us to be cousins, too. Aside from that, he is one of my closest friends here. On January 17th he was in a terrible motorcycle accident. He fractured his skull in 3 places and was hemorrhaging in three places. He got the emergency room and needed an emergency surgery, opening up his head to get rid of some of the blood. We showed up at the hospital and waited until he was out of surgery to leave. That night I was at the hospital from about 9:30 PM until 4 AM. After getting through the operation, he was put into critical care. Doctors weren't sure he would make it, or if he would ever be the same.

God had other plans. He was released not even a week later to go home. The swelling started going down little by little. On February 9th we celebrated his birthday. God has worked a complete miracle in his life. Now, his headaches are subsiding and coming much less frequently. He is able to go to church again and is no longer house-bound.

This was such a testimony to the power of prayer. Thank you for your faithful prayers and support for Santy! Words cannot truly express how grateful we are here for your love and prayers. It is also amazing to me to see how, even across continents, it is the love and

power of Christ that unifies His church.

Quiet Critters:

Thank you, All Saints' Women's Group, for your awesome work in making and sending the Quiet Critters and the letters. The letters did get here a little after Christmas, but the children loved them. Having a personal letter for each one meant a lot. They also love the quiet critters. I will send pictures soon. With all that's going on in the neighborhood, I haven't taken my camera to school. The kids all get really excited when we get them out. They were also really appreciative that you all would make them each one. Thank you also for your patience in waiting for their arrival. I know it took longer than we had all hoped. Such is international mail I suppose.

Literacy Workshops:

Earlier this month we hosted our first ever literacy night at school. We invited families whose children are in pre-K through third grade to join us. Parents often are frustrated because they want to help their child's English and reading comprehension improve but do not have the resources or ideas to be able to assist the learning that happens in the classroom.

On Tuesday, February 18th, we hosted workshops at school. Parents were invited and greeted with a short synopsis of literacy and some research-based strategies. Then parents were given an hour to move from classroom to classroom in 15 minutes sessions. As teachers, we paired up and hosted a session. With another teacher, I taught on how to check for understanding while reading with your child. We had over 100 parents come through our session that night. All parents expressed so much gratitude for our willingness to host that, especially knowing we would have to teach their children the next day.



It truly is an honor to be able to not only be a part of my students' lives but also be a part of their families. I was reminded of the wonderful community that develops at Alliance Academy International that night. It is one of the things that makes it a very unique place to serve and grow.

Sunday School Workshop:

Before Christmas the father of one of my students approached me asking if I would be willing to give a workshop for Sunday school teachers. He asked specifically if I would speak about methods of behavior management that could be used in the Sunday school classroom and provide teachers with a time to ask specific questions about specific cases.

I felt honored that he would ask me but completely inadequate at the same time. Last year I helped a friend with this but just translated for her. This year I would be flying solo. But I knew that if God was calling me to this, He would give me the tools I would need and also the courage to stand in front of strangers and talk. After praying about it, I replied to Pastor Gustavo, telling him I would do it. Things got really busy here and as I got ready for the workshop I felt more and more stressed and less and less prepared.

On Saturday, February 22nd, I went out to a small church in a town outside of Quito called Puembo, not knowing exactly what to expect. I taught Sunday school teachers from a few different churches. We had a great discussion on serving and loving our students. It was such a blessing and encouragement to me.

I was reminded that so often God gives us opportunities to serve, knowing that we will be blessed through our service to others. But sometimes we think, "I'm too busy" or "I can't do that." And we miss out on a unique experience and possibly even another door opening up to us. We shouldn't serve with that motive, but many times when we submit to God we find that He had something even better in store for us.

Prayers for safety:

Finally, I would like to ask that you be praying for our safety here. There are two young men that have seemed to have targeted my neighborhood. They do not know where my roommate, Mandi and I live, and we intend to keep it that way, but they know where some other friends from school live and have been seen almost every day parked outside their house. The girls were assaulted at gun point on Valentine's Day and then less than a week later, both times when they were walking home from school. Since then, Mandi and I have decided that it would be best if we didn't walk around our neighborhood, even

during the day. That means a lot of taxis. We are not living in fear, but we are trying to be wise, taking any necessary precautions. Just last week they robbed two other ladies in our neighborhood but police have been unable to catch them so far.

Please pray that the young men will be apprehended and also that they would one day come to know the power and forgiveness and love of Jesus for themselves.

Finally, thank you for your love and support. It means so much to me. I had a wonderful time when I was in the US in January/February. It was a short visit, I know. It was great to see people but above all, it was amazing to be able to throw Erin a bridal shower. She is a pretty spectacular sister and I couldn't be more excited for her.

Blessings,

Katie



Stay Connected

Katie Bolgiano
Academia Alianza Internacional
Casilla 17-11-06186
Quito, ECUADOR
Phone 011-593-983720003
Kb1322@Live.com