

Imperishable Seed

Uganda

June 2017

“How are you doing?”

“Great!”

“Are you really?”

“Yes!”

Praise God this was the honest initial exchange between myself and the pastor of my home church in Wisconsin as I arrived back to my hometown. As I wrap up my first overseas term and prepare to return to Uganda for my second term serving with CVM, I am blessed to be able to say this in all truth and honesty.

It’s been a long three and a half years with challenges I never even realized I would face. Who would know that the psychological effects of growing up in a controlling cult were still affecting me a decade and a half later? Who knew that I was better suited to live and work in a city of a million plus residents rather than a quiet village? God knew. So as I prepare my presentations, sermons, and visits, Genesis 50 has been on my mind.

Joseph’s father had just died and now his brothers were beginning to worry that he was still holding a grudge. One might suspect that Joseph’s grudge would still be alive considering his brother’s had sold him into slavery and drastically altered the course of his life. Instead he responded graciously by saying “*You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives. So then, don’t be afraid. I will provide for you and your children.*” And he reassured them and spoke kindly to them.”

This fully applies to my life. Specifically, I see how Satan constantly intends to do damage and God comes around and uses it for good. It is, however, definitely easier writing this when I am looking back at it, rather than when I am facing it.

If I had known four years ago what I know now about my first term on the mission field, would I have entered the plane on December 1st, 2013 with such a bounce in my step? No. But fortunately we don’t know what’s coming towards us. Does *not* knowing make it easier? Often times, no. Humans tend to want more certainty in their life. *What if? Are you sure?* And if God keeps prodding as if to say, yes, just step out in faith already, we are likely to rebut with, *but I’m not good enough yet!*

This makes me think of the very first time I stepped out in faith. Well, second, if you count my accepting Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior on April 2nd, 2002. Some time after that, my pastor’s wife approached me to consider becoming a leader for the church youth group. I let her know rather quickly that was a terrible idea. *No way! I am way too shy to speak publically. I have nothing of value to share in meetings. I sometimes don’t know if what I’m remembering is what the Bible really says or something I was told it said.* She didn’t flinch. Instead she encouraged me to just take time to pray about it. Even worse, she asked me how much I trusted God to work in me and grow me in the areas I was weak.

Soon after that, I began my transition into youth leadership. Now, all these years later, I’m speaking to groups, teaching students, coordinating short term mission trips, traveling the world, sharing Jesus with a Muslim at a police station, driving in chaotic Kampala traffic, and who knows what else. A faith journey commences as one-step-after-another, and the journey doesn’t happen over just one night. Likewise, did the vet school new

freshmen expect to repair a shattered femur on the second week of school? Or did they trust the faculty for guidance? Chances are they made a mistake at some point in their university years that cost the life of an animal too. But rather than disqualifying them from the profession, it probably taught them a valuable lesson that later helped them save another life.

Don't worry, I'm writing this as a reminder to myself just as much as an encouragement to everyone who reads this. If I thought about what the next two years might bring, I might hesitate a bit to board the airplane in August.

What are you hesitating on right now?

By the Grace of God,



Emily

PS: I was able to attend my Grandma Arndt's Ninetieth Birthday Celebration when I first arrived in Wisconsin in the beginning of May. It was nice to be around for a special celebration and spend time with family. Amazingly, seven of her eight grandchildren were able to attend, coming from Arkansas, Florida, Minnesota, Texas, Uganda, and Wisconsin.



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