

RANSOMED HEART

LOVE GOD. LIVE FREE.

August 2013

Dear Friends,

First, thank you – back in June I asked if you would support this beautiful mission called Ransomed Heart and you responded with such kindness. You are such vital partners as you carry the message forward in your world, fight for us in your prayers and support this work financially each month. Thank you great hearts!!!!

This month we wanted to share with you a bit more from Stasi's new book *Becoming Myself*. A few of us on the team are on our second or third read through it and loving it more each time. This excerpt is from the chapter entitled *Beauty Forged Through Suffering*. I'll be honest with you – I've been a little concerned about how followers of Jesus understand suffering these days. Many dear ones are chasing breakthrough so hard they have subtly bought into the idea that if we just walk in the power of the Kingdom we can avoid all suffering. Oh, how I wish it were true...but nothing in the teaching of Jesus supports this. In fact, there is a sacred invitation in the Scriptures to share in the sufferings of Christ (see Romans 5:3, 2 Timothy 1:8, Col 1:24).

While we journey through this broken world, and *especially* as we seek to advance the Kingdom, suffering will come into our lives and the question is – what will we do then? I'll let Stasi take it from here:

“My mother could be a very driven woman; we couldn't walk on the carpet in the living room because we would leave footprints. My mom could be short with me; she could be controlling and demanding; she failed in many ways. Not in every way, not by a long shot, but she did have her rough edges. My mother also loved Jesus. When cancer began to ravage her life at the age of 71, a startling transformation began to take place. My mother softened; she became gentler than she had before—or she became gentle more often. She loosened her grasp on control; it just didn't matter. She lost her edge to demand or criticize. She said “I love you” more than she ever had. The beauty that was always there began to come forth in truly amazing ways. Our last 4 months were the best months of love and relationship we ever shared.

My mother suffered intensely the last months of her 72 years. She had suffered much in the long months prior to them as well. But in those final months of life, she leaned into God and came to know his love in a way that filled her heart with peace, rest, and joy. Unable to swallow anything, my mom received nourishment via a feeding tube. A tiny sip of water was impossible for her to take down. She hoped that when she crossed over from life to Life, Jesus would be waiting for her holding a large, cold glass of water.

My mom kept a diary all her life. Not journals, diaries; little entries of how she spent her days. A few months after she died, I was reading through her diary from her last year of life when a note in her precious handwriting fell out. This is what it said:

I wish to thank the beautiful priests and parishioners at St. Edwards Church and San Felipe de Jesus for their prayers during my illness. I had an unexpected diagnosis and it has been

the most awesome, rewarding and glorious time God has ever given to me. I thank God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit from the depth of my soul. ~ Mary Jane Morris

My mother actually gave thanks in her suffering—not *for* the suffering, but for what it did in her life. It opened her up to relationship; it caused her to see the value of love over clean carpets and a neat kitchen; it enabled her to offer love and receive love. And though her battle with cancer ended up costing her life, what she gained through the pain she named “the most awesome, rewarding and glorious time God has ever given me.” She became the beautiful woman she was always meant to be.

And she’s drinking Living Water now!

I am surrounded by people who are surrendering their lives to Jesus in deeper ways. They may not understand why things have happened as they have, but they are trusting God that no matter what, He is good. Our friend Scott has grown to know and trust God profoundly. He sent us a little note on the twenty-eighth anniversary of his fall from a ladder that left him paralyzed from the waist down. Scott and his wife know God in a way few of us do. He simply wrote, “No regrets.” The note brought John and me to tears.

God didn’t give my mom cancer any more than he caused Scott to fall. He didn’t cause it. But he will use it. He will use it to reveal to us who He really is in the face of tragedy and anguish. He will use it to reveal to us who we really are. Jesus wants you to know who you are. He wants us to see ourselves as our God sees us. The most important mirror for us to look in is our reflection in his eyes.

I would like to become a woman who is as desperate for God in my joy as I am in my sorrow. That has not happened yet. Nothing brings my heart to fully run after God like being in a season of grief. It may be grief over the way I have failed my sons or my husband. It may be sorrow over a revelation of how my selfishness has hurt my friends. It may be pain over the suffering that one I love is experiencing. But nothing causes me to seek God like pain.”

At *Ransomed Heart* we believe that breakthrough is available. We believe we can experience the life of Jesus as the source of our life. We believe there is great joy and beauty to be found in this life. But we also understand that suffering cannot be avoided and if you believe it can, it will throw you hard when it comes. Rather, we want to be transformed by our suffering; we want to find Jesus in it, and through it. *Becoming Myself* is a book about hope and transformation, about a deeper place with God. You are going to love it.

Help us spread the message of redemption; help us rescue hearts and lives. Tell the women you know about this wonderful new book!

For Jesus,


John