

The Heartbeat



February 2019

Limitless Love

I heard a message from God's Word over the radio recently and it struck me as never before. The main concept of it was the fact that we can't give anything to someone else that God hasn't already given to us. Simple, yet profound, at least in my mind. As I think about love, the real deal, the stuff of I Corinthians 13, nothing to do with emotions, nothing to do with temporary euphoria, and everything to do with sacrifice, laying down our lives (our time, our energy, our desires, our agenda, our to-do list) for the betterment of another, I truly had a bit of a breakthrough moment as so often I hit the end of myself and don't fully rely on God to fuel my frail, human heart.

As I think about this ministry that each and every one of our lives are invested in on some level, I ponder how we can continue to share this message with others and, honestly, with ourselves in the days, months, and years to come. Maybe you can relate as I think about the times that I feel as though I truly have nothing left to give. Spent. Burnt. Fried. Exhausted. Then it occurs to me that all of those feelings—however real they are in the moment—are just an illusion. Because of Christ, because of the Holy Spirit, because of my Father in Heaven I am never and will never be any of those things. Spent. Burnt. Fried. Exhausted. Ever. **Never, ever, will I ever be any of those things.** To be totally spent isn't possible because of the promises of God as He vows to renew our strength as the eagles. Never will any of us who belong to Him be truly fried by exhaustion because we are literally grafted into an eternal line of limitless energy. The same energy that brought the universe and everything beyond it into being is the same energy that each of us can lay claim to because of Christ. I'm no astrophysicist but even my little brain can comprehend that truth as being astoundingly spectacular.

What thrills me almost as much as the thought of what this reality can do in my own life is the fact that we have the privilege of proclaiming this truth to each life that walks through our doors at 16 East Pine Street. To break through the grand illusions that imprison so many lives is the greatest of privileges and is truly a spiritual battlefield.

Please pray that in the days, weeks and months to come each and every one of us will lay hold of these incredible promises of God like never before. Regardless of what season of life we find ourselves in, can we vow to each other to truly cling to His promise of unlimited strength, unlimited power in our lives because of Christ? Can we promise to consciously throw off, carve out, dig out, anything in our lives that blocks the channel of His unlimited, eternal, holy & unrivaled power, love and energy as it flows freely from the Throne of our Father into our hearts, hands, lives, and communities? As my thoughts cycle back to the concept that began this writing, can we just let it sink in: "I can't give anything to anyone that hasn't already been given by God to me." When we couple this reality with the limitless, vastness of this power of love that we have full access to, it's a real game changer, isn't it?

(Continued...)



Valentine's Day through St. Patrick's Day!

Life Saver Ministries

2019 Love 4 Life Fundraiser

\$19 = 100#s of supplies including diapers!

*What to do: follow directions on reverse...

It's that time of year again!! Our Love 4 Life campaign runs from Valentine's day through St. Patrick's day and is a hugely important way by which you assist in funding our TLC (The Love of Christ) program so we may obtain needed items through our bulk supplier. A gift of \$19 will purchase over 100 POUNDS of items that can include diapers, blankets, household items and food for our growing ministry. This is one of our 4 main fundraising efforts and a vital part of keeping our programs well supplied. If you would be interested in promoting this effort in your church, civic group, or circle of family & friends, we will be happy to send you business card sized pledge cards that can be mailed in with your donation. Please contact us at lifesaverheartbeat@gmail.com if you are interested in being part of this initiative!

When we truly view God's love as being the transformative force that it is and truly embrace the fact that we are the conductors of that great force, it's enough to be breathtaking. We are planted in an area of such incredible need, it is truly a modern day mission field like no other. We have so much as a society and yet we are spiritually bankrupt. There is an abundance of food, clothing and shelter, but children and families still going without. There is technology like we have never seen before since the dawn of mankind, but very little skill or aptitude in the way of day to day existence and survival. I am not intending to make a blanket statement, so please know that I am aware that there are exceptions to the rule, but I truly believe that in communities such as the one we serve in (and there are hundreds of very similar communities across our state, thousands nationwide), we are seeing a cultural landslide that is beyond disturbing. It's as though there is a "Recipe for Societal Disaster Cookbook" somewhere and it is being followed precisely. Faith and family are eroded into non-existence and we have a drug epidemic that is growing teeth, gaining traction every hour of every day and never sleeps. Here at our center, we had a young woman come in right before Christmas who literally dropped her kids off with a relative and disappeared into the drug underworld for about 8 months. Three little boys. No mom. Eight months. To be honest with you, prior to this, she was one of our "better" moms who attend our center in that her children seemed to be a higher priority than that of others and yet this evil got a hold of her. Thank God she had relatives who stepped in and did the best they could, but still there was something that took this mother's heart and twisted it in such a way that the love for her sons couldn't hold a candle to the allure of the addiction. Thankfully, she came back. Thankfully, we have her back in our fold and hopefully she will stay safe and well. I can't promise you those three boys were well cared for, or are even now. I can't promise you they weren't victimized as abuse of all kinds is so rampant. I can however promise you that there are scores of kids just like them

who were either not fortunate enough to have a family member or friend to step in to care for them or fortunate enough to be spared being put in the care of someone who would continue the pattern of abuse and neglect and were placed in foster care instead where they await a home that will provide & care for them.

In closing, a key element of our mission here at Life Saver Ministries is prevention—preventing the choices that lead to the devastating lifestyles and continued patterns of domestic violence, substance abuse, unplanned pregnancies, and every other issue of life that God's Word has the remedy for. Part of prevention is truly reaching lives in a proactive manner BEFORE horrible decisions are made, BEFORE consequences heap difficulty on a young life, BEFORE a life is derailed from unlimited potential to unending despair. Please consider, prayerfully and fervently, how God is calling you to get involved in conducting His love into a profoundly broken system that is striving to rescue kids who are truly trapped in situations that they have no control over and no escape from apart from another human being's sacrificial love. There are opportunities forthcoming to become a certified foster parent. There are opportunities for us to shine with blinding brilliance into a dark and hurting community with the kind of light that can only be conducted from the Light of the world through the hearts of His people. If ever there was a time to dive in with reckless abandon, the time is now.

His love never fails. His strength renews us daily.

His love knows no limits. His love casts out fear.

Please prayerfully join us and take the next step by contacting me

at lifesaverheartbeat@gmail.com or at 320-6789 if you are ready to answer this call.

Saving lives and changing lives is what this beautiful God we serve does and I can't

wait to see what He will do through our willing hearts. **-Abbey Ballard, Ministry Director**

How big of a problem do we have? New York State Facts & Figures...

In 2015, there were 5,172 children in Foster Care awaiting adoption. (The numbers continue to climb.)

In 2015, the healthcare costs of the opioid addiction epidemic were over \$1,255,668,294

There are over 26,000 children currently in foster care with nearly 700 awaiting adoption and over 3,000 likely to be freed for adoption within the year.

Home to Home & Heart to Heart

Having spoken to some families who have adopted children from foster care locally, here's what they have to say:

"I honestly can't imagine where my daughter would be if she wasn't with me. She was set to age out of the system, had life threatening health issues and no one to advocate for her. God truly worked a miracle in her life when He brought us together. My daughter is a healthy young woman now, who, despite some physical disabilities, works full time, drives, has her own apartment and loves the Lord. It's no exaggeration to say that God saved her life and it's a privilege to have been part of Him doing that."

-Mom of 5 children adopted from foster care speaking of her oldest whom she adopted when the child was a teenager.

"Looking back, I almost wish we had adopted while our older biological kids were younger so that this is all they know. I think it would have been a greater service to our older children to have known nothing else but an open home and caring for others through foster care from the very beginning. I know God's timing is perfect, but I would really encourage families who are hesitant to get involved to know that the best gift they can give their children is training in the faith and molding their hearts to look like God's. When that is the reality from day one, it becomes their "normal", so anything short of not helping others and having an open home seems weird to them. I think it can be perceived as taking something away from kids to expect them to share all that God has given them – home, parents, toys, space, life, in general, when really, it's the absolute best thing for them."

-Parents of 2 biological children and 2 adopted children brought to the family through foster care.