

ALL CREATION SPEAKS



By Annie Schiller

As I sit here, looking out the window at the birds on the feeder with the sun shining through the window, Huckleberry on my left cuddled up right beside me and Tippi on my right lying peacefully, soaking up the beautiful rays on a cold Michigan day. The horses are at the gates looking for their breakfast. If it was feasible, they too would be in the house cozy with me.

I'm forever grateful for the love and companionship they give. I'm grateful for all the lessons they teach me. I know the Lord speaks, teaches and loves me through them. The greatest Biblical lessons have been taught to me through these wonderful, precious, furry friends as well as being out in nature and gardening. I pray these parables I've learned will be a blessing to you too.

Matthew 13:34 *Jesus always used stories.*

Illustrations like these when speaking to the crowds. In fact, he never spoke to them without using such parables.

He talked to the Fisherman about fishing, the Farmers about farming, and to the Horsemen about horses.



1. Through
2. Valuable
3. Sally
4. Wait
5. Poop
6. Dont Harden your Heart
7. Fixed
8. Spurs
9. Gate Keeper
10. Clogged Pipe
11. Life on Mission
12. Reflector oven
13. Night Ride
14. Just a closer walk
15. Burdens
16. Endure
17. Set my face like Flint
18. Good Medicine
19. Bits
20. You are Mine
21. The Talker
22. Lessons from Levi 1
23. Lessons from Levi 2
24. Pit to the Palace
25. No Quit Cowboy
26. Facing the Scary PT 1
27. Facing the Scary PT 2

GO Through



A good friend and I went riding one day. It had rained the night before, and many of the trails had standing water. Left to their own devices, horses will usually avoid water at all costs and go around mud puddles.

We came upon a trail with a large puddle right in the middle. Many times I simply let my horse go around. No big deal. But this time I wanted to see if Fritz would walk through it.

As he approached the puddle, I lined him up and asked him to move forward.

Nope.

He swerved to the right. He swerved to the left. He tried turning around and backing up. It looked more like a line dance than a trail ride! All I wanted was for him to go forward and through, but that button seemed broken.

Because there was so much resistance, I knew this needed to become a teaching moment. As I explained to my friend—who was patiently waiting while we struggled with this puddle—there are times when I cannot allow a horse to avoid obstacles. If you've ever been riding on a narrow trail with trees on both sides, you know that a horse suddenly swerving to avoid a puddle can result in your knee meeting a tree. Sometimes avoiding the puddle can be more dangerous than going through it.



So I kept Fritz facing the puddle no matter where the rest of him wanted to go. He became frustrated and threw what could only be described as a horse-sized temper tantrum. Meanwhile, I stayed calm, rewarding every small step in the right direction and releasing pressure whenever he moved toward the puddle.

Selah... Pause and think about that.

It took time and consistency, but eventually Fritz decided to trust me. He discovered the puddle wasn't going to swallow him whole, and he walked right through it.

Good boy, Fritz!

As soon as we reached the other side, I looked at my friend and said, "Sometimes you just have to go through."

The moment those words left my mouth, I knew God was speaking to me too.

Don't we all want to avoid the puddles on life's trail? Those things we'd rather ignore and walk around?

Maybe it's a cluttered closet you've been meaning to tackle but keep shutting the door on. Maybe it's a difficult conversation you've been avoiding. Maybe it's grief, forgiveness, fear, or a decision you've been putting off.

We all have puddles on our trail.

As I reflected on that day, I could almost hear Jesus, the Master Horseman, whispering, "I am with you. The puddle before you will not consume you, but you must go through it. I will walk through it with you."

The puddle remains a source of fear and anxiety as long as we stand in front of it. But when we trust Him and move forward, what once seemed overwhelming becomes something we leave behind.

God loves us too much to let us avoid everything. Sometimes the only way to freedom is through.

Reflection

What puddle have you been avoiding?

Take a moment to name it. Then picture yourself walking through it—not alone, but with Jesus beside you. The One who leads you is faithful, and He will never ask you to go somewhere He isn't willing to accompany you.



Isaiah 43: 1-3 *Do not be afraid for I ransomed you . I've called you by name. You are mine. When you go through deep waters I will be with you when you go through rivers of difficulty you will not drown.*

Prayer

Lord, help me trust Your guidance when You encourage me to move forward through the puddles of life. Thank You that You never ask me to face them alone. Give me the courage to stop avoiding the things that stand in my way and the faith to follow where You lead.

Help me be like a willing horse that says, "I may not want to, but not my will—Your will be done."

Thank You for walking through every puddle with me and for leading me safely to the other side.

In Jesus' name, Amen.



Looking out my window the other day I noticed all the sparrows that were hanging around. I immediately thought of the scripture about the sparrows.

Luke 12:6-7 (NIV) Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? Yet not one of them is forgotten by God. Indeed, the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.

Why did Jesus make reference to sparrows?? They are everywhere and dull in uniqueness and color. Nothing Special... A dime a dozen, or like scripture says five for two pennies. Who goes bird watching for a sparrow? Have you ever heard anyone say, "OH WOW look at that beautiful sparrow"? I could see if Jesus had referred to a beautiful Red Cardinal or something more spectacular, but a sparrow..... Have you ever felt ordinary, not valuable and forgotten? I know I have. Our culture values the winners and the wealthy...the Cardinals and Colorful. But what about the sparrows?

I have had the privilege of visiting people in memory care facilities over the years doing Animal Assisted Activities and Therapies, as well as providing spiritual care. Many of these residents have a form of Dementia or Alzheimers. My heart breaks for the ones whose families and friends do not come to visit or want to be a part of their lives. They are not valued anymore due to their age and disease. Some have been dropped off and forgotten. The picture is of a very special man in a facility holding a sparrow to remind him of what Jesus says about him regardless of how he is made to feel. Here at the Ranch we have a lot of geriatric horses that the world would say are of no value. They won't win money or a ribbon. They may not have the confirmation and stamina they used to have, but each and every one of them is valuable to me!!! No matter their age ,breed or ability I see God using them all to bless others in miraculous ways. I LOVE that Jesus values the ordinary sparrow. Not ONE is forgotten!

If you feel forgotten my sparrow friend, know our Heavenly Father HIGHLY Values you!!!!





Need some inspiration or a bit of motivation? Who is with me wanting to celebrate someone's success?! She won't win money, saddle or buckle (although I think she should) but nevertheless pretty amazing. Sally started her Horsemanship journey about 5 yrs ago. She was a bit scared of horses due to a bad experience. Can anyone relate? She started learning about the relationship she could have with a horse. That a horse was not a thing or object just to be ridden but a wonderful partner that was to be loved, cherished and enjoyed. We took our time with foundational ground work then eventually riding .She bonded with my husband's horse Lucky and he has taken great care of her, building her confidence and skills. Bit by bit their trust in each other has grown. In fact we call Lucky her horse now because he loves her as much as she loves him. Not too many horses get a horse box delivered every month. LOL When he hears her voice he comes running, or be it fast walk or trot. He can be lazy Lucky..



The things in the beginning of her horsemanship journey that she NEVER thought she could do she has accomplished and more. Even after a slip a few years ago that landed her in the creek (I have the picture) she did not allow fear to destroy her love of riding. There is a saying by one of our favorite Bible Teachers “ Do It Afraid” and she put that into practice by getting back on after a fall. Fast forward a few yrs to present day and here is our conversation;

Me: Wanna ride in the woods tonight?

Sally: I'd like to ride bareback.

Me: GO GIRL!!!

How INSPIRING!!! I know people who have had horses their whole life and compete in all sorts of disciplines that would NEVER think to trail ride bareback. If she would have let fear take over after her fall years back she would have never gotten to experience the thrill and joy of trail riding her buddy bareback.



Life Lessons:

- Small steps add up to big things! Don't despise small beginnings.

Zechariah 4:10 (NLT) Do not despise these small beginnings, for the Lord rejoices to see the work begin

- Get back on the horse! Don't allow a fall to stop you from doing something you love. Do it afraid!

Psalms 34:4 (NLT) I prayed to the Lord, and he answered me. He freed me from all my fears.

Lord, thank you for helping us make progress bit by bit as we learn to trust and follow you. Help us to overcome all fear that would keep us from enjoying all the many blessings and adventures you have for us.

Wait!



I've been hearing myself tell my dog, Huckleberry, to wait...A LOT!! He's a little red Cattle Dog that needs some work on impulse control. He's bred to chase and go after cattle and livestock, so I understand his tendencies. However, I know I must teach him to wait to keep him safe! When he takes off chasing something, he does not look, think or listen. He just runs ahead! My cue "Wait" does not mean "No you can't", it means "Not right now"! It means you must focus on me and not the thing you're wanting to run after! It means I will make sure it's safe and clear to pursue after I evaluate the situation. It's not punishment even though he probably feels like it is. It is my love for him, and wanting to keep him safe!

Just the other day, he jumped the gun, deciding he knew better than to obey my asking him to wait, and ran down the dock to the boat. Because the door was not open yet, and the boat was in a different spot, he tried jumping over the door instead of obeying my command to WAIT! Instead of waiting for me to open the door, he decided to try to jump it! He did not make the jump, and down he went, in between the boat and the dock, into the water. I was probably more freaked out than he was. Thank God he had his life vest on! (yes I'm one of those moms).



He swam under the dock, through the sea weed, to the shore. He was wet and scared. We both ran to each other and hugged, grateful that he was OK. I remember saying if you had just waited for me!!!

Then, not but a few minutes later, when we were finally going to go on a boat ride our other dog

Chunk got nervous because the boat was in a different spot and his normal way of getting on was different. So, instead of listening to me he just ran to do what he usually did. The problem was, there was no ramp so he ran through the lily pads and grown up weeds and jumped. Bam! He hit the front of the boat and...SPLASH! My heart had not quite recovered from Huckleberry's episode. Dazed and confused as

to what had just happened, I ran to him and put leashes on both him and Huckleberry. I said, I told you to WAIT!!!! Both incidents could've been avoided if they had just waited and trusted that I knew better and that I was preparing a safe and fun ride. I had to have time to open the door. They both thought they knew better and trumped my instruction to wait! My telling them to wait was not a no you're not going, it was a wait until I have everything ready for a safe fun adventure with me. It dawned on me that this was exactly what the Lord was saying to me, and he was showing me, through my Furkids, a very important parable. I have a Cattle Dog personality. I do everything fast and I'm quick to respond. I hate waiting. I hate waiting in line. I hate waiting in any traffic. I just hate waiting!! I tend to jump into things too fast!! Patience and impulse control have never been my strength, but I see the value in being trained to wait, just like my dogs!!!

Right now, I am working on that skill with my dogs all the time. I need to really get it into their heads to wait and look to me for direction, instead of running into trouble or danger. It's a skill, I know, that could save their lives and keep them from harm! So, I will continue to work on it with them, not because I'm a control freak, but because I love them with all my heart!!!

Like Huckleberry, who assumed it was an open door and just took off, or Chunk who just assumed he should do what he always did out of routine, neither waited for direction! I've been guilty of both offenses!!!

Remember, waiting is not a NO, it could be a NOT NOW, something better is in store!

Lord help us wait for your guidance and direction. Help us to wait until you open the door, in your timing!..Knowing it just might keep us from making a big SPLASH!!!

Those that wait on the Lord will SOAR not splash!

"Yet the Lord longs to be gracious to you; therefore he will rise up to show you compassion. For the Lord is a God of justice. Blessed are all who wait for him!"
Isaiah 30:18 NIV



Dump it where it belongs



After cleaning stalls the other day making my way with my oversized and overloaded wheelbarrow to the poop pile, a scripture came to me that I just read that morning. (All my horse friends agree that some of the best pondering and praying times are in the barn cleaning stalls.) It was a scripture about what we store up in our hearts and minds.

Luke 6:45 b *For the overflow of what has been stored in your heart will be seen by your fruit and will be heard in your words.*

Throughout the Good Book what we store up is talked about quite a bit. Store up treasures in heaven not of the earth. (Matthew 6:19) Store up.... And right now being a daughter of The Canning Queen I can tell you Granny has been storing up! She has been storing up things to bless her family and friends for months now.



I realized at that moment heading down the hill to the pile that there are things we are to store up and things we are to put on the poop pile. You don't store poop! You don't bring poop into your home where it brings all kinds of nastys you dump it on the poop pile .

It made me think about some poop I had been storing. When someone talks about you , rejects you, hurts you , is unkind, uncaring ,says bad about you or tells you that you are not good enough. What do you do with that? Do you store it and ponder on it for days where it gets you down, feeling defeated and ready to quit. Or when that crap comes at you do you scoop it up and throw it on the pile?

I was walking with my boy Huckleberry enjoying the beauty of the woods minding our own business and all of a sudden out of the blue a not so nice thought about a person who had wronged me pooped in my head. Has that ever happened to you ?? Like a rapid fire machine gun of negative thoughts. Where did that come from?? I started thinking about it and was getting madder and madder every step I took when I had an Ah Ha moment. I realized my wheelbarrow was overloaded with all this negative garbage.



I said NOPE I'm not storing that anger, bitterness and resentment in my house. That's going on the poop pile! When I saw the two choices I had in my mind as God had shown me it was easier to make that choice.

Store good things like God's word:

Proverbs 3:1

*My child, never forget the things I have taught you.
Store my commands in your heart.*

Store up things that encourages you to run your race:

Hewbrews 12:1, *So we must let go of every wound that has pierced us and the sin we so easily fall into. Then we will be able to run life's marathon race with passion and determination, for the path has already been marked out before us.*

Store up His word to you that says:

Philipians 4:13 *For I can do everything through Christ, [d] who gives me strength.*

We are Victorious in HIm! Store That.

Crap is gonna happen but you don't have to bring it into your home .Choose to dump it on the poop pile.



Don't Harden
your Heart



Andy, a.k.a. "Boss" is a wonderful man who has come to the Ranch for many years. Every Wednesday at 4 o'clock, he comes to help me do chores, play with horses, visit, have a devotion, and eat snacks. Always snacks! When Andy and his family visit, everyone gets snacks including all the horses. The world may define Andy as someone with Cerebral Palsy, but all of us that are called his "Barn Buddies" here at the Ranch would define him as the sweetest, most caring, godly person we know, Andy is a wonderful example of having the fruit of the spirit that the word of God talks about.

Galatians 5:22-23 *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.*

So it's no surprise that he took us all to Church in his own special way, on one particular Wednesday. We were both working together giving the horses their hay. One of the mares Pocha, who is a bit of a bully towards her stablemate Fritz, charged into his stall scaring him off in order to eat his hay, all before I was able to shut his door.

We were both working together giving the horses their hay. One of the mares Pocha, who is a bit of a bully towards her stablemate Fritz, charged into his stall scaring him off in order to eat his hay, all before I was able to shut his door. As I was pushing her out of his stall, I said out loud "We don't do bullies here and you're not getting any grain!"

At that point, Andy agreed with me. Then shortly thereafter, he looked at me and said "Mrs Schiller, don't you think we should soften our hearts and give her some grain? I don't think God ever hardens his heart toward us." Oh my,..... I just stood there, frozen, looking at him, but not saying a word, knowing that the Lord was speaking to me. I finally said "you're right Boss", and we gave her some grain.

We usually do a devotion at the end of our time together. However, this was as if it was Jesus himself was teaching his disciples as he did with everyday life parables. Teaching spiritual truths through everyday life. Sometimes when you hear a good sermon, you still forget it the day after. Although, this is one I will never forget! Many times since that night, I hear Mrs. Schiller, "Don't you think we should soften our hearts? I don't think God ever hardens his hearts towards us."

Hebrews 3:15 *Remember what it says: Today when you hear his voice, don't harden your hearts as Israel did when they rebelled."*

Lord help us to always be kind , loving and caring no matter what others actions are towards us.

I believe God speaks to us in many ways, if we are listening.

Thank you for the message Boss!



Fixed on you



Isaiah 26:3 *New Living Translation (NLT)*

3 You will keep in perfect peace all who trust in you, all whose thoughts are fixed on you!

Perfect Peace???? With all we as a people are going through.... With so much death and devastation all around us... Fear trying to consume us. How can I have any peace in this storm?

If you believe in the good book (Which is our rule book for the arena of life) like I do, it promises peace to those whose thoughts are fixed on the Good Lord. When I read this I immediately thought of two things. A Cuttin Horse and a Border Collie. HUGH??

God speaks to my heart mostly through parables. Some of the best lessons I've ever learned has been working with horses and dogs. It's biblical! Look through the Good Book and you will see that He talks to the Fisherman about Fishing, the Farmers about Farming and to the Horseman through Horses and yes even those of us crazy in love with our dogs He can speak His lessons through them. (Can you think of a better example of unconditional Love) If we listen.....



Have you ever seen a good Cutting horse? That horse is so extremely focused on its calf that it does not matter what is going on around it. That horse is dialed in and laser focused. Everything else in the world is of no concern when every thought is fixed on that calf. We see it in our dogs too. Have you ever seen the Border Collie Stare?? Or what about the dog who is OCD for his ball. Nothing will draw their attention away from it.

I don't deny, or put my head in the sand on what is going on around us but I choose to fix my thoughts on the Lord and His promises. If I do so He promises I can have peace in the storm. Not when it passes but right in the midst IF I keep my thoughts fixed on Him. Oh the prize my friends is more valuable than a check, trophy or ribbon. Our reward is much greater, it's HIS PEACE.

Spurs



Hebrews 10:24 (NIV)

*And let us consider how we may spur one another
on toward love and good deeds,*

This scripture came to mind this morning.

Sometimes we need a bit of spurring on. In the Western horse world when you hear the word spur it often comes with a feeling of abuse or mistreatment to the horse. I like how the English world calls the spur and aid. Whichever term you like if used properly it's something that's meant to help not hinder your performance. Sometimes in the arena of life we need a little aid (spur) to help us to yield to God's word when we really just want to get bracy and run off in our own direction. Sometimes we need an aid to get us to hustle and pass that finish line.

Let's face it we all have days of hit barrels and no paychecks. You know those days that you're just not your best. Everything goes wrong, stuff flies out of your mouth, bad attitude and the list goes on. I was at a Barrel Race this summer and one of the best in the business fell off his horse on the second. It happens... But that one run or even a rotten season does not have to define you.



But my challenge to you is, will you be the one to spur someone on?? I love to see my friends have good runs in and out of the arena of life. I have seen way too much judgment and criticism both in and out of the arena that is so devastating to people that they just quit. What a difference it can make in someone's life to spur them on. When I enter the arena on my little Fire Breathing Dragon I have a sense of confidence knowing that my mom is in the stands praying and cheering us on (LOUDLY). Her encouragement is invaluable and when I hear her I hustle a bit harder. Be that person! You will never know how your encouragement that day could be the very thing to spur someone on to try another day and not get discouraged and quit.

Friends I spur you on to run your race to be and do to all that God has called you to!



Gate Keeper



Boundaries...The Bible says that we are to guard our hearts. I've heard the Lord whisper to me more than once "I said guard it not harden it." But that's another devotion.

We should look at our hearts as we do a garden that must be protected. I had my husband build some fencing around my garden beds to keep the critters out after I learned the hard way about the importance of boundaries. Years ago, when my mom and I were at a barrel race, I got a picture from him of some pepper plants that were eaten completely down to the dirt. Augh! They were doing so good too! I was so disappointed with myself as I thought I should've protected them better, and it was no one's fault but my own. They were destroyed because there was open access to all those plants with no safeguards or boundaries. I worked so hard to grow those pepper plants and now they would never produce what I had intended for them...the fresh salsa, the stuffed peppers, and especially for me, the enhanced flavor they would bring when added to my scrambled eggs for breakfast...Yum! But now my hopes for them were long gone, as this year they would not fulfill their destiny. Friends, just pause and think about that with me for a moment...NO BOUNDARIES mean NO FULFILLMENT OF DESTINY!



Open access to your garden(your heart) is not good! It allows the enemy to come in and sow his evil Darnel counterfeit seeds. It allows him to destroy your well intentioned garden and to take what you worked so hard to grow!!

I know this scripture is talking about a sheepfold here and not a garden, but I see some valuable principles about boundaries nonetheless. The reason that there was a wall in the first place was to protect His valuable sheep, so for me this applies. There were boundaries and a gate, so it wasn't like no one could ever come in or out, but it was up to the gatekeeper who would be allowed access into that space where His valuable sheep were. Jesus refers to himself in this scripture as both gate and Shepherd. But who is the gatekeeper then?...It is Me!!!! It's my responsibility to allow who gets access and who doesn't. All access to the garden of my heart needs to funnel through the gate which is Jesus. The way I see it is if something or someone tries to get into my garden I must measure it against God's Word, and the wisdom of the Holy Spirit. If I don't have peace about something I must say halt, you do not have access until I do a background check and investigate. The Bible says peace is my umpire.

Colossians 3:15 (Amplified Bible, Classic Edition)

And let the peace (soul harmony which comes) from Christ rule (act as umpire continually) in your hearts [deciding and settling with finality all questions that arise in your minds, in that peaceful state] to which as [members of Christ's] one body you were also called [to live]. And be thankful (appreciative), [giving praise to God always].

Peace is the Umpire in the game that calls the shots.

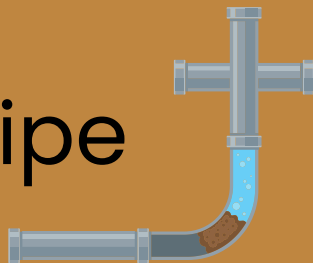
It dictates whether something is in or out. If no peace, no access. No matter what! Remember the enemy comes disguised as an angel of light (2 Cor 11:14) to sow his evil seeds like Darnel wheat. That counterfeit seed that often looks like the real seed, but has no value. One thing that comes to mind are the seeds of lust, which is a counterfeit for God's love. It's everywhere in our culture today. There are so many TV commercials, TV shows and movies that say this is what Love is. But when looked at through the the eyes of scripture(the gate) and Jesus' teachings, it could not be further from the truth of what God's Word says love is.

(1 Corinthians 13)

Friends we must be on guard. These counterfeit deceptive evil seeds scattered and sown in our hearts by the enemy of our souls can take root when we leave the gate open and allow everything and everyone in.

Lord, help us to be the Gatekeeper of our hearts. Help us to be diligent and obedient as to what you say is allowed in or out.

Clogged Pipe



Ephesians 4:1 Our Divine Calling

As a prisoner of the Lord, I plead with you to walk holy, in a way that is suitable to your high rank, given to you in your divine calling. With tender humility and quiet patience, always demonstrate gentleness and generous love toward one another, especially toward those who may try your patience.

t

Today I'm drawn to *Ephesians 4*. I find myself saying "OUCH" and "Lord I repent" a lot! The Apostle Paul is begging those who have accepted Christ to lead a life worthy of the call God has placed on them. One translation says, "*I plead with you to walk, holy in a way that is suitable to your high rank given to you in your divine calling*". Am I worthy of the calling? Am I a good representative of Christ that lives in me? In *Ephesians 4: 6* it says, "*and he is the perfect father who leads us all, works through us all and lives in us all*". If he lives in me, and wants to work through me, why doesn't that always show? What caught my eye was "works through us all" ... My heart's desire is for Jesus to shine and work through me. To be a vessel of who He is and show His love to those around me. To be honest there are too many times to my embarrassment that what's coming out of me is NOT Jesus. It is not love, joy, peace, forgiveness, humility, gentleness, kindness, etc. etc.

What's coming out of me at times is not living water, but sewage...I was thinking about this today as my husband left this morning to go dig up a sewage pipe that may be clogged at my grandparent's old farmhouse. The renter said that everything is running slow, and stuff is backing up at times. So, he's going to have to go on a digging expedition to see if it's clogged somewhere. It made me think of my connection (pipeline) with Jesus. If He were really living through me, then I would be gentle, humble, loving, patient, etc., a vessel that his character is flowing through. If I'm honest, that is not always what comes through. Do I have a clogged pipe somewhere that hinders the flow of living water from the throne of God to the world? Is it gross, stinky and sludge like that no one wants to be around?!

Augh... Sludge like, gross, stinky substance is from the pits of hell and poisons everything around it. It's toxic. The Bible talks about bitterness as being poisonous **Hebrews 12:15**

What has my pipe been clogged with? Could it be bitterness? Pride, anger, unforgiveness all these things are causing poisonous backup to my soul, as well as seeping out to others. Not a good picture. I know it is not the life-giving Living Waters that Jesus wants us to have and give to others. **John 4:10**



When I look at it this way, it makes me want to unclog the pipe, not only for myself, but for the sake of others around me. I don't want those I love or anybody for that matter to drink toxic sludge. I may have to put some effort into a digging expedition of my soul and rotor root out some unforgiveness, bitterness, pride, and any other thing that's hindering the flow.

Lord, I pray that I can be a vessel for you and that you can flow your Living Water through me to others. Help me with unclogging the pipes that hinder that flow. Help me to release any unforgiveness that I have towards others and any other thing the enemy uses to poison, clog, and hinder that flow.

Has anything clogged your pipes of the Life-Giving Living Water that Jesus desires us to have and give to others?



**Life
on**



Mission

As I sit here with my coffee, Bible and Huckleberry looking out the window , it's raining. There is something so comforting about being under the covers listening to a steady rain. I just planted potatoes and onions yesterday, so this is good. There is nothing better for your garden to make things grow than a good rain. Every Gardener knows that no matter how much you water with the hose or irrigation system, there is nothing like a good rain! For the past two months I have felt the Lord speaking to my heart about living a Life on Mission. I even hear myself talking to my husband about it. You see I don't have any desire whatsoever to travel ,or be in big crowds, or to do big events. I'm not a missionary ,preacher, or performer. Not that I haven't tried those things in the past but that's just not me. What I really feel called to do is stay right here at the Ranch and live my life on mission. I'm amazed when I think of all the people the Lord brings here to share the gospel with through our land, horses and dogs. Lately it's been nonstop and I can feel myself needing a break to fill back up. I need to soak up His presence so that I can give out again. I need to rest and let it rain so to speak. If you've ever looked at a plant that the soil was dry from lack of rain or water it starts to break down and wilt. This is exactly what happens to us in the natural when we go without any watering or refreshment .



Isaiah 58:11 (NLT)

*The Lord will guide you continually,
giving you water when you are dry
and restoring your strength.
You will be like a well-watered garden,
like an ever-flowing spring.*

The Bible talks about the water of God's word. God's word is nourishing to our hearts. It moistens our dry soil that's on the verge of hardening because it's been depleted. Dry soil ruins the plant and destroys its ability to produce anything beautiful or useful. I am a worker bee. I go and go and go. I do and do and do. I have not been good at rest. This has led to burn out many times. Burn out means depleted and wilted. Not a pretty plant for sure. Burn out stunts growth and does not produce anything, just dry soil and a horrible looking plant.

I have had this Clover plant in my home for over 15 yrs and sometimes I forget to water it. The soil dries out pretty quick in containers. I always know when it needs water. It shows. The beautiful purple leaves hangover droopy, the edges look wilted and kind of burnt. It really does show. I think our lives do too. I'm always amazed when after I take it to the sink how in an hour or so it looks like a strong upright beautiful plant again. Right now I look like a plant that is dried out and droopy a bit depleted but I'm gonna take the time to just soak and rest in the Lord today. If I am to be able to continue living a life on mission, and to be fruitful in every good work. I need a Rain Day. No people but just a day of rain.

If your life was a plant what would it look like ?

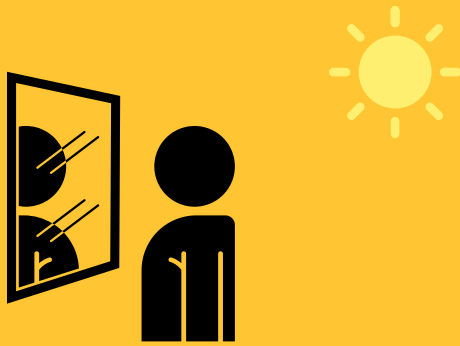
What is one thing you can do to help it thrive ?

Psalms 119:5

***Oh that my actions would
consistently reflect your decrease***



I'm drawn to the old ways I've said often that I think I was born 200 years too late. I love to learn about how things were and how big people did things way back of the things when it comes to cooking that was used almost every home with a reflector oven to cook and bake food based on the reflection of the fire or sun. I was so intrigued learning about these that we made a simple fall down type as a family years ago and made some biscuits. It was amazing with this little reflector oven could do that got me thinking when I read the above scripture, my heart desire that my life would reflect Jesus. In order for me to reflect Jesus, I must be pointed towards him. I must be fixed on his word whatever we point ourselves towards that's what we will reflect. Some actions are just a reflection of what we are pointed towards what my mind is fixed on .

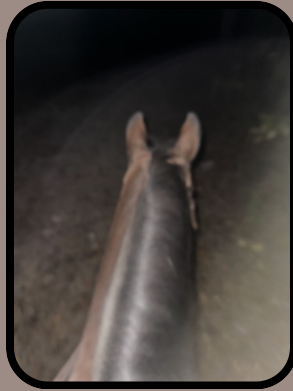


If I am focused in my mind is fixed on feelings of rejection for example, what will reflect in my life is insecurity, fear and lack of confidence. But if I'm focused on the Lord and His word, I will be confident and not shrink back . Knowing I'm loved , I can move forward with no fear as "perfect Love casts out fear " (1 John 4:18) We are a reflection of what we are pointed towards. What I look at ,what my eyes are fixed and focused on will be determine what I reflect all around me. I want to be a good reflection of Jesus don't you?

What have you been fixed on lately?

Dear Lord help us to be a reflection of you .We know that whatever we are pointed towards or fixed on will ultimately tell in our actions. Keep us pointed towards you that we can be a light to all around us in Jesus name. Amen!

Night Ride



Last night, I took my horse Moon on a Night Trail Ride just the two of us. There is something majestic to be on a horse, hearing the crunch of the fall leaves and the saddle creaking to the rhythm to her steps as the sun is going down . As I make my way into the woods, the stillness of it calms my soul. Everything is better in the woods on a horse. It was just me and her in the darkness and I had no fear. In fact, I was absolutely at peace. I know to some it might seem crazy to take off by yourself on a horse into the darkness of the woods, but I know her... Moon and I have many miles together, we've had miles on the road barrel racing ,trail riding, scaling steep hills going through the willy wags and more. We've had our ups and downs for sure but out of the other 10 horses in the barn I choose her!

I know her. I trust her. We have a relationship and lots of experience together. I had total trust my horse would get me home. She knows the way. I just had to stay centered in the saddle. I was in the woods a bit too late and everything started to blend into the darkness. We had about 10 or so deer that jumped up in front of us. I could barley make out the white tails, but she did not flinch one bit but stayed steady and stable. It made me think of Jesus carrying me through some dark times. When I felt all alone in the darkness. I know I can trust Him as I trust Moon. I have a relationship with Him. I know He loves me, and even when I feel alone in the darkness He is carrying me. So when you're on that night, trail ride in life and you can't see the trail because the darkness seems to consume everything, just stay connected and centered in Jesus and He will carry you. He knows the way and will bring you safely home.

Isaiah 45:3 NLT

And I will give you treasures hidden in the darkness— secret riches.

I will do this so you may know that I am the Lord, the God of Israel, the one who calls you by name.

Just a Closer Walk



This morning, as I was writing in my prayer journal, I felt my hearts cry was "Just a closer walk with thee" I can hear that beautiful hymn and see my grandma dancing to it in her kitchen. It was her favorite! It made me think about my walk with Jesus. Right now in Southeast Michigan, It's the peak of fall. I walk in the woods with my pups daily .We currently have four (pictured above left to right) Huckleberry, Levi (our newest rescue dog),Chunk and Tippi. They love nothing more than to go on the golf cart back to the woods and then go for a walk. They explode with glee at just the slight notion of going for a ride. They all have different walks. Levi must be kept on a long line because even at 10 years old if a chipmunk or squirrel pops up his eyes glass over and he's gone. He's only been here a few months so I don't expect him to walk perfectly. Chunk is pretty good and checks in with me often and I usually don't have to call him back too much, but if he sees his golf cart in the distance he's hard to hold back.



Tippi is a pain. I'm constantly calling her back. She's a young exuberant Labrador with little impulse control at the moment. Just the other day she took off chasing something and would not listen and ran off with pure abandonment into the swamp, which she then made a few laps overcome with the zoomies before she finally came back to me. Mud and gunk from belly down Augh! Then there is my a.k.a. "Red Dog" Huckleberry, a six year old Cattle Dog who is mama's baby. Not that we did not have issues in the past with impulse control and still once in a while his chase instinct doesn't kick in, but for the most part, he stays close, and I can call him back. The other day I just wanted a quiet, relaxing walk, so I took just him. I don't micromanage him. He loves to explore, sniff and be a bit ahead of me, but I don't mind that at all. I want him to enjoy this time with me. It actually brings me great joy to see him enjoy himself so much, with my watchful eye on him. I tell him sometimes "if I can't see you, you are too far from me". He can be blissfully joyful in the boundaries I have set for him. It makes me think so much about my walk with Jesus. It is within the boundaries of his word I can have such peace and joy. His eye ever on me. I don't have to worry about getting lost if I stay close to Him.



If we go off chasing things we shouldn't, we find ourselves lost, scared and asking ourselves "How did I get here?" I want to stay close to Jesus like I want Huckleberry to stay close to me. I love the relationship we have. I love doing things together with him whether it's walking in the woods, doing chores, or like right now cuddled up right next to me as I write. I love doing life with him. I never want him far from me. I believe that's Jesus 's heart towards us. He desires to have a closer walk with thee. With me! With YOU!

Imagine taking a walk with Jesus in the woods on a beautiful fall day. How do you see yourself? Are you side-by-side? Are you chasing after something? Did you lose your way?

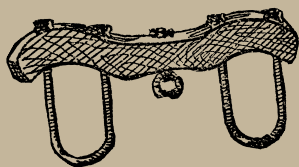
Lord, keep us ever so close to you and not chase things we shouldn't, knowing there is great joy in the boundaries you have set for us in your precious word. In Jesus name, Amen



Matthew 11:28–30

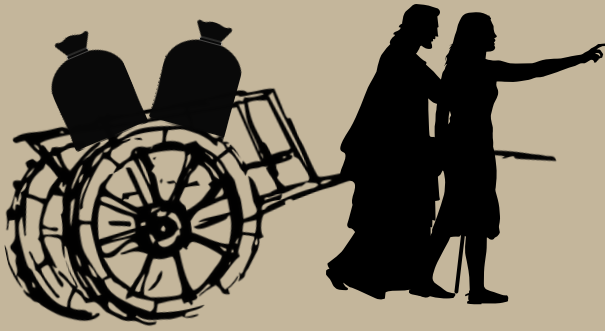
Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy-laden and overburdened, and I will cause you to rest. I will ease and relieve and refresh your souls. Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me, for I am gentle (meek) and humble (lowly) in heart, and you will find rest (relief and ease and refreshment and recreation and blessed quiet) for your souls. For My yoke is wholesome (useful, good—not harsh, hard, sharp, or pressing, but comfortable, gracious, and pleasant), and My burden is light and easy to be borne.

As I was writing in my prayer journal one morning about the heavy load I had been carrying, I got this picture in my spirit of me pulling a wagon loaded with huge canvas bags . It was like something you would see out of an old western where a plow horse was loaded down with all these bags of stuff. I felt there were way too many bags and quite burdensome but out of hopelessness I said “ it is what it is” . I felt tired, depleted, body sore, beat up ,lame and a bit resentful especially when I know I’m carrying what others should. Some have thrown their stuff , their responsibilities ,on my wagon because they don’t wanna deal with it, but I’m struggling to pull it.



We are called to bear each other's burdens, but it has left me in quite a state of exhaustion. Then I thought of the scripture about the yolk and what Jesus said about burdens that we carry.

I pictured Jesus inviting me to come under his yoke to connect with him and allow him to be connected to me and the wagon full of things weighing me down. At first I thought we would just dump the wagon and unburden myself completely, but I realized that there were some things that I was meant to carry and not just dump or give to someone else but instead yoke with Jesus and together we would pull the wagon that was loaded down. We would journey together side-by-side until we made it home and be able to then unload and dump the burdens forever. There are some burdens or responsibilities that I just can't throw out of the wagon. They are mine too bear. Taxes! I wish I could throw them on some else's wagon! There are other responsibilities/ burdens that are mine as well. I do believe Jesus wants me to take inventory of the load in my wagon though. Some things that weigh me down are not meant for me to carry like other peoples responsibilities, unforgiveness, anger, etc. They are unnecessary extra burdens that I'm heaping on my already heavy load.



Other burdens we are meant to carry and need to carry, but not alone. This is His invitation that we don't have to carry the load, but to connect with him under his yoke and He will do the heavy lifting .Then you are now attached to Jesus and not the heavy burdens. In my spirit I seen when I yoked with Jesus I could walk upright and not strain so much and there was even some joy along the rocky roads because we were doing it together.

What burdens are you meant to carry ?

What burdens are you not meant to carry?

Are you pulling your own burdens alone?

Jesus bid us come.He invites us to be yoked to Him.

Will you accept his invitation?

Jesus I accept your invitation to be yoked with you. I give my burdens to you, Lord thank you for coming alongside and carrying them.



Romans 2:3 -4

Endure suffering along with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. Soldiers don't get tied up in the affairs of civilian life, for then they cannot please the officer who enlisted them.

This past weekend, I took my mom to a Civil War Muster. Anyone who knows me knows I am intrigued by General Thomas J Jackson, AKA Stonewall. I am inspired by his unwavering faith in which he was known for. His resilience and bravery in battle was absolutely amazing and still being talked about. His movements in war to this day are studied by the military. He was determined and resolute in obedience to his commanding officer General Lee and the Lord. He was a man of deep faith. He was not in support of slavery, but states rights and defending his homeland Virginia hence why he had to make the hard decision to support the Confederacy to protect his homeland , his family and all that he loved. He actually started a colored Sunday school, which he supported all throughout the Civil War.



So before you going judging me and Stonewall both ,do your own research.The word *endure* has been a word for me in so many things over the years. I feel the Lord has continually spoke that word in my ear over and over. There are many battles that I would rather just get out of or avoid, but all throughout the scripture it's speaks loud and clear to *endure*, go through and press on. For any great Soldier there is a no quit attitude. If your commander tells you to press the enemy, you press or desert . Seeing all the reenactors of the Civil War reminded me of what the soldiers had to endure. The Apostle Paul knew a thing or two about soldiers as well. Specifically the Roman Soldiers he was surrounded by ,so it's no surprise he uses those examples of how we are supposed to conduct our lives. He's encouraging young Timothy in the scripture so that he doesn't desert or turn tail but to keep going. Endure hardship Timothy with me as a good soldier. Paul is saying "with me" he is in this battle too, and oh by the way Timothy don't even think about retreating !

Soldiers don't get tied up in the affairs of civilian life, for they cannot please their commanding officer who enlisted them. Soldiers can't afford to get tied up in civilian affairs... Augh... This is a whole other devotion. This life is full of battles and the enemy wants to capture us and tie us up in things that don't really matter. Things that take the focus off the mission that has been assigned to us. Temptations, tiredness, or maybe just battle weary from all the attacks can entangle us. *We will never win battles with a retreat mentality.* We must have a no matter what I will obey my commander officer and press on. I will not quit! I will not retreat! I will endure because he says to regardless of outcome. You may be going through some things right now that are so hard and you want to retreat. I get it, but I want to encourage you as Paul did to Timothy. ENDURE, keep going, Don't quit we are in this together.

Lord help us to stay the course. To stay committed and focused like any good soldier. So many things in this world will try to trip us up, pulling us into civilian life, tempting us to retreat and desert. I pray you refresh and strengthen us to continue to endure.





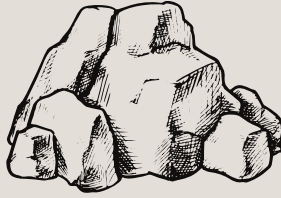
Set my face like flint

As I was having my JAM (Jesus and Me) time one morning as my son calls it, when something rose up in me to pray "Lord set my face like flint". As soon as I wrote it in my prayer journal it struck something in me and I immediately thought. "Where have I heard that before and what does that mean?" That sent me on a study in search of treasure I knew the Lord had for me.

Isaiah 50:7 (NKJV)

*"For the Lord God will help Me;
Therefore I will not be disgraced;
Therefore I have set My face like a flint,
And I know that I will not be ashamed.*

These prophetic words of Jesus through the prophet Isaiah written hundreds of years prior give us a glimpse of his focus on fulfilling his mission. So what does it mean to set my face like flint?



Flint is a hard rock used for many things, like tools, houses, churches, fortress, etc. It is known for its strength and once set immovability.

We see a confirmation of this in Luke 9:51

Luke 9:51 New King James Version (NKJV)

Now it came to pass, when the time had come for Him to be received up, that He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem

Jesus is not ignorant of the danger that lays ahead. Jerusalem is a death sentence. Yet we see that because he knew his mission he was always pushing toward it. Focused and steadfast.

Isaiah 50:7 (NLT)

*Because the Sovereign Lord helps me,
I will not be disgraced.*

*Therefore, I have set my face like a stone,
determined to do his will. And I know that I will not be
put to shame.*

Luke 13:22 (NIV)

*Then Jesus went through the towns and villages,
teaching as he made his way to Jerusalem.*

*Look up these other verses and you will see that he
was always pushing toward Jerusalem his final
earthly mission.*

Luke 17:11 (NLT)

As Jesus continued on toward Jerusalem, he reached the border between Galilee and Samaria.

Luke 18:31 (NLT)

Taking the twelve disciples aside, Jesus said, "Listen, we're going up to Jerusalem, where all the predictions of the prophets concerning the Son of Man will come true.

Luke 19:28 (NLT)

After telling this story, Jesus went on toward Jerusalem, walking ahead of his disciples.

Immovable , courageous , steadfast men and women of God inspire me. That's why soldiers have a special place in my heart. They represent a toughness and an immovable attitude regardless of what they are facing in the battlefield . I'm in awe of the courage of the soldier who rushes toward the enemy and puts his life on the line so I can enjoy freedom.

To set my face like flint is a statement of courage with a firm commitment to accomplish what God has sent me to do in spite of scorn, ridicule, or yes even danger. One of the greatest Generals of all time Thomas J Jackson also known as Stonewall Jackson was known for this immovable attitude when he was given an order. His nickname Stonewall comes from the very idea of being immovable except when pursuing the enemy.



General Barnard Bee in trying to rally his troops said, "There stands Jackson like a stone wall. Let us determine to die here and we will conquer. Rally behind the Virginians!"

When asked by Captain John Imboden after the first battle of Bull Run how he could be so immovable in battle when bombs and bullets are raining down on him he said.

" My religious belief teaches me to feel as safe in battle as in bed. God has fixed the time of my death. I do not concern myself about that, but to be always ready, no matter when it may overtake me.... That is the way all men should live, and then all would be equally brave."

The Stonewall Brigade was set apart from all other brigades. They were almost always smaller in number and against great odds. But their obedience to their commander and their heart to serve him made them do what everyone else thought impossible. The term Foot Cavalry came from them because they were known to march 25 to 30 miles a day and then still engage the enemy. Many battles were won due to this amazing brigade who had an immovable attitude that said "if Stonewall said we can do it then we can!"



It is apparent the war against Christianity has started. Before the civil war actually began many knew it was on the horizon. General Jackson told his cadets at VMI

"The time for war has not yet come, but it will come, and that soon: and when it does come, my advice is to draw the sword and throw away the scabbard"

We are on the front lines. Are we willing to sacrifice all for the sake of Christ? What we hear going on in other countries is now in our communities. This is just the reality to the times we live in. I want to be brave, I want to charge into battle, I want to say I would sacrifice all for Christ. Yet I know if I rely on myself will, my toughness, my strength, I will eventually weaken like Peter and deny my Lord. This is where I believe when Paul said *"Your Power is made perfect in my weakness"* (**2 Corinthians 12:9**) comes to play. I believe if I rely on Him and ONLY His Spirit in me, that I can accomplish whatever he has called me to do regardless of how impossible it may seem. I must rely on His power and nothing of me. As John the Baptist said " I must decrease that He can increase."



I believe He will give us wisdom, direction and resources for victory. He has equipped us for such a time as this. Let us set our faces like flint to the mission He has called us too. One little side note to ponder. When flint is struck it sparks a fire. Selah....

Lord help us to set our *faces like flint* to the mission that you have called us too. Many things get in the way to take us off focus. I pray that your powerful Holy Spirit would convict us and help us to recognize the strategies of the enemy that try's to get us to desert. Lord we know we can do nothing in our own strength and we rely on you to move thru us. We cannot be brave in the face of the enemy or charge into battle unless you anoint us and empower us to do so. Lord let all we do and say be rooted in Calvary Love and all that we come in contact with will know they were touched by You.

In Jesus name. Amen!

GOOD



MEDICINE

When taking my mom for a golf cart ride with the dogs in the woods, I spotted some beautiful Lobelia . It's a stunning red stalk with blazing red petals that stands out like nothing else. I was so excited to see it not just for its magnificent beauty, but for its medicinal properties. I make a tincture for one of my kids that has some muscle spasms that contain lobelia.They make fun of and call me the Crazy Cherokee Medicine Woman but many of my friends and family come to me for natural remedies because they work. I've been learning and applying natural remedies for about 10 years to date and I'll never go back to any traditional. We are so programmed to go to the pharmacy for everything that ails us ,when all we need God has provided for us in nature.It works so much better. When we first hear the word Medicine most think of prescription from a doctor , pill , or something you buy from a Pharmacy. I believe medicine means so much more. Native Americans believed anything that was nourishing and healing to spirit ,soul and body was medicine. I believe in this philosophy with all my heart.

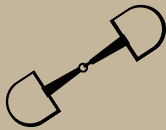


As I was reading the word of God this morning I said to myself, *"this is medicine to my soul"*. It felt like a healing salve was being applied to my heart. I felt I could relate to Paul as he expressed himself about struggles and hardships. Someone feels what I feel at times. This was to me ,medicine to the soul. The encouragement, correction, and hope that the word of God brings is like a poultice that I make that draws out toxins and poisons. Oh how the word is good medicine! There are other things that are good medicine for me. When I'm with my dogs or riding my horse in woods engulfed in all of God's creation ,that is good medicine! Certain people you spend time with can be good medicine. Things you love and enjoy can be good medicine. What is good medicine for you? What nourishes your soul. For me it's The word of God ,My Furkids , animals ,and all things nature. All good medicine!

Lord, let us be open to natural ways of healing. Natural ways to nourish our bodies, spirit, soul, and body. I thank you for your word, especially that heals. I thank you for all you have created in nature that nourishes and heals our bodies. Scripture that comes to mind is he sent his word and healed them and delivered them from all their distress

James 3:3 (NLT)

We can make a large horse go wherever we want by means of a small bit in its mouth.



Recently, my sister-in-law from Tennessee came to visit. We share a love for horses, dogs, and nature, so we had much to talk about! While she was here, there was a big horse expo about an hour and a half from the house. Her son was texting her pictures of certain bits he wanted her to look at while there. He must've sent five or so different pics of different bits. I laugh because most Horsemen get it. I have totes of bits I've collected over the years. Training bits, draw bits, leverage bits, driving bits and on and on. I thought at no coincidence that the next day on Sunday the scripture we studied from was **James 3:3** (above)

It got me thinking if I was a horse and Jesus was the Horseman what kind of bit would he have to use on me?



Would I partner with Him in such a way of being soft in the mouth to give the slightest hand movement or intention or would I be hard headed and bracy pushing against the bit .(His commands) Would He have to use a leverage bit with a high port to keep my tongue in place and head down, or a light snaffle that He barely picks up the reins for me to yield? I've ridden all my life and have ridden all kinds of horses and dabbled in all kinds of disciplines. The horses that just want to fight you all the time running through the bit are no fun at all. It seems that you are always in training mode and you can't just relax and enjoy the ride together. I've also experienced the horse that is willing. Willing to give ,willing to let me lead, willing to learn. Every subtle intention of my hands or legs means something and they are soft and responsive to the slightest pressure. They don't even need you touching the reins. Just a movement from the body or a little leg pressure is all that's needed. I have both here at the Ranch now. I want to be like my horse Friday. She's my girl that I can ride bridle-less. I really got into liberty in the early 2000s after I seen a friend play with her horse at liberty. Liberty is where you take all the restraints off. No halter ,no rope , no bit, etc. I think it was Pat Perelli horse trainer extraordinaire that said *"When you take everything off you only are left with the truth"* think long and hard about that...



You only have the truth of what that relationship really is when you ditch all the tools to control. I want it to be like Friday in the Masters hands. I want to be obedient to the slightest queue that the Lord gives. I don't want performance, but a partnership with Him. I want to be the horse the master can enjoy being with, bride-less through the woods, enjoying each other's company. There's nothing more beautiful when you and your horse are so connected that you need no tools for control, it's a mutual love and respect.

With Liberty my horses have the choice to leave me at any time, but they don't and that is precious to me.

I don't want to be like the horse heading back to the round pen because he needs more tuning and cannot be trusted, is fighting you all the time or just wants to run away. I want to be the horse that is willing, flexible and gives to the Masters hands and cues.

Be honest if you were a horse what kind of horse would you be?



**YOU ARE
MINE!**



Isaiah 43:1: *"But now thus says the LORD, he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: 'Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, **you are mine**'"*

Besides the Bible, my animals teach me more about God's character that aligns with scripture than anything else .

One of my animals will do something, and as I observe them, a certain scripture will come to mind that illuminates the meaning of what they are doing. I say to my Huckleberry a lot 'You are mine!'

There's so much to that statement that has such deep meaning "you are mine"

What that is saying is ,I choose you. I care for you, I want you , and I love you. It is a term when I speak it of the utmost endearment. It means I always want you by my side. I will always provide for you and I will always love you, you are never to be outside in the cold. Your place is on the sleep number with me. (by the way Huckleberry's sleep number is 25.lol)

In reading the Bible, I've run across some scriptures that say that very thing.That scripture is like medicine to my soul because I understand the intent behind it.

The Lord is saying “**You are mine**”. I want you with me always .I will care for you, support you, and there’s nothing more I would love to do than just be with you. When my Huckleberry wants to sit with me, there is never a time when I will turn him away. It’s the most precious thing to me and I can’t help but think the Lord is like that with his children as well. It is hard to wrap my head around a Father’s love. I am a product of an affair and a biological father that did not want anything to do with me ,so for me rejection and abandonment has always been a part of my life .When reading the Scriptures and the word Father comes across ,it does not bring warm fuzzy feelings. To me the word Father brings Feelings of rejection, abandonment, hurt and the like. But when I see God through my animals, I get His heart more than anything, and I’m so grateful for the lessons!

He says he will never leave us or forsake us. He says he will never forget us. No, not ever or leave us without support. I know there’s many like me who have a hard time when we read scripture talking about a loving Father because we have nothing but the opposite to compare to. I pray the Lord will speak to you about His love in ways that you will understand as well. What are some ways that you feel God is speaking to you today? Is it through his word ? Through animals, or nature.? How does that lineup with scripture?

Lord, I pray that you will reveal your love to us in ways that we will understand. I’m grateful for all the many lessons and examples that you bring through your creation. In Jesus name

Amen

PARABLES AT DOG CLASS

“ THE TALKER”



When I teach a Companion Obedience dog class, I always do an orientation with no dogs allowed the first night. I find that it is a must! Humans need an extra week more than dogs lol. In this orientation I go over many things to make their six weeks with me successful. I teach Foundational Dog Learning Theory and how dogs learn best. I go over helpful tools and equipment to bring as well as what reinforcements and rewards that are best to train with. I have a lot of videos where I demonstrate what I'm teaching as well as having a demo dog there. They also get to practice using a clicker that marks behavior and when they leave, they get thorough written information with everything we went over as well as homework so that they can go home and start training before the next week of class. I spend a lot of time teaching them at this orientation how to best set up their dog for a successful class. One of the things I discuss is if there are two handlers, it is usually best for one to sit and observe across the room. I find it hard for dogs to focus when there is more than one handler at a time. I'm a big advocate, of focus. I believe it is the foundation to everything you will ever teach your dog. There are unique circumstances where a dog (usually a hearing breed) does better with his people altogether but for the most part having one handler at a time, helps cut down distraction and helps the dogs focus better.



One week in class I have a student who comes with a friend that helps with her dogs care during the week. Even though I have discussed not having two handlers at length, it is clear they are going to do what they are going to do. I let it go at first to observe their interactions with the dog and to see how the dog was going to do. The two talked through the whole first half of the class over me to each other, not listening or doing anything I was instructing. It was downright rude! I let it go for a bit thinking surely this would get better, but it got worse. I had to intervene for everyone's sake, especially their dog that was overstimulated and was getting ignored due to them talking. I'm trying to teach them, but they would not be quiet enough to listen. I could feel my blood boil thinking to myself. "Why did you pay for a class if you know everything!" I knew that I could help them if they would only shut their mouth and listen. To makes things worse, the next week they come to class and I separate them from the get-go. Wouldn't you know one of them comes up to me and says, "would you mind talking louder as we could not hear anything last week" ... Oh, how I had to push down the feelings of going for the throat and saying " no one else had issues of hearing! (I am actually miked) .



If you would've shut your trap, you would've heard loud and clear." I did not want to lose my Christianity over these women, so I politely said "yes, of course," and turned away before I said something, I would regret later

They could have made so much progress. There was so much potential in this dog, if they would have just listened and tried the things I was teaching. It was very frustrating for me, when I know I could have helped them accomplish their goals. They paid the money, but they were unwilling to listen. Very sad...

Are we like that at times? Are we too busy talking? Praying for help but not taking the time to listen? I know I've been guilty of the same very thing that so irritated and frustrated me. I'm praying for help. Praying for direction. Praying for ... then, Amen goodbye! Do I purpose to shut up long enough and quiet myself to just listen to what the Lord may be saying? There is a reason in between the psalms you see the word, Selah (pause, and think about that). If you come to me asking for help, asking for direction and then turn around and leave before I can tell you anything, what good is that? You're still in the same boat as you were. Is it my fault if you get nowhere?



Is it the Lords fault that I'm not growing or having success in my relationship with Him or fulfilling the callings and purpose for my life if I'm not taking the time to listen and obey, but just keep yakking? Am I a rotten dog trainer if you don't listen or do what I'm trying to teach you?

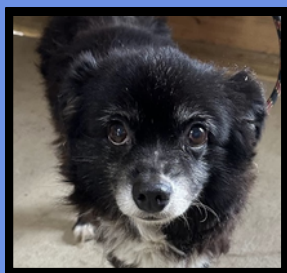
There is a reason He gave us two ears and one mouth. We must use accordingly.

Proverbs 4:20

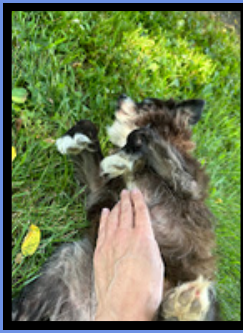
*My child, pay attention to what I say.
Listen carefully to my words.*

Lord, help us to listen to the many ways you speak to us. Less talking and more listening. Help us to obey what you're trying to teach us. In Jesus Name. AMEN!

LESSONS FROM LEVI



One Monday morning, a client was dropping her dog off at Doggie Daycare and had with her another little dog that just jumped in her truck that was out in the middle of a busy road near us. Cars were stopped trying to avoid him, so she thought to herself “well if I just open my door and he jumps in, I’ll try to help him” Well that’s exactly what he did so she brings him to us not knowing what to do and having to go to work. This poor dog was a hot mess. He had hardly any hair from midback to tail, ridden with fleas and mange with open wounds. He was a horrible site. I posted some pictures on Facebook to see if anyone knew this dog and no one responded, so we contacted animal control to come out. When he ran the scanner over him, Bingo! He actually had a chip, and the Deputy was able to track down and call the owners. I had him on a leash in the shade as the Deputy said someone would be coming to get him. A flood of emotions began to consume me. Who would let this happen to this poor little dog? Should they even be allowed to take him? Such unjust neglect.



This little dog is wanting so much attention rolling over for belly rubs and wanting so much love in between him, flopping around on the grass trying to relieve the horrible itching from all the fleas. A guy in his late 20s early 30s or so I would say showed up. The little dog just looked up at him, backing away from him and back at me like he was saying, Please No. The man never went to pet him or anything. He just seemed irritated that he had to come and get him. I was so upset by now that I let him have it. He gave some sob story about how it was his girlfriend's dog who went through a divorce and she's got kids and how they kicked this little dog out of the house to fend for himself. Reading between the lines they were hoping he'd get hit by a car not to deal with him anymore. Supposedly he was throwing up in the house and a nuisance to them. I could feel the anger swelling up in me and I'll be honest I wanted to go for the throat. I said "do you even want this dog?" Not really, you think this is abuse, you should've seen him before she took him. "he replied. I thought I was going to make the front page of the paper! Annie Schiller from Miracle Meadows Ranch attacks man. I would've been so justified....

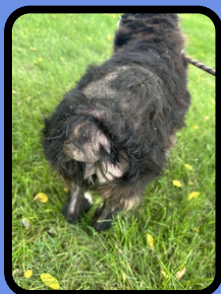


With tears in my eyes over this poor baby, I looked at the Deputy and said "I'll take him" The Deputy asked if they would surrender him, and the owners were happy to be rid of him. It tells me all I need to know about a person as to how they treat their animals. People in this world can be so cruel. I find myself saying at times "I hate people" I know as a Christian this is not how I'm supposed to feel. Sometimes I want some good ole Old Testament Justice served, and I'd be glad to hand it out! I know this is not how God feels. I struggle, especially in situations like this seeing the good in mankind. I often say to myself "I love people because God loves people, I love people because God loves people." This little dog that we learned was named Levi is the sweetest little guy. He should hate people for what they have done to him, yet he doesn't. He is full of love towards everyone in spite of how he was treated. It reminds me of the scripture in

Luke 6:27. *"But to you who are willing to listen, I say, love your enemies! Do good to those who hate you.*

I think I have some lessons to learn from Levi.....

LESSONS FROM LEVI PT 2" UNCLEAN"



When you looked at this little dog, your first reaction would not be to pick him up and hold him. He had mange, open sores, and no hair from mid back to his butt. His tail and skin were red, and flea infested. You could actually see the fleas running around. His tail was so swollen from being tormented by fleas that it looked at first to be tumors and his undercarriage was black from flea poop. Who knows the last time he was brushed or cared for with all those fleas. You did not want to touch him. He screamed unclean! It reminded me of stories I have read in the Bible about people with Leprosy. From what I understand, it was a horrible skin disease that banished people to stay out of the city and were labeled Outcasts. They could not go to the Temple or be a part of their community. They were unclean. In fact, if one with Leprosy was spotted, people would shout as loud as they could for everyone to hear "unclean, unclean." It became their identity, and they were rejected by all. I could not love Jesus anymore when thinking about how he treated the "Unclean". He broke Jewish tradition of ceremonial laws and religious mindsets to touch the Unclean.



By doing so would label himself the same as them, Unclean.. I have a feeling he would rather be with the Unclean than with the filth of religious hypocrites but I digress. Moved by compassion and seeing their hidden value and potential underneath the shroud of sickness, brokenness and disease He touched them..

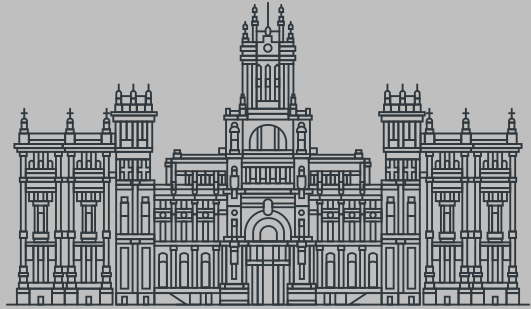
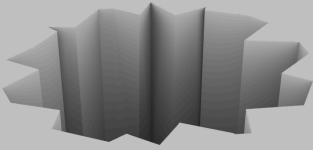
Overlooking what would be disgusting to most. He touched them. The beautiful song He touched me, comes to mind.

Since I've met this blessed Savior Since He's cleansed and made me whole Oh, I will never cease to praise Him (to praise Him) I'll shout it while eternity rolls Oh, He touched me, oh He touched me, He touched me And oh, the joy that floods my soul Something happened and now I know He touched me and made me whole

Oh, the heart of Jesus...

Lord, I'm so grateful you touched me ! Once unclean myself, full of defilements of the world. Lost and rejected by many. You found me and took me in. Oh how grateful I am! Lord let us see the Levi's of the world. Let us not walk past them because they scream "Unclean". Let us look upon them with compassion and be your hands and feet whether man or beast. Lord help us to do what you would do in Jesus' name Amen

FROM THE PIT TO THE PALACE



I am reading Genesis chapters 37- 50 about the life of Joseph. There is so much to be drawn from his life ,but in a nutshell I think of him as someone who went from the Pit to the Palace. I encourage you to read the whole account but what stuck out to me today was Genesis 50:20. When talking with the very ones who caused him harm he says “ As for you, you meant evil against me, **but God** meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive.”I have read this account many times and it always speaks to me. Many of us have had bad things, unjust things happen in our lives. Childhood traumas of abuse, neglect, and more have thrown many in the Pit. Like Joseph, some of us have been thrown into the pit by family members who were supposed to love us and protect us. Because of their actions we felt scared , alone , and in a dark place with no way out. That place is called The Pit. But God... Oh how I love those two words! God did not leave Joseph in the pit that his brothers threw him in.



Joseph said the above verse towards the end of his life to his abusers, who threw him in and made profit of him. He went through still more trials of unjust treatment before he got to the Palace where his ultimate authority (being second in command only to the King) and fulfilling his destiny was to be used to God's glory. He acknowledged that they (his brothers) meant evil to him, but God meant it for good, to bless many people, even them!

Joseph could have taken revenge and sent them to be killed or thrown in a Pit as they had done to him, but he chose to forgive and care for them even after what they had done. He continued to walk upright with God in the midst of a pagan nation, but God...

I'm a Pit to the Palace girl. I'm so grateful God did not leave me in the pit. I was thrown in a pit by family members like Joseph at a very early age, but God! I'm so grateful for his mercy and all he has done in my life. I pray, like Joseph, it can be used to bless others for His glory. The Palace is not to say look at me, but **look at Him!** I



I still have to work through forgiveness at times. When thinking about certain family members, I have to fight feelings of anger and resentment, but the scripture is like a healing balm that changes my perspective. What they meant for evil God meant for the good. May it be a testament of the goodness of God in a changed life.

Are you struggling with feeling life has been unfair and questioning why certain things happened to you? Just remember, But God...
Were you thrown into a Pit by your family? But God...

The Pit wants to hold you captive forever. Don't let the Pit make you bitter. Put your life in God's hands and allow Him to use it to help many.

May your Pit experience in life not leave you resentful, bitter and afraid, but let it be used for God's glory to help many. Let it be used to help others who may be in The Pit now. Let our lives not only pull people out of the Pit but point to the one that can take us from the Pit to the Palace.

Genesis 50:20

*"As for you, you meant evil against me, **but God** meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive."*

Patient endurance is what you need now, so that
you will continue to do God's will. Then you will
receive all that he has promised.
Hebrews 10:36



The No Quit Cowboy

Iv'e been called a lot of things, but I've never been called patient. NOT my strong point, and one of the things that I struggle with the most. I'm fast moving with a get it done attitude. It has served me well for many things, but it also causes me to burn out, be a little spicy with a fiery temper and bad attitude. If I'm honest, I don't pray for patience because I don't want to be tested in it. I hate waiting and I hate slow! When I'm behind slow moving anything whether it be people, vehicles or any other thing trying to slow me down, I can feel my heart start to race, blood pressure starting to warm . I can go instant attitude and all fired up if I don't ask Jesus for help. Help me Jesus is my daily, sometimes hourly prayer. My Horse is just like me, but that's another devotion. The one thing that I DO have going for me is that I DO want to be more like Jesus. I'm far from it and some days better than others. I saw a sign one day that said "I love Jesus, but I still cuss a little". Not proud but no truer or a statement.

The above scripture came to life at the Ranch the other day. Zach has been coming to the Ranch for about a year. We usually ride or drive horses, but I felt this day was the day to teach him to swing a rope. So we brought out the roping dummies and started to work on some fundamentals. Roping looks easy, but when you have never done it, the easy part is to get all tangled up! It is an art form of technique and skill. Zach was having a hard time with it. He was getting all tangled up, missing every time he threw and coming up short. I did what I could to help him, but it was not going well. I did not want to discourage him, so I said to him "Do you wanna get your horse out to ride and come back to this next week? Zach's answer was a big NOPE! He wanted to keep roping, regardless of missing the mark and getting tangled up. One hour goes by and Zach is still roping with no success, not one catch but he keeps trying. What was more impressive, was that he kept a good attitude. He never got frustrated. Never threw his rope down and stormed off. He just kept patiently trying over and over throwing the rope. An hour and a half later he throws and he catches!

We all erupt with clapping, high-fiving and way to go's. He keeps roping and catches some more. Now he's roping everything and he wants to rope one of my poles over 6 feet tall that I use for pole bending where he has to throw up and out. Catch! Wow!





It wasn't till we sat down for our devotion after, that I realized the Lord was teaching me through watching him. Zach sure earned my respect that day. He had no quit in him and he just took me to church where I'm the student now. The Lord spoke loud and clear 'What YOU need is patient endurance. "Just keep throwing, just keep sowing. Keep a good attitude, don't give up and you will reap the reward of the catch" I heard the Lord's spirit say to mine.

- Are there things in your life right now that you're tempted to give up on?
- What's your attitude when it comes to being patient?
- Are you fiery or spicy with a bad attitude? Or peaceful and focused with a no quit try?

Lord, thank you for allowing me to see the scripture come alive while watching Zach. You say Patient Endurance is what we need. Lord, a lot of us have a long way to go, but I know you will help us. I'm thankful you are patient with us, so help us to be more patient with ourselves and others.

In Jesus name, Amen!

FACING



**THE
SCARY**

Honor is a Friesian/Percheron cross—big, smart, beautiful, sweet, and funny. But confidence is something he struggles with. One day, my husband parked a truck and trailer full of hay in the arena. There was plenty of room to ride, so I saddled up, expecting a relaxed and enjoyable session. What I didn't expect was how frightening that truck and trailer would be to Honor. He couldn't take his eyes off it. He snorted, jumped sideways, and tried to avoid it altogether. Even after touching it and nibbling the hay, he was convinced it was a monster waiting to harm him.

So we went around and around the truck, patiently working through his fear. At one point I heard myself say out loud, "Oh, Honor, do you know who you are? This shouldn't scare you. It's just a truck and trailer with your hay on it."

In that moment, the Lord gently showed me myself.



TRUTH TO HOLD ONTO



Fear is a trust issue. What I knew was harmless, Honor perceived as dangerous because he didn't yet fully trust me. His fear revealed where trust was still growing.

Because I love him, I can't allow him to avoid the things that scare him. If he focuses on the frightening object instead of on me, he'll never reach his full potential. So I ask him to face hard things—not to harm him, but to build his confidence and deepen his trust.

The same is true for us. The "scary things" in our lives—whether real or perceived—can keep us from walking fully in what God has called us to do. Fear quietly steals confidence and limits growth.

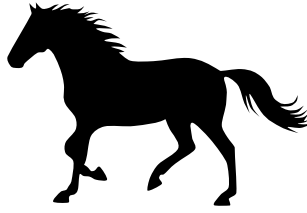
Personal Application

What is the "scary truck monster" in your life right now?

Is it possible the Lord is asking you to face it—not alone, but with Him—so your trust in Him can grow and your faith can deepen?

Remember: God never asks us to face something without His presence. He is always with us, strengthening us, guiding us, and holding us steady.

TRAINING TIP



Find a meaningful scripture and keep it before you at all times. Memorize it. Speak it aloud. When fear comes knocking, throw that scripture right in its face.

My scripture I'll share with you:

Isaiah 41:10 (ACV) Fear not [there is nothing to fear], for I am with you; do not look around you in terror and be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen and harden you to difficulties, yes, I will help you; yes, I will hold you up and retain you with My [victorious] right hand of rightness and justice.

Prayer

Lord, help us trust You in the scary things.

Help us remember who we are and whose we are.

Give us courage to face what we would rather avoid, knowing we can overcome it because You are with us.

In Jesus' name, Amen. 🙏

FACING THE SCARY PT. 2

A Devotional on Fear, Focus, and Fixing Our Minds on the Lord



While working Honor through the scary, I realized something important. No matter how many times we went around that truck and trailer—his “mountain”—trying to desensitize him, the fear and anxiety never truly left. He did what I asked, but emotionally he was still undone. Fifty-plus times around, and I felt like I was sitting on a time bomb. Sure enough, just as we were making another pass, my husband’s air compressor kicked on on the other side of the barn door. That sound he had heard a million times was enough to put him over the edge and he exploded.

Going around the same mountain over and over wasn’t working. Can anyone relate?

I stopped. I stepped back. I prayed. I asked the Lord for wisdom. That pause gave both of us a much-needed break. In that stillness, I sensed the Lord gently saying, “He’s so focused on the scary that he can’t focus on you.”

Immediately, one of my favorite scriptures came to mind:

Isaiah 26:3

“You will keep in perfect peace all who trust in you, all whose thoughts are fixed on you.”

I often pray this verse for myself—Lord, help me keep my mind fixed on You. I know how important this is. The Lord reminded me that the mind plays the biggest role in overcoming fear.

I realized something else too. I can go through the motions with a “suck it up” attitude, but if I’m still riddled with fear and anxiety, my focus hasn’t changed. I’m still staring at the mountain instead of Christ.

Honor was the same way. He usually responds to the slightest cue, but when his eyes and mind were locked on the scary, he became bracey, stiff, and unresponsive. His body followed his thoughts.

The mind truly is the battlefield.

As long as his mind stayed fixed on the scary instead of on me, nothing would change. The mountain would stay big—bigger than everything else he could see. So I changed my approach. I stopped circling the mountain and started working on connection. I asked for transitions, bending, softness—anything to interrupt that cycle of fixation. Slowly, he began to focus on me. I watched him relax, drop his head, lick his lips, and soften to my cues. Then came the big, deep breaths—sweet signs of release in horse language.

Oh, the lessons horses continues to teach me.
If I don't get my mind off the scary and fixed firmly
on the Lord, I'll keep going around the same
mountain too—still fearful, still anxious, still stuck.

TRUTH TO HOLD ONTO

A fixed and focused mind on Jesus and His Word is
key.

When we stare at the scary, it grows bigger than
God.

But when we intentionally fix our minds on Christ, the
mountain shrinks in comparison.

Reflection

Have you been too focused on the scary instead of
the Lord and His Word?

TRAINING TIP

Interrupt that “going around the same mountain”
pattern by intentionally fixing your mind on Jesus.
Try reading the book of John, not just to read—but to
truly know Jesus' character, His heart toward you,
and His deep, personal love for you.

Look up scriptures about the mind and meditate on
them.

One of my favorite books is *The Battlefield of the
Mind* by Joyce Meyer.

PRAYER

Lord, I pray that You would help us fix our minds on
You.

As we do, may fear lose its grip and mountains melt
away in comparison to Your greatness.