



Dear Harvest Christian Church,

March 2017

In Honor of Our Friends

About a year ago a woman in our recovery community handed me a poem she had written. Simply titled "Insane," it is her haunted view of herself; what she sees when she looks in a mirror.

**Insane**

*Determinedly distant  
Disturbingly vague  
Desperately searching  
For something to say  
Some way to distract  
Some way to disguise  
Some way to hide my  
Shame from your eyes  
Dark is the anger  
Deep is the pain  
Dismal's the outcome  
Demented, insane  
Deny all the facts  
Distort what is real  
I can't let you see  
I won't let me feel*

It is disturbing to think this dear woman sees herself this way. But her words are more easily understood once you begin to picture how hard life has been to her. From a childhood dominated by a raging, alcoholic here-again-gone-again Navy father, to her own experience as a parent having lost three of her five children to death – the scope of her story is intensely framed by pain.

More amazing to me is her resilience and good-hearted kindness; the fact that a human being who has experienced this level of trauma and heartbreak is so quick to smile, so willing to love. This phenomena never fails to amaze me, but it does not surprise me anymore because it is so consistent – the folks who come to us as 'failures' are, in fact, some of the most amazing people on the planet.

*hope and healing for the hurting and broken*

Over 25 years ago it was, I was working in a Rescue Mission in downtown San Jose, CA. I remember it distinctly, the huge surprise when the realization hit me in a room full of addicts, parolees, ex-cons, felons; incongruent the thought that forced its way into my close-minded-narrow-minded-small-world brain; *"These men have hearts of pure gold."*

I assure you I am not deluded.

The people coming to us for help have most often been marginalized by our culture; labeled as failures, addicts, criminals, or worse but when you provide a safe reprieve from the stresses of living in survival mode the protective, hard layers begin to fall away and what is revealed is the thumb-print of God: Loyal, loving, protective, generous, steadfast, courageous, caring, and creative.

The story of Jesus on earth is replete with instances of His reaching right through a person's protective outer layers to call them into new life. Matthew the tax-collector (traitor), some teenaged fishermen, Mary, Saul (Paul), Zacchaeus, the Woman at the well, and on and on right up to the Criminal on the Cross.

He calls me to do the same. He calls me to look beyond the tattoos and the piercings, to look through the rough, protective exteriors, to look to the heart.

This is my constant prayer, the constant challenge; Oh God, help me to see people as you see them. Help me to set judgment and fear aside and to love with steadfast devotion.

Thank you for partnering and praying with us as we serve. Without you we could not do what we do. Thank you.

In God's Grace,

  
Cash & Lisa Lowe

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