

MAY 2018

A Monthly Newsletter from Hope Wesleyan Church

Hope! church

*Changing Lives by
Leading Others
Into a Growing
Relationship with Jesus*

505 4th Ave NE Independence, Iowa 50644 (319) 334-7148
www.hopewesleyan.org

Jesus Sets the Captives Free

On a recent trip back home I had the chance to tour the Ohio State Reformatory. Movie buffs will recognize this as the place where the movie *The Shawshank Redemption* was filmed. The prison is closed now. In fact, the last prisoner was transferred from that facility in 1990. All that stands now is a dark, dismal reminder of a facility that housed thousands of inmates for over 100 years.

Walking past the cells with their peeling paint, rusty bars, and broken bunks, I couldn't help but wonder what the stories were of the men who spent some of the best years of their lives cooped up in this place of gloom. After their arrival, some men never breathed the air of freedom again.

Sadly, we don't have to be locked up in a penitentiary to be a prisoner. Far too many people spend years of their lives cooped up as spiritual criminals. Even worse, we can become so accustomed to "life in prison" that we forget what it's like to be free. Here are just a few of the shackles that can keep us incarcerated.

Bitterness: You don't have to live very long before someone says something, does something, or fails to live up to your expectations. It may be intentional or accidental. Either way, you're left having to heal from the hurt inflicted by someone else's actions. Bitterness is like an infection growing inside a wound, never allowing it to heal. Without the grace of forgiveness we

will find ourselves bound by the chains of bitterness.

Regret: Regret is like bitterness only turned inward. Often we are cuffed with regret not by someone else's choices but by our own. "I never should have trusted him." "Why did I ever move here?" "Why didn't I take the time to call her more often?" While all these may be valid learning experiences, God never meant for us to live under the sentence of regret.

Worry: Worry comes from an Old-English word that means "to strangle or choke." Isn't that exactly what worry does to us? I can never think of a time I've felt better because of worry. For that matter, I don't know of any problem that got better because I worried about it. Our doctors are right to point out how worry harms our bodies. But it also hurts our souls.

If worry has you all bound up, here's the key to freedom: "Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done" (Philippians 4:6).

These are just three of the many ways we can find ourselves spiritually imprisoned. Is there any hope for freedom? Oh yes! Jesus himself said, "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners..." (Luke 4:18).

While some of the prisoners at the Reformatory served life-long sentences that doesn't have to be your story. In Christ Jesus, there is deliverance. The chains are broken. The doors are unlocked. Step forward in faith and breathe the clean air of freedom.



Women's Connection
Monday, May 7th
6:30 pm
Buttermilk Café

**Human Trafficking
Informational Speaker**
Wednesday, May 9th
6:30 pm
First Presbyterian Church
643 6th St.
Jesup, Ia

**Independence High School
Baccalaureate**
Wednesday, May 16th
7:00 pm
Graduation
Sunday, May 20th
2:00 pm

Congratulations



HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES!!

Carly Broughton
Alex Coberly
Hadassah Close
Sam Turner

Last Day Regular Sunday School
Sunday, May 27th

SAVE THE DATE

Vacation Bible School

Sun., June 3rd – Thurs., June 7th
6:00 pm – 8:30 pm

Music Moments



with Pastor Elissa

~~~~~  
 ~~~~~  
 What if your blessings come through raindrops? What if your healing comes through tears?

What if a thousand sleepless nights are what it takes to know you're near?

What if trials of this life are your mercies in disguise?
 ~~~~~  
 ~~~~~

I want to share with you the story of a worship artist I admire. Her song has been running through my head and streaming out of my radio for weeks now. Let's hear her story.

There's no denying some of the blessings in Laura Story's life, but amidst that success a brain tumor hospitalized her husband in 2006. The faith Story sang about was put through the unexpected fires of fear and loneliness; most young newlyweds don't imagine being kept alive at one point by breathing machines or having to find their way through significant post-operative vision and memory loss. Could grace notes resound from such a life-altering struggle? Laura's incisive new album, *Blessings*, suggests they do.

"Life is filled with things you don't expect, but the Bible tells us to respond by trusting God and continuing to worship Him," Story begins.



"Martin hasn't received complete healing—and that can be hard at times when we view God as all-powerful and all-loving. But here we are now saying, 'Yes, this is how faith works.' God has proven to be faithful. We have been truly blessed out of a circumstance that at first didn't seem like much of a blessing at all."

Story's perspective has also changed for the better; the words of James 1:2 (*Consider it a great joy . . . whenever you experience various trials*) ring especially true and duly influence the joyful, wisdom-loving tone throughout *Blessings*. "Don't get the wrong idea. It hasn't been easy," Laura admits. "Everyone wants to be a mature and equipped follower, but would I have signed up had I known what it would take? God has grown us up, deepened our faith, our awareness of our great need for Him as a Savior, *daily*. We

knew it before, but we didn't *see* it. This is a good place to be."

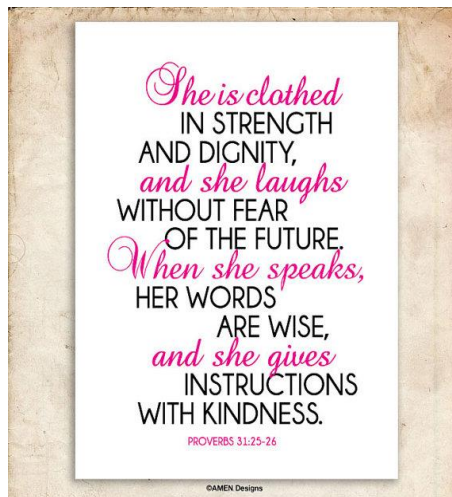
Blessings reflects that hopeful place. Yet Story knows firsthand the journey to surrender gets complicated—that it sometimes involves having to redefine what God's "blessings" could mean, a spiritual wrestling match she perfectly encapsulates in *Blessings*:

What if my greatest disappointments or the aching of this life is a revealing of a greater thirst this world can't satisfy?

"The song shows that we still have more questions than answers," Laura confesses. "But there's a decision that I find God is asking us to make: whether we are going to choose to interpret our circumstances based on what we hold to be true about God, or whether we're going to judge what we hold to be true about God based on our circumstances."

Laura and Martin's circumstances have magnified the blessing of marriage. High school sweethearts, they faced the strong chance their long-awaited bond might last just two years. "Once you've rallied through a life-threatening illness together, the rest of it is like a surprise; every day is a new gift that might not have been there. It's not as big a deal now if he leaves his socks on the floor," Laura says with a smile.

"People ask how we're doing, and I like to say: 'We have a faithful God.' *Every promise He's kept, every need He's met.*"



JUNIOR HIGH
 June 10th - 15th
SENIOR HIGH
 June 17th - 22nd
TADPOLE CAMP
 July 5th - 7th
KIDS CAMP
 July 9th - 12th
WOMEN'S CONFERENCE
 July 17th
I/A/MN DIST. CONFERENCE
 July 18th
FAMILY RETREAT
 July 18th - 22rd
 Register online at
www.cedarspringscamp.com
 or call 641-398-2488
 Brochures on foyer table



Sunday, May 13th

Birthdays	
Ally Broughton	1
Lorraine Fulton	1
Randy Miller	2
Addison Gericke	4
Josie Broughton	7
Jenny Turner	7
Meredith Miller	8
Larry Karsten	9
Bill Andrews	12
Dianne Hepke	13
Karstyn Zimmerly	16
Jayda Greenwell	17
Bob Solon	19
Kolt Zimmerly	20
Steve Zimmerly	21
Joshua Solon	22
Alice Billingsley	30
Anniversaries	
Rich & Shirley Seamans	24



Alex Coberly
 Saturday, May 19th
 12:00 - 3:00 pm
 Hope Wesleyan Church



Carly Broughton
 Senior Recital
 & Graduation Party!
 Friday, May 25th
 7:00 pm
 Hope Wesleyan Church



Sam Turner
 Sunday, May 27th
 3:30 - 5:30 pm
 Hope Wesleyan Church