

Augustana College
Chapel of Reconciliation

Kirsten Lenander

19 Feb 2010

“I can’t do that.” Who has ever said that? What makes us say this?

There’s a metaphor that goes something like this... “You hear a knock on your door, but by the time that you remove the chain, disarm the alarm, unlock the deadbolt and turn the handle, the opportunity is gone.”

We all have latches on our door...what are some of your latches? The situation might bring us out of our comfort zone. Maybe you don’t have all of the talents it takes? You won’t be good at it...or perfect?

But God says, “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations.” Jeremiah 1:5

Think about all of the tools we are already equipped with: we have the abilities to think and reason, to feel immense passion and deep emotion.

How many of you have seen the commercials that wrench at your heart? Like the one from Compassion International asking for donations in order to give a child the opportunity to succeed. Now, and you don’t have to raise your hands for this, how many times have you changed the channel? Have you thought about why? Latches.

Now, I am not saying that a lock on the door is bad, but often times we can get caught up in the messiness of life and put up more latches than needed. It is then that taking time away from our daily routine can bring us back into perspective and pull us into a deeper relationship with Christ.

Last year, I went with a group from Augie on a service-learning trip to El Paso, Texas. We went to learn about immigration issues on the border and hear personal stories from our neighbors being impacted.

Before we left, Pastor Paul gave us an assignment: we were challenged to reflect on

(1) ways to learn in El Paso,

(2) ways to serve,

(3) ways to grow in Christ, and

(4) ways to share this learning when we returned.

He called it a “Service Learning Covenant.” And with this, we began our journey.

The other evening, I was looking at my journal from the week and I came across a story that has been a constant affirmation of God’s call and ever presence.

Susana is a wife and a mother of two. When you look at her, you see strength and love. She is just one of those people that you meet and think, “I can only hope that I am half of what she is when I grow up.” She serves in the church, volunteers in almost every organization in El Paso, and cares for her family.

When Susana was pregnant with her daughter, a *coyote* crossed her through the pecan fields west of El Paso. At this time, the fence was not built across that area. Susana walked, pregnant, across the barren desert into a foreign land that did not want her.

“Why did you come?,” we asked. “For my children,” she said.

“I came because I want my children to have an opportunity to succeed. In México, you cannot get a job unless you know someone. You are lucky to get a job in a *maquila*, an American-owned factory, which pays \$45 a week for 50 hours of work. Education is not free in México, you must pay for a new uniform every year, for books and supplies, and to receive your grades. I came here to give a better life to my kids; an education – an opportunity.”

“We come for the American Dream,” she said, “but for most of us, it’s still just that – a dream. I work, I pay taxes (through a *special* number the government gives me), I support my family, I give back to my church and community – but sometimes it is not enough. I thank God every morning and say a little prayer for safety before we all leave the house. I never know if we will all make it home at night.”

The other day, I found out that one of Susana’s fears did come true. One evening, last fall, her husband did not come home and is now in immigration proceedings.

Her family has to decide if they will stay or leave. If they leave, all of the sacrifices she has made will seem fruitless. If they stay, she will live separated from her husband, potentially forever.

Susana has sacrificed more than a husband to support their children’s future. She must live separated from her family – able to communicate only by phone and photographs. Her father is ill, but she cannot see him – even though he is less than two miles away.

Even through this all, Susana continues to praise God and give thanks for what she has been given. For now, she and her children will remain in the United States. She is opening the latches to the doors when God knocks – opening the doors to her family, her church, and her community. Though most of us would listen to her circumstances and pronounce them impossible, Susana chooses to see them for the possibilities.

As our group of white, middle-class, college students listened to story after story like Susana’s, I began to reflect. What is a bad day like for me? A flat tire? No food I like in the Commons? Did I forget to save my paper?

What if I was worried every day that I might not see my family that night? What if my children’s teachers told them not to even bother with school because, in the end, it won’t

matter anyway because they are undocumented? What if my church told me I couldn't attend seminary because there was a language barrier? What then?

Life is not without heartbreak. Oftentimes, the doors God asks you to walk through are not easy, or even remotely attractive. Sometimes they come with pain and sorrow. But, do not fear; Jesus/God says, "Do not be afraid, for I am with you." Because coming through the door, unlocking the latches, promises love, community, and life beyond compare. So, leave the door unlocked...you never know who's going to be knocking.

MORNING WORSHIP

Friday 19, 2010

Prelude

Welcome/Announcements

Song

"Open the Eyes of My Heart, Lord"

Open the eyes of my heart, Lord, open the eyes of my heart
I want to see You, I want to see You.
Open the eyes of my heart, Lord, open the eyes of my heart;
I want to see You, I want to see You.
To see You high and lifted up, shining in the light of Your glory.
Pour out Your pow'r and love; As we sing holy, holy, holy. *Repeat*

Holy, holy, holy,.....holy, holy, holy;... holy, holy, holy, I want to see you.

Paul Baloche © 1997 Integrity's Hosanna! Music

Scripture

Sermon

Kirsten Lenander
Hometown: St. Joseph, MO
Majors: Nursing/ Exercise Science

Song

"In Christ Alone"

In Christ alone my hope is found, He is my light, my strength, my song.
This cornerstone, this solid ground, firm through the fiercest drought and storm.
What heights of love, what depths of peace, when fears are stilled, when strivings
cease! My comforter, my all in all, here in the love of Christ I stand.

In Christ alone who took on flesh, fullness of God in helpless babe!
This gift of love and righteousness, scorned by the ones He came to save.
'Til on that cross as Jesus died, the wrath of God was satisfied.
For every sin on Him was laid, here in the death of Christ I live.

There in the ground His body lay, light of the world by darkness slain
Then bursting forth in glorious day, up from the grave He rose again!
And as He stands in victory, sin's curse has lost its grip on me
For I am His and He is mine, bought with the precious blood of Christ.

No guilt in life no fear in death, this is the power of Christ in me.
From life's first cry to final breath, Jesus commands my destiny
No power of hell no scheme of man, can ever pluck me from His hand
Till He returns or calls me home, here in the power of Christ I'll stand!

Prayer/Lord's Prayer
Benediction
Postlude

Thank you to all who assisted with worship today. - Kirsten

CAMPUS MINISTRY ANNOUNCEMENTS

"REVIVE AT 5" - All are welcome to worship on Sunday evenings at 5 pm in the chapel. We will be singing Holden Evening Prayer and celebrating Holy Eucharist.

CHAPEL IN KRESGE AUDITORIUM - On **Monday, Feb. 22nd**, the chapel service will be in Kresge Auditorium - Humanities, led by the Wind Ensemble.

SERVING THE BANQUET - Campus Ministry will be serving the Banquet on Monday, March 1st. We are in need of many more workers!! Please sign up for one of the shifts on the Narthex table.

FAITH FEST - A big THANK YOU to all who helped with Faith Fest this year. It was a huge success!! We raised over \$550 for world hunger and had a great weekend with the high schoolers and their leaders.

CHAPEL STAFF APPLICATIONS - Applications for chapel staff for the next school year will be available on **March 1st**. If you are considering applying for staff, please see Carol in the chapel office. Voting for chapel president will be **Fri., Mar. 26th and Sun., Mar. 28th**. Interviews will be held **Mar. 25th and 26th** for staff, and the announcement for staff will be sometime the week of the 29th.

CHAPEL SCHEDULE

Sun., Feb. 21st - Dist. Schol. Worship, 9 am
"Revive at 5" worship - 5 pm - Meg Eide, preacher
Mon., Feb. 22nd - CHAPEL IN KRESGE - Wind Ensemble
Wed., Feb. 24th - Holy Communion, 10 am - Julia Pachoud Bennett, Theater
Thurs., Feb. 25th - Lenten meditation, 10 am - chapel
Fri., Feb. 27th - Worship, 10 am - Will Dietzler, Sr. Spkr.
Sun., Feb. 28th - Dist. Schol. Worship, 9 am
"Revive at 5" worship - 5 pm - Prism Outreach Team