



"Joy is a mystery because it can happen anywhere, anytime, even under the most unpromising circumstances, even in the midst of suffering with tears in its eyes." -Buechner

Hope & Haiti

May 2015

Hello! I pray that you are now enjoying some of the warmer weather that the spring months bring! Our rainy season has started and with it comes lots of mosquitos, humidity, muddy roads, and super hot days.

Lately, I've been struggling with how to love well. I don't mean simply greeting people and being kind, but rather how to love in a way that is truly open, intentional, and vulnerable even when I know I could get hurt. Better yet, even when I know it's going to hurt. This hurt isn't something that is physical, but it's more of an emotional pain. I'm learning that investing in the lives of my friends is a choice. I can choose to ask questions and to listen to their stories as I sit in their homes or I can simply wave and hurry off to the next task or job that is waiting for me. My heart desires real relationships and yet my head knows just how difficult those can be.

My dear friend had a baby recently. I spent months feeling that little one kick from the inside of her momma's belly and months guessing with the children as to if it would be a boy or girl. From the moment I heard this little girl made her grand entrance into the world though I have been filled with this paralyzing fear. Her mother had no complications while delivering her in their home and yet my mind just wouldn't stop running with the long list of things that could happen. She could get an infection, would she be able to breast feed, and was the baby truly healthy? Yes, I have loved getting to hold this sweet baby girl and have loved watching the children get so excited about absolutely everything she does (who knew a baby could pee that many times a day!). But in reality I'm afraid to really love her because I know the hurt of death and loss all too well. I have had to consciously remind myself of what the Lord has done and is doing in this sweet family because I want to be there to encourage my friend. I desire to



Prayer Requests

-For the mothers and caretakers of all my little friends. These women work so hard to provide for the children and it seems they rarely have enough to get by.

- My personal community has changed a lot over the last few months and will be changing again over the summer. Praying for unity as we learn to serve, work, and live together.

-Summer months are right around the corner and that means school will be out. Eating a meal everyday is a luxury to a lot of the children when school isn't in session. And school provides routine and purpose for the children. Praying for health and safety for the students during their summer break.

(continued) love this family and invest in them. I don't want to let my fears win.

The other day Francoinise (our housekeeper in the clinic) and I spent time looking back through pictures of children who have graduated from the malnutrition program. I was amazed at just how much she remembered about each child that had been in the program. As we looked through the albums it was like watching blessing after blessing unfold. There were children we both thought wouldn't live and yet they are now chubby and thriving. We talked about how some that had graduated were now walking and in school. At one point Francoinise looked at me and said "Brooke this is now in their past, you know that right?" She reminded me that they now have the opportunity to do everything and so many of them are living miracles. Franconise knew just what my heart needed to hear. I tend to get stuck in being worried for the children instead of rejoicing with them when they succeed. I find myself constantly bracing for the next child that will be brought to the clinic. As we looked through the pictures I was reminded of just how powerful the Lord truly is and how much He truly loves each of these little children. Choosing to love and walk on this journey with each parent and child in the program is emotionally draining and yet it's also one of the greatest blessings. These mommas are learning it's ok to stand up and fight and they are truly working so hard for their children.

I'm constantly choosing between loving or hiding away in fear of getting hurt. Earlier this year I started writing down a list of words that describe the character of the Lord. This simple list has radically changed the way I see the Lord throughout the day. You see there are many days when I need to be reminded that the Lord is faithful, He is my ultimate provider, and He is just. Each morning after I read my devotional and Bible I add another word to the list. This simple little list has radically changed the way I see the Lord once I leave my cozy little house each morning. This list has helped bring perspective to moments that otherwise make no sense at all or that seem fairly hopeless. I can't thank you enough for following along as I continue to live life in Haiti. I pray that you too are being challenged to step out in faith and to truly love those that the Lord has placed in your life. Even the people that are just a tad bit more difficult=)

Love, Brooke



thankful

Just a few of the things I'm feeling thankful for this month...

* As soon as the children see me walking on the road into Chambrun they come running. They are so quick to greet me with hugs and kisses. If I could bottle up these precious moments with them I would!

* For the youth program in our church and the leaders who love and serve the students. The youth leaders are really pushing the students to be bold in their faith and to not just do as others have before them. Change is happening in our community!

* For a community that has literally surrounded my family (in Indiana) with love and support while my dad has been sick. It has been hard for me to be here and not in Indiana with them. The Lord has truly blessed my family with an amazing community to help with everything from meals to sitting with my mom at the hospital.

* We have had several teams lately that have been super intentional with loving and serving the staff at NVM. These teams have been refueling to me and have helped to encourage me as I continue serving.



preschool

The clinic I work in is located behind the preschool classrooms. I love that while we are treating patients throughout the day we can hear the little three and four year olds singing different songs. There is a song for learning the days of the week, how to say greetings in French, learning colors, and even one about the sun. These kids sure know how to sing! One of my favorite things to listen to though are the prayers the teachers pray over the students. Every morning before classes start and every afternoon before the students are released the teachers literally pray over the children. They pray that the children will remain healthy and that they will continue to learn. They pray that they have a safe journey home from school and while they are walking back to school the next morning. They pray for their little minds to retain the information they are learning. They even pray for the parents and caregivers to be kind and compassionate and help the children to continue to learn and grow. The words the teachers are praying over the preschool children aren't just silly little sayings, but rather they are truly lifting each child up to the Lord and seeking His blessing for them. The teachers aren't just there to teach the children, but they are there to truly impact and grow up a new generation of leaders for this community and country!