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Wake Up!



A busy ministry schedule has limited my time to blog, but I want to give a quick update.

This is a land of great darkness, but more than that, it is a land of great need of the light of God's love. Our ministry here has focused on sharing the love of God to the people of Thailand and also to Jason and Sarah Ricketts, who are missionaries here.

I have walked the streets of Pattaya where there are thousands of prostitutes and hundreds of bars. Men come here from around the world for sex. Young girls and boys sell their bodies in order to make money. They are often illiterate and have no marketable skills other than their very body. The damage to their souls is beyond measure. Yet there are some here who are endeavoring to share God's love. They teach free English classes. They teach marketable skills. They provide counseling for the trauma; most of the young girls have been raped more than once. So many have come here in order to honor their families by providing financially for them. That is important in this culture. Most families know their girls come here to work in the bars. They know their girls will become prostitutes. It is an acceptable means of employment. However, most know nothing of the horrors these young girls will experience. And once the girls experience the horrors of prostitution, instead of honor, they find intense shame and feel unable to go back to their families. Isn't that the enemy's classic strategy? Empty promises and bondage in the very place you thought would bring freedom.

And of course, there is the slave market which is another story entirely. Behind closed doors, there are young people and children, yes children, who are sex slaves. These did not come here on their own choosing. Their parents have been offered education and jobs for their children, but the reality is they are either tricked or deceived into this lifestyle or many are kidnapped, and then smuggled across national boundaries, raped and traumatized in order to gain power over them, threatened, and then enslaved. They don't speak Thai or English. They are afraid and powerless. And in the midst of all this, prostitution is illegal.

It is more than I can explain to you. I strongly recommend you order ***Not for Sale: The Return of the Global Slave Trade - and How We Can Fight It*** by David Batstone. It will trouble you. It will disturb you. It will awaken you from any illusions you have that slavery is a thing of the past. It will inspire you to care, to speak on behalf of the weak. It will bring forth an abolitionist spirit inside you. It will change you if your heart is alive. The message is God's message: Justice is for all. Would you submit your heart to God and just ask Him if you should read this book? For me, it was a point of realizing I had had my head stuck in the American illusionary sand and God had said, "Wake up!" We are inexcusable when we experience God's love and refuse to share it. Not all are called to travel, but most are called to give, to support, to encourage people like Jason and Sarah. All are called to be informed. As God awakens our hearts, may you and I be faithful to care in tangible ways for anything less is cotton candy. And although denial may be our preferred mechanism of dealing with the hard realities of life, it is the truth that will make us free and our freedom should always call us to fight for others to have the same freedom.

Arise, O Sleeper!

For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth), finding out what is acceptable to the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them. For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret. But all things that are exposed are made manifest by the light. For whatever makes manifest is light. Therefore He says, "Awake, you who sleep, Arise from the dead, And Christ will give you light." Ephesians 5:21

And remember, the truth brings freedom when it is acted upon.

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