

Mighty to Save ministries

Offering hope and new beginnings to young adults who want to be free from addictions by providing mentoring, discipling and transition assistance.

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Identity

I will be honest with you. I've had a hard time deciding what to write for this newsletter. I thought about doing the traditional "Year in Review", and some other novel ideas, but nothing felt right. I kept praying, asking God what He wants said, and every time I asked I felt like He was saying "Identity".

If there is one thing I have learned over the last two years of ministering to young adults fighting their way out of addiction it is that how we see ourselves really affects our actions and our thoughts about ourselves. And it spills out into our other relationships. If we see ourselves as bad, unworthy, unlovable, an addict, or any other negative identity, this becomes the lens through which we view life.

Identity... is described by Merriam-Webster as *"who someone is; the name of a person"; the qualities, beliefs, etc., that make one particular person or group different from others."*

I've only recently stepped into what I believe is my identity in Christ. As a young adult, and even into my more "mature" years I have struggled with self-esteem and insecurities. Although I

thought as I got older, I was getting better; I really think I was just feeling more comfortable in those insecurities. They were my identity and bothered me less; but, over the past few years, as God has really been showing me who I am in HIM, and the rights and privileges that come along with being HIS child, I find myself being surprised by the way I am handling situations.

In conflict, I don't find myself arguing, trying to defend myself or my point of view. In tense or uncomfortable situations, I truly feel "the peace that surpasses all understanding". There have been times when I've actually stopped and asked myself, "Why are you not freaking out right now?" And in one recent situation when I made a mistake, I didn't find myself saying, "Well, so-and-so did it, and nobody said anything to her". I should state here that this is not the situation 100% all the time. I am still a work in progress; and God is not done with me yet.

That is growth. But why did it have to take me so long to get here? I'm 47 years old. Why didn't I get this at 27? I could have saved myself a lot of heartaches. My heart for those I am working with is for them to figure this

out NOW. Don't wait. Live in your God-given identity now.

But-- How do we get there? How do we begin to believe, and to receive in our hearts who God says we are?

The bible says we are **"adopted in sonship with Jesus"** (Ephesians 1:5 & John 1:12) We are **co-heirs with Christ**. (Romans 8:17 & Galatians 4:7) We are **victorious**. (1 Corinthians 15:57) We are **more than conquerors**. (Romans 8:37) We are **free**. (John 8:32 & 36 & Galatians 5:1) We are **forgiven**. (Colossians 1:14 & Colossians 2:13 & 1 John 1:9) We are **redeemed**. (Ephesians 1:7 & Colossians 1:14) We are **restored**. (Colossians 2:14 & 1 Peter 5:10) We are **holy and without blame**. (Ephesians 1:4) We are **righteous**. (Romans 3:22 & Corinthians 5:21)

WOW! That is some good stuff. What would it look like if we really believed what God said? Can you imagine how our lives would change and our relationships with others as well?

Once we say, "Yes" to Jesus, this becomes our identity, who HE says we are in HIM. So, why should we argue with that? Why are we so quick to believe the negative lies the enemy tries to tell us

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instead of believing our Creator, the One who knit us together and formed us in our mother’s womb, and the One that chose us in HIM before the foundation of the world? (Ephesians 1)

I am not suggesting that this is something that just (“Poof!”) happens. I believe it has to be experienced. In my case, it wasn’t an instant moment, or even something that happened overnight, or in a week, a month, or a year. It took time. It took my willingness to surrender EVERYTHING to HIM, my realizing that I, on my own, would never be enough. My desire had to be to receive everything that HE has for me, and to remain in HIM. I have to start out each day with surrender to HIM, letting HIM remind me of who HE says I am, listening to what HE has to say to my heart, encountering HIS Holy Spirit. Maybe the reason it took me so long to walk in my God-given identity was because it took me so long to surrender my old identity to HIM?

Would you be willing to take a step of faith with me this year? Would you be willing to pray every day for that encounter? Will you pray that God will reveal to your heart who He says you are, and that your heart will believe it? Would you be willing to read these scriptures, and to meditate (think deeply) on them?

This is my hope and my prayer for our Mighty to Save “kids”, and for our volunteers and supporters in 2014. I am praying that God would reveal the truths about our real identity to our hearts, that we would experience those truths, that they would become real to us. What a life this will be if we just receive, and believe in our hearts who we are in Christ, and realize just how very much He loves us.

~ Christina

Dreams and Visions

As we begin this New Year, I’ve been thinking about MtSM, and how much we have grown in the almost two years since God birthed this ministry.

Jail ministry has kept us busy. We did 80 visits in 2013, compared to 56 in 2012. Our inner-healing SOZO team is reorganizing and is ready to offer sessions again. We moved into a wonderful new office that I am so thankful for and just LOVE. We have made some great connections; and the word is out on the streets that there is someone who cares and is willing to help. It has been a very good year with much learning and growing.

There are three major things that I am praying about for 2014. I do not know what they will look like, but I fully and completely trust that if these things are God’s will for this ministry, HE will put the pieces together and complete the puzzle.

1. The MtSM Transformation Housing:

We continue to move forward with this project and with the Grant Writing Process. Ann Meyer and a new team member are working together on this HUGE undertaking. They are researching and doing very important Grant Writing things of which I know nothing. This is another reason why I am so very THANKFUL and DELIGHTED that God has provided the gifts and talents of a team working on this venture with us.

2. Mom’s Support group in Oak Harbor.

Our mom’s group in Anacortes has been meeting for about 16 months now. This group of ladies continues to get together to pray for each other and for their children. They support and encourage one another and hold each other accountable. As I continue to meet moms in Oak Harbor, I see a real need for this type of support here as well.

We need someone or a team of several people to come forward to lead this group. If you think this is something you can do and God is calling you to lead, please give me a call. I would love to chat with you about it.

If you would like to attend a meeting, but not lead it, I would love to hear from you too. I believe it is powerful when we gather together for prayer and support. So often, as parents of someone

struggling with addiction, we feel guilty, isolated and alone; but when we get together and share our hearts and pray, it defeats the plans of the enemy to make us feel ashamed, friendless, and reclusive.

3. Weekly Support Meeting for those coming out of addiction.

When someone has been sentenced to Drug Court, Family Court, or other Dept. of Corrections Community Custody programs, attending weekly “meetings” are mandatory. They have to go to AA, NA, or Celebrate Recovery.

I have been thinking about starting some sort of meeting here at MtSM once a week. It would need to meet a certain standard to qualify and fulfill the requirement for the courts, but other than that, I think it would feel and look very different from the other typical meetings.

What if we talked about identity and forgiveness, receiving it and giving it? And how about if we introduced these people to a culture filled with God’s grace, mercy, acceptance, and forgiveness?

As I was sharing this idea with our ministry partner Neil Harmsworth from Noble Maritime, he had the thought of looking at this as an opportunity for building up leaders.

We have seen from our jail visits that this group of young adults are passionate. They want to make the world a better place; and they want to lead the way. They are so creative and fearless.

We need you to join us in prayer about these three dreams. Participation of others and many prayers are required if these things are going to really come together in an effective, efficient way to touch the hearts of those we are reaching out to.

Do any of these ideas stir something inside of you? I would love to hear from you. If you would like to help, please contact Christina by phone or email.

360-929-2959

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Thanks!

The Night of Hope took place on November 24, 2013 at the Oak Harbor Senior Center. Thank you to everyone who participated and came out to support us. It was such a blessed night. The music was uplifting, the testimonies were inspiring, and definitely offered HOPE.

We heard from Frankie, our soon to be new dad, who stopped running away and instead surrendered it all to God. After being on the run from the law for years and always having to look over his shoulder, Frankie now walks in freedom. He may still struggle on occasion as we all do, but he has learned how to work through the hard times in a healthy way.

Johnny shared his story of his encounter with God while in a jail cell in Whatcom County. God met him right where he was, and changed his life forever. Johnny used to walk the streets filled with anger and ready to fight. Now he is filled with the joy of Lord and it just spills out of him. He brings the presence of God with him wherever he goes, and freely shares God's love with others. God transformed him from being called "Crash" on the streets to being called "God's Warrior".

Anita shared from her momma's heart how God has been and still is, so faithful to walk with her, encouraging her and speaking softly to her while she prayed, waiting for her son to change his life, and enter into relationship with God. God was with her and her family through it all. Sometimes, she just had to look a little harder to see Him. As they enter into the next phase of "life outside of addiction", God walks with her still, and continues to bring peace to her heart.

Potter's House, a local Christian band, started the night with a beautiful song written by two of the band members about the accident that changed our lives in 2010. Lisa, band member and song writer, is married to Jason, a first responder who responded that night. The song is about how only Jesus can take the pain and brokenness, and make it beautiful and new. It was amazing, and

we are so grateful to them for sharing the night with us.

Clips of our Night of Hope can be viewed via our web-site at mightytosaveministries.org

Participant's Note

On January 19th, Christina and Van along with Johnny and Jodi Arellano, traveled to Spokane, WA for Sarah's completion ceremony. Sarah completed the one year discipleship program at the Spokane Dream Center. After completion, Sarah traveled home with her parents for a short visit and then headed off to Uganda, Africa for a one week mission trip. After her mission trip, Sarah will be returning to the Dream Center to start an internship.

Here's a note from Sarah to all of us.

"Hello Mighty to Save Peeps!! :) I have been so blessed in the last two years. It all started with the introduction to Christina and my journey to finding my identity in Christ. I am so thankful for Christina and her ministry for always reflecting the love of Jesus towards me and never losing hope. She kept her heart and her door open to me even during my most difficult times. She was there speaking life and truth into my spirit and mind and I am so thankful for everything Mighty to Save has done for me. I am delivered from my addictions and abiding in God's presence, fully relying on His character and not my

own to overcome any obstacles. I am planning a week long mission trip to Uganda. I leave January 25 and arrive home on February 2. So keep those prayers coming!! :)

"For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and sound mind."
2 Timothy 1: 7

I super love you guys!!!!

~ Sarah



Gaye, Sarah and John Rodriguey at Sarah's completion ceremony.



Paula, Van, Christina, Sarah, Johnny and Jodi at Sarah's one year completion ceremony.

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Commit to Pray — Email

prayer@mightytosaveministries.org and request to be

added to the email list.

Finances — MtSM is funded solely by private contributions.

Your ongoing support helps in funding the purchase of

Bibles, teaching materials, travel, meetings, volunteer

training, counseling and so much more. Please consider

supporting MtSM on a monthly basis.

To Donate

Mail checks to the below address or go to

mightytosaveministries.org and donate online via PayPal.

Contact Us

Mighty to Save Ministries

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Prayer: Your prayers are powerful and effective! If you would like to join our team of Mighty to Save Ministries Prayer Warriors, please send an email to: prayer@mightytosaveministries.org

Financial Support: Please consider MtSM in your monthly giving. You can give a one time donation or schedule monthly giving using PayPal. Go to mightytosaveministries.org for details.

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