

May 29, 2011, YAY Worship

The summer I turned three, my family and I moved from Van Nuys to San Diego. We had a little house over on Waring Road, back before there were very many houses in Allied Gardens. In fact, there were acres and acres of undeveloped land just behind our house where my brother and I went out exploring.

The day that we moved into the house, we celebrated my birthday. All the relatives were there! I was having a great time, and then I did something very frightening. In fact, I got hysterical---- I panicked!

There have not been very many moments in my life that traumatic, but then again, I was barely three and easily frightened.

What I did was this----

I locked myself in the bathroom. I guess the lock worked differently from the one at our old house and I could not figure out how to get it unlocked!

So I screamed and I carried on, frantic to come back out of the bathroom.

After all, I was missing my birthday party!

My mom tried to give me directions from the other side of the door, but I am not sure she knew how the lock worked well enough to explain it to me.

Then I heard my dad say, "It's okay. I'll get you out." That calmed me down a little, and the next thing I knew, my dad had found a ladder and his face was looking in the bathroom window.

I distinctly remember the look on his face.

He was trying not to laugh.

And he told me how to open the door and FINALLY I got out of that prison of a bathroom!

Sometimes I think that God looks at me with that same amused look.

I can almost hear God saying, "Look what you've gotten yourself locked into! Just calm down and listen to me and I will get you out of it, no problem!"

Because we can get locked up by many things----by other people's expectations, by our own fears, by plans that really aren't right for us but we are committed to them regardless.

When Christ sent us "another Advocate," as today's scripture calls the Holy Spirit, he gave us the power, the key to unlock everything that traps us. Christ came to give us freedom!

And yet sometimes we don't know how to use that key  
and we stay locked up.

When each one of us was born, we were innocent of any  
wrong-doing. But right away there were expectations and  
dreams put upon us.

But sometimes it can trap us. We believe that's what we should do with our lives, or we believe that we are a certain kind of person.

We buy into the thinking that defines us even when it's incorrect---that we possess certain characteristics that we can't change, or that we should do what we're good at even when we find little fulfillment or joy in it.

Even what we're good at might be defined by someone else based on an isolated incident or family traits, and it might be completely wrong!

This is a trap----a room we were put into by others but we are often the ones who keep the door locked from the inside.

This is not the abundant life ---the freedom---that Christ came to bring us.

And I think I see Christ's face looking in the window of that room, telling us how to open the door and be free!

The great King David wrote that God will give us the desires of our hearts.

I used to think that meant that God would give me whatever I really, really wanted deep in my heart.

And I couldn't understand why, no matter how hard I prayed, God didn't give me what I really wanted.

Not always.

And then one day I found myself really wanting to be closer to God's heart.

I had never particularly cared about that before, never really asked for that or tried to find a way for that to happen.

I had grown up believing that God loves me, but it never seemed really personal to me---more of a generic thing---that God loves me the same way I love the beach. Just like I don't love each individual grain of sand, I thought God loves us as a group, as a whole, but not exactly me as an individual.

But there came a point when I wanted to be more like David, who was described as a man after God's own heart. I wanted to be closer to God's heart.



God had put that desire into my heart---given me the desire of my heart---not like granting a wish or even answering a prayer, but to put that desire into me, so that I would work toward it.

By putting that desire into my heart, God was standing outside the window of my locked room, the room I had locked myself into by thinking that God did not love me personally. And God told me how to open that door and come out.

So the question I have for you today is this----what is the deepest desire of your heart? What is it that you want more than anything?

Your locked room may feel safe but you're missing the party! What is it that makes you want to risk coming out of that safe place? To try something new? To get to know a new way of life?

What is it that God has put into your heart?