

RANSOMED HEART

LOVE GOD. LIVE FREE.

August, 2018

Dear Friends,

John is on a much needed Sabbath, so it's Stasi writing this month's letter!

I want to share something that God is reminding me of this morning with the hope that it brings encouragement to you. Are you familiar with St. Patrick's Breastplate? It's a powerful prayer that begins in this way:

*I arise today
Through a mighty strength, the invocation of the Trinity,
Through belief in the Threeness,
Through confession of the Oneness of the Creator of creation.*

"I arise today through a mighty strength." Oh, wouldn't that be nice to say every morning? I want that to be true, but the thoughts that frequently take our hearts captive upon arising include: *It's going to be a bad day. I don't want to get up. You are a failure as a mother, father, friend. You do not love well. You are alone. You are selfish. This is all too hard.* And repeat.

Do you know what yours are? This morning, the accuser was battering my heart with "*Failure. Failure. Failure.*" The crushing weight of shame was reinforced by memories (cruelly twisted but seemingly real interpretations) of my failing, evidence parading across my mind that I was not being a good friend, wife, or mother.

But the prayer continues:

*I arise today
Through the strength of Christ's birth with His baptism,
Through the strength of His crucifixion with His burial,
Through the strength of His resurrection with His ascension,
Through the strength of His descent for the judgment of doom.*

Wow. Well, okay then. We don't arise through our strength to figure it out or to change or to become an amazing person who loves everyone at all times perfectly. We arise today and every day by turning our gaze onto Jesus and what He has accomplished for us—because we needed Him to accomplish it.

While still feeling the weight of failure, I began to ask Jesus for the truth and to tell it to myself: *I am not a perfect friend, but I am a good one. I fail as a wife and mother, but I am not a failure.* I took my gaze off of my performance and turned it onto the King and His character: His faithfulness. His goodness. His mercy. His strength.

*I arise today,
through God's strength to pilot me,
God's might to uphold me,
God's wisdom to guide me,
God's eye to look before me,
God's ear to hear me,
God's word to speak for me,
God's hand to guard me,
God's shield to protect me,
God's host to save me
From snares of devils,
From temptation of vices,
From everyone who shall wish me ill,
afar and near.*

*Christ with me,
Christ before me,
Christ behind me,
Christ in me,
Christ beneath me,
Christ above me,
Christ on my right,
Christ on my left,
Christ when I lie down,
Christ when I sit down, Christ when I arise,
Christ in the heart of every man who thinks of me,
Christ in the mouth of everyone who speaks of me,
Christ in every eye that sees me,
Christ in every ear that hears me.*

(Find the complete prayer at <http://www.ransomedheart.com/prayer/st-patrick's-breastplate>)

This morning, like so many days in my clay-footed life, I need mercy. My Father offers it to me. Jesus has won it for me. The Holy Spirit beckons me to receive it. I have blown it. But the blowing now has become the wind of the Holy Spirit. His breath shepherds my heart into my Father's, and there mercy triumphs over judgment. I may stay in bed a bit longer, but now it is not out of despair. Now I cozily snuggle into His forgiveness, His love, His heartbeat of hope. We can have hope no matter if we wake to accusation or to celebration, because our God is with us. And for that I am defiantly joyful.

With much hope and joy,



Stasi

PS – I also want to let you know that I have a new book coming out this October. It's called *Defiant Joy*. I share a bit about it in a short video at DefiantJoy.com. I hope you'll check it out and join me in this beautifully disruptive and wonderful way to live.