

Day 2, 5/13/09, AUEA

Our team is an eclectic group of people. We come from different backgrounds and have different experiences. Our commonality however, is our pain. All of us have experienced some form of pain to some extent. And so, ten broken strangers join together to journey to experience the African culture and all that it encompasses. God, help us.

I was reminded of my own frail humanity on the airplane traveling from London to Nairobi. During the trip, I looked outside the window. All I could see was dessert. It looked hot, dry, and unwelcoming. That represents my humanity. Sin causes my heart to become a desert, dry and alone. When I hurt either myself or another, I know something is not right. I know things should be different. I was reminded that when you're in the desert, you need hope to be your oasis. And God is that hope. Above the Sahara desert from the window, I saw a huge brilliant rainbow that stood as a testament to God's strength and faithfulness.

And so I ask myself, what is my dessert and what is my rainbow?

God,

My heart is open, attentive, and alert. I ask that you would begin to paint your story across my heart. My life is fragile and I am reminded of that as well as the fact that You are hope and grace. Thank You for my story thus far, and the chapters that are to come. Grant our team safety. May we love each other.

Above anything else, I ask that you would wreck me. Shatter my heart. Strip me of my white male upper-middle class suburbia calluses. Cause me to weep. I forget so easily how blessed I am. And by forgetting my blessings, I forget my responsibilities.

And so my prayer is that You'd bless me. Jesus, pour out every good thing You have to offer upon me. You are a God who is so much and is involved in my minuscule daily life. Scripture shows that you long to bless us. So I simply say, bring it on, rain it down, and knock me over with your blessings. Out of those blessings and the platform I have been given, may You use me to impact the world, to be a catalyst for social justice and the movement of love, i.e. You. I know what I am designed to do, and yet I am terrified of the mundane. So I ask and plead that on this trip, You will cause me to fall upon my face and weep. Break me so that I can never forget. Then I can share it with the world.

Paint Your face upon my soul.

Write Your name into my flesh.

Carve Your love into my hands and feet.

And wreck my heart for you.

Be my rainbow in my dessert

I am finished. You've heard my prayers. You know my heart. We have wrestled and fought and I'm throwing in the towel. Now all I can do is wait with expectancy for You and say thanks. Thank you for what You're going to do inside of me and through me.

Bless me. Wreck me. Use me!

-John.

"May God bless you with tears to shed for those who suffer from pain, rejection, starvation, and war; so that you may reach out your hands to comfort them and turn their pain into joy. May God bless you with enough foolishness to believe that you can make a difference in this world, so that you can do what others claim cannot be done."

- Franciscan Benediction