

OPEN YOUR EYES

(A message by Colleen Boyer on 30 Hour Famine weekend)

This weekend's theme that I decided on was "open your eyes" I wanted this weekend to be a reminder that hunger comes in all shapes and sizes. It doesn't discriminate and neither should our awareness. This is my second year leading the famine and my 5th or 6th year participating, and every year the statistics always shock me. 1 child every 8-12 seconds, 153/1000 infant mortality rates 28% literacy. Poverty doesn't care whether you live in Afghanistan or Zambia or even America, poverty is everywhere we just need to open our eyes and see it and recognize it. But that's the good news, we can do that, and we do! Good Shepherd I think is a very willing congregation, we all contribute to the famine in some way, we donate to the food bank and to the homeless, and we have a benevolence fund. We strive to do what we can, to feed the hungry and welcome the stranger in. Sometimes all it takes is to recognize that we are all God's children whether we are rich, poor or living in extreme poverty.

But what about after you recognize the need? Doing what you can is something we also talked about a lot this weekend, in both of our scriptures the people did what they could, in Matthew there was food and water and welcome given. In Mark 2 fish and 5 loaves of bread we're given. Now when I was growing up I distinctly remember being told this story and in the story a boy gave the disciples the fish and bread he had packed for that day. He wasn't trying to be a hero or looking for anything he was just doing what he could, and that to me is something we should all learn from, just doing what we can to help because it always makes a difference. That boy gave up his simple meal, just what he could give, but it made all the difference in the world, it created a miracle and fed over 5,000 people. Now I don't know that I can make that big of a difference, but I know that my participation in the famine has helped bring numbers down. When I started it was one kid every 5/6 seconds and now its 8/12, that's a huge change and I feel amazing knowing that my little contribution, doing what I could helped make a difference. I also know that standing outside for 3 hours collected a lot of cans for the food bank, no huge miracles but definitely things that make a difference.

So now you've heard the new facts, you've seen the change that we have helped bring about.

So open your eyes, do what you can, give up your fish and bread, make a difference.