

## sharper focus “Encounter Christ daily”

*By Erin Wikle, Soldier*

One Friday I was driving home, weary from the usual week of work and juggling our family of five’s schedules. On top of that, I’d found myself “stalled” on a writing project and frustrated at this perceived writer’s block. My lack of progress lingered in the back of my mind and I’d found myself filling any free moment with attempts to cast vision and put pen to paper. It made sense I pursue this opportunity; it would fill a need and desire to write more and pour forth new ideas and revelation. So why was I struggling so?

Quick to recognize that this particular week had managed to suck a lot of life out of me—leaving me dry and worn out—I entered into a little combo of prayer and praise. (For those with long commutes, I highly recommend filling this idle time by engaging God in some way, be it in intercession or turning up Pandora and having a mini-worship session.)

Like a stubborn child who had refused the help of her father, choosing to struggle through a task to prove her independence, I suddenly “gave up” and began crying out to the Lord for help. The words from a worship song, “I feel you near God, you are thick all around me,” played, and I became overwhelmed by the love of God. Through tears, I began pouring out words of repentance and desire for clarity and peace of mind. Admitting that I desired obedience over independence, in but a moment, something shifted. As if a weight were lifted as words of desperation poured forth, peace and joy were suddenly all mine.

I’ve been in “this place” before. That moment of recognizing you’ve long pursued something because it “made sense” and fit within the paradigm of your world, because it was masked by spiritualism or Salvationism, so why wouldn’t God have that for you (or me); yet quite ironically, God didn’t have that for you. So many times, I’ve tried to force in my flesh what directly opposes the Spirit of God. My perceived writer’s block, absence of vision for this project, frustration and lack of peace were a direct result of conceding to an idea because it made sense—I didn’t need anyone else’s input or approval, including a God whose sovereignty is so seldom tapped into and acknowledged.



This encounter with God was brief, but so significant for me. I was reminded how my own flesh (sin nature) acts as a veil, keeping me from the presence of God and his best. All decisions derived from a place of disobedience will keep you from hearing the voice of God, receiving and responding to his revelation, and knowing him more. Friends, we must put to death the notion that it is only the worst of our worst that keeps us from him; our disobedience alone separates us from God. Even those desires and choices which are intrinsically good, “make sense,” or are seemingly reasonable, if their origin is not of a place where God has directed you, you have veiled yourself from his presence and cut yourself off from closeness with your Creator.

His desire is that we encounter him daily. That we push through the veil and enter right into his presence—the power of Jesus’ death and resurrection alone has allowed us access. So, be it in the quiet of the morning over a cup of coffee or in your car during your commute home, don’t settle for conventional and sensible, what is justifiable and of our own intellect—we are much too flawed a people. Don’t settle for disobedience. Settle for a sovereign God who is rich in love and compassion for his created, and who knows and cares for our deep wants and desires.

And so, dear brothers and sisters, we can boldly enter heaven’s Most Holy Place because of the blood of Jesus. By his death, Jesus opened a new and life-giving way through the curtain into the Most Holy Place. And since we have a great High Priest who rules over God’s house, let us go right into the presence of God with sincere hearts fully trusting him (Heb. 10:19-22a NLT).