

Happy Thanksgiving

When we count our blessings, we start with you!!

Singing with granddaughter Bri
in Worcester, Mass ☺



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Dear Balm Benefactors,

I think most of you know that I try to use this newsletter to inform you about how your generosity is being used to get the Gospel out to people who might not hear it otherwise. So I tend to tell “stories from the road” rather than talk about doctrine. But this month I ended up ministering in two places where I met young people (by which I mean “younger than I”!) who are still very much in the midst of struggling with the reactions of those in the church. In Massachusetts I got to share at the Morning Star Cathedral of Hope where Pastor Ron Anderson let me bring my oldest granddaughter, Bri along to sing with me. (She’s ten & she brought the house down, of course.) But my daughter-in-law, Rachael, was telling me how she & my son often feel like they have to “come out” in two groups. They feel defensive both to their Assembly of God church over singing at Pride, and to the glbt-supportive community for going to church.

In Joplin, where Pastor Uri has me sing at the anniversary for Spirit of Christ MCC, I ran into some college students who have been emailing me for a while & got to dig into some of the questions they had. I think I sometimes forget that people are searching just as frantically as I once did for answers about their place in Christ & their standing with God. We talked long into the night. Later one of them emailed me & asked how I dealt with the anger & injustice heaped on us by some in the church community. I thought I’d share part of my answer:

I have been very angry & indignant at the unfairness of other Christians. I find myself quite succinct in quoting Scripture to them. (“Haven’t they been a Christian long enough to know that if they had a problem with me, *I* should have been the first one to hear about it?” “Wouldn’t it be nice if they got the beam out of *their own eye* before they started blindly digging around in mine?”) But in a lot of ways, I was fortunate to have the experience of being ridiculed when I first accepted Christ. Students & teachers in my high school made a big point of mocking my new-

found faith. That did give me some experience in dealing with rejection & prejudice in a forum where I had the advantage of knowing deep down that I was right. I know that sounds a bit haughty, but it entrenched me in my faith to be bullied by those without any. My biggest anger came when I found out some of my classmates were believers who sat in silence while I was taunted.

I think that the experience of truly being persecuted for righteousness sake (& of course I mean Jesus' righteousness, not my own) set me up for dealing with bigots today. Certainly I am *crushed* when people who I love & admire are judgmental & cruel when they speak about me & the one/s I love. But I do tend to relate it to *their* sin, not *my* sexuality. So I don't feel defensive about those things which need no defense. I think, "Wow, I wonder where in my own life I am that blind to sin." So, kind of like when I see someone being pushy & impatient at the market & I think it makes them look like a jerk, it makes me be a bit more patient the next time the line gets overly long because I wouldn't want to be a jerk like that. Do you know what I mean? Daily sin observation brings out my judgments, but it also makes me more aware of avoiding the similar behaviors in my own life.

In the same way, once I became truly at peace with me & my life & my relationship (& even my choices), it was easier to see self-righteous Christians' judgments about me as their sin. I feel about them like I do about anyone who has gotten themselves caught up in lies & deception & false doctrine. I feel sorry for them. I feel concern for the damage they are causing to themselves & others. I even wonder what I do in my own life that takes me away from dealing with the stuff Jesus wants to heal in my heart. But I don't take it personally any more than I would if they said other equally ridiculous things like, "I know you! You have green eyes. Everyone knows that women with green eyes are evil & will go to hell. You need to get rid of those green eyes. You need to see a doctor or cover them up or pluck them out if you have to, but you better not keep on having green eyes." I mean, you'd just think they were nitwits, right? So when I had people in high school ridicule me for my faith in Christ, I thought, "Wow. How sad. I remember what it was like to have no hope, to feel so alone, to think life was all up to me. I wonder what I can do to show them what abundant life is like." And when I see (or hear or read about) people who are all up in arms that I'm a lesbian, I think, "Wow. How miserable to feel you have to serve a god like that. I wonder what I can do to show them the Real One."

Nothing ever changes the sting of false accusations or the pain of betrayal from a friend (although we certainly serve the One who knows those things first hand), but I do think that the more certain you are of your own standing in

Christ, & the more comfortable you are in your own skin (the one that Jesus made for you!), & the better you are at being like the Bereans & "searching the Scriptures for yourself to see if these things are so," the more likely you will be to allow your anger to be overcome by pity & prayer for those so misled. After all, some of them truly are an abomination to God. "There are six things the Lord

hates, seven that are an abomination to Him: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked schemes, feet that are quick to rush into evil, a false witness who pours out lies, & one who sows division among the brethren!" (Prov. 6: 16-19)

With much THANKSGIVING, Marsha & Cindy

Free Ways to Help BALM Ministries Raise Much-Needed Funds.

(Below you can read their advertising blurb, but the simple thing is this: when you want to shop online at a major store, you go first to www.igive.com/BALM. You put your info in and then it gives you a list of most stores you've ever heard of. So, for instance, you pick BestBuy, it takes you to that site and you order whatever you want online. That way, they automatically donate part of their profit to BALM Ministries.)

Every time you shop at any of 700+ online stores in the iGive network, a portion of the money you spend benefits BALM Ministries. It's a free service, and you'll never pay more when you reach a store through iGive.

In fact, shoppers will enjoy iGive's repository of coupons, free shipping deals, and sales. To get started, just create your free iGive account.

> **Start iGiving at:**
www.iGive.com/BALM

Prayer List

- ✓ Golly, prayers for everyone's finances, huh?
- ✓ When we are not traveling we offer extra support to some of the upBeat! artists & other ministries. You make that possible, so thanks to God for you.
- ✓ Prayers for upBeat! artist Justin Ryan. His music & booking info is available at www.justinryanonline.com
- ✓ Prayers for upBeat! artist Orgena Rose & her TV debut. Find out more at www.orgenarose.com
- ✓ upBeat! artists Carolyn Marshall & Pat Grant are

touring full time. See their videos on YouTube too!

www.MarshallGrantMinistries.org

- ✓ Prayers for new songs I'm working on ☺ & for our health.
- ✓ Prayers for Cindy she's decided for now to go back to school so she'll have more opportunities to join me back on the road.
- ✓ Prayers for wisdom for the dozens of emails I answer each week & for the still-closeted Christians who are hoping for answers!

What You Have to Say

"I am in awe of the honesty & truth that your lyrics reveal. My heart aches for the church as a body. I read that you have no ill feelings for the denominations that don't accept you/us. Wow. I wish I could say I was there, but I have no doubt that daily God is healing. Thank you for being a reflection of the Son, especially when it seems like all I see are looks of condemnation & hate."

"I wanted to tell you in person but was unable to stay & talk. I wanted to tell you that you were absolutely DYNAMIC this past Sunday at the concert. It was the first time I had ever heard you & I have to say: I was amazed at your beautiful and wonderful talent in both song writing and singing. It was the BEST service I've yet been blessed to attend."

"I wish I could begin to explain what God did in me (at your concert). I have spent so long hating, loathing, despising the church in which I grew up. I tried to walk away & the entire

time I ached to be back. I could not imagine reconciliation between faith & sexuality. God has brought me so far in the past year, but still, in the depths of my soul, I wondered if He really accepted me just as I am, not straight, not blond, not thin, not tall. Tears came from the moment I walked into MCC. I was terrified to accept myself, terrified that God would see me as hopeless & walk away. The peace that I felt with the first note was a peace that I have only ever dreamed of. I love music, I always have, & the fact that God allowed peace & acceptance to be shown to me in music is just another way He revealed a little more of His Love & just how well He knows me!!! Healing is something that will take time & I am so grateful to know the Healer of all. Marsha, from the bottom of my heart, thank you. Thank you for (your concert). Thank you for your ministry. Thank you for being bold. Thank you for embracing who you are as a Daughter of the Most High. Thank you for your time Saturday night. I praise God for you, for Cindy & for your ministry.

Marsha's Schedule

Dec 10 Liberty Church Dallas, TX
7:30pm concert (214)770-4184
www.LibertyChurchDallas.org

What Date Would You Like??
PLEASE!! As always, check the phone numbers for updated times & info. Go to www.BalmMinistries.net for current listings.

ChristianGays.com handles BALM Ministries sales outside the US. Also check out 5,000 pages of Resources, Education, Chat Rooms, List Serve, Prison Ministry, Blogging, Books & Music For Sale & much more