

GO WHERE GOD CALLS

Scripture: Isaiah 49:5-15

December 29, 2020

Message: **I will make you as a light for the nations, that My salvation may reach to the end of the earth.**

Isaiah 49:6b (NASB)

New York City! One of my favorite places to visit and especially at Christmas! The city looks so magical all lit up and Radio City Music Hall Rockette's Christmas spectacular is one of my favorite ways to usher in the season! In 2017 I visited the city December 19-22, but this time it wasn't for pleasure. A group from our church went on a mission trip through New York City Relief. I have been on several mission trips and worked on numerous mission projects with our youth, but nothing affected me the way that this trip did. We spent three days feeding, helping to clothe, find emergency shelter, health care, and just talking to and getting to know our new friends on the street.

The first job that I was given was to pray with everyone who came to the back of the bus to receive socks OR a hygiene kit. They couldn't have both because supplies were low. I first remember feeling very intimidated. What if they don't want me to pray for them, are offended and get angry? I also didn't feel comfortable saying Merry Christmas. Would that be insulting given that I would go home to a very Merry Christmas with family, food, and gifts and most of these people would spend it alone on the street? What I found was how incredibly gracious they all were - for what we were able to give them, for the prayers, and to my shock they would say Merry Christmas to me first! I didn't fully absorb everything until my first shower at home, with full bottles of shampoo, conditioner and shower gels surrounding me...and I broke down crying for how much I take for granted and for the suffering, but gracious, spirits I had just served.

Some have asked why we would go so far away to serve when there are those in our own communities in need? My answer is that we go where God calls us to serve. Isaiah 49:6b says, "I will make you as a light for the nations, that My salvation may reach to the end of the earth." All who served on that trip were blessed to be a light to our new friends, and I now have a new reason to love that city even more!

Prayer: Heavenly and Gracious Father, thank you for the blessing and opportunity to serve you and to be called to be a light to the nations. Whether we serve in our own neighborhoods and communities, state, nation or in other countries, let us always have a willing and eager heart to go where you lead. Give us new opportunities, especially during these seasons of Advent and Christmas, to be your light and to go where we are called. In Christ's Most Precious Name. Amen.

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