Where is it that you stumble across God?

In a young woman from Kenya

The odds were stacked against Edna Ogwangi’s favor from the moment she was born in Kenya. Soon after her arrival into the world, the country entered an extended era of a devastating drought that resulted in widespread starvation. On top of that, to say that “girls were not prioritized to attend school,” as Ogwangi put it, is a polite understatement. Ogwangi immigrated to the United States, where she was able to obtain an education, even going as far as to earn her masters in social work. This prepared her to fulfill her life’s calling, which she describes as “returning to her home and literally handing out food to young ones.” After all she had been through in her childhood, all Ogwangi wanted to do with her life was to be physically present for the world’s poor children. Ogwangi is continuing to make this happen through her work as Chief Impact Officer at Rise Against Hunger, an international hunger relief organization that distributes food and provides life-changing aid to the world’s most vulnerable. As of today, Rise Against Hunger has provided more than 300 million meals to the hungry.

Where is it that you find God?

In an isolated tribe in Ethiopia.

A missionary named Ben Staggs about his first visit to the Boshu people, an extremely isolated group in Ethiopia’s Me’en territory. On arrival, Ben and his team were welcomed by a local named Golon Kabule. ‘We sat down and spoke a bit,’ Ben says, ‘explaining that we had come to tell them of “God’s talk”. I described who God is, what He is like, and where He lives.’

But Golon interrupted. ‘We must follow Christosi,’ he said, using the Me’en word for Christ. Astonished, as Christ’s name hadn’t even been mentioned, Ben asked where Golon had heard that name. Golon explained that Christ had appeared to him in a dream, told him it was he who had given Golon his life, blood and bones, and that Golon was to follow him. Christ then said that in just five days someone would come to tell him about following that path.

Ben and his team had landed on the fifth day.

Where does God appear in the world?

In a Hospital Ward

Virginia told me about a struggle she once had with an eating disorder, triggered by a difficult break-up. At her worst point she ended up in the hospital, weighing just eighty pounds (thirty-six kilograms). There she met another girl—the sickest patient in the ward, who weighed a mere fifty-five pounds (twenty-five kilograms).

‘This girl scribbled a Bible verse on a piece of paper and handed it to me,’ Virginia said. ‘It was Philippians 4:13: “For I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength”. As a result of her doing that, I became a Christian, got healthy, and ultimately got married and had a family.’

Where can you find God? I would argue that we can find God all around us, everywhere we look, everywhere we go we have the opportunity to run into God. The questions for us are will we recognize God when we see God, and what will we do when we recognize God in our presence?

The Bible starts us with two creation accounts. The first one talks about the 6 days of creation and Gods sabbath on the seventh, and the second account in chapter two has a more detailed and specific account of the creation of humanity, and when they are both put together we are able to observe something beautiful. We are able to see that both male and female are created in the image of God, each of us are endowed with the divine in us. That when God reached down into the dirt and created humanity and took time to sculpt us and forms us and breathes Gods breath of life into us we are given infinite worth.

And I would argue that Ogwangi has been able to find God in the eyes of each and every single starving and hungry child that she runs into. And that every time she sees the image of God in each child she is moved to act with compassion, to care for each one who is struggling.

In the story of the tribe in Ethiopia, we are introduced to the fact that it does not matter where we go on this earth, God is up to something. Ben Staggs when he signed up to go to Ethiopia never would have guessed that he would meet God where god already was. I would bet he thought he was going to be bringing Christ with him to a tribe that had never had someone tell them the Gospel. And yet there he was, God was there already active and in the midst of an isolated community.

Virginia was in the hospital, struggling with an eating disorder that controlled her and ruled over her life. She was fighting for her life, fighting for control, and out of nowhere comes God in the face of a 55 pound girl who shared a simple bible verse that changed her life. God was in that girl delivering a much needed message, and god was in virginia and the girl treated her with amazing hospitality showing love and care for a neighbor who was hurting.

God is all around us, can you see Him? God is all around, are you noticing?

When Abraham was by the oaks of Mamre sitting at the entrance to his tent in the heat of the day, this is high noon, and I could imagine it being a really hot day that can make you lethargic and yet, he looked up and saw three men standing near him. And then he recognized who these three men were and bowed to the ground in reverence to the Lord and asked the Lord to stay with his servant and offered some morsels of bread and a little bit of water.

However when we get to what Abraham actually provides it is much more extravagant. My sanctified imagination leads me to believe that when Abraham fully comprehended who he was going to be serving, he realized that mere morsels of bread and water were not enough. Instead in he brought out kurds and milk. milk and curds perhaps something like yogurt or buttermilk is better than just water -Deuteronomy 32:14, the curds and milk signify the abundance of God’s provision. Possibly symbolizing a recognition of all that God has given Abraham and wanting to give nothing less than the best that God provides.

And the Hebrew word for the type of flour Sarah uses is solet, a word that appears in 1 Kings 4:22 to describe the type of flour for the wealthy Solomon, and describes the choice food with which God feeds Jerusalem in Ezekiel 16:13 and 19. This is no mere morsel or dry crust!

Where are you able to see God? What will you do when you recognize God?

Abraham recognized God and offered up the best that he had. When we recognize God how do we respond? Will you extend hospitality? Will you fix a meal for someone? Will you listen to their story? Will you acknowledge their existence? Will you give of yourself? Will you be an ambassador for Christ? Will you give them your attention?

Are you ready? Because the truth is that God is all around us. God is in the homeless families that we serve at the Parking Lot mission, God is in the coworker who is struggling, God is in the hospital room, God is on the street corner, God is the kid that is struggling to read, God is the woman who is being abused, God is the student far away from home, God is in the pew right next to you, God is everywhere in every single person we meet.

Can you see God as Abraham did? What will you do the next time you see God?