

# Place of Promise

*A Multi-Service Advocacy Center*

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*"I will walk among you and be your God, and you will be my people." Leviticus 26:12*

May 2011

"Do not fear for I have redeemed you. I have called you by name; you are Mine."

Isaiah 43:1

Dear Friends,

One of the things we do in the month of May at Place of Promise is to take walks along the Merrimack River. Everything is coming alive! It restores us physically, emotionally, spiritually, and even relationally as we interact with one another, God, and His creation. Everyone has to come back with a spiritual lesson to share with everyone else. It's a wonderful way to see, hear, and experience God through the eyes, ears, and hearts of each other as we journey towards abundant life together.

A little while ago, I went to the Children's Museum with my son, Adam, his wife, Emily, and my granddaughter, Elyse. While there I learned a spiritual lesson that I will try now to share with you. I believe it creates a picture of what Place of Promise really is.

There was a long, black tube that stretched about 20 feet and was wide enough for a child to easily crawl through from one end to the other. There were toys and interesting objects at one end; not much of anything at the start. Well, Elyse leaned over a bit and peaked in. She stood back up. She hesitantly looked in again, getting a better view. It was dark in that tube. She became more courageous, knelt down, and crawled in a few feet. Quickly, she backed out. Almost reluctantly and yet with an air of excitement, she ventured in again even farther. She got anxious and afraid. She tried to turn around to come back out, but got stuck. Now she was upset, almost crying, and ready to go find something else to do. Just then she heard someone call her name. It was her daddy! He was at the other end of the tube, kneeling down, reaching in, and calling her by name. Instantly, she was in that tube, heading straight to her beloved daddy! She made it through to the other side in a moment; squealing with delight the whole way into her father's waiting arms!

Place of Promise is that tube. It takes us from darkness into the light; from fear into serenity; from loneliness into an intimate love relationship with God and each other. It takes us from a life of bondage into freedom. Why would anyone hesitate to crawl through and enter the abundant life God has promised us?

Many of the reasons it took Elyse several tries to crawl through are the same reasons that men and women who come to Place of Promise have a difficult time. First of all, everything familiar lies behind them. Everything at the other end is unknown and therefore, frightening. At every intake interview, I ask for a measurement, on a scale of 1 to 10, of their desire to change and find a whole new life. Most measure this desire to be at 10. How willing are they to "crawl through the long, dark tube" to reach this new life? That measurement is a tougher one. The desire may be there, but the willingness to do whatever is asked of them can wax and wane. A couple of new residents came this month. Each expressed a strong desire to choose life, but each wanted to back out and run more than once in the first couple of weeks. The old life is bondage, destruction, even death, but it is what they know.

Another reason it can be difficult to “crawl through the tube” is because of its length. Every resident that comes into Place of Promise wants their lives fixed and in order quickly with the least amount of effort possible. The longer they have to crawl along, day after day, the more anxious they become. One of our residents is a young man who is trying to get back custody of his two young children. The state of Massachusetts took custody of his 4- and 6-year old sons when he and the boys’ mother were incarcerated. Now, this young father is in Place of Promise and is trying to crawl through this very long tube into a brand new life of promise with his sons. The most challenging part of this process is the length of time it is taking to get to the other side. He is trying to be patient. When he first came, he often thought about backing out and leaving. He felt trapped, afraid, and very doubtful that any of this was going to help him reach his goals. He trusted no one. He was angry and resentful towards God. Yet he continued to stay at Place of Promise. He’s attending college and doing well. He’s trying every day to keep on keeping on for the sake of his two boys. He’s now having them stay every other weekend with him and there are plans for them to move into Place of Promise this summer!

Why doesn’t this young man give up? Why doesn’t he back out and run? Every day at Place of Promise, he hears a voice calling him by name. Yes, he is motivated to do this by the love he has for his children, but that’s never enough to persevere. That voice, that voice of love is calling him by name. He looks; he strains to know who it is. Who is calling him? Who is this with His arms reaching out to him, urging him to come to Him? Day by day, he is learning to know God. He is learning of His great love for him. He is learning of God’s sacrifice of His only Son, Jesus, for the pardon of his sins so he could become a son of God. Little by little, he is coming to believe that there is a God who loves him and trust is beginning to develop and grow.

Please pray for this young man, Cory. He has come a long way, but still has a life time journey to go. Pray he can come to know God as his Father and crawl willingly and quickly into His outstretched arms. Pray that Cory recognizes the voice to be the voice of God. He needs to know the love of God as his Father in order to crawl through into a new life as a man of God, a father to his two beautiful sons. He needs to make this journey of life with his Father guiding, loving, forgiving, and empowering him each step of the way. This young man absolutely delights in his two young sons. He longs for them to come and mourns when they leave. He presses on towards the day when he is reunited permanently with his boys. Pray that he will know the longing, the mourning there is in the heart of God for him. Pray that he will fully realize the love, the delight of God for him, and become reunited with his Daddy forever.

Please continue to pray for all of us at Place of Promise. Everyone is crawling through; all at different places with their own challenges and struggles. Some know God as their Father and others were just introduced to Him for the very first time. Please continue to give so that Place of Promise can continue to be the “connecting tube”. Many of you have come and served; come and joined with us in worship and praise to our God. Continue to come. Continue to serve. Please continue to love with the heart of God so that more and more men, women, and children who come to Place of Promise can hear and know the voice of God calling them by name.

Serving in the Name of Our Father,



Beth Kidd, Director