



G R O W A T H O M E

DAY 56

READ

ACTS 18

REFLECTION from DIRECTOR AUTUMN IGO

When the Red Sox won the World Series in 2004, my husband and I were lucky enough to be living in Boston. The team returned home from their win to be greeted by fanatic rejoicing. There was a ticker-tape parade through the city and EVERYONE in town turned out to join in the celebration. Shane and I grabbed our spot along the parade route and cheered as the team floated by on their clouds of glory. As the crowd began to disperse at the end of the party, a scene unfolded that is forever burned into my memory. A family with three very small children happened to be positioned near us. When the time came for them to pack up and leave, Dad was distracted by the fun of the crowd so Mom took charge of the kids. She picked up the baby and put him on her back, grabbed the toddler and put him on her hip, instructed the preschooler to stay close by, and got her family moving...you could tell she was pretty stressed. Before they had gone a few feet, the preschooler fell and skinned his knee...you would have thought his leg had been amputated by the show he put on. Dad, completely oblivious, kept on walking. So Mom, in full martyr mode, bent down and added child #3 to her load. She took three steps and her poor knees buckled under this incredible burden of children. Before a horrified crowd, mom and her three kids tumbled to the ground. All four of them started wailing...at which point Dad snapped back to reality and ran to the rescue.

The reason this scene sticks with me is because it's soooooo me (not literally! We didn't have kids at the time...but if we did, I'm sure it COULD have been me)! If there's a problem to be solved or an obstacle to be overcome, clearly it is my job to do it...all by myself. "No, no...don't worry...I'm fine...I can do it all myself," is often my martyr's cry. Ugh. I hate that this is so true of me...and as we see in Acts 18 it is so UNBIBLICAL. If anyone could have shouldered the burden of teaching the whole world about Jesus all by himself, my guess is it would have been the Apostle Paul. But even Paul didn't take on this monumental task by himself. He was constantly building up new leaders and delegating in his ministry...I'm sure he could have done literally every job that he let others help him with better himself, but he shared the load. Paul trained Priscilla and Aquila who trained Apollos who ended up being one of the greatest evangelists in the Early Church. Paul started churches and then left them to the people he had trained up. Paul trusted other people to join him in his work and to complete the tasks he started.

I'm sure none of you struggle with this "martyr" mentality like I do (ya, sure you don't!), but if you do, I think I can tell you the source. We want to be important. We want to be THE people who can be depended on to get the job done right. We get our value from being smart, capable, efficient...you fill in the adjective here. But you know what? The Good News of the Gospel is that your value doesn't come from what you produce. Your value is pre-set, pre-determined by the Savior who has bought you to be His own. If you can really and truly accept this deep down in your soul, you just might be able to give up some of the load you have been carrying. You might be able to reach out and ask for help...or simply share the load. God has surrounded us with a crowd...an entire church full of brothers and sisters that He has gifted uniquely and called into ministry right alongside us. Asking for help is not a sign of weakness...it is a sign of security and strength. The Church is not a group of individuals each working at their own task, it is a team, a family, a body...all pulling together towards a common goal. If we keep trying to do all this on our own...martyrs...we'll just fall down. Instead of picking up another load ourselves, let's look to see who God has placed around us that we can invite to tackle life right alongside us.

QUESTIONS

- WHAT PARTS OF YOUR LIFE ARE YOU MOST TEMPTED TO TACKLE ON YOUR OWN?
- DO YOU HAVE ANY CURRENT CHALLENGES OR TASKS THAT YOU NEED TO ASK FOR HELP ON?
- WHO IN YOUR LIFE MIGHT YOU BE ABLE TO INVITE TO HELP YOU?