

Come fill me again

DONNA WHITTEN | JUNE 14, 2018

I opened the door to a familiar place. Although it's dark, I know it so well I make my way to the windows instinctively. Pulling back the curtains, the sun streams into the room highlighting a million dancing dust particles taking flight. I grab the sheets covering the furniture and memories of coffee and conversation flood my mind. Conversations with friends. Conversations with God. And although this has been a place of painful processing at times, I still smile. It feels like home even though I haven't been here in months. I've allowed this hallowed place to sit empty even though I know it's one of the few places I feel like myself.

The place to which I'm returning is my beach house. If you've checked out my website before, you know it's not a real beach house but the basement in my house I have designed and determined it to be a place of inspiration, rest and holy productivity. Years ago, I told God I would write everything he was asking me to write if I could just have a beach house (the epitome of inspiration, in my mind). The Holy Spirit responded quickly and emphatically, "You have a basement, don't you?" When I return to it after a long absence I always try to justify it; I've been so busy. My husband has been ill. I'm just too tired. They're all valid and yet when I mull them over, they seem hollow. Or maybe it's just me that feels hollow.

Why do I always forfeit the filling places first?

Filling places force me to admit I'm empty. I can't do it all. I am dependent.

My husband shakes his head ruefully when I allow my gasoline tank to get too low. "Under ¼ of a tank and you're damaging the engine," he reminds me. But the truth is I HATE stopping when I'm on a mission to get somewhere. What I will admit to you and never to him is I would HATE being stranded somewhere more than stopping for gas.

I run on empty too much because I don't pay attention to the physical or mental gauges. I choose times of distraction or disengaging over the discipline of rest and restoration.

Filling places don't often produce immediate results.

Filling doesn't feel forward. I mean it's stopping for crying out loud. At the gas pump I stand around for what feels like an eternity watching the numbers on the gas pump roll by. My husband assures me it's only a few minutes well worth the time. To me, I've sprouted some gray hair and missed out on something important.

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Some of the most necessary and powerful work is done while filling. Just like with a car, if I would take a few minutes to fill up, those few minutes allow me to go farther and without fear.

Filling places feel selfish.

Whether I'm filling up with friends over coffee or going to a movie or by myself at my "beach house" writing, it feels selfish. My brain overflows with things that I "could or should" be doing: housework, yard work, work-work, exercising, blah, blah, blah.

I just had a funny thought cross my mind. Since I've been on this gas station roll, imagine me at Quick Trip and I'm filling up everyone's tank but my own. Seems crazy but I metaphorically do it all the time.

I know spending time with God, friends and family and writing fill me up. I know I have sacrificed what is fueling for what is immediate and/or acceptable.

So I've decided to return to my filling place, my story house. It's more about a lifestyle than a place. It's intention, discipline, easy and hard. It's full of people and fun and lonely moments of reflection. It's accessible by better choices and eternal priorities.

I've opened the windows, folded the sheets and dusted the furniture. I've set a place at the table for my constant companion and Counselor. My heart is settled in and my mind is ready.

Is there a filling place you need to return to? I'd love to hear about it.

June 24, 2018

The Person God Uses: Week 1

"No More Excuses"

Sermon Notes:

Jeremiah 1:1-19

1. Excuse: The _____ is too

2. Excuse: My _____ is inadequate for the _____

Jeremiah 1:6

Exodus 4:10-12

Jeremiah 1:9

Isaiah 6:5-7

Matthew 3:17

3. Excuse: The timing is not

Jeremiah 1:7-8

4. Excuse: The teaching involves too much _____

Jeremiah 1:13

Jeremiah 1:18-19

5. Excuse: Do I have to go right _____?

Jeremiah 1:17

Luke 9:57-62

Reflection: The Word of God directs us as we consider what the *next step* is for our lives. What is your next step? Are you being obedient to the Call of God on your Life?

Communion at FOCUS

Every Sunday at FOCUS we celebrate the **Lord's Table, also known as Communion.** We have open communion which means all are invited to receive. We receive communion elements by intinction. Tearing off a small piece of the loaf of bread, dipping it in the communion glass of juice, and then consuming it immediately. Please note, upon your request, we also have gluten free elements for those with gluten and other major food allergies.

FOCUS Youth Group Tonight

- 6:30-8 PM

Friends welcome and snacks provided! Also, we have a special combined Youth Gathering called "Linked" coming up next Sunday, July 1, at the Upbeat Café. Don't miss the time of fellowship and fun!

FOCUS Fellowship Meal this Wednesday 5:30-6:30 PM

Please note that we will not be having Wednesday night meals during the month of July. We will begin again August 1, 2018

Annual District Conference - July 20, 2018

Eastland Church of God | 2598 Liberty Road | Lexington KY

Registration begins at 8 AM



FOCUS
WESLEYAN CHURCH



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