

Love Letter From Lisa

1-30-18

LADIES!! (Yes I am shouting)

I just really want your attention. I just had an amazing week. I got to see nearly 200 of us gather to get situated for what promises to be a magnificent 7 weeks of study. So many of you have, at His prompting, made the decision to give us a chance and others of you have invited and encouraged others that this is a GIFT they can experience if they show up. **Seeing women connect with such love and enthusiasm is God's beautiful design and we get to be an active part of that Kingdom work. THIS IS DISCIPLESHIP AND JESUS IS SMILING!**

Today, I took some time to just unwind which means watching my DVR'd Grey's Anatomy. And let me just say WOW! **I don't want to give it all away but one of the things I truly love about the** show is the inclusion of a beautiful young female Christian character, April Kempner. She is a devoted believer, knowledgeable of scripture but fully human, flawed and challenged by the ways of this world. Her struggles are real and, of course, many- this IS a TV drama. She, sort of, bumbles her way through all of it which feels quite validating to me, a serial bumbler.

This week, the episode seemed to focus more than usual on her and on the challenges faced by those who speak openly about our faith. **She was looked to as an "expert" on scripture and in the end of the episode, we found her** defeated and experiencing doubt. I posted a comment regarding this episode on Facebook and I have already received some negative feedback. But here are my thoughts....

This is the dilemma we all face at one time or another. It is so challenging to stand up against the pain we must endure in this life. It can be down right humiliating to have unbelievers call you out on the validity of a God that seems absent in all the tragedy and on the Word that is so easily misrepresented and, often times, used to damage and divide. And to be honest, I found myself momentarily concerned, as the end credits rolled, that Shonda Rhimes would abandon the Christian thread in her writing. However, the title of the episode gives me pause.

It is called "PERSONAL JESUS".

This is hugely important for us to understand. The movement Jesus began was to be based on an EXPERIENCE not a religious system. God sent His Son so we can PERSONALLY experience His kind of LOVE. So that He could prove His willingness to experience all the horror the world could throw at a human. He knew that our limited human understanding needed the experience of this Savior to bring focus to the blurry lines of morality the world sells us on. So Jesus came, awakened in His Beloved GOoDness, and started movement back toward the Creator.

Having said that, as the episode progressed, we see the world throw so much heartache at poor April. She maneuvers through the hospital chaos being called to witness as a Christian but we can see it gradually takes its toll. And in the last scene, we see someone I believe many of us know all too well; a defeated, confused, and devastated woman of God that sought worldly comfort .

Now, since this was a TV show, the audience was privy to the big picture. In another scene, two bonded female characters discuss a very strange confluence of circumstances where a very bad man, in his death, provides life. The words used to describe the outcome were "darkness giving rise to beautiful light".

I believe Shonda Rhimes wrote this to depict the reality of this world. It is broken, hard, and endlessly unrighteous. It will bring us to the very edge of faithlessness. And the One that created us knows that. He not only accepts our outrage, He expects it. He knows that the pain will have us turning away with disgust where the enemy is waiting to take the win. But all around us, light is coming from dark. We just look away too soon.

Our sweet, exhausted April reached a point where her heart could not take another moment so she retreated to the dark. Oh how I wished she could have heard me yelling at the TV. **"April, go talk to the other 2 ladies.** They will tell you how good God is. The healing He was able to pull out of a place evil had lived. **Don't give up!** I know how, after all that you just went through, you are doubting the goodness of our Lord but there is more. There are things you **haven't seen yet.** Please, **come back from that place you have run to"**

And I thought in that moment ; is this how Jesus feels at times? He can see what we cannot and He knows the beauty there is to experience. He knows what others have lived and how connecting the story lines will lift our Spirits. He has a similar vantage point as we, the TV audience. He is our audience of ONE. (Thanks Pastor Mike - message 1/21/2018)

The connecting we do through Diamonds is so very necessary. Our tales of victory shared infuse an uprising of courage and hope. **Our coming together to speak these truths and praises of God's magnificent provision electrify** our faith. It is LIGHT! It is the EXPERIENCE OF A PERSONAL JESUS.

Love Letter From Lisa

1-30-18

It gives me chills to see this play out in front of me and I am overwhelmed with gratitude for all the ways He gets us; all the GRACE He gives us. We will get tripped up just like April but He is ready to play out a scene of such promise but we must look up, seek His presence, and engage in the experience of Him.

Thank you Lord for all you our doing in our small part of the world. Thank you for loving me in my weakest moments. And thank you for allowing me to play this part and placing me in a cast of such beautiful mates. I am humbled by Your grace. I am lifted by Your truth. I am transformed by Your perpetually unfolding story. I pray all of this in the name and the EXPERIENCE of Jesus. Amen

And Love,
Lisa