

My thoughts #49

March 10, 2024

This week started out by flying to South Africa with Ray, Kartor and Raymie. The time change is 10 hours so adjusting was a bit rough. We flew to Cape Town. It is an amazing place, unlike any other I have seen.

The people are very friendly and wanting to engage in conversation. They seem happy to be working whether that is in the market place, as a taxi driver, in restaurants or hotels. Most of the people I have talked with feel content with their position in life for the moment and are grateful for opportunities to come their way.

Cape Town is fascinating. It is beautiful. The beaches are stunning with boulders or rocks amidst miles and miles of sandy beaches. The waves crash upon the shore. The wind is always blowing. The temperatures are in the high 60's. They are just starting autumn.

Boulders Beach was covered with these little guys... it was so fun to see them.





We went to Cape of Good Hope, or Cape Point. It is where the Indian Ocean and the Atlantic Ocean meet. It is beautiful.



I was fascinated with the wild life we saw. We were driving down the road and suddenly there was an ostrich... an ostrich... I told the taxi driver to pull over. I wanted to take pictures... it was amazing!



Incredible enough on the same drive and not much further Ray spotted a baboon. Amazing! He was too far away to get a good picture, but we stopped to try!

We were able to visit Table Mountain and take a gondola to the top, visit Hermanus, visit a Cheetah preservation outreach, drive the coast, see rocks covered with sea lions, shop down at the wharf where the cruise ships come in, see all kinds of animals, walk the market places (they are everywhere) talk to the people and attend church today. It has been an amazing week.







As I have thought about my experiences this week I keep pondering all the things that I have seen here that are new for me but common for the people who live here.

An ostrich is like a deer at home. Be careful not to hit them, nothing more. Baboons are dangerous but also pests so the people want nothing to do with them. Cheetah's are a problem for the farmers, like black bears in Alaska and can be shot. Penguins are simply a tourist attraction. Whales are just part of a high-end Tourist place in Hermanus.

I thought about everything that is amazing to me. Often, we get used to seeing things or having things that we forget how amazing they actually are.

I asked a taxi driver why so few people are on the beaches. His response was there are so many beaches, only the tourists ever go there. The beaches are magnificent but so common here.

This happens with our testimonies too. We get so used to reading scriptures or praying that we don't think about how blessed we are to have scriptures or a knowledge of our Savior.

The poverty here is horrible. Millions of people living in conditions that we simply don't have in the United States. In seeing poverty each day around them, those working are appreciative of their circumstances. Poverty is in everyone's back yard so it's just a problem that is unfortunate. The people here are so used to seeing poverty that it doesn't feel crushing, it's just part of their everyday drive home to pass these "informal settlements."



These “informal settlements” can be miles and miles long as far as you can see. I pulled this picture off the internet to show how large these settlements can be.



While my thoughts have been a bit disorganized as I have seen so much this week, one thing that stands out to me is the way the South Africans talk about the poor. They speak with respect. Many people I talked to said “I do not know the circumstances of them, why they are poor. Is it that they have no job when they want to work? Is it drugs? Is it disability or lack of opportunity? Since we do not know we must be respectful to all people. We are all children of God.”

New Testament

Matthew 11: 28-30

28 Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

I don't want poverty to be overlooked. I don't want it to be so common that we set it aside. We cannot let someone's suffering become something that we do not see.

I hope that I can be more mindful of all the things around me that are actually amazing. I want to be more mindful of the poor and needy as well. I want to notice and be aware of ways to help. I want to express appreciation to Heavenly Father for the amazing blessing of coming to Christ and allowing Him to carry our burdens.

With love,

Leslie