

The Word transforming our stain

Wood working is not a hobby of mine, but our house of 25 years needed a bit of updating. Living in the same space for that long, it is hard to think outside the box, thus the fresh ideas of an interior decorator can provide the nudge needed for change. Her advice was invaluable, we immediately made some superficial, cosmetic changes. But that was only the beginning...

"Then the trees of the forest will sing, they will sing for joy before the LORD, for he comes to judge the earth." (1 Chron 16:33)

God blessed our home with a huge fieldstone fireplace that is the centerpiece of the house. Its mantle is impressive, a 10-foot-long, 1-foot-wide piece of oak that is a rough-hewn splendor. It has happily lived in its natural state as if we had just cut it down and dragged it in from the forest in our backyard. We loved its God-given beauty. The decorator took one calculating look at it and said, "I suggest painting it black, then the field stone will really pop." Hmm, I thought, that's going to be quite the project and take some nerve. So, I went to our local paint store and found some stain that the expert agreed would do the job. I skipped home with my "Spanish Oak" stain thinking I had the solution.

Enter husband, who happens to have an elderly acquaintance with many years of carpentry experience. This gentleman looked at the project, the men discussed removing the mantle in order to do the work outside, but that proved impossible. The carpenter walked away and 6 months later, the mantle stood in its original state.

"I can do everything through him who gives me strength" Phil 4:13

Winter in Wisconsin, at times holds you hostage indoors with unfinished house projects glaring. Fortunately, my husband lives for winter and while he was away to enjoy the snowmobile trails, I decided it was now or never, the mantle was getting done. Yes, Philippians 4:13 was rolling around in my head.

In my naiveté, I planned to slap on the stain and in 2 hours the project would be done. But being unsure of myself, I sought the counsel of friends who had some wood working knowledge.

"The heart of him who has understanding seeks knowledge, but the mouths of fools feed on folly." Prov 15:14

"You know you have to sand it first," said one friend. Another, "after sanding you need to wipe it with a "tack cloth" and pre-treat the wood." Going back to the expert who recommended the stain she said, "now this is a "wipe-off" stain, apply it and after 5-10 minutes, wipe it off. Make sure you dispose of the wiping rags properly or they can spontaneously combust." At this point, my nerves were telling me to abandon the project by hiring it away.

"For I am the LORD, you God, who takes hold of your right hand and says to you, Do not fear; I will help you." Is 41:13

God renewed my strength through his Word. Armed with resolve, I was going to get this done, this very weekend, and have the "great reveal" when my husband returned home!

I prepped the living room, began hand sanding, 6 hours later, the exterior varnish was off and my right arm was aching. The next day, the wood was tacked and prepped. Now the moment of truth...applying the stain. As the "Spanish Oak" was brushed on, I waited (sweated), then wiped. A rhythm developed, (yes, I had inspiring music blaring) and to my joyful amazement the character of the wood blossomed.

"In the days to come Jacob will take root, Israel will bud and blossom and fill all the world with fruit." Is 27:6

After sealing the stain, I stood back to admire the finished mantle. I was stunned by the transformation; this wood represented me, a living, human being, who has lived in a dormant, sin-filled state. But covered in God's Word, his Grace seeps into our very souls and makes us

...more and more like him as we are changed into his glorious image." (2 Cor 3:18 NLT)

Paul tells the Corinthians and us that when we

"turn to the Lord, the veil is taken away. Now the Lord is the Spirit and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom." (2 Cor 3:15-17)

Dear sisters, seek God through his word, let it marinate your heart and mind, as He works in your life, in big and seemingly small ways He will make his presence known.

"And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit." 2 Cor 3:18