

April 2022

Thank you so much for your faithful support this month. We truly appreciate you, and the Lord will use your giving for the kingdom as we place it in His hands with faith. Here's where we are in....

Circumstances:

There was a small phrase that caught my attention and stood out to me this month: "Seek the servant-heart of Christ that puts people above plans." (Rob & Joanna Teigen) This statement really helps you, and I probe how we are doing in servanthood to others. When my schedule or plans are interrupted, am I able to give preference to another's interest or need over my own? When we look at Jesus in the Gospels, we see him almost never treat anyone as an obstacle or hindrance and always see his compassion for those in need and calling for Him. One of the main reasons He came to earth was "not to be served, but to serve and give his life as a ransom for many."

As I was singing in worship with the guitar, searching for Christ, suddenly, I felt a tug on my pants, and little hands prop up on my knees (Noah, my one-year-old, does this when he wants to be held or wants attention). I also felt the Lord saying to me, "You don't have to look so far to find me. I am right here". Not that Noah is the Lord, but I could see Christ's glory and beauty through and in Noah. Since Noah is made in God's image and is His beautiful creation, he reflects part of God. God through Noah got me thinking about the Bible passage on the least of these in Matthew 25:34-36, "Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in. I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.' "Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?' The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'"

There's a quote from Mother Teresa that describes seeing the Lord in the needs of others very well: "Oh Jesus, You who suffer, grant that today and every day I may be able to see You in the person of Your sick ones and that, by offering them my care, I may serve You. Grant that, even if You are hidden under the unattractive disguise of anger, of crime, or of madness, I may recognize You and say, "Jesus You who suffer, how sweet it is to serve You." Give me, Lord, the vision of faith, and my work will never be monotonous. I will find joy in harboring the small whims and desires of all the poor who suffer...Lord, increase my faith. Bless my efforts and my work, now and forever. (Hill 168)"

So, putting all these two things together, the Matthew passage and the Mother Teresa quote, I am trying to convey that to have the heart of a servant who loves others, and even more so, Christ is essential for living in His Kingdom. There was a list of a distinction between traits of servanthood(serving with love) and servility (serving without love) in a spiritual gift discovery book called Network:

	Servanthood	Servility
A. Serves out of...	Obedience "I want to serve God"	Obligation "I have to serve God"
B. Motivated by...	What God sees Serves an audience of One	What others see Serves to please others
C. Has attitude of...	Whatever it takes Goes beyond expectations	It's not my job Does the minimum
D. Results are....	God-glorifying Directs attention to God Humbly reflecting Christ	Self-seeking Draws attention to self Pridefully promoting self

(Chart from Network by Brucbugbee and Don Cousins pg. 102)

The prayer would be: Lord, help us serve You by serving others and increasing our love for first the Lord and those around us that He would help us love as He has loved us. Jn 15:12-14. "Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this: to lay down his life for one's friends."

Also, James 3:9-12 comes to mind, "With the tongue, we praise our Lord and Father, and with it, we curse human beings, who have been made in God's likeness. Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this should not be. Can both fresh water and saltwater flow from the same spring? My brothers and sisters, can a fig tree bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Neither can a salt spring produce fresh water."

But even going further than that, what is truly encouraging and touching is this! Never lose the deep desire in your heart to become more like Christ and be made in his image. When I get caught up in so many things I have to do each day, or in the bills we have to pay, or in making it through the month, sometimes I can lose sight of what Christ is trying to do to shape me and teach me to be more like Him. Look at just a couple of verses from 2 Corinthians 3:17-18, 4:17 17, "Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. As we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit... For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all."

You've probably heard all this before, but oh, is it refreshing to step back and remember that we are clay in God's hands, and everything that happens He can use for His glory and our growth in faith and trust in Him, and in His character. Praise the Lord; nothing that happens is without meaning or purpose if we are willing to learn from it with an attentive and sensitive heart to the Lord and His Spirit.

Fundraising:

We continue to meet and get to know other church members, and we are always encouraged that God puts it on others' hearts in His timing to give! More and more people express interest in supporting the mission and are being touched by the Lord to give to the kingdom and His ministry in Peru! As of March, we have \$70,360.00 with pledges and one-time gifts, and by God's grace, one more supporter joined! This is 69% of the target goal.

One passage that was encouraging I read in this regard was when the Israelites worked together with Moses to build the tabernacle in Exodus. There were detailed and extensive instructions, and it indeed was a job for everyone to pitch in. All the details of the entire structure are mentioned twice, the first time God gave this to Moses, and the second when the Israelites did everything exactly like the pattern the Lord showed him. I felt like after they put together that golden calf, the Lord put Israel to work in the good sense of the word and really gave Israel something constructive to do with their hands. "Have them make me a sanctuary for me, and I will dwell among them." Ex. 25:8

So I will use a short example Ex 25:10, "Have them make an ark of acacia wood- two and a half cubits long, a cubit and a half wide, and a cubit and a half high..." Ex. 37:1, "Bezalel made the ark of acacia wood- two and a half cubits long, a cubit and a half wide, and a cubit and a half high." Bezalel is described in Ex. 31, "as I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with wisdom, with understanding, with knowledge and with all kinds of skills- to make artistic designs for work in gold, silver, and bronze, to cut and set stones, to work in wood, and to engage in all kinds of crafts."

In that context of this passage, the truly encouraging thing is Moses asked for donations and materials from the Israelites to make the tabernacle. In this passage, resources were given so abundantly that Moses had to tell the Israelites that there was plenty and none more was needed. What Moses asks for is in Ex. 35:4-19, and verse 20-29 is what the Israelites bring- it says everyone whose heart was moved came and brought an offering to the Lord for the work of the tent of meeting, for all its service, and the sacred garments. All who were willing, men and women alike, came and brought gold jewelry of all kinds: brooches, earrings, rings, and ornaments. They all presented their gold as a wave offering to the Lord... and the list continues... All the Israelite men and women who were willing brought to the Lord freewill offerings for all the work the Lord through Moses had commanded them to do."

A little afterward, in Ex 36:4-7, "So all the skilled workers who were doing all the work on the sanctuary left what they were doing and said to Moses, "The people are bringing more than enough for doing the work the Lord commanded to be done." Then Moses gave an order, and they sent this word throughout the camp: "No man or woman is to make anything else as an offering for the sanctuary." And so the people were restrained bringing more because what they already had was more than enough to do all the work."

Likewise, it's our prayer that the body of Christ come together as a team to help advance and expand the Lord's kingdom and his temple, "being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ." (1 Pt. 2:5) with Jesus as the cornerstone. May we build on the foundation of Jesus, the body of Christ together in quantity-width and quality-depth (Eph.4:16, "From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.")

Spiritually:

This verse was an encouragement for strength:

"Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way to get the prize. Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last, but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. Therefore I do not run aimlessly; I do not fight like a boxer beating the air. No, I strike the blow to my body and make it a slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize." 1 Cor. 9:24-27

If you picture a race and the runner who really wants the prize, and how much effort they put into that? Even in the race itself, they give it everything they got; much beforehand, the athletes are preparing hard constantly because they have the goal in mind. The subtitle of this passage is the need for self-discipline. Likewise, sometimes we quit striving in our spiritual life and maybe become complacent, which could be for a set of reasons. But this small paragraph from a devotional describes this well, "Where does God want you to go today? How do you feel unqualified or "not enough"? What excuses keep you from saying 'yes' to what he's calling you to do? Our confidence is lost when we focus on our weaknesses instead of His power. Something of these excuses could be: not enough money (like Gideon, he was of a low family), not eloquent of speech or maybe knowledgeable (as Moses says), small in others' eyes as David was, but God makes the weak things strong for His glory, for those who are willing to trust Him, step out in faith, and do what He calls us or gives us to do.

Take courage, don't allow fear to creep in, or listen to the lies of the enemy- you are more than a conqueror in Christ Jesus who loves you! (Meaning the thing that feels too big for you, you can conquer it in Christ's power). There will be battles, and sometimes we will fall; however, we are to endure suffering/hardship as good soldiers of Christ-faithful to the end of the war (not just the battle)- till all enemies are made as a footstool under Christ's feet! And may all the glory be His forever, Amen!

Logistics:

Every 15th of the month, I receive a gifts/donations report for the previous month and send out a thank you card within ten days. Every 5th of the month, I send out the last month's newsletters.

We also have a website you can visit, www.iveyperuparterns.com, for more information.

You can give online by going to www.tnpartners.org or send a check to the Partner's address (**Partners** 1000 Whitlock Ave, Ste 320 PMB 283 Marietta, GA 30064). Create a free account online and select Josh and Rocio Ivey-Peru when giving. Any amount is helpful for the kingdom!

Blessings in Christ!!!

