

January 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:

January was a very busy month, full of struggles and help from the Lord in His provision and peace amid storms. Another way to word storms can be instability or being shaken. Sometimes the Lord allows storms or really shakes the ground beneath our feet to help us make sure we are standing on the rock eternal, that we are trusting in God to live, not in ourselves, what we can do, or even how much money we make. If you also think of wind hitting a tree, its roots are tested. As it says in Hebrews 12:26-29, "At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, "Once more I will shake not only the earth and also the heavens." The words "once more" indicate the removing of what can be shaken-that is, the created things-so that what cannot be shaken may remain. Therefore since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, for our God is a consuming fire." I say that because, in our circumstances, we have felt like a bouncy ball (going all over the place). This month, we have tried hard to adjust our work schedules to spend time with the kids at home and be able to afford daycare. It wasn't easy for any of us. Rocio changed schedules and jobs three times for this, and Noah tried out two new daycares. But God allows these as an opportunity to put our complete and whole trust in Him and only Him. He, the Creator of the universe, made an empty, dark, and formless world shine bright, be filled, and become inexplicably harmonious. Who separated the skies from the waters, who made day and night, and made such an intelligible design for creation that men have studied it for ages and lifetimes and still find new things. Trust him to bring order as we put Him in our lives first. You most likely already know I will say this verse but "seek first the kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given/added to you as well." Mt. 6:33. As we place the Lord as a priority, we are giving Him space to be able to do His glorious and miraculous work in our lives and around us and bring peace. Ultimately, we could find a better daycare for Noah, and Rocio has a day shift job as a CNA again, so we praise the Lord for that. Also, our sweet baby Noah's birthday was January 1st, and he is a year old now. God fills us and shows us joy and peace in the middle of any circumstance through our precious baby Noah.

The Lord can use storms; He can use obstacles or needs for His glory. I am reminded in Acts 13:4-12 when Paul is speaking to the proconsul of Cyprus, Sergius Paulus. Sergius was an intelligent man and sent for Barnabas and Paul because he wanted to hear the word of God. Elymas, the sorcerer or Bar-Jesus, a false prophet, opposed them and tried to turn the proconsul from the faith. Then Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked straight at Elymas and said, "You are a child of the devil and an enemy of everything that is right!... Now the hand of the Lord is against you. You are going to be blind for a time, not even able to see the light of the sun." Immediately mist and darkness came over him, and he groped about, seeking some to lead him by the hand. When the proconsul saw what had happened, he believed, for he was amazed at the teaching about the Lord.

Another example is Peter in Lydda and Joppa (Acts 9:32-43). Peter says to a paralyzed man bedridden for eight years, "Aeneas," Peter said to him, "Jesus Christ heals you. Get up and roll up your mat." Immediately Aeneas got up. All those who lived in Lydda and Sharon saw him and turned to the Lord."...Likewise in Joppa, Peter resurrects Tabitha (in Greek- Dorcas) from the dead...This became

known all over Joppa, and many people believed in the Lord.” Notice it just took one event for an entire village to believe; it was because this event or work was clearly of God!

In Philippi, where Paul and Silas were imprisoned, the guard and all his family were filled with joy because they had come to believe in God after an earthquake (Acts 16:16-40). In Ephesus, God did extraordinary miracles through Paul so that even handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched him were taken to the sick, and their illnesses were cured, and the evil spirits left them. What seized the Jews and Greeks living in Ephesus with fear and the name of the Lord was held in high regard was that some Jews tried to drive out demons in the name of Jesus whom Paul preaches, and the demons jumped on them overpowered them all. He gave them such a beating that they ran out of the house naked and bleeding. The response to this was a number who practiced sorcery brought their scrolls together and burned them publicly. When they counted the number of scrolls, the total came to fifty thousand drachmas. In this way, the Lord spread widely and grew in power.

Finally, after a shipwreck journey to Rome to testify to Cesar, Paul got bit by a snake on the island of Malta, and the Lord protected him from the snake’s poison because nothing happened to Paul. The chief official of the island’s father was sick on that island. Paul went in to see him and healed him. When this happened, the rest of the sick on the island came and were cured.

So in many instances, we see God over circumstances, not vice versa. I like a quote that says, “Paul lived above his circumstances, and you can too...He lived above them because his focus was on Jesus and not on the trial. As a result, he gained the victory-and so can you!” This quote was about 2 Corinthians 1:9, “We had the sentence of death within ourselves so that we would not trust in ourselves, but in God who raises from the dead.”

See how God works through and around and above circumstances to accomplish His will? He even used the very men that crucified him as part of his plan written beforehand to be able to save the world from sin (Acts 2:23-28)!

You can trust Him! Jesus told us to expect storms: “In the world, you have tribulation,” He said. Then He added these words of encouragement, “but take courage I have overcome the world.”

#### Fundraising:

As of December, we have \$61,010.00, including pledges and one-time gifts. Praise the Lord; prayers have been answered. We have had a meeting with our leaders and are working on an updated budget, including Noah. The new target goal is \$110,000.00 for two years; however, we are adjusting it down more, Lord willing. This puts us at 55%! A quote that encouraged me in fundraising this month is from the missionary Jim Elliot, “He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain that which he cannot lose.” This quote was used in a devotional by Stanely, who speaks of never seeing Jesus worrying about public opinion or the consequences in this life; instead, he was focused on the *eternal* mission. His desire was for people to know Him as Savior, so they could be eternally reconciled to God. And because of it, he bears the name above all names (Phil.2:9). Likewise, above all, the disciples valued Christ, even more than their lives, for this mission and kingdom expansion. I pray that desire for each of us as well!

## Spiritually:

I have just been asking the Lord to help me surrender more and more areas of my will and life to Him. Many things we have to do; I have been asking Him to help me want to do them. And not wanting to do things sometimes can be an indicator of areas that still need further yielding. This quote helped me some, “Above your service, commitment, and deeds—even before leading others to Him- God both commands and delights in your hearty, sincere, and humble adoration. He must be first and foremost to you because when He is on the throne of your heart, all else- the service, evangelism, and godly character- will flow naturally.” This is also the idea of abiding in Christ, and as we do, such an inner and outer fruit will grow as we yield more and more to Christ.

Likewise, in 1 Peter 1:13, “Prepare your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.” This verse also helps us yield our thoughts, minds, and desires to Christ; as we do this, He can transform us from the inside out.

