

July 2023 Newsletter

Thank you so much for your faithful prayers and 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

We visited Huancayo, Peru, for two weeks, from July 13th to the 29th!!! We spoke with pastor Beto (Peruvian pastor in Huancayo) more about the ministry and its challenges. We also enrolled our kids, Stephen and Noah, in a school for next year. Pastor Beto's son went there, and the director mentioned to him that she might be interested in hiring English teachers, so I also left the school my resume and pray that the Lord will do his will within that process. Arthur and Mary Alice Ivey, my dad and mom, also taught us what to look out for, how to move money around, and practical tips to function well in Peru. They also gave us good advice and counsel about the ministry. We were able to visit and spend time with my mom and dad. They loved having the grandkids in the house and helping them adapt to Peru.



(Rocio, Mary Alice, Noah, Arthur, and Stephen)



Rocio, Joshua, Noah, Stephen, Beto

In Sapallanga, about 40 minutes from Huancayo, we also visited with Rocio's family- her mom, brother, and sister. She hadn't seen them for eight years. So we spent lots of time with them. Rocio's mom, Mery, Lady (Rocio's sister), and Joseph (Rocio's brother) loved seeing, caring for, and playing with Stephen and Noah. We were able to share Christ some and encourage Joseph, Rocio's brother, who is 17 years old. Please pray for him as he is considering coming back to Christ.



Stephen, Noah , Mery



Mery, Josep, Lady



Stephen and Mery

Stephen and Noah liked Peru, praise the Lord. They liked going on the combis (a van) and buses- public transportation. They liked the few playgrounds there; they went to the zoo and a trout farm in Ingenio (about 50 minutes from Huancayo). And they enjoyed lots of attention from grandparents and Rocio's siblings. They also visited the street market, where Rocio's cousins and aunts work, and were able to meet them. They gave Noah and Stephen all kinds of fruit. They also really like going on airplanes for the first time.

Spiritually

We noticed how Huancayo has a spiritual atmosphere where a battle is always taking place between Christ and the enemy. Every day before going out, it's important to be covered in prayer and close to Jesus.

I've been learning in Scripture about the heart and how important it is to stay close to Christ to protect it. In 2 Chronicles 13, we see two different types of reigns Jeroboam and the other is Abijah. Jeroboam wanted to conquer Judah with an army of 800 000 men, and Abijah had to defend Judah with only 400,000 men. And part of Abijah says is this to Jeroboam, "And now you plan to resist the kingdom of the Lord, which in the hands of David's descendants. You are indeed a vast army and have with you the golden calves that Jeroboam made to be your gods. But didn't you drive out the priests of the Lord, the sons of Aaron, and the Levites, and make priests of your own as the peoples of other lands do? Whoever comes to consecrate himself with a young bull and seven rams may become a priest of what are not gods. As for us, the Lord is our God, and we have not forsaken him. The priests who serve the Lord are sons of Aaron, and the Levites assist them. Every morning and evening they present burnt offerings and fragrant incense to the Lord. They set out the bread on the ceremonially clean table and light the lamps on the gold lampstand every evening. We are observing the requirements of the Lord our God. But you have forsaken him. God is with us; he is our leader. His priests with their trumpets will sound the battle cry against you. People of Israel, do not fight against the Lord, the God of your ancestors, for you will not succeed." The result was God routed Jeroboam and all of Israel before Abijah and Judah, and God delivered them into their hands (v.15)

Though Jeroboam and Israel had an enormous army, they did not prevail because they had forsaken the Lord. Abijah and Judah were delivered because they were close to the Lord. We must be close to the Lord to win spiritual battles because he is our victory. Yet sometimes, we so easily forget and try to take up things in our own strength, in our own plans and strategies, or maybe in our own intellect or economy.

Precisely that is the problem many of us can have; we forget and are forgetful. As it says in Revelations 2:4-5, "I know your deeds, your hard work, and your perseverance....Yet I hold this against you: You have left your first love." There is a quote from Tim Keller in his devotionals that helped me yesterday, "For Christians, a new view of our sin can be accompanied by deeper discoveries of how righteous in Christ and perfectly loved we are (Phil 3:9). So conviction of sin can lead to both greater humility and greater gratitude and joy at the same time."

For deeper experiences with Christ and more transformation, even though Christ has given us victories in some areas, we tend to view our sin in lesser dimensions, are less broken over it, and write it off much easier. That's exactly what pride does- justifies, diminishes the fault, rationalizes or blames. As we do this, our hearts can become less and less repentant. What about my anger or my pride, or my bad

attitude? Am I distraught, mournful, and repentant over them? If I want more profound experiences with Christ, I have to keep growing in humility. That's the way forward.

God and life constantly have to remind us- that we are lost without Him, and that's every day, not just a one-time life thing. The Gospel really isn't rocket science, though sometimes our mind wants to treat it like that. We need to get back to the simplicity of it because that is where faith is. To move forward and grow in the kingdom of Christ, we have to (with the help of the Holy Spirit) continue to display the same character of Christ of humility, love, devotion, repentance, and faith in Him and not sit on victories in the past, but press on in the present. Even in our present circumstances, where obstacles and challenges can be more significant than before, it's the same answer, cry out to Jesus, trust in Jesus, and as it says in Matthew 13:15, Jesus would heal us, "For this people's heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts, and turn, and I would heal them." Heal us of pride- when things don't work out, we become frustrated. Heal us from resentment or impatience- when we get offended. And even though this verse is in the context of the Pharisees, pride can callous our hearts, eyes, and ears from the Lord as well. This is often why He has to break the hardness to get down to the tenderness of the Spirit dwelling within us.

Regarding recovery of gratitude, I also saw in 2 Chronicles how Jehoshaphat's heart was with God. A vast army was coming against them. Alarmed, Jehoshaphat resolved to inquire the Lord and proclaimed a fast for all of Judah. After a prophet pronounces that Jehoshaphat's army will not have to fight but just take up their positions, stand firm, and see the deliverance of the Lord. He said, "Go out to face them; the Lord will be with you. The response to this was a filled heart cry, "Jehoshaphat bowed down with his face to the ground, and all the people of Judah and Jerusalem fell down in worship before the Lord. Then some Levites from the Kohathites and Korahites stood up and praised the Lord, the God of Israel, with a very loud voice." That's the gratefulness and gratitude we need to recover, the one that makes us fall on our faces before the Almighty and, with every gut of our heart, cry out to Him, thank you, Jesus! Three times this month, the Lord answered our prayers in tough situations; he came through! And we could do nothing but tear up from gratitude and be glad that we trusted in such a good, powerful, and loving King Jesus and God Almighty. And we are reminded of who he is in those moments. He reminds us that though life is hard, it is worth it to do the right things, go through trials, and even suffer for Him because, in the end, He always comes through in His perfect eternal ways. We have this promise: 2 Chronicles 16:9, "For the eyes of the Lord range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him." And when we depend on and commit our hearts fully to Him, we see again and again that He is even more committed to us.

Fundraising

We need to raise \$50,067.44 for our third year, and we are at 25% of that amount. If you feel the Lord Jesus is leading you to be in ministry with us financially, you can use the link below to contribute. <https://tnpartners.org> (Make a free account and choose the Ivey missionary to give).

Blessings in Christ!