

September Newsletter 2023

Thank you so much for all your prayers and 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 ...

News

- We registered for CIT missionary training from January 14th to February 9th; before then, we will formally leave our jobs and plan to go to the mission field in Peru in March.
- We continue to work with Pastor Beto in the online Bible Studies, helping sometimes lead the study on the book of Matthew. It is amazing that he has different people groups studying Corinthians, Psalms, Daniel, and Matthew. It's awesome!
- Rocio's brother made it to the USA this September and has been living with us. Please pray for him to find work.

Circumstances

This month, I was encouraged by a Genesis story I hadn't thought of before. I was exhausted. I told the Lord, "Lord, why do I always have to go against the current with the potency of a land slide just to take some steps forward? I am tired of doing that. Can't the circumstances just be less difficult and more favorable?"

Anyhow, I was thinking about that, and the thought of adverse circumstances could be a lie from the enemy or self-pity, which are both not helpful to give into. But in my discouragement, I read Jacob's story. He caused part of his hard circumstances, as sometimes we need to admit some circumstances aren't the Lord's fault; they are ours. As you may recall, Jacob was the younger brother who, incited by his mother, stole his brother's blessing from Isaac, their father. As is the nature of deception, the deceiver ultimately reaps what he sows (sin always ends up in some form of death- suffering, pain, hurt, brokenness, etc.) Jacob fled from his older brother Esau, who wanted to kill him, to Rebekah's brother, Laban, in Paddan Aram. Jacob fell in love with Rachael, Laban's youngest daughter. Jacob told Laban he would work for seven years for him in return for his daughter, Rachael. He worked for Laban for seven years, and Laban gives him Leah, the older daughter, and tells Jacob it's not tradition to give the youngest but the oldest in marriage first. Jacob had to work a whole seven more years for Rachael. Laban deceived Jacob. He ultimately did do seven more years and married Rachael.

Circumstances weren't really in Jacob's favor at a glance but adverse. I say this because look what Jacob says in Gn. 31:4-9, He said to them, "I see that your father's attitude toward me is not what it was before, but the God of my father has been with me. You know that I've worked for your father with all my strength, yet your father has cheated me by changing my wages ten times. However, God has not allowed him to harm me. If he said, 'The speckled ones will be your wages,' then all the flocks gave birth to speckled young; and if he said, 'The streaked ones will be your wages,' then all the flocks bore streaked young. So God has taken away your father's livestock and has given them to me. "In breeding season I once had a dream in which I looked up and saw that the male goats mating with the flock were streaked, speckled or spotted. The angel of God said to me in the dream, 'Jacob.' I answered, 'Here I am'. And he said, "Look

up and see that all the male goats mating with the flock are streaked, speckled, or spotted, for I have seen all that Laban has been doing to you. I am the God of Bethel, where you anointed a pillar and where you made a vow to me. Now leave this land at once and go back to your native land.”

This passage above was very encouraging because I, like many, have felt taken advantage of in the workplace. But I felt like the Lord telling me, and even now as Jacob, “I see you.” “I have not forgotten you.” I see all the struggles you’ve been through, how hard you’ve tried, and even the devastating pain you had when sometimes you failed. I see your pain, I see your hurt, I see your circumstances, I see your heart, and I see you. And though Jacob, in his story above, was in an entangled mess, God has compassion and mercy on Him because he sees Jacob trying hard to do the right thing this time, in this process of working for 14 years, unlike the first time when he didn’t work any for his brother’s blessing and deceived his father in giving it to him. I remembered Romans 8:31, which says God is for us and not against us, “What then shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all- how will he graciously give us all things?” This passage goes on to say in verse 35 that nothing can separate us from God’s love (trouble, hardship, persecution, famine or nakedness or danger or sword). That neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” “And in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.”

This is definitely a verse about circumstances because the majority of v. 35 describes external circumstances, the ones in the parenthesis. And it says in all of these we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. Sometimes we can even feel like Job, “What strength do I have, that I should still hope? What prospects, that I should be patient? Do I have the strength of stone? Is my flesh bronze? (Job 6:11-12) Some can identify when life keeps going and going, and you feel like you can’t stop to take a breath. During and before the trial, this prayer can help: “Please flood your Spirit in my heart, pour and drench my soul in your love because I am too weak and need Your love. I am too angry, and I need your patience. I am too rough; I need the gentleness that comes from You. I can speak too sharply and need your kindness. I need your goodness, faithfulness, and self-control because I won’t make it without them. Please help me receive that agape, eternal, unconditional love from above, from You, to pour out of me to others because I feel like I have nothing left to give. And even say, Father, into your hands I commit my spirit to renounce my will and live in yours, Father!

Spiritually

God told me “I see you” recently while I was struggling, like Jacob in the story! I told him: Lord, I love that look; please don’t ever take your eyes off me. It was a look of peace, of tenderness, of compassion, of mercy, of grace, and love, all mixed together! It is crucial to think about how God sees you. It will be a profound and important thought for every believer. In other words, how does God see you? Yes, holy, and righteous in and through Jesus Christ. Those are the

intellectual or theological correct answers. But when God looks specifically at you, how does he see you, your life? The baptism of Jesus comes to mind for me. “As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased (or in whom I delight in the AMP translation).” I think all of us need to hear that from the Lord. When God looks at you, he delights in you!! And He said this of Jesus before Jesus did any ministry as he does with us. We can’t add on to or lessen his love for us. His face, eyes, and look are the most beautiful, glorious, and majestic imaginable. When He looks at us, and we look at Him or contemplate Him, we are being transformed into his image of ever-increasing glory! As Nehemiah 8:10 says, “The joy of the Lord is our strength.”

As I was thinking about rest, this verse came to mind. Hebrews 13:20-21, “Now may the God of peace who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory and glory for ever and ever. Amen.”

Just think of those green pastures and He who leads us by quiet waters and refreshes my soul. He guides me along the right paths for his name’s sake (Ps. 23:2-3). I think of how the Good Samaritan is like Jesus and us, the beat-up person alongside the road. “The Samaritan came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him.” Then the Samaritan told the doctor to look after him, paid him two denarii and said when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have. That’s a picture of what Jesus does for us. “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest... Take my yoke upon you, and you will find rest for your soul.” There you go; that’s what needs to rest in Him and Him alone, your soul.

If you notice in the above Hebrews verse, it is the God of peace who works in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ. Rest from the weight of everything else and focus on pleasing the Lord; even He is working those things within us! That’s what our purpose is – He even does that in the pain and trials- to be conformed into His image. Scripture in Romans 8:29 even says that we were predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he justified; those he justified, he also glorified.” All this to please the Lord! In fact, Colossians 3:23 says, “Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not as for human masters.” Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. We can also find rest from anxiety in the peace of knowing that the God of the universe is guiding us into His will as the Good Shepherd and equipping us to walk in it.

Fundraising

We need to raise \$50,067.44 for our third year, and we are at 40% 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!!!

