

April 2023 Newsletter

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...

In Fundraising

Thanks to the Lord and the Lord through you, we have reached the goal for two years of ministry (\$105,000.00) to be launched to go to Peru approximately in February 2024 (we have to finish our yearly contracts before moving) with one-time gifts and pledges. This, however, is just the beginning, not the end, in fundraising. We are working on fundraising for the third year. Many important documents have been received by God's grace, but more are coming in; Lord willing, we visit Peru in July. We continue assisting Pastor Beto, who lives in Huancayo, Peru (where we will start serving initially), with online Bible study groups with fellow Peruvians. Feeling the Lord guiding us through this ministry has been a great blessing.

In Circumstances

As we continue to work as a CMA and pre-k teacher and care for our two precious boys, Stephen and Noah, the passage below of Corinthians encouraged me greatly this month.

2 Corinthians 6:3-10, "We put no stumbling block in anyone's path, so that our ministry will not be discredited. Rather, as servants of God, we commend ourselves in every way: in great endurance, in troubles, hardships, and distresses; in beatings, imprisonments and riots; in hard work, sleepless nights and hunger; in purity, understanding, patience and kindness; in the Holy Spirit and in sincere love; in truthful speech and in the power of God; with weapons of righteousness in the right hand and in the left; through glory and dishonor, bad report and good report; genuine, yet regarded as impostors; known, yet regarded as unknown; dying, and yet we live on; beaten, and yet not killed; sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; poor, yet making many rich; have nothing, and yet possessive everything."

What Paul says leaves no reason for excuses. We commend ourselves in every way- hunger, sleepless nights, hard work, great endurance, troubles, and in purity. And he says we commend ourselves as servants of God." I pray the Lord would make me and you like the above passage more and more every day; that be it whatever, we always give ourselves, surrender ourselves, entrust ourselves to Him and seek and desire and long to be conformed into His image, out of love for God. It's like saying yes, in all these circumstances, I am yours and not my own. I am the servant; you are the master. I am the clay; you are the potter. So I have to respond like a servant, with endurance, purity, understanding, patience, kindness, sincere love all in the Holy Spirit and in the power of God. 2 Cor. 5:14-15 says, "For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and all died. And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again."

As servants, we serve not to prove ourselves but out of gratitude for the grace that is given to us in Christ Jesus. 2 Cor 4:15 says, "All this for your benefit, so that the grace that is reaching more and more people may cause thanksgiving to overflow to the glory of God." We serve other for God's glory to expand in the mouth of praises of those around us and our own and seek to "make it our goal to please him, whether in the body or away."

Paul also encourages Timothy, "Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, and in purity (1 Tim. 4:12). You notice where I might be going with this, it is that our lives and examples matter. Behind a good speaker, teacher, minister, or pastor is how his life backs up his message; even more so, if we are continually submitting to the Holy Spirit, He will flow. If we are out of submission and in the flesh, the message will likely be less powerful. In the beginning chapters of 1 Corinthians, Paul speaks of the difference between human wisdom and spiritual wisdom, "My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, so that your faith might not rest on human wisdom, but on God's power (1 Cor. 2:4-5)." In 1 Timothy 3 some qualifications are shown for overseers and deacons are also well worth pursuing.

May we all seek to have the character of Christ, the fruits of the Spirit, and the love of the Father in our hearts and lives. And that all three of them in one and together may shape those in us. This is a life goal worth fighting for! If sometimes life seems somewhat purposeless, look at what God might want to form, shape, teach, or do in you. This is the unseen, the eternal glory from within, and what makes our troubles light and momentary. May we strive to live a life worthy of our calling, worthy of God who calls us into his kingdom and glory.

Spiritually

Reading through some Proverbs passages also made me think of what to pursue in life- God's favor, to please God. James 5:16 says, "The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective." No one is righteous in and of themselves (Rom. 3:10-18), but we depend and place our lives and faith on the righteousness of Jesus Christ given to us, on the cross. Thus, the righteous will live by faith (Rom. 1:17). Through this lens, we look at some proverbs that express the righteous. (Remember that Matthew 6:33 states to seek first his kingdom and **righteousness**.)

"The Lord detests the sacrifice of the wicked, but the prayer of the upright pleases him. The Lord detests the way of the wicked, but he loves those who pursue righteousness (Prov. 15:8-9)." "The Lord is far from the wicked, but he hears the prayers of the righteous (Prov. 15:29)" "The path of the righteous is like the morning sun, shining ever brighter till the full light of day. But the way of the wicked is like deep darkness; they do not know what makes them stumble. (Prov.3:18-19)

"One whose heart is corrupt does not prosper." (Prov. 17:20) The greedy stir up conflict, but those who trust in the Lord will prosper (28:25). "The Lord does not let the righteous go hungry, but he thwarts the cravings of the wicked. (Prov. 10:3) "The righteousness of the upright delivers them, but the unfaithful are trapped by evil desires. (Prov 11:6)

There are many more proverbs about this, but the point, I think, is long to be holy and righteous in God's sight-to be close to Him. There's power in the hope, patience, and long-suffering of a servant/child/ of God set apart and cleansed, placing all their faith in God's promises. "For we are the temple of the living God. As God said: "I will live them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people." Therefore, "Come out from them and be separate, says the Lord. Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you." And, "I will be a Father to you and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty. Therefore, since we have these

promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates the body and Spirit, perfecting in holiness out of reverence for God. (2 Cor 6:16-7:1)

Jesus is worth everything; he's worth the wait, worth the fight, worth the cost, and worth our lives! Let's put all our hope in Him, and that's lived out through holiness and being set apart for His glory! This is also an encouragement to pray, as the proverbs state he hears their prayers! "For no matter how many promises God has made, they are "Yes" in Christ. And so through him the "Amen" is spoken by us to the glory of God. (2 Cor. 1:20).

