

December 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 and Spiritually:

This month has been interesting. Mostly, we have been trying to keep up with life. Just keeping up with our kids is already a lot, but keeping up with work, house chores, and bills. We are trying to do our best at all of this as parents and a family, but the most important thing to keep up with is God. When getting things done, I pray I can be more like the ten virgins with extra oil to keep their lamps shining, not the two that ran out of oil. The opposite of a spirit of procrastination is a spirit of prevention. I ask the Lord to help formulate plans, goals, and my vision with his wisdom and His Spirit to follow Him. To prepare a way, to get things ready for His glorious work. This will enhance efficiency as a servant in the kingdom.

We can't go around wandering in the desert for 40 years (this is a comparison with just living in the daily routines of life and doing nothing more). God has given us a plan- to take the promised land, be courageous, be intentional, and go to all nations and make disciples. Will we be like Joshua and Caleb and take the land by faith or the Israelites who shrank back in fear? This is one reason it says in Hebrews 3:7-11 not to harden our hearts because in all that wandering, our hearts grow cold towards God. There's a phrase I've heard in Spanish more than once that says, "the kingdom of God is for bold and brave people." It reminds me of a verse in Matthew 11 that says, "The kingdom of heaven is violently, or forcefully advancing and forceful or violent men take hold of it" Think of the boldness and intentionality of Paul, of Jesus, of the apostles in Acts. They took God's mission seriously, giving up their lives for it. How is our passion for the kingdom? May God once again light that fire of the Holy Spirit in us to go and be a witness of Him in the power of the Holy Spirit and from on high. Have we lost it? Have we quenched the flame? Oh Lord, give us the zeal to get out there and share You and what you have done for us all. Jeremiah 20:9 Then I said, "I will not make mention of Him, nor speak any more in His name." But His word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones; and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not hold back/ contain it." May your Spirit stir in our conviction, courage, and urgency to obey this commission.

In Matthew 11, when it says forcefully, many would think of the militaristic route; however, this requires a bit more pondering. Before the great commission and after his resurrection, Jesus says, "All authority on heaven and earth has been given to me. Therefore, go..." We have been raised up by God with Christ and seated with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness in Christ Jesus (Eph. 2:6-7). God wants us to walk as Jesus did (1 Jn 2:6), and Jesus walked on earth always in submission (did the will) to and in the authority of the Heavenly Father (Jn. 5:19-30). And it's in Christ's authority we walk the earth now by faith and in submission to Him over

the enemy and his strongholds. Joshua 1:6 says, "I will give you every place where you set foot, as I promised Moses."

Interestingly enough, similar to Moses, Joshua also has an encounter with God where God asks Joshua, as he did Moses, to take off his sandals because the ground he is on is holy ground (meaning in the presence of God). Who we walk in authority over is Satan, and Christ's power freeing the lost, not necessarily forcefully over humans, if that makes sense. "Our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms (Eph 6:12)." Basically, we walk in the power of the Holy Spirit, because if we try to take on the darkness, otherwise we will end up like the seven sons of Sceva in Acts 19:11-20.

Tagging off the concept of becoming hard due to wandering, there is a hardness that can be in our hearts that I ask God to break more and more. Part of the hardness of the heart can come from too much individuality rather than reaching out to others. It could be a false humility in which one says I wouldn't want to bother others with my problems. Though we may not directly say we don't need others or anyone else, our lives can reflect that if we don't attempt to connect and share our lives with others. One could isolate himself because of the fear of being known by others. In the back of this fear is the lie; if only anyone knew the real you, they would never accept you or want to be your friend. The lies Satan throws at us sometimes aim straight at the heart of community. I had a friend say, "Yes, when you put yourself out there, being rejected hurts; it really hurts. Just look at Jesus on the cross, but the pain didn't stop him from loving and showing others love. It helps me to think, in what areas of my life have I closed off in some way to being open again that the Holy Spirit can help me with? In what area did I put myself out there, experience rejection, and close off? May God heal that and help us open up again and go out of the walls again! Being known is frightening sometimes, but we all need one or two trustworthy people with whom we can be honest and open, and transparent, who we know love God and want to help and not judge us. Some of us may shy back from these types of relationships and even sometimes hide our pain under a nice house/family, a career achievement, a title, or good deeds (I'm not saying we all do this, but if one is or has a tendency to do that, we can be free of that in the unmerited grace of Christ Jesus). Still, it is helpful and beneficial to be open to others and, even more importantly, to God, not only his transformation but also open to obey his will. Here is a quote from C.S. Lewis about isolation: "To love at all is to be vulnerable. Love anything, and your heart will certainly be wrung and possibly broken. If you want to make sure of keeping it intact, you must give your heart to no one... Wrap it carefully round with hobbies and little luxuries; avoid all entanglements: lock it up safe in the casket or coffin of your selfishness. But in that casket-safe, dark, motionless, airless-it will change. It will not be broken; it will become unbreakable, impenetrable, irredeemable." This quote came from a book called, "Nothing to Prove" by Jennie Allen. Part of this also is Satan's strategy of stopping believers from reaching out to others more and sharing the gospel, a lack of trust, and a lack of connections in relationships. We must allow God to break it (the walls we put up)!

Fundraising and Prayer Requests

We praise and thank the Lord and all of you. With one-time gifts and pledges as of November, we are at \$104,578.00, 99.5% of the target goal. Please continue to pray for the immigration process of Rocio's U.S. citizenship to follow through in God's timing. We applied for this in August 2022, which takes at least 12 months to attain. Also, please pray for wisdom and faith in the Lord's perfect timing to finish well in the U.S. before moving to Peru. We must complete our yearly employment contracts and finish them to do things correctly in the eyes of the Lord. My employment contract ends in May 2023, and Rocio's in January 2024.

Along with these prayer requests, please pray for Peru.

The president of Peru, Castillo, was detained for a coup d'état (but it was not successful because the army and the police were not in alignment with it), and many corrupt acts in government. The vice president, Dina Baluarte, has become president. There have been political struggles always between congress (the right and the left party. Castillo tried to dissolve the congress to gain power and exercise a dictatorship over the country. Many Latin countries that were better off are now suffering due to dictatorships like these. While all this is happening, there have been many riots in Peru. Still, through the riots, there have been mobs that have raised the alarm of the country; for example, there were a number of police taken captive, there various airports were targeted, and even they tried to take the central Hidroelectrica del Mantaro (a central hydroelectric plant) which is the generator of electric energy to over half the country. There was nearly 30 dead due to the riots and constant confrontations. Not only among the politicians (the right and the left) but also in the population, there are mobs sowing terror and disorder in the country; according to the Peruvian Intelligence Service, these are people connected to terrorism and narco-trafficking. Most riots are located in Lima, Cusco, Arequipa, Puno, and Ayacucho; however, this affects the entire country- there isn't peace, an increase of insecurity among the civilians, and an economic impact on prices.

Among the prayers, pray for peace in Peru from all this and redemption of the economy that has been decreasing since COVID took place.

Final thought:

I have hope God can redeem completely. Part of redemption in Revelations is also vindication. When Jesus came to die on the cross, he was bringing justice – in his grace, mercy, forgiveness, and love by connecting us (the sinner) to God again. The second coming, Jesus will also bring justice and make all things right, but he will come as a conqueror, a warrior, no longer as a lamb of sacrifice. We hold both these pieces together as we lay all our burdens, hurts, and sins on the cross, seeking healing in his wounds and peace in his forgiveness. And as we hope and await His return and the fulfillment of what is promised through the seal of the Holy Spirit, to be at home with Him forever.

Amen.

Let this be a prayer and consolation for those who seem to have irredeemable situations; God is powerful and holy enough to cleanse, to set free, and to make all things new

