

October 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:

This month I, like many of us all, need to hear the refreshing voice of the Father's love and be reminded that we are truly eternally and unconditionally loved. In Scripture, God tells us he holds us as precious; I think it's part of why he calls us his children. Here is one of those verses: 1 Peter 2:9, "But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light." It's one thing to know in our heads, but it can be much harder to understand deep down in our hearts. 1 Chronicles 16:9, "The Lord! It is his eyes that go back and forth over all the earth to offer strong support to the hearts of those who are completely committed to him."

On that note, 2 Peter 1:3-8 says, "His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through the knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. Through these he has given us his very great precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature, having escaped the corruption of the world caused by evil desires. For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, mutual affection; and to mutual affection, love. For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ."

This passage in Peter brings me great hope for many reasons, but first is when I feel like I am not enough, He always is! As the target goal to Peru gets closer, fear can subtly creep in and get us to start to ask the "what if" questions. "What if I fail?" What if they don't listen? What if we can't produce results? What if etc.? And the only remedy for this is faith. Someone bigger and more powerful is backing me up, and it's in Him we place our trust in! Our Warrior, our Deliver, our Savior, our Lord, our God, Jesus Christ! "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in your weakness. (2 Cor. 12:9)" In other words, God was saying to me: Don't worry about what you are lacking, and give what you have whether it seems like a little or a lot, like something extraordinary or something pitiful in appearance, give it to me first, and He will breathe life in it for others. Have faith that I am with you, will be with you, and will work in you.

Secondly, it is helpful to see what area God is growing in you on this list to pinpoint some direction. For example, God has been working on my self-control, gentleness, and patience for the past couple of years. And I ask that he continue to add goodness to my faith because I could work on optimism more. And ultimately, it is essential to note that, in the end, love and mutual affection are not individualized growing. We need each other and others to grow together and build each other up in truth and in love (apostles, prophets, evangelists, and teachers) to equip his people for works of service that the body of Christ until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ (Eph. 4:11-13)!

Third, his promises are our comfort when everything else may seem to be shrinking around us. Psalm 119:49, "My comfort in my suffering is this: Your promise preserves my life." Or Psalms 119:57-64, "You are my portion, Lord; I have promised to obey your words. I have sought your face with all my heart; be gracious to me according to your promise. I have considered my ways and have turned my steps toward your statutes. I will hasten and not delay to obey your commands. Though the wicked bind me with ropes, I will not forget your law...."

Romans 15:4, "For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through the endurance taught in the Scriptures and the encouragement they provide we might have hope." So with good reason, the Lord says in Joshua, "Be strong and very courageous....Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid, do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go." And also, in Isaiah 43:1-3, "But now, this is what the Lord says— he who created you, Jacob, he

who formed you, Israel: "Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze. For I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior;

Fundraising:

Praise the Lord, as of September, with one-time gifts and pledges we are at \$101,135.00, 96.3% of the target goal. We are excited and praise the Lord for his provision on this calling as things seem to be coming to completion; however, of any plan, God says, "To humans belong the plans of the heart, but from the Lord comes the proper answer of the tongue. All a person's way seem pure to them, but motives are weighed by the Lord. Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and he will establish your plans." Prov. 16:1-3

Speaking of establishing, many times this month, I wanted to fall into despair, almost like a mid-life crisis, of looking at what I've done and not measuring up, and time keeps running. But when the Lord saw me doing this, I read Psalms 90 and felt similar to the author. First is some of the despair part: "All our days pass away under wrath; we finish our years with a moan. Our days may come to seventy years, or eighty, if our strength endures; yet the best of them are but trouble and sorrow, for they quickly pass, and we fly away. If only we knew the power of your anger! Your wrath is as great as the fear that is your due. Teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom." However, at the end of this chapter, the author writes, "May the favor of the Lord our God rest upon us; establish the work of your hands for us- yes, establish the work of your hands. (v.17)" This shows that ultimately, we trust in God to establish the work of his hands in our life, to complete it, to perfect it, as it says in Philippians 1:6 ("being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion (perfect it) until the day of Christ Jesus."). We can only put our trust in Him to do this. It is the Lord who establishes, not us. But sometimes, we try too hard to do that rather than trusting in Him and His foundation. Another verse that mentions this is 1 Peter 5:10, "And the God of all grace, who called you unto his eternal glory in Christ, after that ye have suffered a little while, shall himself perfect, establish/ settle, strengthen you. (ASV)"

Prayer Requests.

Please 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.
- For wisdom in prayer and not falling in despair, but have faith in the Lord 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 December 2023.

Psalms 112 also encourages you to do things right and correctly for the Lord and in the long term if you want to take a look. It is also an encouragement to always look to God's favor.

Spiritually

This month, I had felt tremendous sized feelings about entering the unknown (so anxiety, confusion, fear, and sometimes meaninglessness when it seemed the same old, same old, and not much going on). Yet the Lord was truly faithful in helping me with each of them. I like to start with a verse that helped me feel peace, Psalm 111:10, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; all who follow his precepts have good understanding. To him belongs eternal praise." Reading this verse comforted me because I felt somewhat lost for a time or unsure of where to go, what to say, what to do, or what God wanted me to do. Yet he said all those who follow his precepts have a good understanding. This gave me hope that I am not as lost as I feel because Scripture says if I follow his command and precepts, I have a good understanding, which is almost the opposite of being lost. Also, if I didn't know what to do, he said to follow my precepts, giving me and you direction and a good place to start.

The Lord has been encouraging me through the Psalms this month. One that touched my heart profoundly is Psalm 94:17-19, "Unless the Lord had given me help, I would have soon dwelt in the silence of death. When I said, "My foot is slipping," your unfailing love, Lord, supported me. When anxiety was great within me, your consolation brought me joy." Also, Psalm 56:13 says something similar, "For you have delivered me from death and my feet from stumbling, that I may walk before God in the light of life." The prayer or application for this is to ask God, and please guide me closer and closer to You.

The other thing I want to praise and thank the Lord for is my wife, Rocio. The enemy was trying to whisper to me this month that I was doing nothing meaningful or of value. In God's and man's eyes, success is different. Even what we might deem small or insignificant can be big or very significant for God. The first time I said this, Rocio told me to look at it objectively: You help take care of the kids and clean the house. You bring in income and work hard. You do a lot. The other thing she told me surprised me, to be honest, but she said when you are close to the Lord, the Lord blesses us and provides for us. Psalm 91:14-16, "Because he loves me," says the Lord, "I will rescue him; I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name. He will call on me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honor him. With long life I will satisfy him and show him my salvation."

The Lord also put on my heart to worship him with all my heart in everything I do, which is lots of the meaning or purpose behind doing things. Sometimes we unconsciously think too much in a dichotomy of spiritual things in the church and our personal times with the Lord separating our work and the daily "secular" things we all do. But God is truly in both of them! I probably should have had this realization long ago, but the Lord told me, "Your mission field is your family right now." This encouraged me greatly because the Lord told me this at my first job in chicken poultry about six years ago; He told me that for now, "this is your mission field." Everyone knows this verse in their head, but fewer are more mindful of it throughout the day: Colossians 3:23, "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters since you know that you will receive your inheritance from the Lord as a reward." This is an excellent question to ask, evaluate, and work on: Psalm 26:2-3, "Test me, Lord, and try me, examine my heart and my mind; for I have always been mindful of your unfailing love and have lived in reliance on your faithfulness." Are we doing this? Are we mindful? If we consider worship to God, everything we do, it will affect our outlook on ordinary duties. Is it affecting my attitude toward daily tasks, or do I need to work on it more? I know most have heard this, but it is a needed reminder in our lives.

Eph. 5:1-2, "Follow God's example, therefore, as dearly love children and walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God." May each day we pour our alabaster jar (our life) out at Jesus' feet because of his mercy, as a true act of spiritual worship (Romans 12:1). No matter how "insignificant" our tasks may look to us, the Lord sees even the smallest of things and delights in them if we do it with a heart for Him, and He is worth it!

We have to test this spirit of calling things "insignificant ." First, if you are serving significant others out of love, nothing is insignificant about that. Something that also gave me relief, rest, and peace was to realize that I was searching for something spectacular or too big, and while I was doing this, I was deeming what God had given me as more minor. This shows a little ungratefulness in me that I need to work on. Psalm 131, "My heart is not too proud, Lord, my eyes are not haughty; I do not concern myself with great matters or things too wonderful for me. But I have calmed and quieted myself, I am like a weaned child with its mother; like a weaned child I am content. Israel, put your hope in the Lord both now and forevermore." In other words, you and I need to accept what the Lord has given us to do. If it is cleaning up or washing the dishes every day or going to work and making a living for a family- it is all from Him! And if we go about doing these things grumbling, ultimately, we are losing a chance to worship Him with our very lives, hearts, and souls. Hopefully, the attitude of glorifying him in everything will influence us so much that the dichotomy of spiritual and natural will break more and more. The more I am concerned with making Him great, the less concerned I will be about making myself great. Let this be a prayer, though as simple as it may be, that we may worship you with all our hearts in everything we do. And thus, this dichotomy or separation or wall built up crumbles to the ground. 1 Peter 2:9, "But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light." May His glory spread as the waters cover the sea. "For the earth

will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the water cover the sea (Habakkuk 2:14)." We cannot, we must not lose this longing, this desire, this passion, or we have lost our purpose. "Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit is, there is freedom. And we all, with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit." 2 Cor. 3:17-18

