

August 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

What could I say much about this month? It was full of work, and I thought I would never get through it. Each day I was just wondering how to get through because of a lack of strength. It was during those crunching circumstances that sometimes the Lord would give me strength by His grace. 2 Corinthians 12:9, "But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly in my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me." Or, as it says in 2 Corinthians 4:16-18, "Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day."

Sometimes as parents, we would also almost explode with stress or become overwhelmed with everything going on. Sometimes we may cry or not know how to handle all of life at one time. In these moments, I also realized that the only way to experience peace is recognizing Christ as King. For it is, with his kingdom and reign were righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit flow (Rom. 14:17). Sometimes, I think, for me, we can't get frustrated as parents because we want to have control over more than we should, especially when it comes to our kids; so we get stressed easier.

As we place our eyes on the Prince of peace, we turn to the Lord Almighty, seek his face, and see Him for who he is, and everything else fades away!

Isaiah 9:6-7 "For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this."

Think of those descriptions for a second. Isn't that someone who sounds like a great leader and inspires you to follow Him? A wonderful counselor when we feel lost, a Might God when we are weak, an Everlasting Father when we stray from the path as the prodigal son, and a Prince of Peace who is with us no matter how difficult the circumstances are.

Not only this, but in John 10, He is our Shepherd that lays down his life for his sheep. He is the Alfa and the Omega, who is, who was, and who is to come. Think about it if he was before everything started in creation, sees all of history and all the future in a glimpse, and if he knows your beginning and end, can't we trust Him? As it says in Jeremiah 32:17, "Ah, Sovereign Lord, you have made the earth by your great power and outstretched arm. Nothing is too hard for you...." For in him we live and move and have our being." (Acts 17:28) "By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, their starry host by the breath of his mouth." (Psalm 33:6)

This reminds me that God is a God of order. Genesis 1 says the earth was formless and empty, and darkness was over the surface of the deep, but he created an intelligent design that is inexplicably complicated yet perfectly harmonious. This God who spoke the light into existence, the earth, the sea, the sky, and all life in them is a master designer who has all our days ordained written in his book before one of them came to be. Oh, how we need his counsel, and how foolish it would be to live in our own understanding and not lean on Him so he can make our paths straight!!!

A question I asked myself that is good to ask is this: Am I asking God to bless the things I do? I don't want this to sound religious, but do you ask for God's favor over your work, family, projects, plans, and life? Some of us rush through them and expect God to bless them rather than submitting everything before him and asking him ahead of time. I have done that and am also guilty of living too fast in a dichotomy of the earthly and the spiritual, but the Lord is in both! So let's ask Him to bless our endeavors as they come from

Him. Psalms 5:12, "Surely, Lord, you bless the righteous; you surround them with your favor as with a shield." May we not only ask for God's blessings but His will to be done in every area we lay before Him and may He leads us more and more into eternity and his kingdom.

## Fundraising

Thanks to the Lord and you, this month we got some generous one time gifts! As of June, we have \$89,050.00 with pledges and one-time gifts. This is 85% of the target goal. We are encouraged that God puts it on people's hearts to give and how they respond. Praise the Lord, we are getting closer and closer, and trust and ask that His will be done in His timing for His glory.

It was very encouraging this month to realize through a book called Purpose Driven Church by Rick Warren that it's very important to be goal-oriented. In this book, the author speaks of making purpose statements for planting a new church, but there has to be a process behind each purpose that we seek the Lord for; if not, it will just be meaningless words. He explains that the message doesn't change, but the methodology we use to share needs to adapt to the needs, hurts, pains, interests, and mindset of the community around us. He gives a lot of thought to how we actually do or accomplish the purposes we set out to do. This is in the church planting area but is applicable in many areas of life. Some of the proverbs he mentions and explains are Prov. 13:16, "Every prudent man acts out of knowledge." Prov. 18:13, "What a shame-yes, how stupid!- to decide before knowing the facts." Through these two verses, he explains how important it is to find out all about the area before planting a church somewhere. He mentions, "The reason many new churches fail is that they are started with uneducated enthusiasm. It takes more than enthusiasm to start a church; it takes wisdom. Having faith does not mean ignoring the facts about the community."

So what I have been attempting to apply this month is to be more goal-oriented and intentional, especially in the area of parenting/exercise but in every area. Sometimes it feels like we can wander in circles in the desert with no direction rather than following Christ by faith into conquering the promised land. Two very different attitudes and lifestyles.

This leads me to the encouraging final verse, Titus 3:14, "Our people must learn to devote themselves to doing what is good, in order to provide for urgent needs and not live unproductive lives." This makes me really think that we would be or feel less unproductive if we were willing to serve others more, as this verse says, provide for others' urgent needs. Even working with that mentality to provide for the pressing needs of others is a great goal that is more encouraging than just paying the bills. (Not that I am living unproductive, I work hard every day. But this is just a good example of how being goal-oriented can help.)

## Spiritually

The Lord has been helping me value and has put more and more gratitude in my heart this month. The Lord encouraged me through Jeremiah.

Gratitude and thankfulness for God's grace, forgiveness, and unconditional love draw us closer to him. Sometimes, we don't value things until we don't have them anymore. For Judah, in the book of Jeremiah, it was their land. This was taken from them, and all were taken into exile by the Babylonians because the Lord disciplined them for so much sin and constantly turning to other gods. Yet we see here in this verse below that even though the Lord's wrath was poured out on them, it was in the hope that they would fear him, repent, and have a change of heart. We see God's care for them, even despite themselves. One thing I have had to thought many times this month is to be thankful I have a job, even though there are things I don't like about it. To be grateful, I have a family, a wife, and kids, even though sometimes they can be difficult to care for.

The Lord, in Jeremiah 32, wanted to restore Judah's fortunes; he told Jeremiah to buy property in Judah after many prophesies of destruction and exile coming from Babylonia despite the prediction of the entire area being wiped out. He told Jeremiah to purchase this in faith and told him, "I am the Lord, the God of all mankind. Is anything too hard for me?...This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says, "I will surely gather them from all the land where I banish them in my furious anger and great wrath; I will bring them back to this place and let them live in safety. They will be my people, and I will be their God. I will give them singleness of heart and action, so that they will always fear me, so that all will go well for them and for their children after them. I will make an everlasting covenant with them: I will never stop doing good to them, and I will inspire them to fear me, so that they will never turn away from me. I will rejoice in doing them good and will assuredly plant them in this land with all my heart and soul. This is what the Lord says: As I have brought calamity on this people, so I will give them prosperity I have promised them. Once more, the fields will be bought in this land of which you say, "It is a desolate waste, without people or animals, for it has been given into the hands of the Babylonians." Fields will be bought for silver, and deeds be signed, sealed and witnessed in the territory of Benjamin, in the villages around Jerusalem, in the towns of Judah and in the towns of the hill country, of the western foothills of the Negev, because I will restore their fortunes, declares the Lord." (Jeremiah 32:26, 37-44)

May God arouse more and more gratitude and thankfulness in us, his servants. "Be joyful always, pray continuously; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. Do not put out the Spirit's fire." 1 Thess. 5:16-19

Prayer: "Now, may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times and in every way. The Lord be with you all." 2 Thess. 3:16

(pictures below )





