

February 2024 Newsletter

Thank you so much for 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

February 19th, we arrived in Peru at 9 pm, took the bus to Huancayo for 8 hours from 11:30 pm, and got to Huancayo at 7 am. Pastor Beto was waiting for us with the truck to help with the luggage. We have been getting to know Beto more and building a relationship with him. We've been trying to prepare everything for our two boys to go to school at Innova Schools (a national school) on March 8th-buying a list of school utensils and uniforms and meeting the teachers. It has been a little challenging, but little by little, we are moving forward in God's grace. Please pray for Stephen and Noah to do well in the new school. So far, we've been in Peru for ten days and are working on forming relationships. We met people in Pastor Beto's small group Bible study on Saturday. One of the person's name is Jenny and is leading a kid's ministry in Sapallanga with 30 kids. Pastor Beto is a Peruvian in Huancayo, leading many Bible studies with a network of at least 200 people in various places in Peru. We will continue to help Beto in these Bible studies. We also met people we knew from the past in a church last Sunday, Ivan and Cecilia Cruz, Ronny Vegas, and David Angulo. Ronny was being sent out as a pastor to a church in Huancavelica, about three hours from Huancayo. Since we don't know as many people here in Huancayo now, it felt good to find some past friendships.

Circumstances

As we as a family are reorganizing our lives and giving more space to God, it is encouraging to think of God in control and sovereign despite the many moving pieces. Matthew 6:33 comes to mind, "So do not worry saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink' or what shall we wear?' For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well." There are many things we all look for when seeking stability. It could be an income, a good school for the kids, a nice place to stay, etc. But the most stable place we can ever be on this earth is in the presence of God.

Hebrews 1:10, "He also says, "In the beginning, Lord, you laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. They will perish, but you remain; they all will wear out like a garment. You will roll them up like a robe; like a garment, they will be changed. But you remain the same, and your years will never end."

Moving out of the house, selling cars, resigning jobs, we realized all those things will perish. But it is the eternal things that need to be a priority. "So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal (2 Cor. 4:18). When we set our hearts on the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God and set our minds on things above and not earthly things knowing well we died, and our life is now hidden with Christ in God- the trials we face are transformed in the light of His glory. I pray for more of that heart for each of us to know in our hearts that "Our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all." 2 Corinthians 3:18 similarly says,

"And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory (from glory to glory), which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit."

Ecclesiastes 3:11 says, "He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the human heart, yet no one can fathom what God has done from beginning to end." This verse encourages us not to conform to the patterns of this world but to be transformed by renewing our minds. Then, you will be able to test and approve what God's will is- his good, pleasing, and perfect will. In all things, God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. For those God foreknew, he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son..." May we all lay down our lives willing for Christ, to be shaped to be more like Him who willingly laid aside the heavens to come to earth and save us. May His love compel us to reach the lost, the hurting, the lonely, and the broken. May He form that love within us!

Some people may ask, and even we may ask ourselves, why are you doing this? Why did you move to Peru? The answer is in Ephesians 5:1-2, "Follow God's example, therefore, as dearly loved 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." God called us to do the same.

Spiritually

Ezekiel 34 speaks of two types of shepherds- a bad shepherd and Jesus, the good shepherd. Ezekiel 34:1-6, The word of the Lord came to me, "Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel; prophesy and say to them: "This is what the Sovereign Lord says: Woe to you shepherds of Israel who only take care of yourselves! Should not shepherds take care of the flock? You eat curds, clothe yourselves with wool, and slaughter the choice animals, but you do not take care of the flock. You have not strengthened the weak, healed the sick, or bound up the injured. You have not brought back the strays or searched for the lost. You have ruled them harshly and brutally. So they were scattered because there was no shepherd, and when they were scattered, they became food for the wild animals. My sheep wandered over all the mountains and on every high hill. They were scattered over the whole earth, and no one searched or looked for them."

Seeing these verses, I feel the missionary needs to search for the stray and lost sheep as Jesus does.

Then Lord says he will rescue the flock from this shepherd and himself will be their shepherd. Ezekiel 34:11-16, "For this is what the Sovereign Lord says: I myself will search for my sheep and look after them...I will pasture them on the mountain of Israel, in the ravines, and in all the settlements of the land. I will tend them in a good pasture, and the mountain heights of Israel will be their graze land. There they will lie down in good grazing land, and there they will be fed in a rich pasture on the mountains of Israel. I myself will tend my sheep and have them lie down, declares the Sovereign Lord. I will search for the lost and bring back the strays. I will bind up the injured and strengthen the weak, but the sleek and the strong I will destroy. I will shepherd the flock with justice.

I am reminded of Peter when Jesus asks Peter if Peter loves the Lord to reinstate him after denying him three times. Simon, son of John, do you love me? "Yes, Lord," he said, "you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Feed my lambs." Again, Jesus said, "Simon, son of John, do you love me? He answered, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Take care of my sheep." The third time he said to him, "Simon, son of John, do you love me? Peter was hurt because Jesus asked the third time, "Do you love me? He said, "Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Feed my sheep..."

Peter's love for Jesus is connected with feeding and taking care of his sheep. And the Good Shepherd is willing to lay down his life for the sheep (John 10:15).

Fundraising

Thank you again your all your generous gifts and support!!! We need to raise \$50,067.44 for our third year for this ministry to continue. Monthly, we are making half of the annual budget that needs to be met for the third year. We need 2,000 more per month. We trust the Lord to continue providing and bringing this ministry to fruition. 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 Josh and Rocio Ivey missionary to give). Blessings in Christ!

