

June 2023 Newsletter

Thank you so much for your faithful prayers and 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

Praise the Lord Jesus; he answered our prayers. Rocio's passport came in the mail, and we can visit Peru from July 13th- the 29th. There we will visit with family and scout out future opportunities. This summer, we have been working hard in our jobs and taking care of the kids. One thing that helped me in the grind of things when we were feeling weary (just wanting to faint from all coming at us) is the need to rest in His strength.

The first verse the Lord reminded me of was Isaiah 41:10, "So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand." It is good to hear, "I will uphold you," when you feel like falling over. The end of Isaiah 40 mentions soaring on wings like the eagles; this is also a picture of resting in God's strength. Isaiah 40 also says as a shepherd carrying his lambs: "The Sovereign Lord comes with power, and he rules with a mighty arm. See, his reward is with him, and his recompense accompanies him. He tends his flock like a shepherd; He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart; he gently leads those that have young."

The one who says "I will uphold you" is the same God described in Isaiah 40 that compared to him, the nations are like a drop in a bucket; they are regarded as dust on the scales. It is He who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, or with the breadth of his hand marked off the heavens. He who held the dust of the earth in a basket and weighed the mountains on the scales and the hills in a balance. To the everlasting Lord God. He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no one can fathom.

Isaiah 63:7-14 also describes the Lord's faithfulness in carrying and upholding Israel and can do the same for you and me. At the moment when we feel like we can't make it, if we look ahead, the Lord in eternity is already paving the road for us to walk on, "I will tell of the kindness of the Lord, the deeds for which he is to be praised, according to all the Lord has done for us- yes, the many good things he has done for Israel, according to his compassion and many kindnesses. He said, "Surely they are my people, children who will be true to me"; and so he became their Savior. In all their distress he too was distressed, and the angel of his presence saved them. In his love and mercy he redeemed them; he lifted them up and carried them all the days of old. Yet they rebelled and grieved His Holy Spirit. So he turned and became their enemy and he himself fought against them. Then his people recalled the days of old, the days of Moses and his people- where is he who brought them through the sea, with the shepherd of his flock? Where is he who set His Holy Spirit among them, who sent his glorious arm of power to be at Moses' right hand, who divided the waters before them, to gain for himself everlasting renown, who led them through the depths? Like a horse in open country, they did not stumble; like the cattle that go down to the plain, they were given rest by the Spirit of the Lord. This is how you guided your people to make yourself a glorious name. Look down from heaven and see, from your lofty throne, holy and glorious. Where are your zeal and might? Your tenderness and compassion are

withheld from us. But you are our Father, though Abraham does not know us or Israel acknowledge us; you, Lord, are our Father, our Redeemer from of old is your name." This passage encourages us to find rest in the Lord, and as the eagle soaring or resting on the wind, we find strength in resting and trusting and placing our full faith and hope on Jesus.

The other place I have found that exact word from Christ saying rest was in prayer from a devotional book. A book was written by Timothy Keller book called God's Wisdom for Navigating Life that was given to me by a dear friend. This prayer says, "Father when I don't confess things I know I've done wrong, I overwork and overcommit. I see now that this is because I am trying to atone for my own sins. But I can't. Let me rest in your Son's sacrifice, and rest content. Amen." I have confessed all my sins, but I have as many- the tendency to try to earn and work for grace rather than receive Christ's complete forgiveness. When we overwork because of this, we are not resting in God's grace. The only place our soul can truly rest in God's grace and eternal love. He is our refuge, our strong tower, and we can turn to him, run to him, and find security in His love, power, and grace. All this may be known, but it is a definite need to remember constantly.

Spiritually

Praise the Lord, a huge burden was taken off our shoulders just recently as we received the documents to travel last weekend (07/02/23). Thank you so much for your prayers. I mention this because the Lord was teaching us something through it that I would like to share with you. During the distress of waiting for the passports (because we already had to postpone this trip once, and to have it happen again would be a little devastating), the Lord encouraged me greatly when reading about King Hezekiah in the book of Isaiah. The context is Sennacherib, king of Assyria, was going to attack Israel and sent a letter to the leaders mocking the God of Israel because of his overconfidence, stating how many towns and people he conquered and not one of their gods (lowercase g) could save them, and Israel would be no different. Below is Hezekiah's response to Isaiah the prophet after tearing his clothes, putting on sackcloth, and entering the temple of the Lord.

"This is what Hezekiah says: This day is a day of distress and rebuke and disgrace, as when children come to the moment of birth and there is no strength to deliver them. It may be the Lord your God will hear the words of the field commander, whom his master, the King of Assyria, has sent to ridicule the living God, and that he will rebuke him for the words the Lord your God has heard. Therefore pray for the remnant that survives (Isaiah 37:2-4)."

Israel was facing a much higher threat than just attaining a delayed passport; however, in distress, I could identify saying oh Lord, please don't let this disgrace happen to us again. I would say disgrace because if the passport had not made it, it would be very disappointing not to be able to go a second time. Hezekiah's feelings also remind me of the wedding at Cana when Jesus turned the water into wine. It would have been a disgrace or shame on the groom's part if the wine had run out and there wasn't enough for the wedding, and Jesus saved him from this disgrace by his most excellent provision.

There is more to Hezekiah's prayer in Isaiah chapter 37, and it's a beautiful prayer that was heard, but our awesome true living God! He asks God. "Now, Lord, our God, deliver us from his hand, so that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that you, Lord, are the only God (Isa. 37:20)."

Isaiah gave the Lord's first response to Hezekiah's prayer in the words of the power and truth of God that comforted him. Isaiah 37:33-35 says, "Therefore this is what the Lord says concerning the king of Assyria: "He will not enter this city or shoot an arrow here. He will not come before it with shield or build a siege ramp against it. By the way that he came he will return; he will not enter this city," declares the Lord. "I will defend this city and save it, for my sake and for the sake of David my servant!"

Second, God follows through, "Then the angel of the Lord went out and put to death a hundred and eighty-five thousand in the Assyrian camp. When the people got up the next morning- there were all dead bodies! So Sennacherib, king of Assyria, broke camp and withdrew. He returned to Nineveh and stayed there." Later, Sennacherib worshiped in a temple to his god, Nisrok, and his two sons killed him with the sword.

The Lord Jesus is our redeemer, even if trial or tragedy should take us. In the book of Isaiah, "disgrace" is used in various places also. Isaiah 61:7, "Instead of your shame, you will receive a double portion, and instead of disgrace you will rejoice in your inheritance. And so you will inherit a double portion in your land, and everlasting joy will be yours." This Bible verse is in the same chapter that states that the anointed one on whom the Spirit rests will comfort all who mourn and provide for those who grieve in Zion- to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of joy instead of mourning and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair. And Rocio and I feel that that is what He's up to with us. And that is a reason to praise the Lord with joy from the bottom of our souls!

Fundraising

We need to raise \$50,067.44 for our third year, and we are at 27% of that amount. If you feel the Lord Jesus is leading you to be in ministry with us financially, you can use the link below to contribute.

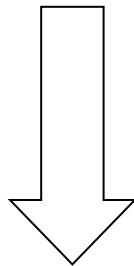
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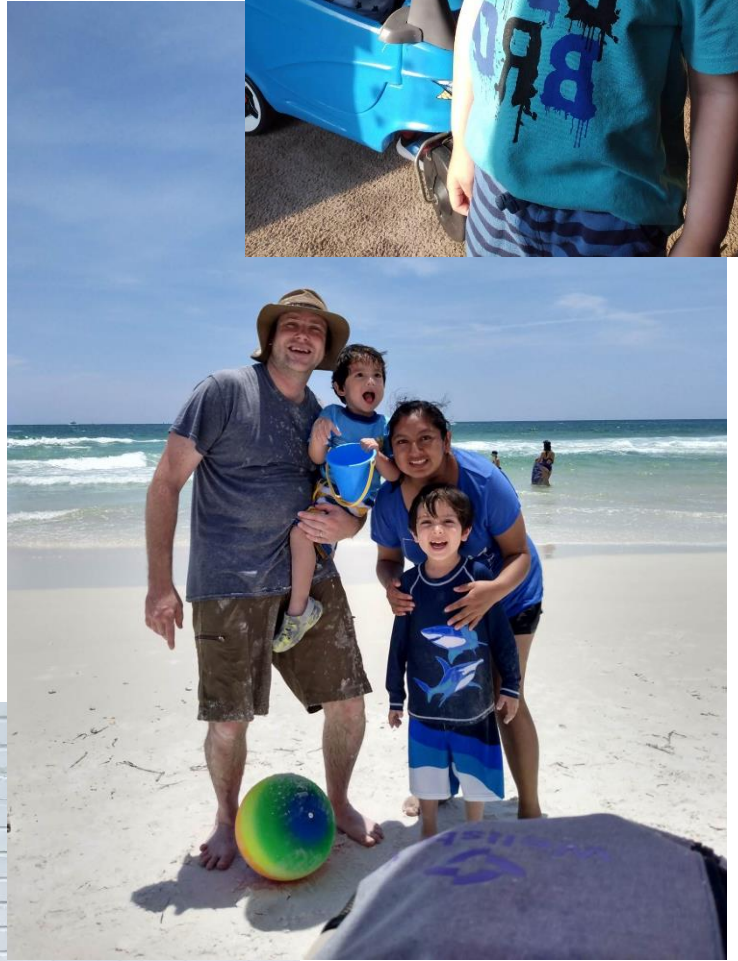
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Blessings in Christ!

From Josh and Rocio Ivey

More photos below





Josh's Birthday (Jun.23rd)