

## September 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, praise the Lord, Rocio started a new job which is training her to be a CMA (certified medical assistant)! When I was a bit discouraged about being so busy, Rocio reminded me that I need to enjoy the kids in this stage of life, though it may be hard work. As I read this verse, it puts things more in perspective, "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." Ec. 3:11

When anxiety gets the best of you and me, it makes us want to jump along to another time (not necessarily the present but the future). One thing of faith that can bring peace is to hear this verse again, "He has made everything beautiful in its time." The stages of life we go through He makes beautiful, so allow Him to make them beautiful. Be waiting and praying expectantly in the present. He rewards those who earnestly seek him and that surely His goodness and love will follow us all the days of our lives (Psalm 23:6). I guess what I am trying to say is trust that God will make not only this season but every season beautiful in your life. When I say beautiful, that doesn't mean there isn't suffering. As we see Jesus on the cross- it is one of the most terrifying deaths but the most beautiful love we see. As He turns things around in our lives, we treasure him and value him more and more deeply. That's where the beauty is (when his beauty and His light shine in you and me).

Another awesome thing about God setting eternity on our hearts is we have a cry and a yearning for God that the earth will never satisfy (Rom 8:18-23, 2 Cor.5:1-10). As this eternal being, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit live and take up residence within us, we experience part of his infinitude and abundance on earth as we know Him more and more- Jn. 17:3, "Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent." And as his kingdom expands, we experience his holy, powerful, and moving (alive) presence in our midst.

Time before this, I asked God to have a heart more like that of Jesus- "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, **for I am gentle and humble in heart**, and you will find rest for our souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

Think about this, how can Jesus' yoke be light? He only was crushed by the entire sin of all the world at all times in one moment, yet he says his yoke is light? 1 Jn 5:2-4 says, "This is how we know that we love the children of God: by loving God and carrying out his commands. In fact, this is love for God: to keep his commands. And his commands are not burdensome, for everyone born of God overcomes the world." Thus, Jesus was full of love as he poured out all of himself, not holding anything back on the cross to us. I believe he could say this because it was because of "the joy set before him that he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart." This means that his yoke was nothing compared to all that love and joy for us to be with Him. That's amazing if you think about how much Christ loves us, you, and me. This can also be backed up by 2 Cor. 4:17 that calls all our troubles *light* and momentary that achieve for us an eternal weight of glory that far outweighs them all. (To not get too entangled; however, the yoke that Jesus wants to pass unto us is light because it is the submission to the authority of His Heavenly Father. As we submit to Him, He empowers us in His authority and carries everything out. We see this in the New Testament in Jesus' relationship with the Father and he invites us into this yoke or relationship.)

As a Prek teacher and dad of two kids- I was walking one day praying and asked God for a heart to love others well. That I need help showing my kids the love of Christ, I need help showing my wife the love of Christ, and I really need help showing the students at the school the love of Christ. I needed more of the kind of love that is much more patient and kind, a love that is humble and not easily angered. So I just asked the

Lord, please give me this gentleness and humbleness and Your love because so many people need it around me. So my prayer and yours this month could be, "Show me how to love as you have loved me. I need more humbleness and less pride, and I need to guide with gentleness and less forcefully."

## **Fundraising**

Thanks to the Lord and you, this month, we were able to share with the congregation in Stonebridge about missions in Peru! Please be praying for more and more supporters to join the support team, that the Lord touch the hearts of many to give, and touches the hearts of many Peruvians with his salvation. As of August, we have \$89,075.00 with pledges and one-time gifts. This is 85% of the target goal. Praise the Lord; we are getting closer and closer, and trust and ask that His will be done in His timing for His glory. Also, thanks to the Lord, this month we were able to help out twice, leading an online Bible study group under Beto Fernandez (a pastor in Huancayo) with Peruvians studying the book of Matthew and continue to attend the study as well.

We see an excellent example in the men of faith in Hebrews 11:13-16, "All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance, admitting that they were foreigners and strangers on earth. People who say such things show that they are looking for a country of their own. If they had been thinking of the country they had left, they would have had opportunity to return. Instead, they were longing for a better country—a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them." In Philippians 3:20, Paul says our citizenship is in heaven, and Peter says we are only passengers or strangers here on earth. Does our life reflect that? In Matthew 8:18, someone tells Jesus, "I will follow you wherever you go." He replies, "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head."

It's incredible to see in Hebrews 11 that Abraham, by faith, pursued a place he was to receive as an inheritance from God, despite living in tents as a stranger in a foreign land because he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God. It's terrific to see Moses choose the narrow road and help the Israelites (going through suffering to help them) rather than stay in Egypt. In Moses, "By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward. By faith, he left Egypt, not fearing the king's anger; he persevered because he saw him who is invisible. By faith, he kept the Passover and the application of blood, so that the destroyer of the firstborn would not touch the firstborn of Israel. By faith the people passed through the Red Sea as on dry land; but when the Egyptians tried to do so, they were drowned." Heb. 11:24-29

Did they take time to think about the countries they had left behind? No, they are awesome examples of "seeking first His kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well." (Mt. 6:33)

Colossians 3:1-5 encourages us to set our minds and hearts on the things above where Christ is seated at the right hand of God, not on earthly things. One thing we must leave behind for Christ is a sinful way of life. Even more than sin, sometimes the worldly things that we hold on to, such as possessions, status, knowledge, money, jobs, houses, and comfort God asks us to give up so that we can place our faith and trust in Him alone. Thus as Colossians 3:3 says, "For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God." None of the things above are inherently wrong; however, if they are what you are living for and not God, we will be greatly disappointed. Jesus says to his disciples in Mt. 16:24-26, "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it; but whoever loses his life for me will find it. What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world and loses his soul?"

## Spiritually

This section is about how to rest spiritually amid busyness, as we have been super busy this month—slowing down to ponder the things below helped. Reading all of Ecclesiastes enabled me to slow down because it makes you think somewhat about death and the eternal.

Ecclesiastes 3:12-14, "I know that there is nothing better for people than to be happy and to do good while they live. That each of them may eat and drink, and find satisfaction in all their toil- this is the gift of God. I know that everything God does will endure forever; nothing can be added to it and nothing taken from it. God does it so that people may fear him."

At first, when I read this verse, I wouldn't say I liked it. But I realized I was asking myself how come I can't add to it, that is, to what God does. This was my pride speaking. I've noticed it is so helpful to my soul to admit my utter dependence and need for God every step of the way. I am nothing without Him; I can't worship without his help leading me into his presence. I can't pray without his Holy Spirit and His groans that go beyond words and Jesus' intercession before the throne of God for me. I can't do ministry on my own; in fact, He has to work through me. If not, I am toast! What "good" word could I say or good "thing" could I do if it weren't for Him? So, yes, the Lord helps not to add to what you do but allow you to do what you do in me and through me.

Somehow, more and more, there can be a dangerous shift without us realizing it when we are busy and forget to slow down and be still in God's presence. We can become more dependent on ourselves, our intellect, strength, etc., and start to complete checklists rather than listening at the Lord's feet and being in his presence. Oh, that we would slow down and see we are nothing before him and can do nothing without Him and let Him lead the way.

Eccl. 7:15-18, "In this meaningless life of mine I have seen both of these: The righteous perishing in their righteousness, and the wicked living long in wickedness. Don't be overrighteous, neither be over wise-why destroy yourself? Don't be overwicked, and do not be a fool-why die before your time? It is good to grasp the one and let go of the other. Whoever fears God avoids all extremes."

When we attempt to build up righteousness points, of course, we won't say this directly, but we all know it happens unconsciously we begin to try to earn God's love, favor, grace, and gifts. This is shown when we rely on or depend on ourselves.

Rom. 4:4-5, "Now to the one who works, wages are not credited as a gift but as an obligation. However, to the one who does not work but trusts God who justifies the ungodly, their faith is credited as righteousness." "The righteous will live by faith because it is because of Him that we are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God-that is our righteousness, holiness, and redemption.

Hopefully, this connects to the circumstances section above also because this is important in finding rest for our souls. Isaiah 30:15, "This is what the Sovereign Lord, the Holy One of Israel says, "In repentance and rest is your salvation, in quietness and trust is your strength." I know most of us already know this, but it is a good thing to check ourselves on- In what areas are we currently letting God work through you and dependently on Him, as Jesus did, and in what areas do we tend to walk ahead of Him and try to do things ourselves? Lean on Him, rely on Him and Him alone, and you will be soaring on wings like eagles...those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles. They will run and not grow weary, and they will walk and not be faint (Isaiah 40:31)

Blessings in Christ!!!

From Josh and Rocio Ivey

(more pics below)

