

July 26, 2020

“You will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast, because they trust in you. Trust in the Lord forever, for the Lord, the Lord himself, is the Rock eternal.” - Isaiah 26:3-4 NIV

“All this I have spoken while still with you. But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.” - John 14:25-27 NIV

Dear ,

Elaine and I pray this finds you well and living in the promised peace of our Lord. These are indeed stressful times and times that could easily distract us from the security of our relationship with Jesus. As I read the news, it is easy to let the anger and frustration and fear that is so prevalent affect my thoughts as well. Thankfully, Jesus reminds us that there are eternal things that are far more important and far more real. He says the world offers peace but He gives a peace that is far superior. Jesus knew hard times would come and in the verses above, he is preparing His followers for that. He said ‘do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid’. Choices. We can choose to not be afraid because we know the ending; we know who really holds the power and the future. Can I get an Amen!

“Humble yourselves, therefore, under God’s mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you. Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings.” - 1 Peter 5:6-9

Peter (aren’t you amazed at the transformation of this fisherman and yes, failure?) speaks to the church in reminding followers to humble ourselves, be alert and not unaware of the very real enemy. We are to remember that our family throughout the world is undergoing even greater tribulations than we are. This week I read about Christians in China being coerced into removing images of Jesus and replacing them with that of the political leader. And, before you think this only happens in communist countries, also this week, in the UK a Christian ministry received death threats and had their bank accounts closed due to the influence of people who desire to sanction anyone who disagrees with their view of sexuality and gender. So, persecutions exist in our world and are getting more numerous. Should we be nervous or fearful? Not according to Jesus, Paul or Peter. Is there any good news? I am so glad you asked that.

This past Easter season, Jesus Film showings far exceeded anything we have seen previously. JESUS was shown in 111 countries with an estimated 163 million views. Do you think that because of the pandemic churches have been ineffectual? My friend Ricky shares what is happening in SE Asia. Our church ministry has been training people in the use of online tools. Our movement is in the process of putting all training online. In the largest Buddhist country of SE Asia, 30 of the 35 recently planted churches saw an increase of tenfold. One church that has over 100 attendees had 2262 attendees online. In another closed country our



movement working through their partners and church plants saw an opportunity to connect the gospel with very needed face masks. To date, over 1.3 million facemasks have been distributed. Time and space do not allow for me to share the many other stories of church expansion and examples of believers reaching out to the lost.

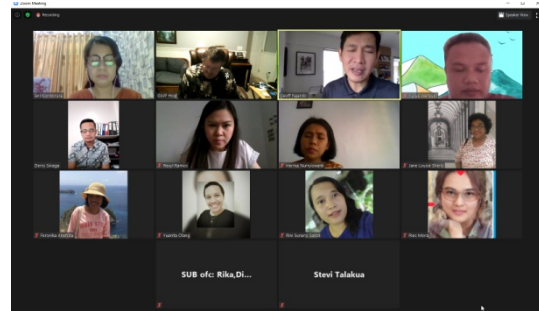
“For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.”
Ephesians 6:12

The point of all of this is that the bride of Christ is not cowering, not intimidated and certainly not hiding in a closet waiting for all of this to blow over. Through the leading of the Holy Spirit and their love for Jesus, they are reaching out to the world around them with the good news of the gospel even more now than before. Yes, we have had to learn to adapt how we do ministry, how to reach out and we have had to keep at the forefront of our minds the promises of Jesus to give us peace and strength. AND, we will fight the right battles, against the real foe. But, nothing is going to stop the advancement of His kingdom. Aren't you encouraged to see how the church is responding? I sure am.

So, how are Elaine and I doing? Better than I would have expected at this point in time. Sure, this online stuff is getting a little old but I am amazed at how the technology we have is being used. Way back at the beginning of this, I believe in April, one of our Asian ministries had over 300 people on one Zoom call for their staff meeting. As for me, I was scheduled to fly there in April to train their

operations people in a system that allows their staff to have their needs met online. (Who knew how important that would become?) Well, as you may know, all international travel for us in CCC has been postponed through the end of the year. We could not wait, however, so we tried doing it through

Zoom. We took three weeks and trained 15 people (most of whom don't speak English). It was a little tricky for me being 12 hours off and I honestly did not have a lot of faith that this would work. But, God did a miracle and the work is progressing. In the next couple of weeks, everyone in this largest ministry of SE Asia will be able to have their needs met without coming into the office.



Training and prayer half a world away

Thank you so much for your faithfulness in prayer and giving so Elaine and I can continue to serve from Orlando. We are amazed and humbled by your love.

I leave with these hopefully encouraging words. Jesus knows the future. He knows when and if this will end. He will take care of His children. People who don't know Him need Him even more now than they realized before. And lastly, the mission will continue, it will accelerate and nothing in this world will stop it!

Mark & Elaine