



TIMES & SEASONS



Freedom Outreach International
(a ministry to the military)
Prayer and Fasting Devotional 2019

Annual Fasting & Prayer Initiative
Monday, January 7th until Sunday, January 27th

Throughout Freedom Outreach International ministry centers and fellowships in the USA, Puerto Rico, the Far East, and Europe, we see a remarkable diversity of people, gifts, talents, styles, ethnicities, cultures, languages, and also methods that we use to reach and disciple those in our collective spheres of influence. Yet, as different as we are, we are called to a common purpose, a mission, a shared “ethnos” that focuses us together on connecting the soldier, sailor, airmen, marine, veteran, ex-pat, their families and communities with a missional Christian family. That’s who we are. That’s why we exist. At the core of our incredible and celebrated diversity is this one singular vision that we must accomplish TOGETHER. Diversity and geography are never in opposition to the unity that we are called to Biblically and as an organization. If there is one action that pulls us together in solidarity of purpose and unity, it is corporate prayer. We pray for each other and with each other, encouraging the team onward in this great spiritual battle so that no one becomes depleted or defeated. We are in this together and the greatest blessing we can bestow upon this great family called FOI/MTTM is to commit to times of collective, corporate prayer.

Every year we take this prayer journey together. It is a journey planned carefully and prayerfully over the course of many, many months. We’ve set aside 21 days to stand together, with fasting and prayer, to speak as one voice and one community to the mountains obstructing our paths, to call forth the promises of God, to provide spiritual triage to those wounded and burned out, and to be refilled by the Holy Spirit and refocused – mentally, emotionally, spiritually, even physically – on our mission.

The theme this year was chosen intentionally: “Times and Seasons.” If we do not have these times with the Lord, we will not enter into the fruitful seasons He has foreordained for us. You’ll notice the devotions building, not just to highlight the theme, but to provide a framework as we move from spiritual self-care to spiritual church-care to the culmination and manifestation of this wellspring of hope to others around us—our ministry centers, our communities, to FOI as a unified entity, and to ultimately impact our world.

How you fast is between you and the Lord. Many people follow the Daniel fast (information about this particular fast can be found here:

<http://storage.cloversites.com/realitythechurch/documents/21%20Day%20Daniel%20Fast%20Instructions%20.pdf>.)

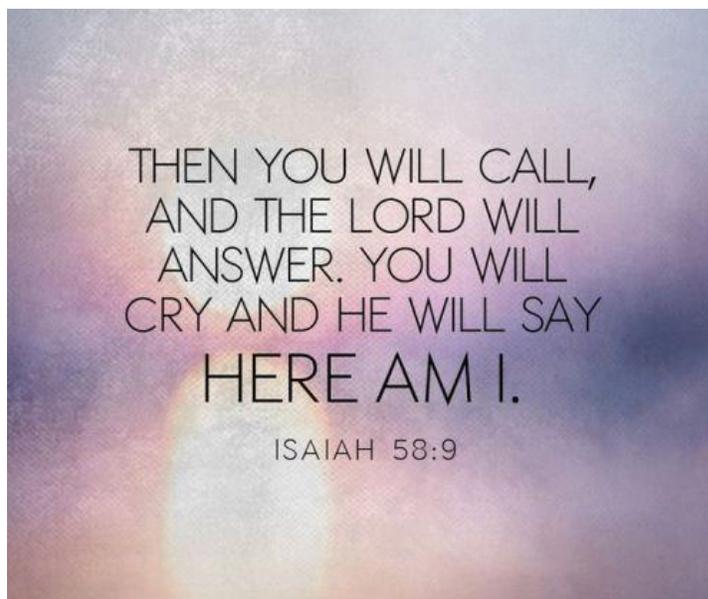
I strongly caution against being overly fixated and consumed about what you eat. In my experience, I’ve found it’s more of a distraction to try to find recipes that fall within the “legal bounds” of this kind of fast or that, and so much time is taken up obsessing about the details of what can and can’t be eaten that the personal prayer, worship, meditation,



Luke 12:22-23,
“Then Jesus said to His disciples, “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat, or about your body, what you will wear. For Life is more than food, and the body is more than clothes.”

and time in the Word is sacrificed. This is absolutely counterproductive. The enemy would like us to lose focus during this time and, thus, try to keep the letter of the fast without entering into the spirit and purpose of the fast. It may be more beneficial for you to fast the evening meal (even secular doctors are lauding the health benefits of this kind of “intermittent fasting.”) The point is, commit first to increased prayer and devotional time and commit secondly to the discipline of self-denial (as Jesus taught us to embrace in Matthew 16:24-26) regarding food, entertainment, and any of the “pleasures” that our carnal nature craves. Pray and ask the Holy Spirit to reveal what kind of fast He would call you to, which will surely be in keeping with the words of Isaiah 58. Consider keeping a journal to help you sort through your own thoughts, write down your prayers, capture the revelation that the Holy Spirit is bringing through the Word and to serve as an inspiration and reminder as you end the fast and begin to employ what was gained during this time of consecration.

Although fasting, prayer, devotion, and purification is a very personal thing, we must strive to commit to this time together. Why? Because the Lord has called us to be ONE BODY; because we are stronger together; because we need accountability, even if (and especially if) we don’t think we do. There’s an old African saying that goes like this: “If you want to go quickly, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.”



There are places spiritually
that are
further and deeper
than we have ever known.

There is a work corporately
that is more
profound and impactful
than we could ever imagine.

We have this moment together,
a “time out” with the Lord,
to let Him prepare us to go there.

Won’t you go with us?

Don’t forget to join us on our corporate prayer site on social media by requesting to be added to, “Ministry to the Military Prayer.” Feel free to share your thoughts, write out your prayers, and encourage one another through this online tool.

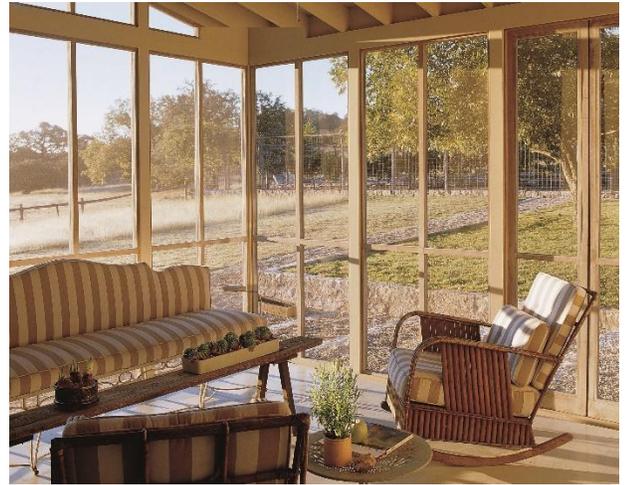
Also, join us for our worldwide, real-time E-Prayer Meeting, which will be held at 0900 Eastern Standard Time (USA) on Saturday, January 26, 2019. For information and instructions on how to connect, please contact FOI Prayer Coordinator, Jennie Humann, at jacobsgen@gmail.com.

Day 1 – Monday, January 7, 2019
Time to Rest – Read Matthew 11:25-30

“Virginia’s Back Porch”

I now realize the privilege I had, as a youth, to observe a bit of Americana that is quickly disappearing — the experience of the American Cowboy.

My grandparents were born and raised and spent all of their adult years (aside from my grandpa’s time in Europe during WWII) in rural western Nebraska, near where the state border converges with Colorado and Kansas. I remember my grandpa well, how he smelled of the field and blackberry pipe tobacco as I sat upon his lap. Sadly, he passed away when I was just 5 years old. When I was a teenager, my grandma remarried the foreman of a large cattle ranch and she moved, with him, to the “big house” on the front side of the ranch.



Summers with my Gram were not lazy days full of childish playtime. On a ranch, you were expected to work. Everyone had to “pull their weight” which for us granddaughters included washing windows, feeding animals, gardening and helping with the never-ending kitchen duties.

In the mornings, Gram would serve breakfast at 5 AM for the ranch hands who came in first, often wrapping bacon and egg sandwiches in clean dish towels to be taken out to the men already in the field. By 9 AM, lunch was started, though we called the noon meal “dinner” and the evening meal “supper.” Around 11:30, we kids would stand on the porch and watch for the men cresting the hill on their horses, coming in together from the distant pastures. We’d run to tell Gram and then we’d take our places to help her serve a dozen famished cowboys.

Every day it was the same. They’d come in through the back porch, take off their boots and hang their hats. There was a big farm sink out there and they’d roll up their sleeves and lather the soap past their elbows and then wash the sweat and dust off their faces. I’d never seen such dirty water as what came rolling off their hands into the white basin.

Then, one by one, they’d take their place around the table, always leaving the head seat for my step-grandpa, Willard. Once we had all the food sitting on the table, typically something like hearty slices of roast beef, mashed potatoes, green beans and biscuits, Willard would say grace and they’d dig in, eating more food than seemed humanly possible. They weren’t allowed to talk about work at the table. “You leave that on the porch with your muddy boots,” Gram would scold. No, the dinner table was a place of rest, refreshment and peace.

After the meal, they'd excuse themselves with a kind word to my Gram, something like, "That was a mighty fine meal, Virginia," before they'd retrieve their hats from the porch and make their way into the living room. They would have never been so disrespectful as to sit on the furniture with their soiled blue jeans, so they just laid on the blue rug, backs flat on the floor, with their weathered and sweat-stained cowboy hats pulled down covering their faces. They'd usually sleep an hour or so, ensuring the hottest and most brutal part of the day had passed before they ventured out again, often working until sundown.

I've often thought about Gram's sunny, enclosed back porch, with the tattered and mud-crust-ed boots lined up in a row, cowboy hats airing out on the nails stuck in the posts. What a welcome sight Virginia's porch must have been to an exhausted, sun-scorched cowboy. They'd often make comments as they washed up about how their mouths watered in anticipation at the smells drifting back from the kitchen, which included Gram's famous pies that she made daily. I wonder, do each of us have a place like that, a place to set the work down and enter into the respite of rest and refreshing, a place tucked away from the never-ending tasks before us?

"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest," Jesus calls to us from Matthew 11:28-30. "Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

"Come," He beckons us, but do we? Do we literally come and enter in and find rest for our souls or do we just read the scripture and move on into the relentless busyness of our daily lives?

I wonder how many meals He has prepared for us that we have never partaken of or how many times He sets out the basin of His word to wash us (Ephesians 5:26) but we do not stop long



enough to comply. I wonder how differently we would function if we would take His word literally and come away to rest, be refilled and refreshed -- not a vacation or retreat as much as a daily place of stopping, resting, feasting and being replenished in His presence. I want to see my time with Him not as a chore or duty or obligation, but like the sweet anticipation of a cowboy walking up to Virginia's back porch, ready to set the work aside and enter in where there is comfort, sustenance, rest and peace. Lord, help us hear You as You whisper, "Come," and let us

leave our troubles, worries and work on the open back porch of Your secret place.

Our Prayer: Lord, teach us to rest -- truly and completely -- to rest in You. Teach us the infinite value of our daily time with You. The recreation and entertainment of this fallen world is a sorry substitute for the joy of one moment in Your Presence! As You beckon us to, "Come," during this season of fasting and prayer, help us to obey. Forgive us for working in our own strength

instead of allowing You to refresh and refuel us. Lord, we long for intimacy with You through Your Spirit. We choose to come away with You and experience all You have prepared for us.

During this time of prayer and fasting, Lord, help us to enter in like never before. As we begin this journey together, teach us to revel in the quiet times with You. For our warriors and their families, we pray for rest. For our Center Directors and their families and leaders, we pray for refreshing. For those on the front lines, both in military service and ministry, may they enter daily into the secret place of the Most High during this time of fasting and consecration and find rest for their souls, peace in their hearts and minds, replenishment for their spirits, and health for their bodies. In Jesus' Name, amen.

Today in Our Monthly Prayer Guide: **Butch & Keiko Alston - Misawa, Japan** - Pray for faithful, Spirit-filled laborers; instrument players; members' spiritual growth & sanctification; God's presence and glory manifested in our gatherings.

Day 2 – Tuesday, January 8, 2019

Time to Feast – Read 1 Kings 17:1-7 & 2 Chronicles 7:14



“I Have Commanded the Ravens”

The Prophet Elijah had a strange ministry itinerary. He’d need to go from the mountains of Gilead, to the King’s palace, to the Brook Cherith, to the home of the widow in Zarephath, before he would finally meet Ahab on Mount Carmel for the ultimate, glorious showdown that turned all of Israel back to the Lord God in a single day. Sometimes God’s timing and ways seem very odd to us. I’m sure, if consulted, Elijah would have fast forwarded past the wilderness and the widows house and asked the Lord, “Why not just show Israel Your power right now?” But, the Lord knows that there is a work that has to be done first and it’s going to take a drought and a famine to do it.

So, we find Elijah at the Brook Cherith in the most unusual circumstances. He has a water source but is told by the Lord to “hide” there and that he will be fed in the most outrageous manner, “I have commanded the ravens to feed you there.”

The Bible doesn’t give us the satisfaction of knowing Elijah’s opinion about this, but as a faithful Jew, he surely must have been somewhat horrified. Ravens were scavengers, birds that eat the flesh of dead things, and were listed by this SAME GOD as “detestable” in Leviticus, chapter 11. The Jews were not to eat them under any circumstances. Yet, as we begin this time of prayer and fasting, there are several important lessons for us here:

1. **If the ravens can obey, we can too.** The ravens were not made in the image and likeness of God. They had no covenant with Him like the Jews did and we do today. They are also territorial birds by nature and will not share with any bird or animal outside of their flock, especially not a man. Yet, the Almighty God commanded them and they obeyed, not just once or twice but up to 2,000 times (up to twice a day for 3 ½ years). The ravens’ obedience to the Word of the Lord stretched them outside their nature, as obedience often does for us also. During this time of prayer and fasting, we will be stretched to stay committed and obey what the Lord has spoken to us.
2. **Satisfaction doesn’t equal pleasure.** Elijah ate bread and meat twice a day so his natural appetite must have been satisfied, but that doesn’t mean he was pleased with the situation. What did the ravens bring? Did they cut Premium USDA Sirloin into nice, clean cubes and put them in Styrofoam packages neatly covered with plastic wrap? No, they would have torn bits of this and that and dropped it, probably into the dirt. I can see Elijah, especially while he’s acclimating to the situation, grimacing as he picks up a torn piece of meat that has just fallen from the beak of the “unclean” bird onto the ground, washing it in the brook so he can cook it over a fire, wondering how long this would be his living situation. Fasting is a lot like this – it’s finding satisfaction and enough

sustenance to give us energy for our day, yet withholding from our selfish nature the things we most crave and desire, the things we take pleasure in. God never would have allowed the ravens to bring the Prophet anything “unclean” so Elijah had to trust that, regardless of what the meat looked like when it was dropped to him, that it was good for him because the Lord Himself was commanding each meal. Bringing our “flesh” into subjection isn’t necessarily a fun thing, but it’s a good, important, and necessary thing.

- 3. When we submit to God in the right way at the right time, we will see His glory.** For all we are seeking the Lord for in our homes, our finances, our marriages, our ministries, in FOI as an organization and in the world we are a part of, we must have these times of consecration before we will be part of the great and glorious. *Elijah would have never had a Mount Carmel if he hadn’t had a Brook Cherith.*

Our Prayer:

Father, we are Your people, called by Your Name, just as Israel of old, just as the Prophet Elijah was. So, Lord, we are not above submitting ourselves to the same exhortation in Your Word, to humble ourselves, to pray, to seek Your face, to turn from our wicked ways, so that You will hear from heaven and forgive sin, and that You will heal our land. Lord Jesus, Messiah of God, how desperately our land needs to be healed! Give us the burden and urgency that we must seek You now and submit to Your instructions in 2 Chronicles 7:14 to fast and pray, to repent for ourselves and for our nation, because Your Word is true and Your promise to hear from Heaven is absolute! We seek You today for this kind of feasting – not the feasting of our flesh which caters to our selfishness but the feasting of Your Word, like bread in the desert, like a miraculous meal in the middle of a famine. You are so good to us, and we praise You, Lord Jesus, for the way You care for us. We give you this small sacrifice of our time and our attention, focused prayer and supplication, in return.

Lord, we also pray for those who feel as though they’ve been in a spiritual famine for a long time – for those who have not seen a breakthrough in the things they’ve been praying for. Show them that You are sufficient for this day and that You are leading them from the wilderness to the top of the mountain where Your glory surely will be revealed. In Jesus’ Name, amen.

*Today in Our Monthly Prayer Guide: **James & Pam Morris - Camp Humphreys, Korea** - Pray for God’s help to connect the lost and searching to Jesus in the military and civilian community here.*

Day 3 – Wednesday, January 9, 2019
Time to Fast – Read John 4:1-38

“Meat to Eat that You Know Not Of”

With the exception of a short donkey ride, every place that the Master trod throughout His three-year earthly ministry was on foot. Jesus and His disciples walked from place to place, out in the elements and under the hot sun, finding food and shelter along the way. They experienced physical exhaustion just getting to the locations that they would do the ministry. It made sense to take the shortest route to conserve energy and resources, yet en-route from Judea to Galilee, the Bible says, “He needed to go through Samaria.”

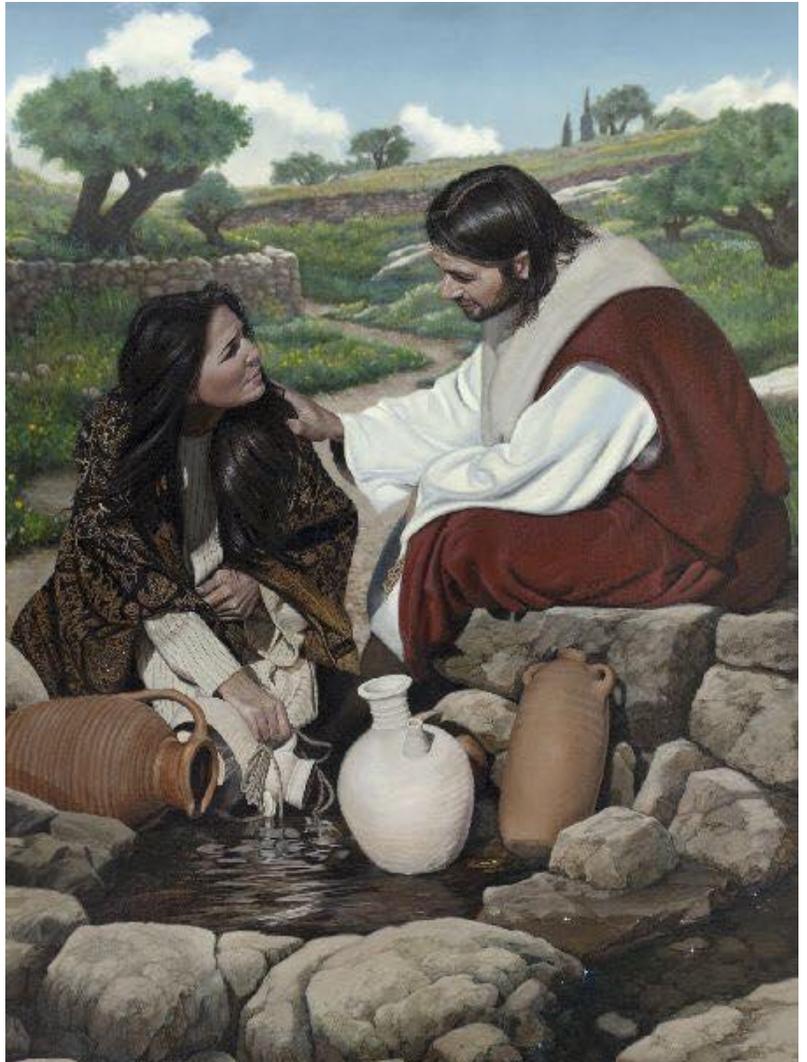
We know the story. Jesus sends the disciples to get food and He, being wearied from the journey, sits down by Jacob’s well. And He waits...

How interesting that the Divine Itinerary included a person who would have been disqualified from ministry by any respectable religious leader of the day: she was a detestable Samaritan, she was a woman, and she was a renowned sinner.

We won’t focus as much on what happened at the well that day, though it’s worth an in-depth study itself. Jesus ministers truth and life to her and she becomes an evangelist to the Samaritans and “many believed” because of her testimony. Yet, when the disciples returned with food, they urged Jesus saying, “Rabbi, eat.” But He said to them, “I have food to eat of which you do not know.” I’m sure they wondered what on earth He meant by that!

There comes a point for the true believer when ***spiritual hunger must surpass physical hunger***, and when spiritual satisfaction that fills the inner man must usurp the physical nourishment of food that perishes.

Lordship is not a pie-in-the-sky ideology but a here-and-now commitment. Who is going to reign in this moment, my carnal flesh or my reborn spirit indwelt by the Holy Spirit of the Almighty



God? When we allow the Spirit to reign and have His way, the satisfaction is deeper and the sustenance is fuller than any sweet delicacy of this earth.

When Jesus was encouraged to eat, He replied to basically say, "I'm already satisfied." I think about that and consider, with tears, how precious this rejected, discarded, "sinful" woman was to the Savior and I want to break out singing, "Oh, how He loves me!"

The pleasure of obeying the Holy Spirit is more delightful than anything this world has to offer! I want to sit in His presence, allowing the Bread from Heaven – His Holy Word – and the life-giving work He has ordained for me to be so intertwined with my being that I can say, even when my belly is empty and my body is weary, "In You, Jesus, I am fully satisfied."

Our Prayer:

Lord Jesus, most of our homes have full cupboards and refrigerators. Most days, we do not lack for earthly meat to eat. Lord, we do not want our bellies to be full and our spirits empty! We want to be satisfied with the Bread of Your Presence, by the sustenance of Your Word, by the richness found only in doing Your will. Teach us to subjugate the demands of our flesh so that we can hear the voice of the Spirit that reminds us, "There is only one way you will ever be truly satisfied." Oh, Lord, help us to crave the meat of obedience and to delight our souls in You above all else.

During this season of fasting and prayer, let it not become mere religious duty. Let us fast not only FROM FOOD but UNTO GOOD WORKS, that we would not pass by the people who religion rejects. Give us Jacob's Well testimonies during this season and throughout this year. Someone is coming into our lives who will not come out with the crowd, someone who is too ashamed to "darken the doors" of our churches and ministries. If we do not permit the Spirit to silence the flesh, we will miss these precious opportunities.

Lord God, help us reach our communities! Help us, each and every person reading and praying this today, to lead at least one person to faith in You during these few short weeks of fasting and prayer. May we be evangelizing the next great evangelists! Find us there where You are, out of the way, sitting by the well, waiting for the discarded and rejected one who is so precious in Your sight. Find us with You in those moments, full of the meat that others may know nothing of, in Your strange, unlikely, divine and delightful will, fully and completely satisfied.

Amen.

*Today in Our Monthly Prayer Guide: **Tim & Tina Andrews - Spangdahlem, Germany** - – Pray Christians here would become hungry and thirsty for righteousness and to seek His face; that we would operate in the power and authority of the Cross.*

Day 4 – Thursday, January 10, 2019
Time to Detox – Read Philippians 2:1-18

“Plugged In or Plugged Up?”

In 25 years of youth ministry, we constantly deal with the growing problem of youth being so engrossed with their electronics that they can scarcely concentrate on anything else. When they arrive at one of our events, the first thing we do (with their parents’ consent) is take their electronics away, put them in large Ziploc bags with their names on them, and lock it up until the end of the event. We typically hear protests such as, “But, I NEED my phone.” Our typical (somewhat snarky) response is, “Well, when the President calls, we’ll make sure to patch the phone call right through to you.”



The point is that we need to detox from more than junk-eating but also from junk-thinking. We cannot expect that, allowing the world to infiltrate our eyes and ears all day every day, will not affect us spiritually.

Today we are praying for a detox of our minds, which most likely starts with our electronic media habits. Are we “plugged in” or are we “plugged up” by time-wasting and mind-wasting dependence on entertainment and social media?

The health food industry has taken advantage of people and gotten rich by hawking fad detox diets, juices and teas. Some of these products may have some health benefits but if you eat sensibly, drink water, and have a liver and kidneys, you’re all set! You don’t actually need any of those things to “cleanse” or “detox” your body.

It’s more likely that we need to cleanse our minds from toxic thinking.

So, here we are, starting out another year with that another season of prayer and fasting. Why do we do this now? Did we get so fat over the holidays that we have to plan this for January? Some may think it’s because it’s a new year and we need to develop discipline in our eating to be healthier during the year? This kind of thinking is the equivalent of buying a junk-science celebrity-endorsed detox tea. It’s not necessary and it’s not the point.

Spiritual fasting is much more than restricting the body. It’s a time of to stop and remind ourselves that this Christian walk is a life of Lordship and we need to take time to *re-consecrate our whole selves* the Lord.

We are praying corporately and we need corporate and organization-wide breakthrough in this great ministry. But, above any other year, I believe that we will also experience personal breakthroughs in our own lives and in our families. The collective Body of Christ is made up of us, as individuals. May this be a time of self-spirit-care, detox of the soul as a detox from this world and culture. As the military demands service members to be “fit to fight,” how much more should we be, physically and spiritually fit, so that we can pray, serve and fight for them?

Our Prayer:

Lord, we give You our whole selves, body-soul-spirit and mind-will-emotions, that we may be healthy and free from the attachments of this world. Help us detox from the things that steal our time and waste our resources. Your Word brings life and health! Your Word brings energy, creativity and well-being! Help us break free from the toxins of a fallen world and, instead, be filled with Your Holy Spirit!

During this season, break off addictions and toxic thoughts and actions. Help us, as freed people, to reach into the community and direct others toward freedom also. Let our centers be places of healing – every kind of healing – and safe places for broken people to come.

We repent of allowing earthly pursuits get in the way of our pursuit of You! Thank You for purification and for sanctification, so that we can love and serve You fully and be clean vessels to bring Your light unto this world.

Amen.

Today in Our Monthly Prayer Guide: **Dawn Ashley - Ansbach, Germany** - Pray for favor and open doors to minister the gospel to the 500 families scheduled to PCS to Ansbach by the end of January, and God’s help in reaching the single soldiers.

Day 5 – Friday, January 11, 2019

Time to Climb Higher – Read Psalm 40 (entirely) & Proverbs 24:16

“Up Is Mandatory”

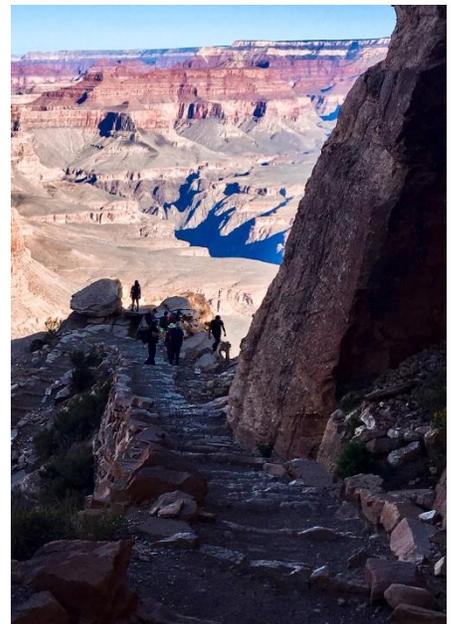


At the end of August, we had the awesome experience of visiting the Grand Canyon for the first time. There really are no photos to do it justice and no words that can adequately describe the wonder and beauty of this amazing place!

On our second day, we took a free guided hike, at dawn, provided by the US Park Service. I was so excited that I purchased a new shirt from the gift shop. Turns out, the logo on the t-shirt is a common saying among the park rangers, who rescue hundreds of well-meaning tourists each year. “Down is optional – Up is mandatory.” I didn’t realize how true that would be until the following day.

Now, we consider ourselves to be pretty avid hikers, not in peak physical condition but we hold our own on long and challenging hikes, some as long as 12-16 miles. When the park ranger told us that the hike is only a total of slightly more than three miles, Brian and I looked at one another and smirked. That, for us, is more like a “warm up.” Oh boy, were we wrong.

What we didn’t know is that it’s an early morning hike because, by noon, the canyon turns into a humongous clay crock pot, relentlessly slow-cooking its inhabitants. We also didn’t know that the trail was cut straight out of the canyon side and we would need to trek like nimble mountain goats down the Bright Angel Trail to get to the famed Plateau Point. Going down, in the cool of the early morning, was the easy part. We enjoyed the views, took entirely too many pictures, before we dared to venture back up. At this point, the sun was high and the shade had disappeared. We trudged straight up the side of the canyon, stopping only to mentally apologize to our smoldering leg muscles and beg them to go on, while some novice and well-intentioned hikers started down the trail past us. We would look at each other, knowing they choose the absolute worst part of the day to go down, and whispered, “The Rangers are going to have to rescue that one...”



The point of the story is this: the ministry we are all a part of is not an easy one. We live and serve in challenging environments where we face multiple obstacles, from obtaining foreign visas, to fluctuating exchange rates messing up our budgets, to the loneliness and isolation that many military families (and ministers, too) can experience living and working overseas. It’s easy

for anyone to allow negativity to infiltrate our thoughts and attitudes. It's natural to see the problems and to react to them first instead of acknowledging the God-directed opportunities. There are multiple occasions each day to feel the weight of the struggle and burden and to get down. But, I am reminded of the saying on my t-shirt as I think about the hardships, "Down is optional – Up is mandatory."

We have the option of seeing the negatives with natural eyes or looking confidently through the eyes of faith! We have the option of sinking into pessimism in our thinking and speaking or we can make a good confession grounded in the Word and Will of the Almighty God! The reality is, whatever direction we are looking is the direction we are heading. If we focus downward, on all the difficulties, we will begin travelling in that direction. But, remember, it's OPTIONAL! We don't have to allow our hearts, minds and spirits to get down! If we look up (Psalm 121:1-2) to where our Help is coming from, we will begin to travel up – and UP, my friends, is MANDATORY!

Our Prayer:

Father God, we are reminded today of Your Word that tells us that to be carnally minded is death but to be spiritually minded is life and peace! (Romans 8:6.) We choose LIFE! We choose PEACE! We refuse negative thoughts and the words of the nay-sayers who would remind us of the "reality" of some of our situations. The true "reality" is that You are for us, so who can be against us! You are with us and will never leave or forsake us! You are our ever present help in times of need! You are the Way Maker, the Miracle Worker, the Promise Keeper! We praise and honor You for all that You are and that we, somehow, by the shed blood of Jesus Christ, get to enter into Your power and provision! We are more than conquerors through Him who loves us! We choose to live in victory and to let our praises shut the devils mouth (Psalm 8:2)!

Lord, we lift up our Center Directors and those they serve. Pour out an anointing of joy! Restore the excitement and thrill of serving You to those who have fallen into negativity or depression. The joy of the Lord, surely, is our strength. Thank You for focusing each person's sight and mind to *upward call of God in Christ Jesus* (Philippians 3:14). We praise You for Your faithfulness to revive and restore, to bring back the passion of each individual calling, and to bring us, individually and corporately, into higher heights! In the Mighty Name of Jesus we pray – amen – so be it – and amen!

*Today in Our Monthly Prayer Guide: **Dan & Andreja Davis - Vilseck, Germany** - Pray that God would send committed, dedicated laborers into His vineyard for the harvest.*

Day 6 – Saturday, January 12, 2019

Time for the Evidence – Read Hebrews 11:1-3 & Hebrews 4:16

“Heaven’s Courtroom”



Thankfully, the only time I have ever been in a courtroom, aside from joyous occasions such as witnessing an adoption or marriage, is my senior year in High School. My government class took a field trip to our county courthouse to more fully understand the judicial system. We were able to sit in on a “mock trial” and I got to play the part of a juror. My job was to consider only the evidence introduced in the court and decide on a verdict (final outcome).

Material Evidence is a term that means *proof*, and this proof corroborates the *testimony*. This *material evidence* has a significant relationship with the facts of the case and can decide whether the testimony is admissible as proof or inadmissible. Without proof (material evidence) it’s difficult for testimony to stand up in a court of law.

Stay with us here, because we are about to relate this to faith.

Possession is nine-tenths of the law. You may have heard that before. That means that it’s easier to prove ownership if you can physically show that you possess it (material evidence), such as holding it up in court and saying, “I have this. This substance in my hands is mine.”

Hebrews 11:1-3 gives us what the Biblical technical definition of *what faith is*. In verses 1-2, we have terms used that sound much like legal terms we use today: faith is a *substance* (material) and it is *evidence* (verse one). It corroborates the *testimony* (verse two).

It does cause one to wonder whether, when we pray (for healing, breakthrough, a change of circumstances, whatever we are praying for) are we going into the Courtroom of Heaven with empty words or with the kind of faith that shows up as material evidence in Heaven? Do we possess faith as the substance of our hopes, or are we just praying ‘wishful thinking’ prayers? Are we tiptoeing in our praying or are we coming, “boldly to the throne of grace”? We can be bold when we have evidence to back it up, and that evidence is nothing less than FAITH.

I must ask myself, am I bringing proof when I pray that corroborates my testimony? Am I asking, in a timid “pretty-please” manner or am I boldly stating that I have the *rights of possession* under the law?

“To the law and to the testimony!” the Prophet Isaiah declares (Isaiah 8:20). The word of God is the law! We can find out what our rights are and show possession.

For wayward children, we own the promise in Isaiah 49:25. For healing, we can grab onto Isaiah 53:5. For freedom (from addiction, from guilt, from anything that would bring you into bondage), we can present the evidence of John 8:36. For the baptism of the Holy Spirit, we can hold fast to Joel 2:28. The list goes on and on through hundreds of promises in the Word of God.

When we understand our rights of possession, we can give material evidence when we pray – FAITH! This is what takes us from just praying prayers to fully prevailing in prayer!

I sat as a juror in the county courthouse during a mock trial to decide the evidence of a case. That was fictitious litigation, but our prayers and the fulfillment of them are a very present reality with earthly and eternal consequences. Our evidence has been obtained for us by the shed blood of Jesus Christ. He invites us into all that He possesses because we are joint heirs with Him! This revelation changes how we pray because we do not have to work ourselves up into an emotional frenzy trying to convince God that we have faith to receive. We simply present the facts. I own this (possession = material evidence) because Christ bought it for me on the cross. It doesn't matter what the world, the flesh or the devil say about what I "deserve" because I have the receipt that proves ownership – Christ's Nail Scarred Hands upon which your name and mine are written!

Our Prayer:

Lord Jesus Christ, You told us that without faith it is impossible to please God (Hebrews 11:6) and we want to please our Father more than anything in the world! Your disciples asked You to teach them to pray and so we also ask, teach us to pray fervently, effectively and prevail in prayer! We thank You that, when we don't know what to pray, the Holy Spirit prays through us with groanings that we cannot express (Romans 8:26).

There are those today whose faith needs to be renewed. Help them to understand the legal transactions within Your word that entitle us to Your promises! Stir up faith in our midst that moves mountains so that all would see Your mighty presence in Your people! Raise up a generation in our midst who walk in world-changing faith. Raise up intercessors for each ministry center in FOI. Raise us, as individuals, up to intercede like never before. Help us to pray in the Spirit *daily* and with understanding so that we can obtain, by faith, all that You have for us and the people we are called to reach and serve.

In Jesus' Matchless Name – so be it – amen!

Today in Our Monthly Prayer Guide: **Angeles City, Philippines - Bong & Sharon Tiru, Clarkview Center** - . Pray that Core Leaders will set an example to others here by sharing God's love to friends and family; pray discernment in who to train as we reorganize the Youth Ministry. **Aladin Ordillo, Humphrey Center** - Pray for financial provision for our university students and for God to use our youth to minister to their peers.

Day 7 – Sunday, January 13, 2019

Time to Bloom – Read Psalm 1 (entirely) & Matthew 28:19-20

“The Century Plant”

It stands in the deserts of the Southwest United States looking more like something from a Dr. Seuss illustration than from a garden. *Agave americana*, the most common agave in the desert, has the common name, “The Century Plant,” because it supposedly takes a century to bloom. Actually, it’s about 15 to 20 years, or sooner, if you pamper it with rich soil and ample water. During these two decades, its appearance is rather lackluster because the plant is determined to accomplish just one thing: to reproduce as much as possible.



Under the ground, out of sight, grow the “pups” – the offspring of the plant. Finally, when the plant is ready to launch its multiple miniature versions into the world, it does the most unusual thing – it blooms for first time.

When the branches finally prepare to bloom, it produces masses of nectar-rich flowers that attract hummingbirds and bees. Agave nectar, now sold in many supermarkets, is a popular natural sweetener.

The plant thrives in harsh environments, rooted in sandstone, gracing the edges of rocky cliffs and canyons. It can reach up to a height of 30 feet. Year after year, it looks like a strange barren twig growing up from the ground until the day it finally blooms when its offspring are ready for the world.

If this isn’t a picture of discipleship, I’m not sure what is. We exist to make disciples. We are personally commissioned by Christ Himself, each and every one of us, to not only be disciples ourselves but to help others grow to become disciples who make disciples as well (reproduction).

The most amazing and symbolic feature of the Century Plant is this – it is the most beautiful when it has done its job to secure the vitality of the next generation. It finally blooms as it releases it’s “disciples” into the world! It seems almost as if the plant has a grand graduation ceremony planned for the day that its offspring will go forth.

One of the greatest thing FOI does as a ministry to the military is to make disciples who make disciples. This is evident each year as we see the fruitfulness of our Ministerial Internship Program (MIP) candidates. The current MIP class will graduate in May and be able to test for ministerial licensure. Then, in the fall, a new group will begin the training and mentorship.

Not only are those who are in a formal ministerial licensure track fruitful, but we are constantly reminded, through the testimonies of the FOI Center Directors around the world, of the faithfulness and effectiveness of the leaders in their congregations. These are proof that the Center Directors are not just doing ministry themselves, but fulfilling the Biblical mandate to, “equip the saints for the work of the ministry” (Ephesians 4:12).

Enduring with strength in harsh spiritual climates and difficult regions, our Directors are never more satisfied as when they are able to send out their disciples. It’s then, in those proud and joyous moments, that the humble leader rejoices in the beauty of Christian service, having (though the indwelling Holy Spirit) produced the sweet nectar of fruitfulness and stands arrayed in Heaven’s blooms.

Our Prayer:

Heavenly Father, we thank You for sending Your Only Son to purchase, through His Own Blood, the rights to be part of Your eternal family! We thank You, Lord Jesus Christ, for being our example in all things and for sending us the Promised Holy Spirit to indwell us and to lead and guide us into all truth. We worship You, Father, Son and Spirit for the work You accomplish in and through our humble lives. It is marvelous to know that You are at work inside us to make us fruitful, as individuals, as families, as ministry centers, and as a movement and part of the global Body of Christ.

Lord, we lift up to You the candidates of the MIP this year who will graduate in the spring and for those who, perhaps even today, are considering pursuing this track toward ministerial internship and licensure in the fall of 2019. Thank You, Jesus Christ, for raising up excellent disciple makers through our Directors. Thank You for fruitful disciples who are going out into the world to be change agents for Your Kingdom and replicating discipleships wherever they go.

Bless each and every one of our Directors, giving them vision, creativity and passion to make disciples. Bless those who also labor to provide the MIP course: Wade Miller, Warren Gaffney and those who teach, train and mentor the candidates. More than ever before, make us a disciple-making ministry that blooms throughout the world! In Jesus’ Name – amen.

Today in Our Monthly Prayer Guide: How appropriate, today, as we celebrate and pray for disciple makers, to be praying for anointing, favor and open doors to plant ministries in the State of **Hawaii** to reach Schofield Barracks, MCAS Kanoeha, Hickham AFB and to reach the huge military and veteran population on the island of Oahu.

Day 8 – Monday, January 14, 2019

Time to Light Up Shadows – Read Psalm 23 (entirely) & Matthew 5:13-16

“It’s Only a Shadow”

Have you ever seen a skilled magician use sleight of hand tricks? If you don’t know how they are doing it, it can be baffling and very convincing. Their job is to deceive by making something look different than it really is, to trick the eye, and make the audience believe something false.



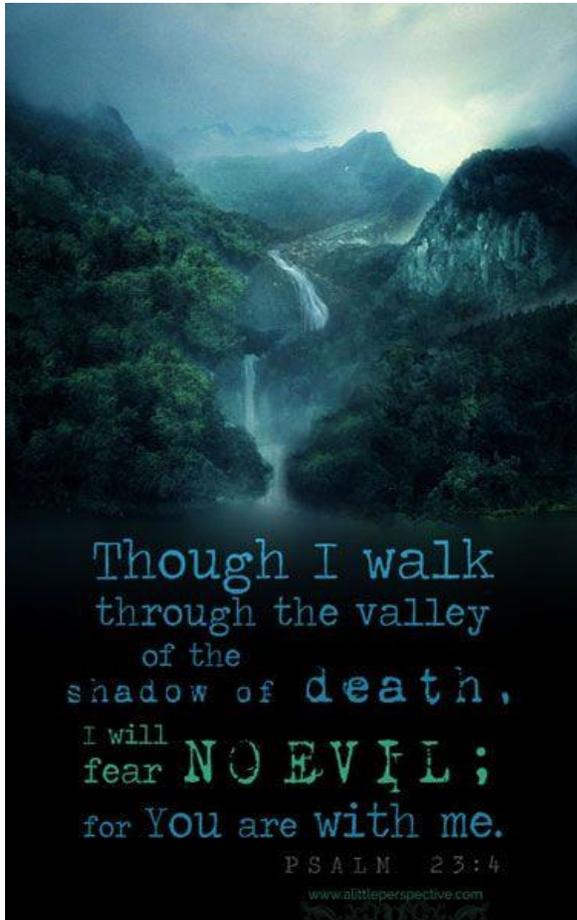
My eight-year-old nephew received a kids’ illusion kit for Christmas a few years back. He had the best time putting on “shows” for the family by making handkerchiefs disappear and reappear, coins fall out of people’s ears and empty books fill up with colors and pictures. He couldn’t believe how easy it was to learn an illusion and how these simple “tricks” were so convincing.

In Exodus, we read about Pharaoh’s sorcerers replicating, to some degree, a few of the early “signs” that the Lord did through Moses. These were practitioners of “secret arts” – what we would call today call the occult – and they were known, during that time, as “magicians.” Whether they actually replicated the sign or just figured out an illusion, we do not know, but one thing is for sure: deception is the enemy’s foremost weapon.

Like a skilled magician, making silhouette hand figures appear on the wall to look like something they’re not, this world is full of dangerous illusions.

In Psalm 23, we are told about a specific shadow – the valley of death – but in that shadow, the believer need not fear because the Lord is present (verse four). That is a lot easier to quote than it is to live, especially for those in the US Armed Forces who are sometimes facing life and death situations. Many have walked through the valley of the shadow of death and have yet to come completely out.

The US Department of Veterans Affairs reports that nearly 22 active-duty, Guard, Reservists and veterans succumb to suicide every day. It is heartbreaking to think of those who have, providentially, survived through difficult battles in military service just to end their lives at their own hands later on. Suicidal thoughts are a powerful deception, causing the individual to believe that it is an escape, a way out, or that the world would be better off without them. As much as we are aware of suicide being a mental illness, we also must acknowledge that it is spiritually influenced. The enemy comes to steal, kill and destroy (John 10:10) – that is the job description of the devil. But, Jesus has come that we may have LIFE, and not just any kind of life, but ABUNDANT LIFE.



The enemy lurks in the shadows, to deceive and destroy those who are passing through the Valley of Death. Just as we read about the enemy's job description, so we find ours in Matthew 5:13-16. "You are the light of the world." It is our job to shine into the darkness and dispel it, to walk with those who are struggling and grieving, and brighten their path through prayer and outreach as the Holy Spirit works through us. There's only one way to expose the magicians cheap parlor tricks, and that is to turn on the light!

Our Prayer:

Lord Jesus, You have already made us salt and light to our world! That is who we are because of Who You are inside of us! We intercede for those who are struggling with depression and suicidal thoughts. In the Name of Jesus, we expose this lie for what it is and we cut off every access point the enemy would have to them. Lord, we cover the active-duty and veterans in our communities with the Blood of Jesus and we proclaim that You

have taken captivity captive so that they can be free! We speak light, life and salvation over each of them. Teach us to stand and pray and proclaim Your word over our military communities. Teach us, also, to walk in compassion and love with those who are struggling. We proclaim abundant life over our US Armed Forces and we thank You for making our FOI centers each a city on a hill that cannot be hidden, places of hope, refuge, and healing. In Christ Jesus' name we pray – amen.

Today in Our Monthly Prayer Guide: **Greg & Dana Smith - Velburg, Germany** - We are praying and believing God for the needed funds to purchase new chairs and for God to open doors to reach and minister to military families with serious marital issues.

Day 9 – Tuesday, January 15, 2019

Time for True Religion – Read Matthew 23:1-36 & John 8:1-11

“Where Is The Hope?”

In March of 2018, we had a neat opportunity to take a group of college students on a guided tour of the Belgian city of Leuven. Our guide was a local Flemish woman, Elsie, who was excited to show our group through her city and give us some history. When she learned that these were students from a Christian University, she spent a little additional time talking about the cathedral and other “Christian” sites.



She took us by the incredibly ornate cathedral, pointing out some architectural details that we would have, otherwise, never noticed. She showed us the statues that adorned the sides of each window and explained that, in the mid-1600’s when the cathedral was constructed, most of the “common people” were illiterate. To help them better understand Christianity, these two-sided statues were carved into the exterior. She said, “This helped the illiterate public fully understand the Bible as each set of statues tells a Bible story. On one side is the sin, and on the other side is the judgement.” She showed us Eve and the snake on one side and Adam and Eve cast out of the garden on the other. She showed us the wicked masses mocking Noah building the ark and then the flood consuming them on the other side. So it went along the building from Old Testament to the New through many Bible stories. Yet, her words were profoundly disturbing.

Somehow, in the 21 years of construction, no one ever considered that this, in fact, was not the entire story of Christianity! Sin and judgement were only ONE SIDE. Grace and redemption should have been on the other! From Genesis to Revelation, we see a story of hope. As beautiful as the artistry of this building was, it showed only an angry, unapproachable ‘god’ who can’t wait to punish his creation into damnation. That isn’t the God of the Bible and not the Father Jesus showed to us! We know a God Who has always poured out grace, mercy and hope to His creation, from covering Adam and Eve’s nakedness with the first sacrificial lamb to covering all who would come to Him with the sacrifice of the Lamb of God Who takes away the sin of the world.



We look at the effect of man-made or man-altered religion and it is devastating. How many countless multitudes have been lost because they found no confidence in a religion that could not save them, would not welcome them and forbade them to hope? And that hopelessness was peddled, blasphemously, in the name of Christianity!

The New Testament is not short of incidents where Jesus is rebuking the religious leaders of His day. In Matthew, Chapter 23, He calls them 'Blind Guides' who "strain out a gnat and swallow a camel." Yet, to the woman caught in the very act of adultery, He said to her, in her shame and humiliation, "Has no one condemned you?" And she answered through the dirt, nakedness and tears, as she gazed upon Mercy Himself, "No one, Lord."

Just as we ought not preach grace without showing the just condemnation of sin, so we cannot preach condemnation of sin without the remedy of grace! The world has only seen one side of the truth and has seen it skewed to falsely present either hopeless wrath or repentanceless grace. They need to know both sides, unlike the beautiful cathedral of Leuven, so that they can know the whole truth – and that truth will set them FREE!

Our Prayer:

Lord, we have the opportunity to impact multitudes of people in our communities. Help each of us stay true to the gospel in every way so that, like the Apostle Paul, that we have preached, "so that by all possible means I might save some". Help us to reach those who have been burned by religion or never given enough truth to understand the gospel at all. Open doors for us to evangelize like never before! Help us communicate, even in everyday conversations, with the unction and anointing of the Holy Spirit. Make 2019 the year of reaching the harvest, which is ripe before us, and bringing people out of religion and into relationship with the True and Living God. In Jesus' Name, amen.

Today in Our Monthly Prayer Guide: Pray for **fundraising efforts & support** to cover costs of worldwide military ministry & family retreat programs as we endeavor to impact the Kingdom of God.

Day 10 – Wednesday, January 16, 2019
Time for Unity – Read 1 Corinthians 12:12-27

“Pull!”



I was having coffee one morning on a balcony overlooking the Tennessee River. There was an early morning fog that was just starting to lift, so I couldn't see what it was right away, but I faintly heard the words, "Pull!" and then again, "Pull!"

I stood up and saw a Sweep Boat, a rowboat in which each person on the team has only one oar. They were training for a competitive race that was coming up just a few days after. I watched as they neared and I could

then hear the captain clearly. He said, "Remember, it doesn't matter how strong you are, how fast you are, or how hard you pull, if we are not in unity, we will not win!"

Isn't that the truth for us? The Lord hasn't called anyone to be a Spiritual Lone Ranger. We are called to be part of a body, and that body doesn't function unless all the members are operating together in unity.

The Psalmist tells us, in Psalm 133:1, that it is good and pleasant when the brethren (believers) dwell together in unity. The verse goes on to describe how the anointing then flows from the top of the head all the way down the body.

We pray for the "anointing." It's not just another catch-word in the modern Christian vernacular. It is the literal presence and power of God to affect change through the lives of His people. We need the anointing! We dare not venture out into any Kingdom work without it, and the way to ensure we are in the flow of anointing is to be in the flow of unity!

Like the rowers in that boat, it doesn't matter who among us is the biggest, the strongest, the fastest or the bravest. What matters is that we are all in the boat together, facing in the same direction, going somewhere amazing. We are ready, together, to secure a win for the Kingdom of God!

So, let's PULL!

Our Prayer:

Abba Father, we thank You for bringing each of our ministry centers, each of our Directors, each of our congregants, each of our leaders and board members, into complete and total spiritual unity! We thank You for a powerful anointing in 2019, such as we have never known before. Take us further and do more in this Gideon's Army than we have dared to even imagine. In Jesus' Name, amen.

Today in Our Monthly Prayer Guide: **Andrew & Rhonda Provazek – Sigonella, Italy** -
Please pray for the several upcoming outreaches to include sponsoring children at the local children's home.

Day 11 – Thursday, January 17, 2019
Times Lead to Seasons – Read 2 King 22:1-11

“Equipped for the Season”



We were driving from California back to Tennessee to bring our camper “home” from my sister’s house at the end of August. I had never been in the “desert side” of California. The extraordinary summer heat on I-40 just south of the Mojave National Preserve was almost enough to melt our truck tires and stall the engine. We poked along, with the windows down and the A/C off, at the grand speed of about 45 mph to keep the truck from overheating. During that time, a huge, fancy and expensive new truck sped past us, also pulling a trailer, but on his flatbed were two brand new water jet skis. We admired his nice, new toys for a few moments before he sped out of view. We were surprised when, several hours later, we saw him again, this time on the side of the road with a repair truck. He had pushed his big, fancy truck a little too hard in the heat after all. How ironic it seemed that he had not one, not two, but *three* brand new vehicles, yet, there he was at a standstill.

Those new jetskis didn’t do him much good in the middle of the Mojave. He had some fancy equipment, but *he didn’t have the right equipment for the environment he was in.*

As we read the story of King Josiah, we see that his times of reading, “The Book of the Law” led to a season of national revival in Israel. His times of study of the Word of God led to a season of renewing the covenant with God and abolishing idolatry from the land. His age or inexperience didn’t matter. When he heeded the words of the Lord, seasons of grace and prosperity followed.

We must remember that the Lord doesn’t haphazardly plunge us into new seasons. Special times set apart with Him lead to new seasons IN Him. Just as in Josiah’s day, perhaps even more so, our nation needs revival and renewal. We must put in the time (as Josiah did to read the Book of the Law) to reap the season. Then, we must obtain the right equipment for the new season we are going into. Like that poor guy on the side of the road, *we need the right kind of power for a changing environment.* He was on a road that had led from the Pacific Coast. No doubt, his new jet ski would have worked perfectly there.

In the same way, as the Lord answers our times of prayer, He leads us into different seasons and we may not be able to do things as we always have or use the tools we used back there. The Lord will provide what we need as we go into the seasons of 2019 if we are careful to discern His leading. He will give us the right equipment for a changing environment and the power, through His Holy Spirit, to go further than we ever thought we could go. The shiny, new gimmicks of modern churchdom may look good but not be right for where the Lord is leading us. We pray and believe, just as the boy-King, Josiah, that our times of prayer and fasting will lead us into a season of revival and that the Lord, Himself, will provide everything we need for that journey.

Our Prayer:

Oh Lord, how our nation needs revival! How we long to be part of turning our nation back to You again! Lord, You know the seasons that You are leading us into and how we need to be equipped. Teach us not to lean on what we already know, what we've already done, what has worked in the past, but to lean completely on You! Put new tools in our hands, new resources, new creativity and ingenuity so that we can be as effective as possible throughout 2019. Forgive us for the times that we lean on our own understanding. Instead, we acknowledge You and know You will direct our paths. Give us discernment and wisdom, especially concerning those military members in their 20's who seem so disconnected with traditional church. Teach us to reach them as You alone know how! Give us a mighty harvest amongst this age group as 50% of our military fall into that category. Thank You for Your faithfulness to put the right tools in our hands at the right seasons so that we can advance Your kingdom as never before. In the Name of Jesus, Our Lord, amen.

Today in Our Monthly Prayer Guide: **Steve & Rebecca Colburn- Aviano, Italy** Pray for new committed Spirit-filled members hungry for God-d's Word and to walk in the gifts; a miraculous move of God and revival; discipleship, growth, new leaders to step up, men to be priest of the home, financial provision, reaching the sin-gles and youth.

Day 12 – Friday, January 18, 2019

Season of Miracles – Read Exodus 14 (entirely) & Hebrews 11:29

“Discerning Our Miracles”

A friend of mine (not military) moved at the end of the summer. She and her husband have been trying to find a church near their new home, to no avail. After months of searching, she ended up saying, “You know, I hate to admit it, but most of the churches around here are



basically the same.” She noted that there was a definite style, *almost a formula*. While in and of itself, this isn’t wrong as long as the church is preaching truth, but it does make one wonder how the “Sunday Morning Experience” became so identical, as if there’s a manual out there stating what sound level the music should be, which song list should be used, detailing the placement of the chairs, the wattage of the lighting, etc. In my oft-times analytical mind, I ponder if far more emphasis has been placed on the “experience” of those coming to worship rather the “experience” of the One we are worshipping.

It’s one thing to walk with the wise (Proverbs 13:20), but it’s another thing to lean on our own understanding, or worse yet, lean on *someone else’s* understanding. It would be too easy to try to replicate someone else’s success. What our very strategic Heavenly Father wants to do is unique to each individual, each of our ministry centers, each movement. Seldom do we see the Lord winning battles for Israel in wartime the same way twice in the Old Testament. Seldom do we see the Lord Jesus doing the same miracle the same way twice in the New Testament. Why do you think that is? Perhaps He calls us to that level of dependence upon Himself and that level of submission to His Lordship.

In Exodus 14, we see the Lord command Moses to stretch out his hand over the sea. We know the story well, that the waters stood up and Israel passed through on dry land. But when the Egyptians *tried to do the same*, they were consumed and died. What we do not see is Moses confronting each challenge afterward by replicating what he was told to do at the Red Sea. In each situation, for each season, the Lord had another way to work.

We serve a God Who is consistently miraculous. In fact, we don’t see a Biblical precedence of Him being any other way. Those who don’t believe in modern day miracles must be deluded into imagining that He suddenly forsook His miraculous methods that He displayed for us from Genesis through Revelation and then decided to just sit back and allow us to work and toil apart from His Promised Holy Spirit (through Whom, all miracles come).

I can say, with complete joy, that those in FOI/MTTM are not of the powerless masses who believe such nonsense. We hold firmly to the truth that He will never leave or forsake us. His miracle working power is FOR TODAY (thank Heaven) and we will not be content to try to make a formula out of what He has done in the past or for someone else.

We must long for the miraculous, not for mere business models or clever programs. We must persist in prayer for the miracles that He has foreordained for this movement! We must never be content with a less-than-miraculous ministry because, if we are, then we will be content with less than all that He is! More than anything, we must be open to the way He leads us to do things in a new season, even if it doesn't look familiar or even sensible to our mortal eyes.

It's a season of miracles, our own unique miracles. How do I know for sure? Because He is the same Miracle Working God, yesterday, today and forevermore. Hallelujah!

Our Prayer:

Lord, we surrender fully to Your plans, Your ways, Your timing and Your miracles. We know with certainty that You have marvelous things planned for each leader, each congregant, each ministry center, and for Freedom Outreach as a movement! Help us to learn about outreach, programs and processes from experienced ministers and ministries, but forgive us for trying to forego waiting upon You and taking time to listen to the leading of Your Holy Spirit for ourselves. Lord Jesus, we need Your Power in our midst! We need the direction of the Holy Spirit! We need a season of the complete, unexplainable, Heaven-sent miracles! Still us now to hear from You, to receive all that You have for each of us. May we know when you are saying, "Stretch out your hand," or "March around this wall," or "Spit in the mud and make a paste." We repent of self-reliance and others-reliance and we surrender ourselves wholly and fully to Your plans. Thank You for fulfilling Your word in our midst and releasing a season of miracles such as we, and this generation, have never known. In Jesus' Name, amen.

Today in our Monthly Prayer Guide:

Pray for **Rod & Steffi Nyman - Heilbronn, Germany** - A door has opened concerning the Football Team but it still needs prayer; Pray for unity in the church and more fellowship one with another.

Day 13 – Saturday, January 19, 2019

Season of Bold Faith – Read 1 Samuel 17:31-51 & 2 Corinthians 12:9-10

“When Giants Fall”

David was the smallest, the youngest and the least qualified on the battlefield. He wasn't even “supposed” to be there. He was the sandwich boy, Daddy's little helper, sent to find out what was going on with the battle. He wasn't considered “man enough” by his brothers to be at the front lines, even as an errand boy.



He was the only one who wasn't a soldier that day and he had no armor or weapons of war. Yet, David, standing there in his everyday farm-boy clothes, gave an epic speech before he went to battle with Goliath. He told everyone, on both sides of the war, his motivation for this seemingly foolish and reckless act: he wanted them all to know the power of God.

He told Goliath, “*that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel,*” (vs. 46). He then went on to say (vs. 47), “*Then all this assembly shall know that the LORD does not save with sword and spear; for the battle is the LORD's, and He will give you into our hands.*”

This was a boy that knew his God. He knew true fellowship with the Living God. He had known His Presence in the sweet moments of worship when no one else was around. He had experienced the power of the Lord when the lion and the bear attacked his flock. David knew the God of Israel in a way they did not, and he was not content with that.

David's battle wasn't necessarily against a mortal foe. His battle was against the enemy of doubt and unbelief that had already beaten down a nation. I dare say, not one other person that day believed what David believed about God. All along, David knew in Whom he had believed and was sure that the Lord would perform a miracle and, in the process, reignite faith in a nation that had lost theirs.

When you stand in faith, you may sometimes have to stand alone. When you believe God for great and miraculous things, you are at risk of looking stupid. When you speak out in faith, as David did, you open up the possibility of becoming the poor, deluded nut that everyone makes jokes about. This past year, I've made a firm resolve of one thing – I'd rather look like a fool in the eyes of the world for believing God for too much than to look like a fool in the eyes of Heaven for believing Him for too little.

Do you sense the prompting of the Holy Spirit to stand up in a Christ-rejecting culture and say, “This is not okay”? Do you feel out of place with the “sensible people” who seem content with the way things are? Are you tired of looking around for someone else to do the things that are burdening and breaking your heart?

If you feel unqualified and unprepared but God’s calling stirs you up so that you, “have to do this,” then you’re in good company. It’s the people who have it all together, at least seemingly, and are in a position to really do something that often choose to sit it out. They may stand tall in their armor on the side of the battlefield and place bets on whether or not you’ll survive. If that happens, just remember, when we really know Our God, we know that He is waiting for someone with that kind of trust in Him, *someone who knows Him like that*. He will be our Champion, if only to turn the eyes of the world back to Himself. That is why your perceived weakness is your greatest strength. It’s those puny errand-boys (and girls) that bring nothing to the table but faith and obedience that get to see the giants fall.

Our Prayer:

Lord, we declare a season of FAITH! We stand up and say to nation that no longer knows You as their God, “It’s not okay!” We declare that they will see Your mighty acts and put their hope in You again! We speak, in the power and authority of Your Name, to the giants of doubt and unbelief and we say, “We come at you in the name of the Lord of Hosts!” Raise up champions, O Lord, in the shepherds of FOI/MTTM. May each Director inspire their people to know You that way, as the Captain of the Hosts, the Alpha and Omega, the Undefeated and Almighty One Who has never retreated from battle and never will! Make 2019 the year of faith that moves mountains in ways we could never have imagined.

By faith, we declare that all of our ministries will be healthy, thriving, disciple-making centers that operate in the power of the Holy Spirit. By faith, we declare provision of people and finances for every need. By faith, we speak life over every dark place and healing over every wounded life we encounter. By faith, we declare that ministries will be planted in Japan, Italy and in the Benelux -- every place where there is not a Holy Spirit-empowered outreach to military. By faith, we believe that FOI will have a life-giving ministry at every milcom in the USA and on every ship and deployment zone. By faith, we call the army of God in FOI/MTTM to be clothed with power from on high so that every minister will be more fruitful than ever before. By faith, we confess that the masses of people around us will come to know You as we know You, as they see the giants of this world fall before Your Mighty Name. We watch for You, Jesus, to do this in our midst and we thank You that, by faith, it is already done. In Jesus’ Name. So be it. Amen.

Today in Our Monthly Prayer Guide: **Michael & Belinda Nearn - Camp Casey, Korea** - Pray for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Korean Peninsula; boldness to share the gospel of Jesus; God sent laborers to work in the harvest and health for God’s people.

Day 14 – Sunday, January 20, 2019

A Season to Run with the Vision – Read Habakkuk 2:2 & 2 Timothy 4:7-8

“Crossing the Finish Line”



I’ve never been much of a runner—truly. I admire those who are but I’ve never liked it and have never been good at it. However, I went out for distance track in high school only because my best friend did. Our unconventional coach would put us all in the back of his pickup truck (yes, it was illegal, even way back then) and drop us off 5-10 miles from our small, rural high school. There was only one way back, and if you were going to get there, you’d better run whether you like it or not. Sometimes the coach would run alongside us and give us pointers. One day, he ran the last half of the gravel road back with me. At the end he said, “Well, you’re not the fastest and you may never win a medal, but if you’re persistent you’ll cross the finish line every time. JUST KEEP RUNNING.”

Our missionaries, throughout the USA and around the world, who are leading FOI ministry centers have one of the toughest races of all. They’re fraught with all kinds of challenges from obtaining missionary visas to paying the church rent when attendance and giving is down, to wearing a dozen different hats just to keep the mission going on any given day. They get tired, they get overwhelmed sometimes, and there isn’t always an encouraging person to run those hard miles alongside them. Yet, they keep going because this is a race that cannot be lost—souls are at stake. Though the road is sometimes lonely, they know they are not alone.

For over 40 years, Dr. Robert A. Moore, Jr., our FOI/MTTM International Director, has seen the vision of this ministry unfold in the lives of the hundreds of ministry leaders and Center Directors. Year after year, event after event, he strives to cast the vision and engraft it into our collective DNA. The Lord tells us through Habakkuk that, when the vision is clear and in front of the people, they WILL respond and run with it! They’ll run because it’s not the vision of a mortal man but the vision formed in the very heart of God Almighty.

Recently, we’ve had to say our earthly goodbye’s to Ann Humphrey. She’d been both wife and ministry partner to her husband, Roy, who passed seven years before and who was a legendary church planter in this movement. From the moment they said, “yes” to Jesus as a newly married couple at an altar throughout decades of military service and into retirement, Roy and Ann ran

with the vision and planted churches and outreach ministries around the world. They ran until they could run no more and now they've passed the baton onto our generation.

Just as my track coach ran beside me to encourage me to keep going, the Holy Spirit runs with us! The Greek word which translates as "Comforter" or "Counselor" (John 14:16, 26; 15:26; and 16:7) is parakletos. This form of the word means "one called to the side of another"; the word indicates a calling alongside to counsel or support the one in need. This Counselor (Paraclete) is God the Holy Spirit, the third Person of the Trinity who has been "called to our side" to both indwell and empower us to run the race that has been given to each of us.

The vision is still written down and it is clear. We've taken the baton from another generation and we are continuing the only race that matters. It's often a rough road but we have One Great Coach at our side, fueling the fires of determination with anointing and zeal, setting the pace and whispering, "JUST KEEP RUNNING!"

Our Prayer:

Lord Jesus, we ask in Your Name for a refilling of Your Holy Spirit in each of our missionaries and leaders and for their spouses and children. Let it the overflow flood their congregations, bringing renewal, faith, hope and endurance. Send true revival in each life bringing energy, strength, passion and a renewal of joy and purpose. As You have already come alongside them, send laborers to share in vision and share in the work. Overflow also in these military communities, that everyone would know that these aren't religious institutions but places of truth, power and hope. May the vision become clearer and clearer before the eyes of those we labor with so that we run as we never have before. In the name of Christ Jesus, our Lord, amen.

Today in Our Monthly Prayer Guide: **Steve & Rebecca Colburn - Vicenza, Italy** - Pray for men to step up as priest of the home; Holy Spirit anointing to break yokes; deliverance from spirit of sexual immorality, fear, anxiety, depression, suicide, alcoholism, drugs; financial blessings; growth; devoted Spirit-filled ministry leaders and volunteers.

Day 15 – Monday, January 21, 2019

A Season of Unprecedented Excellence – Read Acts 6:1-7 & 7:54-60

“The Best That I Can Give”



Our daughter was excited the year that she was enrolled in kindergarten. She loved school – the social interaction, the classes (except math), the teachers, the projects and extra-curricular events. She was even more excited when she was able to go for the full-day and stay for school lunch. For whatever reason, it was thrilling to go to the school cafeteria with the “big kids.”

One day, after school, she walked up to me in the kitchen, smiling widely. “I have a gift for you,” she said. She reached into her pocket and pulled out a somewhat squashed, round brown thing. I couldn’t make out what it was, but it was almost furry, having been coated with an abundance of lint from her pocket.



“It’s my brownie from lunch,” she stated proudly. “It’s the best part and I saved it all day just for you!”

Oh my! How could I turn down this precious (although horrifying) gift? I went on and on about how special it was, how much I loved brownies, how much it meant to me, being sure she understood that I fully appreciated her sacrifice, before I put it up on a little ceramic plate to, “save it for later.” Later, it was in the garbage bin, of course, but the fact that it was inedible did not negate the beauty of the gift.

I wonder how often our gifts seem like that to a perfect, majestic God Who is in all and Who knows all and Who created all! What could He possibly need from little, ole us? The truth is that He doesn’t *need* anything, but for some strange, divinely mystical reason, He *chooses* to partner with us in His Kingdom.

Stephen was a man full of faith and full of the Holy Spirit. He was chosen by the Apostles for the illustrious and noble task of, “waiting on tables” during the widow’s food distribution. That doesn’t sound like a job for a prominent man of God! Yet, he knew what we need to know ourselves and constantly remember: there is no small job in the Kingdom of God. 1 Corinthians 10:31 reminds us that whatever we do, we ought to do for the glory of God. Even waiting tables.

Shortly after being promoted to, “waiter,” we find Stephen again, “...full of faith and power,” doing, “great wonders and signs among the people.” He is seized by the religious leaders and he takes the opportunity to preach and prove to them, through scripture, that Jesus surely is the Promised Messiah. He was soon to become the first Christian martyr for that anointed sermon, but before he died, he looked up into Heaven and saw the Lord Himself standing to receive him!

What a humble and ordinary life, but what a powerful and glorious end! In his humility, he gave all to the Lord in his service, even work as mundane as waiting on tables for elderly women. His servant-attitude in the smallest tasks would open wide the doors for the greatest testimony of all, one that is still encouraging believers to this day!

Like my daughters brownie, our service to the Lord is much more precious when the attitude and heart is humble and worshipful! She saved her best for me, probably patting that little pocket all day long to make sure her sweet gift was still there. We must remember, it's not the gifts themselves that honor and please the Lord, it's our hearts behind the gift.

The religious leaders of Jesus' day thought they had special favor with God due to their stringent keeping of not only the law itself but the abundance of rules and regulations they had implemented for their fellow Jews. Jesus told them, "You strain out a gnat and swallow a camel!" They had missed the point completely because they didn't really know the Father. If they did, they would have known that He doesn't look at outward appearances, but at the heart.

In 2019, as individuals and as a movement, we have the opportunity to give all we have and are to the King of Kings and His Eternal Kingdom. Compared to His riches and unending power and might, it may seem so small and insignificant. But like a little squished up, lint-covered piece of school lunch brownie, if it's the best we have to give then it becomes most precious and priceless thing in the Hands of our Father.

Our Prayer:

Lord, we desire to give to You our very best, to invest our gifts and our time, talent and treasure into Your Kingdom as never before. Call us toward excellence, not only in the quality of service to You and others, but the heart behind it! Forgive us for meritorious works-based motivation and return us to the heart of serving, which is worship unto You. Renew in us the desire to give our very best in all we do and to also do everything with a heart of worship toward You. Bring into each ministry center people who are willing to serve with all their hearts and do it with excellence unto You. Give us hearts that seek to please You first, above all, and forevermore.

Today in Our Monthly Prayer Guide: Jackie & Senetra Harris - Kaiserslautern, Germany - Pray for God's help in making disciples, reaching the lost in the military and German community and the entire transition process here.

Day 16 – Tuesday, January 22, 2019

A Season of Re-digging the Wells – Read Genesis 26:1-33

“Well, well, well!”

In Genesis 26, we read the story of Isaac, after Abraham’s death, being told by the Lord to go back to Gerar. There was a famine in the land, but not in Egypt. Isaac was planning to take his family to Egypt until the word of the Lord came.



In Gerar, many years prior, Abraham had made a peace treaty with Abimelech, King of the Philistines, and there Abraham dug several wells.

First, we must understand that the well symbolized more than water. Water, rightfully, symbolizes **life** and allowing the well to be dug clearly meant that Abimelech was acknowledging Abraham’s **rights** to use the land, his rights to stake a claim and to settle there. Isaac may have remembered the land of Gerar, having lived there in peace with Abraham when he was just a small boy. So, we can imagine what Isaac may have been thinking when the Lord told him to return to this land. “The Lord has led me back here, so surely I will not have problems or resistance!”

Now, Abimelech Jr. is king of the area. He does not acknowledge the treaty between his and Isaac’s fathers. Isaac soon discovers, even in the midst of the Lord’s abundant blessings (He reaped 100 fold on his crops in the middle of a famine!), that there would be resistance from the adversary. He found that the wells his father dug had been stopped up. Ruining the wells was the enemy’s ways of cutting off legal rights to the land. Isaac’s servants dug them out just to have the enemy continue to pressure him to leave. This happens over and over until, finally, Isaac is settled in the land.

This isn’t a story about land rights but, to us, is a story about **spiritual rights**. We hear the term, “from generation to generation,” over and over in the Bible (Psalm 100:5, Luke 1:50, Daniel 4:3). We hear the concerned voice of a Heavenly Father throughout scripture encouraging us to prepare for the generation behind us. “This shall be written for the generation to come: and the people which *shall be created* shall praise the LORD.” (Psalm 102:18) Just as Abimelech sought to destroy Abraham’s legacy left for Isaac, so the enemy of our souls would desire to ruin what we have prepared for the generations yet to come.

For all the Lord has done in our lives, He desires even more in the lives of our children and of the generation following ours. It is our responsibility to fight against spiritual battles that seek to interfere with our spiritual rights. It is also our responsibility to teach our children to stand up for theirs lest we lose the next generation.

In FOI/MTTM, we strive to provide life-giving discipleship to children and youth. We must always be preparing the generation rising up behind ours. They need to know the tactics of the adversary so that they are not content with stopped up wells. Even so, we sometimes hear the lament from our elders that the, "good ole days," are gone. That is not so! The same Holy Spirit that worked signs and wonders in the birthing of this ministry almost 60 years ago is still working in our midst today! Let us not depart from God's promises when the enemy intimidates. The wells that seem dry are only stopped up, and the Lord has raised us up to re-dig them so that the promises and blessings He has granted to us and our children can, once again, flow from generation to generation.

Our Prayer:

Lord, God Almighty, we stand today in divine resolve for the promises You have made to our children and our children's children! We refuse to buckle to the warfare that surrounds their generations. The enemy seeks to destroy their innocence and pervert their hearts and minds. In the Name of Jesus Christ, we re-dig the wells of righteousness and obedience to Your word! They will be holy as You are holy! We pray that our children will have a discernment, unlike any other generation, to see clearly the plans and schemes of the evil one and how to overcome with the Blood of the Lamb and the Word of their testimony. We pray for consistent, anointed and abundant discipleship for our children and youth in every center, at every conference and camp, and in every home. We appropriate the promises of the outpoured Holy Spirit from Joel 2:28 upon them. We pray for our children to possess the land entirely and give no room for the enemy. Lord, stir us up to intercede for them and to prepare them to be the mightiest Army of God that this world has ever seen, in our time, and from generation to generation. Amen and amen!

Today in Our Monthly Prayer Guide: **Harry & Cristy Rodriguez -Baumholder, Germany** - Pray our son will find a place to live, meet the right girl who will love him and for musicians, leaders, and laborers in Baumholder Center.

Day 17 – Wednesday, January 23, 2019

A Season of Provision – Read Numbers 20:1-13 & John 14:13-14

“Speak to the Rock”

You know someone must not be a true, born-again believer when they say, “The Bible is boring.” Boring? What a laugh! In fact, each and every story, if we hadn’t heard it before, would be one that we could have never guessed the outcome!



Every miracle God did, in the Old Testament, or through Jesus and His disciples in the New Testament, is done in a way we would have never anticipated, often contradictory to what we would have done or expected.

We see the children of Israel coming out of Egypt, complaining against God as if He had made a mistake and led them to a place where there was no provision of water. We read in Exodus 17 of another time and location earlier where the Lord had told Moses to strike the rock with his staff and water gushed forth. Now, here they are again, without water for the second time. Moses isn’t told to do what he did before (strike the rock) but to SPEAK to the rock instead.

As with the majority of stories in the Old Testament, we see types and shadows of the Christ Who was promised to come as Savior. The rock symbolized the person of Jesus Christ, and Moses represented the law. Moses was told first to strike the rock as a symbol of Christ who would be crucified under the law. After, water (natural water for the nation of Israel and, through Christ, spiritual “living water” for all mankind) poured forth. The second incident was to reflect the new covenant, Christ as the Victorious Intercessor Who has opened up the way for us to speak and receive through the Holy Spirit. Moses, instead, relied perhaps on what he knew or on what had worked before. The Lord not only rebuked Moses, but revoked Moses’ right to enter the Promised Land. That may sound harsh, but not in the context of what the Lord was intending to show to us through these two passages.

The point is this: 1. God sometimes leads us to places of scarce resources so we can learn to depend wholly upon Him. 2. We will always have provision in those times because of the covenant that was begun with Israel and completed in Christ, through Whom we’ve become partakers of the promises.

How odd to be told to talk to a rock as the solution to a dire problem. Moses couldn’t have imagined how that would work, but we can. Christ, the Rock of our salvation (Psalm 62:6), the Rock that is higher than us (Psalm 61:2), the Rock that lifts us up out of the miry clay (Psalm 40:2) – He ever LIVES to intercede for us (Hebrews 7:25)! We need only to speak to the Rock and His provision will flow!

It may seem that we are off in the dry plains of need – a need for missionaries to plant new ministries, a need for workers in our overseas centers, a need for buildings and vehicles, or a need for financial help. Yet, our ever-present help in times of trouble (Psalm 46:1) really is ever-present and He is ready to supply our need according to His riches in glory! (Philippians 4:19)

What worked before may never work again. What works for someone else may do nothing for us. But, we can rest assured in this: there is a Rock that cannot be moved and His Name is Jesus Christ. He is for us and not against us and, when we speak to Him and pray in His Name, the provision He knows we need will surely flow!

Our Prayer:

Lord God, we know that You are the Giver of every good and perfect gift. You are our ram in the bush, the manna that came down from heaven, the widow's oil, and the stream in the desert! We remind ourselves now that You are all we need! You are our sufficiency! We praise You for the marvelous and, often, miraculous ways You have provided for us and these ministries throughout the years. Today, we ask, according to Your word, for provision for every need. We touch and agree, as You said we should (Matthew 18:19) for abundant and miraculous provision in every area of ministry and in every location that we serve. We thank You that You have already been struck, You have been poured out unto death and resurrected in victory, so that we can ask today and know that we shall receive. In Jesus' Name, amen.

Today in Our Monthly Prayer Guide: **Greg & Michelle Perkins - SHAPE, Belgium** - We're asking God to help believers here at the Center live in fear of Him to become stronger, and with the Holy Spirit's help, we will grow in numbers. Acts 9:31

Day 18 – Thursday, January 24, 2019

A Season of Creativity – Read Exodus 35:31-32 & Matthew 25:14-29

“Something New on the Menu”



About 17 years ago, when two of our three kids were still in elementary school, we had made arrangements for them to be at home with our friend while Brian and I went out to celebrate our anniversary. As I finished getting ready, my friend arrived and then, strangely, left. We were just about to leave when Brian came into the bedroom and told me, “We’ve had a change of plans. We aren’t going to the restaurant. We are supposed to stay in here until the kids call for us.”

What in the world? I was sure Brian was just trying to get out of going to the Chinese restaurant I’d been wanting to try! Yet, at his insistence we waited, and waited...and waited. Finally, a scruffy young man of 9-years-old arrived at our bedroom door in a white dress shirt, partially untucked, his arm out with a towel folded over it. “Sir and Madam,” he said, motioning dramatically, “I will show you to your table now.”

Somehow, our tiny apartment dinette in Heidelberg, Germany, Army quarters had been turned into a little café, complete with tablecloth, candles and linen napkins. Sparkling grape juice filled our cups and there were even little printed menu’s glued to construction paper on the table before us stating the name of the bistro: “The ONO Café.” (We found out later that ONO stood for One Night Only and not, O-NO the food is weird!)

Our 11-year-old daughter appeared as the waitress to take our order. Brian started in with a big order, but I kept interrupting. He said, “I’ll have the fries and...” but, I jumped in, “Well, you know, if the fries are actually FRIED in hot oil, that can be rather dangerous. Can you check with the Chef and see how they are prepared?”

The waitress returned a few moments later, having just conferred with the 13-year-old Chef, “Sorry, Sir, we’re out of fries tonight.”

And so went our very memorable anniversary.

I tell that story – I’ll admit – because it’s so adorable, but primarily to illustrate the incredible creativity our kids displayed to give us one of the most precious anniversaries we’ve ever celebrated.

There are ways to reach the people around us with the gospel that we have never considered before. I'm not talking about gimmicks, but the creative and ingenious inspiration of the Holy Spirit to do something we've never done before, try a different way to be salt and light, and to use the simple gifts He's placed inside of us to do it.

The German scientist, Johannes Kepler, discovered the laws of planetary motion in the early 1600's and set out to demonstrate that the earth orbited the sun. Though other scientists of his time mocked him and he was persecuted for his Protestantism, Kepler, who had been trained for the ministry, believed that God was orderly and that creation, also, must be orderly. He joined the great mathematician, Tycho Brahe, in Prague and they began to prove the physical movement of planets in the solar system. His laws were greatly used by Sir Isaac Newton in his work. When Kepler was asked how he could have ever thought of something so brilliant, so outside of ordinary thought, and then to (successfully) prove it, he gave all the credit where credit was due: "All of my ideas have come from just thinking God's thoughts after Him."

God has thoughts on how to reach the incredibly diverse and complex people in our communities. He is infinitely creative and has made us in His own image, to be creative and unique ourselves. Our Heavenly Father has some definite thoughts on how to bridge the gap between ourselves and our ministries and those who would never consider coming to a church. He knows them and longs to show them Who He is through our lives and our gifts. Let us be intentional about "thinking His thoughts after Him" so that we have His wisdom, creativity and authenticity in the way we reach out.

The "One Night Only Café" was true to its name and closed the next day. Actually, it was shut down by the health inspector (Mom), but we kept those precious hand-made menu's and never forgot that special night or the time and creativity our kids put in to show us they love us. Let us hear from the Father about how to show that same kind of genuineness and originality in serving the people He loves.

Our Prayer:

Lord, through You, all things were created. You are the Source of all creativity and ingenuity! You know exactly how we can touch the lives of the people in our military communities. You know what they will and won't respond to. You have placed skills and gifts within us to do this work. We do not want to waste precious time and resources doing what has been done already, over and over, without effect. Open our hearts and spirits to Your methods and how You would lead us to reach out. We pray for impactful outreach in every military community that FOI serves. We receive Your thoughts on how to draw them. We know that this is the work of Your Holy Spirit, but that (according to Exodus 35) You are the One who gives knowledge, skill, creativity and artistry to Your people. Let us use these gifts abundantly in 2019 and bring many sons and daughters home to the Father's table. In Jesus' Name, amen.

*Today in Our Monthly Prayer Guide: **Ray & Connie Pettit - Colorado Springs** - Pray for receptive hearts, open doors and anointing to reach this military community.*

Day 19 – Friday, January 25, 2019

A Season of Revelation – Read 2 Timothy 4:1-5, John 16:13 & Matthew 6:22-23

“Turn Off the Lights”

“You have to go to the Grand Canyon at night.” People told us that over and over. I couldn’t understand what would be interesting about seeing one America’s great natural wonders at night when it’s dark. What would we even be able to see?

What I didn’t understand was the effect of what is called, “light pollution” on the night sky that we typically observe. What is light pollution? It is when the night sky is obstructed by man-made light sources such as city and street lights. This excessive, unnatural brightness is obtrusive and has a disruptive effect on natural cycles (such as the ability to sleep well) and inhibits the observation of stars and planets while fundamentally altering natural conditions. We have so much artificial light around us that we rarely get to see the majesty of the natural lights our Father placed in our universe.



He who made the earth by his power, established the world by his wisdom, and stretched out the heavens by his skill.

Jeremiah 10:12

When we are born-again, the Holy Spirit comes to dwell within us. He becomes our personal Tutor, helping us understand the Word of God and apply those truths to our everyday lives. I remember, as a very new Christian, reading stories and passages in the Bible that I had read many times before I was saved. Suddenly, the deeper meaning of these scriptures jumped out at me, like a light had been turned on in my understanding. I remember being at my Father-in-law’s house (he had recently led me to Christ) and opening my Bible at breakfast and showing him where Jesus spoke the Parable of the Wedding Feast. I said, “This isn’t just about a wedding! It’s about the return of Christ!” He looked at me and smiled a little because, of course he knew that. He had been a Christian many years and had been well-disciplined. But, for me, I had just comprehended it for the first time as the Holy Spirit Himself illuminated the true meaning of the passage. It was one of the first “lightbulb” moments that I ever remember having but it demonstrates the supernatural light shining inside of each believer through the Person of the Holy Spirit. This, and so many truths, were there in my Bible all along – I just could never see it before.

There is no shortage of “false light” in this world. You can turn on the television, radio, podcasts, etc., and hear from any dizzying number of self-help guru’s or “enlightened teachers”. We are also living in a time when many so-called Christian teachers are turning away from Biblical doctrine in favor of political correctness and what the Bible straight-up calls out as a, “doctrine of demons”. (1 Timothy 4:1.) As Paul mentored and trained Timothy, he warned of such things, “For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own

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desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers, and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables. But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.” (2 Timothy 4:3-5.) This artificial light obstructs truth and can skew a person’s view of Who God really is.

The reason the Grand Canyon must be seen at night, as well as in the daytime, is not to see the canyon itself, but to see the night sky above it as it truly is but as we rarely will ever experience it. Because the Grand Canyon is so far away from all that is man-made, we have the opportunity to see the splendor and majesty of the heavens above in a way that will leave us awestruck in wonder and worship of our God.

We need to turn off the “light pollution” of secular thinking and the artificial glare of our own understanding apart from God’s word. There’s a brilliant and breathtaking display of His glory through His word and through His Spirit that we cannot see any other way but to spend time in His Presence. There is a vast, spectacular revelation in the wonder of His Word that He is waiting, like the starry sky above the Grand Canyon, to reveal to those who will take the time to look up.



Our Prayer:

Lord, may we be a people Who know Your word, who do not compromise the truth even when it is unpopular and even when we are persecuted for defending it. Give us eyes to see and ears to hear, that we may understand Your word as never before. We repent of

allowing false lights, secular viewpoints and mindsets, to impact our thinking. We know that our minds are a battleground and the evil one would like to obstruct Your truth through artificial, man-made and demonic influences. We turn off those false lights and thank You for turning on the eyes of our understanding through Your Holy Spirit. We commit wholly to the Word of God and pledge fidelity to it. For You are the Word (John 1:1) and You are the Way, the Truth and the Life (John 10:10). Thank You for a season of revelation and going deeper in the Word of God. In Jesus’ Holy Name – amen.

Today in Our Monthly Prayer Guide: **Brian Johnson - Osan, Korea** - As God has begun a new thing, we are believing for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit for growth at CrossLight.

Day 20 – Saturday, January 26, 2019

A Pilgrimage into His Presence – Read Song of Solomon 2:10 & Hebrews 11:1-3 & 32-40

“Giants of Faith – an Indelible Mark upon the Earth”



About once a year, we take around 10 days to visit family on the West Coast. We have the pleasure of driving down the incredible Pacific Coast Highway, also known as California State Route 1, for most of the road trip from Portland, Oregon to Ventura, California. It would be cheaper and much faster to fly, but we count these days as a time of meandering,

meditation, and mental/spiritual respite. We take time out each year to hike in the majestic redwood forests at the Avenue of the Giants.

John Muir, who was influential in the formation of the American National Parks, stated his (unverified) belief about the origins of the word, “saunter”. He said, “A-way back in the Middle Ages people used to go on pilgrimages to the Holy Land, and when people in the villages through which they passed asked where they were going, they would reply, ‘A la sainte terre,’ meaning, ‘To the Holy Land’ and so they became known as saunterers.” Whether or not that is accurate, Mr. Muir believed that we should enjoy nature that way. The idea evokes visions of walking with the Lord, such as Adam and Enoch did, with thoughtful and enjoyable conversation between a Father and His child. This kind of “sauntering” is not meant in a secular, naturalistic, tree-hugging sort of way, but in the sense of shutting off the world and sinking deeply into the contemplative hush of creation with its Creator. It takes no more than a short walk in the quiet forest to hear the Still Small Voice begin speaking, subduing the mind and spirit and drawing us into the secret place of intimate conversation with Christ. Isn't it true that the Holy Spirit calls us daily to a holy pilgrimage? It's a convicting thought that the journey into divine communion is open to us every single day but we seldom take the time to go.

This year, I have been studying Hebrews in depth, focusing intently on the Heroes of the Faith in Hebrews 11, then studying each of their lives in detail. I am always left with a holy envy of sorts. I think, “Why not me? Why not now, in our time? Why not this ministry?” The truth is, God has already answered the “why not” in scripture when He told us through the Apostle Peter that He is not a respecter of persons (Acts 10:34). The “why not” is not a question for God to answer but for you and I to answer. He is not holding us back from becoming giants of faith – we are.

The towering redwoods were once small saplings. They were once ordinary size, blending in with every other tree, but their DNA is not the same. They were destined to be giants, destined to stretch out their limbs toward heaven, their branches higher and their roots deeper than any other tree. We must understand that we have the spiritual DNA of Jesus Christ Himself. In Him,

there is no limitation. Each of us can grow to the extent that we want to grow. The only issue to deal with is the “want to” within each of our hearts and the discipline of our unruly flesh.

A friend once told me, in the brutality of honest friendship, that I’ve had as much of God as I have ever wanted. I protested and insisted that, no, of course, I’ve wanted so much more! He said, “If you wanted more, you would have done something about it and pursued Christ for more.” Ouch! I sincerely do not like that statement except for one thing: I have control over the “want to” of today and tomorrow and every day after! I can seek God for all He is and run after Him with zeal, determination and discipline like no other time in my life! He has promised in His word that, if we seek Him with all of our hearts, we will indeed find Him! (Jeremiah 29:13.)

It’s time to shake off all that is average and ordinary, wiping off the dust of mediocrity that gathers on this rolling ball of dirt we call Earth. It’s time to decide to be giants of the faith and to make, like the mighty redwoods, an indelible mark upon this world. It’s time to stop running to and from prayer and devotional time like it is some task that requires completion (though perhaps I’m only talking to myself here) and “saunter” with Him on a daily walk, a pilgrimage, with the expectation of being infused more and more with His heart and His nature.

The heroes of faith we read about in Hebrews were ordinary people, like you and I, who simply said “yes” to the Lord continually and followed it up with obedience at His leading. I want to be a giant of the faith, not for the renown of men, but for the glory of God Almighty. Striving for anything less means not giving Him all that I am capable of and settling for bestowing less honor upon Him than He deserves. We, individually and corporately, are part of the history of this planet, striving not for notoriety but impact, to be the nameless, faceless giants of faith of whom the world is not worthy.

Our Prayer:

Heavenly Father, how we long to give You greater honor and glory! How desperately we need Your presence and to hear Your voice as never before! You call us daily, even moment by moment, to come away with You. Teach us to walk with You in such close communion that we hear Your voice throughout the day and enjoy unbroken fellowship with Your Holy Spirit. We pray for those who are struggling to connect to the Body of Christ in fellowship and to connect with You in prayer. Protect their minds from the fiery darts of the evil one so that they can focus upon You. We pray for those who feel distant from You and those who are wayward. Reveal to each one Your great grace and desire for communion with them. Expose the lies of the adversary that trap Your people with condemnation or misinterpretation of Your word. As You call us to, “Arise, my love, my beautiful one, and come away,” let us be eager and obedient to go. Thank You for renewal for each person in this area, in Jesus’ Holy Name, amen.

*Today in Our Monthly Prayer Guide: **Alejandro & Dinorah Velazquez - New Life CC, Puerto Rico** - We need prayers for guidance for finding a place for worship, and prayer for the 5 families that compose the church.*

Day 21 – Sunday, January 27, 2019

The Times and Seasons Are For Us – Read Genesis 1 (entirely) & Ecclesiastes 3:1-8

“In The Beginning”



On April 26th, 2018, we received a call that we had feared and dreaded. After investing our lives for three years in an area, having left everything in the USA to become full-time missionaries, we were having to leave.

The next day, I sat during my prayer time, still in shock. I was wrestling with the thousand unknowns and attempting to try to figure out God’s plan. I began praying suggestions to Him about how He could fix the situation, suggestions that, for some reason, He never seems to take. Through the turmoil embroiling my mind and heart, I felt His Spirit hush and calm me, “Peace, be still.”

My eyes were too strained from crying to try and read, so I turned on the audio Bible. Unsure of where to go that day, I just clicked play at Genesis 1. Why not start over in my Bible study time since I was having to start over in every other area of my life?

“In the beginning...”

There is some kind of inexplicable solace in those words. He was there in THE beginning, making everything perfect, orderly, functional. He took the great big void of nothing and began creating, making everything new. He was speaking it all into being and then looking, content with His creation, and exclaiming, “It is good!”

What caught my attention particularly this day were the signs He put in the sky. He placed the sun, moon, stars and planetary systems in the universe to surround us. Did He require a solar system to support life on our planet? He could have done it a million other ways. The sun, moon, and stars are not there because HE needs them to be but because WE do! He already knew all there was to know about times, days and seasons because He is the Inventor of it all. He gave the signs to us, His creation, that the salmon would know when to start her journey upstream to have her young; that the crocus would know when to pop its colorful head out of the spring snow; that the tides would know when to rush in and when to wander back to rest in the deepest parts of the sea. He made them so that mankind, who had been just a thought hidden within the imagination of the Almighty, would understand when things are changing—when the glory of one day fades, to find peace in the dimly lit night and await the sunrise. We would need to know when to let the loveliness of one good season fade and prepare to welcome another

season, soon to come, with a beauty all its own. How much more, then, will He give signs now to those who are His children, looking for guidance and praying for His leading? He's a Good Shepherd. I don't need to try to convince Him to lead me, as though I should be concerned that He would cast me away and stop guiding me now. I don't believe that. I'm utterly secure in the love of My Father who promised to take me from glory to glory. After all, the place of temporary setback or disappointment is only a ragged gas station, a necessary stop, before we head onto the better part of the journey.

So when it all looked to be over, and—my, my—so disastrously so, I felt the Holy Spirit turn my anger against the spirit of fear and refuse to allow it lodgings. It's not from God. I can't abide with it. If I did, I'd be allowing it to take the place of Lordship that belongs only to Christ. No, I will believe like the unreasonable fool I am. I will trust only because He is trustworthy. That's reason enough. The world may one day look back upon my life and state my many failures, but small and impotent faith will not be one of the charges. I know in Whom I have believed and I am persuaded. Nothing and no one is going to persuade me otherwise.

We've had abundant and beautiful spring-times and summers. We've had our blustery falls and winters too. Whatever season you have come out of, whatever season you are heading into, however He is leading us as individuals and as a movement, this much we can know for sure: He is the Creator. We don't need to know how it's going to all turn out, we just need to trust in Him.

"In the beginning..."

Whatever He's making in this season we can rest assured in this: it's going to be good.

Our Prayer:

Father, Shepherd, Master ... we trust in You to lead us where we need to be. We submit to Your guidance. May Your Kingdom come, in and through us, and Your will be done. We surrender fully to Your will, putting ours upon the altar of Lordship. We pray for those who are struggling with the call upon their lives. Let them see the peace and joy in surrendering fully to You. We pray for those who need victory in different areas. We know that as they resist the devil and submit to You, the devil will flee! We stand with them for that breakthrough and victory. For those who are confused or disappointed, You are the lifter of their heads, Lord Jesus. Thank You for a new baptism of joy, for a fresh outpouring of Your Holy Spirit! We receive all that You are and all You have for us, even as we surrender ourselves to You, once again and always. Hallelujah to the Lamb – amen.

Today in Our Monthly Prayer Guide: **Cris & Mieko Reyno - Okinawa, Japan** Please pray for healing of sickness and broken-hearted in the members of the church and restoration of faith to the ones returning to seek the Lord.