

January 2019

Dear Praying Friends,


Happy New Year from Dapitan City, Philippines! I would like to begin by thanking each of you who faithfully pray for me, my family, and our ministry here in Dapitan. Any missionary would tell you that if he had to choose, he would rather have your prayers than your financial support. As the songwriter said, "Prayer is just as big as God is." In the past, as a missionary on deputation trying to get to the field, I always KNEW in my mind that prayer was more important than finances. However, my heart didn't always FEEL that way. After all, you can't count prayers, and you can't track your "PRAYER percentage." You do, however, track your "SUPPORT percentage," and when you are on deputation, that percentage number becomes a very important figure in your heart and mind. That being said, the longer we are back on the field in the thick of the battle, more and more my heart understands the value of your prayers. I love what Paul wrote in I Corinthians 15:57, "But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." Over the last two months, God has given us many, many victories, and there is no question in my mind that those victories are results of the prayers of God's people. However, no one ever won a victory without fighting a battle, and we have fought many battles, both spiritual and physical, over the last two months. Many of you fought those battles with us through your prayers, although, for the most part, you were probably unaware of the specific battles we were facing. I write this letter not to complain about the battles but to praise God for the victories, the victories won through your prayers.

Our biggest battle took place over the Thanksgiving weekend. Ruth came down with dengue fever two days before Thanksgiving, and, being the sharing, loving individual that she is, she promptly passed it on to me via one of our friendly household mosquitos. I began feeling the symptoms of dengue on Saturday night, and by Sunday morning, I was very ill. On such short notice, there was no one to fill my pulpit, so I taught Sunday school and preached the morning and evening messages. I don't know if I made any sense at all, but I tried. When I finally got to the doctor on Monday morning, I was severely dehydrated, and my blood pressure was dangerously low. The doctor really wanted me to go to the hospital, but I, being a typical, stubborn missionary, decided to go home instead. I later came to my senses and agreed to go to the hospital. It was during this time, when I was at my weakest point physically, that the Devil chose to attack our people with everything he had! Obviously, in the ministry there are many things that cannot and should not be shared, but allow me to simply say that several of our most faithful people made potentially catastrophic decisions over the Thanksgiving weekend. I have never in my life felt so utterly helpless. I had multiple church members whom I desperately needed to visit, but I didn't even have the strength to drive my motorcycle safely. Yet, in spite of my feelings of complete helplessness, I felt a strange peace that everything would be okay. That Monday afternoon before I went to the hospital, God began to work. One of the members I was very worried about came to see me about a different issue, and I was able to counsel him there in my home. I was able to sit up for a while but eventually had to lay down on the couch. As I lay on the couch trying to counsel this good man, the thought crossed my mind, "This has got to be the strangest 'pastoral' thing I've ever done!" Later that evening I was admitted to the hospital, and the next day God brought the people to see me whom I so badly wanted to visit. There from my hospital bed, I was able to counsel the people I love, and by God's grace, we were able to avert disaster in every situation that had arisen over the weekend. In the time of my greatest weakness, God showed Himself strong, and I believe that your prayers made the difference! I believe in the power of prayer! Please continue to pray for us; the battles have continued into the new year, but as I said before, no one ever won a victory without fighting a battle! I look forward to the victories that lie ahead in 2019!

Dividends on Your Investment

It was Monday afternoon, November 26, and for lack of a better expression, I was as sick as a dog! Though I had not yet admitted it to myself, I really needed to go to the hospital. I was battling dengue fever. I was badly dehydrated and aching from head to toe. Ruth was out running some errands, and I was trying to get some things done at home. As I slowly moved from one task to the next, I heard someone calling from outside our front gate. I went outside and saw Nicole, a sweet little girl of about eight years of age whom I had led to Christ a few weeks before. Nicole had two of her friends with her, whom I had never met. Initially, I didn't understand what they wanted. However, after a few minutes, it began to dawn on me that, though she didn't know how to say it, Nicole wanted me to witness to her friends. I thought, "You have got to be kidding me!" If I have ever in my life felt that I was "out of season" for soul winning, it was that moment! I wrestled for about 10 seconds and then gave in. I invited them in the gate, and we sat down on the porch steps. As I pulled out a tract to witness to her friends, Nicole could hardly contain herself. She practically danced (her feet aren't quite sanctified yet) as she said to her friends, "Ako naluwas na, ug kamo hapit na maluwas!" This translates roughly as, "I'm already saved, and you are going to be saved soon!" She was right. About 15 minutes later, both her friends bowed their heads and trusted Christ as their Saviour! His strength is made perfect in our weakness!

Yours for souls,


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Missionaries to the Philippines

"For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries." 1 Corinthians 16:9

