

Dispatch Three

- I. All arrive in Kenya safe and sound
- II. Of head colds and the grace of God
- III. Fears both real and imagined
- IV. The comfort of the Word of God
- V. Prayer requests:

A. Please claim the following four passages. That they would be a source of comfort and that we would minister by their truths and not in the flesh.

Lam 3:22-23 The LORD'S lovingkindnesss indeed never cease, for His compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is Thy faithfulness.

Isaiah 41:10 'Do not fear, for I am with you; do not anxiously look about you, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, surely I will help you, surely I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.'

Matt 11:28-30 "Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart; and you shall find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My load is light."

I John 4:18 There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love.

B. Please claim I John 4:4 "You are from God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world." That our position in Christ and His power over satan would always be at the forefront of our minds. Not only this but that we would minister in this victorious power and not in the flesh.

C. Pray as well for us, that our confidence in the ministry would not be in our own persuasive power but in the Word of God as empowered by the Holy Spirit. Please claim the following two passages as you pray for us in this area.

Jeremiah 1:12 Then the LORD said to me, "You have seen well, for I am watching over My word to perform it."

2 Corinthians 4:1-2 Therefore, since we have this ministry, as we received mercy, we do not lose heart, but we have renounced the things hidden because of shame, not walking in craftiness or adulterating the word of God, but by the manifestation of truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.

Dear Prayer Warriors,

The last three items off the conveyor belt at the Nairobi International Airport were the last two boxes and our last suitcase. I have to admit an amount of fear and trepidation as bags after bags were downloaded and the crowd quickly thinned as people grabbed up their possessions and headed out of the airport. All who travel know the sinking fear when the conveyor belt comes to a lurching halt. If yours is not on it, then it did not make the flight. All that said, sure enough, there at the very end were our last three items. That means everything arrived safe, sound and intact. All went through customs unscathed and unmolested. The customs official was intrigued by the Billy Graham tract, "Steps To Peace With God" so I left him with one and El and I proceeded past customs and into the arms of our good friends Dr. Stanley Mukolwe and his loving wife Patiance, along with 11 boxes of Bibles, Bible study aids and Bible reference books, three suitcases of supplies for missionaries and staff and our two personal suitcases. We are not in Africa and for the next three months will be teaching and preaching the Word of God.

It is times like this, when I reflect back over the miraculous grace and provision of God in putting together a mission venture such as ours that I am invariably embarrassed by the fears and doubts that often plague me along the way. There seems to be two constants, (1) God always comes through (2) I always doubt and fear. Each time I steel myself that it will be different and each time, stage by stage, I look back thinking, "Why was I ever afraid our doubtful? Look, it turned out just fine, just as the Lord willed." In terms of bravery and faith, I always seem to look better after the fact than during the trial.

At the layover in Heathrow I could feel a severe head cold coming on and it is now battling with my immune system. From the amount of Kleenexes I go through in an hour I would say it is a full fledged war. It is not uncommon for me to get something on these mission trips, the fatigue, the stress, the changes in food, water, climate, the hundreds of hands I shake almost daily, it is pretty much a given. I have added a quote from John Fletcher of Madely, one of the great ministers associated with John Wesley to my prayer notebook and as I was prying through my notebook it was timely to reflect on the heart and faith of this great preacher...

"One time meeting him when he was very ill with a hectic fever... I said, 'I am sorry to find you so ill' Mr. Fletcher answered with a great sweetness and energy. 'Sorry sir! Why are you sorry? It is the chastisement of my heavenly Father, and I rejoice in it. I love the rod of my God, and rejoice therein, as an expression of His love and affection towards me.'"

God the Holy Spirit expresses this so well in Hebrews 12:6,10 & 11

"For those whom the Lord loves He disciplines, and He scourges every son whom He receives... For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but He disciplines us for our good, that we may share His holiness. All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness."

That fact that all God has and does for us is a great comfort during times of change. There is not good or bad with God in terms of His actions towards us, only good. There is good (pleasant) and good (difficult) but God's actions towards us are and always will be good and in that we take our rest and comfort. I have often found it of great benefit to memorize key passages from the Word of God which remind me of this truth, that God's wrath has been satisfied in Christ and as such I need not fear any motive, action or plan which He has for me.

Satan's stock and trade is fear. That is his modus operandi for the church and her ministers. Having no power, he is left only with fear. In reality he has been stripped even of this. Hebrews 2:14-15 makes it clear that for those in Christ satan holds no power and that we as Christians have been delivered not only from the power of satan but also from the fear of satan and death. "Since then the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil; and might deliver those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives."

Never-the-less satan still seeks to cause us to fear - fear God, fear one another, fear the future, fear real dangers, fear imagined dangers, it does not matter, just as long as we fear, then he is happy. Fear leads to inactivity which is just fine with satan. A fearful Christian is an immobilized Christian. An immobilized Christian soon becomes complacent in his inactivity and drifts into being a sluggard. In this state satan no longer needs to cause him to fear, the inactivity which fear brings about is now a part of his character. As God the Holy Spirit teaches us in Proverbs 22:13, "The sluggard says, 'There is a lion outside; I shall be slain in the streets!'"

I am no more immune to the intrigues of satan than any other minister of the gospel. The flight into Nairobi is an overnight flight and during those dark hours on the plane, already exhausted yet unable to sleep, feeling a little feverish and achy, there was much to preoccupy my mind... What about the boxes? Are our visas indeed in order? What if import policies have changed and I have to pay duty on Bibles and religious books?

Will the plane make it safely to the destination?

Will our host be waiting for us?

What about our bags, what if they are lost or stolen?

How are our children and grandchildren back home?

What if a hurricane hits Houston while we are in Africa?

The list of worrying thoughts which satan can bring to mind is almost endless. In times like these there are four verses which I have memorized and I begin to review and meditate upon...

Lam 3:22-23 The LORD'S lovingkindnesss indeed never cease, for His compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is Thy faithfulness.

Isaiah 41:10 'Do not fear, for I am with you; do not anxiously look about you, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, surely I will help you, surely I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.'

Matt 11:28-30 "Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart; and you shall find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My load is light."

I John 4:18 There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love.

As I meditated on my position in Christ, God's sovereignty over all situations and His great love for me my fears of the unknown began to wash away and filled with the love and comfort of the Holy Spirit as He ministered to me through his holy word I feel into a deep and restful sleep.

I commend these four passages to you as well and would encourage you to memorize them and make them a constant resource for meditation in times of fear - be they real or imagined.

I close out this prayer dispatch with the assurance both from us and the Word of God that we are safe in Kenya, in the sovereign care and protection of God and that are hearts are warmed and encouraged by the comfort of the Holy Spirit that comes from a full assurance of the truths of the Word of God as they are meditated upon both day and night. We have nothing to fear, God is on the throne, our hearts are sealed by the Spirit, our hope is in Christ and the Word of God, as ministered to us by the Holy Spirit, is a source of both guidance and comfort - we have nothing to fear.

Once again we thank you for your co-laboring with us in this ministry, knowing that we minister by the sovereign grace of God and by the effectual power of your constant prayers on our behalf.



Arranging transport of materials from airport.



El writes note to Patiance's Bible.

By His mercy,
II Corinthians 4:1
Rev. John S. Mahon
Grace Community Int.