

Sermon notes- jan 2010 - scripture Matt 14:22-33, Isa 55:6-9

Ideas and verses----

Titles- Walking on water - Being part of the miracle

Today I would like to share some personal reflections from the past few years of my walk with the Lord and also to issue a challenge to us all.

Prayer- for the delivery of the message to be Gods words inspired and carried by His Spirit so we may understand His truth in our lives- amen

I have been asked several times what it must be like to work in Africa, or be a doctor, or be married to such an amazing woman..

But I am here today not to answer those questions or to show slides of Africa, but very humbly accept invitation to this pulpit by Kerry to share “What the Lord has done for me”

I did not know where to begin-- You might say this is just a bit out of my comfort zone . However, not with standing my discomfort and other road blocks that I can easily conjure up ----- Here I am Lord!

I wish to share some passages and thoughts that I have experienced over the last year, often during my morning devotional time.

My prayer is that you may see Gods hand in my life as a testimony that He can indeed accomplish His will with even meager offerings from ourselves.

Ps143.8- Let the morning bring me word of your unfailing love, for I have put my trust in you. Show me the way I should go, for to you I lift up my soul.

Start with God's word and His love, then put your faith in it and Him

Ask His will and direction in prayer- look , listen, feel for the answer

Open your heart and be vulnerable to Him- be open- take the risk- **LIKE PETER step out of the boat!**

Colos 3.2 says - set your mind on things above- that is the direction, your goal

What does that mean for us as Christians? How are we to respond to the Lords bidding.? Do we dare to dream God's dreams ? Or, are ours much smaller?

How does each individual assess their gifting and passions and then choose what to do with their lives?

I don't have simple answers to these vital questions but can only share part of my story and the encouragement I have found in scripture as the Holy Spirit reveals.

Serving in Africa has been distant dream that was always lurking in the back of my mind since even before I attended medical school. I had no idea what a medical mission would look like for me, although I knew from books and speaking with missionaries that it was usually rewarding, always challenging and sometimes dangerous.. Early in my career-One of my colleagues, while doing medical mission work in Africa lost her young child to meningitis, and almost lost her second child to the same illness. It was inconceivable to me that such a price must

sometimes be paid for service. Africa has some very scary bugs and I don't mean the ones with six legs buzzing outside the tent in the night. Political instability, famine, disease, warfare and poverty are all pervasive through the continent. But with it there was the allure that “ **maybe God can do something big with me?**” ---daring to dream, I would say.

-My life and training went on in close partnership with my wife Nicolette. While raising 2 children and practicing full time medical professions , sometimes we would ponder upon mission work somewhere, but not knowing what it would be. It was evident for a long time, that the idea had not crystallized and the season was not ready for us to leave our busy practices and disrupt family life yet. I was frankly not quite ready for the risk! I found patience and encouragement in the following verses;

Gal 6.9 So lets not get tired of doing what is good. At just th right time we will reap a harvest of blessing if we don't give up.

And

Rom 12.6 In his grace God has given us different gifts for doing certain things well

In the meantime I was using and developing my gifts in medicine and in my spiritual life trying to stay close in my walk with the Lord.

I was give an aptitude and opportunity to study and practice anaesthesia , and it was that particular gift that allowed me an opportunity to serve on the ‘ Africa Mercy’ in the surgical program as I on occasion in the last two years.

-All has not been smooth sailing however, and when I relocated to Duncan from Ontario, my anaesthesia job evaporated after providing a 3 month locum here. I went into a mental and spiritual tailspin for a while- as this was not in my plan!! And I could not see how it was God's either.

Eccles 7.3 Sorrow is better than laughter, because a sad face is good for the heart.

Wow! What does this mean GOD? I looked and waited for clarification in His word through my devotional time and struggled to keep busy , and tried to find some occasional anaesthesia work to maintain my skill level. The comfort and support of my wife and friends was crucial to keeping my head above water. Mean while I was hoping that this difficult time in my professional career would create resilience and character, perhaps even develop in me a heart of patience—not one of my strongest assets.

Rom 12.5 says - We belong to each other and each of us needs all the others ...

You mean God that I am not alone, and that I just feel that way sometimes?

Do God's faithful chosen actually feel like this sometimes?. -OF COURSE THEY DO!!

If it wasn't for the support I felt especially from this body of believers, I may have very well abandoned our plans to stay here in Duncan.

I found great encouragement in the following scripture.

Josh 1.9 --Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified, do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God shall be with you wherever you go.....Yes.....Even Duncan, YES even scary Africa

Many times in life we may feel like losers....or .not needed or wanted. Remember playing as kids and being the last chosen to be on a team...We still get that experience as adults sometimes.

Scripture says in

Ps 32.7 for you are my hiding place, you protect me from trouble. You surround me with songs of victory.

God is a winner and we are winners if we are on his team....that is all that matters. Do you hear God whispering somewhere in your soul that you are his child....that he has chosen you for his winning team?

I had already been to Central America a couple of times on mission outreaches with our church in Goderich, Ontario, and witnessed the poverty and human indignities experienced by many in this world. I also experienced the joy and satisfaction of sharing time, work, meals and worship with my foreign brothers and sisters. These were life changing events in my walk with God. My optics for the world and my place in it HAD to be redefined. Thank God!!

The enrichment received in doing a small part for God's children in His kingdom is personally the most exciting and satisfying feeling one can have- especially when you engage people in the midst of their real life issues. All this is made sweeter by a thankful grin or hand shake... **or best of all- a" God bless you!"**

Sometimes the logistics and frustrations of working in other parts of the world can be painfully hindering to a Westerner with a digital mind set. When things got bogged down in Benin we just shrugged, grinned and said TIA! Short for (this is Africa)

God says.

Isaiah 55.10-11 /As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish... so is my word that goes out from my mouth. It will not return to me empty...

So there - God promises our efforts for His kingdom will not be frustrated.

What further assurance do we need?

I want to share an idea with you_ - *Risk to be different!*

Rom 12.2 Paul says, Don't copy the behaviour and customs of the world , but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn Gods will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.

Is this not the great remedy for boredom, restlessness-sick of going nowhere with the flow?

But there is risk - and each one of us knows our own fears and weaknesses all to well. Fear can overwhelm courage and confidence to the point of stagnation..

Like the coyote in a Road runner cartoon... as he chases that rascal over the edge of the cliff, in full pursuit over thin air... he is doing quite well until he looks below ... into the great abyss of the canyon. And then he thinks... Coyotes aren't supposed to fly?

How much is our faith like Peter's as he risked his life stepping out of the boat to go to Jesus who was on top of the water.....He was in the miracle until he lost his focus and floundered. He was doing great when his eyes and mind were on the Master.

Jesus told his disciples that by the power of the Holy Spirit they will accomplish greater miracles than He didWow! What an invitation to a life of supernatural experience with the Lord doing His mighty Works. Obviously our faith must be sufficient to conquer our doubts-- and God promises **He won't give us anything that we can not endure. There is nothing that can separate us from His love --- as we will be more than conquerors being surrounded by songs of victory.**

Matt 25;23 I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness

What decisions in our life are we making - that will bear eternal fruit??

We are accountable with our lives and gifting. So look for opportunities to share your walk with God. There can be many ways, too many to mention. You have no doubt considered some.

This world certainly needs compassion. Our Lord is the most awesome model of that. By definition ; compassion is only happening when you do something to help solve the problem... It is an action! ...not just a feeling!

James 2.15 says - If a brother or sister is in physical need of clothing, warmth or food and we say—Go, I wish you well.. but do nothing...What good is it?

We don't have to take on the challenges of solo outreach. Teams and partnerships are usually more effective. The support of family, church and the fellow workers in the field seem to yield incredible results. We can help each other succeed and reach out to each other if we stumble along a challenging path.

Is working for the Lord hard. Yes!

Is it worth it? A resounding Yes!!

Paul exhorted in **1 Corinthians 15:58**—*Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labour in the Lord is not in vain.*

So we should find work that we have a heart for- and preferably some gifting or as well- then strive toward creating blessing in his Kingdom.

I have come to experience great personal reward in working for God whether digging a trench with a pick in hand while in Nicaragua, or plying my skills as a physician in Duncan. Then humbly I stand back and watch God build stronger, healthier and more faithful souls. I wipe the sweat off my brow, take a deep breath and give God a quiet cheer from my soul.....Yah, God Go!

Paul reminds Timothy

Tim 1;7 - God did not give us a spirit of timidity

Go out on a limb for God today.....Reach out on the branch where the best and most fruit is born

Look back in your life and ask yourself when God has given you courage. Remember how he has brought you thus far. Search out new and exciting ways to play

on his winning team. Keep your ear close to his guiding voice and search His ways.

As another year passes and a new one begins, **we do well to dwell on a dream—God's dream!**

Isaiah 40:30-31 - Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall ;but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.

When was the last time you felt like flying?

Prayer- Lord hold on to our hand tightly and take us with you on a most amazing journey . May we fly with the power and glory of Jesus in us, for your Kingdom come. Amen