

DISCUSSION IDEAS
TRUSTING GOD'S COW PIES

March 5th, 2017

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Alex's Testimony: What a story! His mother dies of AIDS, Grandma and uncle murdered during the ethnic genocide in Ruanda when he was 6. Saved from being murdered by a gun malfunction. Protected from enemies by God during his escape to go live with an aunt.

AND....Saved from death by falling down after stepping in a cow pie! The bullet missed by an inch.

Deeply affected and drawn to the Word of God by the ministry of Operation Christmas Child.

But his testimony includes dealing with bitterness and blaming God for the evils he suffered.

♦ **DISCUSSION POINT ONE: WE LIVE IN AN EVIL WORLD. WHAT IS OUR ATTITUDE WHEN WE GET HURT?**

Have you ever been mad at God?

Can God put up with that?

When I am angry because things do not go MY way, how does that relate to living out God's agape love?

What if the only way God can get someone's attention is to have them see how I react to tragedy or hardship?

Do I love my unsaved friends that much?

Why do you suppose God had Peter write 1 Peter 4:12-19?

Look at the experience of Paul and Silas in Acts 16:22-34.

Discuss this event. Was the salvation of an entire family in a pagan city worth the suffering?

♦ **DISCUSSION POINT TWO: DO WE REALLY WANT TO KNOW WHAT GOD HAS TO SAY?**

Alex was hurting...a LOT. So what did he do? He turned to the Bible!

At first look, Jeremiah 29:11-13 seems to be a comfort verse. Does God care about me in that same way?

But it was interesting that Alex was drawn to knowing who God was talking to. He had never before understood who the Israelites were. He did not know their history. So he studied.

First, read just those three verses. What a loving God! Right?

Now read the context in verses 1-14:

What was Israel's relationship with the very God who had chosen them as a showcase of His Grace and Love?

What were His promises in Deuteronomy 28?

What was to happen if they turned against Him? (see vv 15-68)

So to whom, specifically, was the promise of Jeremiah 29:11-13 made?

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YET...though that promise was not made to us, what can we learn about God through it?

♦ **DISCUSSION POINT THREE: WHAT CAN WE DO TO DEAL WITH BITTERNESS?**

Do you want to be healed? How can you get started?

What about our perspective? How does our continued study of God's Word influence that?

What can we do about being angry at someone?

Look at Luke 6:27-38

What kind of help can we ask of our fellow believers?

How useful would it be to see our "cow pies" from God's perspective?

Have you heard of other stories where someone was saved from harm because of a "bad" event?

ALSO...will peace and joy be ours immediately?

♦ **FOR MEDITATION AT HOME:**

Think about today's communion study on Colossians 2:6-14.

What does v.6 mean in my daily life?

How does v.9 prove the truth of vv 7-8 and 10?

What is my real condition according to vv 11-13?

Dwell on the picture given in v.14. Where did that page, nailed to the cross, come from? (Rev. 20:11-13)

♦ **FOR PRAYER:**

Our Grace Church Elders: Pray for our elders as they seek how to do their part in God's plan.

Gettises: Pray for the Gettis family as they settle in down in San Jose, Costa Rica, and as David is in an intensive six weeks of Spanish Language study that started March 1st. Pray for his brain :-)

Cindy says, "David is doing well and enjoying his studies. He had 20 pages of grammar homework! He is smart though and can handle it. He's enjoying getting to know the other missionaries."

Shelter Valley: Continue to uphold the Shelter Valley believers, and the GCC team that serves there. Pray for Scott and Leslie Stevens as Scott

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heads up this ministry. Pray for continued growth in understanding among those who attend about God's Plan and what it really means to follow Him.

Home Groups: Pray for our home groups.

Pray for the leaders to grow in understanding and skill so that those in each group will truly grow in their walk in the Spirit and in true agape love.

Pray that more folks will take part in a home group and be encouraged as a result.

Pray that each one of us would seek to learn how to use our individual spiritual gift(s) to build up the Body of Christ.

Pearsons: Continue to pray for John and Bobbie Pearson as John completes a living area for his 101 year old mother, and for their son, John Caleb, who is dealing with severe cancer. John Caleb is currently in Mexico seeking alternative treatment.

Barangonan Island: Let's continue to pray for the Lord's love and power to be seen in Barangonan Island.

Pray for wisdom and encouragement as both Ingvoldstads and Binders prepare to move off the island. The Ings are in Puerto Princessa taking care of business, before they move on to Manila for a March 19 departure. Pray for wisdom, clear understanding of God's Word and continued obedience to the Holy Spirit on the part of the island church leaders.

Praise and continued prayer: Continue to uphold the Tagbanwa believers who go to a neighboring island every Friday to teach about God. Pray too for the hearers to respond.

"Continue to pray for them as there continues to be a solid group listening and interacting with God's Word. We often get to go, and its exciting to see `the body' in action.

"Not only are there teachers, but others go to support and engage this new group who is hearing. If you can believe it, there are even some who catch fish for the families who go so they won't miss a meal!

"Continue to pray for strength and endurance for those who go, as well as understanding for those who hear."

Thank God and uphold in prayer the "TFG" (Time For God) group of children and young folks who meet every day!

Pray with the strong, self-motivated women's group as they study God's Word and grow to be mature believers.

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Persecuted Believers:

Let's not forget to uphold our fellow believers around the world who are experiencing real and intense persecution for following Jesus.

THIS WEEK:

1. PRAISE!!!:

After 445 days in prison in Sudan, Czech national Petr Jasek was set free last Sunday! Jasek had been arrested in December 2015. He had served as VOM's Africa Regional Director.

In five different prisons, each worse than the last, placed in group cells with drug traffickers, violent criminals and radical Muslims including ISIS members, deprived of sleep for days in a cell with no running water, where mice ran over his body every time he lay down:

Petr says: "I found that I was peaceful and joyful in prison, and that is a miracle that only God can do. I can say that I was experiencing an amazing time with the Lord. My prayer was that I wanted to have the right words to speak at any time so that everything I said would be for the glory of God and touching the hearts of the other prisoners."

During his almost 15 months in prison, Petr shared the gospel with many and saw several come to saving faith in Christ.

2. India:

A Christian in Jharkhand state has passed away due to illnesses resulting from villagers immersing him and his wife in frigid water last winter because they refused to deny Christ.

Upset that his family had left their indigenous religion, tribal residents of Kubuaa village immersed Bartu Urawn and his wife up to their necks in a cold pond. The couple was in the water from 5 p.m. to 10 a.m. the next morning, at a time when the temperatures were hovering at about zero degrees Celsius (32°F...Freezing!!).

Their son, Beneswar, says, "The villagers kept asking my father if he is ready to forsake Christ and return to the Sarna (tribal religion) fold. He reiterated every time, 'I will not deny Christ.... I will continue to believe till my last breath.'" In addition to this treatment, they were beaten after being taken out of the water.

Please pray for Beneswar, his mother, and other family members and friends, as they mourn and deal with fear.

Also intercede for the villagers who committed this needless crime that they will be drawn to Jesus.