

"Newsletter Number 6"

The Apostle Paul wrote in Ephesians 3:20-21, some very amazing words that continue to shine in the light of the work we are doing in Living Hope Ministry. His words are encouragement to all who would follow in the steps of the Savior.

"Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen." (Ephesians 3:20-21, NIV)

For too long in my walk with Christ I know that I limited His ability to work just because I didn't realize all that He wanted to do! When Paul says that God can do immeasurable more than we could ever ask or imagine he wasn't just filling in words to make the chapter complete.

Paul gives two great guide lines for working in the kingdom of our Savior and Lord Jesus Christ. First he says we need to ask. Our pride, our humility, our understanding of our own past, put in whatever you want, but something is keeping us from asking God to work in our lives. We have forgotten our reason for existing; namely to glorify God in all we say and in all we do. How can God be glorified in my life? I ask Him to do immeasurably more than I could ever do by my own power or ability. I know that sounds scary, but please remember that He knows what we need before we ever ask. One of our problems is that we don't ever ask. Start asking God and you will be surprised at what He can accomplish. The second thing is equally important: we need to imagine all that He can do. Review all that God has done in the past and realize how He wants to work through you in the present. Look at the fields, see the possibilities for effective ministry, dream of how people can be helped, consider what can be done if we would just imagine God working through our lives. The troubles we face would become opportunities, the limits we place on service would disappear, money would no longer stop us because our God owns the cattle on a thousand hills and the silver and gold are His. Isn't it amazing! All of the reasons why something cannot work would disappear in the glorious light of the one who specializes in the impossible.

And what's really amazing is that we don't have to do it ourselves! It all happens, "...according to His power that is at work within us..."

Do you remember this song: "There is no problem too big – God cannot solve it; There is no mountain too tall – God cannot move it; there is no storm too dark – God cannot calm it; There is no sorrow too deep – He cannot soothe it..." If He carried the weight of the world on His shoulders I know my brothers and sisters that Jesus can carry me and you! We just need to ask and imagine...

“Some Things I missed on the Way to the Ministry”

“Oh, the innocence of youth!” You do know what I am talking about don’t you? It happens to everyone who has a dream of being effective in this event we call life. For the young minister it is simple, “We are going to save the world.” Everyone will listen to all we have to say and will help us in all we have to do because everyone wants to do what is right! We unwittingly believe that all who take on the name of Christ really are on His side and want to do all that will glorify Him. If we will just say our prayers, read our Bible, give our money, and do right everything will turn out just fine.

Call me crazy if you wish, but that was my idea of what life in the ministry would be like. Boy was I ever wrong. How could I have been so mistaken about what real ministry would involve? Quite simply I had a mistaken view of the work and of the world in which we live.

I cannot remember who said it but it is true, “Christianity is not a playground it is a battle ground.” Bluntly stated, “We are at war.”

“Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.” (Ephesians 6:10-13, NIV)

When I read Paul’s words it makes me realize that I had under estimated the enemy. Not only have I made that mistake I also was woefully prepared for the battle’s that would come my way. Did they tell me about this war in Bible College? I can’t really say that anyone ever told me what it would be like to serve in the church. Now part of that may have been the fact that I wasn’t listening, but I will also tell you that if someone would have told me all that I would face I might have jumped ship on the ministry before I ever got started.

When my desire was to win the world and the greatest obstacles to accomplishing that task were coming from within the walls of the church I was surprised to say the least. Once again my ignorance of the Word was a hindrance to my understanding.

“For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, masquerading as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. It is not surprising, then, if his servants masquerade as servants of righteousness. Their end will be what their actions deserve.” (2 Corinthians 11:13-15, NIV)

Where would the workers of evil stage their battle, well on the fields of righteousness of course! Satan couldn’t defeat Christ so his next best target would be those who would want to live for Christ. Now the last time I checked that would be people like you and me. If they hated the Christ why are we amazed when we are hated?

If they undermined the Christ why be amazed when we are undermined? If they killed Christ – do you get the picture? You see this is war!

Coming Events:

The next “Ministry to Ministers and Leaders” will be September 17, 2007, at the Peaks Mill Christian Church near Frankfort, Kentucky. Once again Bob Russell will be with us to share in two very important sessions: “Elders: Allies or Adversaries” and “Courageous Leadership.” This is a wonderful opportunity to once again be reminded what our work is all about. It is also a time to find strength and encouragement to continue on in the battle. If you would like to come we would love to have you. Please call Ronnie McKinney at 502-227-9800 to let him know how many will be attending with your group. The cost is \$15 per person, but please do not let a lack of funds keep you away. Funds are available so everyone can attend. Please register by September 15 if you plan on attending. See you then.

Preacher to Preachers

Our next “Preacher to Preacher” gathering will be October 16, 2007, at the Driftwood Christian Church in Jackson County Indiana. The church is located on US 135 south of Brownstown, In. and north of Salem, Indiana. I would give better directions but it would just be best if you called the church when you get ready to come and share with us.

The title for the day is “Wounded, Weak, and Weary.” There may be nothing worse in the world than to be a wounded soldier and no one seems to care.

Living Hope Ministry does care deeply and we want to provide help to those who are wounded in the ministry. We will be looking at the battles that leave us wounded and what we can do to insure that the wounds are not fatal to our spiritual life.

Steve Gommel is the minister at Driftwood and has graciously allowed us to come and be with them on the 16th. To register, please call Driftwood Church at 812-358-4063 or Living Hope Ministry at 812-752-2634. You may also e-mail your registration to living_hope_ministry@hotmail.com

We will begin that day, our Lord willing, with a light breakfast and we will end with lunch. The cost will be \$10 a person that can be paid on the day of the meeting.

Most of the time when someone asks, “How are you,” we answer, “FINE.” Fine means frustrated, irritated, neurotic, or edgy. Maybe you were there once, we need your insights. Possibly you are there now, you need our brotherhood. And if it has never happened to you, it is on the way...Come and get ready to overcome!