

We Asked—He Answered

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An Encouraging Word

We have a wonderful, Almighty God who *loves* to answer prayer! He has heard and answered the heart-cry for millions of people, and will continue to do so.

Of course, the first prayer we can expect Him to answer for us is for His mercy to forgive us of our sins and to save us. This He will do when we, in faith, truly turn from our sins to Him through Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

When we have become His children, God delights in giving us what we ask for in faith, and according to His will—found in His Word. We must be sure there is no sin to hinder our prayers: confess and forsake it quickly. As we listen to the Lord and obey Him, He listens to us and answers us.

As we pray for ourselves and for others, let's be specific in our requests, and re-

joyce in God's answers. Sometimes, for greater needs, united prayer, fasting, and/or earnest persistence will be required. Often our loving Lord will give us **better** than we asked! Let's learn to pray about everything.

May God so teach us to pray that He, as our amazing, sovereign, loving Lord, will give the good gifts, change the hearts, move the "mountains," bind Satan's powers, and accomplish the "impossible" that He wants to do—and receive the glory He deserves!

May the following few stories, out of thousands of answered prayers God has given us, be of special encouragement and challenge to you. I would never have remembered all these events, except for years of diaries, prayer journals, and our family's prayer letters.

*For whosoever shall call upon the name
of the Lord shall be saved.*

Rom. 10:13

On May 20, 1946, I went to my mom and asked if I could let Jesus come into my heart. With tears I said I was sorry for all my sins, and asked the Lord Jesus to make me clean, and come into my heart and live. Praise the Lord, He did! He changed my life, attitudes, actions, goals, and destination.

We had prayed especially for the salvation of one girl in our Bible class. On New Year's Day, 1970, we discovered the Lord had evidently already prepared her heart *and* her sister and brother to be ready to ask the Lord to save them. What a wonderful, promising way to begin the New Year!

Countless times we have prayed for friends, relatives, children, and adults with whom we shared God's powerful, life-changing Word, that He would grant them true

repentance and heart faith in Christ. He has brought thousands to professions of faith in Him. Of course, He alone knows how many of these have been genuinely born again. We anticipate seeing multitudes of them in Heaven. How thrilling to have a part in bringing joy to the heart of the Savior who rejoices in Heaven over one sinner who repents!

*In everything, by prayer and supplication,
with thanksgiving, let your requests
be made known unto God.*

Phil. 4:6

*Ask, and it shall be given you; seek and ye shall
find; knock and it shall be opened unto you.*

Matt. 7:7

Every once in a while, one of us has lost car keys and/or house keys. Small items, big problem. Sometimes we've had to climb in the window of the house. Not long ago, as I was searching all over for my keys, and praying to find them, the Lord led me down our driveway. There they were at the edge. What a relief!

A friend of the family sent Joy a monetary birthday gift to be used on something personal, so she went to a jewelry store where a school mom had offered her a 1/3 off discount. There she found a lovely, inexpensive, pearl ring. A few years later, the ring was

misplaced, and Joy felt bad, especially because it had been a gift of love from a friend who, shortly after, went to Heaven from a car accident. Joy prayed to find the ring, but for years and years, couldn't. Then one day, while searching through a school desk drawer, what should be spotted in a nook but the ring. It's a reminder now of the love both of a gracious lady, and of God.

More recently, I suddenly discovered my driver's license was missing. Trouble! Praying and searching, I kept looking, but without success. The Lord urged me to look again among some papers for which I had needed to show my license. Sure enough, there it was, stuck deeply in the papers. Whew, how merciful the Lord is!

While beginning research for this booklet, I wanted to skim through 20+ years of diaries and journals, especially of mission trips. Since they were not for public consumption, I'd put them in a safe, secret place. Trouble was, I couldn't remember where.☹ I

prayed and searched and prayed and re-searched. Finally, with the Lord's guidance, I looked more deeply in a place already delved into, and there they were. How I thanked the One who knows where everything is!

One Sunday night about 11:15, Dad was horrified to discover that our blue van had disappeared. BIG LOSS. This was one of the vans we used to carry children to and from Sunday School and Bible clubs. The next day, Dad and Joy drove around, looking in six to eight housing projects, with no success. Several of us traveled our Sunday School routes, checking. No sign of our van. Of course, we kept praying, because God knew where it was. That night, a teenager told one of our church ladies that he'd seen it. Her son Gary and some boys checked that location. Sure enough, it was near where the other boy had seen it. A teenage delinquent had stolen it. Thank God, we got it back safe and sound.

When Joy was a senior in high school, she participated in an essay contest called

“Lenin, a False Prophet”. She, along with several other high school students who placed, took a trip to the Holy Land. This was at the height of the skyjackings, so we prayed for safety and good weather. Not only did He keep everybody safe, but as the group traveled from country to country, they were told that the weather there had been rainy or stormy, and this was the first good weather in days or weeks. God cares even about pleasant weather—as well as about our safety.

Very often, hearing predictions of rain, storms, or a tornado coming our way—especially when it’s almost time for church or Bible club, we’ve asked God to keep that kind of weather away. It matters to Him, and many are the times He has cleared the sky, even when it was already raining. Sometimes storms surround us, and yet the Master over storms keeps them off us.

*God be merciful unto us, and bless us...
that Thy way may be known upon earth....*

Psa.67:1a,2a

*Herein is My Father glorified,
that ye bear much fruit....*

John 15:8a

Frequently we have prayed for certain goals in attendance for our Sunday school. (Are numbers important? If they're people, yes; and even one person, especially if that one is *you!*) We want to tell MANY people of God's love, how to be saved from an eternal Hell, and how to live fruitfully for Christ. Here are a few examples of how God answered to bring as many as we requested, or more, to church.

(The first number is how many we asked of the Lord; the second is how many He brought.) In my teens class: 9/12. On my van route: 30/40. In church: 60/72. Another Sunday, teens: 13/14. Van route: 33/39. In church: 80/88.

...I am the Lord that healeth thee.

Exodus 15:26

*Jesus Christ the same
yesterday, and today,*

and for ever.

Heb. 13:8

*Confess your faults one to another, and pray one
for another, that ye may be healed.*

*The effectual, fervent prayer of
a righteous man
availeth much.*

James 5:16

Back in the late sixties, our brother Joseph was standing one day on the lower porch roof of our two-story house, removing a window screen to be painted. Suddenly, to my horror (as I was watching from inside), he slipped, then disappeared over the edge of the roof! Praying frantically, I sped downstairs and out the front door, afraid of what I'd find.

God be praised: although Joseph had had the breath knocked out of him, and had a sore stomach, he had no broken bones or other drastic injuries. What a welcome relief!

Joy needed a back tooth extracted, which was already split, and the dentist just *knew* the top would break off when he went to pull it. He gloomily showed Joy the X-ray with its long roots (which earmark our family's teeth). So he put off the extraction until another time and told her to prepare to take the whole day off afterward.

She e-mailed friends for prayer—that the extraction would be smooth and fairly painless. On *the day*, the dentist got a grip on the tooth and pulled, but it stayed put. He stopped to do a little drilling, then gripped it again. This time the tooth came out smoothly and painlessly. He could hardly believe it, and told Joy she was lucky, then caught himself and corrected it to “answered prayer” instead. And rather than taking the day off, Joy took a twenty-minute walk in the lovely springtime

air, then returned home to work. Using natural remedies for pain, she never had to resort to the painkiller prescription afterward. Thank You, Lord!

At the end of December, 1988, I was carrying a five-gallon can of kerosene from the car to the storage shed. I'd been extra tired, so my body was somewhat weakened. I felt something strange happen in my back. It became very painful, especially with certain movements. We prayed for the Lord's healing, and I particularly prayed that it wouldn't hinder my ministries. Meanwhile, Joy and other friends voluntarily and very kindly filled in for some of my responsibilities, and helped me up and down.

Dad suggested the possibility of going to a chiropractor, and we asked for the Lord's guidance. We consulted with a chiropractor that Christian friends recommended.

He wanted to take X-rays and do at least six to twelve treatments. (Fortunately, each treatment was only \$18.) The first treat-

ment went well, not too painfully. I prayed specifically that day that, if the Lord pleased, only two more treatments would be needed. At the second adjustment, the chiropractor was happily surprised with my rapid progress. He commented, "We can't take credit for this." Grace answered, "Yes, the Lord is answering prayer." After this treatment, the chiropractor remarked, "I think one more treatment ought to be enough." It was, thank the Lord!

One of the people behind bars in Florida whom Joy writes is a young man named Tony. He has a rather rough appearance, partly due to extensive burn scars from childhood, and partly from marks of violent fights he was in prior to his conversion, plus he is pretty imposing in size. But when Tony surrendered his life to the Lord, he was given the right to pray and bring petitions before his Father. On Joy's recent birthday, he told her that he was going to spend the whole day praying for her. She didn't take this lightly, and here

is why: several years after a horseback riding accident, her hip injury began giving her severe pain again, to the point where it took her forty-five minutes to get out of bed. When Tony found out, he wrote back that he was going to fast and pray for her healing, and get some of the Christian brothers there to pray with him. The next morning after receiving his letter, Joy sat up and left her bed with no pain, nor did it return. Another time, Tony prayed for an acute, continuing pain in her jaw, and similarly, the pain left right after his letter arrived. God listened to his prayers.

At Bible Memory Camp, the summer of 1989, I was hemorrhaging extensively. I wrote in my diary, “Don’t know that I’ve ever been so close to death (by sickness) as I was this a.m. Felt as if all my blood were draining down to my toes; and I was extremely weak. But friends prayed. Lord, thank You for your miraculous (I believe) healing touch! I even played volleyball today and was on the winning team, both whole games I played. ☺)”

Shortly after this, I had the privilege of leading a nine-year old girl camper to the Lord. I wrote, “Thank You, Lord. I see why the devil was, I believe, trying to kill me.” I could thankfully say with the Psalmist, “O Lord my God, I cried unto Thee, and Thou hast healed me.” (Psa. 30:2)

In the early eighties, I developed a mastitis cyst that grew quite huge. We prayed for God’s healing and strengthening. The illness had greatly reduced my vitality and ability to maintain regular responsibilities. One doctor tried unsuccessfully to drain the cyst. He then sent me to a hospital for tests: very painful and embarrassing (as when four doctors came to view the unusually large cyst ☹). Without consulting me, they planned on surgery. Not believing this was God’s plan, I left the hospital. Instead, prayerfully we obtained a prescription for Danazol and some rejuvenating vitamins and herbal combinations. The Lord used these to begin reducing the swelling and return my strength. At one point, this last

doctor commented to me, while holding his thumb and forefinger close together, “You were *this* close to death.” (Earlier doctors probably believe I did die. I’d like to see their faces if I were to show up and tell them that the Lord healed me. ☺)

I had one more hemorrhaging-nearly-to-death episode. We took our school students to sing for senior citizens one day, then let them play a while in the nearby park. I lay down in the van, feeling totally exhausted and drained. My friend Lana was with me, and was extremely worried. Thinking this could be my last chance to disciple Lana, I gave her some brief, most important ways to grow in the Lord. I did want to finish all God wanted me to do before heading to Heaven. In tears, we prayed together.

Later, God gave me enough energy to go to a health food store run by Christian friends. The lady took one look at me and asked if I had hepatitis, I was so yellow. The next morning, I asked Dad to anoint me with

oil and pray for me. That day I lost the yellow to a white skin color, and began to feel better. The next day I felt and looked like a new person with normal color. Thank the Lord for His gracious healing.

Delight thyself also in the Lord; and He shall give thee the desires of thine heart.

Psa. 37:4

...Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.

John 16:24

It's awesome when our Heavenly Father answers big requests with big answers. It is also very special that He cares enough to answer and provide for little requests. Maybe no one else even knows about that small need or desire; but Father knows and cares, and likes to make us happy—especially as we delight to obey Him.

One warm spring day several years ago, Joy and I drove to Columbia to attend Homecoming at our Bible College alma mater. We planned to attend the morning meetings and return home to work. However, after the first meeting, we felt led to stay for the afternoon and evening services. One little (?)

problem: the dresses we were wearing would no longer be fresh that evening. ☹ An 85-mile round trip to change clothes didn't seem to be the best use of time or gas; so we opted for shopping at a thrift store.

While Joy was finding a nice, inexpensive outfit, I searched and searched, but couldn't seem to find anything suitable, as I combed the same dress rack two or three times. God cared. He showed me a dress I'd missed earlier. It had beautiful flowers, two pockets, was a no-iron, and it fit me perfectly. It is still my favorite dress.

Very often, we ask the Lord for good parking places—especially drive-through spaces. Most of the time, that's exactly what He provides.

He gives us many sweet little blessings because His Father heart delights in rejoicing our heart.

I attended a ladies conference with spiritual refreshing early this year, and en-

joyed the Christian fellowship. What a surprise it was when I received a door prize: a beautiful needlework picture that one of the church ladies had made. The amazing thing about it was that this was the answer to a need for which I had prayed for years. I do an object lesson called “The Weaving.” (I show the under side of a weaving that looks confused and messy. Then I turn it over and show its beauty and order. So circumstances in our lives look messy and confusing, but God above is working all things together for our good.)

I was never totally satisfied with the objects I’d used for it before. This one is super, and God gave it unexpectedly.

*Ah Lord GOD! Behold, Thou hast made the
heaven and the earth by Thy great power
and stretched out arm, and there is
nothing too hard for Thee.
Jeremiah 32:17*

When I was a student at Prairie Bible Institute, I had a pocket watch that stopped working. I took it to a jeweler in the small town of Three Hills, in which PBI is located. I waited for six to eight weeks for it to be repaired, praying meanwhile. One Saturday in January, my roommate went to town and checked about the watch. She came back with disheartening news: the jeweler said he couldn't fix it, but maybe a jeweler in (large) Calgary, an hour and a half to two hours away, could. I was so disappointed.

As my roommate handed me the watch, it dropped on the floor. I picked it up, and lo, and behold, it worked perfectly. 😊 God has creative ways of fixing things we can't.

Recently Joy's minivan developed a shimmy when its speed reached around 40 mph. She prayed that it would be fixed, but was busy and didn't take it to the garage. Later, as she was driving it down I-26 to Columbia, she realized that the shimmying had totally disappeared. God had granted her prayer that the problem be fixed, and it was *free, besides*.

*But seek ye first the kingdom of God,
and His righteousness; and
all these things shall
be added unto you.
Matthew 6:33*

*For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous,
and His ears are open unto their prayers....
1 Peter 3:12*

Does God care about our financial needs? Of course He does. He has given us thrilling answers to prayer in this area. Through several decades of the high privilege of serving the Lord, with physical labor, the stresses of dealing with people and situations, and the joys of sharing God's Word with thousands of children and adults, and always unsalaried, we have personally seen God provide great and small money needs. Here are a very few examples of His loving provision for us.

Once when Joy and I were going to take a friend on a trip for her birthday, we

prayed for an inexpensive place to stay; but the motels we checked, even with coupons from the travel booklet we'd picked up were all expensive or full. It was a busy season, and people were everywhere.

Anyway, we prayed for a good motel, as Joy kept jumping out to go check on rates. Holiday Inn was about \$142 for three people. Joy thanked the clerk and vanished. I had picked up a coupon book from a welcome station, and we tracked down a promising motel for \$48 total.

We booked in, and found one of the largest motel rooms we've ever stayed in: two king-sized beds plus a couch, a fully equipped kitchenette--a room labeled by the desk clerk as the nicest room they had. And the motel was right on the beach, so we could walk out the door to swim. How's that for an answer to prayer? Here's another answer: the weather forecast was for thunderstorms, which never happened, only light rain—which kept most of the crowds away so that we had the beach almost to ourselves. 😊

Our van needed several small repair jobs, so I took it to the mechanic and rode home on the bicycle. I usually pray that the job will be done soon, properly, and inexpensively; and this time, I specifically prayed the bill would be \$25 or less. Guess what. It was only \$16. This kind of answer to prayer has frequently happened.

On our way to give God's Word in some school chapel programs in the sixties, we (two or three siblings) left early to try to have our car fixed. It had kept stalling. Taking it to the shop where it had recently been tuned up, we asked the Lord that the problem would be corrected quickly and inexpensively. Arriving at the large, closed door of the garage, it flew open and the mechanics beckoned us in as if expecting us. They worked on it immediately, finished quickly, and charged us nothing.

A bit later as we left, the gas pedal went on strike; so we coasted back the half

block. The mechanics hooked up the pedal, again with no charge, thank the Lord. We made it in good time to the schools and taught God's Word to the boys and girls.

About two weeks ago, I was shocked to discover I had written checks the previous week for more money than we had in the bank. I try to be careful not to do this, and was baffled as to how this had slipped past me. Anyway, I didn't want any checks to bounce, and I SURE didn't want those recipients (mostly missions and missionaries) to have to pay for my mistake. It was Saturday, and the bank was closed. I prayed urgently, deposited into the night deposit box more than enough to cover the checks, and kept praying for the Lord's merciful intervention.

Monday morning, soon after the banks opened, with some faith and some trepidation ☺, I called the bank and asked what the balance was. God be praised, we were \$60 to the good beyond what I had deposited. What a merciful rescue by a loving Father!

It was the summer of 1967 before my senior year at Bible College. My siblings and I had been commuting each year up until then. On-campus living was required for a year before graduating. As late as our August '67 prayer letter, this need was noted, that we had "absolutely nothing on hand financially toward this."

Not to worry. "Your Heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things," way before you ask Him. He had everything in place. He had taken one of our dear prayer friends (whose first name was Grace) home to Heaven within the previous year. He had led her to leave me \$2,000 in her will! I received it late that summer. Yes, back then, that more than covered a whole school year's expenses, even after giving tithe and offerings to the Lord. Praise the Lord for His loving provision, and for a wonderful senior year at the Bible college.

Two summers later, our brother Paul was in a similar financial situation. Much prayer ascended Heavenward, and God wonderfully provided. Three days before Paul needed to leave for his senior year of Bible college, a beloved Christian friend sent a check to cover Paul's entire year's expenses there. How faithful and generous is our God!

My times are in Thy hand....

Psalm 31:15

Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for Him:

Psalm 37:7a

Thank the Lord, no matter what it seems to us, God is never late.

On a mission trip to Kenya in 2001, I was traveling with our brother Paul, his wife, Vicki, and their three children. We had to change planes in Johannesburg, South Africa. Long queues/lines inched their way through the international check point; but thankfully, no problems for us. Taking a shuttle bus to the jet, I discovered, to my dismay, that Paul's family was nowhere to be seen.

I waited at the front door of the jet as it got later and later, wondering if they would make it on time. I dead sure didn't want to arrive in Kenya without them, not knowing whom to contact, or how! I kept praying and watching for them, as it seemed they'd be too

late. *Finally* they arrived in another shuttle bus, much to my relief, and we all left together, thank the Lord.

Later that same day, after we'd arrived safely in Nairobi, Kenya, we found that three pieces of Paul's luggage were missing, including his chalkboards for all his chalk talk preaching. He didn't know if they were lost, stolen, or just delayed, or how long he'd have to wait to find out. We prayed earnestly. Thank the Lord, we had to wait less than two hours from the time we learned the luggage was missing. All three pieces arrived on the next flight from Johannesburg.

At the end of that mission trip, I was flying back alone. The jet I was to take from Nairobi to Johannesburg was delayed, so I flew out nearly two hours after the scheduled time.

Reaching Johannesburg only forty minutes before leaving time, I dashed to the South African Airways ticket counter, and

waited behind a few other customers. When the agent looked at my ticket, he informed me that my plane had already left! I exclaimed politely, “The monitor says the flight has been delayed until 21:00 [9:00]!” He pooh-poohed that, and assured me they would put me up in a hotel, and I could leave the next day. I wouldn’t have minded, except I knew of no way to inform Joy or Lana, who were planning to pick me up in Atlanta.

Boy, did I pray. God was listening. He sent the ticket agent over to confer with another agent. He hurried back to his computer, made an entry, then spoke to me. “Ma’am, it looks like you’ll get to go tonight. They’re holding the plane for you [all], and you’ll be boarding at 8:15.” Thank You, Lord. You knew it all the time, didn’t You!

A year and a half later, on a Johannesburg mission trip, I was recuperating in a hospital after skidding down and fracturing my pelvis. I was hospitalized ten days, including nine days of therapy to be able to start walking

again. God enabled me to make excellent progress, so that on the day after Christmas, I was told I could leave any time I chose after breakfast. Since my strongest time of day was late morning through early afternoon, I asked the Lord to give me a flight out during that period.

I called the missionary family with whom I'd been staying before the accident, and told them when I was allowed to leave. The missionary lady felt sure no flight would be available before evening, but she promised to check.

It wasn't long before she called back with the news that she'd been able to arrange an 11:00 a.m. flight. Perfect! So I flew to Paul and his family who cared for me until I was strong enough for the 19+ hours of transatlantic flying home. Praise God, His timing is always right, and His mercy is so great.

And call upon Me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me.

Psalms 50:15

During a mission trip in Uganda, a group of native preachers, plus three of us missionaries from the States, were returning to Kampala late at night from a four-day crusade in Iganga. We had to pass through four checkpoint Charlies (or whatever the term is in Uganda). The first took only about a minute, and we were allowed to continue.

The second was rather suspenseful. The guard, armed with a rifle, kept asking for certain papers; things must have looked suspicious. The van was packed with sound equipment, lots of luggage, and 11 passengers. The pastor who was driving courteously and conciliatorily answered the guard's questions, explaining who we were and what was in the van. Probably all 11 of us in the van were fervently (and quietly) praying. Finally the guard waved us on.

The third and fourth guards, farther down the road, just waved us through, much to our relief and thanks to the Lord.

Shortly after our friend Lana and her family moved down from Ohio to Newberry County, she requested prayer that God would enable her to break completely her 21-year smoking habit. She had tried many methods over the years, but all without success.

So one morning, she and I fasted and prayed, and discussed relevant Bible principles and promises. Then with authority from Christ, Lana sent away the evil smoking spirit. We could smell the foul odor left behind. From that day to this, by God's grace, Lana has not even had a desire to smoke; and that was nearly 16 years ago. Our God is the loving, powerful Deliverer!

One Easter vacation in the mid-eighties, Paul, Joy, and I drove down to southern Georgia to visit our brother Joseph, and the Christian school where he was teaching.

Their break came later than ours, and we enjoyed helping a bit, and fellowshiping with them. Then we four drove to the ocean so we could go swimming. We love to swim, and don't get to the ocean very often. Joseph was at the van, while Paul and Joy swam out to a sandbar. I headed that way, but more slowly, stopping occasionally to stand and rest. (I'd been quite sick and had not fully regained my strength).

Beyond my depth, I kept expecting to reach the shallow water near the sandbar, but it was just deeper. Also the force of the waves was causing me to drift sideways as well, away from the sandbar. I kept pushing, but then began swallowing the salty water. My energy was waning treacherously. Trying to shout to the others was quite useless, with the crashing waves drowning out my feeble efforts. I knew of no other way to make the others aware of my danger. I had to choose whether to keep aiming for the sandbar—which looked closer, or head back to shore.

Deciding the shore seemed safest and surest, I headed in. However, my strength gave out, and I was still not touching bottom. I believed it had become a life and death matter. I didn't sense fear of death, but I didn't want anyone else to be blamed if I drowned, because it wasn't their fault. I cried out in my heart to God for *His* strength to get me ashore, since mine was totally depleted. In His tender mercy, the Lord infused new energy into me, and finally I stumbled onto shore. Joseph saw me wobbling unsteadily, and supported me back to the van. It took me weeks to get over the memories of that experience, but I was so thankful for the Lord's rescue. He still had much work for me to do serving Him. What a merciful Lord!

On a trip to South Africa in 2004, the day before she left, Joy and our niece Hannah went to Imhoff Farm to ride horses. It was a gorgeous afternoon as the group of riders and a guide headed off toward the beach, fording a bay to reach the other side. Joy's horse had an

attitude, lagging behind the others, but then when the group began to trot, it wanted to *gallop*. Since Joy has had very little experience in fast riding, she reined her in, but the horse retaliated by rearing up and throwing her rider into the surf, dragging her in the sand. Then the horse galloped triumphantly to the rest of the group, who had not even missed the two.

The group leader put Joy back on the horse, attached to hers by a lead, then a few minutes later, asked if they could canter again. Since everyone would have had to walk if one did, Joy agreed.

Predictably, her horse promptly lengthened her stride into a full gallop, swiftly leaving all the rest behind. Knowing she could break her neck should she try to rein the horse in at this speed, Joy simply closed her eyes, hung on for dear life, and prayed. *Did she pray!*

It seemed like an eternity that the horse thundered down the beach (giving Joy pain at every step), only slowing to a walk when she ran out of steam, and turning to look

smugly at the rest far behind them as she stood there heaving.

When the guide finally caught up, she exclaimed how impressed she was at how brave Joy was, and how well she had handled it. But Joy decided she should *never* have trusted a horse named Madonna. Yes, that was her name. But the Lord *did* keep Joy safe during that wild ride, and she's very thankful!

Go ye therefore, and teach [make disciples of] all nations... teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you....

Matthew 28:19a, 20a

And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, Who hath enabled me, for that He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry."

I Tim. 1:12

Serve the LORD with gladness.

Psalms 100:2a

In December of 1975, the Pents, a large, godly family who faithfully read the Bible together daily and memorized large portions of it, visited our family. We had wonderful fellowship serving and praising the Lord together for several days.

One day, we were all together sharing devotions in Luke 1. There, for the first time, I learned of something my parents had prayed thirty-three years earlier, evidently around the time of my birth. As we read and discussed

verses 16 and 17, Dad remarked that he and mom had prayed this would be true of their firstborn child. “And many...shall he turn to the Lord their God...to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.”

Hearing this, I was surprised, pleased, encouraged, and even more motivated. The Lord has been answering that prayer as He has chosen this simple child of His to share His Word in Bible camps, DVBS's, Bible clubs, one-on-one Bible studies and discipling, public school chapels, Christian schools, Sunday Schools, and churches. More recently, He has taken me on mission trips into Kenya, Uganda, South Africa, Ukraine, and Russia, teaching His Word to thousands of very needy boys and girls, especially orphans.

In 1969 I earnestly asked the Father that He would make me a good, faithful, and wise steward of all the Bible teaching and training I had received. Our faithful Lord has been answering by opening hundreds of doors

for me to share His powerful Word. This is my favorite ministry.

On a Ukrainian mission trip, I had been asked to give a certain object lesson a number of times in orphanages, schools, and to other groups. The lesson emphasizes that Christ is all we need, is offered freely, and is received through repentance and faith. The Lord was especially blessing these presentations of His truth.

At our fifth service, I was asked to share this object lesson at an orphanage. Then word came that the children wouldn't be assembled. As team members and orphanage staff were discussing giving out the hundreds of JOY Boxes we'd brought for the children, I was quietly praying.

The Lord of the harvest wanted these children to hear the Gospel. In a few minutes, the decision was made to gather 200+ children in the auditorium. I did get to show the object lesson, urging the young people to receive the best Gift of all, the Lord Jesus. Afterwards,

we distributed JOY Boxes to the boys and girls.

The Lord is even more eager to win these precious boys and girls to Himself than we are—and that’s a lot!

In June of 1980, I requested of the Lord that He give me a ministry of encouragement, since everyone needs this from time to time. Since then, He has rejoiced my heart with testimonies by others of how He has been answering that prayer. How gracious is our Lord!

In October of 1989, a dear prayer friend of ours went to be with the Lord. She had written that she prayed for me every day. When we learned of her Homegoing, I asked the Lord for “one or two faithful prayer warriors to stand in this gap.” We know there are hundreds of friends who pray for us at least once in a while. Today we are deeply grateful that there are 26 individuals or couples who have told us they pray for us *daily*. What a

tremendous lifeline for God's blessings on us and through us!

Lana and I had an appointment for ministry in a Ukrainian grade school in the fall of 2004. However, the assistant principal informed our interpreter, Galina, ahead of time, that they wanted "no religious propaganda." Asking Galina exactly what this entailed, I learned that she felt the statement was intended to prevent proselytizing. We prayed for clear guidance and blessing from the Lord. He graciously did this beyond our expectations.

We were invited to a classroom with two grade levels of children. There we shared clear Gospel messages through stories, making plain the way of salvation. The children and the teachers gave excellent attention. They also enjoyed hearing about our families and seeing photos of them. Afterwards we gave special treats to the students.

Then a visiting teacher asked us to do the same thing in her classroom, also with two

grade levels. Happily we discovered that at least three teachers in that school seemed to be believers. We were even allowed to leave enough little picture cards of Jesus and the children for all the other students in the school. Thank You, Lord.

One January day in 1969, we drove to Columbia to take our brother Joseph back to Bible college, and then we did several errands around the city. The radiator began heating up and leaking extensively. We stocked up with eight or ten gallons of water, but asked God for His intervention.

I wrote in my journal, “Maybe this is extreme, or funny, or bad theology—or maybe the truth; but I sometimes ask the Lord to get the devil out of the car, because I know he’s trying to fight, and often uses car trouble.” I felt sure the devil wanted to stop or hinder the preaching trip to public schools the next day.

Well, the Lord took us safely home without having to stop once to add water. The next day, the Lord abundantly blessed as we

shared His precious Word in the three schools where we had appointments—and the Lord kept the devil out of the car.

On two different occasions during mission trips overseas, I asked the Lord for more appointments to teach God's Word to children, since not many meetings had been scheduled so far. In both cases, God graciously gave more opportunities, even ten more meetings one of those times, with fruitful responses.

During a recent mission trip to Ukraine, Lana and I had doors and hearts opened by the Lord of the harvest. However, we were deeply disappointed and perplexed when three appointments in a row were cancelled. Wondering if somehow I was hindering the ministry, I asked the Lord to show me if this was the case. On the other hand, if I was not to blame, I requested that He would give me a specific opportunity of ministry

Sunday evening (my morning Sunday school appointment had been pre-empted).

That evening as Lana and I were entering the church, I was asked to give my testimony in the upcoming service. By His Spirit, the Lord challenged the church folks through the testimony. After the service, I remembered my request, and thanked the Lord for His favorable answer, relieving me.

Several years ago I desired to be able to print some of the topical Scripture booklets the Lord had enabled me to compile, and later, some of the poems I had written in valley times. Also, more recently I believed that stories of answers to prayer God has given us would refresh and inspire many of God's people. I prayed that if God could use these, He would provide all that was needed.

God wonderfully answered and supplied the time to prepare the booklets, suitable printers, and the money needed. This is the seventh booklet, and He is using all of them in

the lives of hundreds of people. To God be the glory.

A few years ago, as Lana and I were in Ukraine on a mission trip, our translator, Galina, had repeatedly tried to contact the director of a certain orphanage to schedule a time for us to share God's Word with them. Having had no success, she and our driver decided to go directly to the director and seek to speak with him face to face.

When we arrived and parked, almost immediately two or three stern-looking staff members appeared in front of the car, looking quite formidable—at least to us.

Galina got out of the car, and approached the women while we two sat in the car and prayed that God would bind the devil's powers, and open this door for His servants and His Word.

Praise God, we were given permission to teach the entire group of about 300 children. As we entered the auditorium, packed with children, sometimes two deep (sitting on

laps). They clapped and clapped to welcome us.

Listening very attentively to the pictured Bible lessons, the boys and girls were most responsive. (Galina even had the children reproduce the “cluck cluck” sound in Ukrainian—300 “cluck-clucks” ☺—as we told the story of “The Little Red Hen” who gave her life to save her chicks from fire.) We explained clearly that Jesus wanted them to come to Him for eternal safety, and we believe God worked in many of their hearts to do so.

Afterwards we gave all of the boys and girls Scripture booklets, balloons, oranges, and picture cards of Jesus and the children.

As we were loading our equipment back into the car, those same teachers we’d seen earlier were chatting cordially with us via our driver, and greatly cheered us by exclaiming, “Please come back! You are welcome any time, even if you come with empty hands [no treats for the children].” Praise the Lord for His abundant, gracious answers.

*Bring forth therefore fruits
worthy of repentance.
Luke 3:8*

*Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new
creature: old things are passed away;
behold, all things are become new.
2 Corinthians 5:17*

For many years, I taught the teen Sunday school class in our church. I loved and prayed for them, seeking to lead them to Christ and disciple them in His Word. (I still pray for those I've taught.)

One of those teens who had started attending as a little boy, grew up in our church, and has come faithfully for about 25 years or more. Several years ago he asked if he could bring folks to church in his minivan, and so has been doing this ever since. He cheerfully serves the Lord in various ways, and is a real blessing to us and to the boys and girls.

There was a certain family Lana and I met on one of our mission trips. They were very kind to us; but they seemed to have very little joy of the Lord, and one of the children was rather rebellious. We prayed the Lord would work what was needed in each of those hearts. What a thrill it was to return there later and see *all* these members of the family joyfully serving the Lord!

One of the most heartening comments we have heard on a mission field was made by a Ukrainian orphanage staff member: “We can see *long term changes* in our children after you come and tell the Bible stories.” God is glorified in this way, and isn’t this what we want most of all?

*Call unto Me, and I will answer thee, and
show thee great and mighty things,
which thou knowest not.*

Jeremiah 33:3

*Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding
abundantly above all that we ask or think,
according to the power that worketh in us,
Unto Him be glory in the church by
Christ Jesus throughout all ages,
world without end. Amen.*

Ephesians 3:20, 21

Remember how Mary and Martha, (John 11) wanted the Lord Jesus to come heal their brother, Lazarus? Instead of hurrying to their home, or merely sending word that Lazarus would be all well, Jesus waited for days before going to them. Meanwhile, Lazarus died! Was Jesus late? Did He not care? We know He *does* care for His children, far more than we do. And He is *never* late.

Rather, He had something far more wonderful to accomplish for His Father's

glory. Instead of merely healing Lazarus, He raised him back to life! More than that, and even better, many who saw this miracle, believed on Jesus for eternal life. God's purposes are sky-higher than ours.

When I was only 20 or 21 years of age, I developed what was diagnosed as rheumatoid arthritis, first in my neck and ankles, and later in my wrists, fingers, and elsewhere. Of course, I asked the Lord to heal me. For a while I took what a doctor prescribed, but it seemed to make no difference whatsoever, so I stopped it.

For years I kept praying for healing. However, the Lord had something *better* planned. (No, He hasn't taken me to Heaven already. You could deduce that, right?)

Whatever His other purposes are, I think I may know two of His reasons—and all for His glory. Knowing from experience the pain and some limitations arthritis brings, I can surely empathize with scores of the ladies

and men in the nursing homes where we have been regularly visiting for over 35 years.

I believe another reason the Lord has not taken away the arthritis is to remind us all, that God is willing to use imperfect vessels—if they are clean and yielded to Him. I'm very thankful the Lord helps me to be able to drive, write, play the keyboard, and do most normal personal and household chores. I'm convinced the limitations and pains help me lean more fully on my Shepherd.

In December 2002, the Lord took Lana and me to Johannesburg, South Africa, to teach God's Word to children in a day camp. It was to be an eleven-day mission trip. However, the Lord had other plans.

He did richly bless at the day camp as we taught His Word for hours each day. There were children there on Christmas vacation from various African countries. Fortunately, they could understand English!

Then on the final morning of the camp, I was supervising the outdoor games

and playing with the youngsters before the Bible sessions began. Suddenly I skidded on tiny fallen things (like wee BBs) from the trees overhead, and hit the ground *hard*. Unable to get up, or even move my body, I asked if Lana would bring out my keyboard and visual aids so I could go ahead with the songs and Bible lessons while the pastor called for an ambulance.

Normally, early each morning I ask the Lord to prevent me from falls. (I'm somewhat clumsy, and have fallen several times, with uncomfortable results.☺) I probably did pray this that morning, but later couldn't recall for sure. Regardless, God was in control, and had some better things in mind.

I learned later that my right pelvis had been fractured. However, my mind and mouth and hands still worked, and the children still needed to hear God's Word. So I was able to go ahead and share the Bible stories and object lesson from my position on the ground. I had saved my best stories and object lesson for this final day of camp. Boy, did I have the atten-

tion of my audience! ☺ More were arriving and joining the circle around the strange spectacle of the white woman on the ground.

After the stories and object lesson, I had prayer with the children, urging them to receive God's Gift Jesus as their very own.

After 45-60 minutes, the ambulance came and took me to the hospital. Sparing you most of the painful and interesting and funny details of my ten-day hospitalization as I went through therapy, let me share some of my Heavenly Father's higher purposes. He did not prevent me from falling, because He had *better* things in store.

Here are a few of His big blessings:

1. I gained a number of new friends there.
2. I'd expected to be able to visit my brother Paul and family in Cape Town for several hours on my way home. Instead, it worked out that I could stay with them for nearly 20 days, recuperating enough to fly home.
3. Best of all, I had the enjoyable privilege of witnessing to, cheering up, and challenging for

Christ dozens more people right there: workers, other patients, and visitors.

The Christmas season made a perfect occasion for giving Scripture booklets and tracts, Bible verse pens, and even fruit out of a large fruit basket given to me.

Praise the Lord, He knows what He is doing, and He never makes a mistake.

Here is a sweet and marvelous promise from the One Who delights in the prayer of the upright (Prov. 15:8b): **“Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it”** (Psalm 81:10). Can’t beat that, can you!