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“Sacrifice of Praise”

Check out Cynthia’s Blog @
www.dickensstory.com/blog

Hebrews 13:15 “By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.”

This same passage affirms the immutability of Christ in verse 8, and we praise the Lord for His faithfulness already in this new year. God has worked in hearts, provided for needs, protected on the road, and blessed our ministry and family. Just before Christmas we celebrated the wedding of two young converts who have been living together but knew that this was not Biblical. We are praying that they will be disciplined and can be baptized soon. God allowed us to meet Rafael who attended a church that taught false doctrine but felt that what he was hearing was wrong. He apparently trusted Christ earlier but had never found a church that taught the truth. He has been learning the Bible and was baptized in February. In January Bro.

James Nash, Pr. Edilson and I made our annual seminary trip to teach for two weeks. The seminary classes that we teach in the interior generally happen every other month for a weekend, but in January we each teach three different groups over the course of two weeks. This year we were able to begin teaching classes in a new city, Avelino Lopes, another two hours west of the farthest place that we visit. We inaugurated the seminary there with 27 students from two solid Baptist churches. With this group, we now teach about

60 students from about 6 churches in 5 cities. We praise the Lord for the opportunities to



train these young people and we ask that you pray that the “Lord of the harvest will call forth laborers (from these students) into His harvest.” The fact is that there is much work to do, many cities to reach, multitudes of souls to be saved, and churches to be started here in the interior of Northeast Brazil. To this end, we ask that you pray for Joel Smothers. Joel is a young (single) missionary who is raising support to come to work with us. He has dedicated his life to help us start churches here in the interior of Brazil. One of the things that God has been doing is working in the hearts of the people here about the need to purchase land and build a building. The congregation has some funds saved to begin some construction, but we need land first. We have purposely, to this point, not asked for help in a building project so that the people will see the need; but a good piece of land in a good location will cost about \$10,000 and that price is going up quickly so we are praying for the Lord to provide the necessary funds. Finally, Cynthia needs your prayers for some minor health issues. We praise the Lord for allowing us to be involved in this work and for each of you. Praise Him!



From Her Perspective
 Cynthia Dickens
 ~ Seeing God’s Hand ~

A while back I was listening to the Bible. (I love my mobile app with the recorded Bible on it! Yes, even missionaries in northeastern Brazil use apps. :)) I was listening to the account of Elijah and the widow woman who was preparing to make her and her son’s last meal, when she was interrupted by Elijah’s request for “a morsel of bread.” Many of you know the story – Israel was in the midst of famine, and the Lord provided for Elijah in various ways, one of which also saved this woman and her son from starvation. Listening to the Bible has really caused me to notice things that I hadn’t yet noticed in previous years of reading God’s Word. (Note: I am not advocating that we give up “reading” the Bible. :P But it has been such a blessing to my soul and a tool in my spiritual growth to listen to it, as well.) In this particular story, one thing struck me as I listened to it play out. Immediately after we learn about the miraculously abundant cruise of oil and barrel of meal, we hear about a deadly sickness that came upon the widow’s son. And only after God, using Elijah, heals him does the widow announce in I Kings 17, “Now by this I know that thou art a man of God, and that the word of the LORD in thy mouth is truth.” I couldn’t even tell you how many times I’ve read this story, but this was the first recounting of it that brought this immediate thought to mind, “It took the healing of her son to cause her to see God’s hand in her life? What did she think every morning, when the barrel of meal and cruise of oil continued to supply her needs?” I was incredulous at the fact that she had failed to notice Elijah’s relationship with God and its direct impact on her own life!

But the more I’ve thought about it, it’s become a great conviction to me. How often do I miss seeing God’s hand in my everyday life? How often does He shake his head in bewilderment at me, when I’m rightfully praising Him for something

Special Prayer Requests

- DISCIPLESHIP LESSONS
- STEPS TO ORGANIZING THE CHURCH
- SEMINARY CLASSES AND STUDENTS
- LAND AND FINANCES FOR BUILDING
- A NATIONAL TO PASTOR THE WORK
- JOEL SMOTHERS—YOUNG MISSIONARY COLLEAGUE COMING TO WORK WITH US

that seems “big,” yet failing to see and credit Him with the daily evidences of His loving care and provision? I don’t want the prayer I pray before meals to become rote – simply something to get done so I can satisfy my hunger – or the bedtime prayers with my children to be nothing more than a litany of “help us to have a good rest, etc., etc.” Do I take too much for granted? Probably. I know in my head and even in my heart that God’s hand is constantly in my life; but I’m thankful that He once again lovingly called my attention to the fact that I, like the widow, have ample daily evidence of it . . . if I will only SEE it.



KIDZ CORNER

Abigail says — On my birthday, some students from daddy’s class sang Happy Birthday to me on the phone, because Daddy was teaching them on his trip. The part that I liked about it was that it was a different version of the song than what we sing in Portuguese. I was not happy that Daddy was gone, but I was happy that he called and they sang to me. Mommy gave me a candy bar with a candle on it.

