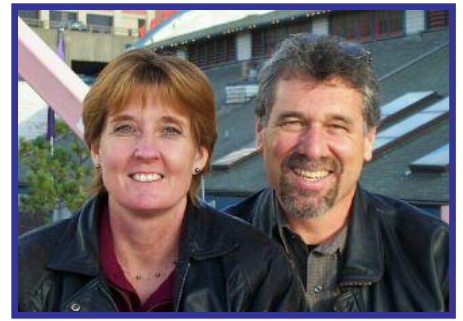


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Ministering in El Salvador



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Eternal life is not what we receive when we die. It is what we receive when we believe. Jesus came to earth as a man to reveal the Father to us that we might be His sons and receive eternal life. He came to establish His Kingdom in our hearts.

The Kingdom of God and eternal life are not synonymous with Heaven. A Christian is not waiting to die in order to enter into the Kingdom of God. A follower of Christ has believed in Him and received His life eternal. He follows Christ and walks in light. It is Christ who lives in the believer. The life Christ lives today is the same life He lived when He walked on this earth as a man. Nothing has changed. He has not changed. Now He walks and lives in His followers with the same mind, purpose and obedience. This is eternal life. This is the mind of Christ in us. This is the work of the Father through us. This is the love of God, the life of God and the selflessness of God revealed to a world walking in darkness.

So why do we experience tribulation, sickness, failures, pain and uncertainty? Jesus answers: "This sickness (*or sorrow, or job loss, or betrayal*) is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it" (*John 11:4*). "Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus" (*John 11:5*). The fact that Jesus did not appear at Martha's doorstep upon receiving news of her brother's illness doesn't look like the kind of "love" we sing about, make films about and dream about here on Earth. That is the point. It isn't Earth's love. It is God's love. God's purpose is to live His life in us, in Christ. But for that to happen, we need to want it, receive it, lay aside whatever else we are looking for to fill our lives and set our hearts utterly and uniquely upon Jesus Christ.

Mary and Martha wanted a body to be healed. Jesus was more interested in healing their souls. He wanted to give them faith and, therefore, give them the experience of eternal life. Eternal life is the life of resurrection power - a power not reserved exclusively for the end of the age but for this age in which we live. But, to see that, to see the reality of what living in Christ means - how difficult it is!

The pain and suffering God brings into our lives is not proof of His neglect. He wants to reveal to us another source of life. We are the ones who can't see. We are the ones who aren't interested in what Jesus offers. We are content with our worldly lives and pleasures: food, sex, diversion, fun. He knows it is all a terrible lie. There is no love in any of that - just selfishness, self-centeredness and self-worship. It is self-deception. We think we know how to "live" but it is a life dependent upon all our toys and games. Our souls stink as badly as the body of Lazarus. It is a stench and we cover it all up with white-washed religion. He came to give us eternal life and to live in the Father's glory and love. We prefer the glory of a new car, expanding savings accounts and making people happy with us. We are addicted to the glory of this world and the glory of man. And we are in self-denial: "I'm not an addict. I can leave it whenever I want!" Oh, sure. And that's why we are so "calm" when we get a pink slip, see our investments disappear and start to be criticized by others!

It's time to face up to what we really are: unbelievers, unrepentant and under judgment. It's time to admit the truth and "take away the stone" (*John 11:38*). We may protest God's methods and resist His recommendations (they are, in fact, commands) but it is time for the patient to accept the truth about his true spiritual condition. The tests are in and it doesn't look good. It's time to take up the stone - stench or no stench. This is the time of light, truth and repentance. To Martha's protest, Jesus replied: "Did I not tell you that if you believe, you would see the glory of God?" (*John 11:40*).

Aren't you tired of all the religious hypocrisy in your life? Doesn't it become unbearable to know all the Bible truth but not live in the power of the Holy Spirit, in purity, peace and love? Don't you just hate it? God does, too. And He knows what it will take to drag us away from our idolatries and spiritual lusts and adulteries (plus others not so "spiritual"). It is time for repentance. This is time, not for groaning over bank statements, but over our own spiritual bankruptcy. Our spiritual life looks like the balance sheet at GM. Our moral life is reflected in all the lies and greed of AIG. Don't say it is someone else's problem and sin. They are mirrors and the image they project back to us is the image of our *own* lusts, lies and self-love. We do not know the life and power of God. We know religion, nothing more.

It is time to invite Jesus in to raise the dead. This is the meaning of Christ's statement: "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it" (*John 11:4*). If we will humble ourselves - in truth, lift up the white-washed stone of our religious life, and believe Jesus - we will hear His voice command: "Lazarus (*or Hal, or Mary, or Joe*), come forth!" (*John 11:43*). We who are dead will be made alive and will come out of the graves we are in. "This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent" (*John 17:3*). This is the glorious life God has reserved for us. He made us to live in His glory and love.

Since the beginning of the year, we have been receiving God's Word from the Gospel of John and it has been of great blessing and impact in the life of the Family of Faith Church here in Santa Ana. New folks are visiting the church and new points for proclaiming the Gospel in the city are being opened. Miriam Diaz, who has a group meeting in her home on Friday evenings, has opened a new group on Tuesday



in a community near where she works. Two new families are now coming to church as a result. This new group meets in a neighborhood called Paradise. The small group I lead, which meets on Tuesday, is now meeting again on Saturday at the business of my neighbor, Ricardo, for the purpose of sharing the Gospel. Each Saturday evening, we are visiting before the meeting and then each member of our Tuesday group takes part by sharing in song and/or testimony. We have met many new people and lives have been touched. This new group meets in a neighborhood called Cloverleaf. Pray for us as we seek to open additional groups around our city, according to God's leading.

One of our greatest blessings and greatest challenges is the construction of a meeting place on our new property. We are building according to the funds God provides, with a very simple construction. The men and women of the church work on Saturdays, doing what we can. It is a big project and we certainly need your prayers and support. I confess it is at times a bit overwhelming.

We were able to connect the utilities after initially having many difficulties. There was much prayer to God as we struggled to find a solution. God led us step-by-step to ask a neighbor for permission to run a water line through her property. She was most helpful and saved us thousands of dollars that would have been spent to bring water from around the corner and up the street. The sewage was another struggle as there are no clear plans or records of where (or if) a sewer line goes by the property. After a week of anxious digging, the sewer line was found and we are now connected.



Work continues on the small structure which will house four bathrooms and a multi-purpose room for office, nursery and storage. The roof was extended a bit to have space for another Sunday School class outside. The elevation work was done for free by a contractor who wanted the soil. There is, however, still a bit more soil to be removed. We are getting closer to starting construction on a pole-building roof which will serve



as a meeting place for the church. We have two requirements to be able to move onto our



new property: (1) Build an open shelter for the church services and (2) Provide a meeting place for the Sunday School. So far, a bit over \$17,000 has been donated for construction, mostly from our own church people. Up to this point, we have spent about \$15,200. The security

fence is up, we have the nursery/bathroom structure nearly completed, the elevation work is almost done and we are working on protecting the site with drainage ditches. However, we cannot start on the church building until additional funds are raised.

We know God has called us to leave our rented facilities and occupy our new property. However, we must proceed according to His direction and provision. The open shelter for the church will cost about \$6,000 and simple structures for each of the four Sunday School classes will cost about \$700 each.

With the obvious concern for building a church structure, we must never lose sight of the greater goal (and much more difficult task) of building up the church in Christ and proclaiming the Gospel. We ask for your prayers for us,

taking up the armor of God and standing firm against the wicked one. I ask that you pray for Cheryl and me. We join with Paul asking for prayer: "That I might open my mouth boldly . . . and speak as I ought to speak" (*Ephesians. 6:20*), full of the Holy Spirit and living the eternal life of Christ. Thank you. We are



Yours for Souls,
Hal & Cheryl

THIS WAS TAKEN
 ON SUNDAY AT OUR
 MOTHERS' DAY SERVICE
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