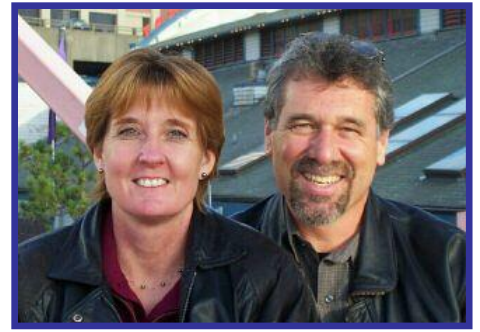


Hal and Cheryl Large Ministering in El Salvador



November 2009

Has God spoken to you today? What has God said to you this week?

One hears all the time of those who have received a "word from the Lord". Others talk of God "leading" them to make a decision or take a certain action. Books are written on divine guidance. Is it possible for someone to hear God's voice today? It certainly was a common experience for those we read about in the Bible. Has God suddenly stopped talking to us?

God speaks. He is still speaking today. *Why should I be so surprised by that?* I proclaim that I have a relationship with God, not a religion. How could I possibly have a relationship with someone who never talks to me? I am not talking about just reading the Bible. I am talking about the Spirit of God actually speaking to my spirit in a personal and direct way - God speaking to *me*. God speaking to *me* something He is not saying to another but is meant to be heard by *me personally*.

How can I lead a church or live my life with authority and assurance in a *spiritual* way unless God speaks to *me*? I think God is always speaking. The challenge (for me) is to *listen* in a way I can *hear*. It is, after all, a personal relationship with *God*. He is not a book or an idea or a feeling. He is a person and He is awesome. I have gone from just reading *about Him* or just talking *to Him* to actually sitting quietly and, with a submissive and obedient spirit, *listening to Him*. It is not a waste of time. It is how one has a personal, conversational *relationship* with God. He does speak to us.

I am being challenged these days to *listen* to God. (The book, "Hearing God" by Dallas Willard, has been very helpful.) I am also being challenged to live and relate to *God in Christ alone* and then to live *out of* my relationship to Christ in how I relate to *others*. (Again, another book, "Life Together" by Dietrich Bonhoeffer, has been most helpful.) I cannot be living in Christ and, at the same time, be living with desires (wish dreams) either for what I would receive from another or about how I think things should be in order to be at peace. That is idolatry. Christ *is* my peace - period! He *is* my life, plus nothing and minus nothing. I have been made complete in *Him* (Colossians 2:8,9). "*Grace and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ*" (Ephesians 1:3).

These are simple ideas. However, as with much of the truth we receive only in our minds, we take it and make it a religious idea instead of a living reality. It is made by our unbelief (lack of practice, *undoing*) dead truth. We kill it or nullify it by our indifference, letting God's Word fall to the ground; or worse, we boast about what we *know* (not about what God *does* through us). So, we misuse it. It leads to spiritual pride, arrogance, hypocrisy and separation from the Spirit of God; the one who has all power and authority. God is constantly confronting us with our idolatry, pride, selfishness and disobedience (the confrontation is *so personal*) that we might have, by means of repentance and faith, a living, conversational *relationship* with Him - the *true* and *only* source of what we *really* need: eternal life.

As we live in Christ and live together in Christ, bearing with one another, praying with one another, loving one another, exhorting one another and as one body in Christ ministering in service, in example and in word, how important it is - how utterly essential it is - to hear the Voice of God. There can be no personal *relationship* with God without it. Are we listening? Are we seeking? What has God said to you? What is He *saying*? It is our privilege to listen to God and enjoy Him forever.

Since I last wrote to you (end of August), we have had two special items of news. One was the move from our rented facilities to our property. The other was a week-long visit by a construction/evangelism team from Columbus, Indiana. We had a great week with the team of nine adults. After the weekend activities at church, Monday was spent constructing a retaining wall and painting. The rest of the week, we had evangelistic activities in schools, an orphanage and in different neighborhoods of the city. It was a really good campaign.



Our move to the property was the result of God's faithful and patient speaking until I was willing and able to hear what He was saying. I had my ideas about how things should be in order for us to make the move. I had an expensive building plan. I wanted everything to be just right; but God's idea was different from mine. I was finally made to listen by the lack of financial resources to erect a fancy building or even to pay the rent where we were. When I was finally willing to accept what God wanted to do in simplicity, humility and even needs, limitations and physical discomforts, I was able to hear Him. Having received His Word, I could



then step out in faith, with conviction and certainty, and do His will, in His power, authority and grace.

So, with a simple roofed-shed structure of rough hewn wood, sheet metal for the Sunday School and a tarp raised like a flag on six poles to keep the sun and rain off the folks in the main service, we started meeting on our own property. And, well, it is glorious! Attendance has actually increased. There is a group of men and women who gather at 7:00 a.m. to begin setting up for the service. The sound system must be stored at a private home and transported each Sunday. The open air structures must be swept and mopped and the dirt watered down. Then, the tarp must be raised and the chairs must be set up. People begin to gather to pray at 8:30 a.m. in the different ministries and at 9:00 a.m. the service begins.

Our whole vision has changed for the church structures. For the immediate future, we are now envisioning a park-like environment with open-sided buildings. We are in the tropics, by the way, where we don't worry about heating or cooling. Trees have been donated, which can be cut and milled for a permanent roof structure to house the church services (similar to the building where the Sunday School now meets). We are planting trees, bushes, flowers, etc. to create a garden or park-like environment.

Before we start building, we need to have another six feet of dirt removed from the second half of the property. We are calling out to God for this dirt to be moved by a contractor who would need it and move it for free. Please join us in prayer asking God to provide according to His good will for us.



The building of a church structure is but the visible struggle of the spiritual building of Christ's church, which is His body. There are so many prayer requests, I believe I'll just make a list:

1. That each one in the Sunday School and Music/Praise Ministries respond to God's call for purity, obedience and love in the Spirit of Christ.
2. For the couples in the church to walk in holiness, honesty and humility in obedience to God in Christ. There are four or five couples in serious trouble.
3. For evangelistic outreaches in Trebol, Paradise City and IVU. Pray for laborers and servant ministers. Pray for faith, spiritual sensitivity and boldness in Christ's authority.
4. For spiritual covering over Cheryl, wisdom and direction as she ministers to the ladies of the church and exercises her gifts for the edifying of the entire body of Christ.
5. That each time of public preaching and teaching be accomplished in the authority of the name of Christ, having received from the Father His Word for the church.
6. For the preaching of the Gospel - every day - in the Spirit's power and in the authority of the name of Christ, in obedient faith. Pray that God would open each heart to repentance and faith in Him.

Thank you for your prayers and support. You are all very much appreciated. We are

Yours for Souls,

Hol & Cheryl

