

MAY 2010

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From the Simpsons
in Santa Ana

Growing in the Family of Faith



Standing before a man in desperate need of help, Jesus addressed the crowd, "Which is easier," He asked, "to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven'; or to say, 'Get up, and pick up your mat and walk?'" (Mark 2:9) To the outside observer, the obvious answer is, of course, the former – to tell him that his sins are forgiven. How so? There can be no immediate outward evidence that contradicts what has been said; whereas, one who tells the paralyzed man to get up and walk will indeed be seen as a hoax and a fool, if in fact he is not healed. Thankfully, in this particular story, Jesus gives testimony to the power of God to work both these miraculous restorations in the life of this person.

I share from this passage because it speaks to the reality of each of us in general and also specifically to what we have been experiencing in the Family of Faith Church. As Christians, all too often we settle for what is "easier" to say, what can be safely shared or believed, but that many times proves meaningless and empty when put to the test in daily life. God's Spirit gives testimony in the Scriptures that "the Kingdom of God does not consist in words but in power" (1 Corinthians 4:20). But doubts remain. Can His power transform *my* life? Has He made it *available to me*? Or must I resolve myself to a life based upon what flows from my own heart? (If you like, take a look at what Jesus has to say about that "chestnut" in Mark 7:21-23.) What does this thing called "new life in Christ" really entail for *my days and my hours*?

It has been a tremendous encouragement, as we have been teaching and preaching through specific and practical areas of daily life, to see God give testimony to how He works in and through each of us. How in the life of one lady, the deep-seated anger in her heart destroying some members of her family was replaced by God's love; a genuine and sincere love to restore her relationships with those same people. And, in the testimony of another person who became acutely aware of just how pervasive selfishness was in his life and has begun to see God's Spirit bringing about the transformation from selfishness to self-less service to aid others. As we walk together as a church body in the power of the Sacrifice and Spirit of Jesus Christ, please pray that the reality of the Life of Christ would be seen in our lives daily and that the testimony of His power would bring hope to those who struggle alone against their own personal demons.

We are thankful for the testing and our weakness that God has made manifest before our eyes. He continues to bring us to the place of looking to Him and not to ourselves, of learning personal lessons of the fact that He is our Life, our Rest, our Peace. Surely, God is at work each day, both in our family and yours, to make us more like His Son as, every morning, He renews His amazing love for you and me.

Thank you for your thoughts, prayers and support for us. We recognize and receive them for what they truly are – the very ministering of God to us through you. Thank you.

We have continued with our group of Young Marrieds. We meet Saturday afternoons and are currently studying "The Kingdom of God". It has been nice to share our lives with other couples. Jon finished his three-month class on Sunday night and will start up again in mid-July. Sunday School is doing well. We have a couple of new teachers, which has been fun. We also have more kids joining our classes.

Elizabeth and Jonathan are doing well in school. It has been a tough year, adapting to the changes, but we have settled into our routine.

We have busy months ahead of us. The kids' school has a medical team next week that Elizabeth and I will be helping with. Then, we have our Medical Team from Indiana and, in August, we have a team from Washington which will help us with our VBS. We are very excited to see God working in each event.

PRAYER REQUESTS:

- **The upcoming short-term medical missions team – June 19-26.**
- **Testimony of God's love and power through our local church body.**
- **To walk together in love and good communication as a family. (Can I get an 'amen' from anyone with teenage kids?)**

PRAISE:

- **God's continued provision and protection for us.**