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INTRODUCTION

In my November letter, I shared with you some blessings as a result of prayer starting in January of 1996. I now want to go back to the same starting point and share with you in more detail, since, in retrospect, I now see more clearly the intent and guidance of the Lord, and am awed by what He has done. Some of the things He has shown me, spoken to me and led me to do, I realize are very personal and intimate. In this regard, here are two things for your consideration. First, I share these things with you to draw your attention to what I believe He wants to do in principle with all who know Him and wish to serve Him. Secondly, this type of sharing leaves me vulnerable. But I know of no other way, when following the Lord. Several years ago, I decided to “come out of the closet”¹ and be what I am in the Lord to all I meet, for He has freed me to be vulnerable and has allowed me to be vulnerably free -- and that is freedom.

By way of explanation, in one respect I am like a number of you who read my letters. For example, in our Church, I presently have no assigned responsibility as a Pastor, Elder, Deacon, Teacher, Prayer Rail Minister or Board Trustee. What the Lord has done and is doing in my life, He has done with me as an ordinary man who desires to glorify His Name. And what He has done for others, He will do for you if you hunger and thirst for the things of God.² You do not have to be in a visible ministry to be used by the Lord. The world cannot distinguish between the limelight and the light. Limelight conceals; light reveals. Those who are hungry for the things of God seek the light.

A NEW BEGINNING

In January of 1996, I was closing down a small

¹To come out of the closet, meaning to be open and unhesitatingly willing to testify to whomever I meet concerning the blessing of knowing the Lord Jesus personally.

²Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled. (Matthew 5:6).

finance company which I started in October of 1992, and converting liquidity to equities, stocks and bonds. As I was doing this, it occurred to me that I was going to free up some of my personal time. It was then that I began to talk to the Lord and say to Him something like this, “Lord, I want to use the additional time I have available, now and for the rest of my life, to glorify the Name of the Lord Jesus. The two ministries³ you have given me take some time each week, but preparation time is minimal, so I will have time available which I would like to use as you direct me. Please *give* me some additional things to do which will glorify Your Name.” I did not realize at the time how powerful this prayer was! Thirty years before, my wife and I had knelt beside our bed one night and made an absolute commitment to the Lord, wherein everything we possessed was *given* to Him.⁴ That act in prayer was a *gift*, our gift to Him, our gold, frankincense and myrrh.⁵ My prayer in January of 1996 was a *specific request*, asking Him to *give* to me. And that is the difference in the two prayers. And it is a major, valid difference. In the book of James the author, writing to the twelve tribes of the Dispersion wrote, “You do not have because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your own pleasures.”⁶ This is a clear admonition that to ask for an additional assignment to glorify the Name of the Lord is to pray in the will of the Lord, and that is

³Playing the piano in Nursing Homes and a book ministry I have been involved in for a number of years.

⁴“I appeal to you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.” (Romans 12:1, RSV). After total commitment, spiritual worship is not something you go and do; it is something you *are in your every-day life*.

⁵“...and lo, the star which they (wise men from the East who came to Jerusalem to worship he who was born king of the Jews) had seen in the East went before them, till it came to rest over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy; and going into the house they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold, frankincense and myrrh.” (Matthew 2:9, 10, RSV).

⁶James 4:2 (b), 3.

powerful! This request continues to be in my prayers, and I attribute the Lord's using me in a new way to this request.

Back to the beginning. As I continued to lift up to the Lord my request to be used as His servant, sometime around February of 1996,⁷ He assured me that He had heard my prayer and would give me a new ministry. Then curiosity set in! And I couldn't stand it. So I said to the Lord, "Can you please give me an inkling of what this new ministry is about?" Of course, all the while I was thinking that if I could get Him to give me a hint, I could be doing some thinking and planning of my own, as though He needed some of *my* help. This time He again assured me that He had heard and would answer my prayer, but to expect the unexpected. This didn't help my curiosity much, but I quit asking as the Lord began to answer my prayer and train me for "the unexpected."⁸

And the training started on 3/1/96 when the Lord began to impress me to "Redeem the time" and "Be bold in prayer." "Redeem the time," meaning when you are born again,⁹ you are born into the eternal kingdom of God and therefore born into eternity. Since chronological time is thereafter of no kingdom consequence, I was to take advantage of opportunities presented to me, as the passing of each day meant one day less I would have to glorify His Name. With regard to the admonition, "Be bold in prayer," I had no idea what He meant, and I've got a pretty vivid imagination. Little did I know however, that the Lord, with these words, was beginning to prepare, equip and test me, over the coming fourteen or fifteen months, for a new ministry. And that's exciting! Fasten your seat belts.

My first test came on July 15, 1997. The Lord

⁷The dates are taken from the journal I have kept for 32 years in which I record the things the Lord teaches me.

⁸In reviewing my notes, I realized in retrospect only, that He began to train and equip me for a new ministry, although while he was testing, training and equipping me, I was unaware of what He was preparing me to do.

⁹See John 3:1 - 21 for the Lord's discourse on the new birth related at night in secret to Nicodemus, a Pharisee, a ruler of the Jews and a teacher of Israel.

spoke to me and said, "Give away your watch."¹⁰ I previously had mailed to my children a detailed list of personal items to go to them and my grandchildren at my death, a copy of which was also attached to my will. Since the watch was earmarked for my youngest son Gil, at our first meeting, I handed the watch to him in its original box and said, "The Lord told me to give this away. It's yours and I do not care what you do with it," and he understood. Although I didn't know it at the time, there was also another test ahead.

On September 5, 1996, the Lord gave me these words, "Holy Spirit, rain on me." When these words came, I knew they were to be used in prayer, which I began to do on an intermittent basis. Whereas "Give away your watch", was a test, "Holy Spirit, rain on me" was the beginning of His teaching me to be bold in prayer. Now, fast forward to April 28, 1997. Dale (my wife) and I had spent a few days in the Texas Hill Country and our last stop on the way back home was Wimberley. While there, we drove around the business and residential areas, visited the Chamber of Commerce where we picked up a Visitor's Guide, had lunch and then headed for IH-35 and the drive back to Dallas. Between Austin and Waco, Dale looked over the Visitor's Guide, formatted as a newspaper, and found on the front page a picture of Pleasant Wimberley, obviously an older man with a beard. Surrounding his photograph was a prayer, that took up the complete top part of the Guide (above the fold), entitled "Wimberley's Legacy." The prayer was almost pure scripture. The caption under the photograph read, "Pleasant Wimberley – This was his prayer over the Wimberley Valley and its inhabitants then, now and forever. It was never written down but was given so often it was remembered by all who heard it." The prayer was prayed during an approximate time-frame of from 1850 to 1875. After Dale read the prayer, as I was driving, she said, "Listen, I want to read you something." She then began to read aloud to me the prayer as we were driving north at 70 MPH on the Interstate. As she did so, the words actually became spirit and life, as Jesus said,¹¹ *and the Holy Spirit fell on both of us--* literally rained on us. Under the power

¹⁰An 18 carat gold Rolex watch with diamond face, diamond bezel and President's band which I had worn for a number of years.

¹¹John 6:63.

of the Holy Spirit, we both began to weep for joy¹² and praise the Lord. Included in the “rain” was a blessing/conviction message for Dale. This was a “first” for both of us. Hear this *kingdom principle*: when the Holy Spirit gives you a specific prayer to pray, as the words part your lips, you prophesy or speak into existence that which you say.¹³ I learned this principle thirty-two years ago when the Holy Spirit, for the first time, instructed me to pray, with another person, for a family. As a result of that prayer, I watched the Lord miraculously change that family. God is in the miracle business and his miracles did not cease with the original Apostles.

Around noon on September 20, 1996, I drove to the House of Prayer¹⁴ to enter into intercessory prayer for those who call in their prayer requests or drop them in the offering plates. As I was driving to the Church, the Holy Spirit gave me these words, “Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean.” After I had finished with my intercessory prayer, I came home and found that passage in the 51st Psalm, where David records his prayer after the Lord had used the Prophet Nathan to convict him of committing adultery and murder. (It is interesting to note that prior to David’s conviction, he pronounced his own death sentence, which was stayed by the Lord because of David’s repentant heart. He nevertheless paid a high price for his deeds.)¹⁵ As I read this Psalm, realizing the Holy Spirit had said to me, “Purge me with Hyssop and I shall be clean,” I prayed most of the 51st Psalm as my own prayer to God. I then also prayed Psalm 19:7 - 14 as my own personal prayer. In retrospect, although I knew of no unconfessed sin in my life at that time, I believe the Holy Spirit was *purging* and cleansing me in preparation for what was to follow. I am reminded of Isaiah who, in a vision, was also cleansed in

¹²In His Presence is fullness of joy. Read Psalm 16:11. Jesus is the only one who can cause it to Rain inside your car with the windows up!

¹³“For assuredly, I say to you, whoever *says* to this mountain, ‘Be removed and be cast into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, *he will have whatever he says*.” (Mark 11:23, NKJV, Italics added).

¹⁴The House of Prayer is a 2700 square-foot room in our Church building complex set aside for and dedicated to prayer.

¹⁵Read II Samuel 12:1 - 25 for this account.

preparation for a ministry after which *he* volunteered, when he said, “Woe is me, for I am undone! Because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts.”¹⁶ Then one of the seraphim flew to Isaiah and touched his lips with a live coal from the altar and said, “Behold, this has touched your lips; your iniquity is taken away, and your sin is *purged*.”¹⁷ After the purging, the Lord said to Isaiah, “Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?” and Isaiah’s response was, “Here am I! Send me.”¹⁸ His response, “Here am I! Send me,” came after he saw the King, the Lord of Hosts. Once you catch a glimpse of Him, you begin to understand Isaiah’s response. One look will change you forever.

This concludes the part of this letter concerning the Lord leading me into a new ministry beginning in January of 1996. I have written about only a small part of the story told in this letter. In my next letter I hope to tell you what I was shown concerning forgiveness,¹⁹ authoritative prayer and fasting, as a part of God’s training program.

The way to get what God wants you to have is to ask Him. When you pray [ask] in His will what He wants you to have, nothing can prevent your receiving that request. That’s the way it is in the kingdom when you ask the King. Jesus said “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled.”²⁰ Since Jesus is our righteousness,²¹ I believe it does no injustice to that scripture to change it to read, Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for Jesus, for they shall be filled. Man has made the reception of God’s blessings complicated. God didn’t do it! Man, through his “theological bent,” has often created a doctrinal maze to complicate coming to God. I have been guilty of that in my past. And I still have some

¹⁶Isaiah 6:5.

¹⁷Isaiah 6:7 (Italics added).

¹⁸Isaiah 6:8.

¹⁹Part of which was in my 11/1/97 letter.

²⁰Matthew 5:6.

²¹I Corinthians 1:30 (b).

doctrinal “chaff” that needs to be discarded. But the Holy Spirit as my Counselor will help me, for I am learning that He is faithful; his broom sweeps clean. Old habits are hard to break. New habits are hard to make. But, upon request, He will help in this area.

ADMONITION²²

“Have no theology. Seek instead a relationship with Me. Seek to know Me as my servant Paul who said, ‘I know whom I have believed.’²³ And do you not remember the words I said, ‘depart from Me, I never knew you?’²⁴ So seek to know Me, for ‘this is eternal life, to know the only true God and Jesus Christ whom He has sent,’²⁵ and if you know Me, you will know the Father, for the Holy Spirit makes you acquainted with both of Us at the same time. And as we become acquainted, then will I become what the Father intends that I be, then will you be drawn to Me as you are intended to be, then will others be drawn to Me through you as I intended from the beginning.”

ISAIAH’S CHRISTMAS

Around the year 710 B.C., inspired by the Holy Spirit, the Prophet Isaiah wrote, “He has no form or comeliness; and when we see Him there is no beauty that we should desire Him.”²⁶ This is a declaration that the Word Who spoke the universe into existence, Who was to be born upon earth, was not to be housed in a body so beautiful that He would be followed and adored for the beauty of His countenance, or outward appearance. No! He would be just the opposite: one whom the world would mock and call an impostor, a Samaritan, whom the world would despise, reject and crucify on a cross, the most ignominious death reserved for criminals, under Roman law. But how precious He is to those who know Him today! For to know Him personally, defies description in human terms. To be

introduced to Jesus by the Holy Spirit is so wonderful, there is literally no (other) beauty that we should desire Him. To know Him as revealed by the Holy Spirit, to hear His voice, to perceive with the eye of faith the beauty of His character, His Spirit, leaves absolutely nothing to be desired -- absolutely nothing. Such is His Beauty today. One does not know Him through Church attendance, good works or the praise of men, but by being born again. As Jesus said to Nicodemus one night, “except a man is born again, he cannot see the kingdom.”²⁷ That rebirth is not an achievement of the mind or the intellect, but is a Supernatural act of God when by faith, one invites Jesus into his heart as Lord. And the word Lord means one who rules or reigns with authority. In this case, with absolute authority, for He said, “All authority has been given to Me (by God) in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations...”²⁸

No one...
spoke as He spoke
lived as He lived
died as He died
gave as He gave.
He gives one...
reason to live
reason to love
reason to write.
He is...
the essence of giving
the reason for the Season.
To know Him is...
to love Him
to wish for everyone
that blessing.
And indeed, by faith
I offer Him to you
the greatest Gift to give
at Christmastime.

Merry *Christmas* everyone.

.....more later, the Lord willing.

²²James L. Ash, **For Christians Only**, “Admonition” (Published by James L. Ash, 1989), p.29.

²³II Timothy 1:12.

²⁴Matthew 7:23.

²⁵John 17:3.

²⁶Isaiah 53:2(b).

²⁷Read John 3:1 - 21 for the story of Jesus’ secret meeting one night with a prominent ruler of the Jews.

²⁸Matthew 28:18 (b), 19 (a), NKJV, (brackets inserted).