

Singing in the Season of Storms...

The whole earth is trembling with storms that are blowing across the landscape of our times. These storms are no respecter of person as they threaten man's fundamental understanding of safety and security. These storms shake the foundations of our nations, our societies, our families and even our faith.

Never before has our own personal faith been so tested. Health issues of family members, challenging finances; seeing the suffering of those who walk in darkness and perceive not the light - the on-going suffering and injustices of our refugee families and... and... and... These swirling storms are at best challenging and at their worst, seeking to destroy both our faith and our witness.

How do we hold fast in the midst of the storm? How do we continue to minister peace to those walking in darkness? How do we do so when at times our own personal storms are seeking to steal our very peace?

At a time when I was feeling the brunt of the storm on so many fronts, a friend who was unaware of my struggles was led to send a link to a song that was to provide the answer to my worn and weary soul. "I will praise you in this storm," broke through the debilitating darkness of the storm. Only the Lord knew what a profound effect it would have on me as EVERY SINGLE WORD SPOKE DEEP INTO MY SOUL AND SET ME FREE: Free to truly praise and worship with my whole heart; free to continue ministering to those who are lost; free to be authentic in my faith, weaknesses and all; free to know that in my weakness He is strong! Free to reflect peace and joy that we experience in the midst of the storm, to be a witness of His amazing provision of faith, grace, and peace. Trading a spirit of heaviness for a spirit of joy, set free to dance in the storm, with the Holy Spirit my dance partner.

So, we sing through these storms, we proclaim his goodness and mercy! And the Lord is pouring out His favor and blessing upon us! The storms may still be swirling round about us, but we have a deep abiding peace, filling and flooding our hearts and minds as we offer up praise to Him!

The Gemeinde

Recently, we hosted the Gideons at church...Daniel, from Switzerland, a leader in the international Gideons divisions shared with us their vision for Europe. It was an interesting presentation, but something he shared about Austria in particular stuck with me. He shared "that the hidden religion of Austria was Christianity." One might say, duh... like why are you guys there if this were not so..." But what was so remarkable to me was not that "profound tidbit of information," but that it confirmed again our call to Austria and also that the Lord was (and has been) pouring out a spirit of evangelism upon our little group to counter measure this statement!

We have for months, a good year now, been experiencing a spirit of revival and evangelism within our group. Stories of witnessing continues to be shared weekly, encouraging and spurring one another in sharing the gospel. The Lord has caused some pretty amazing encounters for our little group and we are always amazed at the lengths He will go to reveal himself. Recently the Lord quite literally "closed a door to open up his Kingdom."

Walter is an older man in our Gemeinde and as so many do, booked an appointment with a dentist in Hungary, because dental work there is so much cheaper than in Austria. And so he found himself on a train with some Christian Literature in hand. Being somewhat introverted, Walter is not one to witness to anyone on the street (or in the train), but on this occasion was convicted that he needed to be prepared to witness to someone on the train. As he took his seat he noticed a lady who was sitting across from him, it wasn't long before the Holy Spirit nudged him confirming that she was the one.

He waited, somewhat uncomfortably, praying and asking for an open door to start a conversation with this lady. After a while she got up to go to the bathroom and on returning, said to Walter: "On journeys like this, I usually have something to read. But I forgot my book in the rush to make the train." Walter breathed a sigh of relief as the door opened before him. He offered her the Christian booklet and the lady was thankful to have something to occupy her time. The two chatted a little but unfortunately, the time

came too soon to get off the train. Remarkably, they discovered they were getting off at the same station. The train came to a halt, but had however, overshot the platform. They tried to open the doors, but they were shut fast. Talk about, "the Lord shuts doors that no man can open!" Well, the train started off again with both of them still aboard. They chatted and it transpired that she too was going to the dentist. As it so happened the conversation changed to things of the faith. This lady was touched by what she had read and wanted to know more. Walter witnessed to her and explained the gospel for a whole 45 minutes while returning to their intended destination. During this time, Walter answered many of her questions about Jesus.

The two made it to the dentist (somewhat late) and while they waited for their appt. the lady started to talk to the people in the waiting room about what she had just read. Unbelievable - here was an unbeliever witnessing to other unbelievers! On the return journey the two spoke more about the faith and Walter invited her to come to church. Recently she came for a Tuesday evening bible study and was attentive throughout the evening. It truly is amazing how God intervenes in strange and miraculous ways. The Lord will go to great lengths to reveal and make himself known! Please pray for more such openings, that God would prove himself a great and extraordinary God!

Yearly Retreat

This year our theme for the retreat was "The Presence of God." Our expectation for the retreat was to experience a deeper sense of God's presence. Based on the 1949 Lewis revival we used this as an example how God's presence was made manifest among the people. The main themes derived from this account were: the importance of prayer and of God given visions; the expectancy that God will fulfill His promises; the importance to commit to seeking his presence, and repentance.

During the retreat God moved in powerful ways. There was a great awareness of His presence and we heard God speak about His direction and about His expectations of us. During one session, one of our members had a picture for her small town. As she had had before, she saw a picture of a bright cross over the town. But this time, she saw the rocks of the mountain crumbling and crashing around her into an abyss. She was troubled by this vision and was at first reluctant to share with the group. We agreed to pray about what this may mean. After lunch, Kathleen and Ava invited everyone on a treasure hunt, to look for "scripture rocks" (painted rocks with an encouraging scripture on it). This lady found her rock but did not read the scripture until the next morning. During the evening she was still troubled by the vision she had had. She awoke the next morning and read her scripture which was Psalm 46. "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear though the earth gives way, though the mountains be moved into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble at its swelling. There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy habitation of the Most High. God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved; God will help her when morning dawns. The nations rage, the kingdoms totter; he utters his voice, the earth melts. Be still, and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!"

The cross of Jesus stands high above everything and even though everything may seem to crumble, He will not be moved. He is indeed in our midst. He will be exalted above the nations. He has conquered the storms.

Refugee Update

We continue our work with the refugees, with Mohammad and Nermin, (expecting their first in December) Mohammad and Suad, (just gave birth to their third) with Vardohe, Arman and Milena, with Marhar and Porsor, (just gave birth to their second) with Bessie and with Zaira, Maryam and Ibrahim. It is a challenge to keep up with all of these very needy individuals as they tend to be moved from one refugee camp to another.

Today we were with Vardohe and Milena and as Ava and Milena played on the floor, Vardohe spoke about her ill health and the immense stress that they were under. We were able to witness to her about God's faithfulness and the peace that he brings. She got out the Armenian bible we had given her and we read the Psalms together. We encouraged her to read the word and to let God comfort her in her time of need. Please pray for this family, as there appears to be no end in sight regarding their Asylum application.

Please pray that God would continue to open doors, even if he has to shut a few in order to bring this family to an authentic relationship with Jesus.

We remain in awe of the mighty God we serve, and the privilege we have to serve him in Austria. It is of course not without great cost of family and loved ones. This year has been an especially challenging year for us as a family. It is only by His grace that we have been sustained and we give Him all the praise! He graciously and lovingly made provisions for our return visits home this year. We are grateful for the many that gave to make these visits possible. We are blessed beyond measure to serve such an amazing God and to have faithful supporters in ministry - thank you for all you do to show us the love of Jesus in your partnership!

For His Fame Among the Nations!

Daniel, Kathleen & Ava