

THE JOURNEY

A Publication of

Dayspring Discipleship Institute

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“...the ministry of the Word” –Acts 6:4

Teaching – Equipping – Training – Ministering

Brenda Cox, Executive Director

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“...the Dayspring from on high has come to give light to those that sit in darkness...” --Luke 1:78-79

Newsletter

Salt Shakers

Dearhearts,

I made my traditional Tennessee Christmas custard drink this year and for some reason it wasn't quite up to standard. It tasted flat. In working on my second batch, I suddenly remembered my mother's addition that the recipe didn't include: "a pinch of salt"! In went the few grains of salt and out came the full, rich flavor I was used to! Salt is pretty amazing. A pinch of salt will take the bitter taste out of coffee without changing its flavor. It causes water to boil sooner. It preserves. It disinfects. It heals. It makes things taste better. It removes the flat taste of some foods to bring out the full flavor. It creates thirst. It's best lightly shaken and scattered.

So what did Christ mean when He said you and I are salt? He didn't say we are to be salt, He said we *are* salt. By simply believing in Him something in us has changed; we bring to the table of the world something no one else can. We uniquely are able to enhance the flavor of life for those at our table, to remove the bitter taste from their cup, to facilitate warmth to what has grown cold; to create thirst for life and God and toss a pinch of that salt into other pots. Of all people on earth, we alone are designed to preserve what is precious, to disinfect soulish wounds and heal contaminated relationships.

So what is it? It isn't laughter or caring or steely resolve; it isn't crusading or efficiency. The world has many such people. It isn't even doctrinal correctness. The Pharisees were doctrinally right. They were not salt. So what is it in us that uniquely equips us to change lives and situations? What salt has been placed in our shaker that is not of earth?

In Numbers, God spoke of the salt of the Covenant. It was to be sprinkled on all sacrifices. We are people of the covenant, people of God. In all the earth, we are the only representatives of the Creator of the universe. We are the only ones able to speak His language. Colossians 4 speaks of this language: "Let your speech be always with grace,

seasoned with salt, that you may know how to answer every man." We are people of humility...agents of grace, measured in thought and word. It is the salt of joy and peace, gentleness, patience and kindness and faith un-tethered by circumstance. We, only, can speak of true hope in desperate times. With these grains of salt the world about us is to be seasoned by our presence and brought to full flavor.

So Stephen, "being full of the Holy Spirit," forgave those who stoned Him. Forgiveness was the salt that removed the bitterness of that cup. In my parent's childhood, before refrigeration, pork was preserved by packing it in salt. As our spirit is packed in the salt of the covenant, super-human responses are preserved in us. In my husband's last months he was packed in salt; his body misshapen by chemo and his face puffy from steroids, he was confined to a wheelchair. Once, I asked him how he was doing and he said, "I'm the happiest man on earth. I have nothing to do but be with my family and my Lord. What more could I ask?" Joy comes, not in circumstance, but in Presence. "Have salt in yourselves," Christ spoke in Mark, "and have peace one with another." The salt of God produces peace within and without. It hinges on nothing but God Himself. We, alone, in all the earth, carry such salt.

"But if salt has lost its savor," Christ asks, "with what will the world be seasoned?" You and I are seasoning agents. Yet I find myself these days being convicted that my salt has lost some of its "saltiness." I must guard against those things of this world that would make me useless for preserving what is precious, for speaking grace and removing bitterness, for enhancing the flavor of my world. Salt is pretty amazing stuff. It is especially so in God's people.

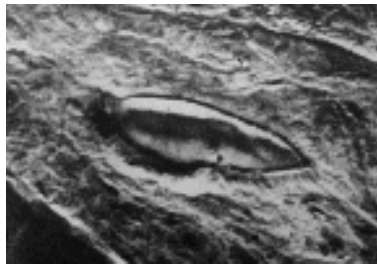
I love you,

Brenda

DAYSPRING WEB SITE ADDS PAGE ON NOAH'S ARK

In the mountains of Ararat in northern Turkey, convincing evidence of the remains of a giant boat has been found. Completely exposed by an earthquake many years ago, it approximates the dimensions of those prescribed by God to Noah for the ark. The result has been recognition of this site by the nation of Turkey as Noah's ark through the construction of a Visitor's center. For pictures of this site and narrative of the efforts of the Ron Wyatt archeological teams over the course of years to substantiate this find, check out our website at www.dayspringdiscipleship.org, go to the **Bible and History** page and click on Noah's Ark.

This is a photo taken in 1960 by a Turkish aerial reconnaissance team at 10,000 feet. The form was in a mud-flow high in the mountains of Ararat near the Russian boarder. In the intervening years, an earthquake helped reveal more details of the object.



The form at the lower right of the picture to the left was more fully exposed following an earthquake in 1978 as 30 feet of the surrounding soil

fell away from its sides, revealing what appeared to be side timbers.

Larger, color pictures including narrative are on the Noah's Ark page of the dayspring website.

If you haven't already done so, we invite you to visit other features of the **Bible and History** page (the Exodus/Mt. Sinai and Sodom and Gomorrah discoveries) as well as many other pages on our website.

If you are blessed by your visit, please pass it on to your friends and family. We need your help in bringing people to our web page.

Comment about Our Website:

"When I first began to explore the site, I was overwhelmed at the offerings and would merrily click on the various options following one trail after another with no sense of order. The website was a treasure chest, and I'd pick up one jewel after another, delighting in what I'd found. I also began to notice that along with my random adventures there was a personal thirst to learn more, experience more, to become who I was called to be. The website has become my well, a place to pause and rest, a place of comfort, a place to learn, a place to be reinvigorated for the journey, a place to offer others for their journey. How blessed I am to have this well to quench my thirst!"
-- Elizabeth

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of our side bar index.**

Daily Focus Pages Updated Thoughts on Uncertain Times

"His ways are not our ways, neither His thoughts our thoughts. Faith, alone, takes us out of our small world into a larger place where God moves. We see "through a glass darkly" and what we see here is never the whole picture and is never pure. Faith, alone, tells us that. Our senses, our logic and reason, will always argue with the Divine about things of this world. Don't look at the giants in your land and despair. Don't look back to the predictability of a lesser time and lament for its security. Faith never carries with it the security of Egypt but the unpredictable winds of a free God breathing His Spirit into His people.

In uncertain and fearful times, grab hold by faith to the hem of His holy garment and hold on with unrelenting determination. Dare to believe He will provide, and rest at peace with what His hand offers. Canaan lies just beyond the horizon for those who know that what they see is not necessarily what they get...or what they need.
(Excerpt from Thursday Focus on website)

WHEN GOD SHOWS UP

In the Trenches

“This is nothing short of a miracle.” Those were the words her mother spoke of the change that had come to Sheila’s husband of 15 years. After 13 years of heavy drinking, Mark had suddenly stopped.

April 17 marks our first entry in our intercessory team prayer journal regarding the difficulties of this issue. Over the months, consistent prayers were offered for the Lord to draw her husband into a meaningful relationship with Christ and bring down the stronghold of alcohol and breathe new life into the marriage.

In August, Mark had his last drink. “It really is a miracle,” she says. “For 13 years I’ve tried everything I could think of...some of which I wouldn’t want anyone to know...to try to get him to stop.” She finally stopped trying and just sought survival in God, attending Bible studies, special services, counseling... anything to bolster her spiritually and emotionally as she found herself spiraling into hopelessness. In this kind of desperate relinquishment, combined with prayer, God moved.

A Long Night’s Journey into Day

It had seemed clear at the time. God was calling them out of their boat of safe, responsible Christianity and flinging them out into the waves; out of a familiar career into something new. As they stepped out, hopeful jobs disintegrated or provided no sustainable income. They wound up living with her parents. Becoming people of faith was a lot harder than being believers. Believers call on Christ to be with them in the boat. For those who walk by faith, Christ asks them to join Him on the water. As they did, their faith was pressed to the limit. Despair. Dejection. Hope. Joy. Resolve. Hanging on for dear life. Joy. Discouragement...And then there was prayer.

We prayed faithfully through most of last year for God to provide their needs...to show Himself to them in new ways; to grow their faith, to bring them out of this long night with new strength and commitment. Recently, there have been amazing answers. A car and house both were provided for free. *Carol is working from home so their child doesn’t have to be in daycare, and *Walt has gotten a stable job with predictable income and hours.

**Names have been changed.*

The Sojourner’s Quill

CHRISTMAS PRESENTS



My first response when Brenda asked if I would share my experience of prayer in this month’s newsletter was that I do not express myself well enough. Four days later, here I am with pen in hand. The blast of winter weather persuaded me to rearrange my work schedule. Trying to get and keep it all together during the holidays is so overwhelming – the shopping – cooking – planning family gatherings – running a business ... and the trips to see Santa with my grandsons (it took 3 trips to talk to “THE” Santa).

It was on our last trip to see Santa that I asked Mason (5) what Christmas was about. His eyes aglow he answered “Presents!” Little Bubba (2) chimed in “Presents ----Me Too!” There in the midst of all the people and hustle bustle “Mimi” told the story once again of Jesus. We found a nativity scene and the three of us prayed a simple prayer of thanks to bless others and for Santa to please remember at least one toy. This precious relationship with 2 little boys is the direct result of answered prayer.

My dad has had major health problems this year but is doing well now. Mom is still going ninety to nothin’ . . . That’s answered prayer!

Then the big one. For the last 13 years of a 15 year marriage my husband and I have fought a disease. The disease of alcoholism. I tried everything and I mean everything determined to “fix” this problem. Completely exhausted and with health issues, I was led to the chapel and met Brenda. Her studies on prayer redirected my life.

My mother says we have a miracle! I have my husband back again – we’re into our 4th month of being sober! That’s answered prayer!!!

I now look at all these answered prayers through a child’s eye. These were “presents.” Gifts from God. Each one wrapped and tied up differently. As with some gifts we’ve all received, you don’t know what it is or even what to do with it. I feel certain these gifts (challenges) are God calling me closer; closer in prayer and conversation with Him. He’s there waiting – wanting – to Answer Prayer!

Thank you Lord. Thank you Brenda and all who have been praying for me and my family.

-- Sheila

Sunday Morning Chapel Study Continues in John

Brenda's teaching on the book of John continues in chapters 12 and 13 as we enter the new year. Writing at the end of the first century, the aged apostle calls us home to a Christ who knows us intimately and who longs to be known...Christ the incarnate Voice of God seeking to communicate Himself to man.

In these last chapters we are with Christ in his last hours as He speaks His soul's yearnings to His beloved followers. Come enter with us into these deepest longings of Christ for His people.

Sunday mornings 8:00-9:00 in the Dayspring Community Chapel.

Weather Hinders Caroling Turnout

A small group of 8 to 9 people enjoyed an evening of caroling and gift giving on a night re-scheduled from Tuesday to Thursday evening due to icy conditions. "We just got started when we had to stop," one new participant lamented. Fifteen Christmas bags were prepared for those homes where we caroled. Once all the bags were dispensed, the group returned to the office for a time of refreshments and fellowship. The evening ended with the desire to find a way to afford more gift bags next year and extend the blessing to more families in our neighborhood.

Road to Emmaus Update

Pat Townsend and Christy Jones will continue their leadership with the Emmaus study this spring. Pat will be leading a discipling study using the Sojourner's Travel Kit at a women's shelter in Kaufman. Christy will continue the Volume 1 study with those who attended her study in the fall.

Pureheart Fellowship in Rowlett has expressed interest in Brenda leading an Emmaus study there.

Rockwall Young Life is using the Sojourner's booklets to disciple teen girls.

Quiet Talks on Prayer Study Group

Gay Bostick will be leading a group of men and women in a study at the Cowboy Church of S. D. Gordon's book on prayer. They will be using Brenda's study guide to facilitate discussion. It is slated to begin Monday evening January 12.

Living With God in the Mystery

"During these days my eight-year-old daughter was diagnosed with leukemia...Long before this happened to me I had come to the conclusion that it

was the nature of God to speak to us in the language of events and that it was the nature of the church for men to share with others what they thought they heard God say in the things that had happened to them...I must in all honesty confess...that I have found no answers to the deepest questions of this experience. The enigma remains what it had been from the beginning – a dark mystery for which there is no satisfactory explanation. And while I have not found any total answer, I have found the challenge to go on living even though I have no answer or complete explanation. The Bible arranges life and thought in just that sequence. We are called on to live life passionately and openly and then to use our minds to try to understand and interpret what we have experienced. In this way, life moves on and whatever insight is possible is born.

"We do not first get all the answers and live in light of our understanding. We must rather plunge into life – meeting what we have to meet and experiencing what we have to experience—and in the light of living try to understand. If insight comes at all, it will not be before, but only through and after experience."

From *Tracks of a Fellow Struggler* by John Claypool

As people of faith we agree with God to walk in mystery. Faith implies mystery while declaring the absolute certainty of God. It is this dichotomy that creates unending adventure and discovery in living.

The desire of this ministry is to offer markers for our journey here that will point us toward a life of rich experience and profound beauty; that will introduce us to a God that changes how we see and love and live.

Of all people, we who follow Christ are most equipped for extraordinary living...for joy and peace and power. There are some who have profoundly caught this sense of God among us. We offer some of their reflections on this page.

"Listen to Your Life"

"Taking your children to school, and kissing your wife good-bye. Eating lunch with a friend. Trying to do a decent day's work. Hearing the rain patter against the window. There is no event so commonplace but that God is present within it, always hiddenly; always leaving you room to recognize Him..."

Listen to your life.

See it for the fathomless mystery it is. In the boredom and pain of it no less than in the excitement and gladness: touch, taste, smell your way to the holy and hidden heart of it because in the last analysis, all moments are key moments, and life itself is grace."

From *Now and Then* by Frederick Beuchner