

Our Father in China

Eastern China

Feb 2018

What's Happening 4

*“Be still, and know that I am God;
I will be exalted among the nations,
I will be exalted in the earth.”
Psalm 46:10*

Be Still... God says to our hearts. Be Still....

*“The Lord will fight for you; you need only to be still.”
Exodus 14:14”*

But God, don't you see the enemy? I must fight them, or die. The Egyptians had come to kill them. The Israelites were terrified.
We can not simply *“be still”*

And what about us, do we also “fight and battle” to do the many things on our “to do” lists. We say - God, don't you see the overwhelming amount of things I must do today? This week? These things are so important, to me and my family, my church...

“But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, “Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!”

“Martha, Martha,” the Lord answered, “You are worried and upset about many things, but few things are needed - or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her.” Luke 10:40-42

I find Jesus' choice of words very revealing, and easy to miss the depth of His meaning. He said “distracted”. But they had to eat, right? Distracted by cooking? He did *not* say that the work was not needed. He did *not* say that Martha's work was insignificant - He said that she was *distracted*. Mary was sitting with Jesus, the Creator of the Universe; He was talking and most likely teaching. His words

Blessed

I've been in China now for 5 months. God has *miraculously* opened many doors, and is building relationships. God has given me so many opportunities to explain His love to those *He's* bringing into my daily life.

I did not give up everything,
for nothing...

I gave up nothing,
For everything...

There are
1.38 Billion Chinese

6% know God
94% don't

Pray for these beautiful
people. God will hear
you...

have the power of life, for Mary and Martha, and for us. His words bring purpose and wisdom to our lives. There is a time to cook, there is a time to clean the house... but sitting at the feet of our Precious Lord, Jesus Christ – the one who was tortured for us, took on our sins, took on our punishment... how important is it to sit at His feet, following the example of Mary?

I hope my words have rich meaning to you, and bring a *blessing* to you. I hope you stop and reflect – are you acting like Martha, during a time when you would be blessed to follow the lead of Mary? Is it a “waste of time” if we follow Mary’s example? To be still, and be loved and taught by God? He provides wisdom and guidance for us, in a dark world, while we walk on difficult terrain.

Why would our Lord say to Martha “You are distracted... worried... upset about many things...”? Why would He say that? I believe He said that because *she needed* time to sit at the feet of Jesus. We too need time to sit with Him. Sometimes at the foot of the Cross. Sometimes dwelling in His Word. Sometimes in prayer with our spouse, our family... in prayer with our coworkers, our friends. God tells us to share our burdens with each other. To carry our burdens – together. As a family. To dwell with God, and the family of JC.

“Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.”

Galatians 6:2

***“Truly my soul finds rest in God;
My salvation comes from him.
Truly He is my rock and my salvation;
He is my fortress, I will never be shaken.”***
Psalm 62:1-2

Black Mold...

Out of the past 11 weeks, I have been sick 6 weeks. Two weeks in December, one in January, and 3 weeks in February. I thought it was a virus, and so I went to the hospital and was prescribed antibiotics, cold medicine, and an anti-inflammatory medicine. Then weeks later it got worse, and so I returned to the hospital, where the doctor performed a chest x-ray and did blood tests. Again, I was prescribed antibiotics and cold medicine.



In February my lung sickness got significantly worse. Just 2 weeks ago, I would go to bed about 10pm and then start coughing about 10:30 pm, and continue coughing until 4 or 5 am. Yes, 5 to 6 hours



of severe coughing. So I returned to the hospital for the third time. The doctor ordered a chest/abdominal CT scan, and more blood tests. Two days before, as I was coughing until 3 am, I went online to research, as I was getting much worse. One doctor suggested I might be having an allergic reaction to the air pollution here in this city, so I wanted to research that. I also saw a small patch of black mold on my wall, and wanted to research that.

As I checked these two potential causes, the symptoms for pollution didn't seem to match, but the symptoms for a mold infection matched. So at 3 am I moved my night stand and.... AHHH!! As you can see from the first picture, there was a *field* of mold growing behind the night stand.

I'm living in a furnished apartment, and it was cleaned by my roommate and his mother before I arrived here, so I did not move the furniture when I moved here, I just settled in.

So at 3 am, I went to the couch to sleep. The next morning I moved the bed and.... AHHH!!! The area behind my bed and both of my night stands was contaminated with a toxic black mold. No wonder I was so sick. The online picture of a contaminated wall looked *so much better* than what I saw growing behind my headboard, just a foot from my head as I slept. And remember, when you feel sick - where do you go? To bed to rest?



Ok, I agree this is horrible, but I was actually relieved - now I finally understood why I was so sick, for so long. So now I am attacking the mold, instead of being the victim of this mold. I showed the doctors these pictures, and he did not seem surprised. He just said, "I think you have something in your lungs." Perhaps toxic mold spores, I suggested?

The doctor prescribed more antibiotics, and I started sleeping in a different room. I've sprayed the mold with a bleach type disinfectant, and the mold appears to be under control in my room. I also found a serious mold infestation in my roommate's room. When he saw it, (behind the bed and curtains) he says, "Oh that's not a problem. I have no cough. I am fine."



The correct treatment for black mold is to:

- 1) Isolate the contaminated area & kill the mold with disinfectant
- 2) Clean the walls with soap and water, and insure it's fully dry
- 3) Repair the walls & paint, to keep the mold from coming back.
- 4) Don't bring any contaminated waste, into any other part of the house, to prevent the spores from spreading

These walls are cement, and the mold actually goes *into* the walls. So I need to repair damaged areas, and repaint the walls, to stop the recurrence of this infestation.

I met with my landlord, and told them I will disinfect, clean, repair the walls, and repaint - but I wanted some compensation for the hospital and medicine expenses. I was told that my medical expenses is not their responsibility. They would however, pay for the cost of the paint and the cleaning supplies. They offered to paint themselves, but only the moldy patches. I do enjoy painting, and I have the time, so I would prefer to paint the full room, and my roommate's room, so the mold won't come back in *any* area

of our rooms. So now I have killed the mold, and am waiting on my health to return, to clean and paint the walls.

So maybe in Heaven we see this scene.... Jesus saying to our Father – Did you know about the mold? Wow. So bad... I was off doing _____ and didn't get a chance to check out the apartment before he moved in... Kind of funny, when we joke about it this way, eh? I also enjoy the joke about Jesus being born in a stable – Father God asking the Holy Spirit, “Did you make the reservation at the Inn? “Oh no” says the Holy Spirit, shocked look on His face... “I got busy and forgot. Really sorry about that one.” So God didn't forget?

God's plans are Sovereign. Perfect. Absolutely perfect. And His plans bring *blessings* to the Earth. Jesus was born in a manger, a barn for animals! He slept in an animals feeding trough. Wrapped in rags of clothing (the Bethlehem Baby's-R-Us was closed for remodeling).

I'm still sick as I write this, coughing, but slowly getting better. Please pray for my health to return. I am *being still* before our Father, *resting in Him* and *seeking His face*. I am in a good place, resting in His arms, knowing of His love. And telling others about His love, His wonderful love.

Scripture Corner

“In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God. **And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.**” Romans 8:26-28

“Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. **Do not be anxious about anything**, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. *And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*” Philippians 4:5-7

God's Promise

“But seek first his kingdom
and his righteousness,
and all these things will be
given to you as well.

Therefore do not worry
about tomorrow, for
tomorrow will worry about
itself.

*Each day has enough
trouble of its own.”*

Matthew 6:33-34
Jesus said this

“As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.” Ephesians 4:1-3

Life Lessons...

Let's take a look at what the Apostle Paul went through... He summarizes some of his difficulties in a letter he wrote to the Christian Church at Corinth. He had been slighted, as happens to all of us, and so he mentions some of the suffering and torture he endured, as an Apostle for Jesus Christ.

“Are they servants of Christ? (I am out of my mind to talk like this.) I am more. I have worked much harder, been in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, and been exposed to death again and again. Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was pelted with stones, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea, I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my fellow Jews, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false believers. I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked.”

2 Corinthians 11:23-27

This just shocks me. *Five times* he was beaten with the “Forty lashes minus one” having his skin on his back ripped off. He was beaten with rods. He was stoned in Lystra by the Jews, then dragged outside the city – His disciples pray, Paul gets up – then goes to Derbe to preach the Gospel, and next we see him returning to Lystra to strengthen the disciples there (Acts 14:19-22). Returning to Lystra?

Dangers from rivers, thieves, hungry, thirsty, cold, naked and ship wrecked 3 times; during one of these ship wrecks, he spent the night and day in the open sea.

Did God forget Paul? Of course not. And God *has not forgotten you*, or overlooked the pain and suffering you are experiencing. God is there with you. I know, because God has been with me in my suffering. I want to encourage you to “Seek God with all your Heart, all your Soul and all your Mind”. To draw close to the lover of mankind, our Precious Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

“Then some Jews came from Antioch and Iconium and won the crowd over. They stoned Paul and dragged him outside the city, thinking he was dead. But after the disciples had gathered around him, he got up and went back into the city. The next day he and Barnabas left for Derbe. They preached the gospel in that city and won a large number of disciples. Then they returned to Lystra, Iconium and Antioch, strengthening the disciples and encouraging them to remain true to the faith. “We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God,” they said.”Acts 14:19-22

Suffering produces perseverance, and perseverance builds our Character in a Godly way – not in the world's way. We have strength & courage in Christ.

“Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.” Romans 5:3-5

Another example of suffering is the story of Joseph:

“He (God) sent a man before them - Joseph, sold as a slave. They bruised his feet with shackles, his neck was put in irons, till what he foretold came to pass, till the word of the Lord proved him true.”

Psalm 105:17-19

As we know, Joseph was God’s chosen leader, but as a young man he was thrown into a pit by his jealous brothers, sold into slavery, falsely accused of sexually attacking his masters’ wife, and then put into a dungeon. His neck in irons, his feet in shackles, bleeding. He prospers in all he does, and God brings the Pharaoh’s chief baker and cup bearer to Joseph. Years later the Pharaoh experiences a confusing dream, and this brings Joseph and the Pharaoh together. Pharaoh sees the Wisdom from God that is in Joseph – and a miracle happens. Joseph goes from a prisoner in a dungeon, with his head in irons, his feet in shackles – to an honored position as the *second highest official in Egypt*.

If we look at this experience, when it is only half finished, how does it look? A beaten man? A terrible injustice happening to Joseph? Pain of the irons and shackles? Yes, of course. But Joseph was being taught by God Himself. Trained to be a Godly man, a patient man, full of Trust in His God – training needed for his future role. He endured hardship like Paul. Are you being trained for your future role?

“Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.” James 1:2-4

Wait a minute here... “Pure Joy”? We just read in Acts about the suffering that Paul endured. Here we read his words saying that he considered it pure joy. Telling us that the *testing of our Faith* in God will produce perseverance, and that IF we let our testing, our troubles, our difficulties *finish* – this work will help us become “mature and complete” – not lacking anything. Yes, I want to be mature and complete. Yes, I want to be “lacking nothing”; but how do I get there? How do we get there?

“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who *comforts us in all our troubles*, so that *we can comfort those in any trouble* with the comfort we ourselves receive from God.” 2 Corinthians 1:3-4

How do we get through this? Here’s our answer, we go to God. We receive comfort from God. But it doesn’t stop there – we are *meant to comfort others*. We are one body of Christ, and we are to bear each others burdens, to comfort each other, to walk together through hardships and pain. To be truly “brothers and sisters” in life.

Jesus told us we would have trouble. The concept of having trouble is not a surprise to us, but when it happens we are surprised. We ask God to quickly get us out of anything that is difficult or troubling to us. Please don’t waste a painful time, a time of trouble. Don’t waste it. Go to God. Endure it. Praise God in the midst of your troubles. Cling to God as if you are in the ocean, during a horrible storm with waves crashing over you, it’s nighttime, it’s raining and thunder can be heard - and you are holding onto a rock for your only safety. Seek God, and hold onto God like this. He is your comfort, and your blessing.

“I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace.
In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”
John 16:33

God wants us to have PEACE in the MIDST of the Storms of life. To allow these troubles to turn our focus to Him. Fixing our eyes on Christ, and not on the pain, the trouble, the heartache... God loves us, and a mature Faith says that “God loves me, even in the midst of the storms”.

“For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.
So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary,
but what is unseen is eternal.” 2 Corinthians 4:17-18

I think the focus of our minds, is what others see. Most of the time they can not see the problems; but they will see and hear what we talk about; what’s in our hearts. So when I experience a deep troubling time, what will they see in me? Will they see my Faith in a Loving God, in spite of my circumstances? I think this is a choice we make. How we choose to live, what we choose to focus on. This is very difficult, to be in physical or emotional pain and have a Godly focus.

To have injustice happen to us, and still choose to walk with God, is very difficult. I had a horrible thing happen to me about 2 years ago. I intentionally chose not to retaliate, not to act in a vengeful way to the person who did this. I chose to walk as a Godly Christian man should walk. It did not come naturally. I could not have done that, without God. It was part of my preparation to come here. I needed to be tested, changed, and have my mind renewed with God’s wisdom. I needed the trials. I am now thankful for the trials in my life, and how God has changed me.

I am thankful for a motorcycle accident that left me in the hospital for 7 weeks (1995), with a leaking artery, both lungs collapsed, most of my ribs broken, puncture wound to my colon. The doctor had to replace the blood from my body that had leaked out, and the volume of blood that was added was “twice what the body holds” – these were his words to me. Twice the volume of blood a body holds. My artery was leaking internally, with additional external bleeding. It suffices to say, I was not expected to live.



“I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord’s holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.” Ephesians 3:16-19

The Love of God.... Was with me in the Hospital. The love of God was with me when I was betrayed, and living in an empty apartment with only an inflatable bed, and some clothes. The love of God was with me as I coughed from 11 pm until 3 am that morning. This was the first day of the New Chinese Year (2/16/18), and God showed me why I was sick. God showed me His love, and He was bringing me comfort. God was changing me, teaching me, giving me the *Wisdom* I had prayed for. I also prayed for God to change me. For God to make me more like Him. I have a long way to go, to be like Him.

“About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them. Suddenly there was such a violent earthquake that the foundations of the prison were shaken. At once all the prison doors flew open, and everyone’s chains came loose. The jailer woke up, and when he saw the prison doors open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself because he thought the prisoners had escaped.

The jailer called for lights, rushed in and fell trembling before Paul and Silas. He then brought them out and asked, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” They replied, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household.” Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house. At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; then immediately he and all his household were baptized. The jailer brought them into his house and set a meal before them; he was filled with joy because he had come to believe in God—he and his whole household.”

Acts 16:25-27, 29-34

God has changed Paul. He was *PRAISING GOD*, in chains, in neck irons most likely. He was bleeding as the metal was cutting into his skin. And praising God does not come naturally – anger, revengeful thoughts, self pity – these come naturally in that type of circumstances – Praising God is a *Choice* that Paul made. And look what happened – an Angel showed up. Help from God. The other prisoners are listening to Paul singing to God. Thanking God. Shouting of His Glory, His Power, His Love...

What happens next? We all know – a *violent earthquake* that shakes the foundations of the dungeon. *Paul’s chains become loose, the doors fly open!* Then everyone’s chains become loose. The jailer wakes and see’s what happened, and concludes – I am going to die. Everyone is gone, and I am responsible. The authorities over me, will kill me, perhaps torture me – so it’s best I kill myself, and avoid being tortured.

So Paul retaliates? Paul tries to harm the Jailer? *Paul’s choice was to tell this man of the Love of Jesus Christ.* To tell the jailer “*You can be saved*”. The jailer takes them to his home. He washes Paul’s wounds, and takes care of him. Gives him food and water. The jailer gives his life to Christ, and all of his household – wife, children, servants, any brothers/sisters staying with him, maybe his parents living in his home. And can you imagine the next day, the coming weeks – how many did he tell about the Glory of God, the miracle, the earthquake... the chains, the doors... The power of God he saw.

What about us? God has not changed. Our suffering, our troubles, our pain and discouragement. The pain of coughing from 11 pm until 4 or 5 am. The lack of sleep. The pain from the accident – broken ribs, seven weeks in the hospital – God is using that. It was not “*wasted*” it brought me **closer** to God. It changed me, it gave me the opportunity to be more compassionate, to be more loving, to be aware of the

suffering of others, and my character changed. Joseph changed. Paul changed. Is God changing you? Teaching you? Guiding you? Comforting you?

Let's us learn from God. Let us comfort each other, and bear each other's burdens. Let's walk towards Heaven - together - and keep our Focus on Jesus Christ and becoming more and more like Him.

Thank you God for my suffering...

Thank you my friends for listening to me. I hope these words bring a blessing to you; and bring peace to you in any hardship you are facing, or any hardship you will face in the future. **God is with us...**

Requests...

- Spiritual growth for the men studying with me.
- My lungs to recover from the mold spore infection. For my strength to return. I am extremely weak.
- For my relationships here to continue to grow, and for my "state-side" relationships to stay strong and healthy

Upcoming Needs

March 2018: \$350 – I would like to visit a pastor in South Central China

April 1, 2018: \$880 - My share of our 3 month rent

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God.

2 Corinthians 1:3-4