HONDURAS MISSION TRIP

JERICHO VILLAS

FEBRUARY 1-8, 2022

Team Members:

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Please pray for us as we travel to Honduras to minister alongside our missionaries, Betsy Hake and Elvia Forgas, at Jericho Villas. Pray for protection as we travel and for “Divine Appointments” along the way and while we are there. Pray for unity among the Team, and that God would use us to touch the lives of the abused and abandoned children who reside at Jericho Villas.

We begin each morning with Team Devotions. Please feel free to follow along with us and pray for and with us each day.

* Tuesday, February 1 – Travel Day (Pray for our safety as we travel to Honduras)
* Wednesday, February 2 – Devotion One
* Thursday, February 3 – Devotion Two
* Friday, February 4 – Devotion Three
* Saturday, February 5 – Devotion Four
* Sunday, February 6 – No Devotions that day as we will share in Sunday morning worship with the Staff and Children at Jericho Villas
* Monday, February 7 – Devotion Five
* Tuesday, February 8 – Travel Day (Pray for our safety as we travel Home)

**Devotion #1 - Wednesday, February 2**

*Romans 14:13 – “Let us not judge one another anymore, but rather determine this; not to put an obstacle or a stumbling block in a brother or sister’s way.”*

*Romans 15:7 – “Accept one another, just as Christ also accepted us to the glory of God.”*

*Galatians 5:15 – “If you bite and devour one another, watch out, or you will be consumed by one another.”*

This week we are going to focus on Community. Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace, came to bring Peace, the kind of Peace that restores our relationship with God and with one another. He makes it possible for us to be right with God and to live in harmony with one other. He came into the world to quench our hostility against God and others. He gives us:

* Peace that passes all understanding
* Joy that is beyond material possessions
* Love that knows no boundaries
* and Strength that emanates from faith in Him

**Discussion: Which of the above gifts do you desire most for your life right now and why?**

The Enemy (Satan) wants to turn us against one another. Whenever people gather in Jesus’ Name (Church / Mission Trips), the opportunity exists for being critical, thinking the worst of others, and taking personal offense by something said or done. He (Satan) takes great delight in this! *Togetherness* is one of the main things he wants to assault. He wants us isolated! He doesn’t want us to recognize the power of being part of a Body, part of the Family of God. He wants us embittered, laden with unforgiveness, pointing fingers, and separated by suspicions of betrayal. So, he pokes add prods us toward judgment of those around us until, even as we stand beneath the free-flowing shower of God’s grace, we aren’t willing to release that same grace to our brothers and sisters.

As we spend this week in a foreign land, in close quarters with people we don’t know well, dealing with lack of sleep and the “comforts of home,” let us be aware of the Enemy’s tactics to divide us. Also, be aware that you will be “drawn” to some of the children; whereas other children might be a little more *difficult* to love. You might find yourself gravitating towards the ones you find easier to be around. Ask God to give you “His eyes” this week to see each person (child and adult) the way He sees them, and to give you a tender and compassionate heart towards all.

**Discussion: What are some practical ways we can show Grace to one another this week?**

**Prayer:** Lord, helps us to see others with Your Eyes this week, and to treat others with Your love and compassion, respecting the dignity of each and every person we come in contact with.

**Devotion #2 - Thursday, February 3**

*Proverbs 11:17 – “Your kindness will reward you, but your cruelty will destroy you”*

*Proverbs 11:24 – “Give freely and become more wealthy; be stingy and lose everything”*

*Proverbs 11:25 – “The generous will prosper; those who refresh others will themselves be refreshed*”

There’s an expression “pay it forward.” Have you ever paid for the person behind you in the Drive-Thru? Or, helped someone out in the check-out line at the grocery store; someone who was a few dollars short, and you said “I’ll get it”

Thinking of others and putting others’ needs before our own doesn’t always come naturally. It’s much easier to think about and focus on our own needs.

God met **our greatest need of all** – **our need for a Savior**, when he sent his Son to live among us. His love CAN (if we let it) unexpectedly overflow from our hearts onto others in need. Because of what Jesus has done for us, we can make a generous, practical difference in others’ lives. But, it requires taking our eyes off of ourselves (our needs, our comfort) and focusing on the needs of those around us; and being in tune with the Holy Spirit as He guides and directs us towards those in need around us.

**Discussion: What immediate needs do you see around you (back home: in your family or neighborhood, in your school, in your place of employment, OR here in Honduras this week?) How can you share God’s love and kindness in a practical way?**

**Prayer**

Thank you, Father, for seeing my need and sending your Son. Please help me to act on your love by generously helping others. Amen.

**Devotion #3 - Friday, February 4**

*1 Samuel 22:1-2*

“*David left Gath and escaped to the cave of Adullam. When his brothers and his father’s household heard about it, they went down to him there.**All those who were in distress or in debt or discontented gathered around him, and he became their commander. About four hundred men were with him.”*

David was on the run from King Saul and in need of good friends to surround him. He needed the right community to help him in his crisis. Instead, what he found were hundreds of men who were also in crisis – those “in distress or in debt or discontented” (v. 2). Yet, David became captain over this motley crew and they trusted him!

Jesus gathered those around Him whom society had discarded. Throughout the Gospels, it is often the sick and disabled, the outcast, and the sinner who find belonging and healing in Jesus. The church is meant to be a kind of “cave of Adullam” (v. 1). It’s not a perfect community, but a ragtag group of people in need of a loving, healing Captain.

**Discussion: We tend to gravitate towards people who we have something in common with; people who are most like us. But, think about this: Who are the people God has intentionally put in your life (not necessarily people whom you would have chosen)? Think about people back home in your daily life, or people this week on this Mission Trip? Have any of them provided *unexpected* companionship and peace for you during a difficult time?**

**Prayer**

Jesus, thank you for the way you’ve welcomed me into your family. Help me to recognize the people around me as unexpected gifts; gifts you have blessed me with.

**Devotion #4 - Saturday, February 5**

Isaiah 9:6 – “*For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”*

Jesus is our Wonderful Counselor – We can go to Him with whatever we are struggling with. He cares about what is important to us. He is trustworthy. And, He is always available (no need to make an appointment)!

He is the Mighty God – He has limitless power. He is our defender when we feel condemned or defeated. We can entrust him with our problems, and find rest in His strong, mighty arms.

He is the Everlasting Father – He always was and always will be! He is a father to the fatherless; and his fatherhood will be without end. We can always run to Him as a child runs to his father, and He will be ready to receive us with open arms.

He is the Prince of Peace – We look to many “things” in this world to find our peace; but only in Him will we find True Peace – the Peace that passes understanding.

Though we as believers in Jesus can’t avoid the darkness of this world, we can fix our eyes on Him, the greatest light of the world.

**Discussion: How can reflecting on the names of Jesus (above) help you through difficult times? Which of these aspects of God’s character encourages you the most when your heart is troubled?**

**Prayer:**

Dear God, thank you for being my Wonderful Counselor, my Mighty God, my Everlasting Father, and my Prince of Peace when my heart is heavy and when I need you most.

**Devotion #5 - Monday, February 7**

Colossians 3:12 – “*Since God chose you to be the holy people he loves, you must clothe yourselves with* ***tenderhearted mercy****,* ***kindness****,* ***humility****,* ***gentleness*** *and* ***patience****. Make allowance for each other’s faults, and forgive anyone who offends you.”*

Buried deep in the lyrics of the Christmas Carol “O Come, Come Emmanuel” (verse 7) are these words that seem uniquely in tune with our times:

*O Come, O King of Nations, bind*

*In one the hearts of all mankind.*

*Bid all our sad divisions cease*

*And be yourself our King of Peace*

What an appropriate prayer for these troubled times! How desperately we need the “King of Peace” to come to our aid. The “sad divisions” we see exhibited in our communities, churches, workplaces, relationships, and families can only be overcome with the help of the One who came to forgive, heal, and restore.

Unforgiveness often feels like a relatively harmless way of dealing with unpleasant circumstances or unpleasant people. However, it puts up an artificial shell of protection that makes us assume that we are shielded from more damage. From our vantage point of self-protection, it appears to be the most advantageous posture to maintain. But, Paul gives clarity on the damaging outcomes of unforgiveness. Unforgiveness, he writes, is one of the ways that a Christian is “outwitted by Satan” (2 Corinthians 2:11). It’s one of the “designs” or “schemes” that our Enemy uses to keep us jailed in bitterness, shackled by resentment, and crippled from our effectiveness in prayer.

The apostle Paul urges us to put this into practice: “Let the peace that comes from Christ rule in your hearts,” he writes; “for as members of one body you are called to live in peace” (Colossians 3:15). As we allow Him to restore our relationships, we ourselves become agents of His peace.

**Discussion: Where do I see broken relationships or divisive behavior in my life? Who do I need to ask for forgiveness for my contributions to the breakdown? How can I forgive actively, forgiving with a visible, tangible expression of love towards the one who has offended me? Why is it so important to seek reconciliation with others? Is there someone you need to forgive? Someone where you are holding onto a past hurt? Ask God to reveal it to you and then show you how He would like you to act towards this person.**

**Prayer:**

Father, thank you for sending the Prince of Peace to rescue us. Help us experience His peace not only in our hearts but also in our relationships. Enable us to be peacemakers who are agents of His peace-providing love.