

**FBC, Crossett
Kharkov,
Ukraine 2021
Mission Trip
Devotional**



Dear Friends,

I find it hard to put into words how excited I am about this trip to Ukraine. Every trip is special for its own reasons. This one is dear to my heart because of the circumstances in our world, because of how we started out on the process of planning this trip, and because of what we get to do. I've dreamed of the day when a team from our church would have the opportunity to help with medical clinics, and here we are! This journey has not been without struggle or the occasional thoughts of doubt that it would ever be able to happen, but our gracious God has guided every step of the way. Should I expect anything different? No! But for some reason I do from time-to-time.

For your daily personal quiet time while on the trip, I've invited 9 others to write one day's devotional each. You'll see devotionals written by staff members, a church member, a few state convention employees, the pastor of another church, a couple current IMB workers, and one special former IMB worker who served in Ukraine and Greece. I pray the Lord uses these devotionals to enhance your experience this week and to bless you in a special way.

I'm grateful to have the opportunity to serve with you in Kharkov this week! To God be the glory!

Blessings...

In His Name,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jamie Staley". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jamie Staley

October 8, 2021

In Matthew 28:16-20 otherwise known as “The Great Commission” Jesus is speaking to His disciples. Ordinary men that devoted their lives to following and living for Christ. The key word here is ordinary. Some may think people going on mission trips or called to mission work have to be the most educated, the most involved or have some super power, when in reality, God calls ordinary people to do His work here on this Earth. God is seeking people willing to go and willing to be obedient to the call He has placed on their hearts. Verse 19 tells us to “GO”. This looks different for some. For some it’s to go out in their community, for some it’s to go to a different state, but for you it’s to go to a different country surrounded by people of a different culture. You will meet strangers and have faith conversations through your time with them.

Difficulties may arise, but pay close attention to verse 20 “And be sure of this, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” He was with you before this trip, while on this trip and will continue to be there when you return. If these difficulties or situations come your way, remember He has made you “a light to bring salvation to the farthest corners of the earth” Acts 13:40.

Each of you “ordinary” people were called in specific ways to further the kingdom of God. Matthew 25 tells us that when we are providing for the helpless, the sick or the strangers, we are showing the love of Christ. Today you are that someone to tell others of Christ, our Savior and our Redeemer. Today your mission is to make Him known.

Prayer: “Lord be with this group today that you have specifically called to be your hands and feet. Guide them through conversations and actions that everything they do will bring glory to You. I pray You keep the enemy away and this group has a constant reminder that You are with them and that You are in control.” Amen

Devotion Provided by: Kayla Trussell, Children’s Minister, FBC, Crossett

October 9, 2021

As it is written: How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news (Rom 10:15).

George Scott, a one-legged school teacher from Scotland, came to J. Hudson Taylor to offer himself for service in China. Taylor asked him, “Why do you think of going as a missionary? You’ve only got one leg.” Scott replied, “I do not see those with two legs going.” He was accepted.

Paul is quoting Isaiah here. He has pulled his quote from Isaiah 52—Isaiah’s prophecy to a people under siege. Isaiah sees the image of a runner making his way from the battle to a war-weary people. He is coming with good news: “Peace! Good tidings! Salvation! Your God reigns!” Isaiah says that the feet that bring news like that are some kind of beautiful.

Paul agrees. The folks who bring good news—the news that Jesus died for our sins, that he was raised from the dead, and that all who call upon the name of the Lord will be saved—have the prettiest feet you’ve ever seen. “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!”

So as you serve in Ukraine, you may feel like you have cold feet (a little apprehensive in the work) or stinky feet (not sure God can use you because of past sins). That’s not what God sees. He says you have beautiful feet. This week, be ready to walk into every opportunity the Lord gives you. He prepares the way. He empowers you by his Spirit. And God can use your hands, your voice, and your beautiful feet to bring good news to these people God loves.

Prayer: Jesus, you reign in Ukraine. Thank you for the privilege of serving here. Make my feet your feet to take me into the paths of people who need good news. Amen.

Devotion Provided by: John McCallum, Pastor, First Baptist Church, Hot Springs

October 10, 2021

Philippians 3:12-14

I don't know about you, but I struggle in the spiritual battle of keeping perspective in my life regarding what has already happened, what one day will be, and fighting to live this day for Him to the fullest. Paul Tripp calls this living between the "already" and the "not yet." I like that description. How do we keep proper focus on the "today" walk with Christ, "working out our salvation with fear and trembling", while at the same time knowing we're already completely forgiven? "It is finished!"

When I fail Him, I need to be reminded that I'm fully forgiven, that my redemption is complete. At the same time, I'm struggling in the battle of my life, in a fight with sin that remains from a broken world and from my old nature that seeks to find a place in my heart.

Paul reminds us of the battle we are in every day, and that this battle is not "against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places"(Ephesians 6:12).

You are part of a team this week. Your enemy would have you pull apart, when the team needs to pull together, to fight together, and not against one another. We were not meant to struggle alone, to fight this battle in isolation. Who is standing with you in the battle you are facing (someone "with skin on")?

What would you have done differently in the past week, a decision better made, a conversation you might've handled better, if you had a teammate standing with you in this "today" time of battle?

Prayer: Jesus, bring into our "today" lives those who can support and fight alongside us in the battle.

Devotion Provided by: Mike Ray, Retired IMB Worker

October 11, 2021

“Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers a multitude of sin.”

In my 19 years of serving as an international missionary, I have hosted and led dozens of mission teams from the States. I laugh when I recall all of the cultural mistakes I observe these volunteers making, and I cringe when I remember the same mistakes I made when we were new.

Peter wrote the verse quoted above to new multi-ethnic churches. Jewish and Gentile Christians were in constant cultural conflict. In his letters, Peter (as well as Paul and John), emphasized the importance of loving each other. When Peter says that love covers a multitude of sin, he is talking about offenses, mistakes, and misunderstandings. On your mission trip, you will be interacting with people who are not like you. And you will be offensive, make mistakes, and misunderstand.

There was a new missionary, who was very different from the older missionaries. He had long hair, could not speak the language well, and did not understand the culture. He even had a tattoo of girl on his arm (after he got saved, he put a bikini on her!). But among all the missionaries, he was the most loved by the nationals. Why? Because of the overwhelming love this missionary had for them.

You will not be expected to speak the language or to fully understand the culture. But your love (or lack of love) for the people you are going to serve will be evident. Love will keep you from complaining, love will help you wake up early and go to bed late, and love will help you to eat unfamiliar food. Love may mean sitting with a sick child or listening rather than speaking. When you love people the way that God loves them, they will know.

God loves you, and he loves the people you are going to minister to. Love them, the way God loves us.

Devotion Provided by: J. T., IMB Worker

October 12, 2021

Who do you fear? That is the title of today's devotion. I start out asking this question because right now in our world there is fear everywhere. Fear of the unknown, fear of the unstable, fear of a virus that honestly we can't control. But is there a fear of God right now in your heart? Before you turn on the news, do you first seek God and the news he has for you in his word? Before you call your friends to talk about how bad it is or how worse it could become, do you first go to the bringer of peace and talk to Him?

Often times these answers are NO in seasons like this. But why is this? Do we fear, respect or revere God enough to come to Him first? Do we fear God? To worship in his name, to give Him praise for everything. Put our trust and stability in His hands. It says in 2 Timothy 1:7 that "God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control." Fear is not something we get from God, it is a tool of destruction from the enemy. He will use it to destroy your spirit in any way he can. Whereas God wants to call fear...FAITH.

If we truly fear God, truly revere God, does this mean we don't experience fear? NO! We still experience fear, but we have something to combat that fear before we allow it to take root and that is faith. "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1). Guys no one said it would be easy to have faith, we don't see an end to this virus, but God does. We just saw in Hebrews 11 where it says that faith is conviction of things not seen. So, my brothers and sisters if you are having trouble finding joy in this season, finding faith, keeping a fear of God at the forefront of your everyday. Then let me remind you that without faith in God, these things are not possible. With this in mind, spend just 10 mins today renewing your heart of faith and fear of God. Find that joy that maybe you have been missing and then call a friend and tell them about it! That's my charge to you today. **More scriptures to read:** Psalm 18:2, Deuteronomy 3:18, Psalm 103:11, Psalm 115:11

Devotion Provided by: Brock Rodgers, Student Minister, FBC, Crossett

October 13, 2021

When God outlined Abraham's call in Genesis 12, He said in v 3, "I will bless those who bless you and curse those who curse you; and all the families of the earth will be blessed through you." In Genesis 18:18 God again says, "Abraham will surely become a great and powerful nation, and through him all the nations of the earth will be blessed"

How is it possible that Abraham becomes God's conduit to bless all the people on earth? The Apostle Paul interprets this for us while teaching his readers about saving faith vs. a works righteousness. Galatians 3:6-9, "So also, "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness." Understand, then, that those who have faith are sons of Abraham. The Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith and foretold the gospel to Abraham: "All nations will be blessed through you." So those who have faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith."

In Genesis 15 God promised the childless and aged Abraham he would one day have a son and an heir. His reaction is in v 6, "Abram believed the LORD, and it was credited to him as righteousness." Abraham's faith in God resulted in God placing Abraham in right standing with Himself. But where is the gospel/Jesus connection that Paul mentions? Check out the genealogy of Jesus in Matthew 1! First person mentioned? Abraham. Why is that a big deal? Abraham and Sarah were way past childbearing age, making their son a miracle. And that miracle starts the genealogical line that goes all the way to Jesus. On this side of the cross, when we respond to the gospel and place our faith in Christ, God places us in right standing with Himself – direct recipients of His promise to Abraham! Galatians 3:14, "He redeemed us in order that the blessing promised to Abraham would come to the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit."

The gospel has been faithfully transmitted to the nations over the centuries, but the job is not complete! Now you have the opportunity to take the gospel of Jesus to Ukraine so folks there can be blessed. Be a blessing!

Devotion Provided by: Bob Fielding, Missions Ministries Team, Arkansas Baptist State Convention

October 14, 2021

Do you ever feel overwhelmed? The truth of the matter is that almost everyone has this feeling at one time or another. Plus, a great number of people feel overwhelmed on a regular (if not constant) basis.

It has well been said that any time you have more in front of you than you feel equipped to handle it can leave you feeling overwhelmed. So what are the results of being overwhelmed? Possibly the main result of this is stress. Doctors tell us that stress can negatively impact our long-term health. Whether its high blood pressure, anxiety, or even depression, the results can be staggering.

Each of us can have different stressors in our lives. For example, this week you are on mission with the Lord and with your team and others. And that is an awesome, wonderful thing. But if you're like me, there are times you even look at the mission trip and feel stress – thoughts of "Should I have even come on this trip?" or "are we actually making a difference?" can creep in. And then when you are home in your daily lives all the things on your to-do list can overwhelm you.

Furthermore, from a Christian perspective, being overwhelmed can steal the joy right out of your life! God wants us to live each day with a perspective of joy that shines out of our lives for others to see.

Check out Philippians 4:4-8. This speaks of the joy we are to have, the peace God gives, and the thoughts that should be in our minds. If you and I will dwell on these few things and let the stressors take a back seat to the things of God you can be sure that they will still be there, but they will now occupy their rightful place and not wear us down.

And finally, don't feel like everything has to be done by you, right now. In Mark 6:31 Jesus told the disciples, "Come apart and rest awhile." What timely advise for us. Let's just relax and rest in Him.

Devotion Provided by: Chuck Otts, FBC, Crossett Member

October 15, 2021

Our Father, who art in heaven,
For the past few minutes I sat still. Listening to the now.
I heard the hum of a fridge

The swish of a car driving past

A child scratching out homework with her pencil

The thumping of someone walking across the floor.

For the next few hours I plan.

Honey-do tasks to complete

Children to teach

An encouraging note to send

A phone call to make.

The fridge, stays humming because you direct the electrons.

The car remains moving because of your permissive will.

The child's pencil moved in line with your ordained plan.

The steps of man only occur in rhythm with your grace.

Thus everything planned and unplanned for this day is your perfect plan.

Every movement of every molecule in heaven and earth...you ordain for your glory.

May I wake every morning and walk every moment in the promises of
your utter sovereignty

your constant presence

and your all-sufficiency.

As such I GO...speaking your word in strength and boldness.

As such I GO...in joy of your presence

As such I GO...every moment is your kingdom come.

For even failure, suffering, and death are rigged for my good and your glory.

Father, who art in heaven, who art going with me, be honored as you direct my heart and my hands and my feet this day and...now.

Job 42:2 | Psalm 115:3 | Matthew 10:29 | Isaiah 41:10 | Matthew 28:18-20 |
Philippians 1:21

Devotion Provided by: Sh. K., IMB Worker

October 16, 2021

Read Colossians 1:15-20

A line to the worship song “You Hold it All Together” says, “You’re the Alpha and the Omega, You’re in the middle and You hold it all together.” The latter part of that line echoes Paul’s statement in the middle of his Colossian hymn regarding Jesus: “...in him all things hold together” (v.17). But this encouragement of what Jesus does is flanked by corresponding truths of who Jesus is. He is the image of the invisible God (v.15), and in him all the fullness of God dwells (v.19). He is the firstborn of all creation (v.15), and he is the beginning and the firstborn from the dead (v. 18). He is before all things (v. 17), and he is the head of the body, the church (v. 18). Because this is who Jesus is, all things are created by him, through him, and for him, and God was pleased to reconcile all things to him through his cross.

Jesus holds everything together: earth and heaven, beginning and end. And receiving special mention in all of this is his body, the church. The church is made up of people who represent new creation to those who are currently passing away with the old. The church is therefore instrumental to his reconciling work between the two. And that makes our individual participation in the mission of the church significant. When you proclaim and portray the preeminence of Christ you are displaying New Creation to the dying world.

But not only is our participation significant, it is also sustained because Jesus is in the middle of it with us. If he is in the middle of the cosmos and the centerpiece of God’s big story, then he is surely in the middle of your life as well. And he is holding it all together. If he is supreme, sufficient, and central throughout the universe, then our lives and our work are no exception. Which is why the same worship song also says, “God of my present, God of my future, You write my story, You hold it all together... You’re not just at the beginning, and You’re not just watching from the end, But You’re walking with me in the middle... and You hold it all together.”

Give Jesus praise today for his preeminence over all things, and ask Him to sustain your faith as you participate in His reconciling work among the nations.

Devotion Provided by: Jamie Naramore, Missions Ministries Team, Arkansas Baptist State Convention