

WAIT FOR IT! WAIT NOW...WAIT...OK, NOW

Some years ago, we had a beagle/lab mix (and who knows what else) named Duke. He was about eight weeks old when we got him and he pretty much cut his teeth on my fingers. Duke was a handsome and exceptionally smart animal and could be very entertaining. We spoiled him with meat treats (his favorite being hot dogs) but as a puppy he would grab and scarf the meat from my fingers and at times my fingers paid the price, so I began to teach him...to wait. I would hold the piece of meat at a distance, refusing to let him have it and softly speak as I lowered it closer and closer to his muzzle, "Wait for it, wait now...easy...wait...wait...ok, now – good dog!" We did this to a point where I could literally put any tantalizing piece of meat (think bacon wrapped deer loin) on Duke's nose and he would not eat it until I gave him the ok. Even then, he learned to gently and slowly eat the meat so as to savor and enjoy it instead of just gulping it down as is the nature of most any dog. Some would call this torture. I called it training, doggie discipline, canine correction. Duke had an awesome spirit and was "*dog enough*" to chase bears and bobcats in the mountains behind our house in North Carolina but "*disciplined enough*" to wait on his master's approval when I wanted to spoil him with his daily piece of "hot dog" as everything meat came to be called.

Right now, I feel like ole Duke must have felt many times as he patiently waited (with amazing discipline) each day for his treat. For 3 ½ months we have worked and waited to secure the permits that allow us to remain in Botswana and continue our ministry and it's only by God's grace that we have managed to hold a church family of new converts and young believers together as they too have been so patient. Yesterday I was called to Immigration and we have been reassured that our file will be in the "stack" of files to be reviewed tomorrow (Thursday) before the board officially convenes for Christmas. Again, we ask you to pray that we will find favor with the government and the permits will be issued according to God's will.

Just as I used to train my dog – God has used this trial to teach and to train me. Desiring quick answers to prayer can cause us to miss the savor of satisfaction that comes when we have had to wait on God to move a mountain. And, while I don't want to dramatize anything or minimize the ministry of anyone, anywhere, we have come to realize the reality that we are serving in Africa and Satanic strongholds are very real here. America has a Christian heritage and the work of the gospel is deep rooted in our land with an abundance of Bible preaching churches in MOST (certainly not all) places. Not so here. While many acknowledge God, they have little to no knowledge or understanding of the truth (II Timothy 3:5). We are gaining a deeper understanding of what Jesus said in Matthew 17:21, "Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting."

We're studying the book of James and in James chapter one verses 2-3 we are reminded to, "Count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." I'm thankful for God's investment in us and the confidence that we can have that HE is always at work preparing and equipping US for a greater work. Great fruit is a product of great faith!

And there is the reality that the work of God will not go on unobstructed and unopposed. There's no "easy street" in ministry and to think that is to live in a fantasy world. Paul requested prayer in II Thessalonians 3: 1-2, "Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you: And that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men; for all men have not faith." We too have prayed that prayer much in recent days and ask you to pray it as well. In II Corinthians 4:8 Paul said, "We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair." We find ourselves facing obstacles with our permits and opposition from people that leaves us troubled and perplexed but we are neither distressed or in despair. God is way too big for all of that and in spite of these things I can tell you that HE continues to do a GREAT WORK both in us and in this ministry.

In the past two weeks we have personally witnessed six adults coming to Christ. Last week we met with another member of government and donated 700 New Testaments to workers with disabilities and today four needy families received food for Christmas. Soon, we'll be able to share with you in much more detail more of the incredible things that God is doing. Lee Roberson said that the doors of opportunity hang on the hinges of opposition. Paul said in I Corinthians 16:9, "For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries." And in James 5:16 we read that, "...The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." We rejoice to see what God is doing here in this place and amongst these people. We are encouraged by your prayers and we are thankful for the good work that God is doing in our lives. Thank you for reading and thank you for praying! The battle is the Lord's and the victory has already been won!!

Bro. Mike and Mrs. Cindy

