

*Hello everyone,*

*Jesus is so wonderful! His presence so real, His face so awesome, His friendship so sweet!!! What could possibly be better than this! For me, to live is Christ and to die is gain (Phil. 1:19-23).*

*I am currently in Jerusalem, on a brief visit to Israel before continuing on to Mozambique, Africa. After having laid a burden for Israel on my heart for over two years, God recently provided a round trip plane ticket at less than 1/4 the cost for me to go and "spy out the land." God is so good to me! He even hooked me up with a small apartment, called "the Prophets Quarters" here in Jerusalem. It is owned by a Christian missionary couple from the USA who are on staff at a Christian "House of Prayer" I visit regularly here in Jerusalem. For a few weeks, I will be here asking the Lord to show me why He has laid a burden on my heart for Israel and how He would have me to bless Israel. I have already visited three orphanages in "the West Bank" and spent some time with local Palestinians who say that 50 to 60% of the Palestinians are unemployed and struggling to survive. On the outskirts of the city, many live in shacks, shanties and even in caves, which I plan to visit this coming week!*

*I have also been trying to spend some time each day at "the Wailing Wall" with the Jews as they pray. Last night, I was at "The Wall" sitting at one of their portable desks. I had been reading the Old Testament but at the moment my bible was closed and I was praying. Suddenly one of the Jewish Rabbis began speaking out loud to me from some distance away. He was saying "Do not read the New Testament here, this is a holy, holy, holy place, do not read it here, have respect for this place." I kept motioning for him to come closer to me rather than speak so loudly amongst so many who were praying. He simply would not come over to me. After waiting for the right moment, I walked over to speak with him. He obviously did not want to speak with me or even be near me. I offered my hand in a handshake but he acted too busy, so I put my hand on his shoulder instead. I told him, "I just wanted you to know that I was reading only from the Old Testament." He responded, "But the book has also the New Testament, an impure book. It is evil, Jesus was evil and we still hate Him today! If you would read the Torah, and believe, you would know that Jesus was evil. This is a holy place, we must keep it pure, do not read the New Testament here."*

*As he continued mouthing his passionate hatred for Jesus and the New Testament, I listened and waited for the opportunity to ask him to show me where in the Torah it says that Jesus was evil. However as he was still speaking, my phone rang and as I fumbled to try to turn it off, he walked away. Maybe the phone call was a God thing to keep me from opening up a proverbial "can of worms," so to speak, at that particular moment, because I was completely surrounded by Jewish Rabbi's who do not accept Jesus. Now I understand why the other Jewish Rabbi had looked at me with a sense of disdain and then proceeded to pick up his things and move when I came to sit near him. God's timing is perfect, so maybe the phone call was sent to save that conversation for another day.*

*Several days before this incident, a young Palestinian Christian minister had warned me saying, "If you want to go to heaven quickly, just go witnessing for Jesus Christ at the Wailing Wall and there's a very real possibility you won't need a return flight to the USA." He said*

*that they would beat me or even stone me and that similar things have happened before. Later, just in case I didn't believe yet, God had other practical examples of persecution prepared for my already dumbfounded ears. On a trip to Bethlehem with a local missions group, one of the ladies told me about a conversation she recently had with a friend on the Mount of Olives. As she spoke softly with her friend, she made the simple statement, "When Yeshua (Jesus) sets His feet on the Mount of Olives again." Though spoken privately, much to their surprise, regular working class citizens in the background around them had been listening in on their conversation and suddenly began throwing handfuls of sand at her and her friends as they shouted to all locals around them, "these ladies are missionaries, these ladies are missionaries". She said "It was a frightening example of how the murderous religious spirit is alive and still active in Jerusalem today, and we prayed earnestly that we would escape unharmed."*

*An even more shocking example occurred when a friend of mine went on a walk through an orthodox Jewish neighborhood with a group of 35 other Christians. One of the orthodox Jews had recently seen them doing an outreach in a non-orthodox part of town filled with the general public and tourists. Pointing to their t-shirts, he asked the group what is the meaning of this. On their shirts was written, "...Your people shall be my people, And your God, my God." (Ruth 1:16) The Jewish Rabbi then made a disturbing phone call, and though no one understood Hebrew, the spirit in which he spoke made the group very uncomfortable. They began walking quickly, but within a matter of minutes found themselves surrounded by hundreds of orthodox Jews rushing toward them with rods and rocks in their hands. Many were literally beaten with rods, while others tried to dodge the rocks, which flew by their heads. One older man in his fifties was pressed up against a shop window by a mob of orthodox priests. Though they beat him severely and hit him over the head with a rock, somehow he managed to escape. Dazed and confused, after the beating, he made his way through the mob, stumbling incoherently toward his friends who had already escaped, as they stood at a distance shouting for him to hurry. Suddenly, the Israeli army and police rushed in to break up the riot, dispersed the crowd and escorted the group to safety outside the boundaries of the orthodox Jewish neighborhood. Though many were beaten and stoned, all escaped with no permanent damage. After the incident, the 55 year old who had suffered such a beating said, "The love which I already had for the orthodox Jews has only grown stronger."*

*Wow! Talk about a life-altering experience to "rock your world." Persecution, real persecution, even to the point of being martyred is a very real possibility, even in our world today. My experiences here have opened my eyes to certain hidden realities of the Christian walk that I have never before truly appreciated or perceived beyond words on a page.*

*Persecution and martyrdom no longer seem to be just words from ages past, incomprehensible to my current Christian experience. Thanks to God's protection we have enjoyed great peace as Christians in the USA, well protected from such viscous realities. Even in Mozambique we enjoy tremendous shelter and peace as Christians in the middle of a Muslim society. But it would be wise to remember that our "reality grid" is not a perspective shared by the entire world, and if God should ever decide to lift His grace, even a fraction of it from us, we could very easily find ourselves in a whole different scenario. So before we allow our current Christian experience to "water down the gospel" by persuading us that such*

*things "died out with the apostles" and are no longer applicable to Christianity in our world today, I think the time has come for us to lay aside everything we've ever been taught, long enough to read and embrace the fullness of "the Book". If the Bible says it, it is not only applicable but also possible for us in our world today, whether we ourselves have experienced it or not.*

*My confrontation at "The Wall" was a real eye-opener for me, strongly confirming that It doesn't have to fit neatly inside our perceived "reality grid" for it to be true, applicable and possible today. This humbling new experience came crashing in on me like a wave of the sea, driving me lower still with a shocking new "reality check " that can be summed up in the following statement. "It is not our current personal Christian experience that wrote 'the Book'. It is God who wrote 'the Book'!!! And whether it all fits neatly inside our "little Christian box" or not, His name remains "Faithful and True" who by inspiration of the Holy Spirit breathed His Word through men who have lived and experienced such things, even to the point of dying for Christ". So after only four days in Jerusalem, I suddenly find that my tiny little "reality grid" has been stretched to a whole new level, thanks to forceful expansion through a concept summed up by the words, "Reality Bites" or "the teacher mature men wish they had avoided as adolescents."*

*Please pray for me, that the love of Christ would be made manifest through me here in this place and that I would be led by His Spirit in His perfect timing to be a blessing to all whether Jew, Palestinian, Muslim or Christian. Pray that I will know how to respond with love to their arguments in a way that does not perpetuate the spirit of argument spirit but rather shuts it down through the love of Christ. Pray that I will cling to the key cornerstones of wisdom for walking in the love of Christ found in the following scriptures, (Titus 3:9) "But avoid foolish disputes, genealogies, contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and useless" and (2Tim. 2:23-26) "... avoid foolish and ignorant disputes, knowing that they generate strife" And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth, and that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will. Please pray that the wisdom of God would be given to me, even at the exact moment of need as it is written in Mark 13:11 "But when they arrest you and deliver you up, do not worry beforehand, or premeditate what you will speak. But whatever is given you in that hour, speak that; for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit."*

*The only thing I am interested in doing here is "to live the life", because love conquers all!!! It is the only thing God is interested in, and the only thing that counts for anything. So please pray that for the duration of my brief visit to Israel, I will live before all, whether Jew, Palestinian, Muslim or Christian, by the wisdom of God spoken of through Paul in the following scripture. "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned,*

*but have not love, it profits me nothing. 1Cor. 13:4 (NKJV) Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things." (1Cor. 13:1-8) Love never fails. Wow, Christianity means so much more to me now! God is Love, and love smashes barriers between men! Love turns the way of the world and it's religions upside down until walls of hatred give way to embraces, swallowed up by the love of Christ!*

*Thank you for your love and support!*

*In Him and for Him,*

*Michael Goodnight*

***Prayer support:*** For more information on being a part of our prayer team, please email Michele at [motherof5cherubs@fredlaverycompany.com](mailto:motherof5cherubs@fredlaverycompany.com)

***Phone:*** My number in Mozambique is 258-825-811-434.

***Mail:*** Please send to [3173 Eastern Avenue, Rochester Hills MI, 48307](#). It will be forwarded to me in Africa

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