

July 1, 2009

"FROM 'ROCKERS' TO 'ROCKERS'—IN 12 HOURS ! "

Dear Friends & Family,

(6/7) Yesterday morning marked the first time I preached in the past three months; it had been the longest "preaching 'hiatus'" I had experienced since going into the ministry in January of '86. What made it somewhat unique was that it was in a nursing home! I was surrounded by aged people, most of which were in wheelchairs! Some were sleeping; others were smiling & listening attentively & appreciatively. One occasionally interrupted with unintelligible noises. It felt so good & "right" to preach again, as if I were doing what I was made for, what I was called to do. I played guitar, entreated the Lord to come & manifest Himself, & to make His Word come alive. I then preached on the fear of death, which I have often had to deal with, even as a man in my fifties, who has been saved over 35 years & has been in the ministry as I said, since 1986. I preached on the two kinds of righteousness: our own, or God's. Only His, transferred to us through faith in Jesus Christ, provides us with that absolute moral perfection God requires for us to abide in His presence forever. I put on a tattered, burnt, & dirty choir robe I had "modified" years ago to illustrate what our own righteousness looks like in the eyes of a holy God: "filthy rags" (Isa.64:6). I then put on a pure white choir robe, which represented Jesus' pristine righteousness. This, & only this perfect righteousness of His Son qualifies us to be called "His Own". Fear of death comes when we focus on anything that has to do with our own righteousness. Fear dissipates in the knowledge that the only righteousness that God is pleased with & accepts is righteousness which He Himself gives to the believer in Christ. I then prayed, & played a number of old hymns on my guitar. Ironically, in the space of almost exactly 12 hours to the minute, I went from "rockers" ("wheelchairs") in the setting of a nursing home to "rockers", as in "music style preference", in a Double A Kansas City Royals' minor league baseball stadium, drumming to the original tunes as loudly (& "raucously"?) as I could of The Caleb Guertin Band. We had been invited to play at the Blue Rocks' Baseball Team "Faith Night" that evening, after a double header. Hence, I marvel at our God, how He can grace & equip someone like me to jump from such diverse age groups & roles in the space of a half a day! **"WE WERE DUG INTO, WHILE DIGGING, FOR 'HIDDEN TREASURES'"**

I returned home late last Friday night from my annual teen camp at Tel Hai. It is my 19th year there, & last week marked my 38th camp at this facility. Our theme this year was "Hidden Treasures", re: Col.2:3, where in Christ are hidden all the treasures of wisdom & knowledge. We came to "dig" for them. They are found in His written Word. I told the staff in their "vision for the week" meeting on Sunday evening, that when camp is "all boiled down", when all of the fun & frills are dusted away, the only eternal value of the camp will be the Word that was preached. Despite many contemporary churches' approach to "attract" unbelievers, via toned-down, entertainment saturated messages, God has not changed His mind re: His ordained means of saving souls: the *preaching* of the gospel (1 Cor.1:21). Why? Because men by nature do not like to be told what to do. When someone is preaching to you re: turning from sin & unto God, it takes humility to listen. Humility. This is what Jesus said was required to see the Kingdom of God—to receive it like a child. Few things require the human soul to humble itself like preaching, especially when the gospel comes through "jars of clay"! It says God was "**pleased**" through the foolishness of preaching to save those who believe! Even God admits preaching seems foolish! Of course, it only is to the human race! God in His wisdom chose the very thing that human nature naturally despises! Hence, *the content* of the message preached is so critically important. That being the case, our preachers expounded on such subjects as: "Texting (most teens are obsessed w/it these days) Versus The Biblical Text"; "Propitiation: Jesus' Greatest Treasure To His Church—Removing God's Wrath" (& thus restoring eternal fellowship w/The Father); ardently searching for the "Treasure" hidden in the field; & warning the kids that suffering comes along with finding "The Treasure". Needless to say, the week was intense. As we dug into

God's Word re: these issues & others, God definitely "dug into" the staff & the kids! Is it possible, given the "cutting" nature of God's Word (Heb.4:12), for the latter not to happen, Beloved? Only, in this context, in a sense, our God used The "Shovel" of the Spirit. As He dug throughout the week, we saw teenager after teenager "go down", break, & become "tenderized" towards Him & their fellow campers. It is a wondrous sight to behold each camp. It is the biggest reason I go year after year. There is nothing like it on earth to me. To have been at this particular camp now for 19 years, seems like a dream to me. I pray I never wake up.

"ONCE PLED, ALWAYS PLED" or "I'VE GOT YOU COVERED"

It has been several months since my last entry re: my newsletter series dealing with "Christian myths", that are too often popular, in use, but, oh, so often very unbiblical! Once again, this month's is one I myself have been guilty of perpetrating! Most of us have either heard others or ourselves say that we "plead the blood", either in intense prayer or while engaged in some form of spiritual warfare. The notion of doing so goes back to Exodus 12, when the Lord commanded the Israelites through Moses to apply lamb's blood to their doors & lintels, so that when the Destroying Angel passed through Egypt around midnight, he would "see the blood". The blood was that of an innocent victim in the form of a lamb, which had died vicariously for the sins of the inhabitants of that dwelling. When sighted, the angel of death would "pass over" that household, sparing it from death. Anyone who did not have blood painted or "pled" on their entranceway suffered the loss of their firstborn. If, when Christians "plead the blood", they think they are doing so spiritually, so that, until they do, it is *not* pled, then there is a serious issue at stake. Once a sinner puts their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ & His "propitiary" sacrifice, i.e., "the removal of wrath (God's) by the offering of a sacrifice" (Rom.3:25, NIV margin), His blood "expiates" (i.e., removes, not just "covers") their sin, & God's wrath, that was previously over the head of that sinner (Jn. 3:36; Rom.5:9), is now removed forever. If there is ever a time that the blood is *not* pled over the sinner, even for a millisecond, then his sin is restored to him &, along with it, God's wrath! Believers are perpetually covered by the blood of Christ, or, they don't belong to Him. Yes, when believers sin, they are responsible before the Lord to confess their sins & Christ's blood—the same blood that *already* covers them, does truly & wondrously cleanse them from all unrighteousness (I Jn.1:9). But this is *not* because they weren't already covered by it. If, when we "plead the blood", we do so *as a reminder* to ourselves, others, & the Devil that this is in

truth, what actually & already exists, then we do well in doing so.

Michael

Kim & I are sincerely grateful for His enabling grace, & your help, to do His impossible work!

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[Please make all tax-deductible gifts payable to: **Elim Fellowship**, 1703 Dalton Rd, Lima, NY 14485. Thanks!]

[Michael is an ordained Elim Fellowship itinerant home missionary, endorsed by his local church. He makes his living & supports his family & ministry by preaching God's Word & through faith in the Lord & His provision through His people.]

Ministry/events for JULY & those not listed in last month's newsletter:

7/7/09: Hopewell Chr. Fellowship: camp board mtg.//Petra Christian Fellowship: Network Pastors' mtg.

7/16/09: Elim area pastors' mtg., Mt. Laurel, NJ

7/19/09: Hopewell Christian Fellowship, Elverson, PA: 4th & 5th grade kids' church & camp promotion

News: our God greatly helped me at camp last week, re: all of the rigorous activity in-involves: tackle football, horseback riding for dramas, serious rough-housing in the pool w/the boy campers, much lifting, etc. I'm praying whether or not to get an injection for my back for the resultant symptoms in my leg. It would be about \$350.00, last about 4 mos. I recently had blood-work done: all OK! I may get tested for Lyme's for \$85.00. Still praying & waiting on God re: open doors to minister. Kim & I are

praying, giving ourselves to our present responsibilities, preparing for future ministry, & looking to the Lord in it all!