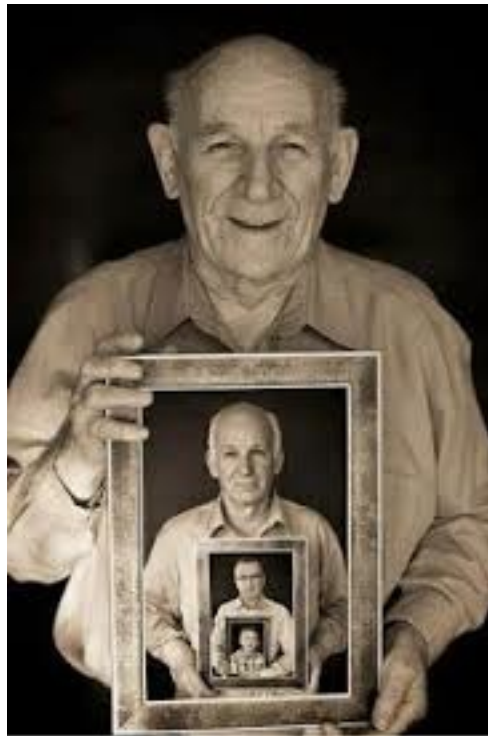


September 1, 2014

“FROM ADOLESCENTS to ADULTS to ADDICTS” or “GRACE THRU THE AGES”



Dear *Friends & Family*,

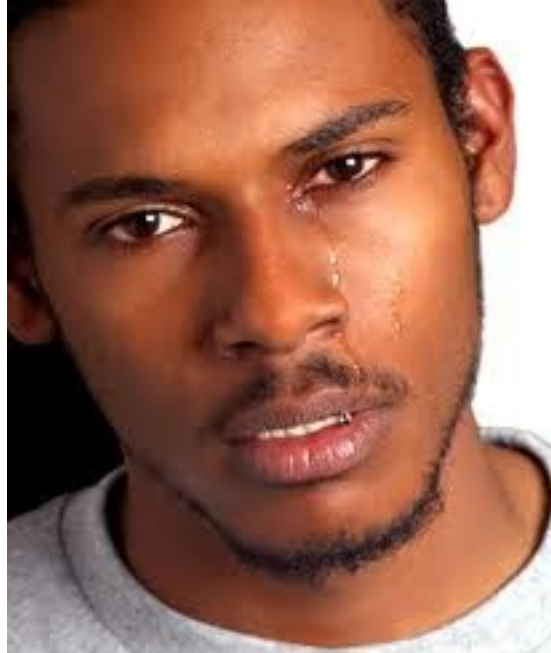
(7/29) I returned home yesterday afternoon from an **8 day, 11 meeting, almost 900 mile** ministry trip thru or to **DE, PA, NY, & NJ**. It involved a community outreach camp for **kids ages 6-13 [over 140 of them]** in Corning, NY, 2 Sunday a.m. worship services in Poughkeepsie, NY, & ministry to recovering male drug addicts in West Park, NY. A message that all three groups received & all in the same manner, despite age & “place in life” situations, was a verse by verse expository sermon re: Colossians 1:12-19. In the natural I was running on fumes, as this ministry trip followed by 2 & ½ days the 2nd camp of the summer for me, my own Jr. Hi. camp in PA. I strove just to survive, but each time I would step up to preach this message, I would have the soundman play background music played by our own local church’s worship leader here in DE, a.k.a., Derek Forsberg, & after entreating the Lord to come, His presence would so *graciously* fill the room. The message was prefaced re: the nature of the Word of God that “the life is in the text”. That is, the Holy Spirit is so intertwined with the written Word, that as you give yourself to the former, the Latter “comes out”. “The words that I speak to you are Spirit & they are *life*” [Jn.6:63]; “These are not just idle words for you-they are your *life*” [Dt. 32:47]; “Moses handed down to us *living oracles*” [Acts 7:38]; “The

Word of God is *living & active*" [Heb. 4:12]; "As He spoke to me *the Spirit entered into me*" [Ezek. 2:2], etc. To the children I likened it to that candy that is hard & crunchy on the outside but when you bite into it there is a sweet syrupy substance in the middle. That is kind of how meditation on the Word of God works. I have written before how the Lord spoke to my heart years ago that, "My deepest fountains [of Holy Spirit experience] are in the foundations [the basic fundamental doctrines, particularly of Christ & His redemptive work]". I have been & have participated in many seemingly "experience-seeking" meetings, whether intended or not. I have been prayed for with hands laid on me by some of the biggest names in the country. And yet-in depth & richness, those times have paled in comparison to times I have given to intense, repeated meditation on God's Word. Again, I've written before that after doing so it feels as if a 17 ft. thick, wet, wool blanket is lying on top of me. I have had to put my Bible down & often just lay there before the Lord, because I cannot take anymore of Him. "What did you do, Michael, to have that happen?!" I read a text from the Scripture. And I read it again, & again, & again. Then-His Spirit comes, with the Divine weight of His glory, His "chabod", if you will. This happens often in my study. I do not want to disparage seeking God-of course not. It's not infrequent that I'm in intercession. I *do* want to disparage though, "experience-seeking". This is easy to do by the young & the zealous. It is precious. They want more of God, like a child who has had the pure, sincere milk of the Word but wants more. Yet, again-the life is in *the text*. John Murray, one of my favorite theologians, decades ago wrote something to the effect of, "**Meditation is not detached dreaming. It requires intense application to the truths of God's Word. The reward will be visions of the mountains of God. The soul will reach the summit of rest because it will have seen the majesty of the Lord**". I have found this to be true over & over again.

When I began the exposition of Col. 1, which, by the way, is what I call 1 of 5 "**Choice Christological Chapters**" in the N.T. [the others being John 1:1-18; Phil. 2:6-11; Heb. 1 & 2], I held up a "walking-I beam horse head oil rig" up to the audience. Seen in fields across the U.S., they go back & forth, up & down, like a teeter-totter, drawing up precious oil from deep beneath the earth's surface. This I likened to meditation on The Scriptures. They are inexhaustible. There is always more of the Holy Spirit's "oil" down there. Before preaching, I had to remind myself, as exhausted & distracted as I was at times, that fruit from the service wasn't dependent on me. Again-the **LIFE** is in the text! Charles Spurgeon once wrote something to the effect of: "The Word of God is like a **lion**. Just let it out. It will do what lions do". And it did. As I expounded & expounded this I saw **children, adults, seniors, & recovering drug addicts** respond. Some clapped. Some wept.

Some laughed as they were set free by this “behind the scenes view” of a Christian’s salvation. “Behind the scenes”? Yes. There are portions of the Word that describe a person’s salvation from *their* point of view, “on the surface”, “on stage”, if you will. They are charged to repent & believe. No one gets saved without hearing the gospel, repenting of sin, & placing their faith toward God. When they truly do so, i.e., when it is a genuine conversion, however, there are other texts that describe what was going on *behind the scenes*, in the *unseen world*, that brought it about. When a person comes to Christ, he only does so because at that time The Father is both enabling & drawing him [Jn.6:65, 6:65]. When he repents, it’s because The Father is *granting* him repentance & in His goodness leading him to repentance [Acts 5:31,11:18; Rom.2:4;Phil.1:29]. He is believing because the Holy Spirit via *His* will [Jn.3:8] has regenerated him to enable him to do so [prior to regeneration the sinner is hostile to & opposed to everything God is for by nature: Col.1:21; Eph.2:1-3], via the Father’s *gift & grant* to that person to believe [Acts 16:14; Phil. 1:29]. The person chooses Christ at that moment in history because the Father had chosen him *before the foundation of the world* [Eph.1:4; Rev. 13:8, 17:8; Acts 13:18?] & back then gave him to Christ [Jn. 6:37, 10:29, 17: 2,6,9,24]. Christians too often debate who’s ultimately responsible for one’s salvation because they don’t understand this biblical principle & resultantly leave The Scriptures & God contradicting them-selves, which of course is impossible. It’s because they fail to see what “view” a particular Bible verse is giving-“**on stage**”, or “**behind the scenes**”. Back to Col. 1:12-19. This is a “behind the scenes” portion of Scripture re: how God the Father qualified us to be His own at the moment of conversion. While we were responding to a gospel presentation, whether verbal or written, Col. 1 reveals what was actually happening. God was delivering us from the kingdom & authority of darkness & translating us into the kingdom of the Son He loves. “In the move”, i.e., on the way over, He regenerated us, punched **Satan** in the face [I actually do this to a Satan head/mask while elaborating re: this] & wrenched us from his power & domain, & qualified us by imputing or transferring the merits of Christ’s death & perfect obedience.

“FEARS to TEARS”



After preaching this to the recovering drug addicts' ministry, my sister Kate [she's the kitchen supervisor there] brought to me a strapping young man named Pedro. He was like a frightened little boy-like a whipped puppy. He said, "After hearing what you said I'm afraid I'm not saved & want to be", et al. I laid my hand on his heart & felt led to pray for him re: the "Pedro" in the Bible ["Peter" in Spanish]. As I did, I felt teardrops hitting my hand. It was one of the most precious & tender ministry experiences I've ever had. This guy could break me in half if he wanted to, but once again, he was receiving "the life that was in the text". And-it was melting his heart. This is why I do what I do by our Father's very kind grace-I, the weakest of men in myself. It makes me marvel at Him. At the children's day camp mentioned above, at lunch one day after I preached in the morning, a young girl came up to me at my table & handed me a note which read: "You taught me so well. There were some things you said I did not know. Thank You! Emily..."

(8/2) "MALICE' in WONDERLAND"



Yesterday, while playing a card game with some of my grandchildren, the Disney classic from 1951, a.k.a. *Alice in Wonderland* came on the TV. I had never seen the entire movie. While trying to play the game, I would try to catch the movie as well-not a great idea for a handicapped multi-tasker! I wish I hadn't. A certain episode in the movie so deeply stumbled me that I mourn, grieve, & ache every time I recollect it. A sinister walrus & his fiendish side-kick dive into the ocean to visit a mother oyster with her very young & tender baby oysters. This devious tyrant exponentially towered over the helpless, naïve, infant oysters both in height & weight. Devouring them is the only thing on this walrus' mind. Like a cunning conman he gives them his feigned friendly line to get them to trust him-to come along with him. Before doing so he uses his cane to tap & close the mother's shell shut, so she can't observe nor attempt to prevent what was about to happen. The baby oysters in their, Oh, so tender & naïve, trusting facial expressions innocently follow this diabolical, deceptive tyrant. He brings them to his shack & seats them around a table, as if they were going to dine *with* him. Little do they know that *they* are on the menu! In the backroom, his sidekick is hastily preparing bread & hot broth to cook these little unawares in. What kills me inside every time I ponder it is the tender, precious, innocent, yet at times fearfully suspicious facial expressions these little ones had as they looked up at him until the walrus soothes them & calms their fears with his seemingly harmless outward appearance & pack of lies. Their upper shell is made to look like a baby bonnet, further emphasizing & highlighting their helplessness before this fiendish foe. When the sidekick comes out from the backroom all excited to share a meal with the walrus, much to his dismay & anger the former has already devoured them, shaking his belly in contented delight. It's so hard not to picture him masticating them with his teeth

& swallowing them with absolutely no remorse! I feel furious at him as I type these words. Oh, how very much like the devil this walrus is. “Simon, Simon-Satan has demanded to sift you like wheat”. The devil roams about like a roaring lion [or gluttonous walrus!] seeking whom he may devour.” I can barely fathom how Disney could have included this movie, much less this scene, in a movie designed *for children*. It reminded me of his *Pinochio* film [one of my favorites], where none of the “stupid little boys” gets saved from becoming donkeys & being sent to the salt mines via the sinister Coachman & his demonic-like henchmen except for the “Little Wooden Head”. You might think I’m a bit too sensitive to such things, for my heart to be so very stumbled by it. When you’ve worked with children as long as I have [since 1986] & are familiar with the ravaging attacks & schemes of the devil, both via the knowledge of the Scriptures & personal experience, it’s impossible not to be so scandalized by such graphic scenes. The devil, if he could, *would* devour children as well as adults. He *does* desire to sift them like wheat. He careth not re: their tenderness nor their age. This is why I do what I do. I preach to children both the same content & in the same manner as I basically do to adults. Why? To arm them from such fiends. To do all I can so that they do not innocently & naively “follow the walrus”. Oh God, help me. Help me.

Ministry/events for SEPTEMBER & those not listed in last month’s newsletter:

Caboose! on the Loose:



July 31: Concordville, PA: hsc directors’ mtg.

Aug. 5: Morgantown, PA: hsc kids camp directors’ mtg.

Aug. 27: Wilmington, DE: IC young adults’ home group: ministry of the Word

Sept. 2: Petra Christian Fellowship, New Holland, PA: hsc board mtg.//
Sept. 5: Immanuel Church, Wilmington, DE: Warehouse youth group "Lock-In": ministry of the Word
Sept. 10: Wilmington, DE: IC young adults' home group: ministry of the Word
Sept. 22: Petra Christian Fellowship, New Holland, PA: Hopewell Network Para-Church Ministries' ministry night
Sept. 28: a.m.: First Baptist Church of Holloway Terrace: Sun. a.m. service: youth Sunday
Sept. 28: p.m.: Hopewell Christian Fellowship, Elverson, PA: 40th anniversary celebration [children's service]

Name: _____ Address: _____ Email: _____

*[Michael is an ordained **Elim Fellowship** "itinerant" home missionary & is also licensed to preach the gospel by the local church he attends, **Immanuel Church**. **Caboose!** is also an affiliate ministry of the **Hopewell Network of Churches**. For 14 years he served on various local church staffs full-time. **Since 2000**, he & Kim have lived by faith, having no salary, retirement to speak of-yet this is their calling at this season of their lives. Michael preaches God's Word & systematic theology, using both visual aids & drama, to all age groups either separately or combined, as the Lord opens doors. To help support this work, please make all tax-deductible gifts payable to: Elim Fellowship, 1703 Dalton Rd, Lima, NY 14485], denoting it for the home-mission work of Michael Robert Guertin. If your church would be interested in ministry or helping to support our missions' work in the U.S. to both old & young please feel free to contact us. Thanks!

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