Dear friends,

Last month I had the privilege of speaking at a veterinary meeting in Pennsylvania. I’d like to share some of my talk with you.

Our CVM theme for this year is Joshua 1:9 “Be strong and courageous.” But I started out with a story that didn’t sound very courageous from Mark 4 where Jesus has just finished incredible preaching and teaching and healing with a large crowd. His disciples push off in the evening to take him across the Sea of Galilee. Jesus, exhausted, falls asleep in the boat.

These storms were common as I understand. Several of the disciples were experienced sailors-fisherman who had grown up fishing with their fathers all their lives. It was not unusual for them to be out fishing at night. But apparently something beyond their knowledge, skill, and experience. They tried everything and at last, as the boat was already filling with water, they turned to Jesus, filled with fear.

Just like us, they tried to battle the storm with their own resources. All this time Jesus was right there in the boat with them, available to them. But they didn’t come until it was a last resort. And when they do wake him, do they ask nicely for His help? No, they BLAME him for not getting them out of this mess already before they had even asked. They say, “Don’t you CARE?”

When you have the maker of the wind and the waves right there in the boat with you, isn’t it a little ridiculous to be afraid of the wind and the waves? If you have a difficult co-worker or client, and you have access to the Creator of that difficult person right there with you, isn’t it sometimes a bit ridiculous not to turn there first? Rather than praying only as a last resort?

It can be scary to go where God calls. But if God calls and it is His idea in the first place, why should we feel fear?

When my family and I were serving with CVM in Nepal, we got to know an evangelist named Kali who told us his life story. He had become a Christian when his wife was miraculously healed. He began to travel preaching and healing others.

One time, he was preaching in a village called Dhuseni where all the people were Tibetan Buddhists and the leaders were Buddhist lamas (priests). Two men were angry at Kali’s preaching and healing and wanted to get rid of him as many people were starting to believe in Jesus. So they told the villagers, “Look, Kali has started to erase our ancient culture. We must stop him.” They whipped up a crowd which quickly became an angry mob of 300-400 men from the village and surrounding area and went to get Kali. They dragged him out of bed at night and tied him to a post. Kali was praying throughout all of this.
Some wanted to beat him and others brought knives to kill him. God gave Kali a sense of peace. Kali was sure they would kill him, but he had read about the stoning of Stephen and the persecutions of Paul. Kali knew many people got encouragement from these Bible stories. Kali continued to pray and believed that if he was killed, it would be an encouragement to the faith of others.

However, God worked a miracle in the heart of the Buddhist lama. The lama came to the mob and said, “I have read the Bible myself. In the future, someday we will all become Christians. Why are you 400 people surrounding him? Don’t do this to him. Let him go.” After the lama said this, they warned Kali, but let him go, unhurt. Within a few years, there were seven churches established in Dhuseni and the surrounding villages.

Though Kali was sure he would be killed, he had the peace of putting his life into God’s hands and trusting God would use it for His glory. His strength and courage were not in his own ability but in trusting God. As we move through back-to-school and into fall, I pray that all of you are trusting God for what’s ahead.

Here’s grandson Caleb and little sister Kaylee on Caleb’s first day of kindergarten. It was his great opportunity to be an example of how to be strong and courageous to little sister Kaylee.

Thank you for the prayers, support, and encouragement that enable us to continue to serve through CVM.

In partnership with you,
Karen and Ron Stoufer

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