

Women's Life

December 2005

Praise on the Aegean

As Diane picks the next song, I recall Pastor Glenn's sermon from several months ago. *Diabetes... discouraged... He talks to the trees... and sings!... When life is hard, sing! Sing praises to God!... Yes, Diane, let's sing!*

Richard and I are traveling in Greece with our niece, Diane, and her husband, Rich. Last week we toured by car. Now we are on a 43' sailboat touring the Cyclades Islands. This portion of our trip is rapidly deteriorating. The meltemi winds, incessant blowing north winds, have uncharacteristically continued past September into mid-October. Mornings I serve Dramamine at breakfast. Sailing is not fun. Nights feel like sleeping in a washing machine. The howling wind makes me edgy.

Today we're heading back, but sailing across the Aegean Sea conditions grow worse as winds increase; steady at 28-30 knots, gusts of 35. Waves build 10 and 12 feet high. Waves splash over our bow. Wind and waves combine to push the side rail under water, as the boat bottom rolls up. Even with a life jacket and tethered to the boat, I feel vulnerable. Richard's face is stern as he works to keep the boat on course.

Diane and I sing every song we can think of: *Great is Thy Faithfulness, Joy to the World, Alleluia, The B-I-B-L-E...* A wave. Something bangs down below. The boat lurches. My body hurts from bracing. A few seconds rest. Next wave is big—too big. It crashes over the cockpit. Rich wraps his arms around the backstay holding on. The wave totally engulfs him. It rushes past the rest of us. Everyone okay?

We continue. "Holy, holy, holy ... early in the morning..." *It's Tuesday. Maybe Flo Wolfe and the ladies at Bible Study are praying for us.*

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“Shout to the Lord all the earth, let us sing...” We laugh at our croaky voices. *Are you hearing us, Lord?*

“In the stars His handiwork I see, in the wind He speaks with majesty...” *What an awesome storm. What power for Jesus to calm the storm with a simple “Peace, be still.” his mighty God loves me! He knows I’m here.* Even in the midst of the storm there’s an inexplicable peace.

The hours go by one long minute at a time. We sing as much as we can. It isn’t easy, but fears rise when we stop singing. The island draws near. Finally in port, peace and bravery disappear as I sob in Richard’s arms. “It’s okay. We’re safe now.” my husband croons. I ignore the curious sailors watching from the pier, and cling to my husband.

The Lord does not promise a life free from storms, but He does promise to be with us. We can choose to sing and enter His courts with praise even when unsure about life at the moment. One day when all life’s storms are over and each of us arrives at the journey’s end, He will wrap us in His arms and say, “It’s okay. You’re safe now.” And then our purest praise will just begin!

Leslie Payne



Looking for a way to give back to Women’s Ministries?

Helpers needed:

Bereavement Ministry
Bible studies
Coffee Fellowship
Fall Ministry Fair
Hospitality
Retreat for all EP Churches
(Mar. 31–Apr. 2, 2006)
Christmas Brunch
Women’s Sunday School Class
(summer quarter only)

Leaders or co-leaders needed:

Appreciation desserts for
our volunteers (Sept. and
March)
A Faith That Works (once-
a-month Bible study for
women who work outside
the home)
Home Management Seminars
(January and July)
Moms of College Kids (one
Saturday morning each
month)
Retreat (November 3-5, 2006)
Summer Desserts
Spring Tea

Living it

...praying at the same time for us as well, that God may open up to us a door for the word, so that we may speak forth the mystery of Christ, for which I have also been imprisoned... Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity. Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned, as it were, with salt, so that you may know how you should respond to each person. (Colossians 4:3-6)

I've been reading Colossians and this part stood out. The picture people usually paint of evangelism is one of knocking on strangers' doors and trying to convince them—or manipulating a conversation with someone we know to try to convince them.

This passage gives a very different picture. Chapter 3 is “applied Christianity.” Pictures of what a life with Jesus as Lord looks like. Then we get to this passage. Paul says to pray for him to be able to speak forth the mystery of Christ. And we are to conduct our selves with wisdom so that we can respond to each person.

As I continued to look at the passage, I learned something interesting. Some people are called to be evangelists. Paul was called as an apostle. It was his job to preach the “mysteries of Christ.” He obviously wasn't telling his readers that it was their job, too.

According to Paul, if I'm not called to be a preacher/evangelist, I am called to live a life that shows that Jesus is my Lord. And I am called to answer those people who ask me about it. Actually, that's what Peter said, too. *...But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. (1 Peter 3:15)*

Knowing that God doesn't expect me to be Billy Graham takes a lot of pressure off, doesn't it? But there's that part about living a life with Jesus as Lord—the kind of life that makes people ask.

When was the last time someone asked you how you keep your words so gracious? Or how you can be so joyful/hopeful in such a hard situation? Or why you live the kind of life you do?

I don't often think about the fact that people are watching. But they are. Making Jesus Lord of my life isn't just about me. Others are watching and they're thinking. And it may just be the way He brings some of His children into the family.

Micki Parkinson

Thots and things

Christmas on the Web:

Annie's Christmas Page has all kinds fun Christmas things: www.annieshomepage.com/christmasideas.html

December verse-a-day

All about gingerbread

Christmas Cursors: lets you change your mouse pointer from that boring black and white arrow into an Angel, Snowflake, or Christmas Tree. (free download)

21 Ways to Celebrate Christmas for teens: www.christianitytoday.com/cl/2001/006/12.58.html

Christian holiday webring has lists of websites with Christmas stuff: <http://h.webring.com/hub?ring=christsholiday> (they promise that the ring won't lead you into unwanted/unchristian areas)

Gifts recipes: www.razzledazzlerecipes.com/christmas/gifts/index.htm



Lord, I find the genealogy of my Savior strangely checkered with four remarkable changes in four generations.

Rehoboam begat Abia:

a bad father begat a bad son.

Abia begat Asa:

a bad father and a good son.

Asa begat Jehoshaphat:

a good father and a good son.

Jehoshaphat began Joram:

a good father and a bad son.

I see, Lord, from hence, that my father's piety cannot be entailed; that is bad news for me. But I see also that actual impiety is not hereditary; that is good news for my son.

Thomas Fuller (1608-1661)

Flo's thoughts

Another Advent is fast approaching. How will I prepare my heart this year? Not my house, foods, decorations, cards, or gifts, but my heart. I want three things to have my attention this year: praise, prayer and people.

My hymnal will get more use this Advent as I take time each day to sing the Christmas tunes that stir my imagination and lift my praises heavenward. I'll turn on a Christmas CD and sing along to the *Hallelujah Chorus* and let loose on the final notes of *O Holy Night*. The Lord's name is praised -- even if I startle a few dust mites hiding under the beds! We might even lend our voices to the choir for the season. Don't sing? Take the opportunity to praise the Lord by returning a salesperson's "Happy Holidays," with "Have a blessed Christmas." Wearing a pin that proclaims "Jesus is the Reason for the Season" offers praise to the Savior and encouragement to fellow believers. Praising the Lord's faithfulness this past year isn't just for Thanksgiving.

In addition to the season's focus on praise, I want to plan prayer times. Luke 2:19 tells us, "But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart." As I think about this adolescent mother, I want her quiet spirit to lead me to more fervent pondering and praying this Advent. My favorite Christmas moments occur when all is quiet in the house, the Christmas tree lights and my Dickens' village houses provide the only illumination, and I can drink in the peacefulness. I have the time to compose meditative prayers, words focused on the "joy inexpressible and full of glory." (1 Peter 1:8) In the stillness of the family room, I plan to pour out the confessions of my sinfulness and revel in the grace offered for me as Christ stepped into history and walked clear to Golgotha for those whom He would call.

In the livelier moments of the holiday, people take center stage. Whether it's the family gathering, the church staff Christmas party, or the greetings that arrive in the mail with letters and photos, people are a big part of Christmas. Each person has contributed something significant to my growth as a Christian, and I will pause

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to thank the Lord for them and the role they have in my walk with Christ. Perhaps this year I will follow Dave's parents' custom. They kept the year's Christmas greetings in a basket, took one card out per night, and prayed for that person. They prayed through their cards several times during that next year.

So I suppose that's my Christmas wish list this year: that the Lord would help me focus on giving Him more praise. That praise will lead me to deeper prayer and a greater appreciation for all the people He has placed in my life. May you experience the peace of the Christ Child who offered Himself in our place.

Christmas blessings, *Flo Wolfe*



This month in history

Safety razor patented: Dec. 2, 1901

Apollo 17 lands on the moon: Dec. 11, 1972

Boston Tea Party: Dec. 16, 1773

Wright brothers' flight, near Kitty Hawk, NC: Dec. 17, 1903

Disney's *Snow White* first shown: Dec. 21, 1937

Pilgrims land at Plymouth: Dec. 21, 1620

This month in Women's Ministry

Acts Study Tuesday mornings 9:30–11:00 (every week—except 12/27)

Coffee Fellowship (each Sunday between services)

Merry Widows will meet at noon on December 10

Christmas Brunch December 3, 2005 9:30-11:30AM. Our own Suzy Florence will speak.

MOPS December 14

MOPS Steering Committee December 28

Women's Life deadline December 15. Email articles no longer than 500 words to Micki ([REDACTED]).

Single Moms' Ministry meets December 6 and 20 at 6:45 PM
Childcare available

Boundaries in Dating meets December 13 at 6:45 PM. Childcare available. No meeting on December 27

A Faith That Works does not meet December, but will resume on January 18, 2006

Moms of College Kids will not meet in December.

Scrapbooking Daze will not meet in December.

Looking to the Future

Home Management Seminar January 7, 2006

All EP Church Women's Retreat March 31–April 2
Registration begins Dec. 4

All the women of the area's EP churches are invited to retreat to the Hunt Valley Marriott. Our speaker will be Carolyn Custis James, author of *When Life and Beliefs Collide* and *Lost Women of the Bible: Finding Strength and Significance Through Their Stories*. Cindy Bauchspies will lead our worship.

1–Grab a friend and register for your room at the Hunt Valley Marriott (1-800-228-9290 or 1-410-785-7000). **Be sure to ask for the EP Women's Retreat room rate** (\$109/night for a queen size bed or 2 double beds).

2–Register for the conference itself at SPEP (\$75.00, includes dessert Friday night and the Saturday night banquet at the Marriott).



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Behind the Scenes of Women's Life

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