

The Faith Script

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But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: "Be holy, because I am holy." 1 Peter 2:1 (NIV)

Prayer Wall

Professor Emeritus Fred Eckel has said, "Pharmacists are life-long students and continue to learn, even after their formal education ends." I personally have found this to be true not only in scientific and clinical matters, but also in spiritual matters. The Lord teaches when I have the opportunity to be a member of a short-term medical mission brigade. Each time I have traveled to an area outside my comfort zone to "serve", I come home with a greater vision of God's omnipotence.

This past fall, a team of willing souls went to a region of the world where Christians are very much in the minority. In this region, Christians may be persecuted for their faith in following the Living and Risen Jesus Christ. This is not a governmental stand. However, officials often look the other way when Christians are being mistreated. The following scripture passage was on my mind while on this mission:

⁶[Jesus] also spoke this parable: "A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit on it and found none. ⁷Then he said to the keeper of his vineyard, 'Look, for three years I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree and find none. Cut it down; why does it use up the ground?' ⁸But he answered and said to him, 'Sir, let it alone this year also, until I dig around it and fertilize it. ⁹And if it bears fruit, well. But if not, after that you can cut it down.'" Luke 13:6-9 (NKJV)

We may look at this parable in more than one way. If we are of the "tree-hugger's" point of view, then we would say that the fig tree is a living organism and it should live until it dies of natural causes. Coming from a farming background, I can testify a farmer usually has the stance that if "it doesn't grow, it's got to go." We may look at it as the tree being the nation of Israel. Israel did not fulfill all that God wanted and it would be cut off from His blessings.

The barren fig tree could also be likened to a living soul. We are all fruitless unless we are united with our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, through faith. *For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23) and Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me." (John 14:6)*

While our team was on location, we held devotions in the morning and evening each day, along with debriefings. We listened as we learned of a Christian family that heard a knocking at their door, to which the father answered the door to find ISIS soldiers demanding if the inhabitants of this household were followers of Jesus. The father not wishing to deny his Lord, stated that they were. An ISIS soldier killed the gentleman quickly. The members of the household were then ceremonially and systematically killed, except for one young adult female. After she was beaten, she was released to tell others of the "power" of ISIS.

One of our drivers and interpreter was run out of his own home as his father literally shot at

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him trying to kill him, once finding out his son was a follower of Jesus Christ. You must realize it was the son who was taking care of his handicapped father: providing a roof over his head, food on the table, and clothes on his back. The father told the rest of the family his son chose to follow Jesus and now the son was open game for anyone in the extended family to kill and avenge the family's honor. The son lost his job, too.

My anger mounted as I heard these and other stories of persecution. I asked God, "Why?" Usually I am not a violent man, but I found myself thinking, "God, just cut them down, like the fig trees in the garden that are not bearing good fruit! Why should they be taking up space on the face of the earth? I do not understand."

The Holy Spirit came silently, gently, truthfully, and very real to me, stating, "Jesus, God the Son, came to save all souls." I was humbled. God Almighty showed His power and might before we left our mission field for we saw our driver and his father reconciled. (For a father, and head of the family, to admit that he was wrong, and his son was right, in this part of the world, and in this faith-mind set, was an act of God. Truly out of the ordinary.) We saw three women in our little church clinic come to the saving knowledge of Jesus as their Savior...all on the same day! (Realize, this made life dangerous for them, as their husbands did not presently know Jesus as their personal Savior.)

How amazing that our Savior, the one who tends our garden, knows when to cultivate, when to prune and when to clear the garden. Thank God, He still teaches me. Praise God, He still saves souls. What a wonderful Savior we serve.

Keith Allhands, CPFI Member and Past President
Bennington, IN



Thank you to all who registered for our 2019 CPFI Annual Conference & National Student Retreat to be held May 22 to May 26, 2019, in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. We have planned an exciting time for learning and fellowship. **Remember to save June 3 to June 7, 2020** for the CPFI 2020 Annual Conference & National Student Retreat to be held at the Bonclarken Conference Center, 500 Pine Drive, 28731, Flat Rock, North Carolina.

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