

eGlimpse #170 – Paul & Kathleen / April 7, 2018



Someone once cautioned,
*“If you spend too much
time looking in your car’s
rearview mirror you will
have an accident.”*

The point? While we never want to miss an opportunity to learn from the past, we mustn’t let the past define us or control us in the present. Doing so can have destructive consequences.

Sage advice.

Similarly, the scriptures are replete with encouragement for God’s people to focus on what lays ahead and not to be taken up with the past. The apostle Paul writes,

...one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Philippians 3:13b-14 NKJV

In our recent eGlimpse I shared the most-difficult decision to part ways with the ministry of GoodSeed. It is tempting to keep glancing in the rearview mirror as it were for we are leaving behind some very precious coworkers in the Lord and a most fruitful ministry of 20 years. We are grieving these very real losses. But while our hearts are naturally heavy they have also been greatly comforted by an outpouring of emails, phone calls and personal visits. Your assurances, prayers and support have been used of God to keep nudging our faith and our focus forward and heavenward. Thank you, each one!

A Demographic Tidal Wave:

Having taken a number of weeks now to rest and to recharge our emotional batteries, Kathleen and I are carefully and prayerfully exploring ministry possibilities for the ‘sunset’ chapter of our lives. I want to tell you about a growing burden on my heart ever since our cancer journey in 2010.

During those many weeks in oncology we had close contact with other cancer patients and their families. Their lives, as with our own, were deeply impacted by the crisis of uncertainty and suffering; with one difference—we had hope; most did not. I observed firsthand how the tumultuous circumstances opened doors of opportunity for the gospel, doors that otherwise were closed tight. A life and death crisis has a way of doing that.

Hospice patients in particular have kept coming to mind. By definition, ‘hospice’ generally means that a patient’s life expectancy is six-months or less; e.g., one is actively dying. In a

2004 report on 'The State of Health and Aging,' the U.S. Center for Disease Control and Prevention noted that the aging Baby Boomer generation (Some 70 million people) represented a "demographic tidal wave," one that threatens to overwhelm health care delivery in the U.S. I expect the same is true in Canada and elsewhere.

I believe this 'tidal wave' is a largely overlooked mission field right on our doorstep, one that is, "*ripe unto harvest.*"



A few years ago, I felt led of the Lord to enroll in some hospice chaplaincy courses to augment my graduate studies. It has been my prayer that one day these academic qualifications might be used of God to give me purposeful access to this growing mission field. But little did Kathleen and I expect this chapter to be thrust upon us so soon!

This week I applied for and successfully obtained a Hospice Chaplain position with a local healthcare agency here in Wisconsin. I begin work next week.

Peace at Last:

Initially, the plan is to work full time while I gain more experience ministering to hospice patients and their families. These are precious souls in their last months, last weeks or last days of their lives—they teeter on the precipice of eternity.

The ultimate question for those in their last days is *not*, "Are you at peace with God?" Rather, "Is God at peace about you?" I've gently probed with this line of questioning over the years and it has proven most helpful in getting to the crux of where people are at spiritually. Some are confident in their religious or moral performance; they think they have made peace with God, that he accepts them on this basis. But according to the scriptures, God is only at peace with those he has declared righteous in his sight—those he has justified,

...having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,
Romans 5:1 NKJV

Now, as I focus on hospice patients and their families it is my prayer that, like the thief on the cross, many will discover peace at last, as they put their trust in the peace-making work of Jesus Christ.

Will you pray with us about this ministry potential? As with all aspects of our lives it means stepping out in faith, believing God to lead, to provide, and to use us by his grace and for his glory as we walk with him. Kathleen and I want to trust God for our best years yet in serving the God we love, this as long as our health and strength permit. And we invite you to join with us.

Financial Support Matters:

Several have expressed a desire to continue supporting us financially in whatever might be the next ministry chapter as God leads. We are humbled by your care and confidence. Your ongoing financial support matters; it will help subsidize our income and allow us to prepare more adequately for the time when we cannot be gainfully employed.

While I will be remunerated for my chaplaincy services, it is our desire eventually to work part-time, thus allowing the opportunity to write evangelistic materials sensitive to those whose lives are impacted by crisis. We functioned similarly in 2004-2007 when Kathleen and I co-managed a 32-unit apartment complex in Alberta, Canada. This work in addition to our GoodSeed ministry was purposeful in that it gave us the opportunity to connect with tenants on a daily basis, to build meaningful relationships and to share Christ with many.

Kathleen and I are still researching ministry-service organizations that are registered both in Canada and here in the USA. This arrangement would facilitate donations for tax-receipt purposes for those that need it. We will advise you of these developments in due course. In the meantime, we will continue to receive support in Canada through GoodSeed until the end of May and through GoodSeed USA until the end of June.

A Visual Aid:

The next time you glance in your vehicle's rearview mirror, may it serve as a visual aid in reminding you to pray for us as we pray for you in turn, that we each will be found, not dwelling in our pasts, but,

...reaching forward to those things which are ahead, Philippians 3:13b NKJV

After all,

Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for them that love him. 1 Corinthians 2:9 NKJV

Servants together with you by God's grace and enabling,

Paul (for Kathleen too)

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