

ELIJAH'S CAVE MINISTRIES... BOB & BARB THOMPSON

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A week ago, I preached a sermon based on Jesus' call to the fishermen:

"Come, follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." (Matt. 4:19)

Matthew notes how swiftly the young men – Peter, Andrew, James and John – discarded boats and nets and took off with Jesus. (Luke, as he often does, reveals more of Peter's soul-searching reluctance, in Luke 5.)

Nearly three years later, when another eager young man came along, this one wealthier than the fishermen, Jesus stopped him in his tracks, prompting Peter to bemoan, *"Lord, we have left everything to follow you."* Prompting Jesus a little later to add, *"And there's a cross up ahead..."*

Does it pay to follow Jesus? Or, Bonhoeffer asked it the other way: Does it cost?

Since the answer to both is undoubtedly "yes, in a way," I like to carry with me the words of my friend, old Rev. Herman Taylor, now in Heaven some 15+ years: *"Never forget, it's a great joy to serve the Lord."* Rev. Taylor reiterated this so often that some said he had a touch of Alzheimer's. But the twinkle in his eye was my clue that it was inspired speech, just for me, Elijah-prone and dutiful, like the prodigal's older brother. Yes, I'm afraid so, at times.

I send along this letter of news and prayer items with Barb's and my hearty thanks for your partnership in the Lord's work with us. And, yes, it really is a joy to serve the Lord!

Item one: Two young men from China have chosen to follow Jesus. A January baptism in frigid water was one they'll not forget. Nor will I. My teeth are still chattering with joy.

More joy, item two: The campus church we call International Bible fills the bookstore on Sundays. The English Corner fills a "corner" on Mondays and Fridays. A roomful of young "Yao Mings" meet me there on Saturday to play with me at "Basketball Club." And the two ethnic fellowships I teach (Korean and Chinese Fellowships) are truly a delight.

Joys on the horizon: A pre-Easter event Barb and I will do in our home to tell the resurrection story to a houseful of mostly non-Christian students. Also, an Easter Eve banquet on campus that we'll share in, with some 200 internationals expected to attend. Farther on the horizon, a trip to China in 2010, as God leads.

And pray for my writing. I want to revisit my screenplay of three years back. It's a missionary story, and a Chinese story. So, on some level, it's my story.

We need His inspiration,
just as we constantly need His joy...

Bob and Barb

Please use the enclosed envelope for your gift. We are blessed to serve Christ with you. As we ask you to pray for our joy and inspiration, know that we are praying for yours.

