



...a prayer letter from John and Jackie



November 23, 2008

Dear friends,

We greet you once again in the wonderful name of Jesus!

### **God's Oil Keeps Flowing...**

On a Sunday morning before we were to leave on a mission trip, I decided Jackie and I should take communion together as we sometimes do, bringing all our needs to the Lord and reminding ourselves of the finished work of Jesus Christ. As always, we had to look away from our needs to see Jesus, and apply His name and blood to our lives in expectation that He will meet every need.

I took a jar of grape juice out of the refrigerator and noticed it was almost gone. I began pouring what little was in the jar into a small glass for our communion service. As I poured the last drop of juice, suddenly I remembered the event recorded in 2 Kings 4 about the widow and her two children. Her husband, a minister, had died. She was in debt and the creditors were about to take her children away. She came to Elisha, who said "What do you have in the house?"

"Only a small jar of oil", she said.

Elisha instructed her to go to her neighbors and get all the empty vessels she could find. "Don't get a few," was the command. In other words, she was to get many vessels, a lot of them. Empty ones, of course. She did this, and then followed the instruction to go in her house with her children, shut the door and start pouring the oil out of her little jar into the empty containers.

I imagine she filled the room with these empty containers.

And, as you probably know, the oil kept flowing and filling each vessel. It never stopped, until there were no more vessels to fill.

I am sure, had they found more empty vessels to fill, more oil would have flowed. As long as there was another empty vessel, the oil supernaturally kept flowing and filling. She was told to sell the oil, and pay her debts, which she did, and she and her children lived on the rest of the profit.

As I poured the last drop of juice that Sunday morning, it was as if I stepped into this event -- as if I stepped out of our kitchen into the house of that widow. When I came into the living room where Jackie was sitting, I sat down with the little bit of juice and the cracker for us to celebrate the Lord's communion. We had placed our needs between us, a folder of bills and the needs for this next trip. In a moment I saw that these were not just needs, but vessels waiting to be filled. Instantly, I became actually happy for all these needs, for they were opportunities for God to pour in His supernatural provision. I thought, "Wow, I'm glad we have all these needs. As long as we have needs, the oil of God's power and provision will keep flowing. And, praise the Lord, when we come home from Ukraine, we'll have more needs. And the next month we'll have more needs. And the month after, more needs."

Not only was it our own needs beside us, but all the needs of the Churches of Praise, as well as those of our children, our church, and our friends. Hallelujah, I thought...the oil will keep flowing, and I hope we never run out of needs! (Small chance of that happening.)

### **"I Love Problems!"**

Ukrainian Pastor Gregory says to us now and then, "I love problems. The bigger the better. It's interesting to me to solve them."

I think God is like that. He loves problems. He loves to solve them. He loves to solve your problems.

*However, a problem or need is not a vessel waiting to be filled until it is brought to the Lord in expectation and faith.*

In the widow's case, she was desperate. But the oil only flowed when she heard the word of God and presented all the vessels in God's presence, in faith and obedience doing what He said. Then the supernatural supply came. And kept coming. And coming. And coming.

"Ask of Me, and I will make the nations Your inheritance, the very ends of the earth Your possession." Ps. 2:8

Some time ago, I asked the Ukrainian Bible school students to count their problems. I also counted mine. I asked them how many problems did they have? Ten? Twenty? "Get more!", I said. The oil of God's faithfulness and grace and power and provision is flowing, and it will keep flowing as long as there is another problem, another need, presented to Him. After all, a need is just an empty space waiting to be filled with God's solution!

If you run out of problems, I told them, go next door to your neighbor and get his or her problems. Go out on the street and collect more problems from the people you meet. Bring them all into the presence of God. The oil of His presence and power will keep flowing as long as there are desperate and hungry people who have large needs, and who also have the "foolishness of faith": the audacity to believe, and the humility to obey. The oil will keep flowing!

**"Don't you realize how bad things are?"**

A few days ago, pastor Gregory spoke by phone to our leader of the ministry in Afghanistan. "How are you, and how are things?", Gregory asked. "Wonderful! Glory to God!", Rustam replied.

This is how Rustam always is; it seems as though he doesn't know what country he is in. You would think, when you are with him, that he was living in Hawaii instead of one of the most volatile places in the world. He is not naïve. He and Anora have faced huge difficulties. Enemies of the gospel have attempted to kill him on three different occasions. They even opened fire on him from six feet away, and all the bullets missed him. Rustam and Anora are raising four beautiful children in a place known for danger and chaos.

How? They keep bringing all their needs to the Lord in expectancy that God will do something wonderful. Instead of complaining about how hard things are, they always see the need as an opportunity for God to work.

*And so can you.* In your mind, turn your problems into vessels that are waiting to be filled with God.

The most important thing about an empty vessel -- like a cup on the shelf -- is the fact that the cup is waiting to be filled. It is available. In like manner, place your needs and problems before God, and give Him the opportunity to pour the oil of His Spirit into those large vessels of need.

***He will always be everything you need...***

Remember, the oil filled all the vessels. It didn't matter what kind of a vessel it is, as long as it was empty. You may have need for healing, for finances, for a job, for family restoration, or for ministry. The need may be there because of your own failure, or because of the world's circumstances. Regardless, the oil of God's Spirit will provide for all those empty vessels.

Praise God for your needs, and thank Him that you have plenty of them to be filled! Collect even more needs from those around you, to make sure you keep an endless supply of opportunities for God to show Himself strong and faithful!

***Update on Jackie's health...***

You recall our concern for Jackie's recent episodes of slow heart rate and faint spells. The report of her final medical test came this week. All findings are within normal limits. With a change in her medication, there have been no episodes, and the doctor has put no limitations on her activity. We give glory and praise to the Lord. He remains Jehovah Rapha: *He is your Healer and your Health!* Thank you for your concern and prayer.

***Our work in the next weeks...***

As I indicated in the last letter, we will remain at home for a while, until the Lord says to travel. We have much to do, especially to make progress in the writing and publishing ministry. We hope to see the messages that God has given us go to many, many places -- far beyond where our feet can carry us!

*Thank you for continuing to pray for us, and for supporting us financially as God leads you.*

With love,  
**John and Jackie**