

With Resurrection Sunday this month it will be a glorious time to reflect on God's redemption plan, goodness, faithfulness and promises to us!

I had hoped to be in Sri Lanka for Resurrection Sunday this year but that didn't happen, more on that later in the letter.

Growing up on the farm this was a busy time preparing for planting of corn and soybeans. Seemed there was plenty of extra work to do along with the normal chores of farm life. Plus spring was a reminder that school was almost out. How I looked forward to Easter vacation as it was known then, now it's just spring break, how things have changed.

For us as Christians though we have the opportunity to remind people as we come in contact with them of the joy we have; forgiveness of sins and that we serve a risen Savior in Jesus Christ. Just like at Christmas this is an opportunity for us to share the love of Jesus with others and point them to the only one who can save them.

Our world, nation, and communities need this message of hope more than ever before! If I were to define our culture and country simply I think it might be, we lack hope. We have the message of real hope and need to busy sharing that message with everyone we meet!

I do want to say thank you for your faithful prayers and support to the ministry. You are helping the preachers in Sri Lanka to share the Good news of Jesus with people who need it desperately. May God continue to bless you for your blessing to this ministry and may he use you where you are to his glory.

Because of Christ, Steve

HAVE A BLESSED RESURRECTION SEASON!

### **SADLY TRIP TO SRI LANKA CANCELLED**

I really thought I would be writing this month's letter from Sri Lanka but as I said earlier this didn't happen. This is due to the COVID - 19 virus.

Rarely do we see anything that affects our global population as this has, and Sri Lanka is no exception.

I held out hope that things would still work for me to travel there but everything was changing so rapidly and nothing was working out so the trip was postponed to a later date.

Several events led to my cancelling the trip. The airport in Colombo was shut down to all incoming flights but then was to reopen the very night I was to arrive there. There had already been numerous confirmed cases of the virus coming in from foreign countries and the country was put on high alert, to date there are 122 confirmed cases.

I also learned from a Sri Lankan preacher friend that he along with the team of Americans he had picked up at the airport were all being held in quarantine for two weeks. He was to pick me up at the airport and would be released from quarantine just in time to pick me up. The government had instituted mandatory two week quarantine for all foreigners, which, from what I have learned, has since been lifted. But very limited flights are going into the country even now.

The government also put into place curfews which started ten days ago, four days of total lock down with a six hour break for people to get food supplies and then the curfew is reinstated for another four days.

So if I had gone most likely I would have spent two weeks in quarantine and then would have been stuck in Colombo as the curfew would not be lifted for a long enough time for me to travel to Koddai Kallar.

Very few flights are leaving the country and this seems to be changing daily as fewer and fewer flights are available. The U.S. embassy has told all Americans to leave the country as soon as possible.

In addition to all this the U.S. embassy is shut down except for emergency services so even if my children's visas had been approved and sent the embassy couldn't process them.

All this has been difficult to deal with but hopefully soon I can reschedule the trip.

Please pray for the Sri Lankan Christians as they are facing many trials far worse than we have to deal with here.

### **ALL CHURCH SERVICES SUSPENDED DUE TO VIRUS**

It took me several phone calls to our preachers to get them to understand the severity of the situation.

Some still wanted to leave the church building open for people to come and pray, some wanted to have short prayer services at the church building, others wanted to go to the believer's homes to pray and distribute the Lord's Supper and pray, some wanted to continue having the satellite Sunday school programs.

I shared with them my concerns about all these things and all said they agreed and would abide by this until all the virus concern subsides. One of my concerns was that someone would be infected with the virus, come to church expose everyone there, and then they would take it into the community. This would have been tracked back to the church meeting and possible riots would occur to attempt to shut the churches down completely, which is a real concern. I saw on the news last night this is even happening in the United States.

Now the curfew would have prevented any of the churches from meeting anyway, but at the time we didn't know how things were going to go.

We see the difficulties we face here with most churches suspending services and it is no different there. Life is completely upended right now.

Please remember to pray for the churches in Sri Lanka as they face these trials.

### **FUNDS MADE AVAILABLE TO BELIEVERS**

Many of the believers in the churches are day laborers or are self employed so many are facing great financial difficulties as there is no work now. We had a couple of our coworker's request some financial help for the believers to which I said yes.

The problem is there will be many who suffer who are not members of the church. We might say this is a great opportunity to help them and share with them the Gospel. It was a tough decision but my mind went back to the tsunami of 2004 and the literally

thousands of people we helped and only had a handful who responded to the Gospel message.

I have left that to the local churches to do the helping of those outside the church as they see fit. This may seem hard hearted or tight fisted, but I feel it was the best thing to do under the circumstances.

### **PERSONAL NEWS**

All my kids are doing well; they are healthy but, bored as they are all at home, sound familiar to some of you? They told me they have cleaned the house top to bottom already.

All schools have been shut down due to the virus so Sowmiya and Tharsha are both home from college. Prashanth is not in school and all extra tutoring centers have been closed.

Vijay had purchased a three wheeler to drive as a taxi and was doing fairly well with that but now is shut down as well. My fear is that someone with the virus will need transportation to the hospital and he would take them and then be exposed to the virus and take it home to the rest of the family.

I'm doing well, pretty much at home compared to days before all this, but have plenty to do around the house to keep me busy, rearranging and cleaning my shop and garage have taken a fair amount of time lately.

### **PRAYER CONCERNS**

1. God's protection for my children, other family, the coworkers, their families and the church believers from the COVID virus.
2. To be able to reschedule my trip to Sri Lanka soon.
3. Even with the closure of the embassy that Tharshini and Prashanth's visas would come through and I would soon be able to get them here.
4. Church believers there to remain faithful and be a witness through this time of trial.
5. For our world to wake up to what is eternal and for many to see their need for Christ through this epidemic.