

Don't Quit—The Fruit Will Appear!

During my sixth visit to Guatemala this week the Lord reminded me

that He promises to bring results when we minister His Word.

Last

Sunday I enjoyed lunch in an open courtyard at a modest home in El Rosario, Guatemala, a town I have visited six times since 2002. My friend Adolfo had invited me to eat with his family after the

morning service at Iglesia de Nueva Vision, a Pentecostal congregation. Nothing thrills me more during my missionary trips to

El Rosario than spending time with members of this church in their homes.

As

we were eating a meal of chicken, rice and Coca-Cola, I noticed some green,

volleyball-sized fruit hanging from a nearby tree. I had never seen such large

fruit before, so I asked my friend Luis (in my broken Spanish) what they were.

His father-in-law, Minor, immediately hopped up from the table, walked over to

the tree and snapped one of the gigantic fruits from a branch.

"Perhaps you need to be reminded of this simple truth as 2010 ends and you prepare to enter a new year. The fruit will come. Don't give up."

While

peeling away the tough, two-inch-thick skin with his pocketknife, Minor

introduced me to the pomelo, a relative of the grapefruit that is less tart but very delicious. "We call it the fruit of the Promised Land," Minor said, referring to the bountiful fruit Israel discovered when Moses sent spies to Canaan.

The pomelo was our dessert that day.

On Monday I traveled with the church's pastor, Oto, and my four American team members to the mountain village of Saspán, about an hour from El Rosario. We had been invited to minister with Oto's sister, Gisela, a courageous woman who has built a congregation of 50 or so adults in her tiny farming community.

I was anxious to see Gisela because I had given her a word of prophetic encouragement during my last visit. I told her in November 2009 that I believed God was calling her to increase her outreach to children and to make them a ministry focus. I learned when I arrived in Guatemala this year that Gisela had taken this challenge seriously.

When we arrived in Saspán and climbed the steep mountain path to the church, I could hear the noise of children laughing and singing. The scene I discovered in the crude basement of Gisela's church warmed my heart: Dozens of kids, ages 3 to

12, were learning Bible verses and songs and doing crafts while Gisela's trained teenage teachers conducted a morning class.

"This is the fruit of what you said to me last year," Gisela said to me in Spanish. Up to 80 children now participate in her children's outreach each week, and there are only 200 children in the entire village. Already some of the children's parents have come to know Jesus personally as a result of the new ministry.

When we climbed up the path to the main sanctuary for an impromptu worship service, I looked out the open windows and noticed two trees laden with fruit. One was full of papayas, the other with coconuts. Then I noticed many maracuyás, or passion fruit, littering the ground between the church and Gisela's mother's house. Bananas were hanging in a tree nearby. Fruit was everywhere.

I realized the Holy Spirit was communicating to me in a very personal way. I remembered what Jesus said in John 15:16a: "You did not choose Me but I chose you, and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit, and that your fruit would remain." I also remembered that before this trip to Guatemala the Lord had given me Galatians 6:9 as a promise: "Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not

grow weary.”

During

this trip to Guatemala my eyes were opened to see the results of our previous visits to the community. I saw the change in the women of El Rosario after they had been baptized in the Holy Spirit and healed from the effects of abuse. I saw the maturity in the teenagers after they had been challenged to go deeper with God. I saw how the pastor’s daughter, Ana Ruth, had become an anointed leader, and how his son-in-law, Eric, was now introducing dozens of youth to Christ. Spiritual fruit was everywhere.

The

Lord began to speak to me: “When you are faithful to sow the seed of My Word, be assured that I will cause growth and produce a harvest. You are not just spinning your wheels. The work may seem tedious at times, and it may require great patience. You may encounter disappointment and delay for a season. But be certain that when you abide in Me and remain faithful, the words you speak and the work you do will always produce lasting fruit.”

Perhaps

you need to be reminded of this simple truth as 2010 ends and you prepare to enter a new year. The fruit will come. Don’t give up. Keep planting and watering. He is still the Lord of the Harvest, and He is the one who causes the growth when His Word is sown.

You

may not see any blossoms on the trees yet, but before long something as big and sweet as a pomelo may appear. I pray the Lord will grant you the blessing of not only seeing but enjoying the fruit of your labor for Him.

J.

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