



December 2008 Email Update

I heard my own preaching about ten times. First, my practice preaching to a few ladies here in Cuernavaca, then to a few Spanish speaking folks for them to make sure my Spanish is Nicaraguan Spanish, and then to the actual preaching time during the Ladies' Coffee in Nicaragua. I heard myself over and over say, "Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus".

On November 10, after being with 40 people for eight days of intense action filled mission work in Ocotlal, Juigalpa and Managua, I flew by myself back to Mexico. I had two stops, one in San Salvador and another in Guatemala before boarding my final plane to Mexico City. I don't know what happened but on my two hour flight from Guatemala to Mexico City I was suddenly overwhelmed with sadness. I missed everybody on the team. I started crying. I ran out of tissues; I had to ask the flight attendant to kindly give me some more. I could not stop crying. I think the other passengers beside me were thinking someone I love must have died. I was questioning God... "Why am I flying to Mexico by myself? Why am I not married? Why don't I have a team of two or three people flying back with me to Mexico?" Suddenly...I remembered what I preached all week and heard God telling me, "Angie, is it true in your life what you preached all week?" I started thanking the Lord for the privilege to share His precious Word to many women in Nicaragua. I thanked Him for His wonderful provision of money, health, clothes, food, transportation, teams, water and everything else we needed to do the mission we were called to do in Nicaragua. I thanked Him for the precious friendships I made with many women in such a short time. I landed in Mexico City, got through Immigration and Customs and did not have any appetite, so I headed quickly for my bus to Cuernavaca.

James 1:22 teaches us to be doers of the Word and not hearers only. Ever since I got back from Nicaragua I decided I will take major steps to truly be grateful at all times.

Last Thursday, November 27, I was once again overwhelmed with sadness missing the Thanksgiving celebration I spent for so many years with friends and family in Chicago. It is a normal regular working day here in Mexico. I decided, "No. I will fight this sadness". I decided I will finish my Bible study early and ask the ladies to write ten things they were grateful for. We will celebrate Thanksgiving even though Mexico does not celebrate this holiday. I gave the ladies 10 minutes to write down what they were thankful for and asked each one to share what they wrote. I did not expect what happened next.

The first gal shared how thankful she is for her family. Her husband has been missing for about six weeks now, but she is thankful to the Lord for bringing her to my Bible study group. With tears in her eyes, she is thankful that she is finding the Lord faithful in the midst of her very difficult circumstances. She has her children and is grateful to God for her children.

The second gal shared how thankful she is to God because she continues to be cancer free and thankful for the gift of life. She is also very grateful because the Lord allowed our paths to cross. With tears in her eyes, she thanked God for the privilege to be His child, that her daughter is a growing Christian and for God's provision for her family.

The third gal shared. Also with tears in her eyes, she was thankful to God for how He answered our prayers for the salvation of her sister-in-law. Since September, when we started the group, we have been praying for this. Last weekend, she was given the privilege to share the gospel with her sister in law who prayed to receive Christ as her Lord and Savior. Praise the Lord!

The fourth gal shared how grateful she is for the miracle birth of her niece. We also have been praying for her brother and sister-in-law who have been married for eight years and without a child. Two weeks ago, she visited and held the precious baby we prayed for. Praise the Lord!

My turn came. I thought I would also cry and had tissue ready. I shared how grateful I am because I did not have to have surgery done to have the cyst behind my left cheek bone removed. I am very thankful to the Lord for helping me learn the Spanish language. I am grateful to God for allowing me to join the Nicaragua mission trip and the great privilege to be a Christian and to be a missionary. One pastor told me, "Many people in my congregation want to be missionaries to Latin America but for one reason or another they cannot. Angie, you are very privileged. You can go and be a missionary!"

I did not cry while I was sharing but certainly this Thanksgiving in Mexico will be one of my most memorable ones. I did not have turkey on the table, no cranberries, no pumpkin pie, no sweet potatoes but I heard four women, five including myself say 10 things we were grateful to God for. Isn't that what Thanksgiving is all about?

I challenged the ladies including myself from here on, every week; we will share what we are grateful to God for.

My message to the ladies in Nicaragua is long over but practicing what I preached will take a lifetime. I am thankful to God for His Holy Spirit for convicting me of my sin of ungratefulness. I am thankful to the Lord for the many ministries He has entrusted to me here in Cuernavaca. I am thankful for your partnership with me here in Mexico so I can continue to do what He has called me to do --- to invest my life in a few faithful, available and teachable women who in turn will teach others also.

Thank you for your love, prayers and support.

Have a wonderful Christmas!

Angie Velasco