



July 21, 2013 www.billandlorismithpng.com

“Empty Vessels”

I have always loved the picture of the empty water vessels Christ choose to use at the wedding feast. His first time to show Himself as God in the flesh, he used simple clay pots as the tools to demonstrate His power. Those pots are such a great reminder to me. They were **clean, available and EMPTY of self content...totally useable as I desire to be.**



“We are never a more Beautiful display of God’s splendor than when willing to EMPTY self for the lives of others”

I think the sacrifice of living a life of ministry and service requiring emptying out selfishness, personal agendas and desires is much easier written about and talked about than actually DOING. Boy is it hard when people’s needs are always getting in the way of what I want to do with my time and energy. HA. As so aptly said, “ministry would be easy if not for the people one must MINISTER TO”..true. But that emptiness and availability is crucial for GOD to be glorified in our lives. We are called to lose ourselves and carry a cross of sacrifice, pain and commitment in order to truly FIND ourselves as His disciples.

This was a week of having to make those tough choices. We know that many of you uphold us in prayer each week. We face so many needs and our time and energy is pulled in so many directions each day.



Many of you have upheld me, Lori, this week as my body continues to combat Chickengunya Fever. Thankfully the fevers, swelling and rash are all but bad memories. The aching and throbbing muscles and joints are the only reminders of the battle of last weekend. But pain is an interesting foe. I know that as I move the stiff and aching body parts they will feel better.... eventually, but getting up

each morning feeling like I am 110 years old makes it hard to vacate the warm comfy bed. Our days here start very early...before the dawn...and that decision to get up and make available a body that hurts is a challenging decision indeed. The pain lingers for weeks with this virus...and the only cure is just time. Amazing how GOD can use that simple sacrifice, though. The act of love reaching out amidst your own pain to help others in pain is a very big light indeed. When I had to stop in the middle of my clinic day to take my own medication, my patients were just "audibly silent"..  That is what love is all about...sacrifice and action. I had the joy of caring for the many sick and injured this week as you all prayed me on. We saw people whose lives were challenged, and some that were added to the family of GOD as a result. No pain...no gain...KNOW pain ...Great GAIN. GOD is good. This was the week of our 28th wedding anniversary. We had a baby sitter all lined up to take care of the kids so we could have a day this week just for the two of us. Not that there is a lot to do here...but just time together even doing NOTHING FUN...is still very sweet. All was set to go... until there was a little boy who was dying. Pata was just looking so bad. The infection in his throat was clearing up nicely but he was ashen and getting stiffness in his neck and shoulders that often signal meningitis. We knew he needed attention and fast, so back to Lae we went. An immunosuppressed child riding public transportation (10-12 people smashed into a van for 6 hours of a bumpy ride) is just NOT a good idea, so Uncle Bill and Amo took him and his daddy down. Two days sacrificed from "us time". It took double the time to get Pata down there as each pot hole (and there are MANY) riveted his little body in pain, but they made it. It took ALL day for them to see the Doctor, but they did. The oncologist was furious as the cause of Pata's horrible condition was the medication the Doctors here in Goroka insisted he take along with the chemotherapy. Thankfully, though, we caught it in time. Had we waited a few more days he would have been dead his body was so full of drug toxins. It was a major set back, but slowly there is improvement. So no anniversary date...but GOD spared the life of a little boy. What greater gift could we have given each other?!



This next week is the long awaited **National Ladies Conference**. Our campus, our house...our lives...all nuts! WE already have ladies here and more arriving Sunday. It is cultural to arrive early and leave late! We are helping our dear national sisters in the village next door, who always are here to help us, care for the many now filling their homes and needing to be fed. Bill has been bombarded as well with constant questions, help needed and details to be worked out from the administrative side of hosting a meeting of this proportion here on our school campus. So much workso much money and time. Yet my heart focus is on the dear ladies coming. Life for women in PNG is hard beyond verbal description. MANY are held bondage in abusive, unhappy marital relationships. They are trying to stand strong with their trust in a God of love and seeking to win these hard men, and often other wives, to Christ. They endure hardships that are hard for me to even comprehend though I live among them and eye witness the horror. This is THEIR WEEK. They can come together, and feel loved. WE can nurture and strengthen and laugh with these amazing women of faith. We can hold and cry with them as we bring their difficult situations before the throne of grace. We can feed them amazing food both physically and spiritually. PRAY we can bring some light in many dark lives. Some women are coming in need of a Savior. Some women are coming in need of encouragement. All are coming with needs that GOD is able to meet as we pray for HIS POWER TO BE

UNLEASHED. [PRAY for me, Lori, and the other guest speakers to share boldly the WORD OF GOD](#) that alone has the power to convict, transform and empower these women from all over PNG.

Being empty. Not a great concept in our world of super sized, large portion life. But as so well said, "the greatest miracle of all is when glory comes to the father through mortal creatures like us". That can only happen as we become like those simple clay pots! Clean, ready and empty! Nothing fancy or "special"...just cracked, stained, water pots meant for work. "Our crack, flaws, and wounds are identifying marks GOD can use just as beautifully as the nail pierced hands and feet identifying HIM and what HE went through to cover, heal and forgive our imperfections". I am so glad GOD uses the simple to confound the wise! None of us are restricted from service no matter how lowly or scarred!

[We know many of you empty of yourselves and sacrifice for us.](#) Your part in the lives of the people here we are able to touch with HIS ARMS OF LOVE are invaluable and eternal investments.

Please continue to uphold with us the needs as we empty our requests upon the ample Mercy Seat at the THRONE OF GRACE.

1) [RAIN....urgent need](#). They got the huge circus-sized tent up Monday on sun hardened ground...the dry grass was laid so we have a nice soft place to sit for hour upon hour all next week. THEN God sent some rain. that was so cool. But we need much more. We are very very dry and our tanks are very nearly empty. Hundreds of ladies are on their way...lets get on our knees!

2) Pray for the many [traveling to the Ladies](#) meeting this next week. Our enemy is on the prowl and he has , I believe, worked in the hearts of the officials to postpone all the voting in our lower level government elections to now. Tension is in the air as violence is often hand in hand with voting here. PRAY that GOD protects, and does not allow all of this to hinder the meetings. PRAY that none of the ladies will allow these distractions to prevent them from coming and hearing God's Word.

3) PRAY for sweet [Pata and Lilian](#) as they continue in their battles with the evil foe of cancer.



4) Pray for [Ruthann](#) to get a full time job in the Rochester NY area. She has had one very positive phone interview and now will have a personal interview on July 31. PRAY her that job.

5) Pray for [Andrew](#) and his missions trip to PNG from September to December. HE will be fulfilling the requirements for his practical assignment in his mission aviation training. Pray for GOD to provide

the visa, finances and prayer support needed for that trip.



6) Pray for our physical and spiritual and emotional strength. There is never a moment of quiet or rest here. People at the door in need is just a part of the life style we have been called to here in PNG. Our home is always full of people in need of meals, encouragement, our time and help....what an amazing opportunity to empty ourselves, our cupboards and our schedules to reach out. We just need to keep connected to CHRIST so that HIS STRENGTH empowers all we do. Your prayers for our walk with him, our marriage, and our physical strength are so crucial. We so appreciate having the close intimacy of partnership with many that do take seriously their job to hold up our hands as Aaron did with Moses so that GOD WINS THE VICTORY!! We are all just easily shattered clay pots...but pots GOD desires to use for HIS GLORY!

Empty...but full and overflowing. That only makes sense when GOD is involved!!

No restraints, no retreats...NO REGRETS!

Bill, Lori , the boys and baby Joyce.

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