



Equipping Servants... disciples making disciples

Christmas 2020

Debbie and I wish you the very best Christmas as you remember why Jesus came to earth! Jesus is the light who shone in the darkness. Isaiah 9:1 prophesied 700 years earlier, that Jesus would come to the land of Zebulun and Naphtali ... “the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations. The people who walked in **darkness** have seen a **GREAT LIGHT**; those who dwelt in a land of **deep darkness**, on them has **light** shone.”

Thankfully, Jesus came to rescue not only Zebulun and Naphtali, but also the whole world! For God so loved the world that He sent His Son! Isaiah’s word “darkness” refers to the spiritual darkness of separation from God, the source of light. The Bible says that this separation is our most desperate plight, affecting every person, making each a slave to sin and death. Our greatest need is escape from this deep darkness, but we cannot do this. We cannot rescue ourselves! That makes our predicament hopeless since no amount of money, self-effort and or religion can dig us out. The Bible describes the world without God as darkness.

Have you ever experienced true physical darkness? A few years ago, Debbie and I took our kids to the remote Bolivian valley of Toro Toro, known for its dinosaur tracks and caves. The local expert is an Aymara paleontologist, knowledgeable from years of fossil hunting with experts from around the world. He takes people on a fascinating three-hour trek into the depths of a cave that begins with raptor footprints along the entryway floor, and descends steeply along narrow ledges, skirting precipices, to a large cavern deep in the earth. At that point he asked us to turn off our carbide headlamps and be still. Deep darkness is a formidable experience – you can almost feel the weight of it. Five minutes, and I felt panicky! I could not WAIT to get the lamps back on! You would not consider taking even one single step in that kind of darkness for fear of plunging hundreds of feet to your death! Deep darkness is not a trifling matter! This is true in the physical world -- how much more does the urgency of true life, eternal life, press us to seek the light of Christ!

Jesus, the light of the world, came to earth to dispel the darkness (John 8:12). Darkness CANNOT extinguish the light of Jesus!! He promised that whoever believes in Him will not remain in darkness, but will have the light of life. He did not come to point us to the light, or to give us the light. He IS the light! By His death, He rescues us from the spiritual darkness of sin and death by His grace through trusting in Christ alone. Only God Himself can accomplish this! Only Jesus can rescue and give true life. Only He can take us out of darkness and bring us into fellowship with Himself, the light!

I am amazed every time I consider that God choose to rescue us in such an unexpected way – sending His Son to be born as a baby in Bethlehem, for the specific purpose of dying on the cross to bear our sins, to provide the way of forgiveness! What grace that Jesus would do this for us – that He would give His life so freely to rescue us so fully!

Debbie and I have been in Cleveland on our Home Assignment for several months. We plan to return to Bolivia in early February. Please pray for the growth of our ILC Church in La Paz, for gospel impact among the women Debbie works with, for the expansion of ESI (Equipping Servants – Disciples Making Disciples) ministry around Latin America, and for wisdom as we

have been asked to train pastors in Africa in Romans and gospel-centered thinking, living and serving in 2021. More details to come. Thank you for praying for us!

Have a Christ-filled Christmas!!

Kep and Debbie

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kep and Debbie James". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Kep and Debbie James