

Pray BFF Letter #291

March 14, 2017

Moving With the Changes

Dear Prayer Partners,

We have just finished a wonderful seminar that was well-attended. The students at the Bible college and many pastors were very encouraged. But to let you know what goes on behind the scenes, I include below some of the many changes we had to face, often at the last minute, even though I did my best to properly schedule to make the plans to work out smoothly. But God's grace stood sufficiently!

For example:

- The hotel did not pick me up at the airport as pre-planned. Instead, I am confused by many people all at once offering me a taxi ride. Then, two pastors, unbeknownst to me, appeared; they had traveled 4+ hours by bus to get there. They led me through the crowd, down and around a path to a waiting taxi. They were like angels, transforming the confusion into a blessing.
- The next morning my talks were to start at 9:00 a.m. I went to the airport early to catch the 7:30 flight. As I was walking into the airport, some people told me that the flight had been canceled! There was only one other flight that day on another airline that would not get me in until 10:50 a.m. An airport manager and others helped me by standing in line for me to secure a new ticket. Since I could not easily discern whether or not they were scamming me, I very much appreciated the pastors who were still with me. I could hand them money for the new ticket.
- I was picked up from the airport and rushed over to the seminar and squeezed the two talks into one.
- The hotel I booked had no record of my reservation and was 3 times the original cost. But later the lady mentioned another hotel on the property that offered cheaper housing (which was fine and comparable to what I had reserved). I stayed there.
- The above few steps were all contingent on having local cash (Naira). Originally, I was not going to exchange money as I figured I would not need it, but thankfully I had for I desperately needed it!



- And to shorten the list, as I was preparing the last day's lectures, I thought to check my flight. The internet in the hotel was very irregular. My flight showed a departure time of 1:35 instead of 5:00 pm as the ticket was written. We finally got hold of the office on the phone and confirmed the 5:00 flight was canceled. No one informed me though I was put on the 1:35 flight. My coordinator and I had to change the whole closing lectures and program. I had to adjust my two messages, but he had to condense a graduation program into the remaining short time at the end where we handed out certificates. Praise God I got on that 1:35 flight. The website showed none available the next day. If I had missed it, I am not sure what would have happened.

I very much appreciate your prayers for me, my family, and ministry during the many changes I faced in Nigeria this past week. I cannot tell you ahead of time what those problems are that I face, but God answers your prayers! Thank you! My favorite verse for these last few weeks is Ephesians 6:13, "And having done everything, to stand firm." I have my assignment and try to properly prepare, but I often face unexpected challenges. I can trust God for all of them.

Praise

- Thank the Lord, that though a security personnel had me wait for everyone to pass, in the end, I safely entered the country. He wanted to only check my yellow fever vaccination.
- That last \$1000. came in and the STM expenses are fully covered! Praise God!
- The seminar was very well received; trusting that God will use these resources to help the people they pastor.
- Though I had a terribly runny nose on the way over, it was healed in one day while there and did not suffer from other cold conditions.
- This trip for me was very productive despite a groggy-head on some days during my travels. This was the first time I taught *The Life Core* seminar, so I needed to prepare many new slides. I also wrote several essays/articles: Commentary on Nahum 1; Faith and Fear; Filters for the Mind; a chapter on an upcoming book on success, reshaped several resources on the Sermon on the Mount and continued working on this coming Sunday's sermon on 1 Samuel 24.
- The Lord kindly watched over my family and ministry while away though my oldest daughter needed to visit the emergency room twice (pregnancy related). She is doing better.

Pray!

- Please pray for my preaching this Sunday, March 19th.
- For grace to balance BFF ministry with the church responsibilities.
- Starting to prepare for a series on Matthew 5 (Beatitudes and Beyond).
- Paul needs to convert the taping of the seminars into useful videos.

Thanks so much for your prayers!

Paul

Rev. Paul J. Bucknell, President, Author, and Instructor
Biblical Foundations for Freedom

Email: pb@foundationsforfreedom.net

Phone: (+1) 412-398-4559 (Mobile/txt)

3276 Bainton St, Pittsburgh, PA 15212 USA

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