



March 2016

Dear Praying Friends,

The kingdom of God is immense. It is immense in the scope of its magnitude and power. That God allows me to play any role in it at all is a testament to His grace, specifically towards me. Over and over, I see my miserably inept attempts to show others His glory, and I see how He chooses to use those meager attempts to show ME how He draws men to Himself through those attempts. What a joy and relief to know that His kingdom is always in HIS hands!

This reality has been shown to me many times, but in the past several months I have been specifically reminded of God's magnitude and power in the lives of two men: Takamasa and Shuntaro.

IT TOOK THIRTEEN YEARS...

I met Takamasa, literally, the day after my family and I arrived in Japan thirteen years ago. He had come to welcome us to Japan and we hit it off the day we met. Since that time we have been praying that God would work in Takamasa's heart. I have spent many hours witnessing to him and showing him his need of a Savior, but it has always seemed to fall on deaf ears. While we were good friends, it seemed to me that nothing I said would convince him to see that he needed Jesus. I have mentioned him quite a few times in my prayer letters and I'm sure many of you have prayed for him through the years.

About a year ago, Takamasa got a job in downtown Tokyo and, because of the busyness of his job, we haven't been able to stay in touch like we used to. On a Friday night a few weeks ago, I got a call from Takamasa and as we caught up with each other he told me of some very difficult things going on in his life and he wanted to ask me what I thought he should do. I told him the first thing to do was to take care of the most important issue, his salvation. He replied, "I've been really thinking a lot about that over the past couple of days." So I asked him if he was ready to trust in Jesus and without a second's hesitation he said, "Yes, I am." So over the phone we prayed together and Takamasa asked Christ to save him! To hear him repent of his sins and profess his faith in Jesus was one of the most overwhelmingly glorious moments I have experienced of seeing God work in a person's life in a way that was completely out of my hands. For those of you who prayed for Takamasa's salvation, THANK YOU SO VERY MUCH!! Please don't stop praying for him though. He is still going through a lot of difficulty and still needs us to pray for him. And pray for his spiritual growth as your brother in Christ, too!

AN ENCOURAGING EMAIL

Another young man named Shuntaro has been a true blessing to me. He is currently studying to take the bar exam to be a judicial clerk and often gets in on just the tail end of a church service because of his busy work schedule. As a very young Christian he is always hungry to learn. Many times after a church service we will take time to study the Bible and discuss questions he has relating to the Scriptures. Recently, Shuntaro and I talked about what baptism is and why Christians get baptized. I then followed up on the topic and sent him an article on baptism. After reading the article, Shuntaro sent me this encouraging email and I thought I would share it with you:

"Thank you! I read the article about baptism. I did not know baptism is so important. I think today is a defining moment in my life as a Christian. I had not understood why the people I respect so much are often Christian, like Martin Luther King Jr., Nelson Mandela, Manny Pacquiao and the doctor of the hospital I go to. They knew Jesus and the Bible well, and God made them marvelous men. Now, I know I can endure any hardship because I'm Christian and I think I want to be the Gospel that people around me can see. So I want to obey Jesus' commandment to be baptized in the future. Thank you!"

Serving Him,
The Carters to Japan