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SULMONA, ITALY

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John & Cristina Inglese

MISSIONARY NEWSLETTER

Siamo Arrivati in Italia!

We Arrived in Italy
By John Inglese

We made it and we are here in Sulmona Italy. It was quite the adventure getting here to Sulmona . My wife, my son Matthew, and my daughter Rebecca, and my granddaughter (the latter two joining us for just a few weeks) got off the plane with like 20 suitcases. It was difficult to find a way to transport our 20 suitcases from the airport to the first train station, and then from the first train, unload all the suitcases very quickly, then re-load onto the second train very quickly before it departed from the platform heading for Sulmona, and then, once arriving in Sulmona, quickly unloading (in 3-4 minutes) before it departed the platform for the next town. Then, they all had to be loaded into vehicles to get to the air bnb where we spent the first two weeks. I look forward to the day when we are in our own apartment, and I won't have to lug suitcases again—Ha! Ha! Ha! We were tired and it was frustrating not being able to communicate with anyone, because hardly anyone spoke English, which was frustrating when trying to figure out how do we move 20 suitcases from the baggage claim area of the airport to the nearby train station. But through the whole process, we had peace because we knew God said we're going to Sulmona.

Within a week of arriving I got to attend the pastors' conference in northern Italy with Steve & Helga from Calvary Chapel Fluvanna. It was a blessing! It was encouraging meeting missionaries who had been here a long time and some who had arrived recently. What a blessing! The one thing that the pastors

and missionaries who had been in Italy serving for a while shared with me (it was also what the Lord had spoken to me) which was that we are to stay in Sulmona - it is a long term process! In order for people to receive what you want to share they have to trust you, they have to have a relationship with you, otherwise, they feel that you're trying to push something or sell something to them. One missionary shared with me that if someone sneezes don't say God bless you because if you say, God bless you they ask "who are you to bless me? You're not a priest!" These insights I know will be very helpful in our communication.

I had been corresponding with Pastor Craig Quam, who was the director of the Calvary Chapel Bible College in Montebelluna, and who probably had been in Italy for the longest time. I had asked him if he had any insights he could share with a newly arrived missionary? He said "to be a missionary it really takes a lot of patience." Pastor Craig was unable to attend the conference because

he was ill and shortly after the conference the Lord took him home. One pastor shared with me that when they started the conference, about 12 years ago, there were only about 12 people who attended it. Now, 12 years later, they have a little over 100 people. It takes time, but I love the heart of those who are here, they're

being faithful in the little things to which God has called them. One missionary shared with me how Pastor Craig Quam would drive once a week about 45 minutes to a small town for a Bible study, which only consisted of maybe three or four people. Everyone is precious in the Lord's eyes and we pray that we will be a light and a salt to those here in Sulmona. Most Calvary Chapels are in the northern part of Italy and only a couple in the Southern region of Italy, near Sicily. Sulmona, east of Rome, has a little over 25,000 people and no evangelical Christian churches. I believe that there are people here who have been praying to the Lord, and seeking the truth, and that is why He has sent us here, so we can to share the love of God with them.

Thank you everyone who is praying and supporting us in this long-term investment for the kingdom. And remember PIZZA PIZZA – "Anytime, you're having pizza. Pray for John and Cristina" - it rhymes! Also pray for CC Sulmona!



ABIDE

A Missionary's Encouragement From the Lord



How prone we are to carry a heavy burden and a hard yoke. The Lord recently reminded me of John 15:4-11. So I did a little study on it, and thought it may bless you as it had blessed me.

John 15:4-11, 4 Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. 5 "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. 6 If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned. 7 If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you[a] will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. 8 By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples."

What an encouraging scripture – here in verse 4 it says “Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me.” Here it is saying all we have to do is ABIDE in Him = Abide means to stay (in a given place) to “continue to dwell”, “to remain”. “Abide in Me and I will abide in you” It not saying “strive” in Me or Struggle in Me or Endeavor in Me or “Hustle and Sweat” in Me. WE are told all we have to do is dwell in Him – Rest in Him. And by doing so HE will ABIDE! in us and we will bear fruit – It can’t get any simpler or easier!

It gets even better as you continue reading verse 5 “I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.” By abiding in Him we will not only bear fruit, but “MUCH” fruit – did you catch that, Just by dwelling, remaining in Him we will bear much fruit. I learned this lesson years ago when I first became a Christian, I basically knocked on doors, went to

family and friends’ houses to share the word to try to bear fruit and the fruit I did receive was mostly rejection and closed doors. I realized that I myself could not open doors or bear fruit. I decided to just dwell in the Lord live after the Lord and let Him open doors for me because in myself I could not open

doors. He did! In the apartment unit where Cristina and I lived we had a neighbor that lived across the hall from us and we got to know each other casually. One day as I was leaving my apartment he opened the door to his apartment and asked if I had some time and if he could talk to me and invited me in (I had never been invited before) His girlfriend had left him and he was feeling really down and wanted to talk to someone. He asked what would I do if I was in his shoes? The Lord opened that door and I got to share with him and he came to know the Lord. He shared that when Cristina and I first moved in and he saw the Christian bumper stickers on our car and that we would have our bibles with us on many occasions (mostly when we were going to bible studies at Calvary Chapel Costa Mesa with Chuck Smith which had studies several nights a week) he said to himself “Great! Christian neighbors, they will probably be knocking on my door any day now.” But as time went on you never did, why? I told him that I left it to the Lord to open doors for me, just like He did with him. The story doesn’t end there, we got to see three other neighbors come to know the Lord! He opened each of the doors, not I, all I did, and still do, is abide in Him.

Let’s continue: I’m not going to spend time on verse 6, because He is referring to those who do not live in Christ. I want to move on to verses 7-8, because they are more promises to us who do abide (dwell, remain) in the Lord. To those who do know the Lord—

6 If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned. 7 If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you[a] will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. 8 By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you

will be My disciples.” “....7 If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you[a] will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. We already spoke about abiding in Him, now He is saying if His word abides in us – We must be in His word – why His “Word”? because it’s powerful:

Hebrews 4:12 12 For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

And then in Isaiah 55:11 NKJV, 11 So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me [a]void, But it shall accomplish what I please, And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.

These are just a couple excellent and profitable reasons for abiding in His word. Let’s continue: “.... You will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you.” What is your desire? Or should I ask what is your desire now that you dwell in Him! – two scriptures pop up in my mind right away:

Psalm 37:4, 4 “Delight yourself also in the LORD, And He shall give you the desires of your heart.” (He gives you His desires in your heart and they become your desires)

2 Peter 3:9, 9 “The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is long suffering toward [a]us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.” (His desire is that non should perish)

“.... and it shall be done for you” What a promise – we will bear fruit!!

And in closing “....8 By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.” Wow! God is glorified by us bearing fruit/much fruit! and we will be His disciples! So we WILL bear much fruit by just “Abiding” in Christ!

Side note: One of Cristina’s and my greatest missionary mentors is Hudson Taylor. In his autobiography, Hudson mentions how he was struggling in his ministry in China. Then he got a letter from a friend who also had been struggling and found great encouragement in the passage in John 15 on abiding in Christ. Upon reading the passage, Hudson’s eyes were opened to the incredible significance of these verses, which completely changed Hudson’s life, learning to rest in the Lord, leaving behind all the struggling and self-effort, and finding great joy and exuberance abiding in Christ.