



Title: Enjoying Christ's Epistle Among Us
Theme: Christ Working In and Through Doris Stump
Series: Pillars of the Local Church

2 Corinthians 3:2-4, "You yourselves are our letter, written on our hearts, known and read by everybody. You show that you are a letter from Christ, the result of our ministry, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts. Such confidence as this is ours through Christ before God."

Accreditation of Ministry of Christ Working In and Through Doris Isabel Stump

This wonderful passage of Scripture gives us an accreditation of ministry. It seems like there is much that opposes God's work today just as there was opposition against the labors of the Apostle Paul in his work with Jesus Christ. Opposition can come from people who stand against the work of the Lord or it may be the intimidation that causes workers to question the effectiveness of their labors in the "Great Commission." This intimidation builds its strength through a world view evaluation, that result of sin that causes workers for the Lord to determine their value through the size of the church or ministry in which they serve. The fact is regardless of the opposition, Christians must find their strength in Christ and be hungry for God's approval in their labors with the Lord Jesus Christ.

I would propose to you that Christians who attend CrossRoads and the United Methodist Church in Long Island, Kansas, can say as the Apostle Paul, "Such confidence as this is ours through Christ before God,' the Lord is at work among us.

The Apostle Paul realized how the false apostles would take a swipe at the creditability of his labors with the Lord Jesus Christ and try to destroy the work God was doing not only through him but through those who served sacrificially with him. Paul's confidence would not rest in the approval of man, but in the work of the Holy Spirit, taking the words they have taught in Christ Name and writing them in the hearts of those who respond to the gospel message. His faith was in the power of God to do a great work among the people to whom he ministered to in Christ.

Just how can the local Body of believers enjoy God doing a work among them as the Holy Spirit anoints the children of God? It is imperative that Christians make themselves aware of and focus on the truth, God does not anoint buildings or programs, the Holy Spirit anoints obedient Christians who are sold out to the cause of Christ. The Body of Christ is not the beautiful buildings or grounds where they gather to worship, but those who have the indwelling of the Holy Spirit of Christ. (Romans 8:10; 1 Corinthians 3:16)

The first step to enjoying the Lord's work among His people is to catch the truth, that God uses human vessels as instruments to proclaim the Word of God about Christ so people may believe in the Lord and be saved. The Apostle Paul told those in the Corinthian church that they were, "the results of their ministry." The Bible says, "How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, 'How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!' ...Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ." (Romans 10:14-17)

There was one life who heard the message of Christ and came to truly believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as personal Savior and Lord, Doris Isabel Stump. Her life is a powerful testimony of the life changing work of Christ. She is an epistle worthy of reading.

Faithful men who preached and taught God's Word to Doris

There were three men who had the call of God to "preach" and teach God's Word to Doris. God's grace was evidently working through them as they had an influence in Doris' life. It was through the ministry of Pastors Richard Krenz, Jerry Vincent and Ronald Scheimo that Doris grew to enjoy serving the Lord. It should be noted that other men of God and faithful servants of the Lord also planted the seeds of God's Word into Doris' life. However, it was the Lord working through the three pastors already mentioned that Doris got involved in long time service to both CrossRoads and the Long Island United Methodist Churches.

The purpose of this compilation of testimonials is for a memorial of Christ working in and through the life of Doris Stump as she faithfully served her Savior and Lord in these two Bodies of Christ since the early 1970's. Both congregations speak of Doris Isabel Stump as the Apostle Paul did of the early church, "...we thank God continually because, when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is at work in you who believe [in Christ]." (1 Thessalonians 2:13) Doris was always very appreciative of men and women who have the gift to preach and teach God's Word. While serving the Lord in the prime of her spiritual service she knew the difference between a Holy Spirit anointed preacher and a hireling, a true shepherd of the flock of God from a denominationally approved man.

Revelation of what God's Word says about Going to Heaven

The congregations of Long Island Methodist and CrossRoads churches are very thankful for faithful men who preached and taught God's Word to Doris. They are more excited that Doris had revelation of what God's Word says about who is going to heaven. Jesus said, "...I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of

God unless he is born again.” (John 3:3) Ezekiel 36:26-27 says, “I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.”

These two passages of Scriptures had real meaning to Doris for the Holy Spirit had illuminated them into her spiritual heart. She enjoyed hearing Dr. Billy Graham proclaim these two passages of Scripture in many of the evangelistic crusades that he was doing with the Lord. He would call sinners’ attention to the words of Christ and then explain to all who would come forward to receive the Lord Jesus, just what God wanted to do in their hearts. Doris had mentioned on several occasions “to observe any of God’s Word means nothing until this relationship with God, Christ and the Holy Spirit is in proper order.”

Those who are born again through faith alone in Christ will see Doris in heaven with Jesus. Let the Holy Spirit probe your spiritual heart, are you born again? Is there a time you invited Christ to come into your heart and life and surrendered to the Lordship of Christ?

Enabled to Overcome Sin

All who are born again will be in heaven with Doris and Christ Jesus. Doris Stump not only had illumination of being born again, she knew the joy of being enabled to overcome sin.

1 John 5:3-4 says, “This is love for God: to obey His commands. And His commands are not burdensome, for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world? Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God. Revelation 2:7 says, “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.”

Doris not only loved and appreciated the preaching and teaching of God’s Word, she allowed the written Word of the Lord to be spiritual food for her soul (Matthew 4:4) and she never found His commands burdensome. As a matter of fact she found obeying the Lord’s Word liberating and knew the joy that comes in every step of obedience.

There was a time she lived north of Long Island, Kansas. When it came that time in her life to move into town and sell the farm house she was given the opportunity to choose truthfulness or be overcome by the world’s view. A family came out to look the house and property over. She told him everything she could think of as they visited. The family left and as Doris meditated upon all that was said, the Lord brought to her memory of some possible termite damage in the house.

Doris' flesh moved her to think as many in the world do today, "They were here and looked everything over, it is no big deal if I do not tell them." The Holy Spirit kept prompting Doris to love truthfulness, so she obeyed her Lord and called the perspective buyers about the possible termite damage.

Doris had an unexplainable joy of the Lord pour into her soul through the Holy Spirit and as she related the incident to her daughter Bonnie and her son-in-law Terry Laughlin, she said with such excitement, "This means I am able to overcome this world's view. In Christ I am an over-comer!"

Who to Trust

Not only was Doris able to overcome this world's view, she knew who to trust in at all times. Psalm 9:10 says, "Those who know your name will trust in you, for you, Lord, have never forsaken those who seek you." Doris lived a life that said, "But I trust in your unfailing love; my heart rejoices in your salvation." (Psalm 13:5)

When Doris' husband, Alfred Fischer died his physical death she had often said, "I should think more upon the truth that Alfred is in heaven with Jesus forever, and not so much on my temporary loss, but it is okay to be sad. I am thankful the Lord will look after me."

Doris grew tremendously in trust in the Lord after the first five years after the death of Alfred and in the taking care of her third husband, Gerald Stump when he was afflicted with brain cancer. Doris expressed genuine faith at the times of the physical death of her husbands because she was illuminated with the truth which was revealed to the Apostle Paul who wrote, "We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and be present with the Lord." (2 Corinthians 5:8 KJV)

How to Deal with the Anxieties of Life

Doris had a trust in the Lord that enabled her to have faith in the most difficult times in life and she knew how to deal with the anxieties of life. Philippians 4:6 says, "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanks giving, present your request to God."

In her physically healthy days and at the peak of her walk with the Lord it was common to see a prayer list next to Doris' Bible because she was constantly in prayer. Bible reading and prayer was the common fruit of her life. In her spiritual height she was a modern day example of the disciple who came to Christ and said, "Lord, teach me to pray..." (Luke 11:1)

Doris was never ashamed to pray because the Lord had taught her how to pray and enjoy prayer. She had prayed through to see her children and in laws come to know Christ personally as their Savior and Lord. She had prayed for loves ones to be filled with the Holy Spirit that they be enabled to do great things with the Lord. She has prayed for new ministries to be raised up and has kept those ministries in prayer. In a time when her illness really afflicted her in the early months of 2007 she had commented to one person who she had prayed for to know Christ and for the ministry the Lord had given this person, saying, "I still pray for you and your ministry."

The Lord had so revealed the power of prayer to Doris enabling her to be like the faithful few who have illumination of Romans 8:26-27, "In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. And He who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will."

Even in her ill health, the same Spirit that raised Christ from the dead, who taught her how to pray in Jesus' name enabled Doris' spirit to have communion with the Lord in prayer as she surrenders to the Holy Spirit.

Even though the human body is subject to illness, the spirit of man is brought to eternal life and enabled to commune with the Lord as mankind groans for specific needs here on earth.

When Christ died on the Cross of Calvary that veil was torn open, indicating that the last final sacrifice was made and all who know Christ as Savior and Lord may come before the Father in prayer in Christ's name. Doris Stump knew and walked in that truth. This is why she unashamedly prayed as the Holy Spirit led.

An eyewitness account of Doris' steadfastness in prayer told about a time when some of the family were at her son, Brian Fischer's state football game when a man at the game had a heart attack. Doris immediately took her focus off the game and prayed real heart-felt intercession for the man. This eyewitness account came from an observer who was not a Christian at the time of the incident. Listen to his comment, "I have never witnessed such a Christian act of charity, a Christian who really believed in the power of prayer, praying for someone in great need while other church attendees set their focus and pleasure on the game."

Gifts of Encouragement and Generosity

Doris was taught of Christ to pray. She also had the gifts of encouragement and generosity. Romans 12:6 and 8 says, "We have different gifts, according to the grace given us... if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously."

The word “grace” (charis) here is the ability to exercise God-given endowments for spiritual service. (The Bible Knowledge Commentary) This is a special manifestation of the divine presence or power of God working through His obedient children for the purpose of blessing. (The Greek-English Dictionary of the New Testament)

The two gifts mentioned here are just as important as the ministry of preaching and teaching God’s Word. Doris exercised two gifts sacrificially that are still touching the lives of people in CrossRoads and Long Island Methodist. Those gifts are “encouraging” or rather “exhortation” and “contributing.” The English Standard Version says, “...one who contributes.” The Bible says these gifts are to be allowed and exercised “cheerfully.”

“Exhortation” (paraklesis) here means to have a God given ability to urge someone to pursue a particular course and/or offer God’s consolation in view of trials or tragedy. “One who contributes” here is that person who has an unusual ability and willingness to share one’s material goods with others eagerly and liberally. This person is open-handed and open-hearted in giving out compassion with a singleness of purpose, not from ambition. This person gives generously for the glory of God with no desire of gaining anything for themselves. (The Moody Handbook of Theology; Linguistic Key to the Greek New Testament; The New American Commentary; The Complete Word Study Dictionary)

Doris, is certainly an epistle worth reading. She was enabled by the Lord to urge many to pursue their callings of God. She did this by practical application and by financial support. She served meals, baked cookies, cleaned, gave verbal encouragement and was willing to support ministries who did not have the big name. She established a personal relationship with people she ministered to in these areas of giving Biblical exhortations and financial support.

She had a real heart for ministries that met the needs of hurting people and she personally got involved in meeting the personal needs of people as well. The Lord has also worked through her to finance powerful ministries that are used of God to take the gospel of Christ all around the world. Small or big, the Lord has enabled Doris to minister with great liberty. She was used of the Lord to encourage and give to ministries that started small and grew to world wide influence.

People of this world and worldly living church attendees are unable to praise the Lord or see Christ working through Doris with these gifts. However, those with Holy Spirit illumination have no problem seeing that Doris is like the Philippians who exercised these gifts to the Apostle Paul. Holy Spirit illuminated Christians say of Doris as the Apostle Paul said in his letter to the Philippians, “I rejoice greatly in the Lord... it is good that you share in my troubles...” (Make time to do a study of Philippians 4:10-16)

Those who are illuminated with these truths can only take time to thank the Lord for His working through Doris and thank for Him for His faithfulness to His word. God has proved Himself faithful to Doris because she stood upon the truths of the whole counsel of God's Word. Dr David Jeremiah said, "In too many churches, the 80/20 rule holds: 20 percent of the people give 80 percent of the money." I would like to add, "20 percent of the people do 80 percent of the work for the Lord."

Doris was in that 20 percent because she actually believed the Bible, "Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. As it is written: 'He has scattered abroad his gifts to the poor; His righteousness endures forever. 'Now He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness. You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God. This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of God's people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God. Because of the service by which you have proved yourselves, men will praise God for the obedience that accompanies your confession of the gospel of Christ, and for your generosity in sharing with them and with everyone else. And in their prayers for you their hearts will go out to you, because of the surpassing grace God has given you. Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!" (2 Corinthians 9:6-15)

Doris knew these universal truths and the Lord has proved Himself truthful in and through Doris' life. She knew these truths are reflected all through the Bible (Proverbs 11:18, 24-25; 19:17, 22:8-9; Hosea 8:7; 10:12) because she had read it completely through many times and was known to be a prayerful studier of God's Word.

In her time of not having a lot the Lord Jesus had proved Himself to Doris, she so trusted in His exhortation, "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life?" (Matthew 6:25) "But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well." (Matthew 6:33)

Doris had discovered the truth of God's word, stewardship is what is required over the religious thinking that 10% is all the Lord requires. She knew stewardship encompasses everything we have; time, talents, treasures and especially Holy Spirit given gifts. From Scripture reading she knew God owns everything, the whole earth and everything in it and we are only administrators. (Psalm 24:1; Psalm 50:10; Haggai 2:8; Ezekiel 18:4; Romans 14:8) Everything comes from Him (James 1:17; Deuteronomy 8:18)

A Blessing in Music

Doris is a living letter to be read and enjoyed in regard to stewardship and she was a blessing in music. 1 Chronicles 25:6-7 says, "All these men were under the supervision of their fathers for the music of the temple of the Lord, with cymbals, lyres and harps, for the ministry at the house of God... Along with their relatives – all of them trained and skilled in music for the Lord..."

There are people who are called to the ministry of music and they are a huge blessing to those who come to the house of the Lord for worship unto Christ. The gift of music cannot be obtained through purchase or hard work. It is a gift from God for the purpose of praising Him. Sadly, many misuse this precious gift for their own glory or to gain wealth.

Doris used her gift of music for ministering worship of the Lord in the house of God. She had been a blessing to many a pastor in the church and at special services such as homes for the elderly. For over 50 years Doris served the Lord in the Long Island United Methodist Church. The Lord has passed this gift of music on to some of her children, thus proving Himself faithful to His Word. (Exodus 20:6)

Doris enjoyed music for the Lord and when it came that time in life when her health started to fail she said, "It is now my turn to sit and enjoy others as they lead music."

The two congregations of CrossRoads and the United Methodist Church of Long Island can certainly praise the Lord. The Lord has used them to grow and mature Doris Isabel Stump in the work of the Lord. They have allowed the Lord to enable Doris to exercise her Holy Spirit given gifts for the edifying of the Body of Christ. Her spiritual gifts were a blessing in establishing key ministries in these two churches and the Lord has enabled her to do her part in making sure these ministries continue on even though she is unable to physically attend these churches. Doris knew that church membership is not simply sitting in church pew and putting your nickel in the offering plate. True church membership is sacrificially exercising your Holy Spirit given gifts for the glory of the Lord, Jesus Christ. (1 Corinthians 12-14; Romans 12:3-8)

Holy Spirit illuminated Christians will honor all that the Lord had done in and through Doris Stump. They will read her life in Christ and trust in the Lord to do a work in them, causing them to be epistles of Christ living and working through them. Doris' greatest concern was that all her children, friends and fellow church attendees be truly born again. She wanted them to know the joy of exercising their Holy Spirit given gifts for the edifying of the Body of Christ and using them for reaching out to those who do not know Jesus Christ as personal Savior and Lord. She wanted everyone to be able to say, "In Christ I can overcome sin!"

Let us Pray!!!!