



Dear Friends and Family,

In a Box with a Bow

I must confess I had a hard time with Easter this year. I had a rebellious spirit. Sounds horrible, I know. So what was the problem? Here's the problem...

I want my risen Lord and Savior to be the celebration of my heart every moment of every day. What Christ did on the cross and that He is alive today should penetrate the depths of all that I am and define me.

People should see His love and joy in my life every day. Every new day should be a celebration of the One we love and of the ones we love... our time together is a precious gift.

But are we really giving our best to the Lord each day? Even on the days when our hearts ache and we just don't feel like we have anything left to give?

That is the beauty of our life in Christ He loves us in our emptiness.

No matter how hard or dark life may get, God is there. He is with us. God longs to fill us with His Presence, His Strength, His Peace and His Joy.

Christ ... "For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form, and in Him you have been made complete." Colossians 2:9, 10

Wow. The Lord God of the universe longs to share life with you, with me, to hang out, to talk, to give our lives meaning and purpose. He loves us and promises to always be there...

Now that is something to celebrate with the gift of each new day.

In an age of information overload and "virtual" everything, it is time to stop running and be real. No more five-minute devotionals, check it off the list and run blindly into the stressful demands of another day.

WE need to stop and see the Lord. Did you see the Lord today? Did you look for Him?

If we could only lift our eyes from our cellphones and actually see the person standing in front of us; I think so many times the Lord is right there... sparkling in someone's eyes, in their smile...

But we never even look up. Or if we do look up, our minds are thinking so many things at the same time that we fail to see the beauty God has placed all around us.

And we miss it... we miss Him, because we do not have eyes or a heart to see.

So I challenge you to stop, I'm working on it, and look up... look for Him as you walk through each new day and celebrate!

"I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; And the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, Who loved me and gave Himself up for me." Galatians 2:20

In a Box with a Bow...

So maybe I've been in Latin America too long but I truly believe it's all about relationships. Relationships take time, they can be messy and sometimes they really hurt. But that's what makes them real.

We were created to be in relationship with God and with others. Until we figure that out, nothing will fill the void. The bottom line is we need God and we need each other.

So why do we like boxes so much?

"God, You can be in this part of my life but not that one"... a box.

"Lord, I will go to church but don't ask me to go outside and get to know my neighbor"... a box.

It's Easter, we carefully take out the beautiful box with the bow, open it up and celebrate Jesus. Then back in the box He goes until next Sunday or maybe even next year...

In a box with a bow.

I don't think God likes boxes.
I know I don't.

I once said to a friend, "I'm no theologian...", I kind of got tangled up in the word.

"But if my hearts desire is to worship the Lord God Creator of the universe... Then who am I to build a box?"

Lord, help us to see beyond the walls that we build and the boxes we live in.

May we see You and dare to draw near.

LIFE IN MINISTRY



Doug spent some time with teams in January and February...
We are blessed to be voked together in Christ...

God continues to move in amazing ways in the ministry. We are all so blessed to be a part of what He is doing in the world today. Thank you for your prayers, encouragement and financial support.

We hope that you know how important you are and can see how your faithfulness has been multiplied throughout the nations!

Our annual IAM/ ICI, (IberoAmerican Ministries/ Iglesias de Cristo Iberoamericana), Board Meeting was held in Ecuador in April. Not only was it a time to rejoice and give thanks for everything that God had done and continues to do, it was also a time to continue planning and dreaming. Here are some of the exciting things God is doing!

The churches in Ecuador continue to grow with a heart and vision that know no borders. The newest church plant in San Vicente is now celebrating Sunday services. Fabricio and Landy, a young Ecuadorian couple form the church in Baba, will be going to work with our team in Sierra Leone next year.

At the Board meeting, Chad Courtney, our team leader in Sierra Leon, brought greetings and more insight into life, ministry and the amazing team they are going to join. Fabricio and Landy are ministering at the church in San Jose until their departure for Africa.

Do we expect the unexpected from God? So try and follow this story... At our daughter Christy's wedding in Chile a little over a year ago, Chika was there. Chika is Chilean and has served for five years in the Middle East. Chad was there too.

Chad encouraged Chika to get to know a godly co-worker of his, Julius. Reluctantly, Chika agreed. Long, incredible story short, after a long distance romance that spanned continents and almost a year... Julius and Chika were married in Chile in February!

Two people mature in their faith, that love the Lord and are walking in obedience to His will in their lives. God brought them together. After much prayer and a long wait, Julius' visa came through. Julius and Chika are currently ministering together in the Middle East.

When we leave behind our boxes and trust obedience, God does crazy amazing things in our lives! Maybe that crazy amazing thing will be seeing my neighbor through my Father's eyes...



OUR FAMILY

Right now we have kids in the North and kids in the South so spending Christmas together was incredible! Of our six kids, the four oldest are now living in Chile, although Kyle gets home to repack his suitcase and run out the door! Our six grandchildren are also in Chile!

Our two youngest daughters will both be graduating from Whitworth University in Spokane, WA in just a few weeks. Niki will graduate with her BA in Political Science and Cross-Cultural Studies with a Minor in English. Lori graduates with her Masters in Marriage and Family Therapy. We are so excited for them and could not possibly be prouder!



Niki has been accepted into several graduate programs but continues to seek God's direction for her life... exciting possibilities, big decisions!

In July, Lori will be getting married! Lori will be marrying Daniel Nelson in Seattle then moving to Arizona. Daniel fell in love with Lori on a short-term mission trip to Chile when he was 12 years old! That's a story for our next letter.



Thank you for your prayers during this season of transition for our family.

Over a span of eight years, four of our kids have been caregivers for their grandparents. After the girls graduate, Doug's sister Heidi and her husband Matt will take on this blessing and responsibility. Our goal as a family has always been for Grandpa and Grandma to live in their home together. We have been so thankful for your prayers and God's faithfulness through this process.





Doug's oldest brother Steve passed away April 17th of a massive heart attack. We are so thankful for all of your prayers and support during this difficult time for our family.

Steve will be dearly missed.

Every new day should be a celebration of the One we love and of the ones we love...
Our time together is a precious gift...

*Thank you for your prayers
and
For sharing life with us.*

*All our love,
Doug and Shelly*



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