

August 2025

GLOBAL TRAINING  
NETWORK

# In His Grip

## Showers of Blessings in the Philippines



I spent most of July in the Philippines. I led four training events during my three weeks there. My first week was in Quezon City, home of the Conservative Baptist Seminary of Asia. There I taught a combined in-person/online course on Integrative Theology. This course involves answering theological using a five step process: First, we examine alternative viewpoints in church

history (Historical Theology). Then we compile biblical data from the Old and New Testaments (Biblical Theology). Next we combine the biblical data to create a thorough systematic answer or statement (Systematic Theology). Then we test that statement against alternate viewpoints from other religions and philosophies (Apologetics). Finally, we examine what life commitments and values arise from this teaching (Practical Theology). This is challenging, but teaches students to think more objectively and thoroughly.

My second week was on Mindanao. I led two training events here. The first class in Davao involved a group I have previously taught in Tagum. Having the class in Davao took less time making possible two training events during the week instead of just one. This first class was on Teaching the Christian Faith. Writing a lesson plan was a new idea to the students. Indeed, there were some in the class not in the habit of preparing their lessons at all. By week's end, they were all excited about the prospect of having objectives for each

lesson and a plan for how to accomplish those objectives. The next training event was in rural Cotabato. Here the subject was Biblical Preaching. This group involved pastors from various tribal backgrounds. The language barrier is high here. We employed two interpreters instead of one. In spite of this, the students simply devoured this, their first-ever instruction on preaching biblical sermons. They sank to the floor using their benches as desks to complete their outlines and were grateful for the opportunity. My final week was in Cauayan in the Visayan Islands. Travel there was hard due to flooding. In the end it was worth it. Here I teach Bible Institute students.



They are eager to learn and a delight to work with. I partnered with GTN staff member Randall Lawton from Australia. He taught a thoughtful class on Discipleship, while I brought a course called "Foundations of the Christian Faith I." It explores the doctrines of the Bible, God the Father, Son, Holy Spirit, and God as a Trinity. Our two courses often dovetailed. The basis for solid discipleship (Randall's course) is rooted in the nature of God and the reliability of Scripture (my course). There were periodic pauses for spontaneous praise as students responded to the biblical truths. I firmly believe that if a theology class is boring, you're missing the point. I was happy to see them not only learning but *'getting it.'*

## Our Itinerary



**Aug 26-29:** Qatar ministry

**Aug 30-Sept 12:** Iraqi Kurdistan ministry

**Oct 9-25:** Rwanda ministry

**Oct 25-31:** Cameroon ministry

**Nov 1-16:** Nepal ministry

## The Power of God's Touch

Not long ago, I walked triumphantly into the house, having completed a dirty and difficult job outside. My wife took one look at her conquering hero and breathed those three special words, "Don't touch anything!" Like most wives/moms, she knows well that dirt (grease, peanut butter, etc.) is like a contagion. It spreads faster than a cold in a kindergarten.



One little touch and the pristine is now grimy. Interestingly, it never works the other way around. Cleanliness never infects dirtiness with its 'next-to

-Godliness' virtue, but dirtiness feels free to contaminate every clean thing it can lay its grungy fingerprints on. It doesn't seem fair.

That's why I was recently intrigued by Isaiah chapter six. In this account, Isaiah finds himself ashamed in God's presence because of his sinful nature. He describes himself as a "man of unclean lips." An angel takes a coal from the altar and touches Isaiah's lips. As a result, he is cleansed of his sin. That is the power of God's touch! It is different from all other touches. Sin, like any form of dirt, spreads to whatever it touches, but when it comes into contact with God, a miraculous reversal occurs. Instead of sin spreading its stain as usual, the cleanliness of God's spotless nature overwhelms and

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## The Power of God's Touch (cont'd)

cleanses completely. A similar picture is found in Ezekiel 47 where a trickle of water flows eastward from the temple, eventually becoming a river. The river drains into the Dead Sea, and the famously salty water of that unique body becomes sweet. This is not natural. Ordinarily when fresh water is mixed with salt water the result is...more salt water. It may be more diluted but all of the salt remains. Not so when God is involved. In this instance, God's fresh water miraculously eliminates the pollution that gave the Dead Sea its name. That is the power of God's touch! Want more? Let's go to the New Testament.

Under the law, lepers were regarded as ceremonially unclean as long as the disease persisted. In Jesus' day they were ostracized socially and had to live in a separate location. The Jewish community took ceremonial uncleanness to mean more than the symbolic picture of sin intended by the law. There was frequently an assumption of actual sin. Disease, defect, or injury were often viewed as God's judgment on the individual for his/her personal or family sin. Nowhere was this more the case than with leprosy. Thus, it was a poignant moment when a leper approached Jesus, knelt, and cried out, "Lord, if you are willing you can make me clean!" This statement was pregnant with meaning. There is no doubt that he longed to be clean in his body, in his soul, and in the eyes of his countrymen! Imagine that moment. Jesus looked down upon this tortured soul kneeling and perhaps sobbing before him, reached out and laid his hand gently upon him, and, with compassion ringing in his voice, cried out, "I am willing! Be cleansed!" Immediately, the leprosy disappeared (Matthew 8:1-3). Think of it! Rotted necrotic flesh became pink and healthy again with that single touch. More than that, the man was spiritually restored in that instant. This was not natural! Leprosy spreads

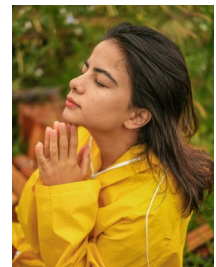


through contact, but contact with Jesus injected health into that diseased body. Contact with a leper should have also made Jesus ceremonially unclean with all its implications. Instead, Jesus' touch made the leper ceremonially clean. All that remained was for him to present himself to the priests and offer the requisite sacrifice and he could rejoin the community. That is the power of God's touch!

Do you see the pattern here? Do you see the lesson? It's about more than coals from the altar, clean water, or physical health. These are pictures of the touch of God in a world stained by sin. Sin always pollutes whatever it touches, bringing heart-ache, damaged relationships, wasted potential, and worse. But it meets its match when it encounters the supernatural touch of Jesus. It is only the touch of Jesus that can halt the spread of sin's disease. It is only the touch of Jesus that can bring wholeness to person when life has been hollowed out by sin's effects. I could tell you many stories of the people I have encountered around the world whose lives have been transformed from darkness to light by the touch of Jesus. Whole families have been transformed. Addictions have disappeared. Hatred has given way to forgiveness. Marriages have been restored. Torch bearers of wickedness have become trophies of grace! The gospel is the good news that there is hope for anyone and everyone! No matter how stained or degraded a person's life has become, the touch of Jesus can restore that person to spiritual wholeness. Jesus can reverse the downward spiral that we are powerless to prevent. He can give hope in the place of despair. He can turn brokenness into joy! He can raise up beauty from ashes! THAT is what the Apostle Paul meant in Romans 1:16 when he said, "I am not ashamed of the gospel for it is the power of God that brings salvation!" THAT is the power of God's touch!



## Our Praises & Prayer Requests



- Praise God for our July ministry in the Philippines (4 trainings in 3 weeks).
- Praise God for safe (though difficult) travel in the Central Philippines
- Praise God for 6 graduates in Cotabato, Mindanao, Philippines!
- Please pray for our upcoming ministry in Doha, Qatar.
- Please pray for our upcoming expanded ministry in Northern Iraq.
- Please pray for our October/November ministries in Rwanda, Cameroon, and Nepal.

## Ministry Partnership

**Your financial partnership is essential as we carry out our God given ministry.**  
**Please follow the instructions below or on the enclosed response card (US mail version).**

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 And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:17, 19)*

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