**Easter and the Inexpressible Gift of Ministry Partnership**

**Romans 8:31-32:**

*“What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?”*

When I first started raising funds, I was encouraged to find a promise in the word that would anchor me through the journey of fundraising and ministry partner development. This promise is an old friend and has helped me navigate more than just Financial Partnership Development. This is one of those tried and tested promises which can be carried into whatever season of life or ministry we find ourselves in.

This verse is not just the heart of Christian Living and the Gospel, but also provides a paradigm for Ministry Partner Development and answers the basic questions anyone seeking to develop ministry partners should be asking. What does this passage tell me about all the key players involved in ministry partnership development-God, Me, The mission, Ministry Partners:

**God:**

He is more committed to getting his message out to those who have not heard and spared no cost toward that mission. He gave so generously that He gave His only son. No one can ever out-give God and He is infinitely more invested in getting His Laborers into His harvest field than anyone. If He spared NO cost to rescue us, will He not fully and abundantly provide the resources to complete the mission that started and culminates with His Glory?

**Me:**

It is not my job to “convince, persuade, or sell” nor is it necessarily a passive exercise of “faith”. The question is not in practice nor technique but where is our confidence. If We believe that God has provided all that is required, then we are simply reaping. We reap in the same way we have been provided for--Graciously. We honor those whom God has brought before us and we invite, not demand nor expect. A Man plans his ways, but God directs his steps. Frustrations in fundraising are sometimes God’s way to remind us that it is He who supplies, not my winsome

Message or well thought out plan.

**The Mission:**

It is not about me and my needs It is about His work and His Glory. Is the Mission Worthy? God thought so--he sacrificed and lost EVERYTHING so that we can say yes to Jesus and follow him. Sacrifice might look different for many people, but ultimately do we do the kingdom a disservice by not asking to the level of generosity and instead ask for what might be convenient. And what does that say about how we view others. Do we desire for them to experience blessing (as Paul referred to in Philippians) or are we content to leave a meeting with a potential partner and not share or invite in a way that calls for action or sacrifice?

**Ministry Partners:**

Notice how many times the author uses the word “us”. It is not about me or them it is about “us”. The message of the gospel has been entrusted to us all and we are invited to be participants in the mission not just spectators. What are we inviting people to do, write a monthly check and pray; or to strive with everything in me to see the power of the Gospel break into a hopeless, desperate and harassed world? It took a drastic and deliberate act of God to rescue us from the slavery of sin. There was a sense of Urgency and abandonment in bringing us home. An invitation to partner to take the most valuable Gift that God gave the world demands that we be gracious and bold when we invite people to partner with us in the mission.

The Hymn writer Issac Watts put it best in this timeless Easter Classic-When I Survey the Wondrous Cross

*When I survey the Wondrous Cross on Which the Prince of Glory Died,*

*My richest gain I count but loss and pour contempt on all my pride.*

*Forbid it Lord that I should boast, save in the death of Christ my God!*

*All the vain things that Charm me most, I sacrifice them to His Blood*

*Were the whole realm of nature mine. That were a present far too small.*

*Love so Amazing, So Divine, Demands my soul, my life, my all.*

As we each take time to reflect and rejoice this weekend, lets also remind ourselves of where our focus should lie while we are engaged with others in taking this message to the World. Crossing the sea does not make a missionary, but seeing the cross does!