

## **November 2008—“How Long Can You Hold Your Breath?”**

Crystal Springs is a beautiful fresh water spring about nine miles from the first church we planted in Beverly Hills, FL. The underwater visibility is officially considered *unlimited*. The temperature is nice too—74 degrees Fahrenheit year-round. I learned to scuba dive in these striking, crystal-clear waters.

Part of the thrill of diving in the springs was a huge underwater cavern. It was “L” shaped; about 60 feet deep and extending back and under the river bed another 75 feet. I’ve been in this cavern many times, cherishing the silence, beauty and excitement of the underwater world.

One beautiful winter day (you know the type: sunny and 80 degrees!), I was standing in chest-deep water next to my canoe readying my scuba gear when a man anchored his boat nearby. We greeted one another as he put on his mask—no snorkel, no air tank, no gear at all. I watched him as he quickly dove underwater and swam out of sight and into the cavern. As I continued to check my equipment, I naturally assumed he would resurface within a minute or so—certainly within a few minutes. After all, how long can a man hold his breath? But after many minutes had passed, I became concerned and hurried to get underwater to help him, or at least drag out his drowned body.

Imagine my surprise when I finally found him; he was swimming in the cavern—thoroughly enjoying himself. I couldn’t believe my eyes! As I watched in amazement, I discovered his secret: a plain old drinking straw. You see, there were air pockets on the roof of the cavern in which spent air from the scuba divers would accumulate. Some are small—about the size of a fist; many are larger—large enough to stick your head in! He would swim up to one of the indentations in the ceiling, suck some air from it with his straw, and continue his exploration. After a minute or so, he would find another air supply in the ceiling, *refill* with his straw, and be on his way again.

I was impressed. This man could do the “impossible” because he had a resource of which I was not aware.

And so it is with us as believers. Many of our mission family are going through deep waters. To the inexperienced onlooker, it may appear that the situation is impossible and the outcome will be disastrous. But we have spiritual resources in Christ which others are not aware, equipping us to meet the challenges victoriously.

Rejoice with me as we look at a small sampling of some of the hidden resources—

*“And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in*

*necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong" (2 Cor 12:9-10).*

*"And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us" (Rom 5:5).*

*"Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Phil 4:6-7).*

Last of all, here's one of my favorites: *"When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee" (Isa 43:2).*

As you apply these precious truths to your life, would you take a few minutes to share with me some of the verses you turn to when you're in need of taking a deep breath?

Thanks,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bill".