

Todd Family Ministry Update | Winter 2023

A letter from Preston

I'm not sure either of us could have predicted what this year would hold.

Three trips to Pakistan. Visiting Zambia and meeting dozens and dozens of Holly's kids for the first time (who call me dad!) and marveling at what was her life's work and greatest passion for so many years. Launching a whole new branch of Matthew 10's ministry in Pakistan that beautifully builds upon and accentuates the message of Jesus that is saving so many. Partnerships being formed with incredible like-minded organizations — all endeavoring to bring Gospel to Pakistan and freedom to more families while persistently exploring ways to change the culture that led them into slavery to begin with. Hour upon hour trying to figure out how to make this new initiative sustainable and build out systems to see it expand (and it is).

We've also been taking Ascent Mentoring into the next phase of it's growth with hiring a staff, starting grade-level Bible studies, and launching our first guy's chapter. We saw it expand this year to 200 college graduates mentoring 200 high school students. We began to host worship nights in Highland Park with a house full of high school students learning to discern God's voice and experience His presence. It's been so wonderful to see what Holly and I experienced in high school begin to capture the hearts of these kids in the same way.

A highlight for me was having the privilege of teaching at a pastor's conference in Islamabad. Holly loved helping facilitate a mother/daughter conference in Dallas. We consolidated our lives and moved not once, but twice. I took Holly and the kids camping in New Mexico (no small thing), adopted a timid and rambunctious dog named Sam, and closed the door on new opportunities for my business in preparation for what we knew was ahead.

We're growing as a family as we all learn to embrace so many new normals. God is sovereignly re-establishing us. And allowing us to play a small part of seeing 173 families set free — over 1,250 moms, dads, grandparents, sons and daughters set free from a lifetime of slavery. Among so many other wonderful moments and trips and conversations. And so many people to thank along the way. Did I mention that Holly is pregnant?!

All in our first year of marriage.



Holly at our very first visit to the brick kilns. | Holly with Nazia on our second visit in July. She was set free in February. | With Anwar on our second trip. His family had been free for 4 months after 50 years of slavery. | Preston with an 80 year old man who had been a slave at this brick kiln for 62 years. I wept when I met him — my dad just turned 80. | Cover: A family on their brand-new loader cart 5 weeks after being set free.



I can't remember a more full and purposeful year of my life since planting a church over a decade ago. It has been unbelievably redemptive. For both of us. We've been referring to this time of our lives as *chapter two*. We adopted a phrase this year that has just begun to shape our lives: *Free people, free people*. Not so coincidentally, it comes directly from Matthew 10:8. "Freely you have received the power (or generosity) of the Kingdom, now freely release it to others." A friend at lunch last weekend told us that this verse was the impetus for him launching what would become his greatest endeavor and legacy — after being at the helm of the world's largest hedge fund. This verse was also the catalyst for his chapter two. I marveled thinking about all that this man had seen. All that God had done in his life — especially over the last 20 years. How much God can do through the life of one with a surrendered heart.

Most of you are well-aware of Holly's *chapter one* that she championed for nearly twenty years. Her unrelenting passion and willingness to endure pretty much anything in effort to finish the race laid out before her — seemingly always with a huge smile on her face. I think unrelenting is a fantastic word to describe her zeal and contagious desire to pull so many into a crystal-clear expression of God's heart for the orphan child.

Hebrews 5:8 says of Jesus, "Though he was God's Son, he learned trusting-obedience by what he suffered, just as we do." That verse struck me years ago. Jesus had to learn to obey. If Jesus had to learn to obey through sufferings and trials, then, as a son, I ought to expect the same. To learn to count the trials as pure joy — and to let them have their full effect on me, being trained by God to endure. Along with Holly, I'd like to think I've learned to trust God over the years through each season and assignment He had given me. Learned to lean not on my own understanding, but acknowledging Him and embracing what He is intending to produce in my life. We are always rediscovering over and over again that His ways of cultivating and maturing our lives are much different than what we often expect. Constantly learning and discovering more about Him and our identities. Learning deeper still that Jesus gives us a freedom to live as a child — fully loved and fully satisfied. Dr. Pete often says that all the fruit from his ministry is in spite of me, not because of me. We relate to that. As feeble as we feel at times. Our prayer is often, Lord, teach us to steward our days. Teach us to steward our history and experiences and gifts. Now, Lord, take our simple offering and multiply it.

The years leading up to marrying Holly have all been so wonderfully and thoughtfully ordained by my Father. He has been working all things for our good. We're both only 42, and personally, I'm not sure I've been this excited to fulfill the assignments that we feel God is inviting us into. I'm convinced that this year has been just a taste of what is to come, of what our gracious God has in store. Why not believe that? If He has orchestrated ten thousand things in our lives to sovereignly bring us to this place, why not believe that the best is yet to come? Why not have a joyful anticipation of good? To agree with David's declaration in Psalm 23 that without a doubt, surely goodness and mercy will follow us all the days of our lives.

2023 was a massive year of transition for our family. It was incredible — exhausting, refining, confirming, empowering, fun. There has been so much to rejoice over. At the end of this year, we find ourselves in a new home preparing for a new child and a new career. I've been asked to oversee discipleship and

"Ascent has been an amazing experience in my life. Having this opportunity to build a strong relationship with my mentor and God has profoundly impacted my life, providing the guidance I have needed and fostering a deeper understanding of my faith. Through Ascent, God has worked wonders! It has become a source of wisdom, strengthening my connection with both God and my mentor, and is shaping my perspective and actions in profound ways."

GEORGEANN HUTHNANCE, JUNIOR



church planting initiatives in each nation we are working in while Holly and I continue to spread the message that free people, free people. This vocational shift back into full time ministry at Matthew 10 and Ascent is a dream come true for me. A hope fulfilled to say the very least. Matthew 10 has been seeing thousands upon thousands coming to Christ each year. This year was no different. So many incredible stories of salvation coming out of Zambia, Ghana, India, and Pakistan. I feel like we are on the cusp of something that none of us, certainly not Holly or I, could begin to articulate. As one might learn to expect with God, I think it will be exceedingly beyond what we could ask for, dream of, or imagine.

It is safe to say that 2024 will continue to be a transitional period in our family and a foundational period in our ministry work. At the beginning of this next year, we find ourselves in a new season anticipating God to move powerfully on behalf of tens of thousands of slaves, house churches, and high schoolers. There is much to do. Much to build. There is seemingly no time to waste — and yet there is an open invitation from Jesus to enter into and remain in His faith-rest life. Right now, it may be hard to believe, but we are in the middle greatest harvest the world has ever seen. God is drawing so many to Jesus throughout the earth. God is at work still seeking, still saving that which is lost. What a joy and honor it is to just be a drop in the river of God’s powerful movement in the nations. We often remind ourselves that it is simply the greatest privilege to be in the family of God — and to be a laborer in the harvest.

It is still like God to restore what was stolen or shattered. Broken lives and years gloriously redeemed with beauty and splendor, giving honor instead of shame. It is still in His heart to seek and save the lost and to redeem the slave. God’s kingdom is unshakable. May what we build stand forever as a monument to His goodness, grace, generosity, and glory. That’s what I want to always be about. I want to run my race to win the prize — To be unrelenting in the pursuit of the upward call of knowing Jesus and leading others to do the same. It may be unsurprising to some of you, but I want to devote all my time to this. This past year I have essentially done that, and it’s not sustainable to keep it up without taking the leap to go all-in again vocationally.

There is a time to build and a time to tear down. This is most definitely a time to build again. We want to do this with a team of friends and supporters — just like we’ve always done it! *We need monthly partners and year-end gifts and anything else you feel inclined to give throughout the year. Most of all we are desiring a team to build with.* To share in the joys and testimonies and victories. Holly and I have made it through a lot of things in life, but we wouldn’t have made it through in the same way without the support of our friends. We’d be beyond thrilled if you jumped in the river with us on this next adventure.

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Thank you for being a part of our journey over the years. May his kingdom come and will be done in your life and in the church throughout all generations!



*With Love,
Preston and Holly*

Please prayerfully consider supporting our involvement in this eternity-focused ministry! You can give by check or credit card using the enclosed card or online.



Above: We met this wonderful family on our January trip at the brick kilns (top photo). Holly and I had the privilege of visiting their home 5 months after their debts were paid and celebrated all that God had done in their lives since then. The oldest son is now an elder overseeing several house-churches. The younger son has begun 3 schools at nearby brick kilns. The oldest daughter attends school now for the first time — and comes home to teach younger sister and the village kids what she has learned. The youngest is a true worshipper and led us in a song. The dad now only works 5 or 6 hours a day, making 4 to 5 times more money than he was at the brick kiln. “We are finally free to rest.”



The family to the right in their new home on the day of their freedom / Below, Holly is celebrating with 30 families that gathered to "show off" their new loader carts. / Preston with one of the 30 families waving to their Sponsor.



We leave January 2nd on our fourth trip to Pakistan this year.

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It costs \$3750 to free a family and re-establish them in a whole new life. To watch our mini-documentary and learn more about freeing a family, scan here.

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Our churches have over 700 families waiting to be freed — Around 4,500 people spanning three generations — many of which came to know Jesus through our Virtual Gospel Crusades. *Our goal is to find sponsors for 100 families by January 1st* — 38 families have been sponsored so far! We find sponsors that pay their debts and purchase a new loader-cart, providing them with a fail-safe way to earn a living. And we throw a lavish celebration to honor them and this moment in their lives. *It's just beautiful.*

Returning from our first trip to Pakistan almost a year ago, I was struck by Psalm 18. "Even though I was helpless in the hands of my hateful, strong enemy, you were good to deliver me — His love broke open the way, and he brought me into a beautiful broad place." That was my story. It's all our stories. We were helpless until his love broke open a way, paying our insurmountable debts and setting us free from the dominion of darkness and transferring us into his kingdom of marvelous light. The greatest demonstration of love in history was also the highest price that could ever be paid to ransom me from a lifetime of slavery.

We'd be so honored if you would join us in doing for them what Jesus has freely done for us. You can sponsor an entire family, or you can contribute to a campaign that groups donations together to set a family free. Their gratitude will stay with you forever.

Now to Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we can ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us, to Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever, AMEN! — **EPHESIANS 3:20-21**

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