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Matt. 13:33 “The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into a large amount of flour until it worked all through the dough.”

As I reference this verse in Matthew let me first say I’m not a cook, and know very little about mixing yeast with flour. The fact is I’ve never done it before and thus referred to my dusty old Betty Crocker book (given by my mother 35 years ago when I headed off to college). I wanted to understand just what is the ratio of yeast to flour. According to Betty Crocker (and who would argue with her) two packages of yeast are to be dissolved into a 3/4 cup of warm water when used with 9 or 10 cups of flour. Of course as I read those instructions I didn’t see anywhere written just how big a yeast packet is? I’ll assume there’s only one size and they’ll both fit into a ¾ cup. I somehow suspect all you cooks are just shaking your head right now.

All this said to illustrate that we as followers of Jesus Christ often feel like those 2 packages of yeast as compared to the much larger quantity of flour. Yet in Jesus’ own words that’s what we are called to be. Yeast can’t accomplish its purpose until it’s mixed with the flour. We can’t accomplish His purposes until we proactively mix with those who don’t know Him.

How have we been doing that here in Ukraine? If I were to sum up in one statement, I’d say “by one soul at a time”. Let me give you a glimpse into a few normal activities.

Last week I had opportunity to reconnect with my good friend Yuri. I had lead Yuri to Jesus Christ two years ago and used a variety of ways to disciple him. When he first became a Christian I would walk to his kiosk where he sold car parts and we’d go over lessons of assurance and discuss what he was currently reading in the Bible. I remember wondering how he could last all day at the unheated kiosk when after an hour or two I’d walk home frozen.

In late July of this year Yuri announced he was headed to Poland for three months to work. Last week he returned home to his wife and three children. It was the first opportunity I had to see him. It was great to reconnect and once again begin the process of creatively looking for ways to disciple him, and to become yeast among his family and acquaintances. The fact is there’s great opportunity to reach many through my friend Yuri, but it’s not easy. What I have learned is that I need to go to him. I can’t stay in the package with all the other unopened packets of yeast.

Later in the week I received a call from a former orphanage director who we as a mission have worked with for many years. Her particular orphanage was closed and the children were moved to a much bigger and nicer facility not far from Rivne. Though she's no longer a director she still has a heart for helping the many children who she had been acquainted with.

She needed help to deliver two children and their few possessions to the new facility. The mother of one of the children, and the grandmother of the other came along. Clearly the grandmother was distraught over not being able to take guardianship for her grandson. She had been told that she is too old. She spoke and cried a lot over the situation. Some of what she said we understood, some we did not. What we did understand is that prayer despite language barriers is powerful. Joanne embraced this old woman and called upon our God and Father to come along side in her time of grief. Truly God answered that prayer.

While Joanne was praying with the woman, I was fixing the broken bicycles for the two children. They were thrilled to have working bikes and happily rode around the parking lot while we waited for the enrollment to take place. Again our work here is one soul at a time while surrounded by thousands of others who don't know Him. It's our job and yours to be that little bit of yeast mixed into the flour.

There's a number of ways you can do that for us. First and foremost **pray**. You need to know that as missionaries in a foreign land our opportunity for spiritual input and community falls far short of what we had in America. We only survive based upon your prayers petitioned to God on our behalf.

Secondly please give. By now I'm sure that all of you who are part of a Free Methodist church have heard of the changes taking place in support of FM missionaries. It's become increasingly important to take a more personalized approach. I think that's a good thing. We desire people and churches that know us dearly and want to take an active partnership role in our ministry here in Ukraine. For those who desire to step into the modern world of electronic contributions please go to www.fmwm.org . Once there click on "Give" and in the next window click on "Electronic Giving". Then follow the prompts as a new donor. When designating the funds you may click on "Piepers Missionary Support". For those who give through your local church, write "Piepers Missionary Support" in the memo line.

In Christ,
Ron & Joanne Pieper