

**Dear Friends of Bob Russell Ministries,**

**I want to take this opportunity to thank each of you for your generous support of Bob Russell Ministries in 2023. Your continued involvement in the work of this ministry is an honor and, as we begin a new year, I want to update you on what is going on with BRM.**

**But first of all, on a personal note, my wife Judy has battled vertigo issues for the past four months. She is improving with the help of therapy but still experiences dizzy spells on occasion. She is coping well but it has shaken her confidence to the point she hasn't driven a car since September. So, I've spent considerable time recently "Driving Miss Judy"! Please pray for Judy's complete recovery.**

**May I also ask you to pray for my daughter-in-law Kellie (the wife of my son Rusty) who is struggling with a rare issue related to the auto-immune disease she has battled for years? Kellie just completed two infusions of chemo-like medicine that doctors hope will counter a terrible blistering on her hands and feet she has been plagued with for the past several weeks. The infusion has left her weakened and nauseous and we appreciate your prayers for Kellie's quick recovery from this nasty problem.**

**Over the past year I preached for numerous weekend services at various churches and conducted a couple of three-day revivals and leadership seminars. Two or three times a week I meet with ministers and church leaders over breakfast or lunch to encourage them and discuss ways they can be more effective in God's Kingdom.**

**We have hosted seven mentoring retreats for pastors at Country Lake plus another for Christian College Presidents. Another retreat that I helped lead was for Christian businessmen. Tom Ellsworth, a retired minister from Bloomington, Indiana, has been sharing these retreats with me for several years. He is an outstanding and compassionate minister who has instant rapport with preachers. Tom is 15 years younger than I and I'm beginning to lay the groundwork for the ministry to be gradually transitioned to his leadership over the next several years.**

**I continue to write a weekly blog with the hopes of encouraging church leaders to remain faithful and strong during the difficult times we are facing. Sadly, I also conducted about 20 funerals last year. One of my funerals took a turn when the family played the University of Kentucky fight song during the service because they knew the deceased was such an avid UK fan, he was rejoicing over**

**Kentucky's football victory over Louisville. Needless to say, that was not a highlight of this past year for me! I wasn't warned about such things in Bible College but the Bible does say there will be times when we can expect persecution!!!**

**I also spend much of my time responding to numerous texts and emails from church leaders who seek counsel for doctrinal and moral issues that arise in their church. I get these types of questions nearly every day. An email I answered this morning will serve as an example:**

**"Dear Bob,**

**I hope this letter finds you well. My name is \_\_\_\_\_, and I serve as a student pastor at \_\_\_\_\_. My family holds you in high regard—my dad reads your blog daily, and my mom recently reached out to you for advice on caring for my grandfather in his old age. However, I find myself facing some theological questions that have arisen in discussions with dear friends, whom I deeply care about and even had the honor of being the best man at their wedding. They argue that passages in Titus 1 and 1 Timothy 3 are culturally bound and no longer relevant today due to improvements in women's status. They lean towards an egalitarian perspective. Additionally, 1 Corinthians 11 has been cited in support of their views on certain practices that, according to them, are no longer applicable. I seek your guidance on how to approach them with love while articulating the truth clearly. Any insights you can provide would be greatly appreciated."**

**I did my best to answer this youth minister's question with what the Bible says about the woman's role in the church. There is no easy or short response to most of the plethora of questions I receive. But it demonstrates the fact that young Christian leaders are struggling with balancing what the Bible says with their desire to relate to today's culture. I attempt to speak the truth in love and encourage them to stand firm on Biblical principles.**

**The Lord has blessed me with good health to this point and I am confident that He wants me to continue to be a source of encouragement to other church leaders, so the BRM schedule is filling up for 2024. We have seven minister's retreats on the calendar for next year. To date I am scheduled to preach for 14 weekend services across the states, 5 conferences and several church retreats. I'm also scheduled to speak four times in September at The Cove, a seminar at the Billy Graham Training Center in Asheville, N.C.**

Without your support there is no way we could conduct the minister's retreats or continue our outreach to church leaders. I'm so grateful for what the Lord continues to do through your generosity and hope you realize how much you are needed and appreciated! Together we are making an impact by exalting Christ and urging church leaders to be faithful in preaching the whole counsel of God.

My prayer is to finish strong and be a good steward of the support you have entrusted to us. You are helping me do just that!

God bless!

Bob Russell