



## Antidote and Venom

I've been in this country so long that at times I feel like I was born here, but the reality is that I was not. I was born in El Salvador and came here as a child fleeing a life of war and hardship. Like anyone else that isn't born in this country I had to go through the proper channels to be here legally. I love this country and believe God opened doors and made miracles happen so I can have the opportunity to enjoy freedom and liberties that I couldn't in the country that I was born. However, I was a ten-year-old kid when I got here, who didn't know the language and was heavily depressed. People thought something was wrong with me because I wouldn't talk or say anything. The school I attended wanted to put me in special classes because they thought mentally, I was not all there. That was just the beginning; then I had to deal with people making fun of me because I couldn't speak the language. I was looked down on because of my race, they would say things like "Go back to your country!" "You freeloader! All you and your family do is take what belong to us!" "You come here, so our government can support you!" Considering I've never taken anything from the government I was living a life filled with false accusations. We were also not financially able to live in the nicer areas of Houston so I lived in a bad neighborhood and had to endure some of the police officers. Many times slammed against the police car as they smiled then said something like, "Oh you fit the description". I remember clearly, one afternoon when I was outside cleaning my dad's car and a police officer with out saying anything pulled me by my shirt and put me in handcuffs. I didn't know what was going on, and it took my mom's tears and a couple of neighbors that saw the incident for him to let me go free. His only reasoning was that I looked like someone they were looking for.

I've never told anyone but I never really felt like I belonged. Those words and incidences that happened so long ago were injected in my mind like a venom and slowly reduced me to a victim that held me captive. I lived here for years with my legal residency but never filed for citizenship until a few months ago. My wife strongly encouraged me to file all the paperwork to gain my full citizenship in this country. After all the paperwork was filed, background check was done and interview was complete I was able to go to the oath ceremony and finally become a citizen. After we said the oath, a well-respected older white American judge looked my way and said to me "Congratulations my fellow American! I would be honored to say the pledge of allegiance with you". Never in a million years would I have thought that those words were going to impact me as much as they did. I fought back the tears and in that moment all of those bad memories and bad experiences of racism and police profiling faded away. Those words hit my soul like an antidote healing and setting me free. That judge may never know this but his words made me feel like I was finally accepted and that I do indeed belong!

It's incredible what words can do, the pain it can cause yet the healing that it can also bring. Years have passed and I have forgiven many. I've

## Personal Message



## 2 Corinthians 9:6-15 (NLT)

6 Remember this—a farmer who plants only a few seeds will get a small crop. But the one who plants generously will get a generous crop.

7 You must each decide in your heart how much to give. And don't give reluctantly or in response to pressure. "For God loves a person who gives cheerfully."

8 And God will generously provide all you need. Then you will always have everything you need and plenty left over to share with others.

9 As the Scriptures say, "They share freely and give generously to the poor.

Their good deeds will be remembered forever."

10 For God is the one who provides seed for the farmer and then bread to eat. In the same way, he will provide and increase your resources and then produce a great harvest of generosity in you.

learned how to live and see people for who they are today and not the people of my past. So, what should I do as a minister of God when I speak. By His grace I've been given an opportunity to speak life into people regardless of who they are and regardless of what they believe. Proverbs 10:11 "The mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life, but the mouth of the wicked conceals violence". Can I encourage us in this, as a holy people, that before we post anything on social media, before we send an email, before we respond to another brother or sister, we choose to speak-life giving words. I've learned these 12 rules to live by ( written by Senior Pastor Juan Sanchez, from Pointe Baptist Church, Austin, Texas) that I would like to pass on to you.

1st Rule: Speak nothing sinful - This includes lying, cursing, scolding, backbiting, gossiping, slandering - anything that dishonors God or neighbor. - 13:3, "The one who guards his mouth protects his life; the one who opens his lips invites his own ruin."

2nd Rule: Speak no idle words - Will what I speak profit or is it vain and empty? - 25:11, "A word spoken at the right time is like gold apples in silver settings."

3rd Rule: Speak not much - 10:19, "When there are many words, sin is unavoidable, but the one who controls his lips is prudent." - 17:27-28, "The one who has knowledge restrains his words, and one who keeps a cool head is a person of understanding. Even a fool is considered wise when he keeps silent-discerning, when he seals his lips."

4th Rule: Speak soberly both as to matter and to manner Don't be loud and obnoxious. - 27:14, "If one blesses his neighbor with a loud voice early in the morning, it will be counted as a curse to him."

5th Rule: Speak not rashly or hastily - 29:20, "Do you see someone who speaks too soon? There is more hope for a fool than for him."

6th Rule: Speak weightily, seriously - 26:18-19, "Like a madman who throws flaming darts and deadly arrows, so is the person who deceives his neighbor and says, "I was only joking!"

7th Rule: Speak in Faith - Do you know and believe what you're saying? -12:22, "Lying lips are detestable to the Lord, but faithful people are his delight."

8th Rule: Speak Prayerfully - Have you prayed about what you'll say? - 15:29, "The Lord is far from the wicked, but he hears the prayer of the righteous."

9th Rule: Speak timely and purposefully - 15:23, "A person takes joy in giving an answer; and a timely word-how good that is!"

10th Rule: Speak in Fear - Keep a bridle in your mouth. - 8:13, "To fear the Lord is to hate evil. I hate arrogant pride, evil conduct, and perverse speech."

11th Rule: Do not let your neighbors' faults be the subject of your talk, even if true - 16:24, "Pleasant words are a honeycomb: sweet to the taste and health to the body."

12th Rule: Speak not of yourself or your worth - 16:18, "Pride comes before destruction, and an arrogant spirit before a fall."

Have a blessed month,  
Pastor Jaime Ramirez

11 Yes, you will be enriched in every way so that you can always be generous. And when we take your gifts to those who need them, they will thank God.

12 So two good things will result from this ministry of giving-the needs of the believers in Jerusalem will be met, and they will joyfully express their thanks to God.

13 As a result of your ministry, they will give glory to God. For your generosity to them and to all believers will prove that you are obedient to the Good News of Christ.

14 And they will pray for you with deep affection because of the overflowing grace God has given to you.

15 Thank God for this gift too wonderful for words!

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## FEBRUARY UPDATE FROM MISSIONARIES IN SOUTHEASTERN EUROPE

*(This article has been modified to protect the safety of the families in this dangerous region. We can take for granted that we live in a place where we can worship our God openly, not all countries are so open to this. So please continue to pray for these countries and the families who sacrifice their comfort and safety to spread the word of our Awesome God)*

Family Update:

The snow has melted away for now which makes it easier to drive and walk. We recently decided to meet once a month with three other American families from other cities for worship. That has been very encouraging to us since we are typically so isolated. Melissa and the boys are doing good in home school. Ella is still attending the local school for kindergarten. Our three youngest have started back with language lessons twice each week. They are making good progress.

Our youngest child made Valentine cards for all of her classmates this week. She also made some for the neighbors and they were so surprised and delighted to receive them. She also was a big helper making the sugar cookies for our Bible study this week. Our son is learning new songs on the guitar each week as he leads the worship for our services. Our 18 year old intern, watched the kids while my wife and I went on a date. So grateful for her and how she is serving our family.

LAUNCH 2019!

A couple of weeks ago our family met with 3 believers and decided that God is leading us to take steps toward launching a church in a new city. SPIRANCA (ANCHOR) is the name of the church-plant project. There are a lot of things that need to happen and we would like for many of you to recommit to praying for us through 2019 as we walk in faith and follow the Lord's leading. We are excited and nervous at the same time. Also, we would love for some of you to take our requests to a small group, Sunday school or church body. We will send you regular prayer requests a couple times a month and keep you up to date on the steps we are taking, challenges we are facing and the way that God is working. We believe that this will NOT happen without an army of prayer warriors fighting with us for the glory of Christ in this area.

Pray now for: 1. our young believers that they would continue to grow in maturity 2. God is leading us to reach out in a specific neighborhood and we need to find a location in that area 3. we are witnessing to several families. pray for soft hearts and open eyes

A missionary said to me recently "I'm not trying to discourage you but several people have tried to plant a church in the area you are looking in the last decade and it didn't work." He is a friend of mine and he was just stating the reality. This IS the reality of the city we live in. No one comes here and makes disciples and plants churches because of the obvious opportunity for success. This was a moment for me to check my motives and heart. Why are we doing this? Should we keep moving forward or should we wait until the odds are more in our favor? The answer for me is simple: God is leading us to move forward. Whether we win or lose this battle we will go and work in the name of the Lord our God. We will dig in and pour our lives into Jesus followers hoping they mature and can be a healthy church. We will model faithfulness and trust and obedience. We will keep our eyes on Jesus and not on the ups or downs of the ministry. We cannot plant a church but God can and I believe He has asked us to work with Him for this goal.

\*Pray for wisdom and understanding as we write our beliefs, values and purpose.

\*Pray for God to show us a specific location to rent. We are looking at several

\*Pray for open doors to share the gospel

\*Pray for the believers here to fall deeply in love with Jesus



**SUNDAY, MARCH 10, 2019**

MARCH 11TH - 15TH



March is here and the CF Spring Fest is right around the corner. Save the Date for Saturday, March 23rd!! 1:00 PM to 4:00 PM The CF Spring Festival will be fun for the whole family. Bring your yourself and your family. There will be Food, Games and Bouncy Houses. Bring a dish to share, your chairs and/or EZ up tents. Can't wait to see you there!!

Did you know that CF has a Twitter and Instagram account? Get connected!



Twitter at: @cf\_church



Instagram at: @Cypress\_Fellowship

### Upcoming Events

Wingman's Breakfast  
Saturday, March 2nd  
Beginning at 8:00 AM  
@ Luby's

R.E.A.L Women's Meeting  
Thursday, March 7th  
7:00 PM @ CF  
in the portable building

Wingman Meeting  
Thursday, March 21st  
7:00 PM at CF  
Contact: Orrell Chatmon  
cfmen@cypressfellowship.org

Prayer Service  
Every Saturday evening  
6:00 PM to 7:30 PM  
in the auditorium

Titus Women's Group  
Saturday, March 2nd  
10:00 AM  
in the Brymer Room

Sojourners' Group  
Every Tuesday night  
7 pm  
in the portable building

Xplode Student Service  
Every Wednesday night  
5:30 pm - 8:30 PM

CF Kidz SPARK  
Every Wednesday night  
7:00 pm - 8:30 pm

## Contact Information

David B. Kennedy, Senior Pastor  
dkennedy@cypressfellowship.org  
281-246-7700

Jaime Ramirez, Associate Pastor  
xplode@cypressfellowship.org

Chris Murphy, Associate Pastor &  
Worship/Praise Director  
cmurphy@cypressfellowship.org  
281-246-7700

Tami Kennedy, Administrative Dir.  
tkennedy@cypressfellowship.org  
281-246-7700

Lisette Kramer, Administrator  
admin@cypressfellowship.org  
281-246-7700

Rick Soliz, Finance Secretary  
cfinance@cypressfellowship.org

Tommy Westbrook, Head Deacon  
cfdeacons@cypressfellowship.org

Orrell Chatmon, Men's Ministry  
cfmen@cypressfellowship.org

Rene Ray, Grounds & Maint.  
cfgodsquad@cypressfellowship.org

Michael Arnett, A/V Technical Director  
marnett@cypressfellowship.org

Lisa Soliz, Children's Ministry  
cfkidz@cypressfellowship.org

Janet Dry, Women's Ministry  
women@cypressfellowship.org

Jennifer Ramirez, Student Ministry  
xplode@cypressfellowship.org

Shane & Heather Kresta, Small Group Dir.  
cfsmallgroups@cypressfellowship.org

Nancy Cook, Counseling  
cfcounseling@cypressfellowship.org

Kathy Oestreich, Care Ministry  
cfcares@cypressfellowship.org

Lorinda Krause, Serving Hands Ministry  
lorindakrause7@gmail.com

Cypress Fellowship, 16620 Cypress Rose Hill Rd., Cypress, TX 77429

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