

My Own Dear Family,

It is good to see you assembled here again today and to see the love you have for one another. When I see how many of you love the Lord, I feel like Paul when he said, "I have sown the seed, someone else watered and God gave the increase." You, as parents, have watered this seed of loving and serving the Lord in the lives of your children.

When I came to this area where you are now, I indeed felt God had led me to a land that flowed with milk and honey. I was not promised an easy life, but I personalized the promises that God gave to the Children of Israel in Deuteronomy 30 and 31, that if I was obedient to the things God commanded, He would be with me in this new land, that I would be prosperous in all the work of my hands and in the fruit of my body, the young of my livestock and the crops of my land. I walked in the ways of the Lord as I knew them. And He did exceedingly and abundantly more than I could ask or think.

I also took personally the commandment that I was to teach my family the WAYS OF GOD, when I was sitting in my house, walking by the way, lying on my bed and rising up. I also accepted His promise that if I did these things, my family would be blessed to the third and fourth generation. And I see today that God has been faithful to fulfill that promise, not just to the third and fourth generation, but to the seventh and eighth generation.

You indeed serve a faithful God who can do no wrong.

This land looked different when I came here. We worked hard to clear the land and to build our homes. But, oh, the joy of the new country made all our hard work worth it many times over. To have the freedom to choose our way of life, to raise our families according to our principals and the opportunity to speak up for what we thought was right, has been a blessing from God. When I see you, my family, here today, it makes all the hardships, deprivations and persecutions and ridicule that we endured both in the old country and here in America, all worthwhile.

Remember, God's love over us is like an umbrella to shield us when we need it. Nothing ever comes to us except it passes through our Heavenly Father's hand first.

Peace, love and grace be unto you, from God our Father.

Your Joseph