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## ***Serving Experiences: A Story from the Delaware Group (2011)***

*The mission team from Wilmington, DE had a moving experience at Hampden. Sara Snowden shared a bit about her experience with us:*

You have kept count of my tossings; put my tears in your bottle. Are they not in your record?  
Psalm 56:8

The Delaware mission team had a challenge: replacing the floor for Terry in his home. Terry is a very large man. He has many health problems and lives with pain. He lives alone, and has been uncomfortable even going out for many years. But thanks to Cab and others who have been an advocate for him, he answers the phone for an electrical repair company--their line goes to his home so he doesn't have to get out! When the water from the flood of March 2009 reached just below the floor of his house, it was enough to cause warping and damage months later. The mission team is helping to shore up the floor so he can continue to stay in his home without fear of falling through the floor.

Sara told me that Psalm 56:8 was part of their meditation for the day as they reflected on their work. The verse is about how God remembers our pain and our sorrow. Sara asked each team member to write down their own tossings that God has bottled for them. They rolled them up, and placed them in a water bottle. When they returned to Terry's to begin to repair the floor they had demolished, Sara placed the bottle of "tears" in the foundation, and they covered it. It was for them a symbol of placing their own tossings in the foundation on which God would build a new life for someone through their hands.

They plan to share this with Terry on the last day. There beneath the new floor is a foundation of hope from God's word. And it is not just words. The bottle is a symbol of God's word lived out, made flesh. It is a beautiful gesture to remind each of us of that our tossings are our own Gethsemane where we have struggled to the point of tears, even to the point of a cross. And God, who knows each tear, is the God who brings new life even from death.

It is interesting that Psalm 56 is a psalm about overcoming fear. Verse 4 says: In God whose word I praise, in God I trust; I am not afraid; what can flesh do to me? The final verse: For you have delivered my soul from death, and my feet from falling, so that I may walk before God in the light of life.

God has used the Delaware folks to show Terry what God's grace looks like. God has used the Delaware team to show Terry what hope realized looks like. And indeed as the psalm goes on to say, Terry's feet will not fall--they will not fall through the floor! We pray for strength, for hope, and for peace for this man who struggles with fear and pain. May he be comforted knowing that his home is safe and dry, and indeed may he walk before God in the light of life with gratitude and joy!