

Having successfully led a team of 16 people last year to Bethlehem and Jerusalem, to hand out 7500 roses, I expected a similarly sized team for the December 2017 project. Many people initially expressed interest in the December project. But as weeks wore on only a few came forward to actually apply or commit. About a month before the application deadline in October, I was praying with my dear friend, Mary Makarios and she felt clearly from the Lord the team would be small—about 4-5 people at most. It was not what I wanted to hear but it was exactly what God did. There were 4 of us and Danny who participated in the December project.

The other unusual pre-tour revelation occurred the week before departure. I was idly cruising my yahoo mail account, noticing some of the news headlines. I came across a little article stating President Trump would make a special announcement on Monday December 4th possibly revealing the US Embassy in Israel would be moved from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem—thereby acknowledging Jerusalem as the true capital of Israel.

I don't usually keep tabs on the news. Michael is the one who lets me know things I might need to know. But this time I found this piece—or maybe it found me.

Mike scanned all the media on Monday, December 4th, and couldn't find word one about the President's decision. We boarded the plane as planned on Tuesday December 5th and all hell broke loose while we were on our way to Tel Aviv. We landed in Tel Aviv amid the immediate aftermath of President Trump's decision to move the embassy to Jerusalem. It quickly became apparent to us all that God had brought about this timing for His purpose. And we were clearly there “for such a time as this.”

On Thursday, Michael sent out a special missive to everyone receiving the prayer letter...

Dear Friends of ATOR,

I am sending this short update out this morning (11:00 AM Pacific time on Thursday) to address and hopefully allay concerns you may have regarding our ATOR Team Members currently on a mission from God in the Heart of the Holy Land, Bethlehem...EVERYONE IS OK. You are currently reading in your news sources that today has

been labeled "A Day of Rage" in Israel by the forces upset with President Trump's announcement the United States will henceforth recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel.

As I mentioned yesterday we, at ATOR, do everything we can to steer clear of politics when abroad on a mission. But sometimes the political finds us whether we want it to or not. I will not comment on the situation over there except to say it is extremely inconvenient toward our plans and itinerary to have this happening in Israel right now. But we also believe God knew exactly what He was doing when He called this team "for such a time as this" to minister to the very people who are raging in the streets and media this very day.

That said, here is what I know. Sent directly from Sally a few hours ago:

"Please keep all of the A Tour of Roses team in prayer as we are currently in Bethlehem very near one of the main checkpoints and the situation is very tense and angry right now. The checkpoint is closed and Bethlehem is on a 3-day strike right now with shops closed, etc.

We were blessed to be able to give our roses in Manger Square and worship the Lord only a few hours after demonstrations took place there also. God sent us here at this time to be an expression of His love in this moment.

"Pray we are continually filled with the Lord's Spirit and His love--trusting entirely in Him--and that He would lead us wherever He wants us to go. Please pray also for the many Palestinians who are being deprived of their livelihood and provision because of the current situation. It is only because of your prayers that we have strength and grace and wisdom. Thank you for supporting us in prayer and encouragement!!! Shalom and Salaam... "

Sally did mention privately to me that there was tear gas in the streets. This is confirmed by an account I read in the L.A. Times:

“Clashes flared between the protesters and Israeli troops, who deployed water cannons and fired what appeared to be rubber bullets and tear gas to disperse the demonstrators.”

ATOR UPDATE – DAY 3 - BETHLEHEM

About mid-morning we heard the Palestinian Authority called for a 3-day strike in Bethlehem and many people were really upset. No stores open during Christmas season, no taxis, no groceries—etc. There were demonstrations in various areas, one of them Manger Square where they burned the American flag and images of President Trump.

We decided to take the roses first to a convalescent home Georgette, one of the Palestinian women who helped with the roses, knew fairly well—and then maybe onto Manger Square. By then it would be a few hours later. We drove through many back streets to the home. When we arrived we were welcomed and people received the roses with thanks.

We then decided to go onto Manger Square. All the shops were closed and we weren't sure where to park. But we had extreme favor because of Akran, who knew the man handling the Nativity Church Parking. He let us in. The man in charge of the parking felt it was very dangerous for me to sing especially. He thought the roses might be ok. But my singing would be dangerous. I was greatly sobered by what he said and willing to put the keyboard back. But other people had other ideas.



Finally, it dawned on me we totally needed to prayer-walk the place first. There were some kids selling hot cups of corn kernels. We bought a few of those to warm up, and just walked around praying. As we did, Danny ran into a very good friend of his, Naif, a Muslim taxi-driver. He totally helped us. He got us police covering and security. At the point the police were willing to keep an eye on us we all agreed to give it a try. Took the keyboard and roses back out (about 300) and made our way to The Bethlehem Peace Center (built by Sweden in 2000). For almost an hour we worshiped and gave out roses. Some of the stories are below.



On the way back to the hotel it got a little dicey. About a block away from the hotel another crowd of demonstrators was near the checkpoint. We hustled out of the van to the front door of the hotel but it was locked. We banged, rang, knocked... and it eventually opened up as the tear gas started again. It smelled awful. But I learned a fascinating fact. Lemon Honey cough drops from CVS seem to dilute the effect. Danny was in agony in his sinuses and the cough drops absolutely quelled all effects and he had no further problems with his sinuses.

MARLYS:

While we were praying through the marketplace I felt a peace there. I was with Bibi afterward, giving out roses. People were very happy to receive the roses. They had BIG smiles on their faces and thanked me, saying, "God bless you!" and "Merry Christmas!" Most of them spoke English. 300 buckets were gone in about 40 minutes.



BIBI:

In Manger Square I was very encouraged that everybody I offered a rose to took it and they were very pleased and grateful. Most of them started to read the cards straight away. And I saw a few groups of young men. And I looked at their faces and noticed they seemed serious or angry. So in the first moment I wasn't sure if I should go to them or not, but when I went and gave them roses—they took them and started to smile. When I saw the next two or three similar people I was quickly going to them and giving roses to them and they also smiled. It was a very nice feeling to see their faces changing. I also saw two security men and they also looked pretty serious, but when I gave them roses they didn't smile. Instead they started to read. And while they were reading I took a photo of them. But when they saw I took the picture they were still serious and not smiling, and they looked at me very seriously—maybe surprised I took the picture. I asked them, "Can I have a picture of you together?" And then they smiled and said, "Yes."



SHARON:

I found the Palestinians in Manger Square were, for the most part, receptive. But some of the American tourists were not. But I did have opportunity to share with some people from Alaska. By the end of the conversation they seemed pleased with the reason we were giving out roses. Cassandra (one of the Palestinian youth from the church who wanted to participate) and I went up the road from Manger Square---and there were cars rolling down their windows to see what we were doing. And they received the roses with big smiles.

**DANNY:**

Despite all the rumors of riots and demonstrations of hatred toward the American flag and President Trump, it was wonderful to experience a calmness and peace as we passed out roses and as Sally was singing. I was reminded how “a soft answer turns away wrath.” And we were able to speak about the love of Jesus and why we are here.

UPDATE – DAY 4

O Little Town of Bethlehem--so besieged in this moment by the anger, fear, violence, and brokenness of so many! Even now we had to retreat to our 2nd-floor rooms on our return from handing out the roses this morning, due to tear-gas all over the street in front of the hotel (we entered from the back). Today there were many angry messages broadcast from the mosques over the loudspeakers in different parts of Bethlehem and elsewhere on this Muslim holy day. But even as those messages went out all over the city, so did roses in pockets of Beit Sahour and Bethlehem, sowing God's love and peace in the hearts of those who were able to receive it. And many not only received but with joy and thankfulness... for such a time as this!!

MARLYS:

Today I decided to stay back and work on tying rose cards and doing other stuff with the roses because we needed them. About 12:30 Danny called me to see how things were. I said I was OK and went back to working on the roses. Kept hearing more noises and then some gunshot-like sounds...

Then, all at once, the smell was tremendous and I couldn't stay in the room. I just went to my room on the second and it didn't smell at all up there. I stayed there until the rest of the team returned. But the whole time the team was out I was praying they would be safe and wouldn't come across anything dangerous and would be able to pass out the roses and find what they needed for the conference. And when they came back they had gotten everything they needed for the conference.

DANNY:

It was very warm today. The weather is absolutely wonderful! The Lord blessed our maneuvering with all the riots and traffic jams. But because of the traffic jams, we were able to pass out roses in such a quick and easy fashion with the people in the vehicles that stopped for roses. I was deeply touched by a young Muslim boy by the name of Mohammed who not only took a rose but invited us into his shop and bought Sally and I a chocolate sweet and a bottle of Coke. We had a great conversation and spoke life into him of the person of

Jesus. I pray I will be able to build a relationship with him on my future missions trip.

SALLY:

Even before the crowds let out from the mosques at noon, we were able to "seed" our street with roses and kindness and the love of God to those shopkeepers and pedestrians who ventured out today, despite the 3-day strike. Prayed with the pharmacist across the street. I could see she was afraid. She thanked me. I walked into a store with about 6 harder looking men and gave 5 of them roses and they were all surprisingly very receptive, except the 6th who quietly stared at me.

Later on in the evening with Danny we met Mohammed who was so very hospitable. He asked why we were doing it here and not in Jerusalem and then I said "I am Jewish and I felt God put it on my heart to bring the roses only to the Palestinians right now." In one of the many cafes we gave out roses the owner sat us down and fed us soup. He wouldn't let us leave without some soup... very sweet!!

BIBI:

Today was an amazing day. We went out twice with roses. People were so open and happy to receive a rose. Many of them asked why we are giving roses when we answered this question they were so grateful and very moved. I saw that two women didn't take a rose from a person from our team. When I was passing by I heard, that they were taking in Russian, so I stopped and greet them in Russian. They were very surprised and asked me why we are giving roses. When I told them, they were very glad to receive a rose. They said a few times; "Thank you and may God bless you too". When we gave out all our roses I saw an old man coming to us. I told him, sorry, that we don't have any more roses but I have one card. I asked him if he would like to have this card; he said with great joy: "Yes" and started to read it. I was so blessed today and felt very strongly God's love and His presence flowing to many people. Glory to God!

SHARON:

God lead us to pockets of receptive people. One woman was so overcome by the gift of a rose she kissed me on both cheeks. On a busy roundabout we were passing out roses and several people wanted their picture taken with us. They were very grateful for this expression of love

UPDATE – DAY 5

SALLY:

This morning about 60-70 women braved their way through blockades and rioting, etc. to participate in our little Something Beautiful for Someone Beautiful Conference. With demonstrations and tear gas happening only blocks away on different sides of the church outside, Marlysi, Sharon, and I shared our testimonies with both old and young Palestinian women who spent most of the day with us. Beginning with prayer and some who were willing to have their feet washed we shared about Loving God, Loving Ourselves, and Loving Others.



Many women cried through Marlys' testimony of coming out of a very abusive marriage. Others were deeply impacted on the issue of forgiveness through what I shared and what Sharon shared. Several wanted prayer. The conference ended with each woman taking one rose to give to the person God put on their hearts.

The translator was amazing! Tuline had such a sweet spirit and not only gave her talents but her heart. She took a rose for her husband and told us how privileged she was to meet us and to be here in this time.

We ended the evening by bringing roses to another corner in Beit Sahour. People were enjoying the evening and celebrating. We had some wonderful moments as people stopped traffic to get roses. I prayed for one young man, George, who was very touched by the whole idea of roses.

I will just say it was an amazing time considering all that went on. Marlys and I anointed and prayed for each woman who came, with the exception of the 4-5 women who bravely chose to have their feet washed by Bibi and Sharon.

Thankfully we started praying for the women even before the "registration" time. For me, it was one of the most intimate moments. I looked into their faces and put my hand on their shoulders and prayed as I felt the Lord leading. Afterward, many of their faces were lighter and they thanked me. It was really powerful.

I was pretty exhausted from the conference, but we decided to go and give out roses after dinner. But after we ate I felt even heavier and just wanted to shut down entirely. I prayed with Sharon, asking the Lord what to do and felt He said, "Go in the strength you have." And as soon as I understood I got attacked. Felt so dizzy I thought I would pass out. That made me mad and I prayed it off and knew for sure I should go. And we did. And it was totally awesome—so much

fun!! So many people received not only the roses but the whole idea of speaking the love of God to them. It was wonderful!!

MARLYS:

At the table I was praying for, most of them wanted to be anointed with oil and prayed for. I would ask each one their name and they wanted to know mine. And I almost felt like they wanted to pray for me. It was such a touching, blessed time with these women. I felt like they had anointed me.

After that we went into the sanctuary to do our program of testimony. I was first to speak. The response was amazing!! They asked questions afterward and couldn't believe I had stayed in such an abusive situation for so many years, especially living in America. The last woman who was allowed to ask a question actually told me, "You are like Jesus. You were persecuted and provoked—and killed." And it was like I kind of fell apart. I just started sobbing—to have someone tell me that—because I thought to myself—no, I am not like Jesus, it's just me—Marlys.



The translator came over afterward to hug me. And I sobbed in her arms. And then I sat down and Sally got up to talk and sing and give testimony and the Holy Spirit was engulfing the whole sanctuary so strongly. They had a cross up in front in the church and it was beautiful. And I wanted to go up there and kneel down in front of it on this tile floor—I just felt like I needed to do that. But I didn't because I didn't think it was right.

Most of the women stayed for the whole conference, which was a great outcome. I knew there was stuff going on outside but I didn't feel like there was anything going on, because God was in control and He was taking care of everything and we were safe.

BIBI:

I was praying for one of the first ladies who came over to have her feet washed and I was very moved when I asked her name to wash her feet and pray for her, because I felt she was full of Jesus—very humble, very special.

After testimonies and the teaching about forgiveness, I prayed for one lady whose son was killed by Muslims because he was a Christian and refused to become Muslim. First I asked her what she wanted prayer for... if she could forgive this person. Because it seemed like it was difficult for her so I shared a little bit with her about the difference between forgiving and forgetting, and also that forgiveness is a decision not an emotion.

She agreed and said, "I forgave him, but I still have anger." So I told her we can ask the Lord to help her. I told her I will pray for you, but I also encouraged her to pray to the Lord and give her anger to Him. And I also told her that I understand your anger and sorrow are still inside because what happened to her son was so difficult for her. And the emotions in themselves aren't bad, but what we do with them can be good or bad. So I prayed for her and afterward she also prayed and gave the Lord her anger. I then prayed that the Lord would fill her with His peace and He would heal her heart. I also told her the verse that says, The Lord is near to the brokenhearted. She was really grateful for prayer and seemed much lighter and was smiling.

In the evening I was a little bit afraid before we went. But when we prayed before going out I felt better and I was ready to go.

So many cars stopped to take a rose. They were very friendly and blessing us and thanking us—taking pictures. Even some drivers who couldn't stop were waving and smiling at us. And we met a few Christians from the US. And they were also very grateful for what we were doing here. Also, there was a group from Nigeria. One man said he would take the rose back to Nigeria. The whole evening was very special! And I felt like we were changing the atmosphere in Bethlehem by just simply giving a rose to people and blessing them and smiling—saying to them God loves you!

SHARON:

When we started the prayers and foot washing at the conference the ladies that came up for the foot washing—I could feel they wanted everything God had for them. They were overcome with such joy and expressed it by continual kissing of my cheek. So during the actual conference, when I got up to do my testimony, I was able to begin by sharing with the women that I felt more love from them than I had ever felt from my mother. They ministered to me!



When we went out in the evening, Danny and I were handing out roses to people stopping in their cars, which totally amazed me, because in America people wouldn't stop for a rose. One man selling coffee at the side of the road was so grateful for the expression of love, he offered me a cup and I thoroughly enjoyed it! And even though we had felt a little uneasy prior to going out in the evening, I really sensed the peace of God.

UPDATE – Day 6

DANNY:

Sunday morning we stopped to give roses at San Antonio and it was an unexpected blessing and a joy to bring a smile to the faces of so many individuals who do not have much family or receive many visitors.

In my heart I felt a tug in my spirit to do some singing and one of the workers confirmed it when she asked, do any of us love to sing? I politely passed it onto Sally. That was really cool! Sally was willing to bust out the keyboard and sing the songs the Lord gave her, and even threw a few extra Christmas carols in. It was a wonderful time to love on the people.



Then, in Manger Square—part two—I was able to reunite with a Palestinian police officer who I met in July of 2016. And he gave us VIP parking. It was good to see him again and continue building a relationship that will be Christ-centered. At the end, while Sally was singing her last song, I engaged in a deep conversation with a Muslim young man named Ahmad. He really opened up and shared his frustration and troubled heart. I was able to speak encouragement and truth about the person of Jesus and soak it in with love. He was very receptive and asked for my local number (Israeli). The Lord gave me another person to build a bridge with for next year when I return

BIBI:

In San Antonio I saw a lady sitting in the park so I went to her and gave her a rose. And then when we were inside she asked for another rose. And then she took my hand and led me to her room. I saw a lady lying in bed. I greeted her and gave her a rose and she was so happy. She started to kiss the rose and hold it in an embrace like it was something precious.



I came to the main hall during the worship and Sally suggested we pray for people during the music. So I blessed shortly two ladies to the left and right of me, but I kept thinking about this lady. So I went back to her room and asked Danny if he could come with me to translate. So we talked a little bit with her. Her name was Miriam. And she said that Jesus is her love.... So Danny and I prayed for her—for salvation, healing of her eyes and comfort. In the end when we were leaving, I gave her a hug to say goodbye. And when I embraced her she started to weep and held onto me. I held her a long time. And she became more peaceful afterward. It was very special!

In Manger Square I took some roses to a few young women. They were very happy to receive them. And in this moment a young man with his friends came and he was angry and upset. He told the women not to receive the roses because there is Hebrew writing on the cards also. He said Israel is his enemy. And we should write on the cards only in Arabic. So I tried to explain to him that God loves Palestinians and Israelis. But he wasn't open to receive another point of view. So then he started talking about President Trump and he asked me where I was with President Trump. And he asked me if I agreed with the decision of President Trump. I didn't want to share my opinion and so diplomatically finished the conversation, because he was already angry.

I was also touched by this young woman who received a rose from Sharon and then asked if she could have a picture with Sharon. So I took a picture of them and Sharon took a picture of me and her. And then she came closer to Sally and she took a picture of her playing the keyboard. And when Sally finished Sally told her she was beautiful and she was moved and received it. And then she said to Sally that she was also beautiful. I also saw a group of Palestinian security so I came up with roses and asked if they would like to have a rose. "Oh yes," they said. And then they were very pleased. And I told them, "Thank you for your work. May God bless you! And half an hour later one of the security came to me with a lady and he introduced me to her saying, "This is my wife." So I also gave her a rose and we had a nice short conversation.



One young woman, maybe in her 30s, received gladly a rose and started to ask me why we are doing this. And then she asked, “is this a mission or a ministry?” So I told her, “This is a mission and also a ministry.” And I told her she could learn more on the website. She is from Canadian TV and said this is very interesting. She asked if we were also going to Jerusalem. I said, “We were there last year.” And I asked her if she was a Christian and she said, “No, actually I am a Jew.” So then I told her Sally is also Jewish and if she would like she could talk to her.

MARLYS:

When we went to the San Antonio Convalescent home all of the people there were so eager to get a rose and they were so full of joy when they received them... The young lady sitting next to me was just looking at Sally and just loved it so much. There was joy all over her face and she was singing along with the words she knew. When Sally told us to pray for people I just touched her arm and shoulder

and just started praying for her. I could feel the joy in her. Then they wanted Christmas songs and Sally reluctantly complied (my commentary). They didn't want us to leave. Almost walked us out—wanting us to stay.

Then there was some more gentlemen who were very angry about President Trump and what he has done. They asked, "Where are you from?" And as soon as I said I was from America they would give me back the rose and say, "I don't want it." Now sometimes that was all they did, and then there were others who wanted to talk with me about it. And I said, "We are not here for anything political." They wanted to know if I agreed with Trump. I said, "We are just here to show God's love for you."

And sometimes they would keep the rose once I explained everything but other times the person would give it back. But I would still bless them. And a couple times when they walked away without a rose they would tell me, "God bless you too!" One man said, "Why do you have Hebrew on this card?" And I was thinking to myself I don't what to say in my thoughts. But the Holy Spirit knew what to say. So I said, "Because we want everyone to read the card so that everyone can love each other."

And once I explained it to him in that way he said, "Oh, yeah, we should all love one another." And he was really happy and walked away with a rose in his hand.

SHARON:

At San Antonio the women were very excited to see us. There was one particular woman sitting at a table by herself. When I handed her the rose her eyes lit up and she squealed with delight. And then watching the ladies while Sally played her keyboard and sang, they were just entranced—glued to listening, very engaged

I saw more people stop and actually listen to Sally play in Manger Square than the first time. And I did also have a negative response by 3 men who gave me back the roses because of the Hebrew on the card. But they didn't throw away the roses, they gave them back so I

could give them to someone else. Then one man, toward the very end when all the roses were all given out, came up. He saw all the people with roses and was glad to receive a card after he found out what it was all about.

UPDATE – DAY 8 - JERICHO

Today we were intending to bring roses to Bethlehem Bible College and Bethlehem University because we were unable to do that during our time in Bethlehem last week. But as I prepared for our devotional time and during worship, I felt strongly impressed we should not go to Bethlehem, but stay in Jericho, even though the noise of the riots here as we drove in was thunderous--and this morning also.



Danny had to go into Bethlehem for some time-sensitive business and texted, saying they are rioting in Bethlehem and the main checkpoint is closed again--even to Danny--and he had to try the back roads into Bethlehem. Danny left at 8AM and didn't get back until after 1PM because of all the riots and demonstrations.



We carefully, prayerfully decided to have lunch in the town center first and then pray through the square. Everything went well. We even met up with the police and talked with them, and they were willing to let us give out roses. We had favor.

People loved the roses. We must have given out 300. They were very positive about Americans--not President Trump--but Americans.







But after the roses were gone and we got into the van to drive back to the hotel (we didn't tell anyone where we were going) a police car started following us.

Danny felt we should drive out of Jericho to the Dead Sea (only a few kilometers away). But we couldn't get out because they had already started demonstrating and rioting--burning tires, etc. So we made a U-turn but the police car continued to follow us. Danny suggested we stop at this big historical sycamore tree and take pictures and see their response.

We pulled over and they pulled over. The senior officer was extremely hostile. Angry beyond measure at Americans. Daniel said we weren't staying in Jericho. Daniel felt it was probably dangerous to tell these particular police anything.

So we took pictures by the sycamore for awhile and there was an old

street vendor who loved our shirts. I bought a couple things for a higher price than needed just to buy some time. So did Marlys. We talked with the street vendor also. He was very nice.



The enraged police officer finally came out of the car when he saw we weren't leaving right away and started talking to Denny, and me

UPDATE – Day 9 - JERUSALEM

The Father's House on the Mt. of Olives in Jerusalem is an incredibly peace-filled house of prayer in a very conflicted area. Bibi comes here often to pray--her church in Berlin sends her.



The Jericho resort gave us a very generous refund for the meals and days we couldn't stay. They were very gracious to us in every way and very understanding. We left a generous tip--as we did also in

Bethlehem. And we gave out more roses to staff and left some to give to staff coming in later.

There was no way we would have been able to fit all the roses, luggage ,and ourselves into one van. Danny resolved to make two trips, but God provided a different way. Bibi's friend, Johnny from Pastor Mazen's church, was kind enough to drive out from Jerusalem to Jericho and take most of the team in his car, along with some luggage and other items. That was all the room we needed to pack our van with the heavier luggage and 1500 roses.

We had absolutely no problems driving into Jerusalem. It was less than an hour getting there and everything went very smoothly. Because The Father's House is removed quite a bit from the main road we unloaded the roses and luggage via assembly line. It worked beautifully, because we are a team.

After that, we took the 3 prepared buckets that we left in the van to Mamilla Mall near Jaffa Gate. Bibi, Sharon, myself, and Danny gave out 300 plus roses at a bus stop near Damascus Gate, in the mall, Jaffa Gate, and a little bit in the Shuk area. Again, many people were so blessed to receive a rose.



There were only a few that weren't interested or even returned the rose after reading the card--mostly religious Jewish people. But even then, many read the card and kept the rose anyway.



UPDATE – Day 10

DANNY:

Met Ibrahim today. He lives in Jericho and works in Jerusalem. He recognized Sally and me from our time in Jericho. He said he liked what we were doing. Also, had a wonderful conversation with two Israeli young men today (Thursday), just inside Jaffa Gate where we were passing out roses.

Do(e) and Abraham asked what the purpose of this project was after they read the card. I shared about the love of Yeshua for all mankind, especially His people—Israel. They were a bit taken aback by the way I pronounced the Lord's name. I gave a brief history of who I was before Jesus and how through Him not only do I have everlasting life, but I look at people in a new way. I am thankful for His healing in my life.

They listened and shared they thought it was a beautiful way of showing God's love. I encouraged them things will get tough in Jerusalem but all they need is Yeshua. Before they left I invited them to make an honest investigation of the person of Jesus. One of them said he would.

The second best encounter was with a Jewish woman who was overwhelmed by the music, singing and act of love. She hugged me. And blessed Sally for her singing and her smile. She really engaged with Sally. She walked away with her friend carrying the rose.

BIBI:

Yesterday I gave two roses to one couple in the Mamilla mall. And they were so pleased and very grateful, and they said, "We are getting married tomorrow." So I blessed them in their new life together in marriage.

We also gave roses to Johnny and his brother. Today I was wondering if we should give them roses again. We were close to his shop in the Shuk and they saw us from a distance and shouted, "Girls, cake is waiting for you!" So we went to the shop and we saw a man who was their friend and he had not received a rose yet. So we gave him a rose, Johnny and his brother also. And this friend told us, "We are going to visit Muslim family and we will give them these roses."

And he mentioned that when he was there that their son has a tumor and he prayed for the son. A few days later when he came back to visit again the tumor was gone. No bleeding and no other sign of this tumor. And he said today, "I asked Johnny to come with me because I don't speak Arabic. So we will go there together to share about the Lord with them. And these roses are like a great blessing. We would like to give them to this family."

I met a lady today and she recognized me and told me, "Yesterday you gave me a rose. And I told you I felt like I should give it to someone. I gave this rose to a girl who needed it. And she was very blessed. This is really beautiful, what you are doing!"

One lady received a rose and she was smiling and very moved. She said, "This is wonderful what you are doing. And I will pray for you!"

MARLYS:

When we got to the Father's House it was amazing to feel the peace there was here. The view of the Old City from the Mt. of Olives was spectacular.

I felt I should stay back and just work on the rose cards, which was a pleasure to me because I got a chance to pray even more for the team and the people in the Old City, the land, and each rose card as I did it—that it would go out to somebody and they would receive it! And I would get up and go to the prayer room every once in awhile and just pray more. It was so full of peace and spiritually anointed in there. It overlooks the whole Old City of Jerusalem. It's been amazing and we have only been here almost two days.

SHARON:

Today I was walking through the Shuk with Bibi and we came across many hearts of gratitude for the roses. One shop gave us orange juice and they wanted to give more after we finished. And the other shop, with our friend, Johnny, they offered us fresh cake—still warm. How could we refuse? But we also came across some very hard hearts.

One man truly believed that no Americans would love him. So he didn't believe that we could love him. Another man said the shops below did not welcome Americans and he gave back the rose. But one of the shopkeepers nearby said he would rather have American dollars than roses.

SALLY:

Worshiped on the steps in the Shuk today. I was particularly moved by an Israeli man and his family who just listened to the worship. He didn't want a rose—just wanted to listen for about 5-7 minutes. That was very meaningful to me!

Also, the Jewish woman who hugged Danny blessed me so much in her expression toward me and speaking “Ha Kavod”—the glory of God. It was obvious that she really “got” what we were doing. There were many people who saw the beauty and the significance of what we have been doing these past few days and it touched them deeply. One woman wanted a CD—which I had brought just in case. I was happy to give it to her.

ATOR UPDATE – Friday – 12 – 15 - 2017

SHARON:

In East Jerusalem the people on the streets, shopkeepers and even bus drivers were very receptive to the roses, except one man. He said, “Not good! Not good! I am Muslim.” He was very angry.

The highlight of the day was our Shabbat dinner with fellow believers from Germany and New Zealand. We had a time of spontaneous worship in three different languages with various instruments. That was so awesome!! I really got a sense of what Heaven will be like.



MARLYS:

Sally prepared her matzo ball soup. We could smell it throughout the house. And then 4 Germans and 1 New Zealander came as guests for dinner. We prepared for the Shabbat dinner. Everyone brought something—salads and a lot of food. And we all sat down the traditional blessings for Hannukah and Shabbat and I enjoyed it. It was my first time. Then we had worship and there was singing. Sally sang and then Brock from New Zealand got his guitar and sang some songs and we all joined in. It was such an amazing, relaxing, enjoyable evening.



DANNY:

Shabbat Shalom! We are finishing our last day in Jerusalem. Sharon and I were on a team and we both engaged with the men and women, some walking to Al Aqsa Mosque for their Friday prayers, and we were able to speak truth to them. And they received the rose. Some of them walked to the mosque with a prayer mat in one hand and a rose in the other. I witnessed something very beautiful that I don't see in my own culture. The innocence of two young Palestinian boys holding hands reminded me of David and Jonathan. I love to see the innocence and purity in this culture. I wish I could see more of this in my culture and express my own love to my friends in this way.

BIBI:

When we went to East Jerusalem we gave out roses in the shops near Damascus Gate, and most of the people were very open and glad to receive a rose. We went to the Israeli police station and the one who was there was very joyful and grateful to receive a rose and also for our encouraging words.



I was surprised to see one man who was driving on the other side of the street from where we were drive against the flow of traffic to come up beside us and get a rose. I saw also two very nicely dressed boys and I saw them carrying roses we had given them and they were so happy. I noticed that they came into the barbershop—probably their father's shop—and were going to put roses in a jar by the window... And we went also to the bus station near Damascus Gate. I was hoping to see Bus #275 because it goes to the Mt of Olives and I know some of the drivers. But there was no bus with that number there. But when we were walking on the street again I saw this bus coming to the station and the driver saw me and opened the door. I told him, you are my friend and you have to receive this rose. And he was also smiling.



I also enjoyed the evening meal—the worship and fellowship. I was very touched by the testimony of this brother from New Zealand. It's amazing how the Lord is meeting people and helping them come out of the pit and into new life. It was a very blessed day.

SALLY:

The first place we stopped we gave out roses on either side of the street. People received them overall with great appreciation. There were some men standing together in one of the business areas. One man was obviously some kind of Orthodox Jewish man and the others were Palestinian. The Jewish man received a rose and gave it to his friend, the man who owned the business. And they told me how they are brothers and friends together and they each had an arm around the other—it was really beautiful!

When we drove to our second stop, it was much closer to Damascus Gate—but on the other side of the street. Many people received roses gladly.



But we made a choice toward the end to give roses to the Israeli police station. And some people saw us go in with our roses. There was only one officer on duty—a young man. He was very appreciative of receiving the rose. He said there was only one other officer at the station, but he was getting lunch, so we left an extra rose for him. But after we came out of the police station we went on to give out some more roses and I encountered three beautiful young Muslim women (teenagers probably) and handed them each a rose. They were clearly delighted. They asked where we were from and read the card. They wanted to take a selfie with me and their roses, but a man from across the street started yelling at them in Arabic. He sounded very angry. The one girl who spoke English fairly well asked if I was with the Israelis and I said, “I am from America.” She asked, “why is there Hebrew on the card also?” And I said, “We want everyone to read it and to learn how to love each other.” The man was still yelling at intervals as she and I were talking. I asked her to tell me what he was saying but she didn’t. So I said, “I don’t see labels. I see people and God loves people.” She said, “I don’t think so,” and handed her rose back to me and her two friends also gave me back their roses. Then they walked away. Danny thought it best we leave the area and walk back to the van. I gave the roses away as we walked.

Everyone loved the matzo ball soup. We had several guests for Shabbat dinner, 3 of them were German. As the evening progressed I shared how A Tour of Roses began. There were tears from two of the German ladies as I explained how God dealt with my heart and feelings about the Holocaust—and Germany in general. They were very touched. I knew it was a divine appointment.

ATOR UPDATE – Saturday – 12 – 16 – 2017

DANNY:

Finishing the last day of roses I spoke with two young Palestinian men that were very curious about what we were doing. They didn’t understand why we would come all this way from America to talk about Yesoua but I told them Jesus came all the way from Heaven to demonstrate His love for us all.

SHARON:

At Damascus Gate a Palestinian reporter named Rem wanted to talk and find out what we were doing and why. Of course she brought up tensions and whether we had anything to do with that. So—on tape—she asked why we were giving out the roses. I told her we were there to share God's love and that God has seen the suffering of the Palestinians and has not forgotten them. And that God loves you and the Palestinians. And she smiled and received the message.

**MARLYS:**

When we were at Damascus Gate Sally asked the Israeli police if it was OK for her to sing and handout roses. No one seemed to know any English, but one guy did. He told us where we could sit on the steps and it was OK. It was right in front of where they were.



Sally started singing right away, but Danny had to park and then bring the last bucket of roses to where we were. But there were a lot of people who just stood and listened. I saw one man go behind Sally and read her shirt. Nobody asked any questions at that point. Then the roses came and they were gone very quickly.

Everybody was pleased to get a rose and read the card. Several people just stopped and listened to Sally sing after they received the rose and read the card. When we finished giving out all the roses there were still people coming up wanting roses. And Sharon had some cards from the roses in her purse—so she was handing those out.



Toward the end, just before the police told us that we had to leave because there was going to be a demonstration shortly, there was one young lady that was asking questions. Sharon gave her a card and she was very interested in what we were doing and where we came from. So we both answered her—back and forth—we were there to show God’s love for her and all of the people there. She still kept asking questions. Then she started asking about political stuff—President Trump, etc. We just continued to say we weren’t there for that—anything political—we only came to express God’s love. And she was just grateful to hear everything we had to say. Then her husband walked up and was telling her in Arabic basically, “let’s go.” But she continued to stay and talk with us. And he tried to get her to go and we just kept saying we were there to show God loves you and nothing political. And she relayed that to her husband, but I don’t think her really got it. And he wanted her to go. She really didn’t want to go, but in the end she had to go with him. And that’s when several police came down and said we had to leave, and it was for our safety. So we gathered our stuff and got out of there quickly.



The Garden Tomb was amazing!! It was very emotional for me. Sally insisted I get a wheelchair, which they had (The Garden Tomb actually only has one wheelchair that is theirs to loan out and it was not in use). We had communion, which was beautiful and then we went to the tomb and I wanted to stay in there a long time, but there were a lot of people in there and it was a small area. I had to leave but we stayed outside of it for awhile and then we left. And then we went to the gift shop. After that Danny drove us to the Mt of Olives where we could take pictures—beautiful pictures and he explained all the different things we could see from where we stood. Then we went back to the Father's House and had the last of the Matzo Ball soup... a beautiful day!



BIBI:



I was amazed when Sally started to worship how quickly some people came. They were standing or sitting—listening. Some youth, Arabic women, even one more orthodox Muslim and some tourists were all listening. Where I was giving roses to the people who were walking up the stairs—some stopped to ask questions. I spoke a little bit longer with a man from India. He was very interested and very amazed. He said that we are doing something very important and beautiful, especially in this place where so many fights have been taking place. Even a few days ago there was a big fight when Israeli soldiers had to intervene.



I also spoke with 3 people from Holland. They asked what we are doing. And they were also very supportive and very encouraging. They said, "May God bless you!" When Sally was worshiping I noticed one Jewish man who was walking up the stairs but he stopped and started to listen. And he was standing for a longer time and I could see that he was really listening with attention. And Sally was singing a song about Jesus right then. Then he started to leave and I smiled at him and he smiled back. I was praying for him as he was listening.



I was also very moved by favor from the Israeli police, when they agreed we could do music and also give the roses. But when they saw a big crowd of people stopping to take a rose they said we had to stop giving the roses. Thankfully, the roses were finished in a few minutes. And then one policeman came to me after Sally was singing a few songs already and he said we needed to finish the music also. I could see that he liked the music—the worship—and he was very sorry to tell me this. "I am very sorry, but you can't stay here because people are gathering." I asked him if we could wait until Sally finished the song and he said yes. And when Sally finished and we started to leave about 10 policemen came to the spot we had been in and closed all of it off with metal fences. So it was another blessing from the Lord—this open window for only a half hour or so. A lot of things happened during that time.



We were walking to the restaurant and saw the beginnings of a demonstration on the street where we walking, we knew that the Lord was in control. He guided us and changed our plans for our safety. When we reached the Garden Tomb God's presence and peace was very apparent and I felt like we came from very different atmosphere filled with tension and we could then rest in God's presence and peace, celebrating God's supper and admiring the beauty of the Garden.

SALLY:

I sat down on one step and pulled out my keyboard and positioned it on my knees—my feet were resting on the step below. It was a bit precarious, but doable. I began singing and people were listening. It was like God just poured out upon us His favor. It was pretty amazing! One guy who had an Australian accent came up after the first song saying, "Hallelujah! This is exactly what this place needs! You are changing the atmosphere as you sing." And then we talked a

little. He was on his way to the Mt of Olives. And he prayed over us before he left. It was awesome!!

ATOR UPDATE – SUNDAY - 12/17/2017

SALLY:

We dropped off the extra towels and bowl and miscellaneous goodies that we didn't use in Jericho for the women's conference with Pastor Steve Khoury in Jerusalem and then headed for the flower shop. 7 of our 15 buckets were stolen and I was prepared to pay but Avi wouldn't let me. I gave him a couple of our CDs and told him about our last wild adventure with the roses at Damascus Gate. I added that he had a part in it because of the beautiful roses he procured for us.

I asked him if he wanted my ATOR hoodie. At first, he demurred, and said, "But it's your hoodie. You should keep it." And I said, "if you really want it, I want you to have it." He read the blessing on the back and just looked at me... So my hoodie is in Jerusalem with Avi. Maybe God will remind him every now and then of why we came, and stir his heart to know who Yeshua really is. When I gave Avi the hoodie, he looked at me for a moment and then said, "Thank you for coming!"

