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NOU REEDS 26 JAAR OUD!

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26 jaar: Ons Kyk Terug, Op, en Vorentoe!

Die eerste uitgawe van die "Goeie Nuus / Good News" Christelike Koerant het 26 jaar gelede die lig gesien. Na 17 jaar van voltydse gemeentelike bediening het die Here twee mense se bedieningsfokus verskuif na die gedrukte en later digitale media. Soos Josef vouds het Hy hulle geleidelik, soms pynlik, voorberei vir 'n grootse taak in Sy koninkryk. Iemand het raak opgemerk dat "Hoe groter die bedieningswerk, hoe feller die toetse ter voorbereiding daarvoor." Dit is soms bo ons menslike begrip om God se werkswyse te verstaan, maar ons weet op Wie ons vertrou het (2 Tim. 1:12), Wie ons geroep het, en ons weet dat Hy altyd getrou is en dat Sy goeie wil altyd sal seëvier!

Na 'n nederige begin met die verspreiding van 10 000 gedrukte koerante per maand in Potchefstroom, het die Here nuwe gehore en grondgebied bygevoeg, totdat ons uiteindelik 50 000 eksemplare maandeliks kon versprei. Sedertdien is daar meer as 8 miljoen kopieë hoofsaaklik in die Noordwes versprei. Met die aanbreek van die COVID-19-pandemie, met die gepaardgaande inperkings en negatiewe ekonomiese implikasies, het ons fokus egter verskuif na die digitale media, sodat ons die Koerant nou op Facebook, WhatsApp, en per e-pos versprei. Dit het baie deure oopgemaak, en ons harte is verbly omdat die reikwydte van hierdie Bediening nou ook vele oorsese lande insluit soos wat getroue lesers die Koerant vir hulle familie en vriende aanstuur. Die behoefte aan opbouende leesstof het net toegeneem en mense is meer honger as ooit om deur God se Woord vertroos en bemoedig te word in hierdie donker en deurmekaar tye. Ons ontvang vele getuenisste van lesers wat aangeraak is deur God se Woord - Sy Woord is immers lewend en

kragtig en lewensveranderend (Heb. 4:12)! Ons kyk dus met soveel dankbaarheid terug na vrugvolle en geseënde bedieningsjare. Niks was uit onsself nie. Daar was baie medewerkers. Maar die belangrikste is dat hierdie bedieningswerk deur God geïnisieer en bekragtig is.

In ons 26ste bestaansjaar is dit met groot hartseer maar ook met vreugde dat ons afskeid moet neem van die geliefde redakteuse van die "Goeie Nuus / Good News", Huegene Venter. Op 78-jarige leeftyd het sy die tydelike met die ewige verwissel. Sy was waarlik die "moeder" van die Koerant wat getrou en biddend elke maand die inhoud van die betrokke uitgawe uitgekies en versamel het. Sy het haar agtergrond in Tale en Joernalistiek as 'n instrument in die Here se Hand oorgegee. Meer nog, die Here het aan haar 'n "geoefende tong en oor" gegee (Jes. 50:4-5) om die vermoedes te verkvik en Sy waarheid op skrif te stel en te verkondig. So kan die Here elkeen van ons se talente - wat Hy in die eerste plek in ons belê het - gebruik tot Sy eer, as ons bereid is om dit in Sy diens te stel en dit tot Sy heerlikheid te gebruik.

Huegene het haar liefdestaak getrou en onder vele en felle aanslae en deur donker tye met gracie en deursetting voltooi. Haar nalatenskap is haar liefde vir mense, wat voortgevloeи het uit haar innige liefde vir haar Skepper en Meester. Hierdie Goddelike liefde leef voort in vele harte en kosbare herinneringe. Sy het waarlik "die goeie stryd gestry... die wedloop voleindig; ... die geloof behou" (2 Tim. 4:7). Deur God se genade en krag en deur haar standvastige geloof het sy die wêreld, die bose, die siekte en selfs die dood oorwin, omdat "Hy wat in julle is, groter is as hy wat in die wêreld is" (1 Joh. 4:4; 1 Joh. 5:4; 1 Kor. 15:57). "Maar in al hierdie dinge is ons meer as oorwinnaars deur Hom wat ons liefgehad het" (Rom. 8:37). Dit gee ons HOOP! Ons berus in die wete dat sy verlos is van pyn en lyding, en dat sy die laaste hoofstuk van haar lewe met soveel moedigheid en waardigheid voltooi het, en met 'n ryke geestelike nalatenskap.

Wat 'n aansporing is dit nie wanneer ons kosbare kinders van die Here se lewens oorweeg en inspirasie daaruit put (Heb. 11)! Dit gee ons moed dat die Here elkeen van ons ook in Sy koninkryk kan gebruik. Hy is die instaatstellende God wat bloot 'n gewillige hart en oop oor soek (Joh. 15:5; Fil. 2:13). Elkeen het 'n unieke roeping en ons hoef nie ons eie te vergelyk met die van 'n ander nie. Ons weet dat slegs die werke wat deur die Gees gedoen word, impak in die ewigheid sal hê (Joh. 6:63). "Want ons is Sy maaksel, geskape in Christus Jesus tot goeie werke wat God voorberei het, sodat ons daarin kan wandel" (Ef. 2:10).



Huegene Venter

Waar laat dit ons wat agterbly? Ons gaan voort in die krag van die Here! Ons kyk VORENTOE en wag op die Here om te hoor wat Sy wil is. Hoe getrou is ons Hemelse Vader nie! Ons het juis in hierdie afgelope maande begin om die Koerant te registreer as 'n nie-winsgewende organisasie (NWO), waar donateurs skenkings kan maak en dit vir belastingkorting kan aftrek. Ons kan nie sonder weldoeners en ondersteuners voortgaan met hierdie bedieningstaak nie. Ons wil voortgaan om die Koerant digitaal te versprei. Maar ons bedink ook projekte wat insluit die skryf, druk en verspreiding van traktaatjies en boeke en die vervaardiging van kort video's met musiek en boodskappe as inhoud. Die Here sal dit vir ons duidelik maak presies hoe en wat Hy wil hê ons moet doen, en ons wil ons visie met Syne belyn. Indien u deel wil wees van hierdie opwindende nuwe hoofstuk van hierdie Bediening, kan u vir ons bid (Rom. 15:30), mense aanmoedig om die Koerant te ontvang per WhatsApp (stuur vir ons 'n boodskap na 074 254 2319 en plaas hierdie nommer as kontak op u selfoon) of e-pos (mail@goodnewsmessage.co.za) of op Facebook (Goeie Nuus Koerant Good News Newspaper). Indien die Here dit op u hart lê, kan u 'n finansiële bydrae maak aan die NWO. Ons bankbesonderhede is: Goeie Nuus / Good News, Nedbank, Potchefstroom, Tjekrekeningnommer 1713 412 463, Takkode 171338.

Baie dankie dat u saam met ons AGTERTOE, OP, en VORENTOE kyk en 'n deelgenoot is in die groot werk wat die Here aan ons gegee het. Ons eer die diens-knegte van God (Fil. 2:29) en ons gawes vir die werk van die Koninkryk is 'n lieflike geur vir God (Fil. 4:18)! Die Here gee aan ons die geleentheid om ook 'n eie geestelike nalatenskap te bou wat vir baie mense tot seën sal wees. So gebruik Hy nederige instrumente in Sy Koninkryk. Mag Sy Naam geprys word!

Jy kán Oorwin!

Eike kind van God beleef van tyd tot tyd 'n storm. Daar is drie posisies waarin gelowiges hulle mag bevind:

- Óf jy beleef 'n storm
- Óf jy kom uit 'n storm
- Óf jy is op pad na 'n storm toe.

Die Woord sê: "En almal wat ook godvrugtig wil lewe in Christus Jesus, sal vervolg word" (2 Tim. 3:12).

In Hand. 14:22 lees ons van Paulus en sy medewerkers. Hulle het, nadat hy gestening was en God hom opgewek het, in die stad ingegaan "en die siele van die dissipels versterk en hulle vermaan om in die geloof te bly deur te sê: Ons moet deur baie verdrukkinge (Grieks = thlipsis, d.i., verdrukking, vervolging, droefheid, smart, ramp, plaag, ellende, nood, gevaar, lyding, verduur van innerlike pyn) in die koninkryk van God ingaan".

Kyk maar na al die vervolginge en verdrukkinge wat die apostels deurgegaan het deur hulle Sendbrieve te lees; veral Paulus wat een derde van die Nuwe Testament geskryf het. Kyk maar na die vervolginge en verdrukkinge wat die Kerk deurgegaan het, selfs in die eerste 300 jaar vanaf Pinksterdag in Hand. 2. Daar is baie boeke wat geskryf is oor verdrukkinge regdeur die eeuve heen tot vandag toe.

Selfs Jesus het gesê: "Dit het Ek vir julle gesê, dat julle in My vrede kan hê. In die wêreld sal julle verdrukking (Grieks = thlipsis) hê; maar hou goeie moed, Ek het die wêreldoorwin" (Joh. 16:33).

- Wanneer jy in die storm is, beteken dit nie dat jy 'n verloorder is nie.
- Jy is net in 'n worstelstryd. Maar jy is nog steeds in oorwinning!
- Getuienis word uit krisisse gebore.

ONS OORWINNING LÊ IN DIE WOORD EN IN ONS VERHOUDING MET GOD

In Joh. 17 bid Jesus Sy Hoëpriesterlike gebed vir die gelowiges. Hy sê:

"Ek het U Naam geopenbaar aan die mense wat U My uit die wêreld gegee het. Hulle het aan U behoort, en U het hulle aan My gegee, en hulle het U woord bewaar" (Joh 17:6). Dit is belangrik om kennis te neem van die feit dat dit hier oor God se uitverkorenes of gelowiges gaan - die "hulle" vir wie Jesus hier bid, en nie vir die wêreld (ongelowiges) nie.

Daarby het hulle getrou en

gehoorsaam gebly aan die Woord soos aan hulle geopenbaar is. Die aanvaarding van die Woord en onderhouding van die Woord gaan dus hand aan hand vir die gelowiges.

Om die geopenbaarde Woord te aanvaar en te doen, is 'n kenmerk daarvan om 'n gelowige te wees. Buite hierdie raamwerk kan niemand 'n dissipel van Jesus Christus wees nie. Daarom sluit Hy in hierdie gebed die ongelowiges (die wêreld) uit.

Let verder op na die belewenis van die dissipels in die storm op die see. Jesus het op die berg geklim om in eensaamheid te gaan bid, terwyl die dissipels met die bootjie na die oorkant van die see vaar. "En toe dit aand geword het, was Hy daar alleen" (Matt. 14:23).

Die skuit was al in die middel van die see, geteister deur die golwe. Dus, 'n geweldige storm wat op hulle losgebreek het. Golwe van doodsangs en vrees vir die dood op hulle wat die see ken, want hulle was vissermanne. Geen hoop op uitkoms. En Jesus kom na hulle toe, vanaf die kalm waters, buite die storm, "al wandelende op die see." En Hy stap in hulle storm in om hulle tegemoet te kom en uitkoms te bied. In Matt. 14:28 lees ons: "En Petrus antwoord Hom en sê: Here, as dit U is, beveel my om op die water na U te kom." Want Jesus het gesê: "Hou goeie moed, dit is Ek! Moenie vrees nie."

Ons is hier nie met speletjies of magsvertoon besig nie, maar ons kry 'n kykie in die storm en ons sien die doodsangs waarin die dissipels verkeer. Hulle soek 'n uitkoms, en nie 'n spook wat op die water loop om hulle nog verder te teister nie.

Nou antwoord Jesus in die hewige storm "En Hy sê: Kom! Petrus klim toe van die skuit af en loop op die water om na Jesus te gaan" (v. 29). En wat meer is, Hy loop toe op die golwe van die storm! (Die storm is eers later stilgemaak).

Oor nog 'n ander storm, waarvan die dissipels ook deel was, lees ons in Mark. 4:38-40 - "Maar Hy was agter op die skuit aan die slaap op die kussing. En hulle het Hom wakker gemaak en vir Hom gesê: Meester, gee U nie om dat ons vergaan nie? En Hy het opgestaan en die wind bestraf en vir die see gesê: Swyg, wees still! En die wind het gaan lê, en daar het 'n groot stilte gekom. Toe sê Hy vir hulle: Waarom is julle so bang? Hoe het julle dan geen

geloofnie?"

Voel jy ook so in jou storm? Kyk na jou eie storm: Jy voel van God en mens verlaat. Dit VOEL so. Niemand verstaan jou nie. Jy is alleen. En jy voel só alleen! Niemand gee vir jou om nie! Niemand verstaan jou nie! Kan jy enigiemand vertrou met jou smart en doodsangs? Dalk wil jy liewer bid: "Here, neem my weg!" Soos ook Elia onder die besembos gebid het: "Dit is genoeg, neem nou my siel weg, HERE, want ek is nie beter as my vaders nie." Doodsangs. 'n Krisis te groot om te hanteer. Is daar uitkoms wanneer jy na God keer? Ja! Die engel van die Here gee vir hom brood wat op warm klippe gebak is, en 'n kruik water in die woestyn. Voorwaar 'n wonderwerk, soos ook vir die dissipels BAIE jare verder in die toekoms in. Daar IS hoop!

Wat het ons nodig om in ons storm te oorwin? Ons moet by God uitkom, en soos Petrus die uitgestrekte Hand van Jesus vasgryp! Ons lees in Jes. 52:12 "...die HERE trek voor julle uit, en die God van Israel is julle agterhoede." Hy sê vir ons: "Ek loop voor en maak die pad voor jou gelyk." Hy sê verder ook deur die Woord in Deut. 33:27, "Die ewige God is 'n woning, en onder ewige arms; en Hy het die vyand voor jou uit verdrywe..." In Ps. 139:5 staan geskrywe: "U sluit my in van agter en van voor, en U lê U hand op my." En verder ook in Ps. 118:6 - "Die HERE is vir my; ek sal nie vrees nie: wat kan 'n mens my doen?"

So word ons deur God omgewe: Van voor, van agter, van bo en van onder. Dan word ons beskerm, en die vyand kan ons nie sien nie, en ook nie wegsteel en beroof nie. Bid die Woord!

Midde-in die storm is die Woord ons Lewensredder se tou waaraan jy moet vasgryp! Leer om jou sorge op die Here te werp! Dit is die oorwinning vir elke gelowige.

Ons lees in Ps. 55:23, "Werp jou sorg op die HERE, en Hy sal jou onderhou; Hy sal nooit die regverdige laat wankel nie." En verder in Spr. 16:3, "Laat jou werke aan die HERE oor, dan sal jou planne uitgevoer word." In die Amplified Bible lees die teks so: "Roll your works upon the Lord [commit and trust them wholly to Him; He will cause your thoughts to become agreeable to His will, and] so shall your plans be established and succeed."

So lees ook Ps. 37:5, "Laat jou weg aan die HERE oor en vertrou op Hom, en Hy sal dit uitvoer..."

En Jesus sê: "Kom na My toe, almal wat vermoeid en belas is, en Ek sal julle rus gee. Neem My juk op julle en leer van My, want Ek is sagmoedig en nederig van hart, en julle sal rus vind vir julle siele; want My juk is sag en My las is lig" (Matt. 11:28-30).

Daar is twee handelinge hier teenwoordig: Ons deel is om ons werke aan die HERE oor te laat, om ons weg aan die HERE oor te gee en op Hom te vertrou, en dan na Jesus toe te kom op Sy uitnodiging. Dán tree God toe tot die stryd en gee aan ons uitkoms. Ons moet soos Petrus die reddende Hand van Jesus vasgryp of... tot niet gaan. Ondergaan. Vergaan.

Die Woord verklaar: "Nader tot God, en Hy sal tot julle nader" (Jak. 4:8). Ons kom na God toe, dan kom Hy na ons toe. Rus in Hom. En verder? Hy sê: "Die HERE sal vir julle stry, en julle moet stil wees" (Exod. 14:14).

HOE BID ONS DIE GEBED VAN DIE OORWINNAAR?

Begin met 'n dag of langer van afsondering en toewyding, gebed, ook selfs gebed en vas, wat jy weer en weer kan opvolg. Doen 'n totale oorgawe van jouself aan God ("total surrender"). Bely jou gebreke en oortredinge vir reiniging soos wat die Heilige Gees jou daarvan oortuig. Bid oor al jou verhoudinge met mense, ja, bid ook vir jou vyande, want Jesus het gesê: "Seën en moenie vervloek nie."

Bid vir hulle wat jou leed aangedoen het, en vergewe hulle van harte! En dan vra jy Hom om jou innerlik te genees van die pyn wat so onmenslik diep in jou hart kom lê! Dit mag tyd neem in gebedsessies met God. Want eers moet jy jouself oorwin wat wraak wil uitoefen, en dan sal die deurbraak kom in liefde. Dan sal jy ook in staat wees om in krissistye, in noodsituasies wat skielik opduik, net uit te roep: "Here, help!" En dan help Hy. Want Hy is in elk geval ALTYD beskikbaar vir hulle wat Sy Naam aanroep.

Ook in nood, maar met ons self-ondersoek en toewyding maak ons ons geloof net sterker en sterker deur ons lewensloop met God. Want wie kan iets van God verdien? Dit is alles net genade!

Vertrou God vir 'n teksgedeelte en bid en bely dit gedurig! Bid so ook Ps. 91. Glo dit en pas dit toe in jou lewe. Werp jou sorge, vrae, pyn, en onbehopenheid op Hom en vertrou Hom om jou te verlos van jou storm. Jy sal redding vind! ©Dr JJ Venter

TIISETSO YA PHOLOSO

Ka ke le Moefangedi gantsi ke botsa potso ka tiisetso ya pholoso. A o a itse gore o pholositswe? Fa o ka swa mantsiboa a, o tla bula matlho kae? Go ne go gakgamsa gore batho ba le bantsi ba na le dipelaelo mme ga ba itse ka nnete. Jaaka re le mo metlheng ya bofelo re tlhoka go rera molaetsa ono wa Johane 5:24 ka tlhaloganyo e e phepa. Ke gopola ka fa bukanyana ya ga Reinhard Bonnke e fetotse botshelo jwa me ka teng.

Johane 5:24 mo phetolelong ya New International Version (NIV) ya Baebele e re: "Ammaaruri, ammaaruri, ke a lo bolelala, mongwe le mongwe yo o utlwang lefoko la me mme a dumela yo o nthomileng o na le botshelo jo bo sa khutleng mme ga a kitla a atlholwa mme o fetile go tswa mo losong go ya mo botselong."

Temana eno ke karolo ya puo ya ga Jeso, moo A buang ka taolo e e newang Ene ke Rara, go akaretsa taolo ya go naya botshelo le go atlholela. Mo karolong eno, Jeso o gatelela botlhokwa jwa tumelo mo go Ene le mo go Modimo Rara go fithelela botshelo jo bo sa khutleng le go tila katlholo, go supa fetoga go tswa mo boemong jwa loso lwa semoya go ya mo botshelong jwa semoya.

Go kgaoganya Johane 5:24 ka dikarolo tse di farologaneng le go tlhalosa bokao jwa yona mo tiisetsong ya pholoso.

"Ammaaruri, ammaaruri ke lo bolelala,"

Bokao: Tlhaloso eno e totobatsa botlhokwa le boammaaruri jwa se se latelang. Fa Jeso a simolola ka "Ammaaruri" (kgotsa "Ammaaruri, ammaaruri" mo diphetolelong dingwe), e supa gore O a bo a tla abela sengwe se se botlhokwa thata.

"mongwe le mongwe yo o utlwang lefoko la me"

Bokao: Go utlwa lefoko la ga Jeso ga go kaye go reetsa fela ka ditsebe mme go amogela le go tlhaloganya melaetsa le dithuto tsa Gagwe. Ke ka ga boikaelelo jwa go amogela Efangele, go supa kgato ya ntlha ya pholosogo amogela molaetsa wa ga Keresete.

"mme a dumela yo o nthomileng"

Bokao: Karolo eno e gatelela tumelo mo Modimong Rara, yo o romileng Jeso. Go dumela mo go Rara yo o romileng Jeso go bothokwa, go bontsha kopano magareng ga Rara le Morwa mo tirong ya pholoso. E gatelela gore pholoso e akaretsa go lemoga taolo ya semoya ya ga Jeso le kamano ya gagwe le Rara.

"o na le botshelo jo bo sa khutleng"

Bokao: Polelo eno ke tiisetso ya paka ya jaanong. Ga e re "o tla nna le" mme "o na le," go bontsha gore botshelo jo bo sa khutleng bo simolola ka nako ya tumelo, e seng fela morago ga loso lwa nama. Mpho e ya jaanong jaana ya botshelo jo bo sa khutleng bo naya bao ba dumelang tiisetso e e tebileng ya gore pholoso ya bone e sireletsegile.

"mme ga a kitla a atlholwa"

Bokao: Karolo eno e fana ka kgomotso le tiisetso ya gore ba ba dumelang mo go Jeso ga ba tlhole ba le mo kotsing ya katlholo. Mo motheong wa Thuto ya Bokeresete, seno se raya katlholo ya bofelo. Ba ba dumelang ba tiisetswa gore tumelo ya bone mo go Jeso e ba golola mo katlholong e e tswang mo boleong, ka gore maleo a bone a itshwaretswe ka ntlha ya thekololo ya ga Keresete Mopholosi.

"mme o fetile go tswa mo losong go ya mo botshelong."

Bokao: Setshwantsho sa go feta go tswa mo losong go ya mo botshelong se bontsha phetogo e e diragalang ka nako ya tumelo. Ga se tsholofelo ya isagwe fela mme ke nnete ya jaanong jaana. Phetogo eno e supa botshelo jo bo sa khutleng morago ga loso le phetogo ya boleng mo botshelong jwa modumedi wa jaa-nong - go tshela botshelo jo bo semoya jo bo tshelang le go nna le kamano le Modimo.

Kakaretso: Tiisetso ya Pholoso: Johane 5:24 e fana ka tiisetso e e maatla ya pholoso mo Bakereseteng. E ruta gore pholoso le botshelo jo bo sa khutleng di sireletsegile go ba ba utlwang, ba amogela, mme ba dumela mo go Jeso le molaetsa wa Gagwe, mmogo le



Johan Zerwick
Sêle ke 083 458 3837

go dumela mo Modimong Rara yo o mo romileng. Temana eno e gatelela boiketlo le boitshoko jwa phetogo ya modumedi go tswa mo boemong jwa loso lwa semoya go ya mo botshelong jwa semoya, e bontsha gore pholoso eno ga se tsholofelo ya isagwe fela mme ke nnete ya jaanong jaana.

E tiisetsa ba ba dumelang ka pholoso ya bone le go tila katlholo, e nonotsha kgopolu ya gore tumelo mo go Jeso ke motheo wa kamano le Modimo e e fetang loso, e solo-fetsa kamano ya jaanong le ya bosakhutleng le Ene.

"A Mowa o Boitshepo o re thuse go tlhaloganya nnete eno e tebileng le go re fa kutlwiso e e feletseng ya temana eno ya Johane 5:24. AMEN."

Reetsa kopelo ya Living Hope:
<https://youtu.be/3fuJe84UXE8?si=cn-YSQFFWdfqYBY>

ASSURANCE OF SALVATION

As an Evangelist I often ask the question about the assurance of salvation. Are you sure you are saved? Where will you open your eyes if you die tonight?

It is surprising how many people have doubts and are not really sure. As we are in the end times we need to preach this message of John 5:24 very clearly. I remember how the small booklet of Reinhard Bonnke changed my life.

John 5:24 in the New International Version (NIV) of the Bible states: "Very truly I tell you, whoever hears My word and believes Him Who sent Me has eternal life and will not be judged but has crossed over from death to life."

This verse is part of a discourse by Jesus, where He speaks about the authority given to Him by the Father, including the authority to give life and to judge.

In this passage, Jesus emphasises the importance of faith in Him and in God the Father for the attainment of eternal life and the avoidance of judgment, signifying a transition from a state of spiritual death to one of spiritual life.

Let us break John 5:24 up into different parts and explain its significance for assurance of salvation.

"Very truly I tell you,"

Significance: This introduction underscores the importance and truthfulness of what follows. When Jesus begins with "Very truly" (or "Truly, truly" in some translations), it signals that He is about to share something deeply significant.

"whoever hears My word"

Significance: Hearing Jesus's word implies not just physical listening but understanding and accepting His teachings and message. It's about a receptive attitude toward the Gospel, indicating the first step towards salvation - receiving the message of Christ.

"and believes Him Who sent Me"

Significance: This part emphasises faith in God the Father, Who sent Jesus. Believing in the Father Who sent Jesus is crucial, highlighting the unity between the Father and the Son in the work of salvation. It underscores that salvation involves recognising both Jesus's divine authority and His relationship with the Father.

"has eternal life"

Significance: This statement is a present-tense assurance. It doesn't say "will have" but "has," indicating that eternal life begins at the moment of belief, not just after physical death. This present possession of eternal life provides a profound assurance to believers that their salvation is secure.

"and will not be judged"

Significance: This part offers comfort and assurance that those who believe in Jesus are not subject to condemnation. In the context of Christian theology, this refers to the final judgment. Believers are assured that their faith in Jesus exempts them from the condemnation that comes from sin, because their sins have been forgiven through Christ's atonement as Saviour.

"but has crossed over from death to life."

Significance: The imagery of crossing over from death to life illustrates the transformation that takes place at the moment of belief. It's not merely a future hope but a current reality. This transition signifies not just eternal life after death but a qualitative change in the

believer's present existence - living a life that is spiritually alive and in relationship with God.

Summary: Significance for Assurance of Salvation. John 5:24 offers a powerful assurance of salvation to Christians. It teaches that salvation and eternal life are secure for those who hear, accept, and believe in Jesus and His message, as well as in God the Father Who sent Him. This verse underlines the immediacy and permanence of the believer's transition from a state of spiritual death to spiritual life, emphasising that this salvation is not just a future hope but a present reality. It assures believers of their salvation and the avoidance of judgment, reinforcing the idea that faith in Jesus is the basis for a relationship with God that transcends death, promising a present and eternal union with Him.

May the Holy Spirit help us to understand this profound truth and grant us a total understanding of this verse of John 5:24. AMEN.

Listen to the song Living Hope also:
<https://youtu.be/3fuJe84UXE8?si=cn-YSQFFWdfqYBY>

The Story Behind 'Be Thou My Vision'

Music has a way of dividing us. Turn on music in a car full of people and you will get a car full of mixed reactions. But there are certain songs that everyone enjoys. Most would have a hard time turning down the sound of bagpipes playing "Amazing Grace" or of a chorus singing "Ode to Joy".

In the same way, the hymn, "Be Thou My Vision" fits into this category. It's one of the most loved songs of all times. The medieval melody brings images of rolling hills and Scottish highlands, causing people to cry when they hear it, and millions more to request it for their own funerals. But very few people know the story behind the song.

In fact, the history of "Be Thou My Vision" is as ancient and mysterious as the haunting hymn itself. A quick look in a hymnal offers little help. Ambiguous entries like "Irish Melody" and "Anonymous" appear where the name of the composer and lyricist typically belong. So what is the true story behind this legendary hymn? Where did it come from? And if it's so old, how did it survive to the 21st century?

The story behind "Be Thou My Vision" begins with St. Patrick. When he was just 16 years old, pirates kidnapped Patrick and sold him into slavery in Ireland. This caused him to enter adulthood knowing the Gaelic language and Irish customs. He also became a Christian during this time. Years later, he managed to escape and return home to his

family in England. While most would've stayed home forever, Patrick chose to go back to Ireland and become a missionary!

What does all this have to do with "Be Thou My Vision"? On Easter Sunday in 433, the local Irish king issued a decree in observation of a pagan Druid festival that prohibited anyone from lighting a flame or candle. Patrick, refusing to honour anyone but Christ, stood against the king.

That morning, Patrick risked his life by climbing to the tallest hill in the area and lighting a huge fire. As the ancient Irish people woke up, they could all see Patrick's defiance of the king. He could not hide his light. Patrick wanted to show the world that God's light shines in darkness, and that only He deserves praise.

Years later, an unknown composer wrote a melody in honour of Patrick's heroism. Called "Slane," the now-forgotten composer named it after the hill where Patrick shined his light: Slane Hill. People still recognise the tune today.

While the story behind the melody is legendary, the history behind the lyrics is much more obscure. Tradition tells us that an Irish poet from the 6th century named St. Dallán Forgaill wrote a Gaelic poem entitled "Rop tú mo Baile", in honour of St. Patrick. Borrowing from another medieval poem, St. Patrick's Breastplate, Forgaill's lyrics referred to God as his "battle shield" and "high tower," phrases that still

exist in the modern version today.

Sadly, the oldest existing copy of Forgaill's poem comes from the 14th century, which included no indication of its author. Because no other historical evidence connects Forgaill to the poem, it's impossible to verify the actual origin of the lyrics to "Be Thou My Vision". As a result, most hymnals attribute the song to "Anonymous." As the years passed, "Slane", and "Rop tú mo Baile" fell into obscurity. Their authors, once known, faded away into the fogs of time.

But in 1905, nearly 1500 years after Saint Patrick lit a flame on Slane Hill, the forgotten hymn re-emerged from the mists of time. Mary Byrne, a 25-year-old university student, discovered the 14th-century copy of "Rop tú mo Baile" and translated it into English for the very first time.

It that moment, the now-hallowed lyrics, "Be Thou my vision... oh Lord of my heart" sprang from the forgotten pages of time and into the modern world! Later in 1912, an Irish woman named Eleanor Hull set the words to music. The melody she set it to was none other than "Slane," the medieval tune written in honour of St. Patrick. The hymn became famous overnight and appeared in its first hymnal in 1919. In 2019, the world celebrated the 100th anniversary of the modern version of "Be Thou My Vision".

The story behind "Be Thou My Vision" is the story of the Gospel. In God's timing, He took what

the world ignored and made it into something beautiful. As far as man was concerned, music like "Rop tú mo Baile" and "Slane" were dead - nothing more but irrelevant fragments from antiquity. But God took what was dead and made it alive again. He took what was ancient and made it new.

So is "Be Thou My Vision" an old song? Yes and no. Just like God took dusty pages of lyrics and infused it with new life, He took us and our sinful flesh and infused us with His Spirit. "Be Thou My Vision" is the song of new life. It's the song of the new life of St. Patrick who shined his light for Christ. It's the song of the new life in Ireland, where dead paganism gave way to centuries of vibrant faith. It's the song of new life in the singer's heart, where God shines His forgiveness into a sinful soul. And it is the song of new life for the hymn itself, which millions now enjoy again after centuries of obscurity.

No one's story is done whose pages rest in the hands of the Father. No song is too old that it cannot be sung again in the choir of God's grace. "Be Thou My Vision" is a reminder that man's ways are not God's ways. The mist descends in the hills and rises to the sky. The mossy mountains crumble and groan. But the grace of God shines bright, as it did on Slane Hill in the days of Saint Patrick.

- Pastor Stephen Angliss,
Bayview Bible Church.
<https://bonnercountydailybee.com/news/2021/oct/01/story-be-thou-my-vision/>

A NEW HEART

When someone needs a physical heart transplant, it's desperately serious. Their heart is failing and, left on their own, that person will physically die. But there is hope - the possibility of a new heart. But, in order to get a new heart, a good and capable surgeon is essential. More importantly, in order for that person to live, somebody else must die. The failing heart is then replaced with a thriving heart, and abundant life is once again

possible.

In the same way, when someone needs a spiritual heart transplant, it's desperately serious. The heart is failing and, left on their own, that person will spiritually die. *"And I will give you a new heart, and I will put a new spirit in you. I will take out your stony, stubborn heart and give you a tender, responsive heart"* (Ezekiel 36:26 NLT).

God is our good surgeon, and

Jesus gave His life for yours. He takes your insufficient efforts and replaces them with something better. But to receive His abundant life, you must humbly ask for His help. You must allow Him to do surgery on your heart. You must surrender what is dying and trust Him with your life.

Maybe the thing that needs to die is a habit that's impacting your life. Maybe it's an unhealthy relationship, or guilt and regret

over your past. Maybe it's an attitude of pride or insecurity. Whatever it is - Jesus wants to take the broken and failing parts of your heart and replace them with something completely new and life-giving!

Ask yourself today: Do I trust Him - really trust Him - with the details of my life? Am I willing to let Him do "surgery" on my heart and show me a better way to live?

- YouVersion

Wat Sê die Bybel oor Wedergeboorte?

Jesus gebruik die beeld dat 'n mens van voor af gebore moet word, dat jou hele lewe nuut en anders moet word, voor jy God kan behaag. "Hoe kan dit gebeur?" wil Nikodemus weet (Joh. 3:4). Dit is God se genade-werk, wat Hy deur Sy Gees doen en wat mense nooit sal verstaan nie.

Gelowiges word weergebore vanuit die lewende en ewige Woord van God, die Heilige Gees wat nuwe lewe gee. Weergebore om die ewige lewe te verkry.

"Daar was 'n man met die naam Nikodemus. Hy het aan die party van die Fariseërs behoort en was

'n lid van die Joodse Raad. Een dag het hy na Jesus toe gekom en vir Hom gesê: 'Rabbi, ons weet dat u 'n leermeeester is wat van God af gekom het, want niemand kan hierdie wondertekens doen wat U doen, as God nie by Hom is nie.' Daarop sê Jesus vir hom: 'Dit verseker Ek jou: As iemand nie opnuut gebore word nie, kan hy die koninkryk van God nie sien nie.' Nikodemus vra Hom toe: 'Hoe kan 'n mens gebore word as hy al 'n ou man is? Hy kan tog nie 'n tweede keer in sy moeder se skoot kom en gebore word nie?'

Jesus het geantwoord: 'Dit verseker Ek jou: As iemand nie uit water en Gees gebore word nie,

kan hy nie in die koninkryk van God kom nie. Wat uit die mens gebore is, is mens; en wat uit die Gees gebore is, is gees. Moenie verbaas wees dat Ek vir jou gesê het: Julle moet opnuut gebore word nie. Die wind waai waar hy wil. Jy hoor sy geluid, maar jy weet nie waar hy vandaan kom en waar hy heen gaan nie. So gebeur dit met elkeen wat uit die Gees gebore is.'" (Johannes 3:1-8).

"Maar toe het die goedheid van God ons Verlosser en Sy liefde vir die mens verskyn. Hy het ons verlos, nie op grond van iets wat ons vir ons vryslaak gedoen het nie, maar op grond van Sy Eie ontferming. Dit het Hy gedaan

deur die wedergeboorte wat die sonde awas, en deur die Heilige Gees wat nuwe lewe gee" (Titus 3:4-5).

"Noudat julle julle in gehoor-saamheid aan die waarheid gereinig het om mekaar as broers ongeveins lief te hê, moet julle mekaar dan ook van harte en vurig liefhe. Julle is immers weergebore, nie uit verganklike saad nie, maar uit onverganklike saad: die lewende en ewige woord van God" (1 Petrus 1:22-23).

- Wat Sê die Bybel Oor... Die Allesomvattende Bybelse Gids. Marius Nel, 2007, CUM Boeke.

Set Apart for His Glory



In a world brimming with noise, demands, and competing voices, God calls His people to a different rhythm: "You are to be holy to Me because I, the Lord, am holy, and I have set you apart from the nations to be My own" (Leviticus 20:26 NIV).

In the Old Testament, the word "consecrated" means that a person, object, or place has been set apart for a sacred and holy purpose. They are dedicated to God. The process of consecration involves purification, sanctification, and often anointing with oil, which is a symbol of this dedication. But God's call to holiness, to live a life set apart, is not about seclusion or superiority. It's an invitation to a life connected to God's character and will. It's about being marked by God's purity for the purpose of showing others God's glory and power.

So, what does walking in holiness look like daily? It's more than just following rules or rituals. It's a heart posture - a willingness to live in a way that reflects God's

nature. It means we allow God's Spirit to align our thoughts, actions, and desires with His Word.

Consider this today: How can you cultivate a heart posture that reflects God's holiness in your relationships and interactions? God, in His holiness, doesn't just beckon us to be separate. He calls us to be set apart unto Him - the One who created us, redeemed us, and calls us by name.

- YouVersion

Glorious Father, I worship You! I bring You all the praise of my heart, and I stir up thanksgiving. You are incomparable in Your bounteous mercy, and Your love knows no end. I'm so thankful to know You and be known by You. You have called me Your Own, and what could be better than that?

I adore You, Father! You are ever so patient and kind to me. You are the King of Glory, and yet You make time for me whenever I turn my attention toward You. What joy I have found in belonging to You! What wonders I have tasted in Your presence! As I offer my life as a living sacrifice to You, over and over again, I know that I will always be met by Your mercy-kindness. I don't have to search the world for a hidden temple where You dwell.

You have made Your home in me. I don't have to move a centimetre or waste another moment seeking You outside of the realms of my daily life, right here and now. You are everywhere, and You are here. Thank you, Lord! Amen.

- Prayers from the Throne Room, Brian Simmons

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The Splendour of a Life Well Lived

CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS

'The Life and Death of Eric Liddell and the Rebirth of Chinese Christianity' was held at the Playfair Library, Old College, University of Edinburgh on 3 February 2024.

It marked the celebration of the centenary of Liddell's famous gold-medal victory in the 400 m at the 1924 Olympics - the triumph depicted in the Oscar-winning 1981 film.

In addition, the inspiring story of this legendary athlete immortalised in the film *Chariots of Fire* was explored at a special event to mark the centenary of the Olympic Games in Paris, France.

The inspiring story of this Scottish athlete who refused to run on Sundays was brought to life at the Scots Kirk congregation in Paris. Eric refused to run in the heats of his favourite race, the 100 m, because they were held on a Sunday - a day he believed is set aside by God as special and not for work - and chose to preach in the Scots Kirk instead.

To mark the centenary of his gold-medal victory, this congregation hosted two performances of *Eric Liddell - the Chariot of Fire* on 23 March 2024. Produced by the Searchlight Theatre Company, the synopsis of the four-person play states: "Set in Paris, during the Olympic Games of 1924, we see the struggles Eric Liddell faces in staying true to his prin-

ples."

WHO WAS ERIC LIDDELL?

Eric Henry Liddell was born on 16 January 1902 in Tientsin (Tianjin) North China, second son of the Rev. and Mrs. James Dunlop Liddell who were missionaries with the London Mission Society. He was educated from 1908 to 1920 at Eltham College, Blackheath, a school in England for the sons of missionaries. Eric, with his older brother Rob, were left at their English boarding school while their parents and sister, Jenny, returned to China.

At Eltham, Eric demonstrated his ability as an outstanding athlete, earning the Blackheath Cup as the best athlete of his year, and playing for the First XI and the First XV by the age of 15, later becoming captain of both the cricket and rugby union teams. During the boys' time at Eltham College, their parents, sister, and new brother Ernest came home on leave two or three times and were able to be together as a family, mainly living in Edinburgh. Although born in China and educated in England, Eric Liddell lived in Scotland at various times during his life.

In 1920, Eric joined his brother Rob at Edinburgh University to read for a BSc in Pure Science. During this period, athletics and rugby played a large part in Eric's University life. He played rugby for Edinburgh University and in

1922 played in seven Scottish Internationals as a wing-three-quarter, scoring four tries thanks to his amazing speed as a sprinter. Eric ran in the 100 yards and the 220 yards for Edinburgh University and later for Scotland. While at the University of Edinburgh, Eric became famous for being the fastest runner in Scotland. Newspapers carried stories of his athletic feats and many believed he was a potential Olympic winner.

As a result of not having enough time for his studies and both running and rugby, he chose the running, aiming for the 100 metres in the 1924 Paris Olympics. Known as the "Flying Scotsman", he is best remembered for refusing to compete on Sundays when the heats for the 100 metres at the 1924 Paris Olympics were held because of his belief that Sundays are set aside by God as special and not for work. Thus, at the 1924 Olympics, Liddell, a devout Christian, dropped out of the 100-metre run - his strongest event. Instead, he trained for the 200 and 400-metre sprints. At the Games, he finished third in the 200-metre run, gaining a bronze medal, and gave a stellar performance to win the 400 metres. Starting in the outside lane, Liddell sprinted out of the blocks and set such a speed that two other runners fell trying to keep up. He won the race in a record time of 47.6 seconds, which was an Olympic and World

Record. In 1924, Eric also travelled briefly to the USA to compete in an athletics tournament. Eric next graduated from Edinburgh University and went on to study Theology for a year.

CHINA

In 1925, Eric returned to China to follow in his parents' chosen work to serve as a missionary teacher from 1925 to 1943, first in Tianjin and later in the town of Xiaozhang. He taught science at the Anglo-Chinese college and later decided to become an evangelist in rural China, travelling by foot and bicycle. During his time in China as a missionary, Eric continued to compete occasionally, including wins over members of the 1928 French and Japanese Olympic teams in the 200- and 400-metre races at the South Manchurian Railway celebrations in China in 1928 and a victory at the 1930 North China championship.

Eric's first job as a missionary was as a teacher at an Anglo-Chinese College where he used his athletic experience to train boys in a number of different sports. One of his many responsibilities was that of leading the Sunday School at Union Church where his father was the pastor. Eric lived at 38 Chongqing Dao (formerly known as Cambridge Road) in Tianjin, where a plaque now commemorates his residence. Eric also helped build the

Continued on p. 7

I hear the Saviour say,
"Thy strength indeed is small,
Child of weakness, watch and pray,
Find in Me thine all in all."

Jesus paid it all,
All to Him I owe;
Sin had left a crimson stain,
He washed it white as snow.

Lord, now indeed I find
Thy pow'r and Thine alone,
Can change the leopard's spots
And melt the heart of stone.

For nothing good have I
Where-by Thy grace to claim;
I'll wash my garments white
In the blood of Calv'ry's Lamb.

Jesus paid it all,
All to Him I owe;
Sin had left a crimson stain,
He washed it white as snow.

And when, before the throne,
I stand in Him complete,
"Jesus died my soul to save,"
My lips shall still repeat.

Elvina M. Hall (1865)
Baptist Hymnal, 1991

The Splendour of a Life Well Lived

Continued from p. 6

Minyuan Stadium in Tianjin, which was modelled on London's Stamford Bridge, his favourite sports ground.

During his first furlough from missionary work in 1932, he was ordained a minister of the Congregational Union of Scotland. Eric returned to Scotland only twice, in 1932 and again in 1939. On one occasion, he was asked if he ever regretted his decision to leave behind the fame and glory of athletics. Eric responded, "It's natural for a chap to think over all that sometimes, but I'm glad I'm at the work I'm engaged in now. A fellow's life counts for far more at this than the other."

On his return to China he married Florence Mackenzie, daughter of Canadian missionary parents in Tianjin in 1934. The couple had three daughters, Patricia, Heather and Maureen, the last of whom, sadly, Eric did not live to see. The school where Eric taught is still in use today.

In 1941 life in China had become so dangerous because of the threat from the Japanese that the British government advised British nationals to leave. Florence (who was pregnant with Maureen) and the children left for Canada to stay with her family when Eric accepted a position at a rural mission station in Xiaozhang, which served the poor. He joined his brother, Rob, who was a doctor there. The station was severely short of help and the missionaries there were exhausted. A constant stream of locals came at all hours for medical treatment. Eric arrived at the station in time to relieve his brother, who was ill and needing to go on furlough and Eric himself suffered many hardships by staying on at the mission, continuing to do all he could to help people.

INTERNMENT

As fighting between the Chinese Army and invading Japanese troops reached Xiaozhang, the Japanese took over the mission station and Eric returned to Tianjin. He was classified as an enemy and sent to the prison camp at Weishien in 1943 (in the modern city of Weifang) with the members of the China Inland Mission, Chefoo School (in the city now known as Yantai), and many others.

Eric became a leader and organiser at the camp and busied himself by helping the elderly, teaching Bible classes at the camp school, arranging games, and teaching science to the children, who referred to him as

'Uncle Eric'.

One of his fellow internees, Norman Cliff, later wrote a book about his experiences in the camp called "The Courtyard of the Happy Way" in which he described Eric, saying, "in all the time in the camp, I never heard him say a bad word about anybody". Langdon Gilkey, who also survived the camp, said of Eric: "Often in an evening I would see him bent over a chessboard or a model boat, or directing some sort of square dance - absorbed, weary but interested, pouring all of himself into this effort to capture the imagination of these penned-up youths. He was overflowing with good humour and love for life, and with enthusiasm and charm. It is rare indeed that a person has the good fortune to meet a saint, but he came as close to it as anyone I have ever known."

SACRIFICE, COMPASSION AND AN INSPIRATION

Even in the camp where he was interned, Eric's enthusiasm and commitment prevailed. He organised sport activities to raise morale for the old and the young. He was an optimist. He told them the sad and miserable days would soon be over and that the bright tomorrow would come. He was loved, especially by young people.

Stephen Metcalf, a fellow prisoner, related how Eric had cared for him during the cold winter conditions. According to Stephen, Eric approached him one day to offer him his running shoes. He said: "I see your shoes are worn out and it is now midwinter. Perhaps you will be able to get a few weeks of wear out of these." We can only imagine that Eric had been saving the historic running shoes as a memento of his past triumphs, but in the difficult conditions of the internment camp, their practical value to Stephen far outweighed their sentimental value to Eric. Stephen later wrote of Liddell: "He gave me two things. One was his worn-out running shoes, but the best thing he gave me was his baton of forgiveness. He taught me to love my enemies and to pray for them."

DEATH

Eric took on a leadership role to meet prisoners' physical and spiritual needs - preaching sermons and teaching hymns. In his last letter to his wife, written on the day he died, Eric wrote of suffering a nervous breakdown due to overwork. Tragically, he had also developed an inoperable brain tumour. The excessive work and malnourishment may have



The Flying Scotsman, Eric Liddell.
Photo credit: The Eric Liddell Community and the Liddell Family.

hastened his death. Eric died on 21 February 1945, a mere five months before liberation.

Eric was buried in the garden behind the Japanese officers' quarters, his grave marked by a small wooden cross. The site was forgotten until it was rediscovered in 1989, in the grounds of what is now Weifeng Middle School in Shandong Province, north-east China, about six hours' drive from Beijing.

LEGACY

Eric's legacy remains strong and he is known and celebrated all over the world. The Eric Liddell Community (formerly Centre) was set up in Edinburgh as a care charity and community hub committed to a vision for all people to live in a society where no one feels lonely or isolated. In 1991, the University of Edinburgh erected a memorial headstone, made from Isle of Mull granite and carved by a mason in Tobermory, at the former camp site in Wei-

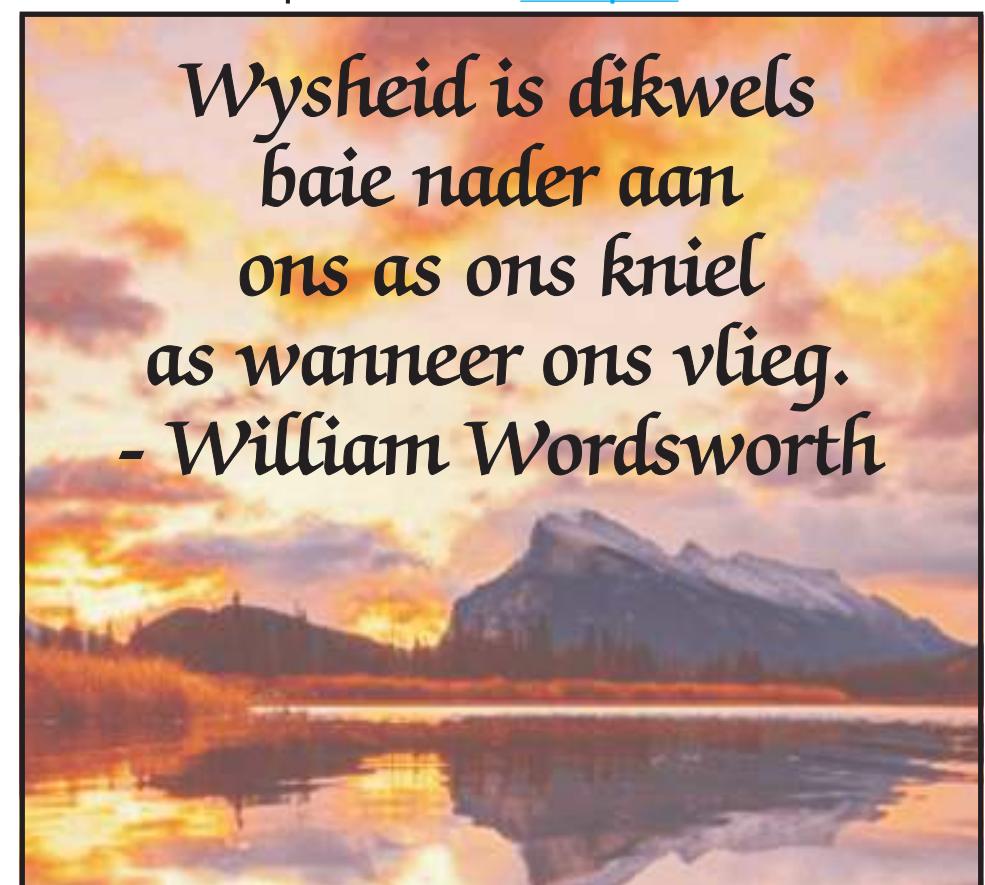
fang. The simple inscription came from the Book of Isaiah 40:31: "They shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary."

More than a famous athlete, rugby player, Olympian, Charioteer, the Flying Scotsman, or an Edinburgh University alumnus, he was a person of faith. Eric's life is an invitation to all of us to serve others with the love of Jesus.

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*Wysheid is dikwels
baie nader aan
ons as ons kniel
as wanneer ons vlieg.
- William Wordsworth*



Suffering and Joy CAN Coexist

After giving birth to her first son in 2008, Katherine Wolf miraculously survived a catastrophic stroke. Since that day, she and her husband, Jay, have used their second-chance lives to champion the truth that suffering and joy CAN coexist in one's good/hard story. Here is their story.

FORGING HOPE IN THE MIDST OF DISORIENTATION AND DISILLUSIONMENT

Katherine: At some point in our young lives, most of us have dreams we hope to achieve. As they start to become realised, we usually piece together a mental picture of what our future will be. So often the picture is wonderful, though we may acknowledge a few hardships here and there because we're not stupid enough to be naive. But we assume even the hardships will make sense once the dream becomes reality.

But what if the road to our dreams gives way under our feet, and we can't get back to the path we were on? What if the broken pieces of the picture we are left with make no sense at all?

When I was six months and five days into "new mommy infatuation" with James, my baby who was mostly brown eyes and a belly button, I had a massive brain-stem stroke and nearly died. As I was slipping into unconsciousness, my husband, Jay, screamed into my face, and both he and a world-renowned neurosurgeon thought I would never wake.

I did wake, hallelujah! But the body I woke up in I didn't recognise. I was paralysed from the right side of my face down to my right toes. I had a trachea tube in my throat, and I couldn't call out or even swallow. Since then, I've had eleven surgeries, and thank God, I can eat, talk, and walk short distances with a cane. But I live with disabilities - like deafness in one ear and delayed muscle response - and there is profound loss.

In the Old Testament's account of Joseph, he, too, started out as a young man with dreams, literal dreams given to him by God. He had a royal coat from his father to christen an auspicious beginning, and I imagine he had a personal picture of his future that did not involve near fratricide and a pit. After being sold into slavery, his road included excruciating heart-break and loss along with supernatural provision and blessing (Gen. 37:23-28). In the moment, Joseph couldn't see the outcome of his faith. He was being trained to hope. And so are you.

FORGING HOPE IN PROGRESS AND POSTPONEMENT

Katherine: To the joy of many, I miraculously woke after brain surgery and left ICU after 40 days. But my "new life" in rehab also came with piercing sorrow and fear. The first time I saw myself in a mirror, I stared in disbelief. My left eye turned down and in toward my nose, and I was seeing double. Due to partial facial paralysis, my right eye couldn't blink or fully close, and drainage seeped out of it.

My trachea tube didn't allow me to speak, but eventually I was given a letter board, where slowly I typed out, "I am the same on the inside! I am the same on the inside!" I had the joy of communicating, but my own questions still haunted me: What if everyone thinks I have the IQ of a small child? What if I am deemed an unfit mother for my baby? What if I never leave the hospital?

Though I was tormented and trapped in a body that didn't function as before, I felt a deep comfort that God would help me. He knew I was in this broken "earth suit" and couldn't fully communicate my heart to anyone. I had a profound reassurance that He would make it OK. I just needed to be still and wait. I spent two years in brain rehab before being released.

In Egypt, Joseph is falsely accused of rape and imprisoned (Gen. 39:20-23). Though God brings him favour with the prison guards, he is still confined. After interpreting two prison mates' dreams, they are released, and Joseph asks one to remember him to help him get out. But Joseph is forgotten for two more years (Gen. 40:9-15, 23).

Eventually, he is freed and given a seat of great honour, but those two more years in prison must have left Joseph wrestling with despair as he hoped for freedom. As you follow Joseph's story, you see how God was clearly at work in the postponement of Joseph's plans, just as He is in yours.

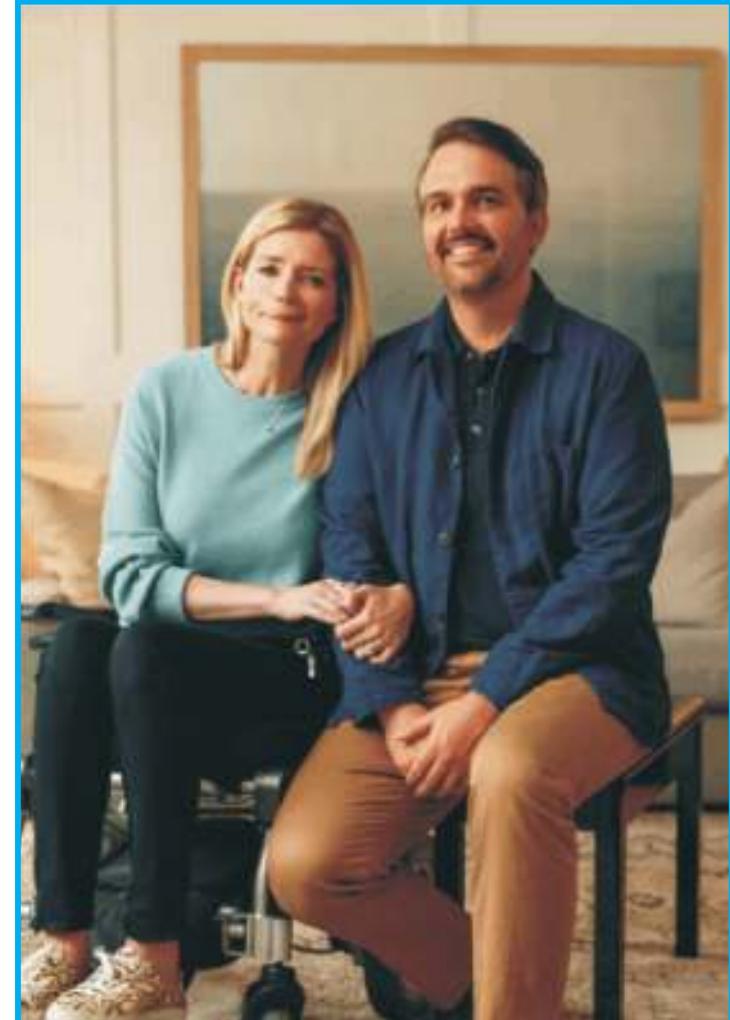
FORGING HOPE IN THE MIDST OF MIRACULOUS PROVISION

Jay: I was in my final year of law school finishing up finals when Katherine's stroke hit. I was allowed to graduate three weeks later, but had no time nor the desire to study for the bar exam. Over the months that turned to years, Katherine grew stronger and began to need less therapy. As we did more "life" outside the rehab hospital, I decided to study for the California bar.

Many of my law school friends were jumping into new jobs, while I had been steeped in my wife's life-and-death conflicts. I think I resented the fact that my peers considered the bar exam to be the pinnacle of stress in their lives. I wish my most stressful encounter in life was a written test. I ended up taking the exam, waited four months, then found out I'd failed. Amid swirling fears of the unknown, and how I would provide for my family, a question from the Lord kept bubbling to the surface of my mind: "Will you trust Me?"

It was then I decided that no matter what lay ahead, we could not let anything obscure our view of the God, Who's given us everything - even in the taking away. He is the same God, our loving Father, Who gives us the one thing we need more than anything in the world: Himself.

I took the bar exam again the next year, waited another four months, and found out that I passed. I've never practiced law, but my legal schooling helped us form our non-profit ministry that currently reaches thousands around the world with the hope of Christ. During our hospital stay, we received two



Katherine and Jay Wolf

million hits on our website, including from people in the Middle East and Africa as well as in England and Ireland, who continue to write to tell us that they are encouraged and helped.

When Joseph was finally freed from prison, Pharaoh recognised that the Spirit of God was in Him and he honoured Joseph's wisdom with the highest position, second only to himself (Gen. 41:38-57). In that position, Joseph was given a wife and was able to carry out a plan that God had sovereignly given him to do: to save multiple nations during a famine.

Joseph's losses had been great, and his new life was not what he had pictured back when he was 17. The royal robe his father gave him was long destroyed, but he now wore fine Egyptian linens and a gold chain around his neck. Who could have ever imagined?

FORGING HOPE AS GOD USES US TO BLESS OTHERS IN OUR SUFFERING

Katherine: I don't think any of us can tell our most vulnerable stories in the moments they occur for fear that they may undo us. Often we have to wait until we are in a season of safety before we can open up our deepest wounds. I had been to hell and back with scars from eleven surgeries to prove it, and two years after my stroke, I began to tell my story to anyone who would listen. I started a blog about the joys and pains of daily living with disabilities. I posted about the sobbing that came when I couldn't lift my son James out of his crib when he called to me. I got emails, handwritten cards, and social media comments from people all over the world.

While digital community can never replace physical presence, Jay and I were comforted to know that on the other side of our computers was a world of people who were suffering in similar ways, and we could encourage them. I also began leading a Bible study on Esther out of my home, and at the end of that same year, CNN did a piece on our family that ran repeatedly during the Christmas holidays. Our hope from Christ was being presented to thousands of viewers. While Jay and I knew that there would be

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Suffering and Joy CAN Coexist



Katherine, John, Jay and James Wolf

Continued from p. 8

more pain ahead, the opportunity to inspire others became a reason to get out of bed in the morning.

After two years of famine in Egypt and Canaan, Joseph was able to provide profound blessing (Gen. 45:1-15). His brothers unknowingly came to him as the head of Egypt's grain storage, and bowed as they begged for food. They also confessed their guilt about their treatment of their brother Joseph amongst themselves, and when Joseph heard this, he privately wept and formed a plan to bring his father and youngest brother to Egypt. After an elaborate scheme, Joseph revealed his identity to his

shocked brothers, sobbed and embraced them, then explained how God arranged for his suffering to keep all the tribes of Israel alive. His brothers were moved to Egypt, Joseph was reunited with his father, and all were preserved from death under his care. God's goodness to Joseph in his years of suffering brings new hope and reconciliation to a physically and spiritually starved family and world.

FORGING HOPE AS GOD USES YOUR SUFFERINGS TO BLESS FUTURE GENERATIONS

Katherine: During one of my darkest moments, I was losing the will to live. After my stroke, I had lost the ability to eat. On Thanksgiving, I was wheeled into our living room to watch others in my family play with our son, James. I didn't have the strength to hold my head up because my neck wasn't strong enough, yet they could toss him in the air and chase him around the room.

"Has God made a mistake?" I thought to myself. "Should I have died? I can't even walk or eat or play with my child. I've gone from wearing cute clothes to wearing adult diapers and hospital gowns. Jay could marry a normal, able-bodied woman, and James could have a normal mommy. I should be in heaven right now and end everyone's suffering."

Suddenly I felt a deep awakening of the word of God, which I had known since I was a little girl: "Katherine, you are not a mistake. I don't make mistakes. I know better than you. I AM God, and you're not. Remember that you

were fearfully and wonderfully made in your mother's womb, and that is when the arteriovenous malformation (AVM) formed in your brain. There is purpose in all of this. You'll see. Jay could never, ever marry a woman as amazing as you. James could never have a mommy like you. Your stroke will teach him more than anything you could ever do or say... You will see My goodness in the land of the living."

In that moment, God met me and implanted a hope deep within my soul that gave me fresh perspective and determination to carry on. At that moment and with each passing day, Jay and I learned not to hang out in the place of fear or "What ifs?"

I had been diagnosed infertile after my stroke, but 7 years later God allowed me and Jay to miraculously conceive, and another beautiful boy was born, John Nestor Wolf. In Genesis 41:51, Joseph named his firstborn son Manasseh, "For God has made me forget all my hardships and all my father's house," and the next son, Ephraim, "For God has made me fruitful in the land of my affliction."

Suffering does not keep the Lord from blessing us. We can receive both hardship and blessing from His hand because He is our loving Father.

- Katherine and Jay Wolf are survivors, communicators, and advocates. Originally from the South, they met in college, married, and moved to Los Angeles to pursue law school for Jay and the entertainment industry for Katherine. Their son James was born in 2007 and just six months later, Katherine miraculously survived a catastrophic stroke caused by a congenital brain defect she never knew she had. After a sixteen-hour brain surgery, forty days in the ICU, a year in neuro rehab, and eleven operations, she continues her recovery to this day. In 2015 she gave birth to miracle baby John. Since 2008, they've been disrupting the myth that joy can only be found in a pain-free life through speaking events, best-selling books, a thriving online community, and Hope Heals Camp for families affected by disability. Today they live in Atlanta with their two boys.

<https://hopeheals.com>

NET BY HOM VIND EK RUS

Wie van ons het nie 'n behoefte aan rus nie? Wie van ons smag nie om tog net vir 'n oomblik te kan ontspan, te kan asemhaal, in ons gejaagde samelewing 'n slag tot jou sinne te kan kom nie? Stilte, ag, ek sou my koninkryk kon prysgee net vir 'n bietjie stilte!

Wel, nou weet ons mos ook dat daar stilte én stilte is. Miskien het jy tydens jou laaste vakansie langs die see gesit met sonsondergang en gesien hoe die son sy laaste knipoog vir jou gee voordat hy onder die water gaan slaap, en in jou was daar 'n salige vrede. Of miskien het jy al die onbeskryflike stilte ervaar as jy die laaste keer deur die huis loop waarin jy vir tien of twintig jaar gewoon het, en die meubelwa is al

weg en die leë vertrekke fluister die somtotaal van ervarings wat hier afgespeel het, aan jou terug, en jy besef: Daar is 'n tyd om te kom, en 'n tyd om te gaan... Of die vreemde stilte wat 'n mens soms in 'n begraafplaas beleef, wanneer die gekoer van die duiwe die stilte selfs verdiep en jy weet: Ons jare skiet verby soos 'n gedagte, ons vlieg na ons einde toe (vgl. Ps. 90:9,10).

Die Bybel praat ook van stilte. Die Ou Afrikaanse Vertaling van Psalm 62:2 lui: "...my siel is stil tot God ..." Oftewel: "**Net by God vind ek rus...**" (NAV). Dis 'n ander soort stilte of rus as dié wat jy in die natuur kan vind, of wanneer jy moet swyg onder die besef dat jou lewe verbygaan en jy verganklik is. Dis 'n stilwees, 'n stilword voor

God, met God, by God. Trouens, die digter is só oortuig daarvan dat 'n mens nét by God rus vind, dat hy dit nie minder nie as vyf maal in verskillende vorme in die psalm herhaal. Soos 'n refrein klink dit op:

**Net by God vind ek rus... (v. 2).
Net Hy is my rots en my redding... (v. 3).
Net by God vind ek rus... (v. 6).
Net Hy is my rots en my redding... (v. 7).**

En, as 'n soort samevatting: "...'n mens kan net op U, Here, vertrou..." (vgl. v. 13).

Dis 'n merkwaardige soort stilte en rus waarvan hier sprake is. Ons sou verwag dat jy dit eers ontvang as jy uit die lewe uit weggeen en êrens in 'n paradys-

toestand geplaas word. Maar nee, die Here skenk dit aan jou midde-in jou worstelinge met die lewe, midde-in die chaos en rumoer wat ons wêreld kenmerk. 'n Mens sien dit al in die manier waarop die digter sy psalm struktureer. Hy begin met 'n belydenis: "**Net by God vind ek rus...**" (v. 2). 'n Mens sou verwag dat dinge hierna sprokiesagtig moet verloop en met 'n sprokiesslot moet sluit, iets soos: En hulle het daarna vir ewig gelukkig geleef. Maar wat volg? 'n Uitroep. 'n Kreet. 'n Beskrywing van uiterste lyding en spanning wat die digter moes deurmaak, waarvan die historiese agtergrond ongelukkig nie meer aan ons bekend is nie:

Hoe lank wil julle almal nog beskuldigings bly slinger

Vervolg op p. 10

NET BY HOM VIND EK RUS

Vervolg van p. 9

*en my probeer doodmaak,
'n man wat reeds is soos 'n
muur wat wil omval,
'n klipmuur wat omgestoot
word?*

*Hulle probeer my uitwerk:
hulle skep behae in leuens;
met die mond seën hulle,
in die hart vervloek hulle
(v. 4,5).*

En dan, net daarna? Weer diezelfde belydenis waarmee die digter begin het: "Net by God vind ek rus..." (v. 6).

Die digter weet dat 'n mens die donker dinge van die lewe nie kan ignoreer of wegwijs of wegpraat nie, maar wel dat die Here se rus groter as dit alles is, voor én na dit staan, dit as't ware omsluit en insluk. Binne-in die storm gee die Here stilte; binne-in die rumoer vind jy Syrus.

O, ons sou dit natuurlik eerder anders wou gehad het. Noordmans, 'n Hollander, sê dat ons verkiekslik rustig saam met die Here rondom 'n teetafeltjie sou wou sit en 'n koppie tee drink en 'n gesprek met Hom voer wat ons nie uitput nie, maar so op teeatafelhoogte bly. Dís die soort rus en vrede wat ons soek.

Maar dan lees jy die Bybel en jy kom agter dat dinge nie só werk nie. Dat Abraham uit sy land moet trek. Josef na Egipte weggevoer word, Moses in die woestyn sterf, Dawid moet vlug voor Saul en Absalom, Israel in ballingskap weggevoer word, die Kerk verdruk word en jy jou kruis moet opneem. Ja, ons lees selfs dat toe die Vredevors na hierdie wêrelde toe gekom het, Hy summier aan 'n houtpaal vasgekap is. Waar's die vrede van die Vredevors nou?

Dis dan dat jy die wonderlike ontdekking van Psalm 62 maak: **dat die Here midde-in die chaos by jou is**. Dat Hy, in Nuwe-Testamentiese terme gesê, jou ter

wille van die Een aan die kruis op ál jou lydensweë dra. Trouens, hieruit bestaan die sentrale spanning van ons lewe: **om van God verlate te voel, en tog deur Hom staande gehou te word**. Dis hoe die vrede van God werk wat alle verstand te bowe gaan (vgl. Fil. 4:7). Dis nie 'n vrede wat binne-in 'n kerkboek, 'n psalm bly nie, maar wat aan 'n kruis gehang het, en daarom saam met jou die hoogtes en dieptes van die lewe kan aandurf, jou kan troos onder al die kruise wat jy moet dra.

'n Man het eenmaal 'n kompetisie geloods waarin kunstenaars gevra is om 'n voorstelling van vrede te maak. Dit het die verbeelding aangegrep, en talle kunstenaars het hulle pogings vir oorweging ingestuur. Op die dag van die bekendmaking van die wenner het honderde mense in die saal bymekaargekom waar die kunswerke van die finaliste met doeke bedek was. Die uitbeeldings van vrede is die een na die ander onthul, en elke keer het die mense uit waardering hande geklap. Uiteindelik was daar net twee oor. Die afwagting was voelbaar. Die man wat die kompetisie georganiseer het, het self die doek van een afgetrek. Die mense het na hulle asem gesnak. Dit was 'n paradysmooi skildery van 'n spieëlgladde meer, omring met langergron bome en skape wat op die welige gras onder 'n sagte blou hemel gewei het. Dit moes tog sekerlik die wenner wees, of hoe?

Die man het die doek van die laaste skildery afgetrek. Vir 'n oomblik was daar 'n doodse stilte, want op die skildery was 'n uitbeelding van oënskynlike onrus. Toe bars daar egter applaus los. Wat hulle gesien het, was die volgende: 'n waterval, só realisties uitgebeeld dat jy byna die koue klammigheid teen jou vel kon voel, met wolke wat gedreig het om enige oomblik reën en weerligstrale van bo af los te laat. 'n Boompie het skuins uit die rots gegroeи, en het op een of ander wonderlike manier die krag

van die storm weerstaan. Een van die takke het só uitgesteek asof dit die water wou uittart. In die mik daarvan, enkele sentimeters van die stortvloed verwyder, was 'n voëlnessie met 'n voëltjie daarin wat houtgerus met toe ogies op haar eiers gesit het. Dít was die wenner. Dís vrede.

Ek vind by U vrede, rus...selfs in storms of watervloed.

Maar hoe? Ongelukkig bestaan daar nie 'n tienpuntplan of 'n resep wat hierdie vrede waarborg nie. Maar tog is daar 'n aantal doelbewuste keuses wat jy moet maak, jy moet jou daadwerklik beywer om in daardie rus in te gaan (vgl. Heb. 4:11). Anders - verskriklike moontlikheid - kan jy dit dalk misloop!

Die eerste keuse wat jy moet maak, is om weg te draai van die ander sg. bronse van vrede en rus, bronse wat die wêrelde of mense voorgee om aan jou te bied. Trouens - 'n bietjie sinies gesê - as mense dinge aan jou belowe, moet jy die gevaelige sien flikker, want ons hart is bedrieglik bo alle dinge (vgl. Jer. 17:9, OAV). Nét God kan vertrou word, want net Hy ken ons hart, en net Hy kan uiteindelik oor ons doen en late oordeel (vgl. Ps. 62:13). Moenie op mense of magte of rykdom of roem of enigiets anders vertrou om jou rus te gee nie; dit sal jou teleurstel. In eeu-eue woorde, en tog so nuut soos die nuus in vanoggend se koerant, sê die digter dit:

Mense is verganklik,

mense is niks:

op 'n skaal wys hulle geen gewig nie,

saam is hulle minder as niks.

Moenie op geweld vertrou nie;

roof sal jou niks in die sak bring nie.

As jou rykdom toeneem,

moenie dat dit jou

te na aan die hart lê nie

(Ps. 62:10, 11).

Moet veral nie op jouself vertrou vir vrede en rus nie, vlug ook - en dit is die tweede doelbewuste keuse wat jy moet maak - van

jouself af weg na die Here toe. Soos Bonhoeffer bid:

***In my is dit aandonker,
maar by U is lig.***

***Ek is bang,
maar U versterk my.***

***Ek is eensaam,
maar U is by my.***

***Ek is rusteloos,
maar by U is vrede.***

***In my woed daar bitterheid,
maar by U is berusting.
U weé gaan my verstand te
bowe,
maar U ken die regte pad vir
my.***

"Werp al julle bekommernisse op Hom, want Hy sorg vir julle" (1 Pet. 5:7). ***"Ja, stort julle hart voor Hom uit"*** (vgl. Ps. 62:9). Sê iemand dít mooier as Luther?

***"As jy iets kortkom, wel, dis
goeie raad om jou hart voor die
Here uit te skud, vrylik daaroor
te kla, niks vir Hom te verberg
nie. Wat dit ook al is,werp dit in
hope voor Hom neer, soos
wanneer jy jou hart geheel en
al teenoor 'n goede vriend oop-
maak. Hy hoor dit graag, wil
ook graag help en raad gee.
Moenie skaam wees vir Hom
nie en moenie dink dat dit te
groot of te veel is nie.***

***Kom getroos uit daarmee, ook
al sou dit ydel sakke vol
gebreke wees. Kom uit met
alles; Hy is groter, en kan en wil
ook meer doen as ons
gebreke.***

***Moenie vir Hom net brokkies
gee nie, want Hy is nie 'n mens
aan Wie jy maar net soveel
smekinge en sorge kan voor-
dra nie. Hoe meer jy bid, hoe
meer wil Hy na jou luister. Skud
net geheel en al alles uit, nie
net druppeltjies of bietjies nie.
Want Hy sal ook nie net drup-
peltjies en bietjies oor jou
uitgiet nie, maar 'n stortvloed.***

'n Stortvloed van seën binne-in die stortvloed van die storm. Waar anders in die wêrelde vind jy dít as net by God?

Gebed: ***Here, ek is onrus. U is rus.
Laat ek vrede vind in U.***

[Uit: Het God 'n Handvat sel? Johan Cilliers, CUM, 2003].

Jer. 20:11

B&B *Uit die Hand*

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OASE VAN HOOP
-KOFFIE KAFEE-

HEB. 6:19
est. 2023