



Goeie Nuus Good News

NOU REEDS 27 JAAR OUD!

GRATIS

Augustus
2025

AANLYN-UITGAWE
ONLINE EDITION

Posbus 1957
Potchefstroom 2520
Tel: 079 273 4630
www.goodnewsmessage.co.za
Goeie Nuus Koerant -
Good News Newspaper



Pursuing Intimacy with God

Jesus taught His disciples that they had a new relationship with God. He taught them to pray, *"Our Father in heaven"* (Matt. 6:9).

The relationship between the Father and Jesus was revealed in a deeper intimacy when Jesus prayed in Gethsemane, *"Abba, Father, all things are possible for You. Take this cup away from Me; nevertheless, not what I will, but what You will"* (Mark 14:36). When Jesus called the Father, "Abba," it's like calling one's father, "Papa."

The strength that Jesus got from that intimate relationship with His heavenly Father gave Him the ability to face the physical sufferings and the spiritual struggles on the cross when He became sin for us (see 2 Cor. 5:21).

What's so endearing about this relationship between Jesus and His heavenly Father? It reminds us of the intimate relationship between an earthly father and a child. The child runs to the arms of his father when returning from a trip and asks, "What did you bring me?" What are you asking from the Lord?

Look at an exhausted child sitting in the lap of his father at a picnic. The child sleeps or rests quietly in his father's lap to regain strength to go play again. They don't need to say anything to each other; they just enjoy the moment. Dad's presence is good enough. Can we also pray without words? Yes!

Remember, the most frequently used word for prayer in the New Testament is *proseuchomai* (*pros* means "toward" and *euchomai* is "the face"). Prayer is like a face-to-face relationship with God that is pictured by two lovers sitting face to face, looking into one another's eyes; they don't need to say anything; their intimacy says,

"I love you." **Intimacy is enjoying the Presence of God.** *"David... sat before the LORD"* (2 Sam. 7:18). When you come to your time of prayer, remember that you, too, can sit in the Presence of your heavenly Father. **Enjoy Him!**

Because you are God's child, you can begin your prayers the way Paul taught us to approach the Father: *"And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts crying out, 'Abba, Father!'"* (Gal. 4:6). What intimate name do you use for your heavenly Father?

In another Scripture, Paul taught us, *"We are children of God, and if children, then heirs - heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ"* (Rom. 8:16-17). Who is an heir? The one who has the right to the assets and property of the Father. So pray confidently. Ask as a child seeking assets from your heavenly Father, which He generously shares.

Intimacy with God can seem mysterious. How can you be confident in your attempts to know God as you would your earthly father? There are several ways to define intimacy and the actions that lead to experiencing it with your heavenly Father.

First, intimacy is being there. You don't get intimacy with God by methods, techniques or even correct formulas in prayer. You get intimacy by drawing close to your heavenly Father. *"How lovely is Your tabernacle, O LORD of hosts! My soul longs, yes, even faints for the courts of the LORD; My heart and my flesh cry out for the living God. For a day in Your courts is better than a thousand. I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of wickedness"* (Ps. 84:1-2,10).

Second, intimacy is seeking the Father's Presence. The Father is sitting on the throne of heaven.

Why don't you go crawl up onto His lap? Just as a child on Earth goes to sit with his or her earthly father, you can do the same with your heavenly Father. And why does a child desire to sit on his father's lap? Maybe he wants to ask for something, or he wants his father to read to him. Maybe he needs help with homework. Perhaps he just wants to sit in his father's lap because he enjoys it. Isn't intimacy wonderful? *"One thing I have desired of the LORD, that will I seek: That I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to inquire in His temple"* (Ps. 27:4).

Third, to experience intimacy with God, you don't need to learn anything. Kids don't need to take a course to learn how to be children. They just are. It comes with birth. When they are born into a family, they experience a father's love. That makes them know they are family. Love teaches them how to act and how to respond to their father. Love opens the door for them to ask.

Isn't it the role of a father to provide necessities - food, shelter, clothing - to his children? Yes. Isn't it the role of children to ask for necessities from their human father? Yes. So today, ask your Father to provide your every need. A kid sitting on his dad's lap doesn't need to take a course in how to be a kid. He just sits there and does what's natural. What's natural for you to do in your heavenly Father's Presence?

Fourth, intimacy is a privilege to enjoy. I love the picture of President John F. Kennedy sitting for an important staff meeting when his son, John-John, bursts into the room and interrupts him. What happened? President Kennedy stopped what he was doing to set his son on his lap. At that moment, the request of his son was more important than any business of the United States.

When you burst into the throne room of heaven, God will stop what He's doing to listen to your request. At that moment, your request will be more important than God running the affairs of the universe.

Fifth, intimacy is learned from heaven, not Earth. While I have discussed the intimacy between an earthly father and his children, that is not our model. Remember, some children had poor human role models in their fathers. Some fathers have been drunks, gamblers, and were lazy and abusive. So some people on Earth have no good memory of a positive relationship with an earthly father.

In creation, God built the concept of fatherhood into men, and if they follow the inner directive, they'll become good fathers. But when earthly fathers give themselves to sin, they destroy the positive relationship they could have with their children and their children with them. If your earthly experience makes prayers of intimacy with God difficult, ask God to heal your memories. Then ask God to heal your inclinations; and finally, ask Him to heal your lack of desire for intimacy with Him. You must forgive any family members who have destroyed any idea of intimacy. Pray, *"Forgive us our sins, just as we have forgiven those who have sinned against us"* (Matt. 6:12, TLB).

Sixth, let intimacy develop. Some people just don't feel connected to God. How can they get past the "asking" phase of prayer to intimacy prayer? The simple answer is to give it time. Go into God's Presence and wait.

The psalmist tells us, *"Wait on the LORD"* (Ps. 27:14). But make sure you are waiting in God's Presence. *"My soul, wait silently for God alone"* (Ps. 62:5). What happens when you wait on God?

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Wees ‘n Dienaar in die Laaste Dae

Dit was ‘n Kersfees, en ek was betrokke by ‘n toneelgroep van ons gemeente. Hulle het ‘n saal in die gemeenskap gehuur om ‘n toneelstuk op te voer. Dit was 1970 in Pretoria en ek was ‘n jong bekeerling. En ek was die “stem” wat ‘n Skrifgedeelte agter die skerm moes voorlees.

Met die aanvang van die toneel, met die mikrofoon in die hand, kom my stem helder en duidelik deur na die gehoor: *“Dan sal die koninkryk van die hemele wees soos tien maagde wat hulle lampe geneem en uitgegaan het om die bruidegom te ontmoet. En vyf van hulle was verstandig en vyf dwaas. En toe die wat dwaas was, hul lampe neem, het hulle geen olie met hulle saamgeneem nie. Maar die verstandiges het olie in hulle kanne saam met hul lampe geneem. En terwyl die bruidegom talm om te kom, het hulle almal vaak geword en aan die slaap geraak. En middernag was daar ‘n geroep: Daar kom die bruidegom; gaan uit hom tegemoet! Toe staan al daardie maagde op en maak hulle lampe gereed. En die wat dwaas was, sê aan die verstandiges: Gee vir ons van julle olie, want ons lampe gaan uit. Maar die verstandiges antwoord en sê: Miskien sal daar nie genoeg wees vir ons en vir julle nie. Maar gaan liever na die verkopers en koop vir julleself. En onderwyl hulle gaan om te koop, het die bruidegom gekom. En die wat gereed was, het saam met hom ingegaan na die bruilof, en die deur is gesluit. Later kom toe die ander maagde ook en sê: Meneer, meneer, maak vir ons oop! Maar hy antwoord en sê: Voorwaar ek sê vir julle, ek ken*

julle nie. Waak dan, omdat julle die dag en die uur nie weet waarop die Seun van die mens kom nie” (Matt. 25:1-13).

Ongeveer 25 jaar later, hierdie keer in Potchefstroom, word dieselfde toneelstuk weer opgevoer. En ek word weer gevra of ek die stem agter die gordyn sal wees. Weer, met mikrofoon in die hand, kom die boodskap deur na die gehoor: *“Dan sal die koninkryk van die hemele wees soos tien maagde wat hulle lampe geneem en uitgegaan het om die bruidegom te ontmoet”* (Matt. 25:1). Toeval? Ek glo nie. Van dag een af, ongeveer 25 jaar gelede, is hierdie boodskap in my hart gegraveer, onuitwisbaar, en ont hou en ken ek hierdie gedeelte uit my kop uit.

Ek is tans besig met ‘n studie van die sendbriewe van 1 en 2 Thessalonicense. In die eerste brief vermaan Paulus die gemeente om gereed te wees vir die Wederkoms van Jesus Christus. Paulus moes vinnig weggaan vanweë die vervolging.

‘n Jaar later kom hy terug rondom die tyd van die Tweede Sendbrief. Hy het gehoor van die negatiewe elemente wat ingetree het. Hulle het Paulus misverstaan. In plaas daarvan dat hulle die moue opgerol en aan die werk gespring het, het hulle opgehou met fisiese werk, want Jesus kom mos! En nou wag hulle vir Hom!

Jesus Self het gesê Hy kom weer: *“Kyk, Ek kom gou!”* Maar ons weet mos nie wanneer die *“dag en die uur”* sal aanbreek nie! Paulus moes dus die saak regstel.

Vandag, 2000 jaar verder, het ons

moeg geword om te wag op Jesus se koms. Tog het Petrus gesê: *“n Duisend jaar is vir die Here soos een dag, en een dag is ‘n duisend jaar.”* En wéér neem sommige gelowiges dit negatief op, want hulle verloor hulle Wederkomsverwachting. Hulle glo dit nie meer nie en verkondig dit ook nie meer nie.

Die antwoord lê daarin opgesluit dat ons maar net kan kyk na die Tekens van die Tye, want ons leef in die eindtyd! Die Bruid moet wakker gemaak word en die roepstem hoor: *“Daar kom die Bruidegom; gaan uit Hom tegemoet!”* (Matt. 25:6). Al tien maagde het aan die slaap geraak, want die Bruidegom *“talm om te kom.”* Tog was vyf gereed om in te gaan. Lees en oordink hierdie gedeeltes weer ‘n keer.

By enkele individue wat bid en hulleself aan God toewy en intree vir die Kerk van Jesus Christus oor die wêreld heen, is daar ‘n verwagting dat Jesus weldra sal verskyn. Want Hy het Self so gesê. En hier is die begin van ‘n herlewing. Is jou lamp aan die brand? Die Here is in hierdie dae besig om Sy Kerk op te wek tot ‘n nuwe lewe in Christus. Die Kerk moet wakker word en bid! Soos ons sing (Lied 481), *“Ontwaak jy wat slaap en staan op uit die dood, laat Christus se lig in jou lewe.”*

Lees saam wat Paulus aan die gemeente in Rome skryf: *“Die liefde doen die naaste geen kwaad nie; daarom is die liefde die vervulling van die wet. En dit te meer, omdat ons die tydsomstandighede ken, dat die uur vir ons reeds daar is om uit die slaap wakker te word; want die saligheid is nou nader by ons as toe*

ons gelowig geword het” (Rom. 13:10-11).

Was die saligheid tóe al nader in Thessalonica? Was dit tóe al nader in Rome? Was dit tóe al nader in Opebaring 20:21 toe Jesus gesê het: *“Ja, Ek kom gou?”* Dan verseker is dit nóg nader in die tyd waarin ons leef. Maar ons moet opleef!

Jy vra dalk, *“Wat moet ek doen om nie net onaktief stil te sit nie?”* Vra vir die Here wat moet jy doen om ‘n ware dienskneg te wees wat wag op sy of haar Heer. Die Here roep in hierdie eindtyd, voor die koms van die Bruidegom, dienaars (Gr. *diakonia*) om te dien in Sy koninkryk. Alle gelowiges. Moenie strewe na hoë dinge nie, maar dien met dit wat jy in jou hand het. Help mense, ook ander gelowiges, in hulle nood. Al is dit met klein dingetjies.

Met die afsterwe van my vrou, terwyl ek in geweldige smart verkeer, verskyn daar een dag voor my hek twee maatskaplike werkers met ‘n pakkie in die hand. Daarin was ‘n baadjie (dit was net voor die winter), ‘n klein voetkomsersie, en iets om te eet. Met groot liefde en medelye bied hulle dit vir my aan (Spr. 15:17). Die vrug van hulle handeling wys vir my dat hulle kinders van die Here is. Dienaars van die Here.

Wat het jy in jou hand? Vra die Here wat jy vir ander kan doen. Met medelye en gebede. Klein of groot volgens jou agtergrond, opleiding, en vaardighede. Jesus kom, en die nood is groot! Werk asof hy jare gaan neem om te kom, en leef asof hy môre gaan kom!

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Forgiveness Matters

“Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you” (Col. 3:13 NIV).

One of the most profound Biblical examples of forgiveness is found in a story Jesus told about a king who wanted to settle his debts. One man owed the king a lot of money that he couldn’t repay him, but the king had mercy on him and forgave the debt. Afterward, the forgiven man encountered someone who owed him a small debt. But instead of showing similar mercy and forgiveness, he sends the man to prison until the debt is repaid. When the king hears about this, he is outraged at the hypocrisy, and has the forgiven man arrested.

If we’re being honest with ourselves, we probably fit into this story somewhere. How often have we chosen not to forgive someone while happily receiving the forgiveness that God offers us?

We’ve all made mistakes. We’ve all rebelled against God. And all wrongdoing is contrary to God’s ways. Some sins have bigger consequences - but every mistake causes us to fall short of God’s perfection.

Forgiveness doesn’t necessarily erase the hurt caused, but it does help us heal and move forward. We will never know someone else’s entire life story. We won’t always understand what experiences impact the decisions someone makes. That’s why

empathy matters.

Showing empathy requires placing ourselves in the position of the person who’s offended us, and choosing to understand their burdens. This is what Jesus did when He came to Earth, experienced what it was like to be human, and then took our sins on Himself when He died for us. Although we have all wronged Him, He gave up His life to forgive and rescue us.

Scripture isn’t asking us to do something that Jesus hasn’t already done for us. And, Scripture also says that to the extent that we forgive, we will be forgiven (Matthew 6:14-15). So if we truly want to experience God’s forgiveness, then we need to extend forgiveness to others -

even when we can’t forget what they’ve done.

So is there someone you’re withholding forgiveness from? Ask God to show you who you need to forgive. Then, allow God to shift your perspective and soften your heart toward that person. Let Him give you the strength and empathy you need to forgive.

Prayer:
God, just as You have forgiven me unconditionally, You are asking me to forgive others. Please help me to do that. Fill me with humility and empathy, and help me to see other people the way that You see them. Show me how to love people the way that You do. In Jesus Name. Amen.
- Selected

Pursuing Intimacy with God

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“Those who wait on the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint” (Is. 40:31). So waiting on God gets results.

Seventh, expect to grow the art of intimacy. What do we know about babies? They are selfish. They expect everything from their parents, and if they don’t get what they want when they want it, and in the way they want it, they will cry, scream and demand attention until they are satisfied. It’s natural for babies to cry. Are you a baby in your relationship with God?

Babies cry for food until the bottle comes. They cry when a diaper is wet until they are changed. Some even cry when they feel ignored. Are you a spiritual baby? Crying babies are not concerned if it’s the middle of the night and their parents are sound asleep. They’re not concerned if the pastor is preaching the Word of God and they disrupt a church service. No,

babies are utterly selfish. Be careful that this doesn’t describe your prayer life!

But babies are not irreversibly selfish. As they grow, they learn better ways to express their needs. They learn to respect others and their needs. God has given a family to teach babies how to share, receive, give, and love. The password to growth is love. “We love Him because He first loved us” (1 John 4:19).

Babies grow into mature adults in an atmosphere of love. With time they learn to give Dad a tie on Father’s Day; and as they grow older, they give him respect and grow in relational intimacy with him.

Eighth true intimacy balances the tension between reverence and relationship. God is the Creator of the universe; we reverence Him. Because God is the omnipotent I AM WHO I AM, we bow in His Presence to cry out, “Holy, Holy, Holy!” That is the almighty side of the door. But when we step

through the door, we find ourselves in the Presence of our heavenly Father - Abba Father - Papa. We can enter close up and metaphorically throw our arms around His neck and tell Him, “I love You.”

Prayer: Lord, I will wait in Your Presence, not asking for anything. I wait in Your Presence to know You better. I want to know

You intimately, more intimately than I know anyone on Earth. I reverence You as my sovereign Lord and the God of the universe. I worship, adore, and bow before You. Lord, teach me when to reverence You and when to seek Your intimacy. Amen.

- *The Daniel Fast for Spiritual Breakthrough*, Elmer L. Towns, 2014, Bethany House

“And this, so that I may know Him [experientially, becoming more thoroughly acquainted with Him, understanding the remarkable wonders of His Person more completely] and [in that same way experience] the power of His resurrection [which overflows and is active in believers], and [that I may share] the fellowship of His sufferings, by being continually conformed [inwardly into His likeness even] to His death [dying as He did]; so that I may attain to the resurrection [that will raise me] from the dead” (Phil. 3:10-11 AMP).

O MANG WENA? (WHO ARE YOU?)

Fano go na le Dikwalo di le 31 ka ga boitshupo jwa rona mo go Keresete tseo re ka ikhutsang mo go tsone letsatsi le letsatsi. (Here are 31 Scriptures on our identity in Christ that we can rest in daily.)

<https://garmentsofsplendor.com/identity-in-christ/>



Johan Zerwick
Sêlê ke 083 458 3837

1. You are a child of God (1 John 3:2).	1. O ngwana wa Modimo (1 Johane 3:2).
2. You are anointed with the Holy Spirit (1 John 2:27).	2. O tloditswe ka Moya o Galalelang (1 Johane 2:27).
3. You are the salt of the earth (Matthew 5:14)	3. O letswai la lefatshe (Matheo 5:14).
4. You are loved (John 15:9).	4. O a ratiwa (Johane 15:9).
5. You are sanctified by the truth (John 17:17).	5. O itshepisitswe ke nnete (Johane 17:17).
6. You are protected from the evil one (John 17:15).	6. O sireleditswe mo go yo o bosula (Johane 17:15).
7. You are holy through Christ (1 Peter 1:16).	7. O boitshepo ka Keresete (1 Petero 1:16).
8. You are free from darkness (Isaiah 61:1).	8. O gololesegile mo lefifing (Jesaya 61:1).
9. You are redeemed by the blood of Jesus (1 Peter 1:18-19).	9. O rekolotswe ka madi a Jesu (1 Petero 1:18-19).
10. You are forgiven through Christ (Acts 13:39).	10. O itshwaretswe ka Keresete (Ditiro 13:39).
11. You are beloved of God (Romans 1:7).	11. O ratwa ke Modimo (Baroma 1:7).
12. You are justified by faith (Romans 5:1).	12. O siamisitswe ka tumelo (Baroma 5:1).
13. You are not forsaken (Hebrews 13:5).	13. Ga o a tlogelwa (Bahebera 13:5).
14. You are saved (Hebrews 7:25).	14. O pholositswe (Bahebera 7:25).
15. You are no longer a slave to sin (Romans 6:6).	15. Ga o tlhole o le motlhanka wa boleo (Baroma 6:6).
16. You are alive in Christ (Romans 6:11).	16. O tshela mo go Keresete (Baroma 6:11).
17. You are a slave of righteousness. (Romans 6:18)	17. O motlhanka wa tshiamo. (Baroma 6:18)
18. You are an heir of God (Romans 8:16).	18. O mojaboswa wa Modimo (Baroma 8:16).
19. You are rescued by Jesus (1 Thessalonians 1:10).	19. O pholositswe ke Jesu (1 Bathesalonika 1:10).
20. You are filled with the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22).	20. O tladitswe ka ditholwana tsa Moya (Bagalatia 5:22).
21. You are filled with the fruit of righteousness (Philippians 1:11).	21. O tletse maungo a tshiamo (Bafilipi 1:11).
22. You are rooted and grounded in Christ's love (Ephesians 3:17).	22. O medile le go thewa mo loratong lwa ga Keresete (Baefeso 3:17).
23. You are strengthened with power through the Holy Spirit (Eph. 3:16).	23. O nonotshiwa ka maatla ka Moya o o Boitshepo (Baefeso 3:16).
24. You are accepted (Ephesians 1:6).	24. O amogetswe (Baefeso 1:6).
25. You are chosen (Ephesians 1:4).	25. O tlhophilwe (Baefeso 1:4).
26. You are crucified with Christ, and He lives in you (Galatians 2:20).	26. O bapotswe le Keresete, mme o tshela mo go wena (Bagalatia 2:20).
27. You are an ambassador for Christ (2 Corinthians 5:20).	27. O moemedi wa ga Keresete (2 Bakorinthe 5:20).
28. You are a new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17).	28. O sebopiwa se sesha (2 Bakorinthe 5:17).
29. You are reconciled to God (2 Corinthians 5:18).	29. O letlantswe le Modimo (2 Bakorinthe 5:18).
30. You are a temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 3:17).	30. O tempele ya Moya o o Boitshepo (1 Bakorinthe 3:17).
31. You are God's handiwork (Ephesians 2:10).	31. O tiro ya diatla tsa Modimo (Baefeso 2:10).

Ons het die sin van Christus - streef daarom na Geestelike eenheid

Ons lees in Jes. 40:13-14 (DV), “Wie kan die Gees van die Here peil, wie is die mens wat aan Hom Sy raadsbesluit bekend maak? Met wie beraadslaag Hy, en wie hou Hom op hoogte, wie onderrig Hom oor die verloop van ‘n regsak? Wie dra aan Hom kennis oor, en die pad van wyse beskikking, wie maak dit aan Hom bekend?” Ons vind ‘n soortgelyke stelling in Romeine 11:34-35 (DV), “Wie ken die bedoeling van die Here? Wie gee Hom raad? Wie bewys Hom ‘n guns, sodat Hy verplig is om iets terug te doen?” Paulus haal hierdie teksgedeelte ook in 1 Kor. 2 aan, maar hy pas dit op Christus toe: “Want wie het die gedagte van die Here geken, om vir Hom te kan voorskryf? Wat ons betref, ons het die denkwyse van Christus” (v. 16 DV). Hiermee erken Paulus die Godheid van Christus.

Ons begryp dus God se verhewe alwysheid, Sy heiligheid en onaantasbare, unieke, soewereine insig. Maar hoe wonderlik is dit dat dit nie net daar bly nie: ons sien ook dat Hy deur Sy Gees hierdie wysheid met ons deel! Hoe dramatiese verskil dit van die Griekse mitologie waar Prometheus swaar gestraf is omdat hy die gode se vuur gesteel en aan die mense gegee het. In plaas van afguns en woede, vind ons ‘n openhartige en mededeelsame Vader. “Ons het die sin van Christus [ontvang].” Wat hou dit alles vir ons in?

1. DIE SIN VAN CHRISTUS

Waarna verwys hierdie begrip? Een kommentator verduidelik dat “die sin van Christus” verwys daarna dat ons die Here se gedagtes, oordele, planne, maatstawwe, ens. begryp en aanvaar. Hierdie denkwyse word aan ons gegee tot so ‘n mate dat ons kan sê dat ons die denkwyse van Christus het. Maar Christus se wysheid vorm altyd die basis hiervan. Die sin of denkwyse van Christus is dus die fondasie en bron van ons eie geestelike denke, en ons groei al deur daarna, soos wat ons aan die Gees oorgee en ons gedagtes / gemoed / denke (Grieks: *noos* of *voûs*) deur Hom vernuwe word (Rom. 12:1-2).

Barnes skryf dat niemand God ten volle kan verstaan nie. Ons kan nie Sy gevoelens, perspektiewe, en raadsplan totaal uitpluis nie. Verder sal niemand van nature belangstel om Sy waarhede na te speur nie; ook sal mense dit nie van nature liefhê en wil navolg nie. Die Christen word egter beïnvloed deur God se Gees. Hy

verkry die denkwysse van Christus, en dán begryp hy en het hy simpatie en empatie met God se gevoelens, begeertes, doelwitte, en planne.

Vincent verklaar ‘sin’ of denkwysse as die Here se wysheid, die Goddelike raadsplan en doelwitte wat volg uit God se onmeetlike verstand. Wat ‘n onmeetlike gawe: Goddelike begrip en wysheid gegee aan al God se kinders (Ef. 1:17-19)! Dit is die dinge wat ons moet bedink (Kol. 3:1-3).

Indien ons die voorafgaande hoofstuk, 1 Kor. 2, noukeurig lees, sien ons dat Paulus God se geopenbaarde, Geestelike wysheid in verband bring met ons redding en saligheid, in die wydste sin van die woord. Nie net die oomblik van bekering en wederbaring nie, maar ook ons geestelike roeping, die gawes en seënninge van die Gees, en die uiteindelijke, volmaakte heelmaking en vrymaking van sonde. Dus, God se karakter, raadsplan en wilsbesluit oor die mens se geestelike lotsbestemming. Dit is die wysheid wat die Gees van God aan ons openbaar!

2. DIE KENMERK VAN GEESTELIKHEID: WYSE ONDERSKEIDING

Ons moet groei tot die volle mate van Christus. In 1 Kor. 2 kontrasteer Paulus die wysheid van God met die wysheid van die wêreld: “Vir diegene wat volwasse is in geloof, is wat ons sê, wel wysheid - nie die wysheid van hierdie wêreld, of van hierdie wêreld se heersers nie. Hulle gaan in elk geval tot niet. Ons praat egter van God se wysheid wat in ‘n misterie gehul was, maar wat Hy voor alle tye vir ons heerlijkheid bestem het” (1 Kor. 2:6-7 DV). Paulus bring geestelike volwassenheid en die kapasiteit vir geestelike wysheid in verband met mekaar. Dit herinner aan sy gebed vir die Filippense (1:9-10 DV): “Ook bid ek dat julle liefde al hoe meer sal toeneem in begrip en fyn aanvoeling, sodat julle die dinge sal kan onderskei waarop dit werklik aankom.” Paulus bid vir geestelike groei, wat sal lei tot ware onderskeidingsvermoë en ‘n diepe, korrekte beoordeling van sake. Ons sien dus dat die wysheidsgawe van God ontgin en ontplooi moet word.

Paulus gaan voort om te skryf dat die Gees die misterie van God aan ons openbaar, sodat ons die wysheid van God deelagtig kan word: “Maar aan ons het God dit deur die Gees geopenbaar; want die Gees ondersoek alles, ook die dieptes van God. Want watter

mens ken die dieptes van ‘n mens, behalwe sy eie gees in hom? Net so ken niemand die dieptes van God nie, behalwe die Gees van God” (1 Kor. 2:10-11 DV). Hy skryf dan dat die geestelike mens die alle dinge beoordeel, terwyl ‘n vleeslike, ongelowige (nie-geestelike) mens nie die dinge van die Gees van God aanvaar nie. Bogenoemde kontekste lei dan tot die sleutelvers van ons oordenking, “Want wie het die gedagte van die Here geken, om vir Hom te kan voorskryf? Wat ons betref, ons het die denkwysse van Christus” (1 Kor. 2:16 DV).

Ons sien dus drie kontraste wat met mekaar verbandhou:

- Wyse versus onwyse mense;
- Geestelik volwasse versus onvolwasse mense (klein kindertjies); en
- Geestelike versus ongeestelike (wêreldse, vleeslike) mense (geleidelik deur die Gees van God versus die gees van die wêreld).

Hierdie betoog en kontraste daag ons elkeen uit om na te dink oor in watter kamp ons val. Jaag ons daarna dat die wysheid van God ‘n werklikheid in ons lewe word, en leef ons daarvolgens? Laat ons die Gees toe om ons te lei en te leer in alle waarheid en wysheid (Joh. 16:12-13)?

3. DIE KENMERK VAN ONGEESTELIKHEID: VERDEELDHEID

Ons sien ook in hierdie hoofstuk die tragiese gevolg indien ons nie reageer op God se geopenbaarde wysheid nie. Paulus berispe die Korinthiërs: “Wat my betref, broers, ek kon nie met julle praat soos met geestelike mense nie, maar wel soos met wêreldse mense, soos met klein kindertjies, in Christus” (1 Kor. 3:1 DV). Dit is opvallend dat hierdie stelling volg direk ná die vorige een dat ons die sin / denkwysse van Christus het. Paulus skryf vervolgens, “Ek het julle melk gegee om te drink, nie vaste kos nie, omdat julle nog nie daartoe in staat was nie. Selfs nou is julle nog nie daartoe in staat nie, want julle is steeds wêreldse. Waar daar onder julle afguns en onenigheid is, is julle dan nie wêreldse, en gedra julle julle dan nie soos wêreldse mense nie?” (1 Kor. 3:2-3 DV). Ons sien dus dat, alhoewel God vir ons die moontlikheid beskik het om alle dinge geestelik te verstaan en tot volwassenheid te groei, ons afguns, trots en eïnsinnigheid in die pad hiervan kan staan. Die vrug van ‘n wêreldse gesindheid is duidelik: daar is partyskap en onenigheid. Verdeeldheid.

Jakobus eggo hierdie gedagte

van die hemelse versus die aardse wysheid en verwys spesifiek op die wrange vrug van selfsug en naywer. Hy bring laasgenoemde in verband met wêreldse en demoniese wysheid: “Terwyl daar bittere naywer en selfsug in julle harte is, moet julle nie daarmee spog dat julle wysheid het nie, want dan praat julle nie die waarheid nie. Dié soort wysheid kom nie van Bo nie, maar is aards, sinlik, demonies, want waar daar naywer en selfsug is, kom daar wanorde en allerhande gemene dade. Maar die wysheid wat van Bo kom, is allereers sonder bybedoelings, en verder is dit vrede-liewend, insiklik, bedagsaam, vol medelye en goeie vrugte, onpartydig, opreg. Hierdie wysheid bring jou in die regte verhouding met God, en jy moet dit gebruik om vrede te maak” (Jak. 3:14-18 DV). Laat ons die goeie vrug van vrede in wysheid najaag!

4. DIE TEENGIF VIR ONGEESTELIKHEID

Hoe kan ons verdeeldheid en afguns uit ons geledere verban? Paulus spreek die Korinthiërs aan oor ‘n vleeslike, verdelende gesindheid (wat teen God se wysheid ingaan): elkeen beskou hulleself deel van ‘n aparte groepering in die gemeente. Die verrassende insig is dat ons almal dieselfde denkwysse van Christus het, en dus behoort daar eenheid te wees.

Reeds in die eerste hoofstuk vermaan Paulus die Korinthiërs, “Ek doen ‘n beroep op julle almal, broers, in die Naam van ons Here Jesus Christus, om eensgesind te wees. Daar moet geen verdeeldheid onder julle wees nie. Julle moet een wees in dieselfde gesindheid en met dieselfde oortuiging” (1 Kor. 1:10 NV). Die Griekse woord vir “gesindheid” is *noi* of *voû* wat ook vertaal word met “mind”, die kernwoord van ons oordenking.

Een kommentator skryf dat dit verwys na intellektuele oortuiging wat die gevolg van volle begrip is. Ons beweeg vanaf geopenbaarde waarheid wat ons goed begryp, na ‘n aanvaarding en waardesisteem wat ons dade beïnvloed. Daarin lê die krag van God se Woord - wanneer ons dit toepas en die transformasie in ons lewe sien. Daar is dus ‘n wilsbesluit betrokke om toe te laat dat die Gees eenheid bewerkstellig, en dat die toehoorders van waarheid daarop sal reageer, hulle denke sal laat transformeer, en dan een van sin en oordeel sal wees.

Paulus doen dieselfde beroep op **Vervolg op p. 7**

God se Troue Sorg vir “Hebronhuis vir Haweloses”

Hebron is God se plek, dit was Sy plan en Sy roeping wat deur ons uitgevoer is. Juniemaand was dit presies 22 jaar wat Hebron funksionierend is! God het nog altyd wonderbaarlik in al ons noodsaaklikste behoeftes voorsien. Daar het nie een dag verbygegaan dat daar nie genoeg kos was nie. Daar was baie benoude oomblikke wanneer ons hard moes bid, maar Vader was altyd op tyd met Sy antwoord.

Ons voorsien tans huisvesting aan 120 volwasse mense. Ons hou die inwoners besig deurdat hulle self hulle kamers, vensters, stoepe moet skoonhou en ook word spanne vroue ingespan om by die kombuis te help. Die manne word weer vir al die buitewerk gebruik, soos tuine, oop groentetuine, tonnells, versorging van drie melkkoeie, hoenders en ganse. Ook het ons ‘n groot varkboerdery aan die gang wat ‘n vaste inkomste bied, omdat ons afvalkos by verskillende plekke in Potchefstroom kry. Dit kos net brandstof om dit te gaan haal.

Ons bekwame kantoorpersoneel van drie laat alles vlot verloop. Nie een van die leiers by Hebron kry ‘n salaris nie. Ons almal werk gratis uit liefde vir God. Ons het nog nooit enige staatshulp ontvang nie en ons bid vir ons behoeftes. Ons ontvang baie kosskenkings, asook meubels, kombuisgoed en alles wat nodig is. God is so getrou en voorsien nog altyd!

Hebron beteken 1) Plek waar mense saamkom, 2) God maak ‘n verbond met ons en 3) verbinding. Hoe waar is hierdie woorde: God maak ‘n verbond met ons, om vir ons te sorg op ‘n plek waar baie mense byeenkom en aan mekaar verbind word met die liefde van Jesus. Ons hoogste doel is om mense met God te versoen deur bekering, hulle op te bou / dissipelleer, en

waar moontlik weer terug te plaas in die samelewing. Daarvoor is Pierre goed toegerus as inwonende opgeleide pastoor. Ons kry ook soms buite-predikers wat deur ons goedgekeur is. Ek help hom hierin en ons doen ook saam berading en, as dit nodig is, bevryding.

Dis ‘n harde sendingveld want almal is nie engeltjies nie, ons kry ook met geharde skelms te doen en ateïste en selfs sataniste wat deurglip. Omdat ons eksgevangenes op ligte parool inneem, mag ons geen kinders toelaat nie. Ons het wel getroude pare sonder kinders, of hulle moet 16+ jaar wees.

Ons kan baie suksesverhale vertel, maar ook talle mislukkings van mense wat weer teruggeval het nadat hulle Hebron verlaat het. Ons besef ons is net die “saaiers” - net God laat groei.

Ek glo Hebron se sukses bestaan omdat God en Sy vereistes hier nagekom word. Ons het twee eredienste op ‘n Sondag en twee Bybelstudies op weeksaande en elke oggend gesamentlike stiltetye. Godsdienst is verpligtend.

Die nood daarbuite word steeds groter en dis so hartseer dat ons daaglikse mense moet wegwys weens plekskaarste. Ons is byna altyd vol of oorvol, en wanneer iemand Hebron verlaat word die plek vinnig gevul. Tog is ons ook innig dankbaar dat ons vir 120 mense ‘n heenkome kan bied en dat Vader steeds sorg.

Soms vra mense ons bankbesonderhede wanneer om ‘n bydrae te lewer, wat ons innig waardeer. Ons Hebron-rekening is: ABSA tjekrekening: 4057368904. **Ek sluit af met die woorde: Alle eer en dank aan Hom wat ons liefhet en so mooi vir ons sorg!**
- Gretha le Roux, 082 607 7198 (stigter).



What’s inside?

“Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing” (James 1:2-4).

Are you the same person all the time? Do you change who you are around different people? How do you act when you’re stressed and under pressure?

It’s easy to play a role, perform, and be who others want us to be when life is going well and we can hide behind success and achievement.

But our true character shines through when life hits us in the face with unexpected obstacles. Many of us like to think we’d rise to life’s challenges with courage and dignity, but hard times don’t change who we are - they show us what’s already inside of us.

Sportswriter Heywood Hale Broun noted that, “Sports don’t build character; they reveal it.” Real life can do the same. Our true colours are revealed when we face the challenges and pressures of life. Have you ever met your true self through challenges and suffering? Who do you want to be when life is hard? How can you become that person today? Trust God to transform you as you submit to Him.

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Smaak en Sien dat die Here Goed is!

“Smaak (proe) en sien dat die Here goed is! Welgeluksalig is die man / vrou wat by Hom skuil” (Ps. 34:9).

1. DIE UITNODIGING

Bostaande Skrifgedeelte laat my dink aan die spreekwoord: “The proof is in the pudding.” Stel jou voor jy stap by ‘n huis in en daar hang ‘n lieflike geur van varsgebakte brood in die lug! Jy is honger, en iemand sê: “Gaan voort, neem ‘n stuk, proe en sê vir my hoe dit smaak!” Gaan jy op jou laat wag? Jy hoef nie te twyfel of dit lekker gaan smaak nie, die geur sê reeds vir jou dat dit lekker is. Jou mond water, jy hou daarvan en jy ervaar versadiging vir jou liggaam.

Dit is juis so ‘n uitnodiging wat Dawid in Psalm 34:9 aan ons rig: “Kom smaak (proe) en sien (ervaar) dat die Here goed is...” Dis ‘n ope uitnodiging om God persoonlik en diep te kom ontmoet, ‘n pragmatiese uitnodiging - ongeag jou ervaringe of omstandighede! Wat beteken “pragmaties”? Pragmaties berus op die beginsel dat idees, standpunte en voorstelle nuttig, uitvoerbaar en prakties moet wees. M.a.w. dit is nie net iets wat jy moet hoor nie, hierdie is ‘n opdrag: kom toets en ervaar self dat God goed is.

2. GOD IS GOED TEN SPYTE VAN ONS LYDING

Dit is nie altyd maklik nie! Baie keer word ons harte geteister met vrae soos: “As God dan goed is, hoe skep Hy dan ‘n wêreld waar lyding, misdaad, ongeregtigheid, armoede en siekte bestaan? Hoe kom gebeur dan al hierdie slegte dinge in my lewe? Hoe kan God hierdie omstandighede toelaat? Het Hy dan ‘n gebrek aan krag

omdat hy ‘n wêreld soos hierdie gemaak het? Is Hy werklik goed?

Kom ons kyk vir ‘n oomblik na die konteks. Toe Dawid hierdie Psalm geskryf het, was dit in ‘n tyd toe hy vir sy lewe moes vlug. Sy omstandighede was glad nie goed nie! Dawid moes homself voor Abiméleg as kranksinnig voorgee. Hy was kwesbaar en hy was uit sy gemakzone. En hy was in diepe afhanklikheid van God se verlossing. Tog het sy geloof sterk gestaan!

As hy skryf “Smaak (proe) en sien (ervaar),” skryf hy dit in die konteks van ‘n werkwoord of opdrag: Jou geloof is nie net om van God te weet nie - jou geloof dryf jou deur omstandighede om God te ervaar, en in ‘n verhouding met Hom te bly staan. Vandag roep God jou tot intimiteit met Hom, ten spyte van jou omstandighede. Hy roep jou om te kom proe en te sien!

3. GOD BRING DIE GOEIE NA VORE VANUIT JOU WOESTYNTYDPERK

Dawid het nie hierdie uitnodiging in weelde van sy paleis op sy troon geskrywe nie! Hy het vanuit ‘n woestyntydperk van sy lewe geskryf, terwyl hy moes vlug vir sy vyand, terwyl hy moes wegkruip. Dan is dit nie so maklik om te sê die Here is goed nie.

Jy gaan dalk vandag deur ‘n woestyntyd! ‘n Siekte wat jou lamlê, ‘n dilemma by die werk wat jou loopbaan bedreig. Of jy sukkel om werk te kry. Dalk het jy ‘n stormagtige verhouding of huwelik! Dalk is jou hart verskeur deur die verlies van ‘n geliefde. En dan vra jy, “As God dan weet van hierdie gebeure wat my pad langs sou kom, hoekom beskerm Hy my

nie daarteen nie?”

As ons egter praat oor God se goedheid, dan beteken dit nie dat jy nooit ‘n krisis sal beleef nie. Sy goedheid beteken wel dat jy Sy getroue Teenwoordigheid te midde van jou swaarkry sal ervaar. Al was Dawid se lewe gekenmerk deur gevaar, het hy ‘n diepe vertroue in God se getroue Teenwoordigheid gehad. Hy skryf in Psalm 27, “Die Here is my lig en my redding - wie sal ek vrees?” Wat hy sê is: al omring my vyande my, sal ek nie bang wees nie, want God is my vesting. In Psalm 63, in die woestyn van Juda, sien ons hoe ernstig Dawid na God gesmag het: “U liefde is beter as die lewe.” Selfs in isolasie het hy tevredenheid gevind in God se teenwoordigheid.

Het jy al God se goedheid weens omstandighede en stryd bevraagteken? Dink vir ‘n oomblik aan Beethoven - dink jy sy musiek sou mooier gewees het as hy nie doof was nie? Het hy moed opgegee? Het hy God se goedheid bevraagteken? Dalk, maar hy het die stryd oorwin. Dink ook aan Milton se gedigte. Sou sy gedigte meer aangrypend wees as hy nie blind was nie? Die goeie kan dus uit die slegte te voorskyn kom. So waarom sal ek te midde van slegte tye God se goedheid bevraagteken? Dawid het te midde van die geweldige hitte van die vuuroond wat oor sy lewe gebak het, geweet dat God se goedheid die brood is wat binne bak - smaak en sien dat God jou ook sal deurhelp!

4. BEANTWOORD VANDAG GOD SE UITNODIGING

Dawid nooi jou en my na die tafel: Kom proe en sien... Kom ervaar self. “Proe en sien dat die Here goed is; geseënd sal jy wees,



wanneer jy jou toevlug na Hom neem.” Onthou Psalm 100:5, “Die Here is ‘n goeie God! Hy sal jou wat in Hom glo, nooit ophou liefhê nie. Hy is ‘n goeie God, nou en vir altyd!” Jy verdien nie hierdie pad na God se tafel van goedheid deur jou goeie werke nie. Al wat jy hoef te doen, is om te reageer op God se uitnodiging. Of jy moeg of kwesbaar is, of jy dwaal en mat is, of as jy wonder... weet vandag dat die goedheid van God ook vir jou bestem is. Kom net nader aan die heerlike smaak - kom nader aan God se tafel! Mag jy uitstap en proe - nie net dink of weet nie, maar waarlik ervaar - dat die Here ook vir jou goed is. Mag jou toevlug nie in antwoorde gevind word nie, maar in Sy omhelsing. En mag jou lewe ‘n honger in ander aanwakker vir die genade van God wat ook hul diepste nood kan still!

Past. Johan Nortje, 083 280 8971.

Are You A Fan or A Follower?

We know from Scripture that salvation is a free gift that Jesus offers to those who trust and believe in Him. But just because our salvation is free, doesn't mean the rest of our lives with Jesus will cost us nothing. Jesus says that following Him will cost us everything! This doesn't mean we have to earn our salvation or work for acceptance, but it does mean that following Jesus requires everything that we have.

When we become disciples of Jesus, we follow in His footsteps. We let Jesus teach and guide us. If we are serious about this, then

our lives will become patterned after His life. This means that just as Jesus took up a cross and gave up everything He had, we also must be ready to carry our own cross.

So what does it mean to take up a cross and follow Jesus? It means that we should be ready to give up everything for the sake of Jesus. It means denying ourselves by surrendering our own desires and plans for God's desires and plans. Rather than focusing on ourselves, we centre our lives around God's mission in the world: loving Him and loving others as we make disciples.

Taking up one's cross isn't easy, but there is nothing in this life that is better than following Jesus. While immediate pleasure often feels more desirable in the moment, it quickly fades and leaves us searching for more. No possession or position can lead to true satisfaction in life - that is found only in Jesus.

Take a moment to think about your life. Are there things that you're holding onto that you would be hesitant to surrender to Jesus? Are there relationships that serve your own desires rather than God's? Commit to following Jesus regardless of

how difficult or challenging life might become. The cross, while painful, is temporary - abundant life with Jesus is eternal!

Prayer: God, please show me what I'm withholding from You. I want to live a fully surrendered life. Teach me how to prioritise following You and loving others. No matter how difficult, I want to daily deny my self-focused desires, take up my cross, and seek You first. You should be the priority of my life. Empower me by Your Spirit and may my life be pleasing unto You. In Jesus Name. Amen.
- Selected

Ons het die sin van Christus - streef daarom na Geestelike eenheid

Vervolg van p. 4

die Filippense, "As daar dan enige troos in Christus is, as daar enige vertroosting van die liefde, as daar enige gemeenskap van die Gees, as daar enige innige tederheid en ontferming is, maak dan my blydschap volkome deur eensgesind te wees en dieselfde liefde te hê, een van siel, een van sin" (Fil. 2:1-2 OV).

Paulus lys dan vyf kernwaarhede om die onwyse, ongeestelike gelowiges te laat afsien van hulle onenigheid.

Eerstens maak hy in 1 Kor. 1 die argument dat Christus nie verdeel is nie, en daarom moet Sy liggaam ook nie verdeeld wees nie (v. 13). Elke groepering kan nie hulle eie afbeelding van Christus maak wat vir hulle aanvaarbaar is, en 'n leier aanhang wat hulle gehoor streef nie. Ons moet dus ons oë in die eerste plek op Christus hou en nie op mense nie. Ons moet een van sin wees!

Tweedens maak Paulus dit in hoofstuk 3 duidelik dat elke leier slegs 'n deeltjie van die dienswerk doen, maar dat dit uiteindelik God is wat groei bring (v. 6). Alle geestelike gawes kom van God af, en ons verrig ons dienswerk in Sy krag, nie in ons eie vermoë nie. Ons vaardighede en talente kom van Hom af. Selfs die spesifieke taak en roeping van elke dienaar kom van God af: "En dit soos die Here aan elkeen

gegee het" (v. 5). Ons het dus geen basis vir trots nie, maar ons moet 'n nederige gesindheid hê en onself beskou as bevoorregte dienaars van God. Hierdie gedagte is 'n terugwysing na Jesus se woorde, "So ook julle, wanneer julle alles gedoen het wat julle beveel is, sê dan: Ons is onverdienstelike diensknegte, want ons het gedoen wat ons verplig was om te doen" (Luk. 17:10 OV). Ons kyk dus weg van onself en hou ons oë gerig op Hom.

Derdens sien ons sien ook dat 'n nederige gesindheid eerstens van die leier af moet uitgaan, sodat sy of haar volgelinge 'n navolgenswaardige voorbeeld kan hê. Leiers moet in eenheid en nederigheid met ander leiers saamwerk ter wille van die uitbreiding van die Koninkryk van God (v. 8). Dink maar aan Johannes die Doper, toe sy volgelinge ontsteld was en hom wou "verdedig" teen die opgang en dominansie van Jesus. Let op sy nederige antwoord: "Johannes antwoord en sê: 'n Mens kan niks aanneem as dit hom nie uit die hemel gegee is nie. Julle is self my getuies dat ek gesê het: Ek is nie die Christus nie; maar dat ek voor Hom uitgestuur is. Hy wat die bruid het, is die bruidegom; maar die vriend van die bruidegom wat na hom staan en luister, verbly hom baie oor die stem van die bruidegom. So is dan hierdie blydschap van my volkome. Hy moet meer word, maar ek minder" (Joh. 3:27-30).

Wat 'n wonderlike voorbeeld van iemand wat die saak van die Koninkryk dien, eerder as sy eie belange!

Vierdens benadruk Paulus die verantwoordelikheid van alle gelowiges: nadat die Fondament gelê is, moet ons versigtig op hierdie Fondasie bou, en ons moet ons hartsgesindheid dophou: "Want niemand kan 'n ander fondament lê as wat reeds gelê is nie - dit is Jesus Christus. Of iemand nou op die fondament bou met goud, silwer, kosbare stene, hout, gras of strooi - elkeen se werk sal duidelik word, want dié dag sal dit aan die lig bring. Deur vuur sal dit geopenbaar word, en die vuur sal die gehalte van elkeen se werk op die proef stel. As iemand se bouwerk behoue bly, sal hy sy loon ontvang" (1 Kor. 3:11-14 DV).

Laastens eindig Paulus af met die gedagte dat as ons ons plek in die geestelike hiërargie verstaan, dit ons tot nederige eenheid sal stem: alles behoort inderdaad aan ons (ons redding en selfs die geestelike leiers is as gawes aan ons gegee), maar ons behoort aan Christus, en Christus aan God (Joh. 5:19-20; 10:29). Ons moenie sê dat ons aan persoon A of B of selfs aan Christus behoort (as 'n verskoning vir verdeeldheid) nie, maar alle dinge is uiteindelik aan God die Vader onderworpe. Ons moet Hom met 'n edele hartsgesindheid en prysenswaardige

handelinge eer.

TOEPASSING

Laat ons ons verheug in die wonderlike geskenk wat God met ons deel: geestelike insig en wysheid. Laat ons groei en die onvolwasse, vleeslike gesindhede agterlaat. Hoe bestry ons 'n onwyse, ongeestelike gesindheid? Deur die Geestelike vernuwing van ons gemeenskaplike perspektief. Alle vrugbare geestelike werk is uit God en uit Sy krag, en so ook die roeping van elke ware geestelike werker. Dit laat ons met geen rede vir trots of ingenomenheid met ons eie vermoë of nalatenskap nie. Ons is medewerkers van God in Sy akker. Ons is verantwoordbaar aan Hom, en ons moet ons geestelike werk in Sy krag verrig. Daarom moet ons onself ook nie met ander vergelyk nie - God sal elkeen se werk beoordeel en beloon, volgens hul unieke roeping. Laat ons dus op onself let, sodat ons werke nie eendag verbrand nie! Laat ons voortgaan om te bou met goud, silwer, en kosbare stene op die Fondasie, dit is Christus, met die wysheid van die Gees. Só sal ons God verheerlik en die Evangelie versier (Titus 2:10). Laat ons ook vir ons geestelike leiers intree terwyl ons saam - in Geestelike eenheid - God se Koninkryk bou! Wees 'n Koninkrykbouer, 'n medewerker van God, 'n nederige dienaar, 'n wyse vakman!

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THE ULTIMATE HIDING PLACE

Beautiful soul, sculptor, artist and pastor, Reverend Doug Merkey's life was seemingly going to pieces. "My mother had lost her prolonged battle with cancer; a long-term romantic relationship was failing; my finances were depleted; my vocation was foggy ... The emotional and spiritual darkness around me and within me was deep and debilitating and seemingly impenetrable," he wrote.

Living in a cramped attic, adding to the long list of negatives, it nevertheless became the setting in which the sculpture, The Hiding Place, was brought to being. Depicting Christ's nail-scarred hands - open, cupped together - became the expression of his ultimate safe place. The "sculpture is Christ's invitation to hide in

Him," he explained.

How many are the troubles that besiege us from day to day! How many prayers go up before the Throne of Grace pleading for relief and an outcome that would lift us out of the valley of tears! Beloved, may I assure you, from deep, personal experience: He hears and He answers. He steps in, builds you up and recycles your worst pain and trouble into ministry toward others in similar situations.

David was speaking to God, composing yet another Psalm, and suddenly it became a conversation with Him - "You are my hiding place; You protect me from trouble. You surround me with songs of victory" ... and then God replies, "I will guide you along the

best pathway for your life. I will advise you and watch over you. Do not be like a senseless horse or mule that needs a bit and bridle to keep it under control." David confesses: "Many sorrows come to the wicked, but UNFAILING LOVE SURROUNDS THOSE WHO TRUST THE LORD" (Ps. 32:7-10).

Beloved, wipe your tears, trust Him, your ultimate Safe Place, now and forever, and rejoice in what He is doing in and with your life!

- Helen du Plessis, 083 332 0895.



Helen du Plessis

Lord, you are my secret hiding place, protecting me from these troubles, surrounding me with songs of gladness! Your joyous shouts of rescue release my breakthrough (Ps. 32:7 TPT).

The Power of Blessing Others with Simple Words

By Aaron Joseph Hall

Every day, we move through routines that shape our relationships and build our sense of self. Sometimes, we believe that only grand gestures matter. But I've seen how simple words, spoken in kindness, can be like seeds planted along the path of daily life. These gentle blessings, easy to overlook, hold a quiet strength. They breathe hope, comfort, and encouragement into the people around us. **I think of this as a legacy anyone can leave - one thoughtful sentence at a time.**

Our words can be a prayer, an embrace, or sunshine on a cloudy morning. So what really happens when we choose blessing over criticism, encouragement over silence? Let's look deeper and discover just how much power our words really have.

1. UNDERSTANDING THE POWER OF SIMPLE WORDS

Most of us can still recall a compliment that changed our outlook, a word of reassurance when we felt alone, or a blessing that lit up a dark day. Words shape our relationships and even our own sense of identity.

Scientific research backs this up. Studies in psychology show that affirming words boost self-esteem and emotional health. A gentle "I believe in you" can rewire a child's approach to a challenge. Couples who thank each other often enjoy stronger bonds. When we speak life into those around us, we spark a cycle of good, rooted in something as simple as a few honest phrases.

2. HOW WORDS SHAPE OUR REALITY

Neuroscience reveals how positive speech can alter the brain's pathways. When we hear or speak kind words, our brains release oxytocin, which is the "bonding hormone." This creates feelings of safety and trust. Even language we speak to ourselves changes our mood and motivation.

Once, a teacher told me I had a gift for writing. I believed her and began to see myself that way. It changed the path I chose. I've seen adults light up from compliments that seem minor. This is not just social grace; it's neuroscience in action. Proverbs 16:24 says, "Pleasant words are a honeycomb - sweet to the soul and healing to the bones." These truths have held steady long before modern science caught up. Real stories fill my mind - like the nurse who whispered encour-

agement to a nervous patient, or the father who told his daughter, "You make me proud." These small gifts carry a weight that echoes far beyond the moment.

3. THE RIPPLE EFFECT OF VERBAL BLESSINGS

Kind words are never spent. When you offer someone an honest blessing, it often ripples outward. A single "thank you" at the grocery store can brighten a tired clerk's day. That person, lifted by your words, might return home with more patience for their family. The ripple grows.

I've seen it at church, where a kind word between friends leads to an outpouring of support when someone falls ill. Workplaces that practice gratitude tend to be more productive and less stressful. Families who fill mealtime with encouragement find joy at their tables. One positive word can begin a chain that circles back, stronger and wider than before.

4. WAYS TO BLESS OTHERS THROUGH SIMPLE WORDS

Many people wonder if blessing others will feel awkward or forced. The truth is, it's easier than you think. With a little intention, ordinary moments become holy ground for encouragement.

Consider these common places to offer a simple blessing:

- At home: Tell your spouse or child what you appreciate about them. Say, "I'm grateful for you today," or, "You handled that so well."
- At work: Thank a coworker for their help. End a meeting by noting someone's growth or resilience.
- With friends: Point out a quality you admire. Even a quick text, such as "Thinking of you. I'm thankful for your friendship," can lift someone's spirits.
- In public: Compliment a stranger's kindness or effort. A "You have a great smile" to someone serving you coffee is never wasted.

These words don't require long speeches. Small, specific comments create real change.

5. CREATIVE IDEAS FOR SHARING BLESSINGS

Blessings don't have to be spoken face-to-face. Sometimes, creativity makes the message even sweeter.

- Leave a handwritten note: Slip a note into your child's backpack or leave a card at a neighbour's door.
- Send a text or voice message: A quick, heartfelt message can



make all the difference for someone far away.

- Start a gratitude jar: Fill it with short messages of encouragement, then share it with a friend or family member on a hard day.
- Post a kind message: Share public appreciation on social media or write a positive review for a local business.
- Expressing blessings through small acts fits any personality. You can even bless someone without them knowing, by praying for them or speaking kindly about them behind their back.

6. OVERCOMING BARRIERS IN SPEAKING BLESSINGS

Not everyone finds it easy to offer kind words. Shyness, fear of awkwardness, or bad past experiences can hold us back.

- Here's how to move forward:
- Start small: You don't have to pour your heart out. A simple "I like working with you" is enough.
 - Practice gratitude: Try writing down three things you're grateful for about people in your life. This helps you spot opportunities to speak a blessing.
 - Don't wait for the perfect moment: Words don't have to be flawless. Sincerity matters most.
 - Remember your own needs: Think about how much it means

when someone blesses you. Let that memory give you courage.

There will be moments when blessing others feels risky. Sometimes people are surprised or unsure how to respond. That's okay. The act still matters, whether or not it's acknowledged the right away.

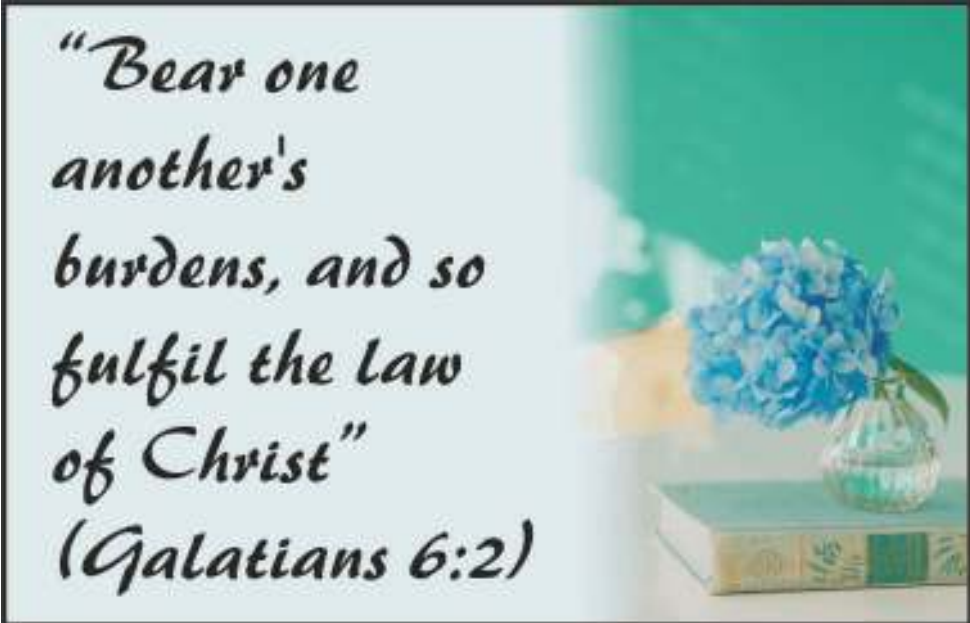
CONCLUSION

Words have the power to build, heal, and encourage. **Every blessing spoken is a seed of hope, a spark of grace.** In a world that often feels rushed or harsh, we have the chance to slow down and use our voices for good.

Imagine what homes, schools, and communities would feel like if we chose words that lifted others daily. The truth is, your simple blessing might be the turning point in someone else's story.

I encourage you to speak a blessing today - out loud, on paper, or in a message. Watch for the shift it creates, both in others and in yourself.

Simple words hold the power to shape hearts. Go out and use them well!
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Wat is die Betekenis van die Golgotakruis?

Van die vroegste tyd af speel die kruis 'n belangrike rol vir Christene. So dui dit aan dat party grotte die vroegste bymekaarkomplekke van Christene was; dit is met 'n kruis gemerk. Ook later in sowel die Westerse en Oosterse kerke is die kruis prominent en een van die redes daarvoor is dat min mense geletterd was. Daarom het simbole, insluitend ikone, 'n belangrike rol vervul.

Hoekom is dit juis die kruis wat vir Christene so belangrik was? Daar was twee redes hoekom hulle dit beklemtoon het; ons skeep vandag dalk die tweede rede 'n bietjie af.

Eerstens herinner die kruis ons aan die woorde: "Dit is volbring!" So dui Jesus aan dat Sy dood ons met God versoen. Dink maar aan 2 Korintiërs 5:18 wat verduidelik: "God het ons deur Christus met Homself versoen en dit beteken dat God in Christus die wêreld met Homself versoen het deur hulle nie hul oortredings toe te reken nie."

Die tweede rede hoekom die kruis vir ons belangrik is, het met Jesus se primêre boodskap te doen. Markus 1:14-15 verduidelik dat Jesus die dissipels met die bood-

skap stuur dat die tyd aangebreek het dat God se koningsheerskappy enige oomblik gaan begin. Jesus gebruik die term 'koninkryk' om te verwys na God se heerskappy wat gaan aanbreek en tot harmonie en vrede gaan lei, onder mense en selfs in die diereryk.

Jesus verseker Sy dissipels dat die koninkryk enige oomblik gaan aanbreek. Volgens Matteus 24:34 sê Jesus dat die mense wat na Hom luister nie uitgeste sal wees voordat dit kom nie. Beteken dit dat Jesus 'n fout gemaak het? Nee, kort na Sy opstanding gebeur dit wel. Die koninkryk breek aan. Trouens, elke keer wat gelowiges die keuse uitoefen om wat hulle wil te verruil vir wat die Here wil, gebeur die koninkryk.

Die kruis demonstreer met ander woorde ook wat dit van 'n mens vra om God se wil te doen: jy moet bereid wees om aan jouself te sterf. Volgens Lukas 9:23-24 sê Jesus: "As enigeen van julle My dissipel wil word, moet jy jou selfsugtige ambisie aflê, elke dag jou kruis opneem en My volg. As jy jou lewe vir jouself wil hou, sal jy dit verloor. Maar as jy jou lewe vir My opgee, sal jy ware lewe vind."

Ons is elke dag omring met mense; baie van ons keuses het met hierdie mense te doen. Dikwels vra die Here van ons dat ons hulle sal dien, dat ons die minste sal wees, dat ons ons aandag aan 'ander' wy, dat ons haastig sal wees om te vergewe en om vergifnis te vra, ja, dat ons selfs ons vyande sal liefhê.

Dit impliseer dat die evangelie van gelowiges vra dat hulle dikwels sal moet sterf aan wat hulle wil doen: om self wraak te neem, om in woede uit te bars en onbeheers aan frustrasie of ongeduld uiting te gee. Dit vra dat ons eers sal sluk en vra: "Here, hoe wil U hê moet ek die situasie hanteer? Wat wil U hê ek moet sê of doen?" Dit vra dat ek aan myself doodgaan deur my selfsug op te offer en te doen wat die Here van my vra.

Dit is die hart van die evangelie wat ons mis wanneer ons slegs op die kruisdood as versoening vir ons sondes fokus. En hierin bestaan ook die impak wat die koms van die koninkryk op ons wêreld het. Soos Jesus in Matteus 13:33 verduidelik: God se koningsheerskappy is soos 'n bietjie suurdeeg wat 'n vrou in 'n groot baksel meel (3 mate = 21 kg!) inwerk om brood te bak. Dit

deursuur alles. Die koninkryk begin met iets klein en dit seën mense en verander hul harte.

Die Here regeer dat gelowiges die voorskoot sal aantrek en op hul knieë sal gaan, soos hul Meester, en ander se voete was. Johannes 13 verduidelik dat nadat Jesus Sy dissipels se voete klaar gewas het, Hy vir hulle sê: "As Ek dan, wat julle Here en Leermeester is, julle voete gewas het, moet julle ook mekaar se voete was. Ek het vir julle 'n voorbeeld gestel, en soos Ek vir julle gedoen het, moet julle ook doen."

Watter impak het jou lewe as 'n gelowige? Hoeveel van die koninkryk kom waar jy gaan? Gebeur die kruis ook verder in jou lewe as net dat dit aandui dat 'n mens met vrymoedigheid en dankbaar voor God mag staan?

Gebeur die kruis in jou huwelik, gesin en vriendekring, by die werk en op die sportveld? In hoe jy oor jouself dink en hoe jy reageer op wat met jou gebeur? Anders gestel: hoeveel van God se wil gebeur in jou lewe? Want dit bepaal hoeveel van God se vrede, harmonie en seën jy in ons stukkende wêreld indra.

- Prof. Marius Nel

FAITH BEHELD, FAITH BLESSED

"A few days later, when Jesus came back to Capernaum, the news spread that He was at home. Many people gathered together so that there was no room in the house, not even outside the door. And Jesus was teaching them God's message. Four people came, carrying a paralysed man. Since they could not get to Jesus because of the crowd, they dug a hole in the roof right above where He was speaking. When they got through, they lowered the mat with the paralysed man on it. When Jesus saw the faith of these people, He said to the paralysed man, 'Young man, your sins are forgiven.'" (Mark 2:1-5)

Jesus was moved by this demonstration of faith. Four men had enough hope in Him and love for their friend that they took a chance. The stretcher above was a sign from above - somebody believes! Someone was willing to risk embarrassment and injury for just a few moments with the Galilean. Jesus was moved. So He applauds - if not with His

hands, at least with His heart. And not only does He applaud, He blesses. And we witness a divine loveburst!

The friends want Jesus to heal their friend. But Jesus won't settle for a simple healing of the body - He wants to heal the soul. He leapfrogs the physical and deals with the spiritual. To heal the body is temporal; to heal the soul is eternal.

The request of the friends is valid but timid. The expectations of the crowd are high but not high enough. They expect Jesus to say, "I heal you." Instead He says, "I forgive you." They expect Him to treat the body, for that is what they see. He chooses to treat not only the body, but also the spiritual, for that is what He sees. They want Jesus to give the man a new body so he can walk. Jesus gives grace so the man can live. Remarkable! Sometimes God is so touched by what He sees that He gives us what we need and not simply that for which we ask.



By the way, Jesus hasn't changed since the day a stretcher was lowered into his Presence on the cords of hope. What happened then still happens today. When we take a step of faith, God sees.

The same Face that beamed at the paralytic beams at the alcoholic refusing the bottle. The same eyes that danced at the friends dance at the mom and dad who will do whatever it takes to get their child to Jesus. And the same lips that spoke to the man in Capernaum speak to the man in

Detroit, to the woman in Belfast, to the child in Moscow... to any person anywhere who dares to come into the Presence of God and ask for help.

And though we can't hear it here, the angels can hear Him there: All of heaven must pause as another burst of love declares the only words that really matter - "Your sins are forgiven!"

- The Gift for all people, Max Lucado, 1999, Christian Art Publishers

Clinging to God in Seasons of Disappointment

Psalm 37:4 offers a beautiful promise *“Delight yourself in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart.”* Yet what do we do when those desires remain unfulfilled? What happens when you are genuinely seeking God praying, obeying, delighting in Him and still your heart aches for something good that never comes? How should we trust God’s promises when your deepest desires remain unmet?

This is a reality many believers face. Creation itself, Paul reminds us, is “groaning” with unfulfilled longing (Romans 8:22). The question is not whether disappointments will come, but how we respond to them.

One woman’s story illustrates this struggle powerfully. At 52, she walks with a cane after surviving a severe accident that left her in a months-long coma and required years of therapy. She has prayed for decades to be married, yet remains single and has never even been kissed. Her question is raw: “Does this mean I’ve been refined only for God? Am I misunderstanding His promises?”

WHEN LONGINGS GO UNMET
The truth is, every Christian carries unfulfilled desires of some kind - a marriage that is not what we hoped for, a child who has wandered from faith, a career that never took shape, a health crisis that lingers.

We read promises like *“Ask, and it will be given to you”* (Matthew 7:7), and *“No good thing does He withhold from those who walk uprightly”* (Psalm 84:11), and we wonder if our unanswered prayers mean something has gone wrong. Yet the Bible itself gives us examples of faithful people living with “unanswered” longings.

Paul pleaded three times for God to remove his *“thorn in the flesh,”* but the answer was “no” because Christ’s power was made perfect in his weakness (2 Corinthians 12:8-9). In the end, Paul found contentment in what God had chosen for him, because Christ Himself became his deepest satisfaction (2 Corinthians 12:10). This is a profound truth for us: when God says “no” or “not yet,” He invites us into a deeper joy - one that isn’t dependent on circumstances, but on His Presence.

LEARNING TO TRUST AGAIN
How do we live with this tension, year after year?

1. Cast your burden daily.
Unfulfilled desires are heavy burdens. If we try to carry them alone, they will crush us. Scripture tells us, *“Cast your burden on the Lord, and He will sustain you”* (Psalm 55:22). Every morning, we can come to God and say, “Father, my heart aches for this longing. But You are wise, good, and loving. I roll this burden onto You again today. Show me how to walk in freedom.”

2. Resist the temptation to wear your pain as a badge.
It’s easy to let disappointment shape how we present ourselves to others, subtly trying to communicate how hard our lives are. But the Spirit calls us to maturity to acknowledge our longings before God and a few trusted friends, while still choosing to live a life marked by joy. Christian maturity does not deny sorrow, but it refuses to let sorrow define us. It is possible to taste unfulfilled desires and still live a life full of purpose, friendships, ministry, and hope.

3. Recognise God’s deeper promise.
Sometimes, our deepest longing is not ultimately for marriage,

health, or success - it is for a life that matters, a life that reflects God’s worth. And God promises to give us that. He promises Himself. As Jesus said, *“Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you”* (Matthew 6:33). Even when we do not receive what we hoped for, we can trust that God is giving us what is best for our souls - both now and for eternity.

LIVING WITH HOPE
Many faithful believers have lived full, joy-filled lives while carrying unmet desires. Think of the single women who devoted their lives to missionary work - Amy Carmichael, Mary Slessor, Gladys Aylward, and others. Their lives weren’t defined by what they lacked, but by what they pursued:

the glory of Christ. Our hope is not in getting everything we want in this life. Our hope is in a God Who promises us Himself. Psalm 16:11 reminds us, *“In your Presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.”*

So, to the one whose heart is breaking from unmet desires, remember this: You are not forgotten. God is not withholding good from you. He is shaping you for something eternal. Every day, roll your burdens onto Him. Ask Him for strength to live fully, even with a “melancholy note” in your life’s symphony. And trust that the joy He has prepared for you will one day outshine every earthly disappointment.

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GEBED VIR HUWELIKE

Hemelse Vader, dankie vir die heilige verbond van die huwelik - nie net as ’n verhouding tussen twee mense nie, maar as ’n beeld van U liefde vir U mense. Ons bring ons huwelik na U toe, Here. Ons erken dat ons swak is sonder U, dat liefde soms ’n keuse is en nie net ’n gevoel nie, dat intimiteit gebou word en nie outomaties bly nie, en dat vrede nie altyd teenwoordig is nie - maar altyd moontlik is in U Teenwoordigheid.

Here, genees die plekke waar ons mekaar seergemaak het. Vergewe ons vir woorde wat geskei het, vir stiltes wat afstand geskep het, en vir trots wat ’n muur tussen ons gebou het. Bind ons harte weer vas - nie met skuld of plig nie, maar met liefde, eerbied en ’n nuwe sagtheid. Help ons om weer mekaar te kies, om mekaar weer te sien met nuwe oë - nie net as ouers, broodwinners of pligdoeners nie, maar as man en vrou, liefdesmaat, bondgenote in geloof.

Laat ons huis ’n plek wees van rus, nie spanning nie. Laat ons woorde genees, nie verwond nie. Laat ons aanraking weer heilig wees, nie skaars nie. En mag ons albei altyd onthou: U is nie die derde party nie - U is die Fondament. Bewaar ons teen die aanvalle van die vyand. Sluit elke oop deur wat ons onbewustelik gelaat het - deur onvergewensgesindheid, emosionele afstand, buite-invloede of geestelike laksheid.

Plant weer nuwe lewe in droë grond. Laat daar lag wees in ons huis, vreugde in ons saamwees, en hoop vir die pad vorentoe. Ons verklaar: Ons huwelik is U s’n. Ons liefde is ’n wapen. En ons eenheid is ’n getuigenis. In die magtige Naam van Jesus bid ons dit. Amen.

Jer. 20:11

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-KOFFIE KAFEE-

HEB. 6:19

EST. 2023