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He Knows What He's Doing

"For the Lord is the greatest of all, King-God over all other gods! In one Hand He holds the mysteries of the earth, and in the other He holds the highest mountain peaks. He's the Owner of every ocean, the Engineer and Sculptor of Earth itself! Come and kneel before this Creator-God; come and bow before the mighty God, our majestic Maker! For we are those He cares for, and He is the God we worship. So drop everything else and listen to His Voice!" (Psalm 95:3-7 TPT).

God, our Creator, can calm the oceans with the sound of His Voice. He speaks, and the winds cease. He breathes, and life is created. Everything God does has meaning that we cannot always see on the surface. Let's trust Him, for His ways are greater than our own, and His wisdom takes into consideration many things we don't even realise.

"Depths of purpose and layers of meaning saturate everything You do" (Psalm 92:5 TPT).

Though correction may sting, it can also be sweet, for a corrective word at the right time can set us straight. It is better to be bruised by honesty than to be left in a cloud of confusion, where we don't

know the ceiling from the floor. We cannot know how everything will work together, but we can put our full trust in the One Who does.

"A person may have many ideas concerning God's plan for his life, but only the designs of God's purpose will succeed in the end" (Proverbs 19:21 TPT).

The psalmist said it this way: "He's the Hope that holds me and the Stronghold to shelter me, the only God for me, and my great confidence" (Psalm 91:2 TPT).

We need not fear, even in a time of disaster, for "His arms of faithfulness are a shield keeping [us] from harm" (v. 4). He can calm the storms of our thoughts as well. Psalm 94:19 is an encouragement in this regard: "Whenever my busy thoughts were out of control, the soothing comfort of Your Presence calmed me down and overwhelmed me with delight."

The presence of God is always available. All that we need - comfort, peace, wisdom, grace, mercy - are only a breath away. Trusting that God works all things together in ways we cannot control or anticipate (always in goodness and faithfulness), we can live



surrendered before Him in the freedom of His love.

"When you live a life of abandoned love, surrendered before the awe of God, here's what you'll experience: Abundant life. Continual protection. And complete satisfaction!" (Proverbs 19:23 TPT).

If you want to live in the confidence of God's arms of faithfulness, why not surrender to His love? He does not require more of you than you are able to offer. You don't have to be perfect to experience His kindness. Simply draw near to Him. You will find strength in His grace, relief in His peace, and liberty in His mercy. He offers you the freedom of His love that lifts the weight of your burdens and emboldens your heart with the life-giving light of His wisdom.

Dare to trust Him. Dare to surrender to Him. Try it out and see what He does for you.

Choose love. Choose kindness. Choose to let go of the need to control outcomes and instead put your faith in God. He knows what He's doing.

"Look! YAHWEH now reigns as King! He has covered Himself with majesty and strength, wearing them as His splendour-garments. Regal power surrounds Him as He sits securely on His throne. He's in charge of it all, the entire world, and He knows what He's doing!" (Psalm 93:1 TPT).

Prayer: Dear Creator, thank you for the ability to trust You. I don't want to strive for my own idea of goodness. I choose to follow Your ways and give myself over to Your love. I want to know the extravagant kindness of Your heart in my life in even greater ways. Amen.

- Adapted from 'Five Psalms and a Proverb: A 31-Day Devotional' by Brian Simmons.

Hy Maak My Lamp Vol Olie

Daar is uiteenlopende kere wat die lamp en olie in die Bybel verskyn - beide in die Ou Testament en Nuwe Testament - met toepaslike gebruike en met ryke geestelike en simboliese waarde. Dink byvoorbeeld daaraan dat die eerste konings van Israel met 'n kruik olie gesalf is tot koning. So het Samuel vir beide Saul en Dawid gesalf as koning. Verder moes die hoëpriester “van die aand tot die môre” die lampe van die Menorah met olie versorg sodat dit aanhoudend lig kon gee. “Menorah” is die Hebreeuse woord vir “kandelaar.” Dit is die goue kandelaar met ses arms wat uit die middelste stam spruit, drie aan elke kant, elkeen met een van die sewe lampies op die eindpunte van die arms. Dit het gestaan in Israel se tabernakel en later in die tempel. Dit moes voortdurend brand sodat daar gereeld lig kon wees in die heilige deel van die Tent van Ontmoeting. Verder is Dawid die lamp van Israel genoem, en ook God Self is die Lamp van Israel genoem. Dan lees ons aangaande die Woord van God, “U Woord is 'n lamp vir my voet en 'n lig vir my pad” (Ps. 119:105). Verder lees ons ook in Spreuke 20:27, “Die gees van die mens is 'n lamp van die HERE, dit deursoek al die kamers van die binneste.” In die Nuwe Testament lees ons: “Die lamp van die liggaam is die oog. As jou oog dan reg is, sal jou hele liggaam verlig wees” (Matt. 6:22). Johanes die Doper is deur Jesus die lamp van God genoem (Joh. 5:35). In Matt. 25 lees ons hoe die bruidsmeisies moes sorg dat hulle lampe vol olie is terwyl hulle wag op die koms van die bruidegom, met die toepassing op die Wederkoms van Jesus. Maria het die hoof van Jesus gesalf met olie, met die oog op Sy begrafnis (Matt. 26:12).

Oral in die Bybel waar die olie ter sprake kom, byvoorbeeld in lampe of salwing met olie, spreek dit van die lewende Teenwoordigheid van God. Lamp en lig gaan hand aan hand. Vir die lamp om te kan skyn, moet sy pit in die olie lê. Dan kom ons by die teks waarby ek wil stilstaan: Ps. 18:29, “U, Here, laat my lamp helder skyn; my God gee lig as dit donker is om my” (Afr. 83 vertaling). God se Teenwoordigheid wat gepaardgaan met lig, maak Hom 'n lewende werklikheid, en die mens beleef God in sy/haar lewe. Deur die soenverdienste van Jesus Christus aan die kruis, kom woon Hy deur Sy Heilige Gees in die hart van elke gelowige wat Hom aangeneem het as sy/haar Persoonlike Saligmaker (Joh. 1:12).

Jesus sê in Joh. 8:12 “Ek is die lig van die wêreld.” En weer in Matt. 5:14: “Julle is die lig van die

wêreld.” Deurdronge met Sy Heilige Gees is ons in staat om soos helder ligte te skyn in die donker wêreld. Maar die vyand van ons siele poog dikwels, eintlik sonder ophou, om die lig in ons uit te doof. Dan word ons selfs 'n rokende, brandende lamp. Daar staan immers geskrywe aangaande Jesus en Sy genadige benadering: “n Geknakte riet sal Hy nie verbreek nie, en 'n lamp pit wat rook, sal Hy nie uitblus nie, totdat Hy die reg tot oorwinning uitbring” (Matt. 12:20). Daarom moet ons gedurig bid en die krag van Sy bloed aanvaar en Sy vergifnis beleef. Dit is dān dat ons bid: “U, Here, laat my lamp helder skyn; my God gee lig as dit donker is om my.” En die vyand kan niks teen ons doen of ons veroordeel nie, want Jesus het sy werke op die kruis vernietig (1 Joh. 3:8).

Ons beleef telkemale dat Hy my lamp vol olie maak! Ook wanneer dit voel of dit donker is om my. Kyk wat doen Dawid toe dit donker word om hom. 'n Bende van die vyand het hulle vrouens en kinders weggevoer. Toe Dawid met sy manne die stad inkom, lê dit daar met vuur verbrand, en hulle vroue, seuns en dogters is as gevangenes weggevoer, en die stad verbrand. “Daarop het Dawid en die manskappe wat by hom was, hulle stem verhef en geweend totdat daar geen krag meer in hulle was om te ween nie. En Dawid het dit baie benoud gehad, want die manskappe het gepraat om hom te stenig; want die siel van al die manskappe was verbitterd, elkeen oor sy seuns en sy dogters; maar Dawid het homself versterk in die HERE sy God” (1 Sam. 30:3-6). Na 'n smartlike belewenis van groot trauma, het Dawid homself op God se genade gewerp. Hy skryf in Ps. 51:19, “Die offers van God is 'n gebroke gees; 'n gebroke en verslae hart sal U, o God, nie verag nie!” In jou smart en jou droefheid, versterk jou in die Here jou God deur gebed en toewyding aan Hom. Gee jou oor aan Hom en word deurdrenk met Sy Heilige Gees. Hy het mag om jou lamp vol te maak met die olie, sodat jou lig helder kan skyn!

Wanneer jy in 'n siektetoestand verkeer, gee Jakobus raad: “Is daar iemand siek onder julle? Laat hom die ouderlinge van die gemeente inroep, en laat hulle oor hom bid nadat hulle hom in die Naam van die Here met olie gesalf het. En die gebed van die geloof sal die kranke red, en die Here sal hom oprig. Selfs as hy sonde gedoen het, sal dit hom vergewe word” (Jak. 5:14-15). Maar dit is nie net 'n blote ritueel nie. Ook nie 'n towerformule met die gebruik van fisiese olie nie. Maar die olie spreek van die lewende Teenwoordigheid van God wat ons in



geloof aanvaar en ervaar. Hy is die Een, deur Jesus Christus ons Hoëpriester, wat ons lamp volmaak met olie.

Bring dus vandag jou krankheid, jou droefheid, smart en ellende na Jesus toe! Hy 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). Doen dit in gebed en verootmoediging op jou knieë, en vra Hom om jou lamp te vul met die olie van die Heilige Gees, en beleef God. Beleef hoe Hy jou laste op Hom neem, jou te verlos en volkome genees deur die krag van Sy Gees!

© Dr JJ Venter

When You Need Support

Everyone carries burdens, and the things we go through shape the way we view the world, and ourselves. But we weren't meant to carry our burdens alone. In fact, Jesus says to the people following Him, “Come to Me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you... For My yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light.” (Matthew 11:28-30 NLT).

A yoke is a heavy wooden beam that lies across a pair of oxen, evenly distributing the weight of the loads they carry. But the term was also used by Jewish Rabbis. “The yoke of the law” symbolised complete submission to God's law, and Rabbis taught that becoming yoked to it would free the Jews from enslavement to the world.

Jesus is using a phrase that His Jewish followers would have easily understood, but then He flips the illustration. He tells the crowd that they must yoke themselves to Him - because He is the fulfilment of their law. When they do this, the burdens they carry won't be heavy at all - because He will bear the weight of their burdens.

Paul references this teaching in his letter to the Galatian Christians: “Share each other's burdens, and in this way obey the law of Christ” (Galatians 6:2 NLT). The law of Christ is to love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength, and to love others as ourselves (Matthew 22:37-40). But the only way we can fulfil the law of Christ is if we bind ourselves to Him.

When we are yoked to Jesus, He becomes our Source of strength. He helps us endure hard situations and enables us to walk away from poor decisions. He fills us up with His love so that we can pour His love out onto others. He gives us the capacity to support other Christ-followers just like He supports us.

Just as Jesus bore our sins and suffering, we are called to bear the suffering of others. In this way, we show them the love of Christ and guide them toward Jesus.

Right now, spend a few minutes talking to God about the burdens you need help carrying, and then allow Him to show you the people in your life He wants you to support.

- YouVersion

True Religion

What do you think about when you hear the word religion?

Maybe you picture a church building. Maybe you envision a cross. Maybe you imagine statues or cathedrals or altars or pews. Maybe the thought of religion brings you comfort, or it makes you want to run in the opposite direction.

Here's what the Bible says religion truly is: *“Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world”* (James 1:27 NIV).

True religion in God’s eyes is looking after the hurting and most

vulnerable, as well as honouring Him with your life. You can do this in countless ways. Here are just a few:

■ **Physically:** You could deliver groceries to a widow, teach a child to read or play catch, help a friend in need, or foster or adopt a child (or support those who foster or adopt children).

■ **Financially:** You can give generously to ease the financial burden to those who don’t have much support. You could find a local church or charity to donate to, or offer to help with electricity bills, children’s extracurricular activities, or even pay someone’s debt.

■ **Emotionally:** You can be the hands and feet of God - by show-

ing up, listening, encouraging, and simply being present.

■ **Spiritually:** You can offer spiritual support or prayer to those who could use guidance, direction, or even reminders of what they already know to be true.

James writes that true religion in God’s eyes also involves keeping yourself *“from being polluted by the world.”* How can you do that? You can trust God’s heart. You can surrender to His ways. You can keep your eyes on Him.

Being “religious” isn’t about a showy facade or a spiritual checklist, but loving God and serving others - which, ultimately, makes us more like Him.

Prayer: God, I know there are

many hurting and lonely people in the world. Show me how I can be Your hands and feet to serve them. Open my eyes to see the needs of the vulnerable or struggling in my own neighbourhood. Help me to love and serve like Jesus did. In Jesus' Name. Amen.
- YouVersion

We must be ready to allow ourselves to be interrupted by God.
- DIETRICH BONHOEFFER

A WENA O MONNA KGOTSA MOSADI WA NNETE? (Are you a man or woman of truth?)



DITEMANA

Pesalome 15:1-2 - Morena, ke mang yo o ka tsenang mo Tenteng ya gago? Ke mang yo o ka nnang mo thabeng ya gago e e boi-tshepo? Ke ene fela yo o sepelang a se na molato, a dira ka tshiamo, a bua boammaaruri ka pelo.

Johane 14:6 - Jesu a mo araba a re: ‘Ke nna tsela le boammaaruri le bophelo; ga go ope yo o ka fitlhong kwa go Rara fa e se ka nna.’

3 Johane 1:4 - Ga ke na boitumelo jo bo fetang joo jwa go utlwa gore bana ba me ba tsamaya mo boammaaruring.

1 Johane 1:6 - Fa re re, re na le kopano le ona, mme re tsamaya mo lefifing, re a aka, ga re dire boammaaruri.

Johane 8:32 - Lo tla itse boammaaruri, mme boammaaruri bo tla lo golola.

Diane 12:22 - Melomo e e akang e tena Morena, mme ba ba dirang ka boammaaruri ba a mo kgatlha.

Diane 19:9 - Mosupi wa maaka ga a nke a tlhoka petso; yo o buang tse e seng tsona o tla latlhega.

Diane 21:6 - Go batla mahumo ka loleme lwa maaka ke go latela boithamako jo bo isang losong.

Pesalome 101:7 - Yo o dirang ka tsietso ga a nke a nna mo teng ga ntlo ya me; yo o buang maaka ga a nke a ema fa pele ga matlho a me.

DIKAKANYO

Batho ba rata go bua maaka le go bua fela jaaka ba rata. Mo dinakong tsa gompieno batho ba rata maaka go feta nnete. Ditlhong ga di tlhole di le teng. Motho o go leba fela mo matlhong mme a go boelelela maaka mo matlhong. Bana le baswa ka bua maaka fela jaaka ba rata le batsadi le barutabana. Ruri diabololo o dirile gore nnete e se kgathalelwe mme e se tlhole e bona e le botlhokwa. Mo ditemaneng tse di nopolotsweng

re bona gore Beibele ga e rate maaka. Nnete le boammaaruri ke se se batliwang. Fa o phela ka maaka letsatsi le letsatsi o itsenya mo mathateng. Temana ya re: “Melomo e e akang e tena Morena, mme ba ba dirang ka boammaaruri ba a mo kgatlha.”

A wena o dira Morena a tenege kgotsa o a mo kgatlha? Itse gore Modimo o itse gotlhe mme o bona gotlhe. Le fa o akanya gore batho ga ba itse maaka e o e buang le e o e dirang, Modimo o itse gotlhe. Nnete e thusa gape gore re phele sentle mme re nne le kagiso re gololesegile. Nagana fela o phela ka maaka mo tirong le mo lenyalong. O dula o tshogile gore mongwe o go bone kgotsa o itse maaka ya gago le diphiri tsa gago.

Fa o le mo lenyalong la maaka le o tsietsana o ka se phele ka kagiso. O tla dula o tshaba go kgabelwa le go lemogwa maaka e o e phelang. Jaaka nopololo ya bofelo e bua ka go re: “Loleme lwa maaka ke go latela boithamako jo bo isang losong.” Go phela maaka nako yotlhe go dira gore o phele o lwala. O phela ka kgatelelo le ka kgatelelo ya madi ka gore o dula o tshaba gore o ka lemogwa.

Jesu gape a re: “Ke nna tsela le boammaaruri le bophelo.” Tsamaya le Jesu mme o tlabo o na le boammaaruri mme o na le bophelo.



Johan Zerwick
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Gape Jesu a re: “Ga ke na boitumelo jo bo fetang joo jwa go utlwa gore bana ba me ba tsamaya mo boammaaruring.” A wena o itumedisa Morena kgotsa o dira gore a tenege. A re leke go tsamaya ka le mo boammaaruring.

THAPELO

Ntate wa rona re kopa o re thuse gore re nne bana ba Gago ba ba tsamayang tsela ya nnete. Re thuse gore re se bue maaka. Thusa melomo ya rona go se bue maaka. Re thuse re phelele mo gare nnete nako yotlhe. Re kopa o re itshwarele fa re tsamaila mo teng ga maaka mme o re thuse re nne bana ba nnete. Thusang banyadi gore ba phele mo teng ga nnete mme thusa le bana gore ba tsamaye ka nnete mo teng ga manyalo le kwa ditirong tsa rona. AMEN.

Is God’s Holiness Exclusive?

I recently faced a very volatile, distasteful, and hurtful situation involving unfounded accusations of exclusivity and discrimination within a group setting. It was the perfect storm, and numerous small, unintended, insignificant things led to the eruption of a volcano of anger. Assumptions were made and distrust thrived. People assumed the worst and took offence. This perception and reaction probably came from deep-seated past hurt, but it also created fresh wounds. Fortunately, through honest conversation we found common ground and could move forward, although some relations will need to be mended by continued gracious interactions.

During this time of turmoil, I found solace in God’s presence and His Word, praying for wisdom to correctly handle the situation. I was also listening to a beautiful Gospel song about God’s holiness, and it struck me: God is holy! Even three times (absolutely and ultimately) holy (Isaiah 6:3). This means God is distinct, separate, set apart, morally perfect, divine, trustworthy, and unique. Not only is He perfect, but He commands us to reach that lofty ideal as well - we should also be holy: *“As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. But just as He Who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: ‘Be holy, because I am holy’”* (1 Pet. 1:16 NIV). We must also be set apart, devoted, pure, and righteous.

The contrast between these two concepts at once became evident: does this holy separation of God from a sinful humankind imply that God’s love is exclusive?

GOD’S INVITATION IS OPEN TO ALL

On the one hand, God invites everyone to come to Him and experience His love: *“Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost”* (Isaiah 55:1 NIV). We also read in Rev. 22:17, *“The Spirit and the bride say, ‘Come!’ And let the one who hears say, ‘Come!’ Let the one who is thirsty come; and let the one who wishes take the free gift of the water of life.”* The gift of salvation is indeed free and it is available to anyone: *“For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life”* (John 3:16 NIV). But God does not only call us to salvation, but also to holiness. He calls us to be a holy nation, set apart unto Him (1 Peter 2:9), and

to be saints (Romans 1:7). Anyone who longs for, thirsts for, and is in need of God’s love and holiness can come and find them in abundance! It is an inclusive invitation directed to all.

GOD’S REQUIREMENTS

But on the other hand, the prophet Habakkuk reminds us that *“Your eyes are too pure to look on evil; You cannot tolerate wrongdoing”* (1:13). While God invites all to come, He will not tolerate sin. Those who come, must be washed in the blood of Jesus and from then onward live holy lives. There can be no twilight zones in God’s magnificent radiance. His perfect holiness cannot excuse perverse actions or attitudes. He is exclusively holy, and desires for His children to be like Him - pure and unblemished: *“Christ loved the Church and gave Himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to Himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless”* (Eph. 5:25-27 NIV).

SOLVING THE PARADOX

So how do we reconcile this paradox of exclusive holiness and inclusive love? In one word - we look to the CROSS! While God lovingly wants to reconcile all to Himself, He has to uphold His perfect moral standard (2 Tim. 2:13). Thus, He made a way for us to become perfect and allowed into His presence: God sent His holy, perfect Son to transform sinners into saints! God paid the ultimate price so we could be holy, and He could also remain true to His divine nature: *“Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behaviour. But now He has reconciled you by Christ’s physical body through death to present you holy in His sight, without blemish and free from accusation - if you continue in your faith, established and firm, and do not move from the hope held out in the gospel...”* (Col. 1:21 - 22 NIV). This is echoed in Rom. 6:23, *“For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord”*, and again by John, *“This is how God showed His love among us: He sent His one and only Son into the world that we might live through Him”* (1 John 4:9 NIV).

PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

1. Positional righteousness

God has sanctified believers who trust in Jesus for their salvation by His Spirit (1 Cor. 1:2) and by the precious blood of the Lamb (Heb. 13:12). In His grace, He has adopted us as children and declared us holy: *“...the Father... has qualified you to share in the inheritance of*

His holy people in the kingdom of light. For He has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought [moved, transferred, translated] us into the kingdom of the Son He loves, in Whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins” (Col. 1:12-14 NIV). He made us citizens of heaven by calling us out of this world: *“But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Saviour from there, the Lord Jesus Christ”* (Phil. 3:20 NIV).

This radical ‘move’ is well summarised by the website GotQuestions.org, “In Christ, God transfers us from death to life (John 5:24); from alienation to acceptance (Col. 1:22); from separation to nearness (2 Cor. 5:18-20); from despair to hope (1 Peter 1:3); from darkness to light (1 John 2:8); from slavery to freedom (Rom. 6:16-23; 8:2; John 8:32); from enemies to friends (Rom. 5:11); and from strangers to compatriots (Hebrews 11:13-16).”

2. Progressive holiness

While believers were declared holy in Christ, they are also called to pursue holiness in their everyday lives, laying down all sin and worldly desires: *“Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, bringing holiness to completion in the fear of God”* (2 Cor. 7:1 ESV). We should continually disregard the flesh and chase after a life that pleases God: *“Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God - this is your true and proper worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is - His good, pleasing and perfect will”* (Rom. 12:1-2 NIV).

Only when we are pure and consistently yearn after God’s righteousness will we have unbroken fellowship with Him and with the Body of Christ: *“This is the message we have heard from Him and declare to you: God is light; in Him there is no darkness at all. If we claim to have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live out the truth. But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, His Son, purifies us from all sin”* (1 John 1:5-7 NIV). Verse 9 reads, *“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.”*

The Spirit assists us and transforms us into the holy image of

the Son (2 Cor. 3:18), until the day that we will be completely holy in the presence of God and His holy angels.

3. Do not call good evil and evil good

We often hear that we should be tolerant of other people’s views and not force our opinions on them. But such a viewpoint is only tolerant as long as one agrees with that sentiment of uncapped inclusivity. Talk of sin or absolute, biblical morality is not tolerated by such a supposedly tolerant and inclusive view. God warns that such moral duplicity will be met with judgement: *“Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter”* (Isaiah 5:20). It is an end-time sign that people will progressively shut their ears to the truth, relegating it in the name of inclusivity: *“For the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths”* (2 Tim. 4:3-4 NIV). We should not fall into the trap of sugar-coating sin in the name of tolerance - neither in our own lives, nor in those of others.

CONCLUSION

How wonderful are the invitation and promises of God Who longs to save and sanctify all people! God is universally inclusive in His all-abundant love and grace. Yet, He requires those who take up His invitation to leave sin behind and live holy lives. He provides the means of sanctification through Jesus’ sacrifice, His Word and Spirit, but expects us to cooperate and detest sin in our lives and communities. Therefore, one cannot be agreeable to sinful thoughts or philosophies in the name of love. Sin is dangerous and destructive, leading to all kinds of heartbreak and painful consequences. It is actually love to call sin out, not to normalise or rationalise it or make it acceptable. Of course, this has to be done with much love and empathy, with wisdom and grace, but also with the conviction that a holy God will not stand for it, and neither should we. Finally, let us be encouraged by the words of Paul, *“Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He Who calls you is faithful; He will surely do it”* (1 Thess. 5:23-24 ESV).

WIE PAK JOU VALSKERM?

Charles Plumb was 'n vlieënier in Viëtnam. Na 75 gevegsmisies is sy vliegtuig deur 'n missiel afgeskiet.

Plumb het met sy valskerm uit die vliegtuig gespring, in vyandelike hande geland en die volgende ses jaar in 'n Kommunistiese tronk deurgebring. Hy het die beproewing oorleef en gee nou lesings oor wat hy uit sy ervaring geleer het.

Eendag toe hy en sy vrou in 'n restaurant gesit het, het 'n man vanaf 'n ander tafel nadergestap en gesê: 'Jy is Plumb! Jy het vliegtuie in Viëtnam gevlieg en is neergeskiet!' Plumb het vir hom gevra: 'Hoe in die wêreld het jy dit geweet?'

Die man het geantwoord: 'Ek het jou valskerm gepak.' Toe gryp hy sy hand en sê: 'Ek dink dit het gewerk!' Plumb het hom verseker dat dit gewerk het: 'As jou valskerm nie gewerk het nie, sou ek

nie vandag hier gewees het nie.'

Daardie nag kon Plumb nie slaap soos hy oor die man gewonder het nie. Hoe het hy gelyk in 'n vlooduniform? Hoeveel keer het Plumb hom gesien sonder om eers: 'Hoe gaan dit?' of enigiets anders te vra, omdat hy 'n vlieg-vlieënier en die ander man net 'n matroos was.

Hy het nagedink oor die baie ure wat die matroos in die ingewande van die skip deurgebring het om noukeurig die valskerms op te vou en te pak, terwyl hy die lot van 'n vreemdeling in sy hand gehou het. Gevolglik vra Plumb gereeld 'n belangrike vraag aan sy gehoor: 'Wie pak jou valskerm?'

Almal van ons het iemand wat dit wat ons nodig het om deur die dag te kom, voorsien. Paulus het van Febe gesê: '...Sy is 'n staatsmaker wat al baie gelowiges ondersteun het - ook vir my.'

Wie ondersteun jou? Bewys

vandag jou waardering teenoor hulle!

- Bob & Debby Gass, Radiokansel

--- ooo OOO ooo ---

'I thank my God every time I remember you.' (Philippians 1:3).

- The Lord brings people into our lives who are a source of blessing to us.

- God uses individuals to touch our lives and lift the load.

- Think about those who have helped you along your path and be thankful.

- Be a blessing to others, so that they will be thankful when they remember you.

PRAYER:
Lord, thank You for those people that You have brought into my life to be a help and an encouragement to me. May my life also be a source of blessing to others as we together serve and honour You. Amen.

www.AlivetoGod.com



HIS LOVE HAS NO LIMITS

Annie Johnson was born in Vineland, New Jersey, USA on Christmas eve 1866. Her parents, Eldon and Jean, rejoiced in the gift of their early Christmas-present daughter!

Nearly three years later, all the joy of that Christmas disappeared in a flood of sorrow, as Annie's mother died at the age of 23, soon after giving birth to Annie's sister. Her father was not well and for two years the bereaved family of three lived with a widow friend of Eldon's. Annie and her sister were not really welcome in the home, they were simply an added burden.

By a remarkable providence, a local schoolteacher recommended a childless Christian couple in the town, Mr and Mrs Flint. The couple offered a loving and warm-hearted Christian home to the two girls and after the adoption, their surname was added to Annie's. Through their childhood years the girls were

taught the Christian gospel and the teaching of the Bible framed every aspect of life.

At the age of eight Annie was brought to saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. In later life she testified of the reality of that experience and although she was so young, she was convinced that God had truly saved her that day.

Even before she became a teenager, Annie began to develop a keen interest in reading and writing - particularly poetry. The Lord was working in her heart, sanctifying her through her life's experiences.

Then tragedy struck again when both her adopted parents died within a few months of each other. Annie was left overwhelmed with sadness and loss. Her own health continued to deteriorate rapidly. Her doctors sadly had to tell her that she would soon become a helpless invalid, crippled by the advancing arthritis running

through her body. In her sadness, her illness, and desperate financial predicament, Annie was cast upon God. The very best of her God-given gifts of writing, poetry, and prose were drawn out of her in her deep trial.

Among her collection of poems that remain, "He giveth more grace" stands out as a wonderful statement of her Biblical theology of pain, trial, and suffering and of the boundless store of grace that is found in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul urges Timothy, his son in the faith, to "be strong" (2 Timothy 2:1) - it is in this grace alone that he will be able to endure the hardships that he will face. It is no different for us as Christians today. Annie's lovely hymn has a timeless message and especially for you, today!

*He giveth more grace when the burdens grow greater.
He sendeth more strength when the labours increase.*

*To added affliction He addeth His mercy,
To multiplied trials, His multiplied peace.*

*When we have exhausted our store of endurance,
When our strength has failed ere the day is half done,
When we reach the end of our hoarded resources,
Our Father's full giving is only begun.*

*His love has no limits, His grace has no measure,
His power no boundary known unto men;
For out of His infinite riches in Jesus
He giveth, and giveth, and giveth again.*

Beloved, take heart! Be strong in His strength and receive our precious Father's multiplying, sufficient grace.

- Helen du Plessis, 083 332 0895
(Source: castlefieldschurch.org.uk).



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Will Jesus Ever Return?

In 1970, Hal Lindsey published "The Late Great Planet Earth." The book sold millions of copies and introduced a generation to the miraculous fulfilment of Bible prophecy throughout the ages and right up to the present time. Coming on the heels of World War II, the rebirth of Israel, the Six Day War, and widespread societal upheaval, many were convinced that the rapture would take place before the end of the decade.

But the 1970s came and went, and Jesus did not return. Then, in the 1980s and 1990s, numerous Bible prophecy books with titles like "Countdown to Armageddon" and "Final Warning" were sold all over the world. Again, many people were convinced Jesus would return before the end of the century.

Yet Jesus did not come. Then the world experienced Y2K, the 9/11 terrorist attacks, and the phenomenal success of the "Left Behind" series. Once again, it seemed as though Jesus would return at any moment. But once again, He did not. And then something happened. Complacency set it.

END-TIMES INDIFFERENCE
Because Jesus had not come, many Christians began to openly doubt whether He ever would. Why?

I believe there are at least two reasons. First, we live in a culture that demands instant gratification. We are impatient, and we are used to getting what we want when we want it. The second reason is the errant predictions of date setters. False prophets told the world that Jesus would return on specific dates - even though Jesus said, "No one knows the day or hour" (Matthew 24:36). Inevitably, this leads to ridicule of Bible prophecy. But these critics forget that it is false prophets who made these claims, not the Bible. The Bible's track record remains perfect. In fact, the Bible predicted this complacency long ago.

THE BIBLE SAID THIS WOULD HAPPEN
Almost two thousand years ago, Peter issued a warning. He said in the last days people will deny the signs we see today. He said the world will mock the idea of Jesus returning. People will make fun of those who believe in the Second Coming and say the exact things we hear today - things such as, "I thought Jesus was coming back? What happened to His promise? Generation after generation has said He is coming. Yet, since the

beginning of the world, everything has remained the same!" (see 2 Peter 3:3-4).

You've probably heard variations of this complaint yourself. But is it true? No. It's not. Nothing could further from the truth!

ARE THINGS THE SAME AS THEY'VE ALWAYS BEEN?
To say the world is the same today as in years past - that we do not live in unique times - is simply not true. More than any other generation, ours has reason to expect the Second Coming in our day and time. Jesus and the prophets said to look for specific signs heralding the end times. For over 1 800 years, you could not find one of the signs they said to look for. Today, in one form or another, you can find all of them. Here are just a few examples:

1. The Jewish People Are Returning to their Land
God promised to bring the Jewish people back to the land of Israel, and the Messiah will reign and execute justice in the Earth (Jeremiah 23:5-8; Isaiah 11:11-12). God said that He would call them from "among the nations" (Ezekiel 39:28), from "the farthest corners of the earth" (Isaiah 11:12), and from "north, south, east, and west" (Psalm 107:3). He promised to welcome them home from the lands to where they were scattered (Ezekiel 20:34). This is now taking place. For 1 878 years (A.D. 70 to A.D. 1948), the Jewish people lived in exile. But on 14 May 1948, they reestablished the nation of Israel. We can see that Jews are returning to their homeland.

2. The Jewish People Back in Jerusalem
Jesus prophesied that armies would surround Jerusalem, destroy the city, and enslave its citizens. In A.D. 70, the Roman legions fulfilled this prophecy. Jesus said that in the days that followed, Gentiles would control Jerusalem, until "the times of the Gentiles are over." We infer that the Jewish people would then once again take control of Jerusalem, leading up to the return of Jesus (cf. Luke 21:24-28; Rom. 11:25). It is significant that in June 1967, the Jewish people retook control of Jerusalem, despite there still being many conflicts and disputes surrounding the Temple Mount.

3. The Gospel Preached Throughout the World
When the disciples asked about the end of the age and the signs of His coming, Jesus told them to look for a very specific sign. He said that the Gospel will be



preached throughout the entire world. Every nation will hear it. Then, the end will come (Matthew 24:14). For centuries after the crucifixion, the Gospel mostly reached a small area surrounding the Mediterranean Sea. But in the past two centuries, Christians have carried the Gospel to every country on Earth. Today, missionaries live in every nation. The Bible has been translated into hundreds of languages, and the message of Jesus is being sent around the world by radio, TV, satellite, and the Internet. Our generation is the first one on the verge of spreading the Gospel to every last person on Earth. This may be the start of the fulfilling of this prophecy, and the preaching of the Gospel will continue until the end, when the Son of Man shall appear in glory (v. 30).

4. Israel Surrounded by Enemies
According to the Bible, enemies will surround Israel in the end times. Those enemies will say "Come, let us wipe away the nation of Israel. Let's destroy the memory of its existence" (Psalm 83:4) and "Let us take for ourselves these pasturelands of God" (Psalm 83:12). Ezekiel said Israel's neighbours will say, "God has given their land to us" (Ezekiel 11:14-17), and "Israel and Judah are ours. We will take possession of them. What do we care if their God is there?" (Ezekiel 35:10).

Ever since the rebirth of Israel in 1948, the daily headlines have included these exact sentiments. Israel's neighbours claim the land of Israel for themselves, and they have no regard for the God of Israel. Enmity with Israel occurred throughout history, but anti-Semitism continues and may even be escalating in the present day. Battles have been and will continue to be fought over the very existence of Israel. God will eventually save Israel from all her enemies upon His triumphant return.

5. Rise of the Gog of Magog Alliance
The Bible predicts that a military alliance that includes Russia,

Iran, Turkey, and a number of Middle-Eastern nations will form and attack Israel "in the latter days" (Ezekiel 38:8) when God brings His people home from among the enemy nations (Ezekiel 39:27). Today, we see those exact nations coming together. The alliance formed today is an one that has never existed in world history. This is an important development that is pointing to the build-up of Christ's return.

6. Rise of a United Europe
In Daniel 2, we read of a dream that king Nebuchadnezzar had. His spirit was troubled, because nobody could interpret the dream. Daniel prayed and received the revelation from God that the different sections of the statue in Nebuchadnezzar's dream represented successive world kingdoms. Many interpret the final kingdom, before the arrival of the eternal kingdom of the Messiah, to be a revived Roman Empire (Daniel 2, 7, Rev. 17). According to Daniel, it will be a ten-nation alliance (signified by the ten toes) of weak and strong nations. Some parts will be as strong as iron, while other parts will be as weak as clay (v. 2:42).

We see the initial stages of this alliance in the formation of the European Union (EU) - the legal and culture inheritor of the Roman Empire's legacy. The EU today is a coalition of both weak and strong nations. Being a volatile alliance, it struggles to remain in unity. However, it is significant that these powers are aligning themselves, forming a framework of power and government that may be a dominant force during the end times.

9. The Rise of Global Government
The Bible says that in the last days, a single government will rule the world politically (Revelation 13:7), religiously (Revelation 13:8), and economically (Revelation 13:16-17). It will rule over "all people, tribes, and languages" on the face of the earth (Revelation 13:7). Its autho-

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Will Jesus Ever Return?

Continued from p. 6

rity will be so complete that no one will be able to buy or sell anything without its permission (Revelation 13:16-17). For centuries, a true global government was impossible. Today, world leaders openly discuss it, and the technology exists to implement and rule such a government.

Alone, each of these signs indicate the end times are near. **Together, they prove ours may be the end-times generation.** Jesus Himself said to look for these signs. He said when you see them, you can know His return is near (Matthew 24:33). Jesus said that the generation that sees these signs will not pass away before He returns (Matthew 24:34). **This convergence of signs is the number one reason to believe that our generation is on the verge of witnessing the Second Coming.**

But instead of getting excited and ramping up our efforts to spread the Gospel, the overwhelming majority of Christian leaders remain silent on this issue. A large part of the Church is complacent, and the Bible warned about this as well.

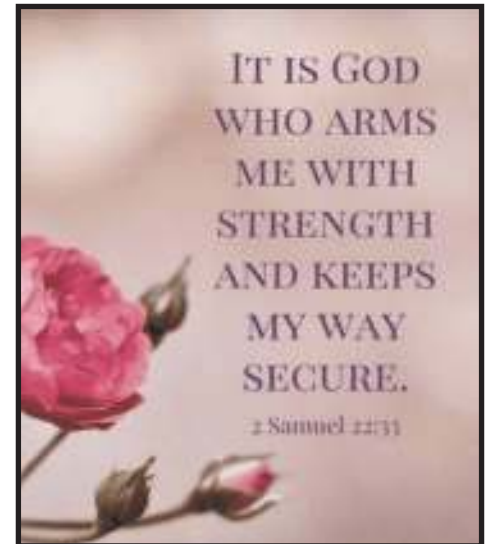
Jesus warned us not to be caught sleeping when He returns (Mark 13:36). To illustrate this, He told the parable of ten bridesmaids. Of the ten bridesmaids, five were foolish and five were wise. The five foolish bridesmaids did not take enough oil for their lamps when they went to wait for the bridegroom. When they left to buy more oil, the bridegroom came and they missed out on the marriage feast. Jesus warned us not to be like the foolish bridesmaids (Matthew 25:1-13). He said: ***"You, too, must keep watch! For you do not know the day or hour of My return"*** (Matthew 25:13).

In another parable, Jesus once again commanded us to remain alert and watch: *"You, too, must keep watch! For you don't know when the master of the household will return. It could be evening, midnight, dawn, or daybreak. Do not let the master find you sleeping when he arrives without warning. I say to you what I say to everyone: Watch for him!"* (Mark 13:35-37).

All the signs Jesus and the prophets said to look for are present right now. **For almost 2 000 years, no Christian could say that.** Our generation is an eyewitness to signs previous Christians could only dream about. We are running a marathon, and the finish line is within sight! Now is not the time to stop and take a nap. It is time to double your efforts to spread the Good News of Jesus Christ because our time here is limited. The signs tell

us that Christ's coming is near. Do not fall asleep. Do not let anyone around you fall asleep. It has never been more important to stay awake. Jesus is coming soon!

- Adapted from an article by Britt Gillette via www.prophecynewswatch.com



The Good Shepherd

“Yahweh is my best friend and my Shepherd. I always have more than enough. He offers a resting place for me in His luxurious love. His tracks take me to an oasis of peace near the quiet brook of bliss. That’s where He restores and revives my life. He opens before me the right path and leads me along in His footsteps of righteousness so that I can bring honour to His Name. Even when Your path takes me through the valley of deepest darkness, fear will never conquer me, for You already have! Your authority is my strength and my peace. The comfort of Your love takes away my fear. I’ll never be lonely, for You are near. You become my delicious feast even when my enemies dare to fight. You anoint me with the fragrance of Your Holy Spirit; you give me all I can drink of You until my cup overflows. So why would I fear the future? Only goodness and tender love pursue me all the days of my life. Then afterward, when my life is through, I’ll return to Your glorious presence to be forever with You!” (Psalm 23:1-6 TPT).

A couple of years ago, while reading my Bible, I came across Psalm 23. Growing up as a son of parents in full-time ministry, this chapter was all too familiar to me. I could probably quote the entire psalm from memory since I was

five years old. Typically... when I'd come across this Psalm, I would find myself skimming over the verses, since I "already knew it."

What should have been a source of transformation and wonder now was predictable. This time, however, I felt the Holy Spirit wake me up to the reality of what I was reading... “The Lord is MY Shepherd”! Something began to move in my heart in a fresh and powerful way! I began to think about the implications of Him truly being MY Shepherd and how that means there is nothing I lack. This beautiful truth changes EVERYTHING!

It changes how I approach my relationships. Instead of needing something from another person, I can come ready to give, because I have all I need in Him.

It changes how I view my circumstances. Instead of me needing to control every outcome, I can release my grip and surrender in peace to the loving will of my Shepherd.

It changes how I view my burdens.
Instead of needing to privately shoulder the weight that builds under the stress of life, I can follow His Voice to green pastures, quiet waters, and a restored soul.

It changes how I view even the

darkness of the valley. Not only is the Shepherd watching over me, He is IN the valley with me. He is walking with me, guarding me, comforting me, as we journey TOGETHER.

Psalm 23 is an invitation into a renewed idea of what it means for Jesus to be your Shepherd. To trust He is leading you and has good plans! That His goodness and mercy are not only present, but they are pursuing you!

May you believe and rest in the fact that He is with you even through the darkness of the valley. May you be satisfied in His love and acceptance. May your cup run over at the Table! Let the reality of His Presence set you free from fear, striving, and

insecurity!

He is YOUR Shepherd, and you have all you need in Him!

Things to think about:

1. What does it mean that the Lord is **YOUR** Shepherd? How does that reality bring peace to your heart and mind?
2. When are there moments in the midst of your own valleys that you can see God's Presence near to you?
3. At the end of Psalm 23, it gives us a picture of a banquet where our cups are running over and His goodness and mercy are pursuing us for all of eternity. How does this stir up your hope? How can this give you strength for the journey?

- Phil Wickham

Burnout is a symptom of needing to lean more fully into the identity Christ has won for us, and trust God to walk with you as you do that.

Hope is not just optimism. It is a profound trust in God's character and promises.

*Freedom is found when we live according to
God's original design for our life.*

Hulp Uit 'n Onverwagte Oord

- Maretha Crous

Op 21 Oktober 2008 het Maretha Crous op die Van Stadensbrug gestaan. Sy was gereed om af te spring en haar lewe te beëindig. In haar nood het God ingegryp. Sy vertel haar verhaal.

“Waar ek 'n entjie van die Van Stadensbrug in my motor gesit het, het my selfoon aanhoudend gelui. Ek het dit geïgnoreer. Niemand sou verstaan hoekom ek die 40 kilometer tot by die brug gery het om daar af te spring nie.

Deur 'n waas van trane het ek my laaste SMS aan my broer gestuur: ‘Ek is lief vir jou.’ ‘Almal anders sal seker bly wees om van my ontslae te wees,’ het ek gedink toe ek die sleutel in my motor los en na die brug begin stap. Dit was koud waar ek op die reling van die brug gaan sit het. Alles was doodstil rondom my. Van onder die brug het die donker dieptes na my geroep.

Ek het my selfoon in die gapende afgrond laat val. Nou was dit my beurt. Ek het stadig opgestaan en met moeite na die rand van die brug gestap. Die geluid van 'n voertuig wat aankom, het my laat staan. Ek sou wag totdat die voertuig verby is. Meteens het dit met skreeuende bande tot stilstand gekom. Ek kon die rubber op die teer ruik en het gehoor hoe die taxi-bestuurder sy deur toeklap

hy na my aangedraf kom. ‘You can rape me. You can murder me. You can have it all. I don't care!’ het ek myself hoor skree. Die man het versteen gestaan. Ek het die woorde herhaal. Vir 'n oomblik het dit gelyk asof hy wil omdraai en wegstap, maar toe het ek hom hoor sê: ‘But God and I care.’

Ek was woedend. Ek het nie die krag gehad om na 'n preek te luister nie. Al wat ek wou hê, was dat die man moes weggaan sodat ek kon afspring. ‘Nou waar was God toe ek Hom nodig gehad het?’ het ek na hom geskree. Hy het kalm gebly en geantwoord: ‘Juffrou, waar was u toe God u nodig gehad het?’ Sy woorde het die wind uit my seile geneem. ‘Hoekom sal God 'n mislukking soos ek nodig hê? Hy het sekerlik ander, beter mense wat Hy kan gebruik.’ ‘God maak nie mistakes nie,’ het die man voortgegaan. ‘Wat jou ook al na hierdie brug gebring het... Hy kan en wil jou deurdra!’

'n Stilte het tussen ons neergedaal. Moes ek steeds spring? Wat as God hierdie vreemdeling gestuur het om aan my te wys dat Hy steeds omgee? Op die vraag of hy vir my kan bid, het ek kortaf geantwoord dat hy kon doen wat hy ook al wou. Hy het in sy moedertaal begin bid. Hoewel ek dit nie kon verstaan nie, het 'n rustigheid oor my neergedaal.



Die man het vir my gesê dat hy nie sonder my sou vertrek nie. Ek het probeer protesteer, maar gesien dit sou nie help nie. Die man het saam met my na my motor toe gestap. Hierna het hy in sy taxi geklim en saam met my weggetrek. In my motor se truspieëltjie kon ek die ligte van die taxi sien wat my volg. Dit het my vreemd veilig laat voel.

Terug by my woonstel het ek omgedraai om die vreemdeling te gaan bedank, maar hy was klaar weg. Ek weet nie wat sy naam is, waarheen hy op pad was of waarvandaan hy gekom het nie. Al wat ek weet, is dat God hom daardie dag na die brug gestuur het om my lewe te kom red!”

Maretha het iets van God se liefde vir die mens in haar dal van

doodskaduwee beleef. In Psalm 23:4 (1953-vertaling) lees ons immers: “Al gaan ek ook in 'n dal van doodskaduwee, ek sal geen onheil vrees nie; want U is met my: U stok en U staf dié vertroos my.” Ook in Lukas 4:18 (1953-vertaling) beklemtoon Jesus dat Hy gekom het om “die wat verbyseld van hart is, te genees”.

Jesus het die Heilige Gees as ons Trooster vir ons nagelaat. Hy vee ons trane weg, Hy versterk ons as ons swak voel en Hy kan 'n taxi vanuit die niet stuur om langs ons stil te hou omdat elkeen van ons se lewe vir Hom kosbaar is. Gaan jy vandag deur 'n geweldig moeilike tyd in jou lewe? Onthou, jy is nie alleen nie. Hy is reg langs jou.

- GOD was d  r... Benescke J v Rensburg, CUM, 2014.

WAAR TWEE OF DRIE IN JESUS SE NAAM SAAM IS ...

- Lucille May

Die het gevoel of my hart van skok gaan staan toe ek die oproep by die skool kry dat my tweejarige seuntjie, Stephan, gif ingekry het. Ons bediende, wat deur die dag na hom omgesien het terwyl ek by die skool was, het 'n draai gaan maak by ons bure waar sy ook deur die week werk. Sy het nie geweet dat hulle slaggif op die gras gegooi het om van hulle tuinslakke ontslae te raak nie. Stefan het gedink dit is lekkers en hy het daarvan ge  et. Ek het onmiddellik huis toe gejaag!

In aanloop tot die gebeurtenis was dit asof daar 'n geestelike herlewing by die skool uitgebreek het. Talle meisies het tot bekering gekom en hulle het my gevra om in pouse vir hulle Bybelstudie te hou. My man, Fred, is 'n prediker en hy het vir my 'n dik pak notas oor fisiese genesing gegee. Ek het die meisies daaruit begin leer. Vir weke het ons gesels oor die voorsiening wat God gemaak het

vir genesing deur die kruiswonde van Jesus.

Toe ek by die huis kom, was Stephan reeds bewusteloos. Sy o   het omgedop en skuim het by sy mondjie uitgekroon. Ek en my man het dadelik met ons seuntjie hospitaal toe gejaag. Elke sekonde wat die gif in sy lyfie was, kon dit sy brein beskadig. By die hospitaal het dinge egter gesloer. Die hospitaal wou h   dat ons eers 'n vorm moes invul voordat hulle na Stephan sou kyk. Hierna het die susters aan diens gesukkel om 'n aar te kry om Stephan se maag uit te pomp. Dit het nog langer geneem om die koolstof vir hom in te gee wat die gif sou neutraliseer. Ons was ged  an van stres!

Na al die drama het die pediater eindelijk opgedaag. Hy het die tydsverloop nagegaan wanneer Stephan ge  et en gedrink het. Sy slotsom: Die gif het reeds versprei deur Stephan se liggaam en

ons moes breinskade en epileptiese aanvalle te wagte wees. Met di   verdoemende nuus het ek na Stephan se kamer gestap waar sy slap lyfie op die bed gel   het. Na 'n paar minute het hy skielik regop gesit. Sy o   was helder en hy het ges   hy is honger. Ons het vir hom kos bestel en hy het ge  et asof hy niks makeer nie. Ek het toevallig op my horlosie gekyk en gesien dat dit net na 14:00 was.

Terug by die skool die volgende dag het die meisies dadelik na my toe gekom om uit te vind hoe dit met Stephan gaan. Hulle het my vertel dat hulle die vorige dag, nadat hulle die nuus gekry het dat hy gif ingekry het, besluit het om vinnig nadat die klok om 14:00 gelui het, bymekaar te kom om vir hom te bid. Hulle het outoriteit oor die vyand geneem soos ek hulle geleer het en gebid dat God vir Stephan deur Sy Heilige Gees sou genees. Die tyd wat Stephan regop gesit het, was presies nadat hulle gebid het. God het hulle

gebede gehoor!

Tot vandag toe het Stephan geen epileptiese aanvalle gekry nie en daar is ook geen tekens dat sy brein beskadig is nie. In sy matriekeindeksamen het hy in al sy vakke A's behaal en hy sal binnekort ook sy LLB-graad verwerf. God is waarlik getrou. Ek eer sy Naam!

Daar is krag wanneer ons in eenheid oor 'n saak bid. In Matteus 18:19-20 s   Jesus: “Verder verseker Ek julle: As twee van julle op aarde oor enige saak saamstem en daaroor bid, sal my Vader wat in die hemel is, hulle dit laat kry, want waar twee of drie in My Naam saam is, daar is Ek by hulle.” Mag dit 'n bemoediging wees as 'n krisis weer oor jou pad kom. God hoor nie net nie. Hy is self d  r wanneer ons Hom met 'n opregte hart aanroep.

- GOD was d  r... Benescke J v Rensburg, CUM, 2014.

The Purpose of Suffering

Suffering is an inevitable part of the human experience, and it's a question that has puzzled believers for centuries: **Why does God allow us to suffer?**

This profound question touches the heart of our faith, and understanding its purpose can bring us closer to God and provide comfort in our darkest times.

The Bible offers numerous insights into the reasons behind suffering. One key reason is that suffering can be a **tool for growth and refinement**. In James 1:2-4, we read, *"Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything."* Through trials, our faith is tested and strengthened, much like gold is refined in fire. These experiences can shape our character, deepen our trust in God, and prepare us for greater purposes.

Another perspective on suffering is that **it allows us to experience God's comfort and, in turn, offer that comfort to others**. Second Corinthians 1:3-4 says, *"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of com-*

passion and the God of all comfort, Who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God." Our own struggles can equip us to empathise with and support those who are going through similar challenges, fostering a sense of community and shared faith.

Suffering also reminds us of **our dependence on God**. In times of hardship, we often realise that we cannot rely solely on our own strength and understanding. This realisation can drive us to seek God's Presence and guidance more fervently. Psalm 34:18 reassures us, *"The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit."* Our suffering can be an invitation to draw nearer to God and experience His love and grace in profound ways.

Furthermore, suffering can **serve as a testament to the fallen nature of our world and our need for a Saviour**. It highlights the reality of sin and its consequences, pointing us to the hope and redemption found in Jesus Christ. Romans 8:18 offers a powerful perspective: *"I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us."* This verse



encourages us to look beyond our immediate pain and hold onto the promise of eternal life, where suffering will be no more.

While these explanations provide some understanding, it's important to acknowledge that the mystery of suffering often extends beyond our comprehension. As finite beings, we may not always grasp God's divine purposes.

However, we can take comfort in knowing that God is sovereign, loving, and ultimately in control. Isaiah 55:8-9 reminds us, *"For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways," declares the Lord. 'As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts.'"*

In times of suffering, it's crucial to hold onto our faith and trust in God's goodness. Surrounding ourselves with a supportive faith community, immersing ourselves in Scripture, and seeking God's Presence through prayer can provide strength and solace. Remember, God is with us in our suffering, offering His comfort, peace, and hope.

As we navigate the trials of life, let us find encouragement in knowing that **our suffering is not in vain**. It has the potential to bring us closer to God, shape our character, and prepare us for a glorious future. By trusting in God's plan and leaning on His promises, we can endure even the most challenging seasons with faith and hope!

<https://faithactivist.com>

Settle Into Your Identity in Christ

Burnout is a sure sign of a misplaced identity. Think about it. The highly motivated, cut-throat young attorney. She is likely entangled her self-worth with success at work. The young man plagued by saying yes to anyone who asks for anything. He is likely defining himself by his helpfulness, defining his value by people's approval of him.

When we are burned out, we are not fully resting in our identity as God's beloved, already-accepted children who have nothing to prove. So, just rest in your Christ-given identity. However, while this is true, it is not that easy. We'll have seasons when we relax into our identity in Christ more than at other times. We might even have aspects of that identity that we have accepted, but other aspects we will struggle with for our entire lives.

But you can start experiencing God's rest now, even though you

are still growing in your identity in Christ. Start by thinking through what is true of your identity in Christ...

You are secure in Him.

He is your Refuge.

He includes you.

He delights in you.

You have His approval.

You are significant to Him.

He gives you meaning.

You can rest in His finished work on the cross of Calvary.

He takes all your guilt.

You are free to live in Him and experience His wonderful Presence in your life.

He accepts you.

Circle back to the top of this list and read it again slowly.

What truth is your heart pulled toward? Now consider how your day-to-day life would change if you really believed these truths.

If you are confident in your significance to God, maybe it will not be as important to get your boss to notice you. If God went out of His way to include you, maybe you can pass when you are asked to join an off-campus outing and you know it is only because you have a car. And if God is your refuge, there are probably a lot of other things (Caffeine? Television?) you have been clinging to that you could leave behind. And by embracing your identity in Christ, and saying "no" to the things God is freeing you from, you might find that you can reclaim enough time to rest in God with more consistency!

Prayer: Jesus, I know that this

exhaustion and burnout is a symptom of me trying to build my own identity, in my own strength and apart from you. Reveal to me how my life would change if I believed the things about me that are true because I'm Yours. And, as I grow more confident in the identity you have already secured for me, let me experience peace and relief.

"You will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast, because they trust in You" (Isaiah 26:3 NIV).

"Are you weary, carrying a heavy burden? Come to Me. I will refresh your life, for I am your Oasis. Simply join your life with Mine. Learn My ways and you'll discover that I'm gentle, humble, easy to please. You will find refreshment and rest in Me. For all that I require of you will be pleasant and easy to bear." (Matthew 11:28-30 TPT).

<https://reclaimtoday.org>

My Treurlied word ‘n Loflied!

Ek en my man, Piet, het in die Noord-Kaap bedien. Die boere was vir ons baie goed en het vir ons baie keer vleis en melk gegee. Hulle kon egter net 'n salaris van R200 bekostig. Piet het eendag uit die kantoor gekom en vir my gesê: “Jong, ek het nou vir die Here 'n begroting uitgewerk. As ons R400 'n maand kry, dan gaan ons lekker deurkom. Nou gaan ek maar van die einde van dié maand af R40 tiende gee, so asof ek reeds R400 kry.”

Ek skrik my gedaan, want nou bly daar net R160 van die R200 oor! Die Here het toe nog nie met my die pad geloop wat Hy later met my moes loop oor finansies nie. Maar Piet het dit gedoen en op een of ander manier het ons tog deurgekom. Na so 6 maande kry ons toe R400! Toe sê hy vir my: “Weet jy wat, ons het dan nou goed gelewe toe ons twee tiendes gegee het. Nou gee ek maar R80 per maand.” En so het hy getrou altyd twee tiendes gegee tot kort voor sy dood...

Later is ek en Piet na Klerksdorp beroep. Terwyl ons in Klerksdorp was, het Piet baie moeg begin word. Hy het geen energie meer gehad nie. Ek het hom na die apteek gestuur om 'n opboumiddel te kry. Die apteker het hom aangeraai om sy broer, wat 'n mediese dokter was, te gaan spreek. Nadat hulle X-straalfoto's geneem het en 'n brongoskopie gedoen het, is vasgestel dat hy asbestose het. Hy het besluit om nie chemoterapie te neem nie en net pynstillers te gebruik. Hy moes na 'n paar maande die gemeente bedank en ons moes uit die pastorie trek.

Dit is onmoontlik om te beskryf hoe die Here ons deur daardie jaar van pyn en siekte gedra het. Ons het albei geestelik baie gegroei omdat ons so diep

afhanklik was van die Heer se genade.

Piet het aanhoudend uit die Woord geles. Kort voor sy dood het hy Ps. 124:7 vir my geles: *“Ons siel het vrygeraak soos ‘n voël uit die vangnet van die voëlvangers. Die vangnet is gebreek en ons, ons het vrygeraak.”* Na die lees van hierdie Skrifgedeelte het Piet vir my gesê: “Hierdie liggaam van my is my vangnet en as hy breek, sal my siel vryraak soos ‘n voël uit die vangnet.” Ten spyte van baie gebede en dat ons altyd positief gebly het, is Piet op 7 Mei 1984 oorlede...

Na Piet se dood het Maxie, my suster, my gehelp om na Pretoria te verhuis. Die Here het onmiddellik vir my deure oopgemaak waar ek die Woord kon bedien. Elf dae na Piet se begrafnis het ek reeds gepreek! Dit was baie moeilike dae van aanpassing, dae van gewoon raak om alleen te wees, maar die Here was baie goed vir my.

Drie maande nadat ek in Pretoria gekom het, het ek gehoor van spesiale dienste wat in die Noorde van Pretoria gehou word by die Charis-gemeente. Pastoor Labuschagne het die spesifieke aand gepreek toe ek 'n diens bygewoon het. Dit was gedurende die tyd toe “Praise and Worship” so prominent na vore getree het en hulle was besig met 'n “Praise and Worship”-Konferensie.

Ek was nog vreeslik gebroke oor Piet se dood, maar op 'n dag het ek besluit om die aand na 'n diens te gaan. Ek is glad nie 'n mens wat baie huil nie, maar gedurende die tyd na Piet se afsterwe het die tranes sommer net dag en nag oor my wange gestroom. Ek is in tranes na die diens, maar op pad daarheen het ek besluit: “Here, ek



gaan U vanaand prys, al maak dit my dood.” Omdat ek nie die pad geken het nie en nie wou verdwaal nie, het ek vroeg gery en so teen 18:20 daar aangekom. Die diens moes eers om sewe-uur begin, maar hulle was reeds besig om die Here te aanbid en Sy Naam groot te maak.

Die aanbidding het tot twintig voor nege aangehou. Dit was 'n baie besondere diens. Ek het die hele tyd vreeslik gehuil. Terwyl ek die Here geprys het, het die Here toegelaat dat ek Piet se stem kon hoor. Ek hoor toe sy bulderende stem voor die Troon en hy skree: “Halleluja vir die Lam!” en die Heilige Gees sê vir my: “Daar is een ding wat jy en Piet nog saam kan doen - julle kan My nog saam aanbid. Want dit is wat hy nou besig is om te doen. Wanneer jy aanbid, dan aanbid jy saam met

hom.” Onmiddellik na hierdie ervaring, was daar 'n boodskap in tale. Die uitleg was: “Die Here sê, hier is vanaand iemand in hierdie kerk wat God geloof het met 'n gebroke hart. Die Here het dit raakgesien. Die Here sê as jy vanaand kom, wil Hy jou gebroke hart genees.” Ek is soos 'n koeël uit 'n geweer vorentoe en mense het my bedien. Daardie tyd was die laagtepunt van my rou. Van daardie aand af het ek begin klim - ek het weer gesak ook, maar nooit so laag soos wat ek was nie! Die Here het my aangeraak en my pyn genees. Hy het my in staat gestel om voort te gaan met my bediening en Hom te dien totdat ek verenig sou word met my man en diegene wat my vooruitgegaan het na die hemelse tuiste.
- Stella se Stories, Stella Eilerd, 2014.

Salvation in a Nutshell

- Rom. 3:23 - Everyone has sinned.
- Rom. 6:23 - The penalty for our sin is death.
- Rom. 5:8 - Jesus Christ died for our sin.
- Rom. 10:8-10 - To be forgiven for our sin, we must believe and declare that Jesus is Lord. Salvation comes through Jesus Christ.

Jer. 20:11

★★★

B&B

Vit die Hand

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Sondagoggenddiens 9:30

JOI-Kinderdienste 9:30

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OASE VAN HOOP

-KOFFIE KAFEE-

HEB. 6:19

est. 2023

