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Love Like Jesus

LOVING THE UNLOVABLE

According to church standards, I was a pretty good person. I "loved the sinner, hated the sin" until the day I had to put this cliché into practice. There it was, my life thrown into a tailspin over a deep betrayal. I had to make a choice: walk away from the relationship or love someone who could not have cared less about the pain that was being inflicted on me, with no remorse or resolution in sight.

I sought God hard for wisdom. What should I do? It was in this moment that God revealed something to me - the heart of my betrayer. The saying "hurt people, hurt people" was exactly what was happening in this situation. This person was in complete turmoil. Unfortunately, he didn't know how to deal with it, so it was taken out on me.

A funny thing happens when we begin to focus on the heart of others rather than on their behaviour. We become compassionate - like Jesus. Suddenly, it's no longer about me and how I've been hurt. Instead, it becomes about ways to love them through their pain.

I believe this is what Jesus is saying in His powerful Sermon on the Mount. How easy it is to love people who are kind to us. Even non-believers do that. Chances are, they aren't the ones who need love the most. Honestly, it's probably the back-stabbing coworker, the lying spouse, the rebellious teenager, or the horrible waiter at lunch.

Taking the journey of loving like Jesus is life-changing! It's loving with eternity in mind. It's a risk, but one worth taking!

"You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbour and hate your enemy.' But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those

who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your own people, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matthew 5:43-48 NIV).

- Shannon Morrison
Life.Church South Oklahoma City

BEING A FRIEND

I had a new co-worker a while back who really wanted to be my friend. Instead of welcoming her onto our team, I wasn't very nice to her. In fact, there were times I was flat out mean. We would hang out from time to time but only when it was convenient for me.

A few months went by and my dad was diagnosed with cancer. It wasn't long before I found myself in a hospice facility during the last few days of his life. This person I hadn't really given the time of day to didn't just pray for me during this terrible season. She stayed on the phone with me every night until I was tired enough to fall asleep. She cooked my favourite meal for me before I got on the plane. She organised a package with all my other co-workers to send to me. And when I returned to work, she made herself available to talk and to cry with me whenever I needed to.

She was my friend before I knew I needed one. She cared about me when I didn't care for her. She loved me when I wasn't very lovable.

I thought I knew what unconditional love was. I thought I understood how Jesus loves us. It turns out, I was really wrong. For some



reason, I thought we earned unconditional love. For example, we start loving people conditionally and if that goes well, then eventually it will become unconditional. But that's not the way God loves us. He died for us while we were still sinners. Jesus sees me as worthy of love even when I'm really not deserving of it. He loved me unconditionally from the beginning, and that's the way He calls us to love others.

That friend loves me just like Jesus does. I want to love like that.

"My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you" (John 15:12 NIV).

"If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners do that. And if you lend to those from whom

you expect repayment, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, expecting to be repaid in full. But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High, because He is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful" (Luke 6:32-36 NIV).

"But God demonstrates His Own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8 NIV).

- Sam Simala
Life.Church Wichita

ONE BODY, MANY PARTS

I just got off the phone with my parents who told me news I never thought or expected I'd hear - my brother had taken his own life. I didn't know what to do because

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Love's Calling

In John 21, we read about the appearance of Jesus to His disciples at the Sea of Tiberias, that is Galilee. He made Himself known by His words and actions.

This was just days after Jesus's violent execution. At first, the disciples were left in trauma, fear, and with the most troubling of questions. Feelings of guilt for abandoning their Master in His hour of need. Not knowing what to do. They had so many expectations of Jesus becoming King, overthrowing the Romans, working wonders for the nation of Israel, and themselves being exalted and sitting at His left and right hand (Matt. 20:21). They had seen powerful miracles and learned deep spiritual truths. But now their Hero had been brutally crucified, and at once everything seemed senseless and hopeless.

Yet, they were totally amazed when He then appeared to them on two occasions after His crucifixion (John 21:14), and now for the third time. Once again allowing themselves to hope, they must have wondered what to do next. So some of them contemplated returning to that which was familiar: fishing. Peter, the leader, said, "I am going fishing" (v. 3). **Herein lies a grave danger: that the one who was called to become a fisher of men (Matt. 4:19) was on the verge of returning to the drudgery of everyday fishing, relinquishing the rich and upward calling of God in Christ (Phil. 3:14).** Herein lurks a danger for every child of God.

RESPONDING TO GOD'S CALL

God indeed has a general call for all believers - to make disciples, baptise them, and teach them spiritual truth (Matt. 28:19-20). But He may also have a special call for some, i.e., the unique scenario in which this activity may play out in an individual's life, e.g., working with drug addicts or vulnerable children. In the latter case, we may oftentimes feel like we have been called to do something greater for God. We have heard Him speak to our hearts, by His Word, through a dream, a vision, or through fellow believers. But like the disciples, we are unsure about the next steps, despite His "appearing" or revelation to us. **At such a crucial time, let us trust Him to unfold His vision as we expectantly wait and obediently follow.**

It would be wise to await God's timing, and not just rush into some activity because there is an inkling of a vision birthed in one's heart. Jesus told His disciples to wait until they have been empowered for service by the Holy Spirit

(Luke 24:49). One cannot do God's work in one's own way and on one's own terms. The flesh profits nothing (John 6:63) and will not lead to everlasting fruit (John 15:16). When the group of disciples followed Peter and went fishing, they laboured the whole night, but caught absolutely nothing (John 21:3), despite their skill, experience, and hard work. **When we do not well discern God's intent and will and subsequently face failure, we will be left frustrated and despondent.**

God usually takes His chosen vessels through seasons of preparation - pain, hardship, and rejection - to prepare them for the task at hand. He cannot use an unsurrendered, willful and hard-headed instrument. There is a difference between being persevering, persistent, and passionate versus being stubborn and not wanting to listen to good advice. Think of attempting to teach a teenager to drive, but he or she will not take any instruction or correction and will not let go of the steering wheel. This is a very dangerous situation that may lead to injury or even loss of life. We should wait upon God's continual direction with humble and open hearts, yielding to His perfect will while acknowledging that the omniscient God knows best, and being ready to spread the Good News of peace (Eph. 6:15) at all times. Then there will be an impact through our ministry.

SECOND CHANCES

Failure often prepares us for God's intervention, since then we will be prepared to listen and obey. When the disciples obeyed Jesus's seemingly illogical command to cast the net to the other side of the boat, they miraculously found an abundance of fish. **Such is a partnership with God: if we walk in His ways, He will bless us with the miraculous and provide beyond our expectations (Eph. 3:20).**

But there is more: Jesus is performing this miracle of providing an astonishing catch of fish at the reinstatement of Peter's ministry. It was a stunning parallel to the one He performed when He first called Peter to be His disciple and a fisher of men (Luke 5:4-10)! There, they also laboured without success throughout the night, and Jesus initiated their ministry with a miraculous catch of an overflow of fish. Peter and his friends could no longer doubt the kind Stranger's identity (John 21:12), nor could they doubt their next steps, their spiritual calling that He was confirming in the wake of His ascension. In a like manner,

Jesus will confirm His will in our lives if we humbly wait on Him and are willing to follow His leading. He will graciously provide new opportunities to right wrongs and get past our failures, turning them into learning opportunities.

ROOTED IN LOVE

Jesus's death on the cross was motivated by His ultimate love for humankind that surpasses understanding. He acted according to God's will, which was to save us from eternal damnation based on His unquenchable love. Now Jesus is reinstating Peter to his own particular calling. **But this ministry should be based on love, and nothing else.** Three times Jesus asks Peter whether he loves Him, and then proceeds to command him to nourish and take care of (to love) His sheep. **No other motive of grandeur, status, riches, respect, or service will do.** Not even a motivation rooted in comparison to the calling of others, or being resentful about their calling distinct from our own (John 21:21-22). In our ministry, we should build on the Foundation Who is Christ, and use gold, silver, and costly stones, not wood, hay, or straw (1 Cor. 3:12). **We should humbly follow Jesus's example and serve Him with the purest of motives: love.**

GROWTH IN LOVE

Upon their landing on the shore, Jesus lovingly fed them and spoke to Peter's heart (John 21:13, 15ff). Jesus asked Peter three times whether he loved Him, "more than these". The latter may either refer to the other disciples, but given the context of Peter's fishing activity, it may also refer to

the career and instruments of fishing. Jesus is beckoning Peter back to his original calling. The first two times, Jesus asked Peter if he loved Him using the Greek word 'agape', referring to Godly, unconditional love. Peter answered in the affirmative, but said that he loved or esteemed or liked (philia) Him as a friend. The third time, Jesus asked if Peter loved Him (only) with philia. Peter broke down and told Jesus that He knew everything, and that He well knew his limited capacity to love Him fully and to follow His calling. **At last, here is a broken vessel ready for use in the Master's hand!** Moreover, upon recognition of his own weakness, here is the challenge and opportunity for Peter - and us - to grow in love for the Master, moving from philia to agape by the power of the Spirit (Rom 5:5). Once called to be a fisher of men, Peter's call is now confirmed, but also augmented to be a shepherd of God's little lambs, those weak and vulnerable new believers and disciples who would be initiated into the Kingdom by the work of the Spirit, and by the disciples' ministry.

Let us take heart and instruction from this lovely narrative in John 21: Jesus is calling us to serve Him and we should respond accordingly. He gives us second chances when we fail. He is calling us to surrender to His will. He is calling us to scrutinise and purify our motives. And He is calling us to love Him more and more as we love our brothers and sisters and serve them in His Name.

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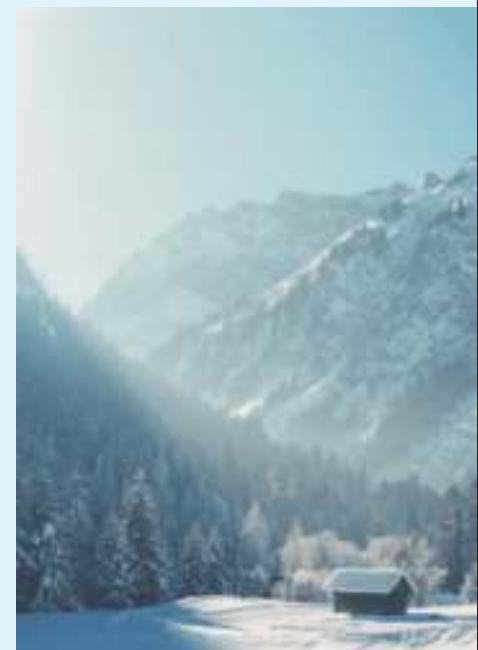
DIE WINTER VAN DIE SIEL

"U wat al die seisoene van die aarde vasgestel het; somer en winter is die werk van U hand" (Psalm 74:17).

As God in die wisseling van seisoene getrou is, sal Hy Homself sekerlik getrou bewys in Sy optrede teenoor Sy Eie geliefde Seun. Die winter van die siel is nie maklik nie. Maar troos jou hieraan: die Here het daardeur gekom. Ryp verryk die grond. Net so kan daar goeie dinge voortspruit uit ons winters van droefheid.

Ons Here is 'n voortdurende bron van warmte en vertroosting in ons moeilike tye. Kom ons wikkel onsself toe in Sy beloftes en gaan dan uit in die koue en sit ons diens aan Hom voort.

- Charles Spurgeon



A WORD ABOUT PERSONAL PROPHECY

First Corinthians 14:1, 3, 4 help us understand prophecy and prophetic ministry. Prophecy must be in line with the Word of God, and a personal word of prophecy should confirm something that is already in your heart. It is nice when that happens, because you know that the person giving you that word did not know anything about what God was saying to you. But if somebody tells you to go to the mission field, or to Bible college, do not quit your job and go unless you know that God has spoken to your heart this same word!

I have seen people get into horrendous messes by trying to run their lives based on what other people have told them was a "prophetic message from God."

If the prophecy does not bear witness in your heart, do not worry about it. There are a lot of well-meaning people who think they hear from God for others, but they do not.

If someone prophesies to you something that is not already in your heart, then I suggest you write down the words that are spoken over you and just wait for the Lord to reveal to you whether or not the words are from Him.

If a word of prophecy is truly from God, He will make it happen in His Own time. Lay aside the prophecy and wait to see if God brings it to pass. He will speak to you in other ways to confirm it, if it is really from Him. I know of situations in which five to ten years passed

before something happened to prove that a prophecy was truly from God. So even when we have clear direction from God, we need to let Him fulfil His promises without trying to manipulate their manifestation.

When a promise does come to pass, the Holy Spirit will help us recall that word we received years before to let us know we are indeed walking in God's perfect plan.

If prayerful, godly believers have spoken a good word over you, then opposition is one of the greatest signs that their message was truly from God. Refer back to the spoken or written message when the devil tells you that you are not called, that you are never

going to do what is in your heart to do, that you are never going to prosper, or that you are never going to get a breakthrough in your situation or whatever the case may be. One of your weapons against his attacks will be the word that has been prophesied to you.

Remember, what has been said through the gift of prophecy will help you remain steadfast in faith when the devil wages war against your calling or purpose. If the prophecy is truly from God, the devil will eventually try to discourage you from believing the truth, and you will be able to stand firm in faith because you know what the Lord has said about you.

- Joyce Meyer, The Everyday Life Bible

GO ITSHWARELA KA PELO YOTLHE

(Forgiveness with all your heart)



DITEMANA

"Mme tsholanang ka bopelontle, lo utlwelane botlhoko, lo **itshwarelane** jaaka Modimo le ona o lo **itshware** ka Keresete" (Baefeso 4:32).

"Gonne fa lo **itshwarela** batho ditlolo tsa bone, le Iona Rraeno wa legodimo o tla lo **itshwarela**. Mme fa lo sa **itshwarele** batho ditlolo tsa bone, Rraeno le ene ga a kitla a lo **itshwarela** ditlolo tsa Iona" (Matheo 6:14).

"Jaanong he, Iona ba lo leng batlhaolwi ba Modimo, le bai-tshepi le barategi, aparang kutlwelobotlhoko ya pelo le bopelontle le boikokobetso le bonolo le bopelotelele; lo itshokelane, lo **itshwarelane** fa mongwe a ledisi-

wa ke molato wa yo mongwe; **itshwareleng** jaaka Morena le ene alo **itshware**" (Bakolose 3:12-13).

"Le gona, lo se ka Iwa atlholo, mme ga lo nke lo atlholwa. Se boneng ope molato, mme ga lo nke lo bonwa molato. **Itshwareleng**, mme lo tla **itshwarelwa**" (Luka 6:37).

"Ke fa Petoro a atamela, a mo raya a re: 'Morena, mokaulengwe wa me o ka nteofela ga kae, ke ntse ke mo **itshwarela**? A e ka nna gasupa?' Jesu a mo raya a re: 'Ke go raya ke re: E sang gasupa, mme e nne ga 70 gasupa'" (Matheo 18:21-22).

"Mme morena wa gagwe a tuka bogale, a mo neela batlhokofatsi, go tsamae a lefe molato otlhe. 'Rre wa legodimo le ene o tla direla jalo mongwe le mongwe wa Iona yo o sa **itshwareleng** mokaulengwe wa gagwe ka pelo yotlhe'" (Matheo 18:34-35).

"O re **itshwarele** melato ya rona, jaaka le rona re itshwarela ba ba melato le rona" (Luka 11:4).

DIKAKANYO

Ka nako ya dikgetho go diragala gore go boelwe morago le go gopola hisitori e e maswe ya Aforikaborwa. Se se utlwisa botlhoko ke gore go busetswa batho kwa morago le mo tumelong. Go busetswa batho kwa morago go ba tsenya mo bothateng jwa go se itshwarele ka pelo yotlhe. Go agiwa mebuso mo

godimo ga kilo le mo godimo ga go sa letlelele batho gore ba itshwarele ka pelo yotlhe. Le fa re ka itshwarela gannyel fela mme re itshwarela fela nakwana ga go thus sepe go ya ka ditemana tse di nopolwang fa godimo. Baagi ba bantsi ba itse le thapelo ya Morena. Ya re: "re itshwarele melato ya rona, jaaka le rona re itshwarela ba ba melato le rona." Ke kopa o ipotse gore le wena o ne wa bofiwa gape ka dikeetane tsa hisitori mme a o ile wa gogelwa mo maemong a go se itshwarele ka pelo yotlhe. Ke lemogile gore le Bakeresete ba ba tsenang kereke beke le beke ba ne ba bontsha kilo e e makatsang. Go rutiwa boitshwarelo mo dikerekeng mme ka nako ya dikgetho batho ba buse-tswa kwa morago.

Fela jaaka ngwaga ya 2024. Morago ga dikgetho, e bile thata jaanong go tla dirisanwa mmogo mo mmusong mme re agela kwa pele mme re ithuta go dirisana mmogo ka tlotslo le ka lerato. Mme fela fa re dirisana monate mme re kgatlhisa Modimo, ke nako ya dikgetho gape. Jaanong e ne e le tsa setshaba mme ka 2026 ke tsa selegae gape. Kilo e be e busiwa gape. Go bontsha gore boitshwarelo ga se ya nneta. Ga se boitshwarelo ka pelo yotlhe.

Diabolo o ja monate fa batho ba busetswa mo dikeetaneng tsa go se itshwarelane. A wena o ne wa gogelwa mo selageng se se go busedseng kwa morago. Re tla tshwanelwa go kopa Modimo



Johan Zerwick
Sêlê ke 083 458 3837

boitshwarelo. Bala gape Matt. 18:34-35 fa godimo. "Rre wa legodimo le ene o tla direla jalo (temana ya 34 – go go neela batlhokofatsi) mongwe le mongwe wa Iona yo o sa **itshwareleng** mokaulengwe wa gagwe ka pelo yotlhe."

THAPELO

Modimo re kopa o re itshwarele mo Aforikaborwa gore re kgone go itshwarelane. Re itshwarele ka re dirile gore re gogelwe mo maemong a go se itshwarele ka pelo yotlhe. Itshwarele setshaba sa etsho. Re kopa o re thus se re dirisane ka lerato le ka bopelotelele le ka boitshwarelano. Re tlhoka thuso ya gago Morena. Tlosang dikeetane tsa go sa itshwarelane mo go rona. Re atlhole mme o re bontshe gore ke kae mo re tlhokang go itshwarelane. Morena tshegofatsa setshaba sa Aforikaborwa. AMEN.

Love Like Jesus



Continued from p. 1

he was my go-to person in times of need. Whenever anything happened, good or bad, he was the first person I'd call.

Fortunately, I had a community of people to share life with. I called my small group leader, and within the hour, four friends came to my apartment to be with me. And what happened over the next weeks and months was incredible. Some came over to my place and let me cry. Others took me out and made me laugh. Some provided meals. Others made charitable donations in my brother's honour. Some drove through the night to be at my brother's memorial service to support me. Others even decorated my apartment for Christmas to welcome me back from my difficult trip. My friends did what God equipped each of them to do to care for me.

First Corinthians 12 teaches that we are one body with many parts. God has given each of us unique gifts, talents, and passions to use to serve others. I am forever grateful for my friends who used what they had to serve me in my time of grief. Today I want to encourage you to remember that you have exactly what it takes to serve others and love like Jesus in their time of greatest need.

"Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body - whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free - and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. Now if the foot should say, 'Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,' it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. And if the ear should say, 'Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,' it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? But

in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as He wanted them to be. If they were all one part, where would the body be? The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I don't need you!' And the head cannot say to the feet, 'I don't need you!' On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and the parts that we think are less honourable we treat with special honour. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has put the body together, giving greater honour to the parts that lacked it, so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honoured, every part rejoices with it. Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it" (1 Corinthians 12:12-13, 15-19, 21-27 NIV).

-Amanda Davis
Life.Church Tulsa

YOU DID IT FOR ME
It was a chilly February evening as we entered our neighbourhood. On the side of the road sat a young girl, hysterically crying, wearing only a thin T-shirt and shorts. We pulled over and I got out and moved toward the woman saying, "How can I help you?"

She muttered the words, "He kicked me out. I'm pregnant, and my boyfriend kicked me out."

As I searched for words, my only thought was, "She's a person. Show her dignity." So I asked, "What is your name?"
"Brittney."

I replied, "It's very nice to meet you, Brittney. Would you like a ride to where you're going?"
"Yes, my grandma lives nearby," she said.

We walked to the car, and my husband hopped into the back seat with our two children - who

both sat with eyes and mouths agape. Without missing a beat, I introduced my family to Brittney as though I'd known her for years.

"Brittney, would it be okay if I get you some clothes? I can just run inside our home and get them."

"Yes, I'm really cold."

I entered my driveway and went inside. To my surprise, Brittney followed close behind me. I grabbed a long-sleeved sweatshirt, sweatpants, and flip flops. I handed her the clothing and she went to the bathroom to change.

We then took her to her grandmother's house and wished her well. On the way home, our children inquired about what had just happened, and I simply said, "I'm sure that's what Jesus would have wanted us to do." They agreed, and we went about the rest of our evening.

The next morning, I was casually reading my devotional when it was as if the words leapt off the page, "I was naked, and you gave Me clothing." My heart quickened as I remembered the events of the night before.

Opportunities to love like Jesus might happen anytime, anywhere.

We can love the stranger on the street like Jesus without even mentioning His Name. When Brittney meets Jesus, I pray she'll recognise Him as the one she encountered on her way to Grandma's house one cold February evening.

"Then the King will say to those on His right, 'Come, you who are blessed by My Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave Me food, I was thirsty and you gave Me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed Me, I was naked and you clothed Me, I was sick and you visited Me, I was in prison and you came to Me.' Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink? And when did we see You a stranger and welcome You, or naked and clothe You? And when did we see You sick or in prison and visit You?' And the King will answer them, 'Truly, I say to You, as You did it to one of the least of these My brothers, you did it to Me.'" (Matthew 25:34-40 ESV).

- Tasha Salinas
Life.Church Midwest City
www.life.church

It is the fruit of our actions that tells us what kind of seeds we have planted.



Die Ryk Boas en die Ryk Dwaas



Rut maak kennis met 'n gesin afkomstig uit Betlehem in Juda. Hierdie gesin, Eliméleg, sy vrou Naómi en hulle twee seuns, Maglon en Giljon, het tydens 'n intense hongersnood vanaf Juda na hul buurland Moab verhuis, sowat 120 km ver, om uitkoms te gaan soek. Daar het Naómi se twee seuns vir hulle elkeen 'n vrou van Moabitiese afkoms verkry. Ook daar het Naómi haar man en twee seuns aan die dood afgestaan.

Naómi besluit toe om terug te keer na haar geboorteland. Sy neem haar twee skoondogters saam. Op pad daarheen het sy egter by hulle aangedring om om te draai. Orpa het besluit om wel om te draai. Maar Rut was vasberade en sê vir haar skoonmoeder: "Moenie by my aandring dat ek u moet verlaat om agter u om te draai nie; want waar u gaan, sal ek gaan; en waar u vertoeft, sal ek vertoeft; u volk is my volk, en u God is my God. Waar u sterwe, sal ek sterwe en daar begrawe word! Mag die HERE so aan my doen en so daar-aan toedoen - net die dood sal skeiding maak tussen my en u" (Rut 1:16-17).

In Betlehem moes hulle weer hulle voete vind. Naómi het wel 'n stukkie grond gehad. Maar sy moes dit verkoop aan die naaste familielid om te oorleef. Sy sê dan ook vir die vroue wat haar geken het: "Noem my nie Naómi nie: noem my Mara (wat bitter beteken), want die Almagtige het my baie bitterheid aangedoen. Vol

het ek weggetrek, maar leeg het die HERE my laat terugkom. Waarom sou julle my Naómi noem, terwyl die HERE teen my getuig het, en die Almagtige my kwaad aangedoen het?" (Rut 1:21).

Naómi het dus bitter swaar gekry in Moab en ook by haar terugkoms in Betlehem. Sy beskuldig God dat dit Hy is wat haar leed aangedoen het, terwyl dit 'n tyd van nasionale afval was. God het die volk oorgegee aan 'n versengende droogte weens hulle eie boosheid. **Moet ons nie ook waak dat ons God verwyt wanneer ons in smart gedompel word nie?** En dit ten spyte van die feit dat ons nie altyd kan bepaal wie vir ons smart verantwoordelik is nie? Ons kan redeneer: Is dit dan nie Hy wat my geliefde van my af weg-geneem het nie? Hy het immers mag oor lewe en dood. Waarom nou die oneindige smart? Die pyn? Maar tog, Hy het mos nie vir ons ewige lewe hier op aarde belowe nie? Dit is goed om ons seënninge te tel ten spyte van ons smarte, en nie te probeer naspoor wie die oorsaak van ons ellende is nie. Want dan kan ons op daardie persoon wreek, terwyl die wraak aan God toekom! Selfs dit bring nie 'n einde aan ons probleem en ons ellende nie! God is en bly regverdig en gee om vir ons.

As Naómi maar net nie teen die donker wolke bly vaskyk nie! **Uiteindelik was dit tog ten goede dat sy na Moab gegaan het, soos ons**

verder in Rut lees. Ten spyte van die ellendes, kon Naómi uiteindelik vir die vroue aan die huisfront gesê het: "Kyk watter wonderlike skoondogter het God my gegee! Sy is vir my meer werd as sewe seuns!" (Rut 4:14-15).

DIE RYK BOAS

Met hul terugkeer na Betlehem ontmoet Rut vir Boas. Hy was 'n ryk boer, 'n man van integriteit wat God gedien het. Hy het sy lewe gebou op die Woord van God en nougeset die voorskrifte van God onderhou. Rut het op die stuk land afgekom wat aan Boas behoort het. Daar het sy koringare opgetel. Die Joodse Wet het bepaal dat die los are wat val, vir die armes en die vreemdelinge gelos moes word.

Boas was verwant aan Eliméleg, die afgestorwe man van Naómi, en hy was die losser om die grond by Naómi te koop sodat dit in die hande van die erfgename sou bly. In die hersteljaar, wat breedvoerig in Lev. 25 bespreek word, moes die grond weer terugval na die oorspronklike eienaar, Naómi. Boas sou verder ook met Rut trou ('n sg. swaersheweelik) sodat 'n erfgenaam vir Naómi gebore sou word en haar man se naam in gedagtenis gehou sou word.

'n Seun word gebore uit hierdie huwelik en sy naam is Obed. Hy is die oupa van Dawid uit wie se bloedlyn Jesus Christus, onse Here voortgekom het. Al sien ons nie dadelik die uitkoms nie, en ook die die uiteindelike plan nie, hou net vas aan die Here! **Kyk watter geweldige seën het Naómi uiteindelik verkry, en ons ook.**

Voorts was Boas 'n nasaat van Ragab, die prostitue, net soos Eliméleg. Wat het Ragab en Rut in gemeen? Hulle is heidense vroue wat genoem word in die geslagsregister van Jesus Christus! So kry die heidenvolke deur Jesus Christus ook saligheid wanneer hulle hul tot God bekeer. Paulus skryf dat die heidense volke die wilde olyftak is wat op die mak olyfboom (Israel) ingeënt is (Rom. 9). "Want so lief het God die wêreld (kosmos of wêreldbevolking, alle nasies en stamme en volke en tale, Openb. 7:9; 11:9) gehad, dat Hy Sy eniggebore Seun gegee het, sodat elkeen wat

in Hom glo, nie verlore mag gaan nie, maar die ewige lewe kan hê" (Joh. 3:16).

DIE RYK DWAAS

Ons kom egter 'n ander figuur in die Nuwe Testament teë. Hy was ook ryk aan materiële besittings, net soos Boas. Maar sy hart het veel anders daar uitgesien.

"Toe het iemand uit die skare geroep: 'Leermeester, sê asseblief vir my broer om ons pa se boedel met my te deel.' Jesus het geantwoord: 'Vriend, wie het My as regter oor julle aangestel om oor sulke dinge te besluit?' Toe het Hy gesê: 'Pas op! Moenie gierig wees nie. **Ware lewe word nie gemeet aan hoeveel ons besit nie.**' Toe vertel Hy 'n gelykenis: 'n Ryk man het 'n vrugbare plaas besit wat goeie oeste opgelewer het. Hy het toe by homself gewonder: 'Wat moet ek doen? **Ek het nie meer stooplek vir die oes oor nie.**' Hy het toe gesê: 'Ek weet! Ek sal my skure afbrek en groter skure bou. Dan sal ek genoeg plek hé om alles te berg. En ek sal terugsit en vir myself sê: Jou gelukkige kêrel! **Jy het genoeg gebêre vir die jare wat voorlê. Ontspan nou! Eet, drink en wees vrolik!**' Maar God het vir hom gesê: 'Jou dwaas! Vannag nog sal jy sterf. En alles wat jy bymekaaargemaak het, wie sal dit kry?' Ja, 'n mens is 'n dwaas as jy net aardse rykdom versamel, maar nie 'n ryk verhouding met God het nie'" (Luk. 12:13-21 NVL).

Ons moet ons lewens orden volgens God se prioriteite! Jesus het geleer, "Verkoop wat julle het, en gee vir dié wat behoeftig is. **Dit sal vir julle 'n skat in die hemel opberg!** En die beursies van die hemel kry nie gate in nie. Julle skat sal veilig wees - geen dief kan dit steel en geen mot dit vernietig nie. Want waar julle skat is, dáár sal julle hart ook wees" (Luk. 12:33-34 NVL).

Hierdie Ryk Dwaas was net op homself ingestel. Hy was 'n opperste egoïs en hebsugtige. Hy het net vir homself geleef en vir homself gewerk. Al die winste en oes was net vir sy eie rykdom en gemak. Hy het glad nie God of sy naaste in die oog gehad nie. Paulus, wat alles prysgegee het

Vervolg op p. 6

Hendrik van Graan
Susana van Graan
OPTOMETRISTS / OOGKLUNDIGES
PETER MOKABALAAN 3 (VAN RIEBEECKSTRAAT 3)
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Lewenslesse Uit Die Lewe Van Josef

Josef moes deur baie en erge verraad, versoeking, laster en onregmatige tronkstraf gaan om sy uiteindelike oorwinning te behaal en sy lewensdoel te bereik. Langs die pad het hy vele belangrike lewenslesse geleer waaruit ons ook waarde kan put.

1. GOD WEET WAARDEUR JY GAAN EN HY GEE OM

Slegs dinge gebeur selfs met goeie mense. Maar daar is 'n sleutelfrase wat vyf kere in Josef se verhaal voorkom: "Maar die Here was met Josef." Selfs toe alles verkeerd gegaan het, het Josef nooit getwyfel dat God by hom is nie. God se nabye teenwoordigheid het Josef deurgedra en gehelp om alle uitdagings die hoof te bied. Ons beleef God se teenwoordigheid soms ten diepste wanneer ons in ons moeilikste tye verkeer. Sy genade is vir ons genoeg en dra ons deur wanneer ons nie meer kan nie.

2. JY IS DIE VRYHEID VAN KEUSE GEGEE

Ten spye van die swaarkry en seerkry van die lewe, gee God jou die vryheid om te kies hoe jy op jou omstandighede gaan reageer: geloof of twyfel, vreugde of wanhoop, geduld of ongeduld. Ons kan dalk nie kies wat na ons kant toe kom nie, maar ons kan kies hoe ons daarop reageer.

Wanneer jy kies om dit wat reg is, te ignoreer, sal God nie Sy wil op jou afdwing nie. Soms bring ons probleme oor onself en blameer dan vir God. Ons sê: 'Dit moet God se wil wees,' asof God genot daaruit put om ons foute en ellende te beplan! Die waarheid van die saak is dat God se wil nie altyd seëvier nie. Ja, Hy het 'n plan vir ons lewens, maar Hy het ook vir ons 'n vrye wil gegee. Omdat Hy ook vir ander mense 'n vrye wil gegee het, kan hulle foute en besluite ons ook seermaak. God kan dit egter omkeer en die

positiewe daaruit laat voortvloeи.

3. GOD IS IN BEHEER VAN DIE FINALE UITKOMS

God kan inderdaad elke negatiewe omstandigheid vandag in jou lewe neem en dit ten goede vir jou omkeer. Aan die einde kon Josef sê: 'Wat my betref, het God die kwaad wat julle gedoen het, omgekeer in iets wat goed is...' (Genesis 50:20 NVL). Terwyl God besig was om die goeie uit sy situasie voort te bring, moes Josef aanhou om Hom te vertrou, selfs al het hy nie op daardie stadium verstaan wat aan die gang was nie - en jy moet dit ook doen. God is getrou en sal jou nie verlaat nie, maar sal ook die goeie uit jou moeilike situasie tevoorschyn laat kom.

4. JY KAN DIT NIE BEKOSTIG OM IN SELFBEJAMMERING TE VERVAL NIE

Miskien gaan jy tans deur 'n toets waarin jy die onskuldige party is - die slagoffer van 'n situasie wat jy nie veroorsaak het nie. Oorweeg Josef se reaksie toe hy in 'n soortgelyke situasie was. Die eerste ding wat hy nie gedoen het nie, was om in selfbejammering te verval. Hoekom nie? Omdat dit 'n groot bydraende faktor tot depressie is. In sulke gevalle is dit is beter om Opwaarts te kyk as inwaarts. Om die waarheid te glo, eerder as die leuen.

Dikwels wanneer ons 'n ernstige probleem ervaar en ons selfbeeld laag is, begin ons onself blameer en onself afkraak. Josef het dit nie gedoen nie. Hy het geweet dat die situasie nie deur sy eie teedoen was nie en hy het realisties daarna probeer kyk. Wanneer jy in 'n storm is en toelaat dat jou boot dwars draai, sal die storm jou omgooi. Soortgelyk, wanneer storms in jou lewe inkom, is die beste manier om hulle te oorkom om op God te vertrou en hulle trompop te konfronteer, soos

Josef gedoen het.

5. MOET NOOIT GROOT BESLUITE NEEM WANNEER JY DEPRESSIEF IS NIE

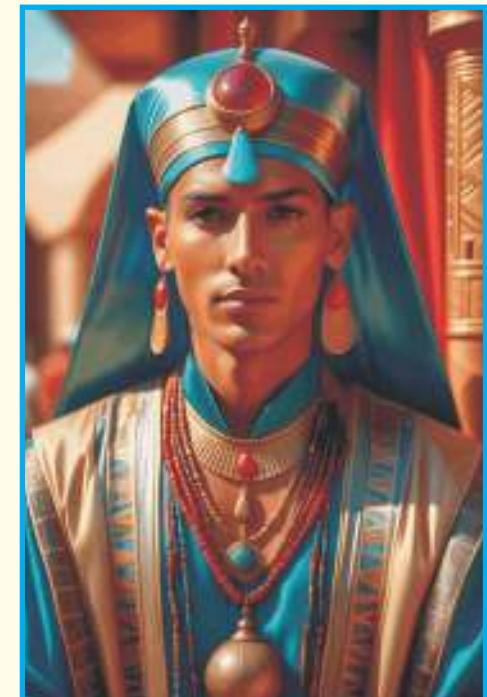
Baie keer wanneer ons mismoedig is, kom ons in die versoeking om te sê: 'Ek gaan tou opgooi,' of 'Ek gaan van werk verander,' of 'Ek gaan wegtrek,' of 'Ek gaan 'n skeisaak aanhangig maak.' Moet dit asseblief nie doen nie! Wanneer jy terneergedruk en moedeloos is, is jou gevoelens onbetroubaar en jy verloor jou perspektief om goeie oordeel toe te pas.

Wat moet jy eerder doen? Vra God om jou daardeur te bring! Sê saam met die Psalmdigter: "In God, Wie se woord ek prys, in God is my vertroue; ek sal nie vrees nie. Wat kan mense aan my doen?" (Psalm 56:5 NVL).

6. JY KAN NIE DIE EKSTRA BAGASIE VAN BITTERHEID BEKOSTIG NIE

Na baie jare het Josef weer sy broers gesien, toe hulle Egipte toe gekom het om koring te koop. Toe hulle Josef, Egipte se tweede-inbevel, ontmoet het en voor hom gebuig het, het hulle hom nie herken nie. Dit was egter 'n vervulling van Josef se drome van soveel jare vantevore. Hy het rede gehad om bitter te wees, maar hy was nie.

Toe Josef vir hulle probeer verduidelik wie hy is, was hulle verstoorn en verskrik. Hier was die broer wat hulle jare tevore probeer vermoor het en nou was hy in 'n posisie waar hy met hulle kon maak net wat hy wil. Boonop het hulle skuldig gevoel. In plaas daarvan om hulle kwaad aan te doen en wraak te neem, het Josef hulle vergewe. Hoekom? Omdat Josef geweet het dat hy nie die ekstra bagasie van bitterheid kon bekostig nie. Hy het gekies om God se pad te loop, eerder as die



pad van die vlees. Hy het die groter prentjie gesien. Wat moet jy dus doen wanneer jy in die versoeking kom om bitterheid te koester? Doen wat Josef gedoen het: Hy het sy geloof en hoop in God volgehoud, geglo dat dinge uiteindelik goed sou uitwerk, en sy geestelike wandel met God voortgesit.

Wanneer dinge verkeerd gaan, draai ons dikwels ons rug op die Een wat ons die meeste nodig het - die Here. Wanneer moeilikheid oor ons pad kom, sê ons: 'God, hoekom het U toegelaat dat dit gebeur?' Ons blameer God asof dit sy skuld is, in plaas daarvan om te sê: 'Here, hanteer asseblief hierdie probleem.' Wanneer mense situasies probeer gebruik om jou te vernietig, kan God dit gebruik om jou te ontwikkel. Hy vind behoefteaar om kruisings in opstandings te verander. "Kom nader aan God, en Hy sal nader aan julle kom..." (Jak. 4:8 NVL). God daag op uitnodiging op. Solank jy aanhou om met Hom te praat en op Hom te vertrou, sal Hy dinge vir jou laat uitwerk.

- Bob & Debby Gass, Die Woord vir Vandag, Radiokansel

Die Ryk Boas en die Ryk Dwaas

Vervolg van p. 5

om vir die Here te werk, het gesê: "Want die geldgierigheid is 'n wortel van alle ewuels; en omdat sommige dit begeer, het hulle afgedwaal van die geloof en hulself met baie smarte deurboor" (1 Tim. 6:10). Jesus het ook gesê: "Niemand kan twee here dien nie; want of hy sal die een haat en die ander liefhe, of hy sal die een aanhang en die ander verag. Julle kan nie God én Mammon dien nie!" (Matt. 6:24). En Mammon is die geldgod (die duivel). Mate-

riële dinge kan 'n seën uit God se hand wees. Maar dit kan ook 'n versoeking wees, en 'n groot gevaar vir 'n gierige hart. **Moet nooit toelaat dat rykdom jou hart met trots en afguns vul en tussen jou en God staan nie.** Gebruik dit liever om goed aan ander te doen, volgens Boas se voorbeeld.

Ten slotte, kom ons vergelyk die lewens van die Ryk Boas en die Ryk Dwaas. Waar lê elkeen se prioriteite? Die een wil rykdom in die hemel vergader, en die ander

rykdom op aarde. "Want waar julle skat is, dáár sal julle hart ook wees." Boas was duidelik 'n man van God wat net die beste vir ander gesoek het. 'n Onselfsugtige mens. Die Ryk Dwaas, daren teen, was net daarop uit om homself te dien en te verryk. **Liewe leser, waar lê jóú prioriteite?** Jesus het gesê: "Moenie vir julle skatte bymekarmaak op die aarde... nie, maar maak vir julle skatte bymekaar in die hemel..." (Matt. 6:19). Die Boodskap stel dit so: "Maak eerder vir julle 'n bankrekening daar by God in die hemel oop." Dit sluit nie slegs geld in nie, maar die hele lewe.

Het jy al 'n totale oorgawe aan God gemaak? Al jou doen en late, jou hele wese, en ook jou besittings in die Hand van God geplaas? Watter een van die twee persone wat ons bespreek het, wil jy wees? Gee jou alles oor aan Jesus en wees ryk in Hom - dan sal jy ook 'n skat in die hemel hê!

© Dr JJ Venter

Six Ego Traps that Hinder God's Plan

Our ego often presents the biggest obstacle to truly aligning ourselves with God's plan. It can cloud our judgment, fuel our pride, and create barriers between us and the Divine purpose meant for our lives. Understanding how the ego operates and learning to overcome its influence can help us draw closer to God's intentions for us.

1. THE ILLUSION OF CONTROL

Our ego loves the idea of control, making us believe that we can and should manage every aspect of our lives. However, this illusion can lead us away from trusting in God's plan. Proverbs 3:5-6 reminds us, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to Him, and He will make your paths straight." When we relinquish control and place our trust in God, we open ourselves to His guidance.

2. PRIDE AND SELF-RELIANCE

Pride is a significant ego-driven barrier that keeps us from God. When we rely solely on our own abilities and refuse to acknowledge our need for God, we distance ourselves from His support and wisdom. James 4:6 says, "God opposes the proud but shows favour to the humble." Embracing humility allows us to seek and accept God's help, aligning us with His plan.

3. FEAR OF VULNERABILITY

Our ego often shields us from vulnerability, making us afraid to expose our weaknesses and flaws. However, vulnerability is essential for spiritual growth and genuine connection with God. As 2 Corinthians 12:9 states, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." By embracing our vulnerabilities, we allow God's strength to work through us.

4. THE NEED FOR APPROVAL

Seeking validation from others is another way our ego can interfere with God's plan. When we prioritise human approval over Divine approval, we may stray from the path God has set for us. Galatians 1:10 challenges us with, "Am I now trying to win the approval of human beings, or of God? Or am I trying to please people? If I were still trying to please people, I would not be a servant of Christ." Focusing on God's approval helps us stay true to His purpose.

5. RESENTMENT AND UNFORGIVENESS

Holding onto grudges and harbouring resentment are ego-driven behaviours that block our spiritual growth. Unforgiveness weighs us down and prevents us from experiencing God's full grace. Ephesians 4:31-32 instructs us, "Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every

form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you." Letting go of resentment frees us to move forward in God's plan.

6. THE PURSUIT OF PERFECTION

Our ego often drives us to seek perfection, leading to stress and dissatisfaction when we inevitably fall short. Completing a project well is fine, but there should be boundaries. Being overly perfectionistic can distract us from God's grace and the understanding that His love is unconditional. Romans 3:23-24 reminds us, "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and all are justified freely by His grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus." Accepting our imperfections and relying on God's grace allows us to live more fully in His purpose.

OVERCOMING OUR EGO

Consider the following steps:

1. REGULAR PRAYER AND MEDITATION

Spend time in prayer and meditation on God's Word to connect with God and seek His guidance. Let Him reveal His plan to you in moments of silence and surrender.

2. SCRIPTURE STUDY

Immerse yourself in God's Word

to understand His will and find strength in His promises. "Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path" (Ps. 119:105 NIV).

3. COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Engage with a faith community for support, accountability, and encouragement in your spiritual journey. We are not meant to 'do it alone'. God has provided us with loving brothers and sisters who can come alongside us and support us through the trials and share in the joys of life.

4. SELF-REFLECTION

Regularly reflect on your thoughts and actions to identify areas where your ego may be interfering with God's plan. Scrutinise your motives and ask the Spirit to renew your heart's desires.

5. PRACTICE HUMILITY

Actively practice humility by serving others and acknowledging your dependence on God. This will be a liberating death blow to our independent and arrogant ego.

Recognising and overcoming the influence of our ego is crucial for aligning ourselves with God's plan. By addressing these barriers, we can draw closer to God and fulfil the Divine purpose He has for our lives.

<https://faithactivist.com>

"God has become my Everything"

George Müller is said to have read the Bible cover to cover more than two hundred times, often on his knees. Before his death, asked by a reporter what he would still like to do, he, on his knees, replied, "To read more of the Bible because I know too little about the excellence of Christ."

George Müller was an Evangelical Christian, director of the Ashley Down Orphanage in Bristol, England, where he cared for 10 024 orphans throughout his life based on God's promise found in Psalm 68:5, "God is a Father to the orphans." Known as a figure wholly involved in the education of the children he cared for, he was even accused of providing an education beyond the usual norm for those times. He founded 117 schools that offered Christian education to 120 000 children, many of them without parents. At the time, there were only a dozen orphan homes in England and

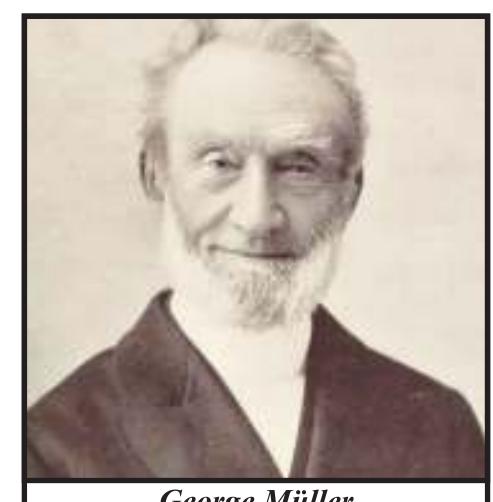
Wales, and they charged fees to care for the children. Poor children who became orphans had to move in with relatives or were sent to work in the work-houses. Müller said, "If I, a poor man, can build and administer an orphanage without asking anyone for money or assistance, only through prayer and faith, this, together with the blessing of the Lord, could encourage God's children in their faith, being also a powerful testimony to the unbelievers about the existence of God."

The famous writer, Charles Dickens, visited the parliaments of George Müller to see for himself how the children were being treated. Dickens was so impressed that he wrote articles for several newspapers, an advertisement money couldn't buy. Even after the age of 70, Müller traveled intensely, reaching 42 countries, even speaking to White House authorities, sharing his

rich experience with God.

In addition to caring for over 10 000 orphans, George Müller paid for printing Bibles and tracts and the Christian education of thousands of children. His organisation gave away more than 250 000 Bibles. He paid tuition for hundreds of children to go to school. During his lifetime, he raised the equivalent of \$7 million, which he gave away, and when he died, he had only a little bit of money left. He never really needed it. As far as George Müller was concerned, every good thing came from God. Müller prayed about everything and expected every prayer to be answered.

On the day of Müller's funeral, the Bristol factories shut down. Thousands of people came to pay their last respects to the man who was transformed by God from a thief who betrayed his closest friends, to a man who put himself at God's disposal. Müller wrote of his



George Müller

conversion: "When I surrendered myself totally to God, the love of money was gone, the love of a home was gone, the affection of wealth was gone, the love of worldly things was gone. God has become my everything. I found everything in Him, there is nothing else I wanted. And I stayed with Him, a happy man, a very happy man, seeking to only accomplish the things of God."

- Selected

The Power of Thinking

Did you know that thoughts can actually make you more anxious, happy, fearful, or content? And what you spend time thinking about has the power to affect your emotions, your actions, and ultimately, your character? Your thoughts are some of the most powerful and influential things in your life.

Scripture has a lot to say about our thoughts because God knows the power of our minds. He also knows what we are thinking and whether our thoughts are aligned with His will.

"You will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast, because they trust in you" (Isaiah 26:3 NIV). Thus, God will keep our hearts in perfect peace if we keep our minds fixed on Him! Can you imagine that? Perfect peace!

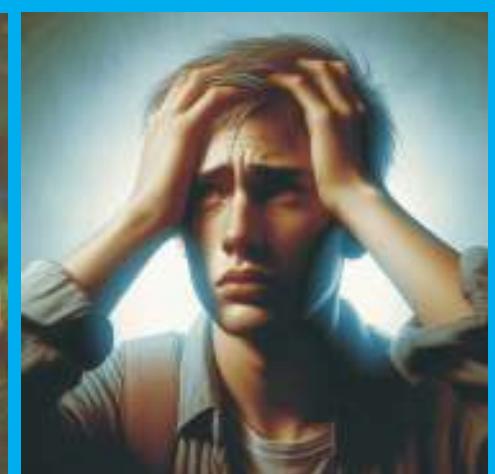
The more time we spend focusing our thoughts on God and His Word, the more our hearts will be kept in peace. That is a powerful

thought, especially in a world that is constantly looking for elusive peace and unity.

The starting point for obtaining this peace is trusting God. We must come to Him trusting in Who He is, and having faith in what He has done for us. We know that God is good and just. So if we have faith in Him, we know that we are accepted and loved by Him. And those who trust in God are given access to Him and His presence.

Let us keep reminding ourselves: Perfect peace is available to those who consistently trust in God, and fix their thoughts on Him.

How many of your thoughts are spent on things relating to God? Do you keep your mind focused on Him when you're feeling anxious or stressed? Or are we mulling over past hurts or future stresses and anxieties. Are we constantly worried? Stop yourself from stepping into the trap of



trying to solve difficult issues on your own. Cast your thoughts and prayers heavenward and ask for God's help right away. He is willing and able to come to your rescue.

Spend some time thinking about the power of your own thoughts and the access you've been given to God through Scripture. Commit to building the habit of centering your thoughts on God so that you can know Him more and experience His perfect peace. As you

relinquish your cares to Him, He will transform your anxious thoughts into victory and joy.

PRAYER: God, thank You for promising to bring me your perfect peace. In every situation, help me to continue to keep my mind on You and Your good promises. Because I trust in Your control, I know I don't have to be anxious about anything. Please remind me every day of this truth. In Jesus' Name. Amen.
- YouVersion

Why Go to Church?

A churchgoer wrote a letter to the editor of a newspaper and complained that it made no sense to go to church every Sunday.

He wrote: "I've gone for 30 years now, and in that time I have heard something like 3 000 sermons, but for the life of me, I can't remember a single one of them. So, I think I'm wasting my time, the preachers and priests are wasting theirs by giving sermons at all".

This started a real controversy in the "Letters to the Editor" column. Many wrote to give their opinion, either agreeing with the first letter, or refuting it.

Much to the delight of the editor and readers, this went on for weeks, until someone wrote this clincher:

"I've been married for 30 years now. In that time my wife has cooked some 32 000 meals. But, for the life of me, I cannot recall the entire menu for a single one of those meals.

But I do know this: They all nourished me, kept me healthy, and gave me the strength I needed to do my work. If my wife had not prepared me these meals, I would be physically dead today.



Likewise, if I had not gone to church for nourishment, I would be spiritually dead today!"

Thank God for our physical and our spiritual nourishment!
- Selected

"And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another - and all the more as you see the Day approaching" (Hebrews 10:24-25 NIV).

[Jesus] went to Nazareth, where He had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day He went into the synagogue, as was His custom. (Heb. 13:17 ESV).



"He will call upon Me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will rescue him and honour him"
Psalm 91:15

One Heart - Pray for Oneness and Reconciliation

One of the last prayers Jesus Christ prayed while He walked this Earth as a human being is recorded in John 17:20b - 22 (NIV) "... I pray that all of them may be one, Father, just as You are in Me and I am in You. May they also be in us." Jesus also said in John 13 that if we love one another the world will know that we are His disciples. To truly love one another we need to intentionally reach out to one another. The Word says that if we know our brother has something against us, we need to go and make right. It is time to acknowledge, repent and make right the sins of the past or in some cases to forgive as the Lord forgave you (Colossians 3:13).

We believe the time is right for the Church to take the lead and assist our country to heal. As Christians we owe the world a testimony. Let us move from fear, hatred, and distrust to rebuilding the ruined walls, as in Nehemiah's time, helping each other to overcome the past and walking in faith, believing that the King of Kings is still empowering us. Let us celebrate our shared identity in Christ. Let us rejoice in our achievements attained by the grace of God, while expecting future accomplishments in line with our potential and the possibilities presented... as we serve one another to the benefit of all.

Join us on a journey of 50 days of prayer towards Reconciliation from 16 June to 4 August. This is not limited to racial reconciliation but reconciliation across the board (family, marriages, denominations, male and female, etc.) and we know that the Holy Spirit will work mightily in the hearts of all those who choose to journey with us. There is a full 50 day prayer guide provided with daily prayer prompts and reminders:

<https://www.24-7prayerafrica.com/prayer>



HUIS HEBRON

Dit is met groot dankbaarheid dat ons weer eens bekend maak dat Hebron steeds van krag tot krag gaan. Elke dag sorg die Here vir alles wat nodig is. Ons is so dankbaar om soveel mense te kan help in hierdie moeilike tye!

Ons is gedeeltelik selfversorgend deur ons groentetonnels en oop beddings waarin ons menigte groente verbou. Dan het ons ook 'n groot varkboerdery op die been gekry. Ons voorsien ons eie melk deur 4 melkkoeie en het ook 'n aantal hoenders. Daar is 'n aantal manlike inwoners wat buitewerk verrig en dan 'n finansiële bydrae maak.



Om 110 inwoners te versorg en te voorsien van alles wat nodig is, vereis egter groot onkostes, ver meer as wat ons kan bybring. Ons grootste uitgawe is Eskom-krag wat buitensporig duur geword het, al probeer ons hoe hard om suinig daarvan te werk. Ons ideaal is om na sonkrag oor te gaan.

Ook wil ons graag nog meer kamers aanbou, want die nood is ontsettend groot en talle mense word weggewys omdat ons altyd vol is. As iemand uitgaan of sterf, is die plek feitlik onmiddellik weer gevul. Ons bly altyd diep afhanklik van God se voorsiening en die publiek se gawes.

Hebron se suksesverhaal is te danke aan ons Hemelse Vader wat hier die eerste plek inneem. Hier



vind daagliks Skriflesing en gebed plaas, asook Bybelstudie 'n paar aande per week, en twee dienste elke Sondag. Alle eer aan God, asook ons innige dank aan almal wat ons finansieel of deur ander donasies (bv. warm baadjies en kos in die wintertyd) bystaan om ons hande omhoog te hou deur gebed en meelewings.

Hebron is so 15 km buite Potch op die R54 Vereeniging-Potch-pad en is 'n nie-winsgewende maatskappy. Hebron se bankbesonderhede is: ABSA Bank, tjkrekeningnummer 4057368904. Baie dankie, mag die Here u ryklik seën!
- Gretha le Roux, selnr. 082 607 7198.

Sout vir die Aarde

"Julle is die sout vir die aarde. Maar as sout verslaan het, hoe kry 'n mens dit weer sout? Dit is nijs meer werd nie. Dit word buitekant weggegooi, en die mense vertrap dit" (Matt. 5:13 NV).

Is jy een van daardie mense van wie gesê word: hy/sy is die sout van die aarde? Wat beteken dit?

Vandag is tafelsout (natrium-chloried) baie goedkoop. In die Bybelse tye was dit baie duur, amper so duur soos goud per gewig! Weens die verdampings-proses en die moeite om blokke sout oor groot afstande te vervoer, was die koste daarvan hoog. Romeinse soldate is ook soms in die vorm van blokke sout betaal, wat hulle kon verkoop om wins te maak.

Jesus het ons as gelowiges vergelyk met sout. Die eerste rede daarvoor: sout bring die beste smaak in kos na vore. Ons kos smaak maar net nie reg as dit nie kundig met sout aferond is nie. Wanneer Jesus ons vergelyk met

sout, dan beteken die beeld-spraak dat ons die beste in die wêreld ontsluit. Daar waar ons is, maak ons die wêreld beter. Ons bring smaak aan ons gemeenskap. Ons maak 'n positiewe verskil daar waar ons is.

Die tweede eienskap van sout is dat dit 'n preserveermiddel is, dit werk verrotting teë. In die antieke tye, voordat die wêreld ys- en vrieskaste gehad het, was hierdie funksie baie nodig. Ons sout vleis in om lank te kan hou - dink maar aan biltong! Dis ook in baie streke 'n ou praktyk om vis te sout, en dan te winddroog om deur die wintertye kos te kan hê. Groente word in sout gepiek en bewaar vir die tye wanneer dit buite sei-soen is en nie vars geëet kan word nie. Christene tree op as 'n teenmiddel vir die verval van die gemeenskap. Ons gee onself nie net oor aan drifte en drange nie. Omdat ons die Here liefhet, gehoorsaam ons Sy gebooie, en Hy stuur ons uit om ons naaste te gaan liefhê. Liefde dring ons om ons naaste op te bou deur ons

woorde en dade.

Die derde eienskap - sout maak dors. Die ou spreekwoord is dat 'n mens 'n perd na die water toe kan lei, maar nie kan maak drink nie. Wanneer jy die perd egter sout-pille voer, dan sal hy drink. Ons getuienis oor Jesus behoort die mense rondom ons dors te maak vir die lewende water van Jesus!

As die sout laf geword het, sy krag verloor het, dan is dit nijs meer werd nie, sê Jesus. Daar word net soutpaaie van gemaak wat deur mense vertrap word. Die waarskuwing hierin is dat ons nie soos die wêreld moet word en ons oorgee aan al ons drifte en begeertes nie. Ons is huis geroep om die pad van die liefde te stap, en smaak te gee, verrotting te keer en mense dors te maak vir Jesus.

Gebed: Here Jesus, dankie dat U my wil gebruik in hierdie wêreld om 'n positiewe verskil te maak waar ek gaan. Help my om smaakvol op te tree in my handel en



wandel. Help my om nie deel van die agteruitgang van die wêreld te wees nie, mag my lewe en optrede ander eerder 'n dors na U gee. Amen.

- Ewald Schmidt, Vers-n-dag

Kan Ek God Bly Vertrou?

Robert Foster en sy vrou Jane is na 'n klein gemeente beroep. Die sukkelende, jong gemeente sou Bob se eerste wees. Die salaris sou maar klein wees, maar met die groei van die gemeente sou dié ook groter word. Bob en Jane sou moes leer om in alles op God te vertrou.

Hulle het baie daaroor gebid en besluit om die beroep aan te neem. Hulle was oortuig dat hulle op God se belofte kon vertrou en dat Hy sou voorsien en het hulle daarom veral op Filippense 4:19 beroep: "En my God sal elke behoeftte van julle vervul na Sy rykdom in heerlikheid deur Christus Jesus."

Bob het met groot entoesiasme begin werk en die mense het spontaan daarop gereageer. Heel gou het die gemeente begin groei. Maar toe begin die meule, die grootste werkverskaffer op die dorp, om te besnoei. Dit het egter nie net by besnoeiing gebly nie - mense is stelselmatig afbetaal. Een van Bob se steunpilare in die gemeente is ook afbetaal en het besluit om te verhuis. Dit was vir Bob en Jane 'n groot terugslag, maar hulle het op hulle tande gebyt en aangehou werk. Hulle het in die geloof soontoe gegaan en was beslis nie van plan om sommer tou op te gooi nie. Hulle uitgawes het egter nie saam met die lidmate minder geword nie. Hulle moes nog steeds eet, die motor in stand hou en vir hulle twee klein kindertjies sorg.

Ses maande later het die meule gesluit. Die kerk kon hul leraar nie meer betaal nie. "Dit het baie jare geneem om die skok en teleurstelling van daardie tyd te werk," het hulle onlangs nog erken. "Dit was nie vir ons so swaar om arm te wees nie - nee, die feit dat ons geloof deur dit alles aangetas is, was die ergste. Ons het met ons hele hart staatgemaak op God se belofte - of altans op dit wat ons as Sy belofte gesien het - en ons is teleurgestel. Dit het ons laat

wonder hoe ons ooit weer op Sy beloftes sou kon staatmaak."

AS TELEURSTELLING JOU GELOOF LAAT WANKEL

Daar is baie Christene wie se geloof ook al deur teleurstellings benadeel is. Waar hulle God vertrou en op Sy beloftes staan, maar dan voel of hulle in die steek gelaat is. Neem byvoorbeeld 'n gelowige moeder wat vir haar kind bid om hom van sy wêrelde lewe te bekeer tot God en aan Spreuke 22:6 vashou. Of 'n kosbare, gelowige moeder wat op jong ouderdom met lewerkanker gediagnoseer is. Sy het vas geglo dat God haar sou genees en vele skrifgedeeltes aangehaal. Sy het nie voorbereidings getref vir haar dood nie, en jarelange misverstante tussen haar en haar gesin nie uitgestryk voordat sy oorlede is nie. Haar gesin was so ontnguter dat hulle nou kerkloos is.

Wat kan 'n mens sê as jy voor hierdie soort teleurstelling te staan kom? Hoe help jy iemand om dit te verwerk as hy opreg geglo het dat God se beloftes vir hom geld, net om agterna wreed ontnugter te word? Kan ons dan nog hoegenaamd op God se beloftes vertrou? Kom ons kyk na 'n paar van die antwoorde wat ons gewoonlik hoor. Dalk is daar 'n element van waarheid in elkeen van hulle vervat.

1. Dis nie God se beloftes wat tekort skiet nie - dis óns.

Ons sê baie vinnig dat daar iewers iets met iemand se geloof skort as sy gebede nie verhoor is nie. Dan word tekste soos Romeine 3:4 (God is nie 'n leuenaar nie) aangehaal en die fout word by die persoon se gesindheid en/of geloof gesoek. Dalk het die leraar nie hard genoeg probeer nie, die moeder van die rebelse tiener hom nie reg grootgemaak nie, en die sieke nie met haar hele hart geglo nie.

Miskien, ja. Dit gebeur wél dat mense soms misluk en die skuld

dan op die Here laai. Maar om dit sommer net oor 'n bepaalde situasie te aanvaar, spreek van onsensitiwiteit en 'n veroordeelende gesindheid. Dit beteken dat 'n mens jou by Job se vriende skaar. Hulle het immers geglo dat Job self vir sy probleme verantwoordelik was. Die skuld kon net op een van twee plekke lê - óf by Job, óf by die Here. En hulle was beslis nie bereid om te sê dat dit God se skuld was nie - daarom moes dit vanselfsprekend Job s'n wees. Maar hulle was verkeerd, nie waar nie? Aan die ander kant is dit soms ander mense se ongehoorsaamheid wat 'n saak belemmer en groot skade aanrig.

2. Ons moet die Here se beloftes nie letterlik verstaan nie - hulle het 'n geestelike betekenis.

Só kan ons al God se beloftes wegredeneer. Die Bybel sê wel in Fil. 4:19 dat die Here in al ons behoeftes sal voorsien - maar wat het 'n Christen nou eintlik nodig? Niks behalwe Jesus nie, sê sommiges. Ons het nie geld, motors, kos, huise, gesondheid en al daardie dinge nodig nie. Indien 'n sieke om genesing bid en dan sterf, sal diesulkes aanvoer dat so iemand nou volkomme genesing ontvang het, omdat hulle nou by die Here is waar daar geen pyn of siekte meer is nie.

Hierdie benadering is nie heeltemal verkeerd nie. Natuurlik maak mense soms aanspraak op dinge wat nooit deur God beloof is nie, of hulle verstaan Sy beloftes verkeerd. Neem byvoorbeeld 'n dogtertjie wat vir haar ma vra, "Mamma, kan ons asseblief Saterdag gaan swem?" en sy antwoord, "Ons sal nog sien... dit hang ook af van hoe die weer lyk." Saterdagmôre douvoordag word Ma dan wakker gemaak deur 'n opgewonde spannetjie wat die gordyne oop trek en vir Ma wys hoe helder die son skyn. Vir hulle was dit die bepalende faktor, hoewel dit glad nie was wat sy bedoel het nie. So neem mense God soms letterlik op, wanneer

Hy iets anders bedoel het.

Maar ons kan aan die ander kant ook nie al God se beloftes só vergeestelik of wegredeneer nie. Die konteks van Paulus se woorde in Fil. 4:19 is inderdaad materiële behoeftes.

3. Die Bybelse beloftes moet in die breë, algemene verband geïnterpreteer word en het nie betrekking op die individu nie.

Diesulkes sal aanvoer dat Spreuke sê jy moet 'n kind in God se weë grootmaak, maar dit beteken nie dat so 'n kind uiteindelik 'n gelowige mens sal wees nie. Die verskering van God se voorstelling, sê hulle, was bedoel vir die Filippense, nie vir ons nie.

Dit is sekerlik so dat nie alles in die Bybel direk op elke mens betrekking het nie, maar die oes gaan maar skraal wees as ek en jy gaan soek na dinge wat nié oorspronklik aan 'n ander gehoor gerig was nie. En as ons nie hierdie beloftes vir onself kan toeëien nie, kan ons nie die Bybel op ons alledaagse lewe toepas nie.

Hoe besluit 'n mens dan of 'n bepaalde belofte toepaslik is op ons lewe? Ons moet (i) die getuenis van die Skrif én die Heilige Gees in ons harte hê, en (ii) fokus op God en nie net op die belofte nie. Ons kan God nie d.m.v. 'n formule verstaan nie. Ons kan Hom nie manipuleer nie. Ons het nie die volle prentjie nie. **Ons wil baie keer hê God moet in Sy almag in ons lewe ingryp, maar nie in Sy alwaysheid nie - ons dink ons weet beter wat die beste vir ons is. Maar Sy weë is hoër as ons s'n. Soos Job moet ons op God BLY vertrou, al tree Hy anders op as wat ons verwag het. Hy sál alles ten goede laat meewerk vir die wat Hom liefhet. Hy is en bly getrou aan Sy Woord, Hy is en bly soewerein, en Hy is en bly liefde, soos Sy Seun se kruisdood bewys het!**

- *Here, Waar is U? VG Uitgewers, 1993, Stanley Baldwin*

Jer. 20:11

★★★ **B&B** *Uit die Hand*

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Skakel "Alte-Welkom"
082 492 2299
018 468 1921
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www.altewelkom.com

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E
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Oase van Hoop
AGS Baillie Park Gemeente

Sondagoggenddiens 9:30
JOI-Kinderdienste 9:30
E-pos: johann@safricom.co.za
Pastoor Johan Nortje 083 280 8971

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