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Psalm 23 in the Lives of our Heros of the Faith

Psalm 23 is the most recognised and beloved Psalm in all of Scripture. David, the author, was himself a shepherd, and later became known as the "Shepherd King" of Israel. But Psalm 23 is about David's experience, not as a shepherd, but as a well-cared-for sheep in the flock of God. In this short poem, David boasts in the character of the Shepherd. It's almost as if he's saying, "Look Who my Shepherd is!" He understood that the well-being of the flock depended on the type of shepherd who owned them. Some shepherds were kind, brave, and selfless, devoting themselves to the care of their flock. Other shepherd-owners were indifferent, uncaring, and the sheep languished and starved under their careless leadership.

Psalm 23 paints a picture of the flourishing environment sheep experience under the loving care, faithful provision, and watchful protection with the Lord as their Shepherd. Let's reread Psalm 23 and be reminded of this beautiful relationship of a Shepherd to His sheep. David writes...

*"The Lord is my shepherd;
I shall not want.
He makes me lie down
in green pastures.
He leads me beside still waters.
He restores my soul.
He leads me in paths
of righteousness
for His Name's sake.
Even though I walk through
the valley of the shadow of
death, I will fear no evil,
for You are with me;
Your rod and Your staff,
they comfort me.
You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies;
You anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.
Surely goodness and mercy
shall follow me all the days of
my life, and I shall dwell in the
house of the Lord forever."*
It's clear from these six verses

that David was thrilled that he belonged to the Lord. He knew that under the Lord's loving leadership, he would flourish and thrive, no matter what dark valleys he had to travel. Saints throughout history have experienced this same tender, protective, and merciful care in the flock of God.

Let's take a look at the lives of missionaries and faithful witnesses of Christ, and how they experienced the Good Shepherd's rest, protection, provision, comfort, and hope. We'll walk alongside the well-worn paths of these righteous saints, as they navigated through dark and shadowy valleys, and experienced the Lord's care. This is not about perfect Christians who always rested in the character of their Shepherd. On the contrary. These stories may belong to 'Giants of the Faith,' but they were just ordinary people who, through extraordinary circumstances learned to rest in the care of their Shepherd. Now their stories belong to us so we can proclaim them to the next generation.

1. AMY CARMICHAEL - HE MAKES ME LIE DOWN

"The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters" (Psalm 23:1-2, ESV).

Amy Carmichael was an Irish-born missionary who served in India from 1897 until her death in 1951. One night, a seven-year-old girl named Preena escaped from a nearby temple and made her way to Amy's house. Through Preena, Amy uncovered one of the darkest secrets of India and realised that this was why God had sent her there. In order to earn favour with their gods, parents would often sell their young children into a life of unspeakable horrors as temple prostitutes. Amy courageously protected any who came to her, which often landed her in trouble with the law.



Amy Carmichael

At one point, she was in danger of serving seven years for "kidnapping" children away from the temple and she was often threatened with arrest. While Amy's work often put her in harm's way, she mostly battled for the children in prayer.

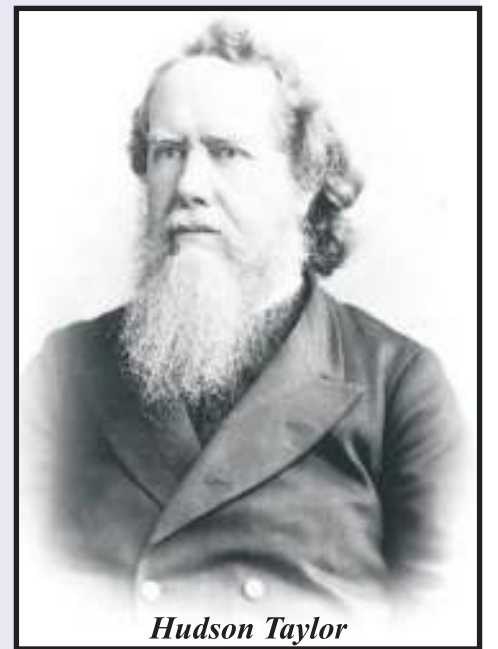
Over the course of her ministry, she cared for over 1 000 children. When the children were asked what drew them to Amy, they most often replied, "Amma (Tamil for 'mother') loved us."

But in 1931, at the age of 63, Amy suffered a serious fall. At first, it was thought she had broken a few bones, but over time, the extent of her injury became clearer. She had permanently damaged her spine and would be bedridden for the rest of her life. The reality of these new limitations was difficult for her to accept. The care giver had now become the care receiver.

For the last 20 years of Amy's life, she was confined to her bedroom that she referred to as the Room of Peace. The rest she initially resisted, opened new ways for Amy to extend her ministry through writing. From the Room of Peace, she wrote 35 books,

countless poems, devotionals, and stories. Though she is now at rest with the Lord, her work and her words live on. The Shepherd provides His beloved sheep with rest. In our lives, our Shepherd provides times of refreshment next to green pastures and still waters, and sometimes He makes us lie down and rest.

Amy Carmichael reminds us that when He makes us lie down, we can still be useful. With our Shepherd, we lack nothing and find true contentment in His care.



Hudson Taylor

2. HUDSON TAYLOR - HE RESTORES SOULS THAT REST IN HIM

"He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for His Name's sake" (Psalm 23:3, ESV).

Hudson Taylor was the first Christian missionary to go into the interior of mainland China. Many believers in China today can trace their spiritual heritage back to his ministry. His work established a Christian presence in the country before the Communist takeover in the early 1900s. His ministry produced over 125 000 converts and 800 hundred missionaries who scattered over all the provinces of China. But as a young man, he was skeptical and thought that being a Chris-

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God se Antwoord op ons Sondeprobleem

Ek sit hier met 'n boek in my hand wat dr. David Yonggi Cho geskryf het gedurende die draai van die eeu. Gedurende daardie tyd het hy die wêreld se grootste gemeente met ongeveer 600 000 lidmate bedien in Seoul, Korea. Hy skryf hierdie boek vanuit sy eie agtergrond van lyding en smart in Korea, geleë tussen Japan en China, tydens Wêreldoorlog II, en God se ingrype in sy lewe. Hy het in 'n sterftetoestand hom tot Jesus bekeer, sy lewe aan Jesus oor-gegee en vir Hom begin werk. God het hom vernuwe!

Hy skryf in sy eerste hoofstuk: *"We are now living in the age of the Holy Spirit. We will never be able to accomplish our mission successfully in this world if we don't recognize His work."* En dan handel sy hele boek oor die antwoord vir ons sondeprobleem en die gevolge daarvan dat ons, elke gelowige, op jou eie Jesus moet aanvaar en voortleef in toewyding aan Hom, en antwoorde van Hom moet kry deur die kragtige werking van die Heilige Gees. Hoe kom ek daarby uit? In verootmoediging, op my knieë in totale oorgawe, en baie belangrik, vergifnis aan alle mense wat my, soms onskuldiglik, leed en pyn veroorsaak het.

Die hele wêreld is stukkend vanweë die Sondeval in Adam en die gevolge daarvan. Dit was die doel van God deur Jesus te stuur om alles heel te maak deur die kruisgebeure en die opstanding, en daarna deur die krag en vernuwing van die Heilige Gees wat deur Jesus en die Vader gestuur is om te bly en te werk deur alle geslagte heen tot in ewigheid. Hy werk deur alle volke, tale en nasies heen om die mensdom heel te maak, om hulle uit die duisternis uit te haal en te bring tot Sy volle Lig. En Hy werk met stukkende mense wat Hy heel gemaak het om Sy doel te bereik.

Martin Luther, die groot Hervormer, het oor verskillende sake verskil van die Rooms Katolieke Kerk. Hy het radikaal opgetree deur 95 stellinge van dit waarmee hy nie met die Kerk saamgestem het nie, aan die deur van die kerk te Wittenberg vas te spyker. Hy was besig om die Skrifte te ondersoek waar hy as Professor lesings aangebied het oor die Sendbrief aan die Romeine. Vir hom het dit hier gegaan oor werke versus geloof. Hy was besig, soos dit 'n goeie Katoliek betaam, om deur werke die trappe van die St. Peterskerk op te kruip om

sodoende sy saligheid te "verdien," toe Rom. 1:17 vir hom oopgaan onder die salwing van die Heilige Gees: *"Maar die regverdige sal uit die geloof lewe."*

Hy het opgestaan en vir homself gesê: Deur die geloof? En dus nie deur werke nie? En dit, net deur in Jesus te glo! Hy het God gevind en God beleef! Hy het die Woord self ontdek. Hy het beleef: "Daar gaan vir my 'n lig op!" 'n Deurbraak wat net die Heilige Gees kon gee. Sy reaksie was blydschap! Dit word 'n Eureka-oomblik!

Later skryf hy dat dit sy wedergeboorte was! Weer 'n keer gebore (Joh. 3). Die eerste keer as mens met 'n natuurlike geboorte en die tweede keer as kind van God uit die Heilige Gees. Een Engelse Bybel vertaal wedergeboorte in Joh. 3 as: "Born from above." Het jy al die Wedergeboorte beleef?

Ek het wedergeboorte beleef as jongman wat soekend was. Ek het in 'n Christelike huis grootgeword met 'n Kerk wat BAIE klem gelê het op die Uitverkiesingsleer. En ek het daar niks van verstaan nie. Dit was vir my te ver verwyder van my daaglikse bestaan en behoefte. In my nood het ek, soos Martin Luther, op my knieë geval in my kamer en gebid: "Here, ek wêet ek moet sekerheid oor my saligheid kry. Wat moet ek doen om hemel toe te kan gaan?" En die Here antwoord my hardop, met 'n hoorbare stem: "Neem Jesus aan as jou Persoonlike Saligmaker." Hierdie Woord staan opgeteken in Joh. 1:12. En skielik breek die lig vir my deur! Ek ontvang 'n "deurbreekwoord", en die hemel gaan vir my oop, en die Heilige Gees wederbaar my uit genade alleen. Ongekende, onbeskryflike groot blydschap het in my en deur my gespoel. En net daar, op daardie oomblik, het ek gewêet dat ek 'n kind van God is, op pad hemel toe.

Ek ontdek toe later dat Rom. 8:16 ons leer: *"Die Gees Self getuig saam met ons gees dat ons kinders van God is."* Ek ontdek later ook 'n boekie deur 'n dominee geskryf, in die NG boekhandel in Pretoria met die titel: "Sodat julle kan weet," gegrond op 1 Joh. 5:13.

Daarvandaan is dit die wyse waarop ek na die Woord gaan met Bybellees, Bybelstudie. Ek vra die Here op my knieë om die Woord vir my oop te maak. Skrifverklarers noem dit *"n woord van kennis"* (1 Kor. 12); 'n Rhema-woord (Efes. 6); of selfs ook

openbaringskennis of in Engels: *revelation knowledge* (Heb. 4:12). Dit is wanneer die waarheid van die Woord oor 'n bepaalde woord of teks of teksgedeelte vir jou deurbreek onder die leiding van die Heilige Gees.

En Martin Luther? Hy het by God uitgekom! Hy was nietemin 'n gerekende monnik wat vervolgd is deur die Kerk en voelvry verklaar is, wat beteken het dat enigiemand wat hom vind, hom kon doodmaak. Hy het toe in afsondering gaan leef waar hy die Latynse Bybel in Duits vertaal het, sodat almal dit kon lees.

Ons moet, soos Luther, subjektief betrokke wees met ons nadenke oor God en oor Sy Woord. Dit beteken ons moet nie slegs by nadenke bly nie, maar luister na wat Hy oor Homself openbaar in die Woord. En in ons nadenke doen ons dit biddend onder die leiding van die Heilige Gees, in die openbaring van die Heilige Gees, en ons ontdek proefondervindelik die kernwaarhede van die Woord. Een van die kernwaarhede waarvan ons as gelowiges in Christus NOOIT mag afwyk nie, is Jesus se Groot Opdrag in Matt. 28 en in Mark. 16. En daarmee saam Luk. 24:49. Ons mag dit nooit versak of afwater nie: *"Gaan dan heen, maak dissipels van al die nasies, en doop hulle in die Naam van die Vader en die Seun en die Heilige Gees; en leer (Grieks = didaskō) hulle om alles te onderhou wat Ek julle beveel het"* (Matt. 28:19). Mark. 16:20, *"Maar hulle het uitgegaan en oral gepreek, en die Here het saamgewerk en die woord bevestig deur die tekens wat daarop gevolg het. Amen."* Hierdie opdrag geld tot vandag toe.

Hierdie Groot Opdrag omsluit die hele heilsgebeure, met die sentraliteit van die kruis en Jesus as sentrale Figuur wat gekom het om te sterf vir die ganse mensdom. Dit beteken: Genade vir almal! Alle mense sal in die hiernamaals moet antwoord: Wat het jy met Jesus gemaak in jou lewe? *"En as dit bevind is dat iemand nie opgeskryf was in die boek van die lewe nie, is hy in die poel van vuur gewerp"* (Op. 20:20). Laat ons dan naartstigtelik werk om die brandhoute uit die vuur te ruk! Die genadedeur van God staan nog in liefde oop vir alle mense. Hou jy nog by die Groot Opdrag? Het jy al 'n siel vir Jesus bereik?

Nog 'n kernwaarheid is volgehoue geestelike groei. Ons lees in Gal. 5:22 van die vrug van die Gees:

Liefde, blydschap, vrede, lankmoedigheid, vriendelikheid, goedheid, getrouheid, sagmoedigheid, selfbeheersing, waarvoor ons bid dat die Here dit in ons moet vestig. Want sien, ons is almal gebroke, selfs nog ná wedergeboorte waar ons vergifnis ontvang het van sonde, terwyl ons nog groei na volmaaktheid. Ons gebrokenheid is nie noodwendig sonde nie, maar dit kan lei tot sonde. Ons bereik dus nooit volmaaktheid en selfs verheerliking in hierdie lewe nie, alhoewel die Here die prys daarvoor reeds betaal het op die kruis.

Iemand skryf soos volg oor geestelike groei: "Geestelike groei is die proses waar iemand meer en meer soos Jesus Christus word. Wanneer ons ons geloof in Jesus plaas, begin die Heilige Gees die proses om ons te verander soos Jesus, ons word verander na Sy beeld. Geestelike groei word baie mooi in 2 Petrus 1:3-8 verduidelik, hierdie gedeelte vertel ons dat deur God se krag het ons *"alles wat ons nodig het"* om 'n heilige lewe te lei, wat ook die doel is van geestelike groei.

En so vind ons dit opgeteken: 2 Pet. 1:5-8, *"En juis daarom ook moet julle met aanwending van alle ywer by julle geloof voeg die deug, en by die deug die kennis, en by die kennis die selfbeheersing, en by die selfbeheersing die lydsaamheid, en by die lydsaamheid die godsvrug, en by die godsvrug die broederliefde, en by die broederliefde die naasteliefde. Want as hierdie dinge by julle aanwesig is en toeneem, dan laat dit julle nie ledig of onvrugbaar tot die kennis van onse Here Jesus Christus nie..."*

Ons lees in Kol. 3:12-19 nogeens van die vrug van die Gees wat ons moet nastreef en wat 'n voortsetting is van ons geestelike groei: *"Julle is die mense wat God uitgekies het wat Hy geheilig het en wat Hy liefhet. Daarom moet julle die volgende soos klere aantrek: liefdevolle deernis, vriendelikheid, nederigheid, sagmoedigheid, geduld. Verdra mekaar en as enigeen 'n klagte teen iemand anders het, vergewe mekaar. Vergewe mekaar soos die Here julle vergewe het. Die heel belangrikste wat julle moet aantrek, is die liefde. Die liefde bind alles volmaak saam."* Paulus gee verdere geestelike leiding in 2 Kor. 3:18, *"Ons almal weerspieël die heerlijkheid van die Here, want die sluier is van ons gesig af weg-*

Vervolg op p. 3

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Vervolg van p. 2

geneem. Ons word al meer verander om aan die beeld van Christus gelyk te word. Die heerlijkheid wat van ons uitstraal, neem steeds toe. Dit doen die Here wat die Gees is."

'n Verdere opdrag van die Here, wat deel uitmaak van ons geestelike groei, is die doop. Ek meen dit was Prof. William Barclay wat in een van sy kommentare geskryf het van die sendeling wat op die sendingveld vir die Here gewerk het. Daar het hy die mense wat tot geloof gekom het, gedoop. Dan neem hy hulle na die rivier toe, laat hulle by die een kant van die rivier ingaan, doop hulle, en laat hulle aan die oorkantste wat uitklim. Hulle het die boodskap verstaan. Simbolies van die

sonde aflê in die rivier wat dit dan wegspoel, en dan stap hulle skoongewas in die bloed van Jesus aan die oorkantste wal uit. Die doop was dan simbolies van 'n begrafnis en opstanding van 'n nuwe mens in Christus (Lees Rom. 6).

Ons het jare gelede in Humansdorp bedien. Daar het ons 'n goeie kleurling-bediende gehad. Sy wou altyd saam met ons bid. Tydens een so 'n gebedsessie het sy haar hart aan die Here gegee. Toe begin die Here met haar praat oor die doop. In drome. En sy word toe ernstig om gedoop te word. Sy kom uit 'n tradisionele kerk uit. En sy vra my om haar te doop, want: "Ek kan myself tog nie doop nie!" Dit was nog in die Apartheidsdae. Wat moes ek

maak? Ek neem haar toe na 'n klein rivierlopie buite die dorp, met 'n groepie gelowiges wat kom kyk het. En ek doop haar. Jy moes dit kon sien toe sy daar uitkom! Sy spring en jubel en juig van blydschap en sy roep hardop uit: "Ek het gedoen wat die Here gesê het ek moet doen! Prys die Here!"

Nadat ons 'n ander beroep aanvaar het en daar weg is, het sy en my vrou nog baie oor en weer gekommunikeer. Sy het toe by 'n Joodse dame in Jeffreysbaai gaan werk wat sy haar vriendinnetjie genoem het. En sy vertel vir my vrou hoe sy hierdie vriendinnetjie na die Here toe gelei het! Sy het by die Groot Opdrag van Jesus gebly: "Gaan dan heen, maak dissipels van alle nasies... doop hulle ... leer hulle om alles te

onderhou wat ek julle beveel het..." (Matt. 28:19; Mark 16:15-16).

Laat ons nooit van die Groot Opdrag afwyk, dit aanpas, afwater of geringskat nie! Laat ons geestelik groei en God in gehoorsaamheid dien en Hom deur die doopwaters volg. Maak 'n studie hiervan, want deur die kernwaarheid daarvan is ons ook gered, soos ook Martin Luther, want "...die saligheid is in niemand anders nie, want daar is ook geen ander naam onder die hemel wat onder die mense gegee is, waardeur ons gered moet word nie" (Hand. 4:12). En dit geld nóg vandag! Amen.

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LETSATSI LA TLHATOSO: KERESETE MO GO LONA KGOTSA KERESETE MO TENG GA LONA (Ascension Day: Christ amongst you or Christ in you?)



DITEMANA:

"Ba Modimo o ratileng go ba itsise se e leng lohomo lwa kgalalelo ya bosaitsiweng joo mo baheitaneng, lo e leng Keresete mo go lona, yo e leng tsholofelo ya kgalalelo" (Bakolose 1:27). "Ga o bolo go fitlha bosaitsiweng jo mo dingwageng tse di makgolokgolo le mo dikokomaneng tse di fetileng, mme jaanong kwa bofelong go mo itumedisitse go bo bolelela ba ba o ratang e bile ba o tshelala, mme mahumo le kgalalelo ya maikaelelo a one ke a lona le Badichaba. Mme bosaitsiweng joo ke jo: gore Keresete mo dipelong tsa lona ke ene fela tsholofelo ya lona ya kgalalelo"

(Bakolose 1:27 LEF). Tlhatlhosho: "Mme ke lo bolelela boammaaruri, fa ke re: Go molemo go lona, fa ke tsamaya; gone fa ke sa tsamae, Mogomotsi ga a ka ke a tla go lona. Mme fa ke tsamaya, ke tla mo romela go lona" (Johane 16:7).

DIKAKANYO

Fa re buisa ditemana tse di fa godimo re bona gore dikarolo tse di ntshofetsweng ga di a fetolwa ka go tshwana. Le mo dipheto-long tse di farologanang tsa Seesimane di tle di fetolwe ka mekgwa e e farologaneng. Fa o buisa gore ga tse, "Keresete mo go lona" go ka raya maemo a mabedi. Go ka re Keresete o mo go lona - *amongst you* - mme go ka raya gape gore Keresete o mo teng ga lona - *in you!* Se se dirile gore ke akanye gore go na le batho ba ba sa e tlhaloganyeng sentle. Jaaka Jesu a ne a tsamaya mo lefatsheng mme a tsetswe mme a na le mmele wa motho re ne re ka re o mo go rona, o mo gare ga rona mme o tsamaya mo gare ga rona. Gape re ne re ka ipotsa gore Jesu a ka nna jang mo teng ga rona ka mmele wa motho. Fa re tlhaloganya sentle gore go diragala eng ka nako ya tlhatloso le ka nako ya go tla ga Mowa o o Galelang, ke gone re tlhalo-

ganyang lefoko go feta. Jesu wa mmele wa motho a ka tsamaya le rona. Fa a tsamaya le wena nna ke sala le mang jaanong? Fa a le kwa tempeleng kgotsa kwa kerekeng ga a kwa go ba ba kwa ntle kgotsa ba ba seng kwa kerekeng.

E rile fa Jesu a tlhatloga a ne a re eng? A ne a re ke tla tsamaya mme ke tla le romela Mothusi kgotsa Mogomotsi. Jesu wa mmele wa motho o ne a tsamaya mme a re romela mowa. Mowa o o Galalelang ke jaaka mowa o o butswetseng go fa Atame bophelo. Ke jaaka mowa o re o hemang. Jesu wa mmele a ka se nne gotlhe mme Mowa o o Galalelang o teng gotlhe. Le wena gotlhe kwa o tsamayang teng o ka hema mme le Mowa o o Galalelang o teng gotlhe.

Fa o tlhaloganya se jaanong o tlhaloganya Beibele go feta. Fa Jesu a re o na le rona, kgotsa a re a ka se a re tlogele. Le fa o tsamaya mo mogorogorong wa moriti wa loso, o na le wena (Ps. 23). Tlhatloso ya Jesu ke tshegofatso ka gore jaanong Mowa, Mothusi, Mogomotsi o na le rona gotlhe. O ka opela monate jang jaanong fa o re: Ke tsamaya le Jesu, Ka mmatla, mmatla... kae kapa kae? Hema fela, mowa o teng le Mowa o



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o Galalelang o teng. Keresete mo teng ga pelo ya gago! Mo kope a tsene mo pelong ya gago!

THAPELO

Rraarona re lebogela leano la Gago la go re romela Mowa o o Galalelang. Re leboga Jesu a tlhatlogile mme a re romela Mowa o o Galalelang. Re rute mme o re gopotse nako yotlhe gore o na le wena. Re thuse re tlhaloganye gore ka go romela Mowa o o Galalelang ke ntlha e kgolo. Ke go tlhomamisa gore o mo teng ga rona mme o na le rona nako yotlhe. O tsamaya le rona, o na le rona gotlhe kwa re tsamayang teng. Tsena le mo pelong ya me. Ke go bulela pelo ya me gore re je re lalele mmogo. AMEN.

Beproef God se Volmaakte Wil

Dit was by 'n mannebyeenkoms waar ons geluister het na 'n inspirerende boodskap. Daarna was daar 'n geleentheid vir persoonlike gebed. 'n Jongman het na my gekom en gevra dat ek saam met hom moet bid, sodat hy God se wil vir sy lewe kan ontdek en ultiem.

Ek het hom bemoedig deur te sê dat dit in die eerste plek baie goed is om God se wil te soek. God sal hierdie soeke eer en ons bekragtig om te doen wat Hom welbehaaglik is. In die tweede plek is dit gewoonlik so dat God se wil en (lewens)roeping stelselmatig ontvou - al weet jy verseker dat jy 'n bepaalde taak moet voltooi, is daar voorbereiding en ordening van sake, plekke, en geleenthede wat eers moet plaasvind. Byvoorbeeld, as 'n mens 'n onderwyser, ingenieur, of prediker wil word, moet daar eers 'n geruime tyd van studie en praktiese opleiding plaasvind. Steeds, die eerste stap is om bevestiging van God te kry dat jy wel 'n onderwyser, ingenieur, of prediker moet word. Derdens, terwyl 'n mens in afhanklikheid van die Heilige Gees opreg na God se spesifieke opdrag en roeping vir jou lewe soek, is daar baie dinge wat jy kan doen in antwoord op God se algemene wil en roeping vir al Sy kinders. En namate 'n mens jou lewe daarvolgens inrig, sal jou spesifieke roeping ook al duideliker word. Dit is so omdat dié wat op die lig wat hulle reeds het, reageer, meer lig sal ontvang. Die omgekeerde is ook waar: as ons nie begin om algemene regte en goeie dinge te doen nie, kan ons nie verwag dat God ons met meer sal vertrou nie.

Net 'n woord oor God se spesifieke wil: Ons vind in Romeine 12:2 die gedagte dat soos wat ons onself aan God oorgee, sal ons denke vernuwe word en sal ons kan beproef, toets, soek, en onderskei wat God se volmaakte wil is: *“Broers, op grond van die barmhartigheid van God roep ek julle dus nou op om julle liggeme beskikbaar te stel as 'n offer wat lewend en heilig is, en vir God aanneemlik. Dit is julle sinvolle godsdiens. Julle moenie aan hierdie wêreld gelykvormig wees nie, maar verander word deur die vernuwing van julle denke, sodat julle goed kan onderskei wat die goeie en aanneemlike en volmaakte wil van God is”* (DV).

Een kommentator stel dit so: “Here the meaning is that the Christian's intelligence has been so 'renewed' by grace that he now, by a holy instinct, can discern, in conflicting cases, the will of God from the will of self or of the world. And on this percep-

tion he is to act.” **Daar is dus 'n faset van God se wil wat ons daaglik moet soek, toets, oorweeg en dan najaag.** Dit maak ons verhouding met Hom dinamies, en bevestig ons voortdurende afhanklikheid van Hom. Dalk wil Hy nie die volle toekomst op een slag aan ons openbaar nie, anders is die gevaar daar dat ons dink dat ons Hom nie meer nodig het nie - ons weet dan wat om te doen. Belangriker as wat ons vir Hom moet doen, is ons verhouding met Hom en ons motief agter ons daad.

Laat ons 'n paar oomblikke stilstaan by God se algemene wil. Paulus bid voortdurend dat God se (algemene) wil sal geskied in die lewens van die Kolossense: *“Daarom hou ons ook nie op nie... om vir julle te bid en te vra dat julle vervul mag word met die kennis van Sy wil in alle wysheid en geestelike insig, sodat julle waardiglik voor die Here mag wandel om Hom in alles te behaag en julle in elke goeie werk vrug mag dra en in die kennis van God mag groei, en met alle krag bekragtig word volgens die mag van Sy heerlijkheid tot alle lydsamheid en lankmoedigheid met blydschap, en die Vader mag dank wat ons bekwaam gemaak het om deel te hê aan die erfdeel van die heiliges in die lig - Hy wat ons verlos het uit die mag van die duisternis en oorgebring het in die koninkryk van die Seun van Sy liefde”* (Kol. 1:9-13 OV).

Uit hierdie gebed kan ons geestelike wysheid en kennis verkry rakende God se (algemene) wil vir my lewe. Nie net gedeeltelike kennis nie, maar volle kennis en geestelike insig.

1. WANDEL WAARDIGLIK VOOR DIE HERE

Ons lees in Filippense dat Paulus die Here se kinders aanmoedig, *“Alleenlik, gedra julle waardig die evangelie van Christus, sodat, of ek kom en julle sien dan wel of ek afwesig is, ek van julle omstandighede kan hoor dat julle in een gees vasstaan en, een van siel, saam stry vir die geloof van die evangelie, en dat julle jul in geen opsig laat afskrik deur die teëstanders nie”* (Fil. 1:27-28 DV).

“Waardig” beteken dat ons reg optree, of iemand kyk of nie. Paulus brei hierop uit en verwys na eenheid en standvastigheid onder verdrukking. Die basis vir hierdie opdrag is die groot prys wat Jesus vir ons betaal het. As Hy dan so vir ons gelyk het, sal ons nie ook bereid wees om vir Hom te lewe nie? Daarom moet ons die skandele dinge afsterf, sodat ons waardiglik kan wandel en die lewe leef waartoe Hy ons geroep

het. Jesus vra nooit meer van ons as wat Hy nie Self bereid was om te gee nie. Mag ons in ons harte besluit om Hom só te behaag deur God se wil in elke saak en opsig na te streef.

2. BEHAAG DIE HERE MET GOEIE WERKE

Ons hoor dikwels dat ons niks kan verdien nie, maar dat alles uit genade is. Dat werke niks tel nie. Dit is inderdaad so dat ons nie ons redding op enige manier kan verdien nie. Maar hier lees ons dat dit wel God se wil is en dat dit Hom welbehaaglik is wanneer ons goeie werke verrig. Hoekom is dit so? Want dit wys heen na Hom en verheerlik Hom, indien dit in opregtheid en nederigheid gedoen word.

Spurgeon skryf as volg, *“Fruitful in every good work.”* Here is room and range enough - in 'every good work.' Have you the ability to preach the Gospel? Preach it! Does a little child need comforting? Comfort it! Can you stand up and vindicate a glorious truth before thousands? Do it! Does a poor saint need a bit of dinner from your table? Send it to her. Let works of obedience, testimony, zeal, charity, piety, and philanthropy all be found in your life. Do not select big things as your special line, but glorify the Lord also in the littles - 'fruitful in every good work.’”

Jesus herinner ons, *“Ek is die druiwestok, julle die lote. Wie in My bly en Ek in hom, hy dra baie vrug, want sonder My kan julle niks doen nie... Hierdeur word My Vader verheerlik, dat julle baie vrug dra en My dissipels kan wees”* (Johannes 15:5,8 DV). Jesus sal ons in staat stel om sinvolle en standhoudende vrug te dra en om die Vader te verheerlik, mits ons in Hom bly.

3. NEEM TOE IN KENNIS

Paulus skryf aan die Korintiërs, *“Ek het julle melk gegee om te drink, nie vaste kos nie, omdat julle nog nie daartoe in staat was nie. Selfs nou is julle nog nie daartoe in staat nie”* (1 Kor. 3:2 DV). Dan vermaan hy hulle, *“Broeders, moenie kinders wees in die verstand nie, maar wees kinders in die boosheid en wees volwassenes in die verstand”* (1 Kor. 14:20 OV).

Ons vind ander plekke ook waar geestelike groei aangemoedig word. Petrus skryf, *“Sorg dat julle aanhou groei in die genade en kennis van ons Here en Verlosser, Jesus Christus”* (2 Pet. 3:18 DV). Die Hebreërskrywer betig sy lesers, *“Want terwyl julle teen hierdie tyd reeds leraars moes gewees het, het julle nou weer*

nodig dat iemand julle die grondbeginsels van die uitsprake van God leer, en het julle weer behoefte aan melk, en nie vaste kos nie. Elkeen wat melk gebruik, is immers onervare ten opsigte van die boodskap van regverdiging, want hy is 'n suigeling. Maar vaste kos is vir volwassenes, vir hulle wat oor die aanvoeling beskik, deur gewoonte geoefen, om te kan onderskei tussen goed en kwaad” (Heb. 5:12-14 DV).

Paulus bespreek die vyfvoudige bediening in Efesiërs 4. Kom ons let op die doelwit waarom God hierdie bedieninge vir die Kerk gegee het: *“En Hy het sommige as apostels, ander as profete, ander as evangeliste, en ander as herders en leraars gegee, om die heiliges toe te rus vir hulle dienswerk, om die liggaam van Christus op te bou, totdat ons almal kom tot eenheid in geloof en in kennis van die Seun van God, en tot 'n volwassenheid wat in ooreenstemming is met die volgroeide gestalte van die volheid van Christus. Die doel hiervan is dat ons nie meer klein kindertjies sal wees nie, wat deur onstuimige golwe rondgeslinger word en rondgewaai word deur elke wind van lering, deur mense se slinksheid en die gekonkel waardeer hulle dwaling beplan; maar dat ons eerder, terwyl ons in liefde aan die waarheid vashou, in alle opsigte na Hom toe sal groei. Hy, Christus, is die Hoof uit Wie die hele liggaam, harmonieus saamgevoeg en saamgebind, deur die ondersteuning van elke gewrig, volgens die werking van elke deel afsonderlik, die groei van die liggaam bewerk tot sy eie opbou in liefde”* (v. 11-16).

Die bedieninge word aan die Kerk gegee sodat die kinders van God toegerus kan word vir dienswerk, opgebou in eenheid, en kan groei in kennis en volwassenheid. Dan sal ons nie deur elke lering mislei of verwar word nie, maar ons sal die waarheid kan onderskei. Laat ons in alle opsigte na Hom groei, sodat ons meer soos Hy kan wees.

4. WORD BEKRAGTIG OM GEDULDIG EN VOL BLYDSKAP TE WEES

Paulus skryf in Filippense, *“Dit is immers ter wille van Christus aan julle as gawe gegee om nie net in Hom te glo nie, maar ook vir Hom te ly. Julle stry dieselfde stryd wat julle my sien stry het, en waarvan julle nou hoor dat ek nog steeds stry”* (Fil. 1:29-30 DV). Wat 'n paradoks: ons lyding is 'n gawe!

Paulus belig hierdie kwessie verder in Romeine, *“Omdat ons*

Vervolg op p. 5

Moments with God

I often have these precious moments of delight with God. Moments when I find myself smiling, captivated by something - it could be from the Word, or, walking outside to put some vegetable peels into the bin and surprised by an awesome sunset that moves me to worship.

Just a few days ago, I was walking in my garden after having been forced to stay indoors with a nasty cough for quite a while. I was bending down to pull up

some weeds and suddenly I saw a brief flash of the brightest purple colour.

Intrigued, I bent down to see what it was that caught my eye. There, on the paving sat the tiniest little butterfly that I had ever seen, its wings now folded into an obscure colour, the shade of the paving. I was overjoyed at the sight of this tiny, beautiful creature - a special moment with God, chatting with Him about this little butterfly with childlike joy. I needed that.



I am reminded of the beautiful words of Psalm 37:4, “Delight yourself in the Lord, and He will give you the desires of your heart.” How often do we simply desire peace and rest from it all. Beloved, in spite of everything, it is still to be found - at the feet of Jesus.

This morning I read some very encouraging words written by Poh Fang Chia, “when life knocks us down, we can still look up - for God is on the throne! He holds our days in His hands, and He holds us close to His heart.”

Life on Earth can often be harsh and painful beyond description. John Wesley once wrote, “The world hopes for the best, but the Lord offers the best hope.” Our hope is steadfast and eternal, as sure as the very throne of God.

In The Message translation, Hebrews 4:14-16 reads: “Now that we know what we have - Jesus, this great High Priest with ready access to God - let’s not let it slip through our fingers. We don’t have a Priest Who is out of touch with our reality. He’s been



Helen du Plessis

through weakness and testing, experienced it all - all but the sin. So let’s walk right up to Him and get what He is so ready to give. Take the mercy, accept the help.”

Delight yourself in the Lord while you are pushing through the rubble of Earth’s brokenness. You have an eternal inheritance. Look up - God is on the throne!

- Helen du Plessis, 083 332 0895.

Beproef God se Volmaakte Wil

Vervolg van p. 4

dan nou op grond van geloof geregtig is, het ons vrede by God deur ons Here Jesus Christus. Deur Hom het ons in geloof ook toegang verkry tot hierdie genade waarin ons vasstaan, en ons beroem ons op die hoop om deel te kan hê aan die heerlijkheid van God.

Maar dis nie al nie: Ons beroem ons ook op ons verdrukking, omdat ons weet verdrukking bewerkstellig volharding, en volharding lei tot betroubaarheid, en betroubaarheid tot hoop. En die hoop beskaam nie, want God se liefde is in ons harte uitgestort deur die Heilige Gees wat aan ons gegee is” (Rom 5:1-5 DV).

Ons sien dat ons juig oor ons verlossing en heerlijkheid wat reeds vas en seker is. Maar terwyl ons op pad is na volkome en

uiteindelike bevryding, verheug ons ons ook oor die pad wat ons moet stap om daarby uit te kom. Dit is soms besaai met verdrukking en moeilikhede, maar dit bereik God se doel: dit kweek volharding, betroubaarheid, en hoop.

5. DANK DIE HERE VIR JOU GEESTELIKE ERFENIS

Paulus sluit sy gebed vir die Kolossense af deur te bid dat hulle, “die Vader mag dank wat ons bekwaam gemaak het om deel te hê aan die erfdeel van die heiliges in die lig - Hy wat ons verlos het uit die mag van die duisternis en oorgebring het in die koninkryk van die Seun van Sy liefde, in Wie ons die verlossing het deur Sy bloed, naamlik die vergifnis van die sondes” (Kol. 1:12-14 OV). Hier sien ons wat die bron van hoop is wat ‘n anker is in

tyd van nood: ons vaste en sekere geestelike erfenis. Verlossing deur Jesus se bloed. Vergifnis van sonde. Vrymaking. Dit is een waarheid wat ons nooit sal ontgroeï nie. Soos ons groei, sal ons net meer en meer waardering kry vir die ontsagwekkende prys wat Jesus vir ons betaal het, en die implikasies daarvan in ons alledaagse lewe. Laat ons onthou dat God inderdaad wil hê dat alle mense gered word, en dat Hy óns wil gebruik om dit te bewerkstellig.

SAMEVATTING

God het aan ons ‘n vrye wil gegee. Hy sal Homself soms terugtrek, Homself beperk, en ons toelaat om te fouteer, omdat Hy ons wil respekteer. Tog kan ons Hom bedroef as ons die Stem van die Heilige Gees ignoreer en strydig met Sy wil optree. Daar is baie

dinge wat Hy vir al Sy kinders verlang, soos hierbo genoem: ‘n waardige lewe, goeie werke, groei in kennis, geduld onder verdrukking, en verblyding in die hoop van ons redding. Tog het Hy soms ‘n spesifieke, besondere roeping op iemand se lewe, of selfs net ‘n bepaalde taak vir ons op ‘n bepaalde dag. Dit is onnodig om dit te oor-ontleed en te wonder in watter kategorie elke saak nou regtig val (algemene roeping, spesifieke roeping, God se algemene wil, volmaakte wil, toelatende wil, ens.). Wat egter nodig is, is om aan die Heilige Gees oor te gee en op Sy leiding staat te maak vir elke sekonde van ons lewe! Slegs in Sy wil het ons vryheid en impak. Slegs dan sal daar ewige, geestelike vrug en ‘n nalatenskap wees wat Hom sal verheerlik!

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Excellence is Evangelism

“You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people’s feet. You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father Who is in heaven” (Matthew 5:13-16).

Contrary to what some modern readers might expect, Jesus does not say, “Now that you’re citizens of My Kingdom, it is time to quit your job and become a ‘full-time missionary.’” Instead, He calls his people to be salt and light, engaging the rot and darkness of

the world. Commenting on today’s passage, pastor John Piper says, “The Bible makes it plain that God’s will is for His people to be scattered like salt and light among the whole range of secular vocations.”

And to engage in those vocations with excellence! Jesus didn’t call us to “work” but “good work.” And while the Greek word for “good” here (kalos) certainly connotes technical excellence, it also alludes to moral excellence. **In other words, we are called to work that is good in both craftsmanship and character.**

And Jesus says that when people see “good work” like that, they will “give glory to your Father Who is in heaven.” In short,

excellence is evangelism. There’s a trend I’ve noticed that illustrates this truth. Any time I meet a parent who has adult children seriously walking with the Lord, I ask what they think God used to cultivate that resilient faith in their kids. The most common answer by far is this: “My kids had other Christian adults in their lives whom they respected personally and professionally.”

In other words, the “good works” of these Christian professionals made Jesus winsome and attractive to those kids. You want the children in your church and your co-workers in your company to follow Jesus? **Be so good they can’t ignore you.**

To make this a bit more concrete, let me leave you with a mental image to carry with you today. I

got it from Rick Rubin, the legendary music producer, who says this: “So often we sleepwalk through our lives. Consider how different your experience of the world might be if you engaged in every activity with the attention you might give to landing a plane.”

I love that picture!

Whatever task you’re turning to next, engage it with the level of focus and precision you would as if you were landing a plane. Because Jesus says that something far more important than aircraft safety is at stake. “*Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father Who is in heaven,*” today. - The Word before Work, Jordan Raynor

Psalm 23 in the Lives of our Heros of the Faith

Continued from p. 1
tian meant his life would be dull and boring.

One day, at age 17, he was home alone and looking for something to read and found a track in his father’s study. While reading, he was struck by the phrase, “the finished work of Christ.” Immediately, he recalled Jesus’ words, “It is finished!” He realised no amount of striving or good works could save him, but his debt had been paid in full at the cross. It was at that moment that he surrendered his life to Christ.

One hundred miles away at the exact same time, his mother, who was visiting a friend, had gone into her room to pray for Hudson’s salvation. For hours she prayed until she felt her prayers were answered. Two weeks later when she returned home, Hudson met her at the door with the happy news. She hugged him and said, “I know my boy, I’ve been rejoicing for a fortnight.”

Many years later in China, Hudson struggled to find joy under the weight and never-ending strain of his work. One day, he received a letter from a friend and fellow-missionary, John McCarthy, who shared a recent revelation he had about abiding in Christ and finding spiritual rest.

As he read the letter, Hudson said, “I saw it all. I looked to Jesus, and when I saw it - oh, how joy flowed!” It was such a pivotal moment in his life that his co-labourers noticed a difference and said of him, “Mr. Taylor went

out, a new man in a new world, to tell what the Lord had done for his soul.”

Finding rest comes from understanding the relationship of the sheep to the Shepherd. When Hudson Taylor fully grasped this truth, it transformed his life and his work.

If you’re striving to find spiritual rest today, consider afresh the character of your Shepherd, Jesus. To know Him is to trust Him, and to trust Him is to love Him. He is the Longing of our hearts, and in Him, our souls find true rest.



Corrie Ten Boom

3. CORRIE TEN BOOM - WALKING THROUGH THE VALLEY OF THE SHADOW OF DEATH

“Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for You are with me” (Psalm 23:4a ESV).

Corrie ten Boom lived in Holland with her family during World War

II. As Christians, they were horrified by the atrocities being carried out by the Nazis and began to quietly acquire food ration cards and help hide Jews in their home. In Corrie’s bedroom, they built a hidden room no bigger than a small wardrobe closet, to hide the Jews when the Gestapo came to the door. The hidden room helped an estimated 800 Jews hide and escape from certain death.

However, Corrie, her sister, Betsie, and her father were eventually caught and sent to the German concentration camp, Ravensbruck.

Even living through the horrors inside the concentration camp, God’s Presence was tangible to Corrie and Betsie. One bitterly cold morning, their cruel taskmaster ordered the women outside for roll call an hour earlier than usual. Corrie and Betsie walked hand-in-hand by a different route to the square. On their right were the outlines of the barracks, crematorium, and gas chamber, and on their left, the guards paced along the watch-towers with machine guns drawn.

In a true valley of the shadow of death, they prayed. Corrie recounted, “We were three as we walked with the Lord and talked with Him. Betsie spoke. Then I spoke. Then the Lord spoke. How? I do not know. But both of us understood.”

“Isn’t this a bit of Heaven?” Betsie said. “Lord, one day we’ll talk with You face-to-face, but even now You are giving us the joy of walking and talking with You.”

Betsie died in Ravensbruck. But Corrie was later released due to a “clerical error” and went on to share her story with millions worldwide. Corrie and Betsie literally walked through the valley of the shadow of death and yet experienced a little slice of heaven communing with God. The world cannot understand, nor experience this kind of peace. It is reserved for those who belong to the Shepherd. Whatever valley you are going through today, be reminded that He is there with you, and if that is true, you have nothing to fear.



Gladys Aylward

4. GLADYS AYLWARD - LET HIS ROD AND STAFF COMFORT YOU

“Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me” (Psalm 23:4b, ESV).

Gladys Aylward was a British-born missionary who served in Yangcheng, China from 1932 until her death in 1970. As a young

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Partnering with God

Nearly thirty million more US adults are following Jesus today than was the case just four years ago, according to Barna. Their CEO, David Kinman, called this “the clearest trend we’ve seen in more than a decade, pointing to spiritual renewal.” He notes that this movement is being led especially by “younger generations.”

God is moving in other parts of the world as well, places where the death of the Church has long been predicted. In France, for example, 10 384 adults were baptised on Easter Sunday, a jump of 46% from last year and nearly double the number in 2023. The number of teenagers baptised was ten times higher than in 2019. One priest said, “We are overwhelmed by what is taking place.”

God is moving dramatically in the UK as well:

- Bible sales in the country increased by 87% between 2019 and 2024.
- Twice as many people are making first-time commitments to follow Jesus compared to 2021.
- Last year, more than two million people tried the Alpha course, a ministry designed to answer seekers’ questions and lead them to faith in Christ. This is the highest figure ever recorded.
- A woman showed up at one church seeking help because Jesus spoke to her in a dream, telling her she needed to be baptised.
- A young woman came on an online Alpha course with a painful case of shingles. The Alpha leader prayed with her, and the shingles vanished.
- One church saw 120 people respond to the Gospel on Easter Sunday.
- A PhD researcher in Wales collected more than six hundred stories in just a couple of months of people being healed.
- A youth ministry called Spring Harvest saw 630 professions of faith last year.
- Last Christmas, more than one hundred thousand believers took the Gospel to the streets of London, singing carols and sharing the Gospel. There were numerous reports of salvations, healings, and revivals in churches.

If you’re like me, your first question is: How can we join this movement? What will it take for a true spiritual awakening to transform our nation? The answer may surprise you.

THE TRUE PURPOSE OF THE UNIVERSE
Jesus promised us, “I am with You always, to the end of the age”

(Matthew 28:20). But for what purpose? What is the living Lord Jesus trying to do in our lives today?

C.S. Lewis wrote: The Church exists for nothing else but to draw men into Christ, to make them little “christs”. If they are not doing that, all the cathedrals, clergy, missions, sermons, even the Bible itself, are simply a waste of time. God became Man for no other purpose. It is even doubtful, you know, whether the whole universe was created for any other purpose.

Our Father seeks for us to be “conformed to the image of His Son” (Romans 8:29) and sent His Spirit to indwell us (1 Corinthians 3:16) so that Christ can be “formed” in us (Galatians 4:19). The “fruit” He manifests is the character of Christ operating in and through our lives (Galatians 5:22-23).

If God will settle for nothing less than Christlikeness in our lives, we should join Him. Oswald Chambers warned, “The great enemy of the life of faith in God is not sin, but the good which is not good enough.”

Jesus wants to be as real in our bodies as He was in His, seeking to incarnate Himself in Christians to continue His Earthly ministry through us. In this way, He becomes “the firstborn among many brothers” (Romans 8:29). As a result, accepting anything less than Christlikeness is settling for less than the abundant, victorious, overcoming lives we are supposed to be living today.

Here’s my point: The more we become like Jesus, the more this miraculous transformation in our lives catalyses us to lead others to Him. And the more we advance the spiritual awakening we need so desperately.

FOUR BIBLICAL STEPS
So, here’s the practical question: How can you and I partner with Christ to become more like Him?

First, seek spiritual renewal for yourself and your nation. Our Lord promises, “You will seek Me and find Me, when you seek Me with all your heart” (Jeremiah 29:13). Philip Yancey is right: “God goes where He’s wanted.”

Second, stay close to Jesus to become like Jesus. Paul wrote that when we are “beholding the glory of the Lord,” we are “being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another” (2 Corinthians 3:18). This is why consistent prayer, Bible study, and worship are vital

“channels of grace.” It is also why the enemy tempts us to separate Sunday from Monday and religion from the “real world.” The more we practice the Presence of Jesus, the more we become the Presence of Jesus to others (cf. Luke 6:40).

Third, ask in every setting the familiar question, “What would Jesus do?” Then ask the Spirit to empower you to be the change you wish to see (Ephesians 5:18).

Fourth, spend your life and influence leading others to do the same. We become like Christ as we help others become like Christ. Only then do we align our lives with the purpose of the One Who came “to seek and to save the lost” (Luke 19:10).

This is God’s design for humanity in which we are linked to one

another in His tapestry of grace. **“THE ONLY THING IN THE WORLD WORTH CARING FOR”**
The theologian Sinclair Ferguson noted: God’s ultimate purpose is to make us like Christ. His goal is the complete restoration of the image of God in His child! So great a work demands all the resources which God finds throughout the universe, and He ransacks the possibilities of joys and sorrows in order to reproduce in us the character of Jesus.

The Scottish evangelist and biologist Henry Drummond added: “To become like Christ is the only thing in the world worth caring for, the thing before which every ambition of man is folly and all lower achievement vain.” Would you agree?

- Dr. Jim Denison
<https://www.denisonforum.org>

MY “JA/NEE” VERSUS GOD SE “JA/NEE”

“En word nie aan hierdie wêreld gelykvormig nie, maar word verander deur die vernuwung van julle gemoed, sodat julle kan beproef wat die goeie en welgevallige en volmaakte wil van God is” (Romeine 12:2 OV).

Die meeste mense het glad nie ‘n probleem om “nee” te sê nie. Ek is nie een van daardie mense nie. Voordat ek Jesus Christus met my hele hart aangeneem het as my persoonlike Verlosser, het ek vir alles en almal “ja” gesê, selfs wanneer daardie ja lynreg teenoor my geloofsoortuiging en waardes gestaan het. God het my egter gebring na die kernvers hierbo en ek het besef dat ek my lewe deur my vlees geleef het en al my besluite geneem het vir redes wat geensins belyn was met Sy allerbeste vir my nie.

As gevolg daarvan het ek vir sowat 15 jaar rondgeswerf, doelloos dag na dag geleef, omdat ek net iewers in “hierdie wêreld” wou inpas en raakgesien wou word. Alhoewel ek in daardie 15 jaar nooit ware vreugde ervaar het nie, was almal om my dolgelukkig, omdat al my “ja’s” hulle lewens soveel geriefliker gemaak het.

Ek stuur geensins op selfsug af en probeer jou oortuig om nou vir alles “nee” te sê nie, glad nie. Wat ek wel wil benadruk, is om die Heilige Gees van ons Hemelse Vader se eienaarskap oor elke besluit wat jy neem, te vra deur gebed elke dag, sodat jy sal kan onderskei tussen God se “ja/nee” en jou “ja/nee” en jou besluite altyd in pas met God se besluite vir jou lewe kan neem.

Hoekom is dit belangrik? God weet alles (1 Joh. 3: 20). Hy ken jou toekoms (Jer 29: 11), en Sy plan vir jou lewe is voorspoed. Ken jy jou toekoms? Weet jy wat volgende week op jou wag? Nee? God weet.

God het ons geskep met vrye wil en daarom kan ons God se volmaakte, mees geseënde wil vir ons lewens mis, omdat ons eerder ons eie wil of die wil van ander wil najaag. God belowe in Deut 31:6 dat Hy jou nooit alleen sal laat of jou sal verlaat nie, daarom, selfs as ons foute maak of verkeerde besluite neem, sal Hy ons nooit wegwys as ons met opregte harte terugkom na Hom toe en vra vir hulp nie.

Moenie langer uitmis op God se beste vir jou nie! Sy “nee” beteken altyd dat daar ‘n beter “ja” op pad is! Vertrou op Hom...

- Maria Dreyer
<https://mannavirmaandae.wordpress.com>

Psalm 23 in the Lives of our Heros of the Faith

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missionary, she endeared herself to the Chinese people by her warm hospitality, her care for orphans, and helping end the cruel practice of foot binding.

One day, she received a summons from the mandarin to go assist the prison warden to stop a riot. Fear and dread instantly overwhelmed her. What could she, a small, foreign woman, possibly do to help stop a prison riot? The warden reasoned that the only one who could stop the men from killing each other was the woman from the village who told everyone the living God was inside of her. Gladys felt sick to her stomach. The harder she tried to back out, the more insistent the warden became that the men wouldn't kill her.

She knew that if she refused to go, word would spread that there was no living God inside Gladys. But if she agreed... there was no telling what would happen. Little 4'10" Gladys was the last person on Earth who should have gone in to stop a prison riot, but God was indeed living inside of her. His reputation was as much on the line as was her life. She knew she had to go.

As Gladys made her way through the tunnel into the prison she prayed, "Oh God, protect and comfort me now. I can only do this if You go before me." The scene at the other end was worse than she had imagined. Dead bodies and blood were everywhere, and a man was running toward her waving a machete. Without thinking, Gladys stepped forward and yelled, "Stop at once, and give me that machete!"

As if an invisible Hand held back his arm, the crazed man froze with his machete in mid-air and dropped it to the ground. The unusual scene caught the attention of the other prisoners, and they stopped fighting to watch the little foreign woman bring order to the chaos.

Psalm 23:4 introduces us to the shepherd's tools. With a rod, he beats off predators, and with his staff pulls his sheep away from danger. Gladys experienced the Shepherd's invisible rod that day, as she was divinely protected. Whatever valley you may be facing, be reminded that His protection and discipline are for those that belong to Him, and that gives us comfort to walk through the fiercest and darkest valleys.

5. LILLIAN TRASHER - HE PREPARES A TABLE, MY CUP OVERFLOWS
"You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows" (Psalm 23:5, ESV).



Lillian Trasher

Lillian Trasher was an American-born missionary who founded the first orphanage in Egypt in the early 1900s. "Mama Lillian" as she was known, cared for over 10 000 orphans in her lifetime, and the orphanage she began is still in operation today.

By the 1940s the orphanage was home to over 900 children. World War II was shifting in favour of the Allies in the region, but inflation made the operational costs impossible to maintain. The children's clothes were in tatters, and they were starving, eating only half a cup of lentils each day. Lillian pursued every normal avenue for help, but the entire country was suffering. One night at supper she announced that all schoolwork and chores would be suspended for 24-hours so everyone could pray for God's provision.

The next morning, Lillian received a telegram from the American ambassador to Egypt requesting to see her immediately. She had no idea what the dignitary would have to do with her, so she boarded a train for Cairo. Once there, the ambassador was bursting with news. He explained that Greece had fallen to the Germans, and a Red Cross ship carrying relief supplies intended for Greece was ordered to return to the harbour in Alexandria. The ship was at risk for attack, and they were ordered to dump their supplies and head out to sea immediately.

But onboard was a young Scottish sailor, whose mother prayed for Lillian's orphans every day, and who had himself supported Lillian's work in the past.

Knowing their cargo would help the orphans, he begged the captain to unload the cargo instead of dumping it at sea. The sailor was adamant and unrelenting, and finally, the captain agreed.

The ambassador leaned in, "This

is why I asked you to come here today. Miss Trasher, do you have need for food and clothing at this time? We have 2 600 dresses, 1 900 sweaters, 1 900 pairs of pants, 3 800 blankets, 1 100 towels, 700 kegs of powdered milk, 1 200 sacks of rice ... " and the list went on and on. Lillian burst into tears. God had heard her prayers and those of the orphans. In the middle of a war, God had prepared a banqueting table overflowing with His divine supply.

6. NATE SAINT AND MINCAYE - GOODNESS AND MERCY SHALL FOLLOW

"Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever" (Psalm 23:6, ESV).

On 8 January 1956, five American missionaries were speared to death by a violent tribe of warriors on a sandbar in the heart of the Ecuadorian jungle. These five men, Jim Elliot, Ed McCully, Roger Youderian, Pete Fleming, and Nate Saint were trying to reach the Waodani Indians with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

The missionaries had spent several weeks dropping gifts into the village from a piper airplane piloted by Nate Saint. Encouraged by the friendly connection they thought they were building, the missionaries landed their plane on the beach on that fateful day. But the violent Waodani distrusted the foreigners and speared them all to death.

The tragic news captured worldwide attention. Why would God allow such a tragedy to befall those who loved and served Him? It seemed so senseless and sad. That might be true if the story ended there.

Two years after their deaths, Elisabeth (Jim's widow) with her 3-year-old daughter, and Rachel Saint (Nate's sister), went to live among Waodani and resume the unfinished business the men had begun. For three years, the women lived among the people, learned their language, and shared the Gospel. Over the next several years, most of the villagers decided to "walk a new trail" and converted to Christ. Among the new trail-walkers were six men from the murder party, including their brutal leader, Mincaye. He had thrust the final spear into Nate Saint.

This story of reconciliation and redemption spans over 65 years, but its legacy will live well past that. In an act of reconciliation that only the Lord could orchestrate, Mincaye and Steve (Nate's son) reconciled and Mincaye was

adopted as "Grandfather" into Steve's family. Mincaye completed his trail and walked straight into heaven in April 2020.

The senseless tragedy turned into a redemptive story that inspired millions and prompted countless others to go into mission work. God's goodness and mercy are at work in a million different ways in your life too. Until you've completed your trail, pray for eyes to see all the ways His goodness and mercy are chasing after you.

CONCLUSION
"Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us" (Hebrews 12:1).

Hebrews 11 is known as the Bible's "Hall of Faith." In it, we read the mighty acts of faith done by Abel, Abraham, Noah, Moses, and even a prostitute named Rahab. These saints, and many others, make up the great cloud of witnesses whose lives encourage us to run the race set before us with endurance. I have no doubt that the saints I've highlighted in this book have joined the ranks of these biblical giants. Their lives and acts of faith are meant to encourage us and spur us on to walk in paths of righteousness as well.

Their stories remind us that we too are participating in the greater story of God's redemption plan. Our lives are being lived out publicly so that our acts of faith, our learning to rest, our walks through dark valleys can point the next generation to know and trust the Good Shepherd. Your life may not end up in the history books, but you can know that the Lord is leading you through paths of righteousness for His Name's sake. He's your shepherd. Bless His Name forever!
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Cara writes to encourage others to see their walk with the Lord not as a box to check off each day, but as a pursuit of holy leisure. She and her husband run a website and consulting business, Avocado Toast marketing, and they live with their four kids, and two dogs in sunny Gilbert, Arizona. Cara is a contributing author on YouVersion Bible App, Medium's publication Koinonia, as well as her personal blog.

Come to Him with your weakness and He will give you strength. Come to Him with your questions, your needs, and your wants, and He will give you Himself. And that is the very best thing of all.

Shattered Glass

There is a window in your heart through which you can see God. Once upon a time that window was clear. Your view of God was crisp. You could see God as vividly as you could see a gentle valley or hillside. The glass was clean, the pane unbroken.

You knew God. You knew how He worked. You knew what He wanted you to do. No surprises. Nothing unexpected. You knew that God had a will, and you continually discovered what it was.

Then, suddenly, the window cracked. A pebble broke the window. A pebble of pain.

Perhaps the stone struck when you were a child and a parent left home - forever. Maybe the rock hit in adolescence when your heart was broken. Maybe you made it into adulthood before the window was cracked. But then the pebble came.

Was it a phone call? "We have your daughter at the station. You'd better come down."

Was it a letter on the kitchen table? "I've left. Don't try to reach me. Don't try to call me. It's over. I just don't love you anymore."

Was it a diagnosis from the doctor? "I'm afraid our news is not very good."

Was it a telegram? "We regret to inform you that your son is missing in action."

Whatever the pebble's form, the result was the same - a shattered window. The pebble missed into the pane and shattered it. The crash echoed down the halls of your heart. Cracks shot out from the point of impact, creating a spider web of fragmented pieces.

And suddenly God was not so easy to see. The view that had been so crisp had changed. You turned to see God, and His figure was distorted. It was hard to see Him through the pain. It was hard to see Him through the fragments of hurt.

You were puzzled. God wouldn't allow something like this to happen, would He? Tragedy and travesty weren't on the agenda of the One you had seen, were they? Had you been fooled? Had you been blind?

The moment the pebble struck, the glass became a reference point for you. From then on, there was life before the pain and life after the pain. Before your pain,

the view was clear; God seemed so near. After your pain, well, He was harder to see. He seemed a bit distant... harder to perceive.

Your pain distorted the view - not eclipsed it, but distorted it.

Maybe these words don't describe your situation. There are some people who never have to redefine or refocus their view of God. Most of us do.

Most of us know what it means to feel disappointed by God.

Most of us have a way of completing this sentence: "If God is God, then..." Call it an agenda, a divine job description. Each of us has an unspoken, yet definitive, expectation of what God should do. "If God is God, then..."

There will be no financial collapse in my family.
My children will never be buried before me.
People will treat me fairly.
This church will never divide.
My prayer will be answered.

These are not articulated criteria. They are not written down or notarised. But they are real. They define the expectations we have of God. And when pain comes into our world - when the careening pebble splinters the window of our hearts - these expectations go unmet and doubts may begin to surface.

We look for God, but can't find Him. Fragmented glass hinders our vision. He is enlarged through this piece and reduced through that one. Lines jigsaw their way across His face. Large sections of shattered glass opaque the view.

And now you aren't quite sure what you see.

The disciples weren't sure what they saw either. Jesus failed to meet their expectations. The day Jesus fed the five thousand men He didn't do what they wanted Him to do.

The Twelve returned from their mission followed by an army. They finished their training. They recruited the soldiers. They were ready for battle. They expected Jesus to let the crowds crown Him as king and attack the city of Herod. They expected battle plans... strategies... a new era for Israel.

What did they get?
Just the opposite.

Instead of weapons, they got oars. Rather than being sent to fight, they were sent to float. The



crowds were sent away. Jesus walked away. And they were left on the water with a storm brewing in the sky. What kind of Messiah would do this? Note carefully the sequence of the stormy evening as Matthew records it: *"Immediately Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of Him to the other side, while He dismissed the crowd. After He had dismissed them, He went up on a mountainside by Himself to pray. When evening came, He was there alone, but the boat was already a considerable distance from land, buffeted by the waves because the wind was against it"* (Matt. 14:22-24).

Matthew is specific about the order of events. Jesus sent the disciples to the boat. Then He dismissed the crowd and ascended a mountainside. It was evening, probably around 6:00 p.m. The storm struck immediately. The sun had scarcely set before typhoon-like winds began to roar.

Note that Jesus sent the disciples out into the storm alone. Even as He was ascending the mountainside, He could feel and hear the gale's force. Jesus was not ignorant of the storm. He was aware that a torrent was coming that would carpet-bomb the sea's surface. But He didn't turn around. The disciples were left to face the storm... alone.

The greatest storm that night was not in the sky; it was in the disciples' hearts.

The greatest fear was not from seeing the storm-driven waves; it came from seeing the back of their Leader as He left them to face the night with only questions as companions. It was this fury that the disciples were facing that night.

Imagine the incredible strain of bouncing from wave to wave in a tiny fishing vessel. One hour would weary you. Two hours would exhaust you.

Surely Jesus will help us, they thought. They'd seen Him still storms like this before. On this same sea, they had awakened Him during a storm, and He had commanded the skies to be silent. They'd seen Him quiet the wind and soothe the waves. Surely He will come off the mountain.

But He doesn't. Their arms begin to ache from rowing. Still no sign of Jesus. Three hours. Four hours. The winds rage. The boat bounces. Still no Jesus. Midnight comes. Their eyes search for God - in vain.

By now the disciples have been on the sea for as long as six hours.

All this time they have fought the storm and sought the Master. And, so far, the storm is winning. And the Master is nowhere to be found.

"Where is He?" cried one.
"Has He forgotten us?" yelled another.
"He feeds thousands of strangers and yet leaves us to die?" muttered a third.

The Gospel of Mark adds compelling insight into the disciples' attitude. They had not understood about the loaves; their hearts were hardened. What does Mark mean? Simply this. The disciples were mad. They began the evening in a huff. Their hearts were hardened toward Jesus because He fed the multitude. Their preference, remember, had been to "send the crowds away." And Jesus had told them to feed the people. But they wouldn't try. They said it couldn't be done. They told Jesus to let the people take care of themselves.

Also keep in mind that the disciples had just spent some time on centre stage. They'd tasted stardom. They were celebrities. They had rallied crowds. They had recruited an army. They were, no doubt, pretty proud of them-

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Shattered Glass

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selves. With chests a bit puffy and heads a bit swollen, they'd told Jesus, "Just send them away."

Jesus didn't. Instead, He chose to bypass the reluctant disciples and use the faith of an anonymous boy. What the disciples said couldn't be done was done - in spite of them, not through them.

They pouted. They sulked. Rather than being amazed at the miracle, they became mad at the Master. After all, they had felt foolish passing out the very bread they said could not be made. Add to that Jesus' command to go to the boat when they wanted to go to battle, and it's easier to under-

stand why these guys are burning!

"Now what is Jesus up to, leaving us out on the sea on a night like this?"

It's 1:00 a.m., no Jesus.
It's 2:00 a.m., no Jesus.

Peter, Andrew, James, and John have seen storms like this. They are fishermen; the sea is their life. They know the havoc the gale-force winds can wreak. They've seen the splintered hulls float to shore. They've attended the funerals. They know, better than anyone, that this night could be their last. "Why doesn't He come?" they sputter. Finally, He does. During the fourth watch of

the night [3:00 to 6:00 a.m.] Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake.

Jesus came. He finally came. But between verse 24 - being buffeted by waves - and verse 25 - when Jesus appeared - a thousand questions are asked. Questions you have probably asked too. Perhaps you know the angst of being suspended between verses 24 and 25. Maybe you're riding a storm, searching the coastline for a light, a glimmer of hope. **You know that Jesus knows what you are going through. You know that He's aware of your storm. But as hard as you look to find Him, you can't see Him.** Maybe your heart, like the disciples' hearts, has

been hardened by unmet expectations. Your pleadings for help are salted with angry questions.

However, remember: When you can't see Him, you can still trust Him. The Figure you see is not a ghost. The Voice you hear is not the wind. Jesus is closer than you've ever dreamed. He is with you and He will carry you through the storm! He WILL come through for you. He will NEVER leave nor forsake you. Rest in Him today, in the midst of your storm. A bright and peaceful morning will follow your darkest night! With your heart's eye you will see Him once more in fuller vision than ever!

- *In the Eye of the Storm*, Max Lucado

Eens Vir 'n Paar, Nou Vir Almal

"Ek sal My Gees uitstort op alle mense..." (Joël 2:28-29).

Daar was 'n tyd toe die Gees net op die enkelinge gekom het - die profete, die priesters, die konings. Die spesialiste. Die mense met status, opleiding, olie op die voorkop. Die res moes maar kyk, luister, stilbly.

Maar toe spreek God 'n revolusionêre gedagte deur Joël: **"Ek sal My Gees uitstort... op alle mense..."** Nie drup nie. Uitstort! Nie net op die "regtes" nie - maar op almal wat dors is. Jonk en oud, mans en vroue, dienskneg en werkgewer, plaasmeisie en stads-japie. Dis nie meer eksklusief nie - dis uitbundig inklusief!

Hierdie profesie van Joël het nie net daar gebly nie - dit bars los met Pinksterdag toe Petrus opstaan en sê: "Dit wat julle nou sien... dis daardie profesie!" Met ander woorde: Jy's ingesluit.

Geen VIP-pas nodig nie. Net 'n oop hart.

Ons het pas Pinksterfees gevier - die verjaardag van die Kerk, die Heilige Gees wat in ons kom woon.

Praktiese toepassing:

- Voel jy te jonk? God sê: Ek sal My Gees op jou uitstort. Hy wag nie vir jou om eers 'n graad, 'n tiara of 'n kerkraadsitplek te hê nie.
- Is jy 'n vrou wat afgeskeep voel in geestelike gesprekke? Die Gees gee nie voorkeur aan geslag nie. Jy dra ook profesie, vuur, visie.
- Werk jy in 'n plek waar jy voel jy beteken min? Die Gees kom ook op diensknegte. Ook in die kombuis, by die wasgoedlyn, agter die toonbank.
- Dink jy jy's nie "geestelik genoeg" nie? Jy hoef nie 'n profeet van statuur te wees nie - net iemand wat dors is. Dis nie jou

status wat tel nie, dis jou oop hande en oop hart.

Gebed: Here, ek's dors. Stort U Gees uit op my. Nie 'n druppel vir die dorsigheid nie, maar strome van lewende water! Dankie dat ek nie hoef te kwalifiseer nie - U het my reeds gekies. Amen.

- Hettie Wessels

Here,

U sien my diepe nood en akute pyn.
My verstrengelde gedagtes wat om en om bly maal...
My verwronge vrese en veelvuldige bekommernisse!
Ek sukkel om U deur my trane te sien. Ek voel so geïsoleer.
Wie kan dit verstaan?

Maar ek wêét in my binneste dat U by my is. U los my nooit alleen nie.
U omarm my met U onpeilbare, sagte, warm liefde.
Dit is my fondasie wanneer ek soveel aanslae moet trotseer.
Ek weet dat hierdie storm ook sal verbygaan.
Maar help my om U te midde van die storm te vind,
om die soete geur van U Teenwoordigheid nou reeds te smaak.
Dit is soveel soeter wanneer die winde loei en die reën in vlae neergiet.
Ek vind rus in U.
Ek vertrou op U.
U is my veilige vesting.
Amen.

Jer. 20:11

★★★ **B&B** *Uit die Hand*

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v a n d i e H E E R

Oase van Hoop

AGS Baillie Park Gemeente

Sondagoggenddiens 9:30

JOI-Kinderdienste 9:30

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OASE VAN HOOP

-KOFFIE KAFEE-

HEB. 6:19

est. 2023

