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WATCH AND PRAY

"For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?" (I Cor. 14:8).

"Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man" (Luke 21:36).

To say that we live in a complicated world is an understatement. The current events of our time show that confusion abounds all over the globe even as humanity continuously grapples with calamity and crisis. When a global pandemic was declared in March of 2020, most people regarded it as an extraordinary and rare event. In fact, the Covid-19 pandemic was said to be a "once in a hundred years event." However, a piece published in August 2022 by the British newspaper known as *The Times*, argues that outbreaks of deadly diseases are becoming more frequent. "The eruption of ebola, Sars, Mers, Zika, and now monkeypox are abundant evidence that what was true if you look back in time is no longer valid if you look forward," the piece states.

The article later goes on to say, "The increasing rate at which novel pathogens are infecting humans means that the probability of new pandemics will grow threefold in the next few decades. It is no longer reasonable, therefore, to regard a pandemic as a once-in-a-century risk. The next one will be along much faster than that, unless we change our ways." The article further discusses an assortment of crises including inflation, the war in Ukraine, exorbitant energy costs, and devastating drought while suggesting these problems will not be resolved any time soon. "Now, we have to get used to the

idea that normal is not coming back," the author writes.

The general theme of the above-mentioned article is that the world is not only fraught with danger, but is growing measurably worse! While the author of the article might not realize it, this premise lines up perfectly with what God's Word tells us about the tumultuous days leading up to the return of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. In Luke 21:9, Jesus tells us there would be "wars and commotions." However, these problems would only be the first of many to imperil our world. Indeed, humanity has gravitated toward war for thousands of years. In 2003, the *New York Times* reported that over the past 3 400 years, the world's population has only been at peace for 268 of them. At least 108 million people were killed in wars during the twentieth century. Thus, war itself is not a sign of the end, because war is a byproduct of sin, and as long as there is sin in the world, there will be wars.

Nevertheless, Jesus gave us other signs to watch for, that indicate the world is growing closer to its final end. Luke 21:10-11 tells us, "*Then said He unto them, Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: And great earthquakes shall be in diverse places, and famines, and pestilences; and fearful sights and great signs shall there be from heaven.*" Jesus further warns in verses 25-27, "*And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.*"

In this era of pandemics, megadroughts, heat waves, massive wildfires, flooding, economic uncertainty, and widespread violence, there's absolutely no question that we see "*distress of nations with perplexity*" and "*fearful sights*." It is also quite interesting that Jesus warned of "*men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth.*" Here let it be noted that researchers from Texas Tech University published research in August 2022 that indicates that watching and reading too much news can make people mentally and physically sick. Those who check the news frequently often suffer "*significantly greater physical ill-being*," the research finds.

When Daniel the prophet was shown a vision of the end times in Daniel chapter 8, we are told that he was so distressed by what he saw that he fainted and was "*sick certain days*" (Daniel 8:27). The events of this age are very heavy and at times difficult to bear, but ignoring what is happening in the world isn't a viable solution. At the conclusion of Luke 21, Jesus admonishes His people to pay attention to what is happening around them. Luke 21:36 declares, "*Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.*" Thus, we see that it is not just enough to watch, but we also must pray! Through prayer we form a bond and establish a connection to God in Heaven. With that connection we find the strength to endure, and as it tells us in Matthew 24:13, "*But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.*"

In August 2022, the American Farm Bureau Federation, or AFBF, published the results of a survey

conducted amongst farmers in fifteen drought-stricken states. The results revealed that many farmers are facing myriad struggles right now. **Seventy-four percent** of respondents said they are expecting a reduction in harvests because of drought conditions. **Thirty-seven percent** of respondents reported intentionally destroying their crops because they knew there would not be enough water to keep them alive until harvest. **Thirty-three percent** of respondents said they've destroyed orchard trees and multi-year crops. Farmers in the state of Texas are expecting their crop yields to decline by **68 percent** this year. Farmers in Oklahoma, too, are expecting a steep decline with **60 percent** fewer crops anticipated at harvest time while farmers in New Mexico are expecting a **54 percent** decline.

To make matters worse, farmers and ranchers all over the country have sold off much of their livestock because there was not enough water for the animals. Consequently, cattle herd sizes in Texas have shrunk by a whopping **50 percent**. As such, the price consumers pay at the supermarket for beef has dropped in recent weeks, but in the months and years to come, it is likely that prices will rise significantly. "*The effects of this drought will be felt for years to come, not just by farmers and ranchers but also by consumers. Many farmers have had to make the devastating decision to sell off livestock they have spent years raising or destroy orchard trees that have grown for decades,*" said Zippy Duvall, who is president of the AFBF.

Elsewhere around the world, Europe is presently suffering its worst drought in 500 years according to the European

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DIE GELYKENIS VAN DIE DIAMANT

Jesus het gelykenisse vertel om sodoende groot waarhede te kon oordra. Wanneer ons in ons een-en-twintigste eeu 'n gelykenis wil verstaan of probeer verstaan, beteken dit ons moet onsself eers verplaas na daardie leefwêreld van die dissipels voordat ons 'n toepaslike boodskap vir onsself daaruit kan kry.

So gebeur dit dan met my ook, en sekerlik met elke gelowige, dat God 'n sekere beeld of gelykenis uit ons eie leefwêreld in ons hedendaagse lewe kan voortbring.

Ek het op 'n plaas grootgeword, aangrensend aan diamantdelwerye. Daarom het ek delwerye en diamante geken. Daar was gegoede delwers (die minderheid) wat GROOT gedelf het met die beste masjinerie (uitgesluit groot mynmaatskappy soos De Beers), en dan was daar selfs ook die arm delwer met karige masjinerie wat net 'n eenmans-delwer was. Hy het 'n oorlewingstryd gevoer.

In daardie omgewing waar delwerye ontstaan het, lank voor my geboorte, was daar in 1926 sowat 30 000 blanke delwers wat van oral gekom het om hulle fortuin te soek. HS van Blerk, die skrywer en digter, skryf só oor sy grootwordjare: "Die delwery was aan die beginjare 'n sameraapsel van alles onder die son: donkiewaens, ossewaens, model T-Fordvragmotors wat almal water aangery het vir die duisende delwers wat op daardie oomblik veral op Bakers en Elandspunte na diamante gesoek het. Van ligdag tot donker het die waens tougestaan voor die pompe - soms 'n tou van vier voertuie langs mekaar wat 'n myl ver strek. Die hangsiwwe het gegier, die stof het gewaai, en van mense het dit gekrioel en gewemel: wit, swart, Moor en Indiaan.

"Die inkruipplek - mens kon die huisies wat opgerig is nouliks iets anders noem - het dan beantwoord aan elkeen se vindingrykheid. Ossewaens met kaptente het plek-plek gestaan en 'n gesin geherberg. Origens het veral seil- en sak-kaias, oor slap latte getrek, vir 'n beskutting gesorg.

"Party mense het 'n ou ronde tenk middeldeur gesny en te lekker gebly. Daar was die omie wat vir hom 'n huisie, ses voet by vier voet met spitsdakkie van omtrent drie voet hoog, gebou het en as mure en dak, 'n 'rubberten' gebruik het. Baie vindingryk, maar so 'n versoeking vir my pa se paar bokke. Ek het met my eie oë dié dag gesien hoe die jong bokkie bo-op oom Piet se huisie spring en "Mê-mê" daarin ver-

dwyn. Oom Piet was baie ongelukkig die aand toe hy moeg van die kleim af kom en sy huisie in flarde aantref. Hy en die huisie het oornag verdwyn, seker gaan bly waar daar geen bokke is nie - of dalk op 'n paal waar geen bok hom sou bykom nie.

"Water is van die pompe af in tenks aangekarwei vir die kleims en vir die private huise. Maar wanneer dit in die somer reën, het die meeste waens in die panne en oral waar water opgedam het, water vir die kleims geskep. Dieselfde tenk is sommer so tussenin by die pompe volgelaai vir huislike gebruik - totdat 'n maagkoors-epidemie uitgebreek het. Daarna is die tenks wat slegs skoon water ry, met 'n swart kruis gemerk. Die ander tenks mog toe glad nie vir huislike gebruik water gekarwei het nie." (Skrywer-digter HS van Blerk. <https://www.gelofteland.org/index.php/suid-africa/43-land-van-ons-vaders/961-lichtenburgse-spoel-delwerye-1926>)

So het ek van kleins af met verskillende soorte diamante kennis gemaak (ons laerskool-sportspanne het diamantname gehad soos Blue Whites en Mellies. Nou, na al die jare, praat God met my oor diamante. Ek kry dikwels 'n boodskap uit my leefwêreld. Die Here kan weer met elke ander mens met ander beelde uit sy eietydse omgewing en agtergrond praat.

Nou die diamantgelykenis: Wanneer die diamantdraende gruis gewas is, word dit in drie siwwe van growwe tot klein gruis-klippertjies gesif. Die siwwe word een vir een op die sorteertafel omgekeer. Nou kom die gesoute delwer wat deur die jare heen 'n hoogs gespesialiseerde sorteerder geword het met sy sorteerspaan om die gruis te sorteer op soek na diamante. Hierdie gruis kom diep onder die aarde uit, somtyds uit 'n onduerdse rivier, en daarom word dit spoed-delwerye genoem. Die sorteerder het versigtig en met oorleg gesorteer. Hy moes dit in die dag doen, want die son moes skyn sodat die diamant kan skitter en hy dit dadelik kan sien en verheug optel.

By die huis gekom, word die diamante in 'n houer met suur geberg. Hierdie suur is so sterk dat dit gevaaarlik is, want dit kan 'n gat deur jou hand vreet. Dit sal dus die diamant helder skoonmaak en alle vuilheid tot in die gletsers, indien enige, kan skoonvreet. Dit is 'n toets vir die egtheid van die diamant, want die diamant is die hardste onder alle gesteentes. Die suur sal nie die diamant skade aandoen nie, maar wel alle



ander gesteentes vernietig. Dit is 'n "suurtoets" of "acid test" genoem.

Elkeen se diamante word op 'n Saterdag aan die diamantkoper verkoop. Hiervandaan gaan dit na 'n diamantslyper. Daar word dit in ringe en halssnoere geset en deur 'n juwelier in sy winkel verkoop. So kom die juweel uit die aarde uit tot op die jongdame se vinger, nadat dit sorgvuldig tot verskillende vlakke geslyp is.

Ons Hemelse Vader is voortdurend besig om Sy diamante te soek uit die ruwe aarde, tussen die grond en sand en modder. Sy Water van Lewe spoel oor elkeen, sodat dit helder en skoon kan wees en maklik raakgesien kan word terwyl Sy Son van Geregtigheid daarop val. Dit skyn só helder dat dit nie misgekyk kan word nie. Dit weerspieël die hele proses tot by Wedergeboorte. Oorweeg die volgende Skrifgedeeltes, sodat jy nie slegs kop-kennis daarvan sal hê nie, maar dat dit allerbelangrik sal wees dat die Heilige Gees jou sal verlig om dit met jou hart te verstaan. Want dit is die Heilige Gees wat jou wederbaar.

Jesus Self het vir Nikodémus, die Joodse geleerde wat in die nag na Hom toe gegaan het, gesê: "Voorwaar, voorwaar, Ek sê vir jou, as iemand nie weer gebore word nie, kan hy die koninkryk van God nie sien nie. Nikodémus sê vir Hom: Hoe kan 'n mens as hy oud is, gebore word? Hy kan tog nie 'n tweede keer in die skoot van sy moeder ingaan en gebore word nie? Jesus antwoord: Voorwaar, voorwaar, Ek sê vir jou, as iemand nie gebore word uit water en Gees nie, (dit is, 'n eerste en 'n tweede keer gebore) kan hy in die koninkryk van God nie ingaan nie" (Joh. 3:3-5). Jy word 'n sondaar gebore, maar word 'n tweede keer deur die Heilige Gees gebore as 'n kind van God! **Vra Hom daarvoor!**

Johannes skryf: "Hy het na Sy eiendom gekom, en Sy eie mense

het Hom nie aangeneem nie. Maar almal wat Hom aangeneem het, aan hulle het Hy mag gegee om kinders van God te word, aan hulle wat in Sy Naam glo; wat nie uit die bloed of uit die wil van die vlees of uit die wil van 'n man nie, maar uit God gebore is" (Joh. 1:11-13).

Deur die geloof verkry ons die ewige lewe: "Dit het ek geskrywe aan julle wat glo in die Naam van die Seun van God, sodat julle kan weet dat julle die ewige lewe het en kan glo in die Naam van die Seun van God" (1 Joh. 5:13). Paulus skryf: "...want almal het gesondig en dit ontbreek hulle aan die heerlikheid van God, en hulle word deur Sy genade sonder verdienste geregtigde deur die verlossing wat in Christus Jesus is" (Rom. 3:23-24).

Christus maak ons vry van die sonde en heilig ons karakter: "Maar nou dat julle vrygemaak is van die sonde en diensbaar geword het aan God, het julle jul vrug tot heiligmaking en uiteindelik die ewige lewe. Want die loon van die sonde is die dood, maar die genadegawe van God is die ewige lewe in Christus Jesus, onse Here" (Rom. 6:22-23).

Die Herder soek voortdurend Sy skape. Hy laat selfs die nege-en-negentig in die kraal en gaan soek na die een wat afgedwaal het op die berge en dra hom op Sy skouer terug na die kraal toe. **Is jy dalk een van hulle? Gee oor aan Jesus dat Hy jou kan dra waar jy nie self kan loop nie!** Jesus Self het gesê: "Ek het nie gekom om regverdiges te roep nie, maar sondaars tot bekering" (Luk. 5:32).

Die 'diamant' kom nou uit die grond en modder uit. Nou is hy wedergebore. Hy het sekerheid dat hy hemel toe gaan. Nou volg die volgende stap. Dit is die "suurtoets" of "acid test." Paulus skryf daarvan aan Timótheüs: "En almal wat ook godvrugtig wil lewe

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DIE GELYKENIS VAN DIE DIAMANT

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in Christus Jesus, sal vervolg word” (2 Tim. 3:12). Die Satan se doel is om jou te vernietig. Maar God maak alles Sy diensknege, en Hy reinig ons van alle onsuiwerhede. Vervolgens moet hierdie diamant geslyp word. En hoe meer hy met sorg geslyp word deur God die Kenner, ons Hemelse Vader, hoe meer word ons gelykvormig aan Sy Beeld, en hoe meer skitter elkeen van ons! Hierdie slypwerk gaan voort tot Hy ons kom haal.

Ons groei lewenslank tot volmaaktheid. God sê: “*Almal wat Ek liefhet, bestraf en tugtig Ek. Wees dan ywerig en bekeer jou*” (Op. 3:19).

‘Tugtig’ beteken nie ‘slaan’ soos Satan dit doen met die mense nie, maar uit die Griekse taal beteken dit ‘onderrig’ en ‘opvoed’ deur die werk van die Heilige Gees. Anders sou ons ons hele lewe ly met pyn

en smart! Maar nou beleef ons die Teenwoordigheid van God, Sy liefde, Sy vrede, Sy genade, Sy barmhartigheid, Sy blydskap, Sy inwoning in ons! En ons beleef Sy salwing van die Heilige Gees wat ons leer en lei in die hele waarheid. Wat 'n wonderlike seën om God te ken in 'n lewende verhouding met ons Hemelse Vader! Ons smaak Sy heerlikheid!

In hierdie slypproses vorm God ons, en Hy hou die aanvalle van Satan uit, want God werk sagkens met ons in liefde. “*Die Engel van die HERE trek 'n laer rondom die wat Hom vrees, en red hulle uit*” (Ps. 34:8). Daar is 'n laer van engele rondom ons om ons van Satan en sy bose magte te beskerm. Rondom hulle wat Hom vrees.

Ons hoef nie bang te wees vir Jesus nie, want Hy het vir Sy dissipels gesê toe Hy op die water na hulle gekom het: “*Moenie*

vrees nie, dis Ek.” Hulle het gedink dit is 'n spook en het geskreeu van vrees.

Na Sy opstanding het Hy aan die dissipels verskyn toe die deure uit vrees vir die Jode gesluit was, en Hy het gesê: “*Vrede vir julle!*” Nie: “vrees” nie. Wanneer God dus besig is om jou te slyp, sal Hy vir jou sê: “*Moenie vrees nie, dis Ek.*” Hierdie slyping laat Christene skitter soos diamante.

Iemand skryf soos volg oor hierdie proses: “During hard times, though, we may feel overwhelmed with the fear that our faith is decomposing. Ronald Dunn, a Bible teacher who has experienced much personal tragedy, knows what we are going through. He writes, ‘I'm often mystified... I don't understand why it is that as I endeavour to live for God and pray and believe, everything seems to be falling apart. Sometimes I struggle, and I

say, ‘Dear Lord, why are You allowing this to happen?’ Dunn concludes, ‘It's good for us to remember that God is not an arsonist; He is a refiner.’”

Petrus skryf só oor goud in die vuurproef: “*Daarin verheug julle jul, al word julle nou - as dit nodig is - 'n kort tydjie bedroef onder allerhande beproewinge, sodat die beproefheid van julle geloof, wat baie kosbaarder is as goud wat vergaan maar deur vuur gelouter word, bevind mag word tot lof en eer en heerlikheid by die openbaring van Jesus Christus*” (1 Pet. 1:6-7).

In sy beproeing het Job uitgeroep: “*Want Hy weet hoe my wandel is; as Hy my toets, sal ek soos goud te voorskyn kom*” (Job 23:10). Nou, na ons wedergeboorte en slypproses, skitter ons en sing ons lofliefdere tot God!

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GO BUSE-LESETSA BOSULA KA BOSULA

(TO PAY BACK EVIL WITH EVIL)

DITEMANA

Se busoloseng bosula jwa ga ope ka bosula; gopolang tse di molemo mo bathong botlh. Fa go kgonega ka fa thateng ya lona, agisanyang le batho botlh. Baratwi lo se ka lwa ipusolosetsa, mme sutelang bogale jwa Modimo, gonane go kwadilwe ga twe: “Pusoloso ke ya me, nna ke tla busolosa, go bua Morena. Jesa mmaba wa gago, fa a tshwerwe ke tlala; mo nose, fa a nyorilwe; go ka go dira jalo o tla tlhatlhaganya magala a molelo mo tlhogong ya gagwe.” O se ka wa fenngwa ke bosula, mme fenza bosula ka molemo (Baroma12:17-20).

DIKAKANYO

Nako e nngwe mo bophelong go tle go diragale dilo tse di seng monate mo maphe long a rona. Dikao tsa dilo tse di bosula tse batho ba ka di dirang di dints. Mosekolong banaba kago utlwisa botlhoko thata. Kwa tirong batho ba ka go direla tse di go utlwisa botlhoko.

Mo lelpeng moratiwa kgotsa mogatsa a ka go utlwisa botlhoko

thata. A mongwe a kile a go utlwisa botlhoko thata. Fa re akanya setso sa batho re ka dumelana gore fa motho a go utlwisa botlhoko o ka leka go ba utlwisa botlhoko le bone. Akanya fela jaaka batho ba bolaya ba bangwe. Batho ba go bolaetse molosikakgotsababolaile mongwe yo o neng o mo rata.

Gongwe ba go utsweditse dilo tse o neng o di rata. Mo nakong ya jaanong re buisa gape thata ka batho ba dipolase ba ba bolai-wang. Go thata le go bua fela ka dilo tse batho ba di dirang. Akanya fela gore go thata yang mo batho ba ba leng mo gare ga ditiragalo tse. Thuto ya Beibele e thata ka kgang e mme e re kopa gore rekgone go itshwara thata.

Re tlhoka go se busolosetse bosula kabosula. Ke akanya fela ka boloi le setso sa mo boloing. Fa motho a utlwisa gore kgotsa a akanya gore mongwe o mo loile a ka dirisa madi a mantsi go ya ngakeng e nngwe e e bogale go feta. Jaanong batho ba eseng Bakeresete ba ka ya ngakeng e e

bogalego feta go ya go busolosetsa.

Ba duela diketekete go tla ka tse di maatla go feta mo ntwang e ba e lwang. Go monate jang go nna Mokeresete ka gore dilo tse tsa boloi ga di re ame ka re sireledit-swe ke baengele le madi a ga Jesu. Mme fa o tlelwa ke kakanyo ya go busolosetsa buisa ditemana tse tsa Baroma. Jesu o itse gotlh mme o itse gore batho ba go dira eng mme ba go dipelo tse di jang. Fa re dula re gopola batho dilo tse di maswe di dira gore re se nne le kagiso mme re se phele monate. Fa bosula ba gago Modimo. Modimomolefokongare pusolosetso ke sa Gagwe. Wena phedisana fela ka kagiso le ka bopelotelele.

Ene a re: “Pusoloso ke ya me, nna ke tla busolosa.” Go monate go na le Modimo yo a go lwelang dintwa tsa gago. Wena o ka sutela bogale jwa Morena. Sekao ke fa motho a batla go lwa le wena mme o na le abutiwa gago. Fa a batla go go bets a ka emela kwa thoko mme o tswa motselang.

Abuti wa gago, Morena wa gago a ka go lwela ntwa ya gago. Temana e felela ka go re “O se ka wa fenngwa ke bosula, mme fenza bosula ka molemo.” Mo tshimologong ya temana ga twe: “Se busoloseng bosula jwa ga ope ka bosula; gopolang tse di molemo mo bathong botlh. Fa go kgonega ka fa thateng ya lona, agisanyang le batho botlh.” Se ke mokgwa o Beibele e re rutangesengbotlhofelammeg o ka nna thata. A re lekeng mme re phele jalo. Lettlelala Morena goreagolweledintwatsagago. Se letlelele batho go go jela kagiso le lerato mo bophelong. Modimo o teng. O itse gotlh mme o bona gotlh.

THAPELO

Morena ka o itse gotlh o itse le dilo tse di bosula tse batho ba di dirang. Re thusre gore re se busolosetse bosula ka bosula. Re thusre gore re phedisana mme re agisane le batho botlh ka lerato la gago. Re thusre gole ka mo bopeloteleleng mme re phele jaaka Lefoko le leruta mo temaneng e. Amen.



Johan Zerwick
Sêle ke 083 458 3837

MAKE GOD YOUR PRIORITY

"The Lord was with Joseph, and he became a successful man" (Genesis 39:2 NCV).

There are certain social clubs and groups that only grant membership to those with a certain level of wealth, a certain background, a certain job, etc. But God's Kingdom doesn't work this way.

Let's look at Jacob and his son Joseph. Jacob had a reputation for cheating and making bad choices. He cheated his brother Esau out of his inheritance, and then ran away when Esau threatened to kill him for his deception.

He then went to stay with his uncle Laban, and wanted to marry Laban's younger daughter, Rachel. But on the wedding day, Laban tricked Jacob into marrying his older daughter, Leah.

But that didn't faze Jacob: he just married both of them. He went on to cause tension and trouble among his children by favouring Joseph so much that Joseph's brothers became jealous and sold Joseph as a slave to get rid of him. But Joseph's life is described in one verse: *"The Lord was with Joseph, and he became a successful man"* (Genesis 39:2

NCV) - in spite of family dysfunction, betrayal, slander and false imprisonment. Even his father Jacob, with all his faults, was blessed and used by God.

In God's Kingdom, our family history, background, and flaws don't define us. As His children we are welcome in His family. That's why the most important thing we can do is to build, maintain, and prioritise our relationship with God.

So thank God that you are His child, covered with His grace and favour. Make Him your priority in all that you do, and be successful in His Kingdom!

Ek bely, Here dat ek trots is en dikwels my eie wil wil laat geskied
Ek staan skuldig omdat ek so graag self die reëls wil neerlaai
Leer my nederigheid dat ek kan sterwe aan myself en U alles in my kan word.
[Op U hoop ek, Eric Stander, Daan Retief Uitgewers, 1983].

THE SIMPLICITY OF PRAYER...

What do you do when you don't know what to do? What do you do when the dream inside of you is not matching the reality that's in front of you? It's going to sound cliché and elementary, but oftentimes we over-complicate things.

We're willing to try the newest strategy, follow the latest teaching, hop on the trendiest spiritual bandwagon, but we roll our eyes at the basics. So, what do we do when the dream inside

of us doesn't match the reality in front of us? **PRAY!**

So many people feel awkward praying. Most people, when asked to pray publicly, would rather die. They say, "I'm not good at praying." What does that even mean? Can you talk? Great!

That's all prayer is: talking with God!

Why are we so intimidated by

prayer? I'll tell you why. It's performance anxiety. We get scared because either we are trying to impress people when we pray, or we attempt to sound like someone else when we pray. God is not impressed when we are trying to impress.

But He is impressed with honesty, transparency and faith. Prayer is simply talking to God. If you are doing that, whether privately or publicly, you can never go wrong!



Mag jou dag net so mooi wees

A Profile in Faith

One Bible story that always touches my heart and challenges my faith is about the Roman centurion coming to Jesus on behalf of his sick servant.

Here is an officer in the conquering Roman army, that proud military power which crushed many nations to establish the greatest empire the world had ever known.

Yet out of concern for a feverish and paralyzed servant, the centurion humbly approached Jesus - a young Jewish man living in Israel under Roman occupation - saying, *"Lord, I am not worthy"* (Matt. 8:8).

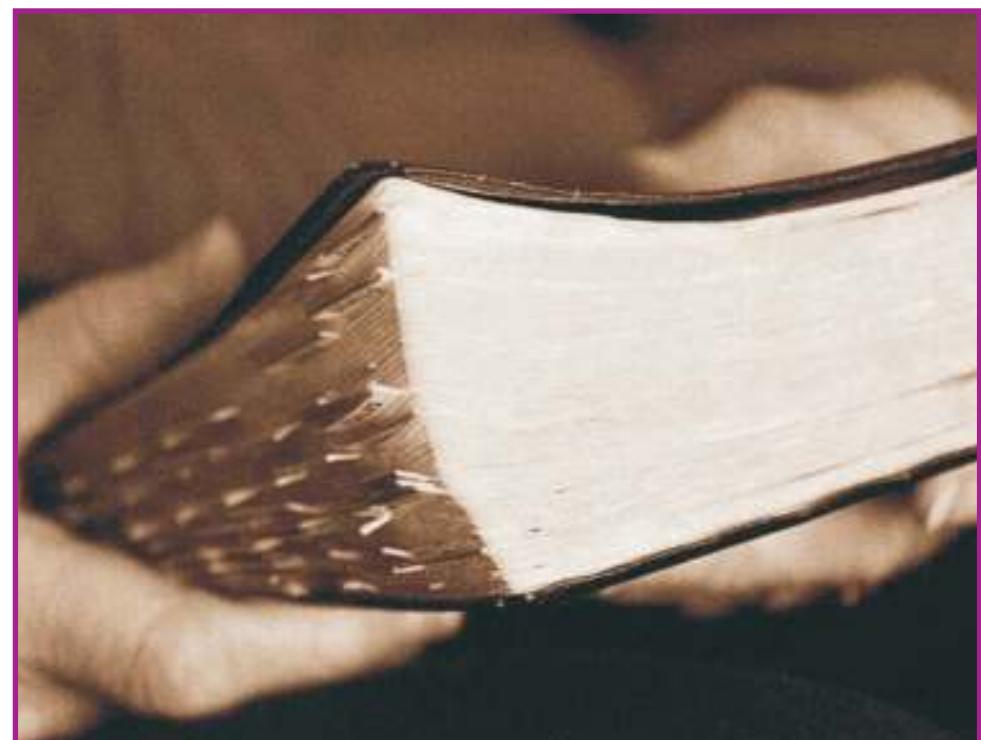
This officer truly understood humility - and authority! For when Jesus offered to come to his home and heal the servant, he answered: *"Just say the word*

from where you are, and my servant will be healed! I know, because I am under the authority of my superior officers and I have authority over my soldiers" (Matt. 8:8b-9).

The centurion knew his orders carried power and were instantly obeyed. And by a revelation of the Holy Spirit, he recognized that Jesus also commanded great power - in the spiritual realm. Therefore, he knew that Jesus' orders would be completely obeyed!

Amazed that a non-Jew could have such faith, Jesus said, *"Go on home. What you have believed has happened"* (Matt. 8:13). And He promised, *"Many Gentiles will come from all over the world and sit down... at the feast in the Kingdom of Heaven"* (Matt. 8:11).

Today, let's pray with that same humbleness of heart and bold-



ness of faith - asking God to open doors for the Gospel to go out among all nations, drawing millions of lost souls into His

glorious Kingdom!

**- Pat Robertson
www.cbn.com**

WATCH AND PRAY

Continued from p. 1

Union's Joint Research Centre. As of August 23, 2022, **sixty-four percent of the European continent is experiencing drought conditions.**

"The combination of a severe drought and heat waves has created an unprecedented stress on water levels in the entire EU," lamented Mariya Gabriel, who is the Commissioner for research at the European Union.

As a result of the pervasive drought, many rivers in Europe are beginning to dry up. This includes the famous Rhine River, which is often used to transport consumer goods and raw materials. However, in recent weeks, water levels on the Rhine have become too low for ships to utilize this vital transportation route.

The falling water levels have exposed carvings in stones that were engraved centuries ago during previous droughts. One such stone is presently visible on the Elbe River in Germany. The message, which was carved in 1616 reads, "Wenn du mich siehst, dann weine." This message translated into English reads, "**If you see me, weep.**" Similar stones have become visible on the Danube, Rhine, and Weser Rivers.

Moving onto China, the world's most populous country is also grappling with a drought emergency. In late August 2022, the Chinese Government issued a warning that the country's upcoming autumn harvest is under "severe threat." The warning instructed local governments to ensure "every unit of water... be used carefully."

The drought, in tandem with sweltering heat, has caused some of China's Yangtze River to dry up. Even Pay, who is an analyst for Trivium China, was quoted as saying, "We've now had thirty-five straight days of heat warnings. We are experiencing dry season water levels or below typical dry season water levels. The conditions are **very, very extreme** and there's no question that there will be some loss of crops." Falling water levels on China's rivers has also wreaked havoc on the country's hydro-electricity system. As a result, some areas of China have seen rolling electrical blackouts and power rationing.

The ailing power grid forced the Chinese Government to shut down many factories in August 2022 because there wasn't enough power to operate these facilities. These shutdowns could further complicate supply chain issues worldwide since so many countries, especially the United States, import vast amounts of goods from China.

"These shutdowns have the potential to be equally if not more impactful on supply chains than recent Covid lockdowns," said Mirko Woitzik of Everstream Analytics.

Other troubling reports have emerged from Iraq, which is home to the Biblical rivers known as the Tigris and Euphrates. Iraq is in its third year of drought, and the formerly lush marshlands of the region have lost **46 percent** of their water since August 2020.

This same area, which was once home to the Garden of Eden written of in the book of Genesis, no longer resembles paradise.

In December 2021, Iraq's water resource ministry warned that Iraq could be "*a land without rivers by 2040.*" It is interesting to note that Revelation, chapter 16, while detailing the plagues that will befall mankind during the end times, tells us in verse 12, "*And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared.*"

While the book of Revelation mostly uses metaphors and word pictures throughout its text, Revelation 16:12 could be fulfilled in two ways - both in a figurative and natural sense.

It should be obvious that the pervasive drought afflicting so much of the world is not normal. In fact, the Eastern portion of Africa has received no rain for **four straight seasons.** Sixteen million people living in the Horn of Africa suffer from an inadequate supply of drinking water, and between 18 and 21 million people are facing food insecurity.

While the scientific community is fixated on climate change, the Bible makes it quite clear that God sometimes uses drought to punish nations that are dis-

obedient to Him. Haggai 1:11 declares, "*And I called for a drought upon the land, and upon the mountains, and upon the corn, and upon the new wine, and upon the oil, and upon that which the ground bringeth forth, and upon men, and upon cattle, and upon all the labour of the hands.*"

Haggai uttered his prophecy in 520 BC, but it sounds like he is describing the summer of 2022.

An Astonishing Deluge

As much of the United States continues to suffer from historic drought, other parts of the country have been devastated by historic flooding.

For example, Yellowstone National Park, which is located primarily in the state of Wyoming but also stretches into Montana and Idaho, suffered disastrous flooding in June 2022.

The flooding destroyed multiple bridges and washed away miles of road. In the aftermath of the flooding, ABC News published a headline declaring "**Yellowstone flooding rebuild could take years, cost billions.**"

This was just one extreme weather event. Multiple floods have struck the United States throughout this tumultuous summer.

As the month of July 2022 concluded, Kentucky was devastated by some of the worst flooding the state has ever seen. According to the National Weather Service, eastern Kentucky and central Appalachia were hit by multiple storm complexes between 25 - 30 July 2022, which drenched some areas with **12 cm of rain per hour.** Entire homes were washed away, and sadly, thirty-nine people lost their lives.

Twenty-four flash flood warnings were issued, and over six hundred helicopter rescues were performed as emergency workers rushed to save those who were threatened by the rising waters.

Kentucky has been hit with numerous weather disasters in recent months. Dan Mosley, who is the judge-executive for Harlan County was quoted as saying, "*The pure catastrophic loss is hard to put into words. I've just never seen anything like this in*

my career or even my life!"

Nearly the entire state of Texas has endured drought this summer. This includes the Dallas-Fort Worth area, which did not see any measurable rainfall for sixty-seven days until it finally rained on 10 August 2022. Less than two weeks later, a deluge came to Dallas. Beginning on 21 August 2022, and lasting well into the next day, nearly ten inches of rain fell in just twenty-four hours. **This was more rain than Dallas usually gets throughout an entire summer.**

"What happened yesterday is the second worst rainstorm and flooding in Dallas since 1932," lamented Texas Governor Greg Abbott. The city of Dallas lost twenty-eight patrol cars, four ambulances, and four fire trucks as emergency workers faced an onslaught of more than two thousand calls for help.

I've been closely following these extreme events for more than a decade. Such events are certainly intensifying as we move through time, and all indicators suggest there will be more drought and flooding in the years to come. **The world is growing more dangerous by the year, and as such, we need to be as close to God as possible.**

I urge every reader to put on the whole armour of God as we continue to watch and pray. Ephesians 6:13-18 offers these inspiring words, "*Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins gird about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God: Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.*"

If you have not yet repented of your sins and dedicated your life to God, I urge you to do so now.

- Samuel David Meyer
Last Trumpet Newsletter, Vol. 41, Issue Nine, September 2022.



How I Stopped Striving and Started Resting in Him

In the midst of a heartbreak trial, God clearly gave me Psalm 46:10 - "Be still and know that I am God."

As I meditated on this verse, I saw that "be still" could be translated "cease striving" or "let go, relax."

I had been doing everything I knew to do, everything I could do, in order to fix this painful situation - and then came the Word of God: "Be still, Kay... cease striving... know that I am God."

God's Word was clear. I couldn't fix the situation, and I needed to stop trying. I had wept. I had prayed. I had tried to make things right. I had searched my heart, rehearsed all my failings, and experienced the grief of them all. Yet nothing had worked. The situation hadn't changed; the incredible pain had not gone away.

Now it was clear. If I were to walk in faith, if I were to live by faith, I had to cease striving. I was to shut my mouth and quit trying to teach, to instruct, to straighten out, and I was to trust God. He sits as Sovereign on His throne; He hasn't moved. And I hadn't seen

"the rest of the story." My part in this situation was simply "to be" rather than "to do."

O my friend, God has taught me so much. I stand in awe as I have seen God do the most incredible things - things I had longed for but couldn't dream of - and I know that He, and He alone, has done them.

He has done them apart from my planning, my orchestrating, my manipulating. **My part was simply to allow the unconditional love of God to flow through me.**

As I walked in obedience to Psalm 46:10, I began to see God move. It was so unexpected and it came in a way only our Sovereign Father could have designed. When it happened, all I could do was weep. It was the most precious of gifts, and I knew it had come straight from my Father's Throne of Mercy.

I had ceased striving. I had let go and relaxed. And He had shown Himself to be God! The sweetness of that one incident of Divine intervention was a precious salve for my pain - the pain which had become a welcomed friend, for without it I would not have seen

how very clearly He is God!

Whatever happens, I do know that I am to continue to rest, to relax and to remember that He is God. I am to walk by faith and remember that I am not God, that I cannot fix situations. My responsibility is simply to trust and obey and to be what He wants me to be. I am to embrace truth and to live by it. I can't live by my emotions, by dwelling on my past, by focusing on my inadequacies, my weaknesses, my failures, or my impotence, and I can't trust in anything of my own flesh or strength. **I am not to fear whatever the future holds, for the future is God's.**

I am to live by every Word which proceeds out of the mouth of God, whether or not my reasoning or emotions agree. Truth, the truth of God's Word, is to be the plumb line by which I evaluate every situation, every decision, every response, every feeling.

Our Saviour is God, and He sits as the Son of Man at the Right Hand of God - above every power of the evil one, above every name in heaven and on Earth. He is God, your Saviour and your High

Priest, who lives to make intercession for you - you as an individual.

He loves you with an everlasting love. He will never leave you nor forsake you, even when you fail to be and to do what is less than perfect. He is absolutely committed to you and in His time and in His way, He is going to perfect, to complete everything which concerns you.

So... be still... and know... that He is God.

Jesus is coming... to reign on earth as King of kings, Lord of lords, and that's the rest of the story which the book of Revelation so vividly paints.

Ask Him now to reign in your life as King of kings, Lord of lords, as God, and rest, knowing that He will complete the rest of your story. And as Psalm 23 says, when you look back, you will see that goodness and mercy have followed you all the days of your life (Psalms 23:6). **Rest, my friend, rest in Him!**

Kay Arthur, Co-CEO, Precept Ministries International

Drome aan Skerwe...

Wanneer ons op 'n plek en tyd in ons lewe kom waar ons drome aan skerwe lê en ons gekonfronteer word met tye van verbysterende seer en wanhoop, ervaar ons tussen die seer en chaos bystand van kosbare vriende wat ons seer en pyn ligter maak.

Indien jy 'n lys moes maak van hierdie kosbare vriende, sou Jesus bo-aan jou lys gewees het? Of voel jy soms Hy het jou vergeet? Hy was nie daar toe jy Hom die nodigste gehad het nie?

Getsémane: Verlate in Sy pyn
Jesus was in die Tuin van Getsémane in Sy grootste nood en benoudheid, **alleen** en sonder Sy kosbaarste dissipels wat saam met Hom moes waak en bid!

Nadat Jesus drie maal gebid het, het Hy opgestaan uit hierdie siele-smart en pyn en die lydenspad begin stap met 'n vaste geloof en vertroue dat SY Vader se plan met SY lewe volmaak is en dat SY

Vader volkome in beheer is!

Ons stryd

Waarheen gaan ons wanneer stukkende drome en wanhoop ons wil oorweldig? Gaan jy na jou Tuin van Getsémane om daar in gebed met jou Vader te praat? Gestroop van alles, sonder woerde, net in gebrokenheid aan Jesus se voete?

Gebrokenheid en desperaatheid is NIE 'n lekker plek om te wees nie, maar dit is 'n goeie plek. Want dit is 'n plek waar al die ander stemme van die wêreld en van vriende stil word. Ook ons eie planne en ons eie stem - sodat ons daarby Sy voete, Sy Stem kan hoor!

Ons kan nie deur ons tranen sien nie en kan nie deur die geklop van ons pyn God se Stem en SY plan herken nie, maar God is besig om die dekor op te stel en ons voor te berei vir SY volmaakte plan en pad met ons lewens! Soos met Naomi, wat haarself Mara genoem

het, wat "bitter" beteken. Sy kon nie verder sien as haar stukkende drome nie, maar deur dit alles heen was God aan die werk en later is haar kleinseun, Obed, gebore. Obed (hy was later koning Dawid se oupa!) beteken 'n "seun is vir Naomi gebore." Nuwe hoop, nuwe vreugde!

Wanhoop word Hoop

Jesus het in Sy donkerste uur in gebed met smeking en tranen na Sy Vader gegaan. **Daarna was Hy van God verlate aan die kruis, sodat ons nooit meer van God verlate hoeft te wees nie!**

Na Sy donkerste uur het die dag gebreek en is die duisternis oorwin!

Hou vas aan Hom, hou aan bid, hou aan klop en soek. **Hy sá antwoord.** Laat Hom toe om wanhoop in hoop te laat oorgaan. Hy is jou beste Vriend en sal jou nooit begewe en jou nooit verlaat nie!

Mag jy deur jou stukkende drome



en smekgebede, God se Stem hoor wat sê: "Wees dus sterk en hou goeie moed, julle almal wat julle vertroue in die Here stel." (Psalm 31:25).

En ook:

"Ek was in die rou, maar U het my van vreugde laat dans. U het my rouklere uitgetrek en vir my feesklere aangetrek!" (Psalm 30:12).

- Susan Foord
mawico@mweb.co.za

Die Vrou by die Put

Sy was alleen by die put daardie dag, Here. Die Samaritaanse vrou wat nêrens ingepas het nie. Die een wat met haar bondeltjie lewe op haar rug geloop het, terwyl die res van die dorpie agter hulle hande gefluister en gewys het. Die vrou wat van die een ongelukkige huwelik na die ander geval het. En terwyl sy so loop na die put toe, so op haar eie, het sy dalk gekyk na die mense om haar, gehoor hoe hulle fluister, en dalk stil by haarself gedink: "As julle maar geweet het wat regtig in my lewe aangaan, wat ek elke dag so stil in my hart met my saamdra..."

Sy het haar eie water gaan haal, daar by die put. Alleen. Sy het haar eie paadjie gestap. Haar eie loop geloop. En terwyl sy so alleen daar by die put water skep, het U stil by haar gaan sit en gevra vir water. En sy wou dadelik, so effe vermakerig, by U weet hoe iemand soos U dan by iemand soos sy water kan vra.

Die lewe het haar geleer om vinnig reg te wees met 'n antwoord, Here. Die lewe het haar geleer om eerste aan te val, en op daardie manier haarself te verdedig. Die lewe het haar geleer om haar masker nie vir 'n oomblik te laat sak nie. Ook nie toe U daar by haar gaan sit het nie.

En U, Here? U het verby U eie dors gekyk, en haar hart raakgesien. Haar hart wat stukkend en alleen daar eenkant by die put gesit het.

Haar hart wat geweet het van aanval en baklei en verdedig en keer. Haar hart wat dalk al soveel keer stukkend getrap en verniel is. En U het U eie hand stil na haar uitgesteek en sag vir haar gesê: "Ek het vir jou water wat alles beter maak... water wat nooit opraak nie." En toe sy U begin vertel van haar lewe, het U haar storie vir haar klaargemaak. So al asof U haar die verleentheid wou spaar om te vertel hoe kom almal haar wegstoet en eenkant hou. En terwyl sy nog wou praat, het U haar stilgemaak en gesê U weet... U weet van elke huwelik, elke man wat in haar lewe was. En ook die een met wie sy saamleef.

"Ek weet," het U gesê. En met daardie 'Ek weet', het U vinger sag op elke stukkie verwerping gesit, elke stilstuipe van elke huwelik, haar drome wat eenkant gegooi is... drome van saam oudword met 'n man vir wie sy lief is, dalk drome van kinders hê... haar behoeft om liefgehê te word vir wie sy is, en nie vir wat sy kan gee nie. U het geweet van elke stukkie alleen en seer wat in elkeen van haar huwelike gaan wegkruip het.

En U het sag U hand daarop gesit en vir haar gesê dat U dit beter kan maak. Dat U dit beter wil maak. Sonder om haar meer verleë en skaam en verskrik te maak.

So baie dae, Here, vlug ek ook uit die malle gejaag van stemme wat praat en fluister, en hande wat besig is, na die alleenwees van my eie put. Daar waar ek my eie water probeer skep. My eie wonder beter probeer maak. Daar waar niemand weet nie en waar niemand vra nie.

Het elke vrou nie maar haar eie put waar sy probeer water skep nie, Here? Daar waar sy probeer om dinge weer beter te maak en heel te maak. Dalk het sy nie nodig om die stukkend van 'n huwelik beter te maak nie, maar dalk die alleenwees na die dood van 'n hart se mens, die sukkel om weer mens te word na trauma, die verlange na 'n lewe wat was...

Elke vrou loop met haar eie klompie vroe en verwyt,



Here. Elke vrou het haar eie put waar sy probeer water skep en dinge beter maak. Elke vrou loop met haar eie masker, 'n masker waamee sy so dikwels die lewe se fluister ongeërg van haar lyf afskud.

Dankie dat U nooit verby 'n Put stap nie. Dankie dat U stil by elke vrou se hart gaan sit, daar waar sy alleen baklei en regop probeer bly. Dankie dat U U hande om haar hart vou, en sag vir haar sê: "Ek weet..."

Dankie dat U nie omdraai en wegstap nie. Dankie, Here, dat U 'n bodemlose put vol liefde by haar voete neersit. Dankie dat U met soveel omgee en troos belowe dat U haar sal toevou met U liefde wat lewe gee. U liefde wat veilig vashou. U liefde wat nie wegskram van maskers en baklei nie. Dankie dat U liefde sag om elke vrou vou, daar waar sy alleen by haar eie put sit. Dankie dat U liefde nie weggaan nie, of opraak nie.

Dankie dat ek nie meer nodig het om by my eie Put te gaan water skep, en heelword, en beter word nie. Dankie dat ek sommer reguit in U arms kan inhardloop! Want by U is daar nie verwyle en vrael nie. By U is daar liefde... liefde wat lewe gee. Altijd. Amen.

(Katrienkie@2022)

'n Pot Vol Lewe...

Dit is 'n lieflike somersoggend. Ek draf vinnig by die kwekery in om 'n kliënt se vetplantbestelling op te laai. Die pragtige, groen spekboompies trek my aandag en ek fluit vir Hans om 'n ekstra een te laai vir my eie tuintjie. Later die middag is my spekboompie egter iets van die verlede.

Een van die werkers het die kan diesel agter op die trokkie oopgelos en die diesel het bo-oor die spekboompie gespat. Sy blaartjies het reeds begin verkleur en die grond is papnat van die diesel. Vies, sommer baie vies, sit ek die vernielde spekboompie agter die Wendy-huis waar ek hom later sal weggooi.

Dis twee weke later. Ek soek na die blou gieter, en loer agter die Wendy-huis in. My mond val oop.

'n Klein stukkie van die dooie, diesel-deurdrenkte spekboompie het oorleef! Ek tel die potjie op en kyk na die natuurwonder.

Net een takkie van die spekboompie het grasgroen gebly en is besig om nuwe blaartjies te stoot. Ek vat onmiddellik die snoeiskêr, knip die gesonde takkie af, maak 'n pot vol kompos, gooi 'n ekstra erdwurm in vir geluk en plant die takkie. As hierdie plantjie so graag wil leef, verdien sy ekstra liefde en aandag.

Sommer so op my knieë, voor die blompotjie dink ek aan al my vriendinne, en vroue wat my lewe omring. Baie van ons oorleef ten spyte van die diesel wat soms op ons gemors word. Ons klou vas, hou uit, stoot selfs nuwe blare in doodgaantye. Al is die grond waar ons geplant is, dood en sonder

enige waarde, bly ons groen en lewendig, net soos hierdie spekboompie.

My gebed vir jou vandag is dat jy met jou oë op God gerig, sal vasbyt. Jouself sal omvou in Sy liefde. Sal aanhou dankbaar wees

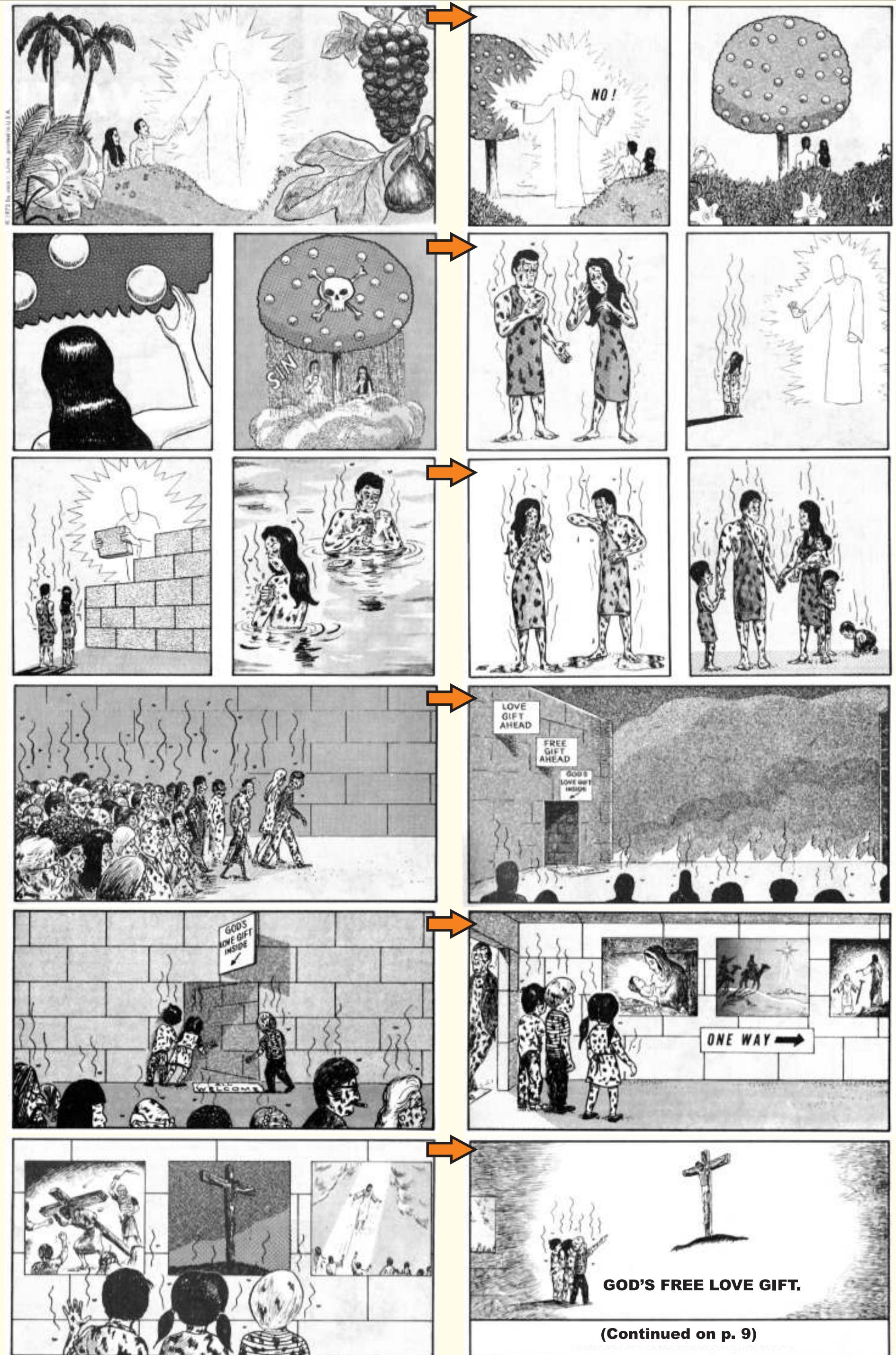
vir die son wat oor goed en sleg skyn. Nooit sal ophou bid en droom van 'n uitplantdag in beter grond nie. Ek weet God beplan vir elkeen van ons 'n pot met vrugbare grond en 'n ekstra erdwurm net vir die liefde!

- Oorgeneem

Life is an amazing mixture of victory and defeat, success and failure, joy and pain, peace and battles, happiness and brokenness. But life in JESUS assures the ultimate victory over everything.

The Divine Shepherd seeks daily to lead His sheep to the "still waters" of His Word, and how sad it is that so many Christians prefer to drink from the polluted pools of the world.

O Father God, help me come to the quiet times with quiet expectancy - expectancy that here my weakness shall become strength, my doubt become faith, my fears become courage and my sin become redemption.





KLOPPERS IS DOOD ...

HY HET SONDER DIE HERE GESTERWE

Hulle het my gevra om hom te begrawe...

Kloppers was 'n groot, sterk, joviale man met 'n glimlag van onbesorgdheid. Alles het hy verower - sy plaas was 'n lushof, sy vriendekring was gek na hom, en sy beurs was goed gevul. "Nierkwaal," het die dokter gesê. Hy het nog steeds grappies gemaak oor die skyfskiet-kompetisie wat nie sonder hom sou klaarkom nie. Dit het ernstiger geword. Die beste spesialiste het koppe bymekaar gesit.

Ek het met hom gaan praat oor die Here... maar sy bulderende stem het my van die bed weggejaag. Hulle het my gevra om hom te begrawe...

Die hemel was baie blou dié dag, maar die grond was swart en koud. Die gat het spits na benede geloop en die wande was klam. Die familie - ses moderne mense met hangskouers - het dom gesnik.

Ek het hom begrawe - Kloppers is dood - vir ewig dood in die hel waar die worm nie sterwe nie. Die opsigter van die grafvlakte het gesê dit is al laat... Die arbeiders het nader gestaan met die skopgrawe, en die blou lug het hard en ongenaakbaar gelyk terwyl 'n vlieswolkie die son wegsteek.

Toe ons teen die gruisbultjie huis toe stap, was Kloppers se grafhopie al sigbaar in die skemering. Daar was niks meer te sê nie - Kloppers is dood. Dominee.

- QUO VADIS? EVANGELIASIEBLAD VAN DIE GEREFORMEerde KERKE IN SUID-AFRIKA, NR. 10.

WEES NET JOUSELF

"Opregte mense vermy die kwaad op hulle lewensweg; wie nougeset lewe, hou homself in die lewe" (Spreuke 16:17 NV).

Opregtheid is die eienskap van 'n ware Christendissipel. Daarom: Wees wat jy voorgee om te wees! Leef volgens jou geloofs-belydenis.

■ Wees nougeset oreg in die klein dingetjies van die lewe, want hulle is dikwels die voor-spel tot groot dinge. Onopregtheid in jou jeug, sal jou as vol-wassene onbetroubaar bewys: 'n huigelaar in die samelewning; 'n skynheilige in die kerk; 'n bedrieëer in die sakewêreld. Klein

onopregthede groei vinnig en welig soos die ergste soort onkruid. Daarom moet jy, soos in 'n tyd van geweld, wagstaan oor jou oregtheid.

■ Onopregtheid is 'n plant wat tierend en weelderig groei en later onstuitbaar word. Die onopregte is gedurig in 'n toestand van onsekerheid en verwarring oor homself omdat hy die standhoudende ankers in sy lewe prysgegee het. As jou gewete nie sensitief en jou ver-houding met die Meester nie intiem is nie, sal jy nooit die moed hê om die kettings van onopregtheid en huigelary van jou af te goo nie.

■ Bedrog kan by jou tweede natuur word. Jy raak van waarheid vervreem, innerlik vals, en verslaaf aan selfbedrog. So verloor 'n onopregte mens sy selfrespek stuk vir stuk. Dis 'n pad van selfvernietiging en al het jy maar net 'n klein entjie op dié pad gevorder, beroep jou op die genade en genesende krag van Jesus Christus.

■ Oregtheid is die fondament van 'n standvastige karakter. Elke ander deug word geneutraliseer deur 'n gebrek aan oregtheid; elke gawe van God word nutteloos. Oregtheid is onontbeerlik vir elke verhouding in ons lewe: tussen man en

vrou in die huwelik; tussen ouers en kinders in die gesin; tussen werkgewers en werk-nemers; leraar en die gemeente; die mens en sy God!

Deur oregtheid word die geluk van alle mense bevorder en die Koninkryk van God gebou.

Heilige Vader, U ken my hart en weet of ek werklik oreg voor U wandel. Laat my deur die leiding van die Heilige Gees alle onopregtheid aflê en oregtheid nastreef.

[Met GOD op pad! Solly Ozro-vech en ander skrywers, CUM, 1994].

WARE VERHALE

'n Jeuggroep in 'n sekere stad het een dag gesit en praat oor wie in hulle skool die onwaarskynlikste jongmense is om ooit tot bekering te kom. Hulle het 'n top-tien-lys gemaak.

Een van die jeuggroep stel toe voor dat hulle vir hierdie 10 sal begin bid. Na drie maande het hulle hierdie 10 jongmense na 'n jeugkamp toe genooi. Nege van hulle het teen alle verwagting gekom. Agt het daardie naweek Jesus as Verlosser gevind en die negende een het 'n maand later 'n oorgawe gemaak!

George Müller het as 'n jongman vir vyf van sy vriende se redding begin bid. Na 6 jaar het die eerste een tot bekering gekom, 'n tweede na 11 jaar, en die derde een na 26 jaar. Die vierde een het na 50 jaar 'n oorgawe gemaak en die laaste een het by George Müller se begrafnis, na 52 jaar se gebed, 'n oorgawe gemaak! Nadat hy vir 38 jaar gebed het, het iemand vir hom gevra of hy glo God sal daardie twee manne nog red as hulle na 38 jaar se gebed nog nie tot bekering gekom het nie. Müller het geantwoord, terwyl dit lyk asof daar vuur uit sy oë flits: "Dink jy God sou my vir 38 jaar vir hierdie twee manne laat bid as Hy hulle

nie wou red nie?"

'n Gemeente in 'n sekere stad het agtergekom dat daar vir 'n paar jaar na mekaar geen nuwe bekeerlinge by die gemeente bygevoeg is nie. Hulle het 'n gebedskaart ontwerp en dit aan die begin van die volgende jaar vir alle lidmate uitgedeel om in te vul. Elke lidmaat het vir ses of sewe ongeredde mense begin bid en deur gesprek en getuenis na hulle begin uitreik.

By 'n spesiale erediens is die duplikaatstrokies ingeneem, in 'n groot bak voor in die kerk geplaas, en die leraar en gemeenteleiers het daaroor gebed. Vir die res van die jaar het elke lidmaat vir die ses of sewe name op sy gebedskaart gebid en weekliks het die leiers oor die bak vol kaarte gebid. Wanneer iemand tot bekering gekom het, is daar die daaropvolgende Sondag 'n rooi roos voor in die kerk neergesit. Die aantal bekeerlinge het so toegeneem dat hulle uiteindelik een roos vir elke 50 persone moes neersit. Tans volg hulle hele denominasie hulle voorbeeld. (NUPSA-pamflet, 2000).

Wil u nie ook begin om daagliks vir die redding van u vriende en kollegas te bid nie?

ETERNAL LIFE

It costs you nothing

"For the wages which sin pays is death, but the [bountiful] FREE GIFT of God is eternal life through (in union with) Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 6:23 Amplified Bible).

In fact, you can not buy it

"WAIT and listen, everyone who is thirsty! Come to the waters; and he who has no money, come, buy and eat! Yes, come, buy [priceless, spiritual] wine and milk without money and WITHOUT PRICE" (Isaiah 55:1 Amplified Bible).

Neither can you work for it

"For it is by FREE GRACE (God's unmerited favour) that you are saved (delivered from judgment and made partakers of Christ's salvation) through [your] faith. And this [salvation] is not of yourselves [of your own doing, it came not through your own striving], but it is the GIFT OF GOD; NOT BECAUSE OF WORKS [not the fulfilment of the Law's demands], lest any man should boast.

[It is not the result of what anyone can possibly do, so no one can pride himself in it or take glory to himself.]" (Ephesians 2:8,9 Amplified Bible).

You cannot afford to be without it

"For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world, and forfeit his life [in the eternal kingdom of God]? For what can a man give as an exchange (a compensation, a ransom, in return) for his [blessed] life [in the eternal kingdom of God]?" (Mark 8:36-37 Amplified Bible).

We can have certainty about possessing it

"I write this to you who believe in (adhere to, trust in, and rely on) the Name of the Son of God... so that you may KNOW [with settled and absolute knowledge] that you [already] have life, yes, eternal life" (1 John 5:13 Amplified Bible).

Maak My Nederig, Heer...

... want hoe kleiner ek is, hoe méér plek is daar vir U in my... En hoe voller ek van U is, hoe méér kan my bekertjie oorloop om die dors van ander sielsbeswaardes in hierdie seekry-lewe te les.

Mag ek vandag vir iemand 'n lafenis wees!

Purpose, Calling, and Assignment

PURPOSE: the “why” behind our lives; the reason we were created; the original intent for our lives.

As children of God, our purpose on the earth is to bear the **image** of Jesus. We are new creations in Christ and, therefore, have the nature of God, which is love. We are continually being renewed into the likeness of God. The Bible says that the greatest commandment is to **LOVE!**

In addition, we were created to **shine**. To shine is to live a life of **FAITH** - being fully convinced in our hearts of the Truth (Jesus, the Word of God, the promises of God, and Heaven). This entails always keeping the perspective of Heaven and living from Heaven's reality. Everywhere we go, we invite Heaven to shine through us. We exist in this world, but we are not OF the world. We are called to be light in the darkness, never dimming the light within us.

We also exist to **glorify** God. He called us out of the darkness to experience His light so that we would broadcast His glorious wonders throughout the world. We must do good for others, living our lives for others' benefit even if it's at our own expense.

How do we remain in our purpose? We continually **surrender** our lives, agendas, and desires to God. We come boldly to the Father and crucify our flesh daily, taking on our new nature, created to be like God - truly righteous and holy.

- Do you feel that you bear the image of Jesus in your daily life?
- Does your life look different from those around you, or do you tend to follow the patterns of the world?
- Do you tend to live for others' benefits or your own?

“...and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the **image** of its Creator”(Col. 3:10).

“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”(Matt. 5:14-15).

“But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for His own possession, that you may **proclaim** the excellencies of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvellous light”(1 Pet. 2:9).

“and to put on the new self, created after the **likeness** of God in true righteousness and holiness”(Eph. 4:24).

CALLING: “how” we do it; the tools to walk out our assignment

on Earth.

Our calling is the **gifts** God has freely given us. Our **talents**, abilities, health, intelligence, and family are all gifts given to us for the benefit of others. It is our responsibility to **steward** over our gifts, work hard to develop them, and offer them as gifts back to God.

But our gifts aren't intended to become our identity or a way to draw attention to ourselves. Our worth and identity come from Christ's sacrifice on the cross and the blood that He shed for us. Our **gifts** are simply to benefit others and to be used as a reflection of His love. They are another reflection of God's goodness working through our lives.

I encourage you to pray and ask the Lord what your spiritual gifts are and how He wants you to **steward** them.

- What are your spiritual gifts?
- How do you glorify God through your gifts?
- Do you steward over your gifts in a way that benefits others?

“Having **gifts** that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness”(Rom. 12:6-8).

“And He **gave** the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the Body of Christ”(Eph. 4:11-12).

ASSIGNMENT: the “what” we do; a specified task or amount of work assigned by or undertaken for God for the benefit of others; the vehicle by which we carry out our purpose and calling.

The assignment we have on our

lives is the privilege we have to be an expression of God's goodness for the benefit of others. Our **assignment** utilizes our **PURPOSE** (to bear His image and shine) and our **CALLING** (the gifts in our life) for the benefit of others.

Our assignments continually change and become bigger as we are faithful in offering our lives to others. Our lives are set up to meet the needs of others and to be their reward.

God is not a replicator or a duplicator; He is the Creator! He **created each of us as an original for a specific time, place, and person**. We are not everyone's solution or answer. Some do not need our gifts and talents, and that is okay. God has somebody else specifically suited for them.

As we cultivate our relationship with God, we begin to take on the heart of God for others and gain clarity on the assignments He has given us. Each assignment bears the fruit of His nature and releases the reward of His Kingdom to others.

Ask the Lord to give you revelation, vision, and clarity on the specific time, place, and person He is calling you to.

- What is the specific time, place, and person God is calling you to?
- Is there something that you feel God is calling you to step into, but you're afraid of what it might entail?

“For everything there is a **season**, and a time for every matter under heaven: time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted; a time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up; time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance; time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing; time to seek, and

a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away; time to tear, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak; time to love, and a time to hate; a time for war, and a time for peace”(Eccl. 3:1-8).

“For it is written in the Law of Moses, “You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain.” Is it for oxen that God is concerned? Does He not certainly speak for our sake? It was written for our sake, because the plowman should plow in hope and the thresher thresh in hope of sharing in the crop. If we have sown spiritual things among you, is it too much if we reap material things from you? If others share this rightful claim on you, do not we even more? Nevertheless, we have not made use of this right, but we endure anything rather than put an obstacle in the way of the Gospel of Christ. Do you not know that those who are employed in the temple service get their food from the temple, and those who serve at the altar share in the sacrificial offerings? In the same way, the Lord commanded that those who proclaim the Gospel should get their living by the Gospel. But I have made no use of any of these rights, nor am I writing these things to secure any such provision. For I would rather die than have anyone deprive me of my ground for boasting. For if I preach the Gospel, that gives me no ground for boasting. For necessity is laid upon me. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel! For if I do this of my own will, I have a reward, but if not of my own will, I am still entrusted with a **stewardship**. What then is my reward? That in my preaching I may present the Gospel free of charge, so as not to make full use of my right in the Gospel. For though I am free from all, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win more of them... I do it all for the sake of the Gospel, that I may share with them in its blessings”(1 Cor. 9:9-19,23).

www.matthew10.com

When Someone Is Needier Than You

In a leper colony clothes arrived for distribution among these outcasts of life.

One little leper boy was asked what he needed most. He replied, “My hands are still good so I can mend my own clothes, but there are some lepers who have no fingers, and some whose hands are so crippled or sore that they cannot use them.

When their clothes get holes in

them, they cannot mend them but must see the holes get bigger and bigger.

I am thankful for my good hands, so please give the clothes to those who cannot mend their own. They are more needy than I.”

How we need such unselfishness! We should never complain when we know that there are others who are needier than we are!

(www.e-sword.net)



<http://www.queeky.com>

Liefde en Geduld in Aksie

Die volgende verhaal dateer uit die dae toe Oliver Cromwell aan bewind was in Engeland. 'n Jong soldaat is deur 'n militêre hof skuldig bevind aan 'n ernstige oortreding en ter dood veroordeel. Hy sou tereggestel word met die eerste gelui van die klok wat die aand-klokreël sou aankondig.

Sy verloofde het 'n aantal ure voordat die aandklokreël in werking sou tree, in die kloktoring opgeklim en haarself aan die groot klepel vasgemaak. Toe die tyd aangebreek het dat die klok moes lui, is net gedempte geluide gehoor.

Cromwell wou weet waarom die klok nie lui nie. Hy het soldate gestuur om ondersoek in te stel. Hulle het die jongdame gevind - gekneus en bebloed soos sy haar teen die klokwande beser het met die gebengel van die klok.

Cromwell was so beïndruk deur haar opofferende liefde en gewiligeheid om te ly vir die persoon wat sy liefhet, dat hy die soldaat vrygespreek het deur te beveel dat die klok daardie aand nie sou lui nie.

John Wesley was geseënd met 'n baie liefdevolle en geduldige moeder, Susanna. By geleentheid het Wesley se vader opgemerk: "Ek verbaas my vir jou geduld! Dis die twintigste keer dat jy daardie kind oor dieselfde saak aanspreek!" Waarop Susan-

na Wesley met liefde na die kind gekyk en geantwoord het: "Sou ek net negentien keer gepraat het, sou al my opvoedingsarbeid verlore gewees het."

In 'n biografie oor die welbekende sendeling na Birma (Myanmar), Adoniram Judson, lees ons hoe dat hy geweldige ontberings moes deurmaak. Hy is in Indië vir 'n tydperk van sewentien maande in 'n tronk gevange gehou waar hy onuitspreeklike, onmenslike lyding moes deurgaan. As gevolg van sy marteling, het hy baie lelige littekens oorgehou wat vir die res van sy lewe sigbaar sou wees.

Na sy vrylating het hy toestemming gevra om na 'n ander provinsie te gaan waar hy kon voortgaan met die verkondiging van die Evangelie.

Die goddelose leier het sy versoek verontwaardig geweier: "My volgelinge sal nie luister na wat 'n sendeling te sê het nie, maar ek is bevrees dat hulle so beïndruk mag wees met jou littekens van geduld dat hulle jou godsdiens salaanvaar."

In die klassieke werk, *Les Misérables*, vertel Victor Hugo die verhaal van Jean Valjean. Die enigste misdaad wat hy ooit gepleeg het, was om 'n enkele brood te steel om sy suster se uitgehongerde kinders mee te voed. Nadat hy negentien jaar in

die tronk hiervoor geboet het, is hy vrygelaat. Hy het werk gesoek, maar kon nêrens iets kry nie as gevolg van sy kriminele rekord. Uiteindelik het hy by 'n bejaarde biskop iets se ete en 'n slaapplek vir die nag ontvang.

Gedurende die aandete, het Valjean uit pragtige silwer borde geéet. Hy was verstom dat hy, as oudenvangene, uit sulke elegante borde kon eet. Terwyl hy op die bed gelê het, het hy aan die eetgerei se groot waarde gedink. Die volgendeoggend het hy vroeër as die res van die huishouding opgestaan, toegegee aan die versoeking en die silwer borde gesteek.

Hy is egter spoedig deur die polisie gevang en na die biskop se huis geneem. Hier het hulle aan die biskop gesê dat Jean sy borde gesteek het. Die vriendelike biskop het egter gesê dat dit 'n geskenk van hom was en bygevoeg dat Jean vergeet het om die kandelare ook saam te neem. Hy het toe later aan Jean gesê, "Hiermee koop ek jou siel vir God!"

Jean Valjean was so diep geroerd deur die biskop se woorde en liefdesdaad dat hy op die daad 'n Christen geword het. Hierdie vriendelike daad van liefde en welwillendheid het 'n totale ommekeer in sy lewe teweeggebring!

Diep ontroer het kaptein Shaw van die Heilsleer na die drie mans voor hom gekyk. Shaw was 'n mediese sendeling wat pas in Indië aangekom het om beheer oor te neem van 'n kolonie melaatses.

Hierdie mans het voet- en handboeie omgehad waarvan die kettings diep in hul besmette vlees ingesny het.

Kaptein Shaw het die wag gevra om die boeie te ontsluit, waarop hy geantwoord het dat dit nie veilig en raadsaam sou wees nie, aangesien hierdie mans nie net melaats was nie, maar ook misdadigers.

Kaptein Shaw het volle verantwoordelikheid geneem en bygevoeg dat hulle reeds genoeg lig as gevolg van hul melaatsheid. Hy het die boeie afgehaal en hul bloeiende enkels en gewrigte behandel.

Twee weke later het Kaptein Shaw gewonder of hy tog die regte besluit geneem het om die misdadigers vry te laat. Hy moes 'n rit onderneem wat sou meebring dat hy daardie betrokke nag nie by sy eie huis sou kon slaap nie. Sy vrou en kind sou dus alleen daar wees. Sy vrou het egter daarop aangedring dat hy gaan, aangesien sy nie bang was nie - God was mos daar!

Die volgendeoggend toe sy by haar voordeur kom, was sy baie verbaas om te ontdek dat die drie melaatse mans op die stoeptrappies gelê het. Sy het gevra wat hulle daar maak.

Een van die melaatse mans het geantwoord dat hulle geweet het die dokter was weg. "Ons het die hele nag hier gebly om toe te sien dat daar geen gevaar vir u is nie."

Dis hoe hierdie gevarelike kriminele melaatse gereageer het op die dokter se liefdevolle, vriendelike en simpatieke behandeling.

[Uittreksels uit Geen Groter Liefde, Robert Strand, VG Uitgewers, 1996].

"Groot liefde het niemand as dit nie, dat iemand sy lewe vir sy vriende gee" (Joh. 15:13).

Your works and wonders
are so precious -
so awesome
O, LORD!

They outnumber
the grains of sand
in all the earth...

Never will I be able
to count them -
they are too manifold...

And never will I be able
to thank You enough
for your faithfulness,
loving-kindness and grace
that abounds to me
day by day...

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HE MEETS US IN OUR MESS

For the one who is waiting
for perfection before you say "yes",
know that God already loves you,
and that He meets us in our mess.

For the one who made a mistake,
whose guilt won't let you rest,
know that God is forgiving,
and that He meets us in our mess.

For the one who is faithful,
but still wrestles with your flesh,
know that God is with you,
and that He meets us in our mess.

For the one who is heavy-burdened,
who is breaking under stress,
know that God gives refuge,
and that He meets us in our mess.

For the one who is struggling,
who is being put to the test,
know that God will guide you,
and that He meets us in our mess.

For the one who is forgiven,
and embraces the Father's rest,
know that God has called you,
and that He has called you "blessed".

- Haley Littlepage