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Be Anxious for Nothing

REJOICE IN THE LORD ALWAYS

"Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!" (Phil. 4:4 NIV).

"Glory in His holy Name; let the hearts of those who seek the Lord rejoice" (Ps. 105:3 NIV).

Anxiety is a meteor shower of what-ifs. What if I don't close the sale? What if we can't afford braces for the kids? What if my kids have crooked teeth? What if crooked teeth keep them from having friends... a career... a spouse? Anxiety is living life in a minor key with major concerns.

Is your heart weighed down with worry? Could you use some calm? If so, you aren't alone. Conquering anxiety and worry requires some work on your part, but it is not God's will that you lead a life of perpetual anxiety. God loves his children. He oversees your world. He monitors your life.

In Philippians 4:4, Paul offers what could be considered a "prescription" for anxiety and worries. Interestingly, this prescription begins with a call to "rejoice in the Lord always." Paul used every tool in the box on this verse to get his readers' attention. First, he uses a verb tense so they would hear, "continually, habitually rejoice!" And if the verb tense wasn't enough, he removed the expiration date: "Rejoice in the Lord always." And if that wasn't enough, he repeated the command: "Again I will say, rejoice!"

But how do you obey this command? By recognising the sovereignty of God. The most stressed-out people are control freaks. The more they try to control the world, the more they realise they cannot. Life becomes a cycle of anxiety, failure; anxiety, failure; anxiety, failure. But when you recognise heaven has an

occupied throne, you allow the Lord to be in control. God then calms your fears not by removing the problem, but by revealing his divine power and presence. Your anxiety decreases as your understanding of God, your Father, increases.

Also realise that God has freed you from the guilt and quagmire of regret that may be causing you anxiety. Unresolved guilt can turn you into a person who is hiding, running, denying, and pretending. Guilt can suck the life out of your soul. But grace restores that life and allows you to trust God's forgiveness. The result is the ability to rejoice unhindered, confident in God's sovereignty.

LET YOUR GENTLENESS BE EVIDENT TO ALL

"And let gentleness be seen in every relationship, for our Lord is ever near" (Phil. 4:5 TPT).

"And everything I've taught you is so that the peace which is in Me will be in you and will give you great confidence as you rest in Me. For in this unbelieving world you will experience trouble and sorrows, but you must be courageous, for I have conquered the world!" (John 16:33 TPT).

Unchecked anxiety can unleash an Enola Gay of angry outbursts, rash accusations, and fiery retaliations against those in your path who are unfortunate to be at the wrong place at the wrong time. How many people have been wounded as a result of such unbridled stress? On the other hand, how many disasters have been averted because one person decided to be calm?

It is this composure Paul is referring to when he states, "Let your gentleness be evident to all" (Phil. 4:5 NIV). The Greek word translated as gentleness describes a temperament that is seasoned and mature. It envisions an attitude that is fitting to the

occasion, level headed and tempered. The gentle reaction is one of steadiness, evenhandedness, and fairness.

Jesus promised that "in this world you will have trouble" (John 16:33 NIV). But what you also need to remember is that Jesus has promised to be with you in the midst of those troubles. Before Jesus departed this Earth, He said to His disciples, "Go and make disciples of all nations... teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age" (Matthew 28:19 - 20 NIV).

God was never watching from a distance. In fact, His very Name is Immanuel, which means "God with us." He became flesh. He became sin. He defeated the grave. And He is still with you.

Anxiety management is like pulling stumps out of the ground. Some of your worries have deep root systems, and extracting them is hard work. But you don't have to do it alone. Present the challenge to your Father and ask for help. Will He solve the issue? Yes, He will. Will He solve it immediately? Maybe. Or maybe part of the test is an advanced course in patience. This much is sure: contagious calm will happen to the degree that you turn to Him.

PRESENT YOUR REQUESTS TO GOD

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God" (Phil. 4:6 NIV).

"Cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you" (1 Pet. 5:7 NIV).

In Luke 18:1-8, Jesus told a parable about a persistent widow who went before an unjust judge. The woman so pestered the judge that he finally agreed to her

request just to get her to go away. Jesus ended the parable by saying, "Will not God bring about justice for His chosen ones, who cry out to Him day and night?" (verse 8, NIV).

What are you to make of this parable? Is God a reluctant judge? Are you the marginalised widow? Is prayer a matter of pestering God until He breaks down and gives you what you want? No, this is a parable of contrast, not comparison. God is not like the judge in the story. He is not reluctant in answering the prayers of his people. As a child of the King, you can turn to him at any moment. He never places you on hold or tells you to call again later. God loves the sound of your voice. Always. He doesn't hide when you call. He hears your prayers.

Thanksgiving is the means God uses to help you take the focus off yourself and onto Him. Gratitude is a powerful weapon in the arsenal against anxiety because it leads you out of the land "if only" and into the realm of "already." The anxious heart says, "Lord, if only I had this, that, or the other, I'd be okay." The grateful heart says, "Lord, you've already given me this, that, and the other thing. Thank you for your blessings, God." In Christ you have everything. So anchor your heart to the character of God. Treat each anxious thought with a grateful one, and prepare yourself for a new day of joy.

THE PEACE OF GOD WILL GUARD YOUR HEART

"And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:7 NIV).

"Peace I leave with you; My peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be

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Die HERE is My Herder

Gedurende my worsteling in gebed, terwyl ek in diep trauma verkeer vanweë die aanslae van die vyand, kom die eerste versie van Psalm 23 by my op: "Die HERE is my Herder." Helder en duidelik spoel dit soos die refrein van 'n lied deur my gees. Dit spoel oor en oor deur my teenoor Satan wat my wil vernietig deur my teen God te laat rebelleer. En dit duur ure! Maar ek oorwin deur hierdie Woord van God wat ek sonder ophou bely en bid, nl. die tema van Ps. 23 in my: "Die HERE is my Herder." Ek beleef Sy liefde, Sy deernis, Sy genade, Sy barmhartigheid, Sy Goddelike medelye. Ek oorwin met die Swaard van die Gees, dit is die Woord van God (Ef. 6:17; Heb. 4:12).

Die Woord van God moet op ons tong en op ons lippe wees wanneer ons in geestelike oorlogvoering teen die vyand te staan kom. Daarom het ek in hierdie besondere situasie, gedryf deur die Heilige Gees, aanhouwend bely, oor en oor, sonder ophou, totdat die deurbraak gekom het: "Die HERE is my Herder."

Daar is 'n rykdom van belewenisse deur die gelowiges regdeur die eeu heen, waaroor daar baie geskryf, gepreek en getuig is. En ek beleef self: "Die vurige gebed van die regverdige het groot krag" (Jak. 5:16). Ons het Hom hoor sê: "Ek is die Goeie Herder en ek ken My skape en hulle ken My stem. Ek lê My lewe af vir die skape" (Joh 10:11-15). Daar is ook 'n onmeetlike krág aan hierdie woorde.

Hoe baie mense kan getuig dat Psalm 23 deur die eeu al meer mense genees het as wat enige geneeskundige ooit kon doen. Miljoene gelowiges het al telkemale hul toevlug tot Psalm 23 geneem.

In 'n neutedorp sê die Heilige Gees in Psalm 23 vir ons dat ons geestelike versorging, saligheid en veiligheid nie afhanklik van enige mens is nie, maar van die Almagtige God. 'n Mens ontdek onder ander hoe teer die Herder is. Hy is teerhartig en liefhebbend. En dan sê Dawid van hiérdie geweldige God: "Die Here is my Herder." Hierdie geweldige Wese, het 'n herdershart! Dis Wie Hy is.

"Niks sal my ontbreek nie". 'n Ware en goeie herder sal nooit toelaat dat sy skape aan enigiets gebrek ly nie. Die Herder is sag teenoor ons deurdat Hy ons "laat neerlê." Dit is 'n teken van beskerming en sekuriteit. Niks kán die skaap uit die Herder se Hand wegruk nie (Joh. 10:28).

Verder LEI die Herder Sy skape. Hy stap voor. Hulle ken Sy Stem en is lief vir Sy Stem.

Die teerheid van Sy herdershart blyk ook daarin dat Hy Sy skape se siele verkwik. Die Hebreeus beteken: "Om te laat herleef / herstel die moeë." Net die lewe as sulks het die vermoë om 'n mens uit te droog - geestelik en emosioneel. Soms wil ons handdoek ingooi en opgee. Soms loop ons deur onder die genadeloosheid van die lewe. En dan kom God se sterkte en krag net weer.

In die donkerste van die donker doodsvillei skyn die lig van die Herder van die skape die helderste vir hulle. "En die lig skyn in die duisternis, en die duisternis het dit nie oorweldig nie" (Joh. 1:5). En skielik sien jy die lig. Jy weet nie waarvandaan dit kom nie, maar ander kinders van God het gebid vir jou.

Hier voel jy ook die Herder se staf, met die krom handvat sel om jou wat jou tussen die doringtakke uittrek met liefde. Jy sien die stok wat Hy in Sy hand hou om die ongediertes weg te dryf, en jy gewaar die verligting in jou innerlike menswees en kan met blydskap uitroep: "Ek is gered! Uitkoms is hier!" Dawid het dit só beskryf: "Ek sal geen onheil vrees nie; want U is met my; U stok en U staf die vertroos my."

Al gaan ons selfs deur die doodsvillei, is die doodsvillei nie vir die Herder 'n struikelblok nie. Dit vang Hom nie onkant nie. Hy ken die doodsvillei baie goed omdat Hy dit Self deurgegaan het. Kyk mooi wat daar staan: "...sal ek nie bang wees nie." Hoe ken Hy die doodsvillei? In die Tuin van Getsemáne, in die nag, toe Sy sweet soos bloeddruppels geword het toe Hy as Seun van die Mens daar geworrel het. En Hy het dit ervaar op die Kruis van Gólgota op die volgende middag toe dit van 12:00 tot 15:00 pikdonker geword het, en Hy uitgeroep het: "My God, My God, waarom het U My verlaat?" Ja, "Hy was verag en deur die mense verlaat, 'n Man van smarte en bekend met krankheid; ja, soos een vir Wie 'n mens sy gelaat verberg..." (Jes. 53:3). En, "Nogtans het Hy óns krankhede op Hom geneem, en óns smarte - dié het Hy gedra..." (Jes. 53:4).

HY ken die doodsvillei, maar Hy het dit vir ons oorwin! "Want deurdat Hy Self onder versoeking gely het, kan Hy dié help wat versoek word" (Heb. 2:18).

Jesus is:

- Die Goeie Herder (Joh. 10:11,14)
- Die Groot Herder (Heb. 13:20):
- Die Opperherder (1 Pet. 5:2,4).

Dit beteken Hy het ander herders ook onder Hom aangestel in die Liggaaam van Christus, soos vir Petrus hierbo in 1 Pet. 5:2. Ons lees daaroor in Joh. 21 waar Jesus vir Petrus drie keer vra: "Het jy My lief?" Dit beteken, bō hierdie vissersberoep. Dan antwoord Hy Self drie keer: "Laat My lammers wei" en "Pas My skape op" en "Laat My skape wei."

God plaas 'n hoë premie op herderskap. Die engele het selfs vir herders gesing met Jesus se geboorte: "...dat vir julle vandag in die stad van Dawid gebore is die Saligmaker wat Christus, die Here is" (Luk. 2:11).

Ek dink ons is almal God se herders om na mekaar om te sien. Ons is Sy kudde. Hy sê: "Want so sê die Here HERE: Kyk, hier is Ek, en Ek sal na My skape vra en vir hulle sorg. Soos 'n herder vir sy trop skape sorg op die dag as hy onder sy verspreide skape is, so sal Ek vir my skape sorg; en Ek sal hulle red uit al die plekke waarheen hulle verstrooi is, op die dag van wolke en donkerheid. En julle is My skape, die skape van my

weide; julle is mense, Ek is julle God, spreek die Here HERE" (Eseg. 34:11, 12, 31). Wees ook jy Sy herder.

Ná die woorde in Psalm 23, "tot in lengte van dae," moet daar eintlik 'n klompie kolletjies (ellipses) wees. Want dit dui op onbeperkte lengte. Wat Dawid nie gesien het nie, sien Johannes in Openbaring 21: "Die woonplek van God is nou by die mense en Hy sal by hulle wees as hulle God. En Hy sal al die trane van hulle oë afdroog. En die dood sal daar nie meer wees nie. Smart, pyn en leed sal daar nie meer wees nie, want die dinge van vroeër het verbygegaan."

Wat Dawid nie gesien het nie, sien Paulus in 1 Kor. 2:9: "Wat die oog nie gesien het nie en die oor nie gehoor het nie en wat in geen mens se verbeelding opgekom het nie, dít het God berei vir die wat Hom liefhet."

Wat is jóú belewenis van Psalm 23? Gee net alles oor aan Jesus, jou liefdevolle Herder! "Die HERE is MY Herder!"

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Great Joy

James, the half-brother of Jesus, couldn't believe that his flesh-and-blood sibling was the actual Son of God - until He rose from the dead. Then, he was convinced. It was that same James who wrote: "Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow" (James 1:2-3 NLT). According to the first-century Jewish historian, Josephus, James was eventually martyred for his confident faith in Jesus - his brother and his Lord.

Here are five things to note from James' mini-sermon:

- **First**, the text says "when troubles of any kind come your way..." It's not IF troubles come our way, but when. We live in a broken world that has not yet been fully restored, so we shouldn't be surprised when issues and challenges arise.
- **Second**, the text says "when troubles of any kind come your way..." Not merely justified trouble or undeserved trouble, but any kind of trouble. And even when troubles find you, it's an opportunity for joy.
- **Third**, the text connects hardships with the testing of our faith. This doesn't mean that God causes every challenge in our life, but He can certainly use them to reveal what's inside. It's in the refining that we're made to look like Him.
- **Fourth**, the text says, especially during difficult seasons or situations, to "consider it an opportunity for great joy." Happiness is dependent on circumstances, but joy is accessible no matter what.
- **Fifth**, the text implies that troubles, trials, or difficulties all create space for endurance to grow. Think of a flower: In order for a flower to grow, it has to go through something - that something being dirt. So when you're faced with hard things and can't understand why, consider it an opportunity for great joy. That's when you know that you're growing and becoming more like Him!

Prayer: God, Thank you for allowing me to experience spiritual trials. Thank you for refining my faith through them. When I go through hard situations, please lead me away from temptation by giving me the strength to endure. Remind me of the joy set before me: the purification of my character and eternity spent with you. In Jesus' Name. Amen.

- Selected

Koninkrykswaardes

In 2023 het McLaren 'n nuwe rekord tydens die F1-resies opgestel, met die vinnigste pitstop van slegs 1.8 sekondes! Hierdie ongelooflike spoed weer-spieël hoe vinnig dinge in ons moderne wêreld beweeg, wat ons verwagtinge en leefstyl dramaties verander. Ons raak gewoond daaraan om alles onmiddellik te wil hê, maar die Koninkryk van God bied 'n radikaal ander perspektief - een wat ons uitnooi om eerder ons prioriteite te hersien en na dieper, ewige waarhede te soek.

KONINKRYKSWAARDES VS WÊRELDSE WAARDES

Geestelike Armoede en Afhanklikheid van God: Jesus verklaar, "Geseënd is julle wat arm is, want aan julle behoort die Koninkryk van God" (Lukas 6:20). Hierdie seën verwys nie na fisiese armoede nie, maar na 'n geestelike armoede - die besef van ons afhanklikheid van God. Dit is juis wanneer ons erken dat ons

sonder God niets is nie, dat ons begin om die ware rykdom van die Koninkryk te ervaar. Hierdie rykdom sluit in dieper geestelike vervulling, 'n intieme verhouding met God, die ervenis van die Koninkryk, vrede wat alle verstand te bowe gaan, en die krag en wysheid om volgens God se wil te leef. Hierdie tipe rykdom is onmeetbaar met aardse standaarde en oorskadu alle vorme van wêrelde voorspoed. Soos Jesus Self gesê het, "Soek eers die Koninkryk van God en Sy geregtigheid, en al hierdie dinge sal vir julle bygevoeg word."

Honger na Geregtigheid en God se Wil: "Geseënd is julle wat nou honger het, want julle sal versadig word" (Lukas 6:21). Hierdie seën fokus op die geestelike honger na geregtigheid en 'n verlange na God se wil. In die wêreld is die drang na onmiddellike bevrediging van begeertes baie sterk, maar in die Koninkryk van God is dit diegene wat 'n honger het na

wat reg en goed is in God se oë, wat uiteindelik die diepste vervulling sal ervaar. Hierdie versadiging is nie net fisies nie, maar ook geestelik - 'n vervulling wat geen aardse rykdom kan bied nie.

Lyding as 'n Weg na Ware Vreugde: "Geseënd is julle wat nou ween, want julle sal lag" (Lukas 6:21). In die Koninkryk van God word trane van lyding omgeskakel in vreugdevolle viering. Die wêreld vermy lyding en streef na onmiddellike geluk, maar die Koninkryk leer ons dat ware vreugde dikwels deur lyding kom. Hierdie vreugde is nie oppervlakkig nie, maar diep en blywend, omdat dit gewortel is in die belofte dat God uiteindelik alle trane sal afvee en ons sal vertroos met 'n vreugde wat die wêreld nie kan gee nie.

Verwerping as Bewys van Koninkryksidentiteit: Jesus sê, "Geseënd is julle wanneer die mense julle haat en uitsluit ter

wille van die Seun van die Mens" (Lukas 6:22). Hierdie seën erken dat volgelinge van Christus dikwels verwerp en vervolg sal word, maar die geseëndheid lê in die feit dat hierdie verwerping ter wille van Christus gebeur, wat aandui dat hulle aan die Koninkryk van God behoort. Waar die wêreld goedkeuring en aanvaarding van ander najaag, leer die Koninkryk dat ons ware identiteit en seën lê in ons verhouding met Christus, selfs al beteken dit verwerping deur die wêreld.

Die Koninkryk van God bied 'n radikale ander pad as dié van die wêreld. Dit daag ons uit om ons waardes te heroerweeg en om 'n lewe te lei wat gefokus is op geestelike rykdom, geregtigheid, vreugde deur lyding, en identiteit in Christus. Wanneer ons die Koninkryk se beginsels bo dié van die wêreld kies, ervaar ons 'n vervulling en seën wat geen aardse standaard kan meet nie.

- PD Conradi, Sel: 067 109 7462

Thuso ya Me e Tlaa Tswa Kae?

(Where will my help come from?)

PESALOME 23

1 Pesalome ya ga Dafita. Morena ke modisa wa me, ga nkitla ke tlhoka sepe.
2 O mpothisa mo mafulong a matalana, o nkgogela kwa met-sing a tapoloso.
3 O lapolosa mowa wa me; o ntsamaisa mo ditseleng tsa tshiamo ka ntlha ya leina la gagwe.
4 Le fa ke tsamaya mo mogorogorong wa moriti wa loso, ga nkitla ke boifa bosula bope; gonne o na le nna. Tsamma ya gago le seikokotlelo sa gago di a nkgomotsa.
5 O baakanya bojelo fa pele ga me go lebagana le baba ba me; o ntlotsa tlhogo ka lookwane; sen-welo sa me se tletse, se a penologa.
6 Ruri molemo le boitshwarelo di tla ntshala morago ka malatsi otlhe a bophelo jwa me; ke tla nna mo Ntlong ya Morena go ya bosakutleng.

DITEMANA

"Nna Morena ke tla akofa ke diragatsa tseo mo motlheng wa tsona" (Jesaya 60:22).

"Jesus a mo araba a re: 'Se ke se dirang wena ga o se tlhaloganye

jaanong, mme o tla se lemoga morago'" (Johane 13:7).

"Ya re Jesu a utlwa lefoko le le buiwang, a raya mogolo wa senagoge a re: 'Se boife, dumela fela'" (Mareko 5:36).

"Morena, Modimo wa ga Dafita rraago, o bua jaana o a re: 'Ke utlwile thapelo ya gago, ka bona dikeledi tsa gago. Bona, ke tla go fodisa'" (2 Dikgosi 20:5)

"Mme itseng, nna ke na le lona ka malatsi otlhe go ya bokhutlong jwa lefatshe" (Matheo 28:20).

"Gonne ke kaya gore dipogo tsa sebaka seno ga se tsa sepe, fa di bapsiwa le kgala-lelo e re tla e senolelwang" (Baroma 8:18).

DIKAKANYO

Nako e ntsi batho ba na le go botsa gore Modimo o kae? Ke eng a sa thus? Nako e ntsi re tsamaya mo gare ga mathata mme re ikutlwa e kete re ka se kgone mme re tlhoka thuso. Buisa ditemana tse di fa godimo gape. Fa o tlhoka thuso ya Morena itse gore o tla go thusa ka nako ya gagwe, e seng ka nako ya gago.

Fela jaaka temana e e latelang e bua. Nako e ntsi ga re tlhaloganye gore goreng go diragala sengwe mme goreng ka wena le baratiwa ba gago. Gongwe Morena ga a batle go arabela kopo ya gago le thapelo ya gago jaanong jaana. Ene o itse tse wena o sa di itseng. Nako e ntsi fa re lebelela kwa morago re bona gore goreng Modimo a ne a sa go fa se o ne o se batla. Nagana fela fa Modimo a ne a file batho botlhe ba ba kopang dinomoro tsa Lotto.

A ba ne ba ka tokafala kgotsa ba ne ba tlie go mo lebala? Gopola fela Ps 23:4, "Le fa ke tsamaya mo mogorogorong wa moriti wa loso, ga nkitla ke boifa bosula bope; gonne o na le nna." Modimo o dula a le teng. O gotlhe. O tlaa go thusa mme o tlaa go sireletsa. Se boife. Bala gape temana ya 2 Dikgosi 20:5, "Ke utlwile thapelo ya gago, ka bona dikeledi tsa gago. Bona, ke tla go fodisa." Sefela se se opelwang ke Soweto Gospel Choir sa re: "Tshepha Thapelo!" Le fa re sa folo mebele re ka fola mowa. Paulo o ne a reng ene? "Gonne mo go nna go phela ke Keresete, go swa ke letlotlo" (Bafilipi 1:21) Tlhomamisa fela



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gore o na le Jesu mo bophelong jwa gago. Ene a ka go thusa go fenya mathata otlhe. O na le rona nako yotlhe. Gonne ke kaya gore dipogo tsa sebaka seno ga se tsa sepe, fa di bapsiwa le kgala-lelo e re tla e senolelwang.

THAPELO

Morena, Ntate wa rona re lebogela thuso le kemonokeng ya gago. Re kopa o romele mowa o o boitshepo go re thusa gore re se lebale gore o na le rona. O re boleletse gore o ka se re tlogele. Re go leboga nneta e. Re go leboga lerato le tlhokomelo ya Gago. AMEN.

Be Anxious for Nothing

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afraid" (John 14:27 NIV).

When mariners describe a tempest that no sailor can escape, they call it a "perfect storm." Not perfect in the sense of ideal, but perfect in the sense of combining factors. All the elements, such as hurricane-force winds plus a cold front plus a downpour of rain, work together to create an insurmountable disaster. The winds alone would be a challenge - but the winds *plus* the cold *plus* the rain? The perfect recipe for disaster.

You don't need to be a mariner to experience a perfect storm. In fact, you've undoubtedly already faced a few in your lifetime. A layoff plus recession. An illness plus a job change. A relationship breakup plus a college rejection. A sudden loss plus an unforeseen event that threatens your future. Individually, these elements might be manageable. But collectively, they are absolutely formidable. It's enough to make you wonder, "Will I even survive?"

Paul's answer to that question is as profound as it is concise. When you present your requests to God with thanksgiving, "the peace of God... will guard your

heart" (Philippians 4:7 NIV). In other words, as you do your part and release the worry to God, He does His part by bestowing on you His perfect peace. You should be worried... but you're not. You should be upset... but you are calm. The peace of God transcends all logic, scheming, and efforts to explain it.

When you seek the Lord, you will find Him. So seek Him first. Lead with worship and thanksgiving. Go first to your Father in prayer and praise. Confess to Him your fears. Gather with His people. Set your face toward God. Cry out for help. Admit your weakness. Then, once God moves, take a step and move with Him.

MEDITATE ON THESE THINGS
Paul's final instruction in his prescription to anxiety is to meditate on the things of God. In other words, pick what you ponder. Picture your thoughts as airplanes in the sky above a busy airport. You are the air traffic controller of that airport. You get to decide which thoughts land and which ones fly away. Want to be happy tomorrow? Let the thoughts of happiness land today. Want to be miserable tomorrow? Let thoughts of guilt, worry, and fear land today.

Healing from anxiety requires healthy thinking. In truth, your challenge is not your challenge; your challenge is the way you think about your challenge. Likewise, your problem is not your problem; the way you look at the problem is your problem. Satan knows this, which is why he is always seeking to plant lies in your thinking. He wants to influence the way you perceive your struggles or uncertainties. But remember that he is not the master of your mind.

Furthermore, you have a power he can never defeat, for you have God on your side. When anxiety threatens to weigh down your heart, you can simply call on God. This slaps the handcuffs on the culprit and marches it before the One Who has all authority. This denies worries and fears to have a platform to influence your mind. This guards your thoughts as you trust in God your Father.

But who can really do this? There is a simpler way: just make it your aim to **cling to Christ**. Abide in Him. Go to Him as your source of strength and the One your thoughts need to obey. Read God's Word. Listen to sermons. Worship Him. Set aside distractions and claim time for Him.

Understand that if anything good comes into your life, He will be the conduit. And when you cling to Jesus, you fill your mind with God's truth. You disarm the enemy and keep anxiety at bay. You receive God's truth. And that truth sets you free - free from fear, free from dread, and, yes, free from anxiety.

A new day awaits you. A new season in which you will worry less and trust more. A season with reduced fear and enhanced faith. Can you imagine a life in which you are anxious for nothing? God can. And, with his help, you will experience it!

- Condensed from: *Anxious for Nothing*, Max Lucado

The dominant duty of the disciple of Christ is to cling to Jesus
- Max Lucado



Die Here se Komma-kind 'n Gebed deur Katrienkie

Soms, Here, soms stamp die lewe 'n mens se regop-loop onderstebo. Sommer so sonder dat jy vra. Soms is dit 'n skewe kyk of 'n skewe woord, of 'n kind se dwars-wees, of die lewe se eise wat net te veel is en die tyd wat net nooit by alles kan uitkom nie. Of siekte. Of dood. En dan gaan lê 'n mens soos 'n komma voor U voete... krom gebuig, arms voor die bors, en bene tot teen jou hart toegevou. Ek is U Komma-kind, Here.

Soms huppel en dans ek deur die lewe. Soms lag ek uit my maag en vat die lewe spontaan tussen my vingers vas. Ander kere loop ek so koes-koes vir mense en hulle woorde. En ander kere, Here, krul ek sommer net in 'n komma-bondel op by U voete.

Dankie dat U nooit U Komma-kinders uit die pad uit stoot nie. Of draaie om hulle loop nie. Nee, Here, wanneer U 'n Komma-kind huiwerig aan U kleed voel raak, stop U dadelik en buk met soveel liefde en deernis en sagtheid by U bondeltjie-mens. En as die Komma se bid opgeraak en weggeraak het, gaan soek U in die Komma-kind se oë en hart na dit wat gesê moet word. En dan luister U met U hart, né Here?

Komma-kinders kry maklik seer, Here. Maar niemand weet daarvan nie. Hulle huil binnekant toe, daar waar niemand kan kyk of seermaak nie. Hulle lag en leef elke dag asof dit hulle laaste dag is. En vanaand, wanneer die son sy kop gaan bêre, Here, gaan lê hulle in 'n komma

voor U voete. En as hulle veilig genoeg voel, dop hulle hul binnekant voor U uit.

'n Komma-kind se binnekant is veilig wanneer U U hande sag daarom van. Komma-kinders sukkel om te vertrou, Here. Hulle vrou nie verniet soos 'n komma op nie - dis om hulle binnekant te beskerm. Maar U weet dit, né Here? Daarom steek U U arms stil na die Komma-wesentjie uit en tel haar versigtig tot styf teen U hart - daar waar sy opregte, veilige liefde kan voel. Daar waar dit nie nodig is om in 'n komma te vrou nie. Daar waar sy diep kan asemhaal en U Stem hoor wat sag vir haar sê: "Kom maar na My toe... Ek wil so graag vir jou rus gee."

Dankie dat U nooit 'n streep deur 'n Komma-kind se lewe trek nie, Here. Dankie dat U U Komma-kinders se harte ken en verstaan... want Kommas sukkel partykeer om te praat. En wanneer die Komma leer dat U liefde is en dat U arms veilig is en dat U Stem sag is, begin sy stadig haar kop oplig en die wêreld requit-versigtig in die oë kyk. Want die God van Komma-kinders is ook haar God. En Hy is lief vir haar. En dis vir haar genoeg. Né, Here?

Al my liefde.

U Komma-kind.

MY PLANNE OF GOD S'N?

"I am the master of my fate, I am the captain of my soul." Hierdie woorde vanuit die gedig deur William Ernest Henley is verewig in die film "Invictus" wat die versoening van Suid-Afrikaners deur die bemiddeling van die eertydse president, Nelson Mandela, uitbeeld. Invictus beteken "onoorwonne".

Gegee al die swaarkry wat beide Mandela en Henley moes deurmaak, is dit bewonderenswaardig dat hulle besluit het dat hulle gees nie verbrysel sou word deur lewensomstandighede nie, maar dat hulle hul probleme met mannemoed en krag sou aandurf.

Op soortgelyke trant gebruik William Shakespeare en ander die frase, "do thy worst" in hul geskrifte. Dit kan dui op twee dinge: wat ook al 'n opponent jou sal aandoen, sal aanvaar word met oorgawe en sonder teenkanting; of dit kan dien as 'n uitdaging dat vuur met vuur begroet sal word.

Dit is goed om teen onreg op te staan, en om sterk te staan teen boelies of aanvallers - letterlik of metafories. 'n Wyse persoon het eenmaal gesê, "Ons kan nie kies wat na ons kant toe kom nie, maar ons kan kies hoe ons daarop reageer."

Daar is egter 'n paar onderliggende vrae: Wat is ons hartsmotief agter die vuis wat ons teen die wêreldig? Is ek werklik in beheer van my eie lewe? Moet ek druk vir my planne en begeertes, of is dit 'n mors van tyd om te probeer staan teen die winde en aanslae van die lewe? Waar pas die Here in?

BEPLANNING IS GOED

Erstens is die Bybel nie gekant teen goede beplanning nie. Jesus leer ons dat mense wat bouprojekte of oorloë aanpak, eers deeglik beplan. Netso moet ons die eise van dissipelskap verstaan en weet waarvoor ons ons inlaat wanneer ons sekere besluite maak: "Want wie van julle wat 'n toring wil bou, gaan nie eers sit en bereken die koste, om te sien of hy genoeg geld het om dit te voltooi nie? Sodat dit nie gebeur dat, as hy die fondament lê en nie in staat is om dit te voltooi nie, almal wat dit sien, met hom begin spot en sê, 'Hierdie man het begin bou, maar kon nie klaarmaak nie.' Of watter koning trek op om met 'n ander koning oorlog te voer, en gaan nie eers sit en oorweeg of hy met tienduisend man opgewasse sal wees teen die ander een wat met twintigduisend teen hom optrek nie? Indien nie, stuur hy terwyl die ander een nog ver is, 'n afvaardiging en vra voorwaardes

vir vrede. Net so kan nie een van julle wat nie van al sy besittings afstand doen, My dissipel wees nie." (Luk. 14:28:33 DV). 'n Mens moet beplan en koste bereken, veral ook m.b.t. die geestelike.

SIF JOU PLANNE IN GOD SE LIG

Spreeke gee goede raad: "n Mens kan sy voornemens hê, maar die laaste woord daaroor kom van die Here af. In sy eie oë is alles wat 'n mens doen, reg, maar die Here ondersoek die gesindheid. Laat wat jy doen, aan die Here oor, dan sal jou voornemens geluk" (16:1-3NV). Dit is so dat die Here vir 'n mens verstandelike vermoëns gee wat gebruik moet word. Die uitdrukking lui "God helps those who help themselves." Maar nog beter is om God te ken in al ons planne en seker te maak dat dit in Sy wil is, voordat ons dit agternaaloop. "Vertrou volkome op die Here en moenie op jou eie insigte staatmaak nie. Ken Hom in alles wat jy doen en Hy sal jou die regte pad laat loop" (Spr. 3:5-6 NV). Ons onderwerping aan God se planne spruit uit ons vertroue op Hom en die wete dat Hy die beste vir ons wil hê. Dat Hy die beste weet en dat ons moet vertrou op Sy tydsberekening en Sy uitkomste.

BEPLAN IN NEDERIGHEID

Dit verg nederigheid om ons eie planne opsy te sit en God te vra wat Hy vir ons lewe beplan, veral as ons nie die hele prentjie kan sien nie. En as dit teen ons onafhanklikheid en dryf indruis. Jakobus leer, "Kom nou, julle wat sê: 'Vandag of mōre sal ons na hierdie of daardie stad gaan, en 'n jaar daar deurbring, en handel dryf en wins maak.' Julle weet nie eers wat mōre gaan gebeur nie. Hoe is julle lewe dan? Dit is maar 'n miswolkie, wat net vir 'n kort rukkie verskyn en dan weer verdwyn. Julle moet eerder sê: 'As die Here wil en ons nog leef, sal ons dit of dat doen.' Maar nou spog julle oor julle hoogmoedige optrede. Sulke gespog is verkeerd. As iemand weet om die goeie te doen en dit nie doen nie, is dit vir hom sonde" (Jak. 4:13-17 DV).

Ons beheer nie die werklikheid en ons lewensloop nie. Jesus herinner ons dat ons onself op God en Sy sorg vir ons kan werp, omdat ons nie mag het om selfs die kleinste dinge te vermag nie: "Kyk na die kraaie, want hulle saai nie en hulle maai nie; hulle het geen voorraadkamer of skuurnie, en tog voed God hulle. Hoeveel meer is julle nie werd as die voëls nie! En wie onder julle kan, deur hom te kwel, een el by sy lengte voeg? As julle dan selfs nie die geringste kan doen nie, waarom kwel julle jul oor die ander dinge?

kwel julle jul oor die ander dinge? Kyk na die lelies, hoe hulle groei: hulle arbei nie en hulle spin nie; en Ek sê vir julle, selfs Salomo in al sy heerlikheid was nie bekleed soos een van hulle nie. As God dan die gras van die veld wat vandag daar is en mōre in 'n oond gegooi word, so beklee, hoeveel meer vir julle, kleingelowiges!" (Luk. 12:24-28 OV). Eerder as om te glo dat ons enigets kan vermag, as ons maar net hard genoeg probeer, is dit beter om te glo dat God dit tot uitvoer sal bring wat Hy wil bewerkstellig.

BETER EN BESTE

"Daar is baie planne in 'n mens se hart, maar die raad van die Here dít kom tot stand" (Spr. 19:21). As ons werklik iets van waarde wil bou, iets wat 'n impak sal maak en staande sal bly, moet ons aan die Here se voete sit en hoor wat Sy planne is. Die psalmidgter herinner ons dat mense en hul planne tydelik van aard is, maar dat God always en ewig is: "Vertrou nie op prinse, op die mensekind, by wie geen heil is nie. Sy gees gaan uit, hy keer terug na sy aarde toe; op daardie dag is dit met sy planne gedaan. Welgeluksalig is hy wat die God van Jakob het as sy hulp, wie se hoop is op die Here sy God, wat hemel en aarde gemaak het, die see en alles wat daarin is; wat trou bly tot in ewigheid; wat aan die verdruktes reg doen, wat aan die hongeriges brood gee. Die Here maak die gevangenes los.

Die Here open die oë van die blindes; die Here rig die wat geboë is, op; die Here het die regverdiges lief" (Ps. 146:3-8 OV).

Jesus leer ons, "Ek is die wingerdstok, julle die late. Wie in My bly en Ek in hom, dra baie vrugte, want sonder My kan julle niks doen nie... Julle het My nie uitgekies nie, maar Ek het julle uitgekies en julle aangesel om uit te gaan en vrugte te dra, vrugte wat sal hou. So sal die Vader aan julle gee wat julle ook al in My Naam vra." (Joh. 15:5, 16 NV). Wanneer ons prioriteite is om God se koninkryk uit te brei, sal ons standhoudende vrug produseer, en ook verseker wees van God se ondersteuning en instaatselling. En ons sal groot vreugde en vredeervaar, omdat ons ons roeping sal vervul, en nie bloot menslike planne sal najaag nie.

TEN SLOTTE

Die Here is nie teen beplanning nie, maar verkies veel eerder dat ons Hom in die kleine en die grote sal ken. Hy wil ons lewe met ons deel. Dit spruit uit ons verhouding met Hom, en toon dat ons Hom eer en respekteer en hoër ag as ons eie wysheid. Hy sal ons afhanglikheid van Hom seën. Vanuit ons nederigheid sal Hy ons planne tot stand bring. As ons Hom eerste stel, sal ons vrug produseer wat sinvolle ewigheidswaarde het!

© C Venter

STEP INTO MY JOY

My child, how long will you choose to live under this cloud of oppression? You have been waiting for your joy to return. It will never come because joy comes from My Presence alone. Any substitute you devise will be temporary and unsatisfying.

You must break through the dark clouds that have hovered over your life. Do it by faith, my child. Choose to step into a new place. Call things that are not as though they are.

Believe My best for you is already accomplished in the Spirit realm. Stand upon My covenant promise for you. Begin thanking Me for it and it will manifest in the natural in My time.

Through all of this, there are two things I want you to grab on to - you must entrust outcomes to Me; and you cannot determine your joy based on your circumstances. Can I not give you joy even in your circumstance? Do I not give you My power to have joy in the midst of your sorrow?

Step into this place by faith, not by what you feel. The joy of THE LORD is your strength. It is not YOUR joy that gives you strength. It's MY joy. Grow up in Me, My child. Like my son Peter, I desire you to understand the secret of true joy: "You have made known to me the ways of life; you will make me full of joy in Your presence" (Acts 2:28).

Step into MY joy, not your joy. Then you will break through the storm cloud that has hovered over your soul for too long.

- Os Hillman

Sekelman

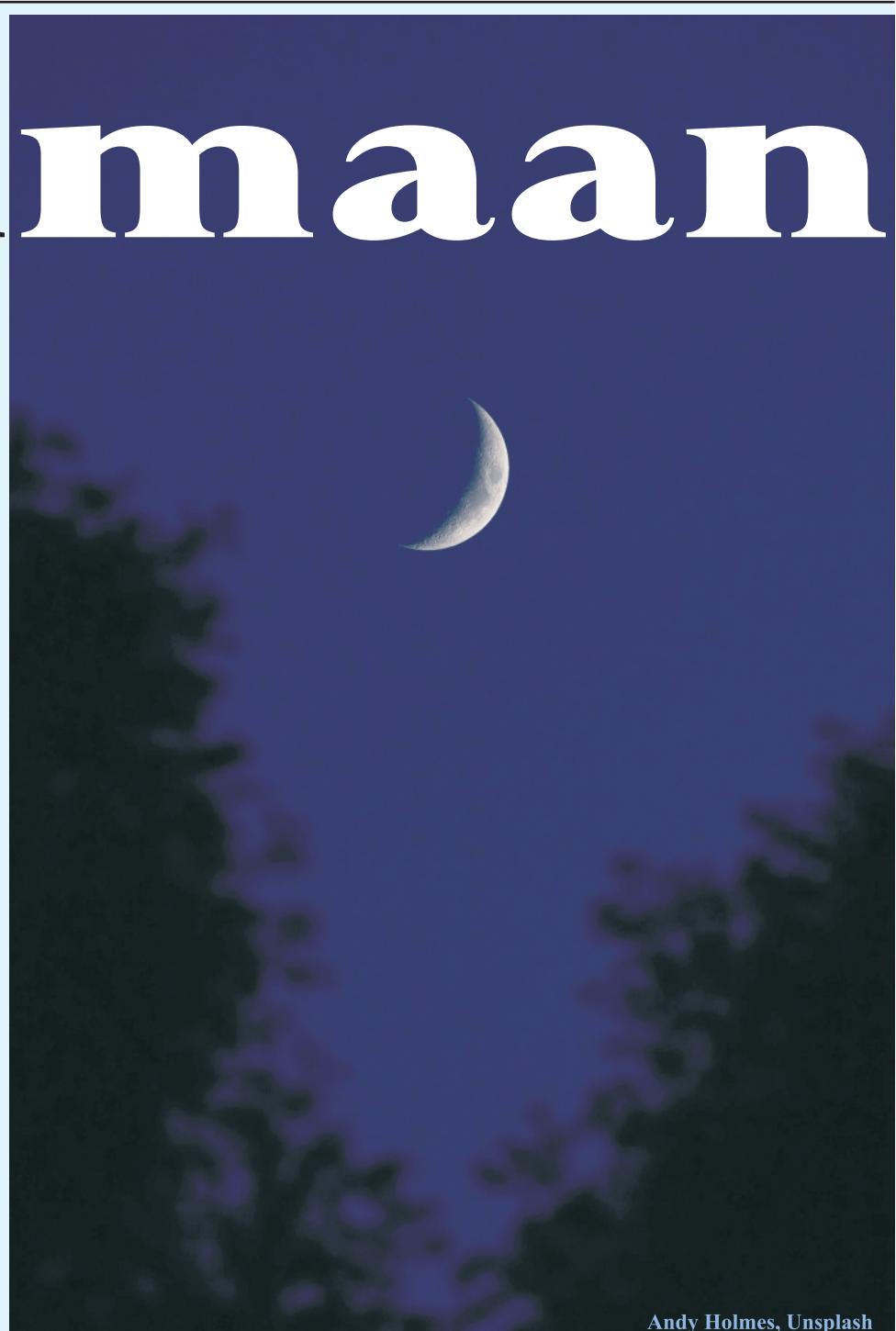
**Vanaand se sekelman
is net vir jou
Mag hy dans tot in jou hart
En sy arms om jou vrou
Want as hy kon praat sou hy eenvoudig sê
Hoe diep My liefde hier binne vir jou lê**

**En mensekind
Ek weet jou hart is broos
Want die twyfel trek jou skeef
En jy's leeg en moedeloos
Maar as jy My oë
vir 'n oomblik sou kon leen
Sou jy 'n bruid sien
In wit gekleë**

**En weet jy wie dit is?
Kan jou aardse siel begryp
Na wie Ek verlang?**

**Dit is jy!
My bruid in ewigheid
Een kyk van jou oë
En die hout se pyn verdwyn
Want dit is jy
Geliefde van My sy
Ek's hier
By jou
In jou
Om jou
Net lief te hê**

**En al sou jy ook die deur
in My gesig toeslaan
En die leuens bly glo
dat Ek net nie bestaan
Sal Ek nog steeds My liefde
vir jou kom wys
'n Gebreekte lyf
wat hang aan 'n kruis**



Andy Holmes, Unsplash

**En weet jy wie jy is?
Kan jou aardse siel begryp
Na wie Ek verlang?**

**Want dit is jy!
My bruid in ewigheid
Een kyk van jou oë
En die hout se pyn verdwyn
Want dit is jy
Geliefde van My sy
Ek is hier
By jou
In jou
Om jou
Ek is hier by jou, in jou, om jou
Net lief te hê**

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We'll Never Be Alone

"Sometimes a storm in your life is what will blow you to the place you are longing to be."

-Beth Moore

"About three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, 'Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?' (which means "My God, My God, why have you forsaken Me?")." (Matthew 27:46 NIV).

"Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, left the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, where for forty days He was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing during those days, and at the end of them He was hungry. The devil said to him, 'If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread.' Jesus answered, 'It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone.'" (Luke 4:1-4 NIV).

"God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God" (2 Corinthians 5:21 NIV).

"For we do not have a high priest Who is unable to empathise with our weaknesses, but we have one

Who has been tempted in every way, just as we are - yet He did not sin. Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need (Hebrews 4:15-16 NIV).

It's hard to imagine that Jesus, the Son of God, went through spiritual difficulties. He did. There were two specific times in His life where He was pushed beyond anything that our human minds can fathom.

THE TEMPTATION OF JESUS

Jesus spent the first 30 years of His life as a normal person before He began His 3½ year public ministry. Before He healed anyone or brought someone back to life, He was baptised in the Jordan River by John the Baptist. Luke 4:1 tells us that Jesus was *"full of the Holy Spirit"* when He left the Jordan River, and the next sentence says, *"The Spirit led Him into the desert."* What an astounding thought. Knowing what we know about Satan tempting Jesus, it's hard for our humanity to grasp that God's Holy Spirit led

Jesus there.

Jesus spent 40 days in the desert and didn't consume food or drink during that time. The devil was with Jesus, pummelling Him with doubts, attacks, and questions. He offered the Saviour of the world opportunities to forego any future hardship. But Jesus didn't succumb. While His physical frame was weak, His Spirit was tenacious. The truth from the Scriptures is what He used as a weapon to counterattack His spiritual enemy.

THE CRUCIFIXION OF JESUS

Shortly before Jesus took His last breath on the cross, He cried out, *"My God, my God, why have you forsaken Me?"* God separated Himself from His perfect Son because the past, present, and future sins of the world were heaped upon Jesus on the cross. Because God cannot look upon sin, His intense wrath had to tackle the magnitude of the sin of the world, and He did it once and for all by forsaking His only Son.

This would be the only time in all

of eternity that God would turn His back on anyone. Because of such an extreme action that left our Saviour begging for God's Presence, we'll never experience loneliness.

Doesn't that bring you a sense of relief? Even though you may feel far from God and feel like He's left you alone, you're not alone and never will be. When the difficult moments smother us and the hard days ambush us, we stand on this truth.

Know this: God has never left you, never will leave you, and is indeed closer than your breath.

Ponder the fact that every sin of yours - past, present, and future - was placed upon Jesus so you could experience salvation and never fear being forsaken by God. Really think about it. Now, either write or speak out your gratitude for God's love for you. Even in your pain and spiritual drought, thank Him.

- Walking Through Spiritual Valleys, YouVersion

Wees Bewus Van Satan se Planne

"Die bedoeling is dat ons nie deur Satan uitoorlê word nie! Sy planne is mos nie aan ons onbekend nie!" (2 Korintiërs 2:11 NVL).

Om in geestelike oorwinning te leef beteken dat jy Satan se planne moet verstaan. Wanneer jy sleg voel, wanneer jy alleen is, wanneer jy moeg is en wanneer jy verlies ervaar het, is wanneer jy veral weerloos daarteen is.

Daar is nie iets soos 'n regverdige spel met die duivel nie. As jy hom 'n duim gee, sal hy 'n myl neem. As jy hom 'n toegangspunt in jou lewe gee, sal hy dit teen jou gebruik.

Let die twee geleenthede op waar Satan vir Jesus aangeval het.

Eerstens, by Sy geboorte. Herodus het beveel dat alle Joodse seuntjies onder die ouderdom van twee doodgemaak moet word.

Dis hoekom jy as nuwe gelowige daagliks gewoontes van gebed, Bybelstudie en gemeenskap met

die wat jou op jou pad met God kan versterk, moet ontwikkel.

Tweedens, op die drumpel van Sy bediening. Vir veertig dae het Jesus in die woestyn vir Satan teengestaan. Hoekom het die stryd so lank aangehou? Omdat dit oor Jesus se toekoms gegaan het.

"Toe die duivel Jesus klaar versoek het, het hy Hom verlaat tot die volgende geleentheid. Hierna het Jesus, gevul met die krag van die Heilige Gees, na Galilea teruggegaan. Hy het deur die hele omgewing bekend geword" (Lukas 4:13-14 NVL).

'n Aanval is 'n teken van respek; dit beteken dat Satan jou potensiaal raakgesien het. Die vlak van sy aanval is 'n teken van die vlak van seën wat God vir jou aan die ander kant in die vooruitsig het.

In plaas daarvan om dus moedeloos oor die stryd te wees, sien dit as 'n teken dat jou beste dae voor jou lê.

- Bob & Debby Gass

THERE IS A PLACE OF QUIET REST

Deeply moved by the death of his brother Howard's two young daughters within 24 hours, Cleland McAfee sat down and composed this beloved hymn. The choir at Park College, Missouri, rehearsed this beautiful hymn on the Saturday night and were so moved by it they went to the quarantined home of Howard and sang these deeply encouraging words outside his home.

Since the beginning of mankind we have been profoundly needy of a place of quiet rest. Somewhere, somehow, the brokenness of life pays a visit to each of us. In stark contrast to the perfect glory of heaven, Earth has always been a vale of tears, not forgetting an enemy who desires nothing less than our destruction. When we read of Paul's suffering in his various letters to the churches he helped establish and his joy in the privilege of suffering, we may grasp a little of the "why" behind it all. We are here to reap a harvest and harvesting is hard work that requires many a long hour in the scorching sun, blisters that will harden into calloused hands deftly swinging the scythe. It requires practice, determination and commitment to become skilled in the work of His Kingdom. Many a broken heart has been lost somewhere in the harvest field, forgetting there is divine purpose in Earthly suffering.

God is not the author of our trials, but He does repurpose it to His glorious intentions. We are strengthened, purified, equipped for eternity. Whatever befalls you on Earth is deposited in heaven as your rich inheritance. Your every tear, your anguished prayers are all kept as precious incense before the throne of God. Think of David, the overlooked shepherd boy in whom God saw a king. He carried *"the Name of the LORD Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel"* with him to battle Goliath. A mere boy who took a rock to a sword fight stood over the mighty warrior of the enemy in victory. He was not trained in battle, but He was equipped by the Name of Him Who is mighty to save. Ah, Beloved, remember: "There is a place of quiet rest, near to the heart of God. There is a place of comfort sweet, where we our Saviour meet, near to the heart of God." Find that place if your life is in turmoil and discover the rest that He alone can give. *"Yes, my soul, find rest in God; my hope comes from Him. Truly, He is my rock and my salvation; He is my fortress, I will not be shaken"* (Psalm 62:5-6).
- Helen du Plessis, 083 332 0895

It's Him - In Us

Think about it: God made you. God put you here, at this specific time in history. **God has a plan and purpose for your life.**

Not only that, but He gave you a brain that thinks, a heart that beats, and lungs that breathe. **He gave you talents and abilities, hopes and desires.** He gave you ears and eyes, muscles and ligaments. And He positioned you on this planet that happens to be in the ideal position in our solar system for life to thrive.

You are a part of God's plan.

A mysteriously beautiful part of God's plan is that **He chooses to work through His people...**

"For God is working in you, giving

you the desire and the power to do what pleases Him" (Phil. 2:13 NLT).

Everything starts with God and comes from God. But we get to choose if we'll listen to His Spirit and follow where He leads, or ignore Him. **We get to decide if we'll submit to His nudges and act on His promptings,** or try to do it on our own.

It's all God, but it's also Him working in and through His people - just as He intended.

Those of us who belong to Christ are filled with His Spirit. We're no longer slaves to sin or to this world. We're no longer incapable of following God. Instead, He gives us new dreams and desires, thoughts and power, and a heart



of compassion instead of selfishness.

So if an idea pops into your mind about blessing or encouraging someone else, don't dismiss it. If you suddenly have a burning desire to share His message, to serve others, to give generously, or to shine His love, pay attention. It's likely the Spirit of God, giving you the desire and power to do

what pleases Him.

Prayer: God, thank You for being faithful. Thank You for making a way for me to know You. You are enough for me, and You make me enough. Please show me how You are at work in my life. I will choose to patiently wait on You, because I know that You will finish the work You have started in me. In Jesus' Name. Amen.

God Gets You

"For we do not have a high priest Who is unable to empathise with our weaknesses, but we have one Who has been tempted in every way, just as we are - yet He did not sin" (Heb. 4:15 NIV).

"He is able to deal gently with those who are ignorant and are going astray, since He Himself is subject to weakness" (Heb. 5:2 NIV).

"But He was pierced for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on Him, and by His wounds we are healed" (Is. 53:5 NIV).

You and I have a lot in common. We have stumbled in life - in morality, honesty, integrity. We have done our best, only to trip and fall. Our finest efforts have left us flat on our backs.

We have broken hearts, weary spirits, and fading vision. The distance between where we are and where we want to be is impassable.

So what do we do? Where do we turn? I suggest we turn to one of the sweetest promises: "For our high priest [Jesus] is able to understand our weaknesses" (Hebrews 4:15 NCV).

God became flesh in the form of Jesus Christ. He was miraculously conceived, yet naturally delivered. He was born... yet born of a virgin. Had Jesus simply

descended to Earth in the form of a mighty being, you might respect Him but never want to draw near to Him. After all, how could God understand what it means to be human?

On the other hand, had Jesus been biologically conceived with two Earthly parents, you might draw near to Him but you wouldn't want to worship Him. After all, He would be no different than you and me.

But if Jesus were both - God and man at the same time - then you have the best of both worlds. Neither His humanity nor deity compromised. He was fully human. He was fully divine. Because of the first, we draw near. Because of the latter, we worship.

Does this promise matter? It does if you ever wonder whether God understands you or listens to you. The one Who hears your prayers understands your pain. He never shrugs or scoffs or dismisses physical struggle. He had a human body. **He gets you.** He was so human He could touch people. So mighty He could heal them. So human He spoke with an accent. So heavenly He spoke with authority. So human He could blend in unnoticed for thirty years. So mighty He could change history and be unforgotten for 2000 years. All man. Yet all God.

Yet if Jesus never sinned, how could He understand the full force of sin? Simple. He felt it more than

we do. We give in... but He never did. He didn't deserve to feel the shame, but He felt it. He didn't deserve the humiliation, but He experienced it. He had never sinned yet was treated like a sinner. He became sin. All the guilt, remorse, and embarrassment - Jesus understands it.

Jesus is the only One Who can help with your sin. Let Him, won't you? You cannot make it on your own. Jesus has the strength you do not have. He is, after all, your High Priest, able and willing to help in your time of need. So let Him do what He came to do. What does it mean to you to know that

Jesus experienced all the challenges of your life? What human experiences did Jesus face that you relate to best?

As your High Priest, Jesus acts on your behalf. What does it mean to have Jesus as your Advocate and Helper? What does it mean to face challenges with His help? How has knowing that Jesus has freed you from sin impacted your life? How does your experience give you compassion for others weighed down by sin?

- Max Lucado, *Unshakable Hope, Building our Lives on the Promises of God*

My GEBED vir jou is dat jy, wanneer jy angs of benoudheid of bekommernis of trauma beleef, Jesus se voorbeeld sal volg en net nog meer intens God sal aanroep en ernstig aanbid (Heb. 5:6-8). Mag jy bly glo dat God jou aanhoor, jou sal antwoord nog voor jy na Hom roep en jou gebede sal verhoor (Jes. 65:24). Mag jy onthou dat daar geen emosie is wat jy beleef wat Jesus nie ook beleef het nie. Hy het ten volle mens geword en Sy emosies met die Vader gedeel (1 Joh. 4:2; Heb. 2:14). Mag jy die vrymoedigheid behou om openlik en eerlik al jou emosies met God te deel (Sef. 3:9).

Die Here sê: "Kom na My toe, jy wat moeg is en swaar laste moet dra, en Ek sal jou lewe verkwik. Neem My juk op jou skouers. Kom leer van My, want Ek is sag en nederig van hart, en jy sal rus en nuwe moed vir jou lewe kry. Want My juk sal sag op jou skouers rus en My las is lig om te dra" (Matt. 11:28-30). "Moet jou nie bekommer en vra: 'Wat sal ek tog eet?' of: 'Wat sal ek drink?' of: 'Wat sal ek aantrek?' nie. Dit is die ongelowiges wat oor hierdie soort dinge begaan is. Jou hemelse Vader weet tog dat jy dit alles nodig het. Nee, maak die koningsheerskappy van God en dit wat voor Hom reg is, jou prioriteit; dan sal God vir jou al hierdie ander dinge byvoeg" (Matt. 6:31-33).

Mag jy God se vrede wat alle verstand te bove gaan elke dag van jou lewe ervar (Fil. 4:7). Mag die genade en vrede van God steeds meer en meer jou deel wees deurdat jy God en Jesus Christus ons Here regtig persoonlik en intiem ken (2 Pet. 1:2). Amen.

God Is Here

“...and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age” (Matthew 28:20 NIV).

“And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever - the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept Him, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him. But you know Him, for He lives with you and will be in you” (John 14:16-17 NIV).

“Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God’s people and also members of His household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus Himself as the Chief Cornerstone. In Him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in Him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by His Spirit” (Ephesians 2:19-22 NIV).

“Don’t you know that you yourselves are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit dwells in your midst?” (1 Corinthians 3:16 NIV).

“Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, Who is in you, Whom you have received from God? You are not your own” (1 Corinthians 6:19 NIV).

“I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in Me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from Me you can do nothing” (John 15:5 NIV).

God has always wanted to be in a relationship with humans, and we see that desire manifesting in different ways over time.

In the beginning, God lived and walked among Adam and Eve in the Garden. When they sinned, it broke our relationship with Him but didn't stop His plan of being close to us.

God the Father sent Jesus to Earth to fix our relationship with Him, and in one of Jesus' last statements on Earth, He promised to be with us always.

Even better than that, He promised His followers that they would receive the Holy Spirit, Who would be God in us. When we

follow Christ, God's Holy Spirit isn't just with us - He's inside of us. In the Old Testament, the people had to go to the temple to experience the presence of God. But now, when we accept Jesus, we are temples where the Spirit of God lives.

All along, God wanted to be close to us, and through Jesus, that has become a reality again. And although we eagerly await a day in which God will renew all things so that we can live with Him in His perfect kingdom, we're not idly waiting until that happens. God has given us work to do.

From the beginning, He has wanted humans to rule over creation. He has given us gifts and assignments to do His work while on Earth, so salvation isn't just a ticket to heaven - it's an invitation to get to work bringing more of heaven here on Earth.

And as we do, we won't be working in our own feeble power. We'll be partnering with God, relying on His Spirit within us to do anything. Apart from God, we can't do anything, but as temples of the living God with His Spirit

living in us, we can do more than we thought possible. We're often tempted to think of God as a distant Being in the sky, even referring to Him as “the Man upstairs.” But our God is here.

And when we know God's Presence is with us and in us, we can get to work on the purpose He has for us - sharing His good news with others and bringing more of His goodness here on Earth.

Prayer: God, thank You that as I invite Jesus into my life, You are not only with me but also in me! I ask that Your Holy Spirit would guide me and lead me through this day. Show me how to bring more of Your kingdom here on Earth, and thank You for partnering with humans to do Your will. I trust You, and I ask for greater awareness of Your Presence today. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Challenge: As you lean into God's Presence today, pay special attention to anything you feel like the Spirit is prompting you to do, then ask Him for the courage to do it!

Verlos van Vrees

En aand terwyl ek voor die rekenaar gesit en werk het, het ek meteens agteroor gevallen en vyf epileptiese aanvalle na mekaar gekry. My vrou, Pippa, was alleen in die vreemde in die klein dorpie Chernigov met ons drie klein kindertjies en 'n bewusteloze man, en sy moes 'n besluit neem oor wat om volgende te doen.

Ons het vir vyf jaar in Kiëf sending-werk gedoen voordat ons gevoel het dat God ons na die klein dorpie Chernigov lei. Aangesien daar min buitelanders in daardie omgewing woon en die mense nie huis Engels kan praat nie, moes ons Russies leer praat om oor die weg te kom.

Die aand toe ek die aanvalle gekry het, het Pippa geweet dat die hospitaal in Chernigov in 'n haglike toestand is. Sy het op 'n wonderbaarlike manier 'n huurmotor in die hande gekry en my, wat steeds bewusteloos was, asook die kinders in die motor gelaai wat ons na Kiëf geneem het. Dit was vir haar baie traumatis omdat sy nie geweet het

wat met my aangaan nie.

In Kiëf het die dokters by die neurologiese hospitaal my ondersoek en allerhande toetse op my gedoen. Die slotsom waartoe hulle gekom het, was dat ek drie breingewasse het (hulle het selfs die groottes daarvan aangedui) en ook dat ek aan meervoudige sklerose ly. Niemand het met ons gepraat en my toestand verduidelik nie. Ons het bloot 'n brief gekry. Dit was 'n groot skok om te dink dat ek dalk nie my kinders sou sien grootword nie.

Ons het baie gebid en besluit om die X-strale vir 'n tweede opinie Suid-Afrika toe te stuur. Na deeglike ondersoek het die neuroloë in Suid-Afrika ons laat weet dat daar geen gewasse is nie en ook geen teken van meervoudige sklerose nie. Tot vandag toe weet ons nie hoe die diagnose in Kiëf so verkeerd kon wees nie.

Ek het die incident verwerk, maar Pippa het vir maande in stilte met vrees geworstel. Elke keer as ek 'n spesifieke geluid gemaak het wat ek tydens my epileptiese aanvalle

gemaak het, sou sy met rooi vlekke van skok uit die kombuis storm om te kyk wat aangaan. Hoewel sy gereeld met God oor die vrees gepraat het, die Skrif geglo het en die vyand bestraf het, het die vrees steeds gebly.

Een aand het sy uit moedeloosheid vir God gevra waarom Hy dit nie wegneem nie. Sy het ervar dat Hy vir haar sê: "Vra My waar Ek tydens die incident was." Sy het gevra: "Here Jesus, wys my waar U was toe dit gebeur het." Meteens het die hele incident weer voor haar afgespeel. Dié keer het Pippa iets gesien wat sy nog nie voorheen gesien het nie. Waar ek op die vloer gelê het ná die aanvalle het Jesus plat op die vloer gesit en my teen sy bors vasgehou. Dit het skielik die houvas van vrees oor haar gebreek. Sy het geweet dat Jesus daar was en dat Hy in beheer van die situasie was - al het dit vir haar gevoel sy was alleen.

Ongeveer drie aande later het ons een aand in die bed gesit toe dit vir my voel of my maag snaaks saamtrek. Ek het vir haar gesê: "Liefie,

ek dink hier kom weer een van die aanvalle." Dit was ons toets. In stede daarvan om op hol te gaan, het Pippa na my gekyk en sag gepraat: "My skat, wees rustig. Ontspan. Jesus is hier. As jy dit kry, dan kry jy dit. Maar Jesus is hier en jy kan nou net by Hom ontspan." Sy het werklik oorwinning oor haar vrees behaal. Dit is nou 15 jaar later en ek het nie daardie aand nie en ook nooit meer daarna 'n epileptiese aanval gehad nie. God het my vrygemaak en genees!

Te midde van elke situasie wat ons bevrees laat, is Jesus Christus daar om ons in Sy arms vas te hou. In Deuteronomium 31:6 lees ons: "Hou moed en wees dapper! Moenie bang wees nie, moenie vir hulle skrik nie, want die Here julle God gaan saam met julle. Hy sal julle nie in die steek laat nie, julle nie alleen laat nie." **Weet dat Hy vandag ook by jou is en dat Hy jou nooit in die steek sal laat nie.**

- Riekert Botha God Was Dáár, CUM, 2014, Beneschke J v Rensburg

My Testimony

I was raised an atheist and was a rabid anti-theist continuing into adulthood. When I was in my late twenties I had an out-of-body experience and am convinced that God showed me a glimpse of Hell. And by "showed me a glimpse of," I mean that I believe I experienced Hell. It's impossible to accurately describe or explain because it's a spiritual realm, and so there's nothing in the natural world with which it can even be compared; the best I can do is offer my experience.

Trying to precisely describe a spiritual realm is like trying to explain to someone what the colour purple tastes like, or the sound which light waves emit. We just don't possess the conceptual abilities to be able to comprehend it in any sufficient manner while we're bound to our natural bodies.

If I was in Hell, and my experience was real, it's far worse than anything I had ever heard about it or could've imagined. Firstly, there's no time. It's just a single, eternal moment. This, again, is something which we cannot conceptualise in our natural state. So, there's that as a foundation. Then the best that I can explain is that it felt like my consciousness was twisted inside out, folded over itself, tied into a super compressed knot, and squeezed into a space infinitely too small. Try and recount the most claustrophobic experience you can imagine and multiply it by infinity.

Meanwhile, there was a persistent, horrific feeling of "Oh, no. No! No!!!" spanning eternity. There was no hope, no joy, no light, no emotion of any variety other than the ceaseless sensation of "Oh, no!" amidst the

most powerful claustrophobic torture imaginable. It is comparable to the feeling someone has when they know they are about to die suddenly but desperately want to live. I experienced this once when I lost control of my car in a snow storm and hit a giant tree head on at 90 km/h. Immediately before impact I let out an involuntary, primal scream. It was a guttural, instinctive, raw and absolutely terrifying reaction which I didn't know I was capable of or had in me. That primal scream was one of the most powerful and surreal moments of my life, and I imagine that feeling would be magnified in the case of a violent death by someone else's hands.

I used to have recurring dreams of dying and had "died" in so many different ways that I had just become used to it. The worst way that I experienced dying in my dreams was being shot in the head at point-blank range. The feeling of "Oh, no! Please, I don't want to die" was so absolutely vivid, visceral, terrifying, and horrific that it makes me uncomfortable even recalling it. And that was just a dream. I can't even imagine how much more terrifying it must be in reality.

But that feeling - that awful, helpless, hopeless, and terrifying feeling - of exponentially heightened pure terror and regretful longing in despair is what I experienced while my consciousness was folded inside out over itself, tied in the tightest knot, and shoved into an infinitely too small space for an eternal moment of "Oh, no..."

Once my brain started communicating with my body again, I came back into myself and saw my two friends I was with hovering over me looking ex-

tremely horrified. They told me that I had been crying hysterically, but I had no conscious recollection of crying at all. I immediately said "I was in Hell," which is odd because I was an atheist and most definitely did not believe in Hell, but I didn't try and immediately rationalise it. I did eventually push it away, though, and finally dismissed it.

Years later, I had come to a place of absolute darkness and despair, and I was planning on killing myself. In the desperate moment I prayed to God for the first time in my life, saying something along the lines of "I don't know if You exist or care at all, but I've tried everything. I have no hope, I'm just sad all of the time, my heart hurts, and if You can't help me I give up." I fell asleep crying but woke up the next morning with pure joy in my heart and a peace of mind I had never known, even as an "innocent" child. All of the darkness, desperate horror, and empty, meaningless sorrow had been completely eradicated from my being in an instant and replaced by a peace and joy which have never left me!

I walked 5 km into town that morning and three separate people spoke with me about what Jesus had done for me on the cross - living a life of perfect, righteous obedience to take my punishment upon Himself and die in my place, conquering the power of death and sin to reconcile me to God - that I may be called a child born of God, and live with Him forever.

It felt totally random as I had never had anyone share the Gospel message with me in my hometown, and now in a single day I'm having three different discussions about Jesus Christ without any prompting. Now, I didn't

immediately believe, of course, but it was enough for me to start reading Jesus' teachings for myself, and they not only explained why my life had come to the point that it had, but furthermore explained so much about people, our hearts, the human spiritual condition, society, and the world in general.

The words spoke directly to my heart, and when I got to the part where Jesus says that one must be born again, I knew that this was exactly what God was doing in my life, and as I looked into it further, other parts of Scripture described this process exactly. I repented, confessed my sin nature before God, turned away from iniquity towards seeking Him and trusting in His righteousness: I accepted Jesus as my Lord and Saviour. I was baptised less than a year later, and my life has been forever changed. I died that night to myself, and have been raised with Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit, being sanctified according to the council of His will, for His glory.

I don't know if I actually experienced Hell, but I believe I did then when it happened, although I eventually pushed it out of my mind, and I now truly believe that I did. It's not something I want anyone to ever experience.

I pray that some who read this will come to the knowledge of Christ Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit, and that they may know You and be known by You. For in You there is true joy, peace, love, and all good gifts of the Spirit through grace, and life everlasting, beginning here, now. I ask all of this in Jesus' name, Father. May it be Your will. Amen.

- Michael Hurwitz

Jer. 20:11

★★★ **B&B**  *Uit die Hand*

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OASE VAN HOOP
-KOFFIE KAFEE-
HEB. 6:19
est. 2023

