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## What Does Our Love Revolve Around?

I remember it all so clearly. It was January 10, 2008. The side street - all potholes and no sidewalks - was just big enough for our bus to squeeze through. We stepped out into heat and chaos and the smell of a thousand used tires dumped on a fire already blended with cheap fuel and last month's trash. Stalls and workshops and shacks and homes. Saris and sandals and bare feet and a noise that blurred the senses.

This was Mumbai, India. We were in a slum, or, to be precise, we were in a red-light district of one of the city's many slums. There were no red lights to see, and everybody there seemed to be occupied in some way-making, selling, sweeping, carrying.

We were here to see *Prem Kiran* - a project devoted to working with children of prostitutes and their families. I don't know that I've ever encountered quite so much life in one single room. It was as if the walls were unable to hold it all. Seventy smiling faces, all turned toward the visitors like sunflowers toward the evening sun. Outside, I could see the street and the slum and the alleys where so much pain and struggle and death lurked. But being inside this room was an experience more potent than any I had ever tasted.

There was one child in particular whom I felt unable to leave. Farin (pronounced fa-reen) was her name and there was something about her that told me I'd have trouble walking away from her. I found out more over the next hour. Like most of the others, Farin's mother was a prostitute. *Prem Kiran* had stepped in and helped to make her life so much better - offering food, clothing, education, and the support of loving, devoted, sacrificial Christians. Yet my mind was plagued by questions: How many atrocities did this young child have to

witness? How much danger had she been exposed to in the slum's streets after dark? How could her life hope to be much different if she didn't get out now? How could I walk away? How could I?

That one afternoon in Mumbai changed everything.

The next evening our band was playing a concert in the city. What else could we do but get the children and their mothers to come join us on stage? So they came, and it was great to have them up there with us - all shy smiles and adrenaline jumps and culture shock. And then something bigger happened. We played, and the mothers simply started dancing. The mothers of the night, the sex workers who were dressed in red lipstick and faded saris, danced with freedom and grace and love in front of a crowd of thousands. Spinning like falling feathers, hands that told stories and feet that trod with care; their dance captured something I'd never seen before. And that's when it struck me: Where should justice be? Where should the outcasts be welcome? Where should those whose lives are weighed down by poverty find freedom and hope? Where should our love get spent without question?

I'd been brought up in church, but somewhere along the way I'd missed some lessons. I'd not learned that when it comes to our response to poverty and injustice - and the role of us Christians as worshippers - God doesn't want things neatly divided. Years back I would have run a mile from the suggestion that we should have a group of women who were forced into prostitution dancing on stage while we worshipped. Now it seems like a sign of the times. It seems that God is stirring up the Church like never before and letting us know that it is just these types of people who need to be welcome.

So I ask myself: What does our love revolve around?

I got home from the trip to Mumbai and everything was a mess. My head had stopped working the way it used to, and I was deeply troubled. I felt a burden on me when it came to Farin - that if we didn't do something, her life would head toward a future cut short by suffering, poverty, abuse, and disease. I felt as though she had become another daughter and our family was incomplete without her. It turns out that God's plans were different from mine. A year and a few months later, as I write about this experience, things are not quite the way I had assumed they would be.

Farin has not left the city. She's still with her family, but her mother no longer works as a prostitute. They moved a few hours out of Mumbai, to live in a community for people just like them - ex-sex workers wanting to find new life away from the chaos and danger of the past. Farin's life is looking fuller than I could have hoped.

And mine?

In a way, I was kind of right about becoming a father again. But not to Farin. Sometime this year my wife, Anna, and I gave birth to another child - a charity, called CompassionArt. CompassionArt exists to raise money through arts-related projects (like albums and books) that use sales and royalties to fight poverty in all its forms, the extreme sort that robs people of life and the sort that might be harder to spot but robs people of hope. But more than that, CompassionArt is about reworking the formula. It's about challenging the math that suggests that when we cease to care for others our faith remains on course. It doesn't. The truth, of course, is that it all just gets weaker. **When our passion and**

purpose and love revolve around our own agenda, we have simply got it wrong. When our love reaches out beyond us we find ourselves aligned more closely with God's right way up.

Lately whenever I've found myself with a microphone, a stage, and a crowd, wondering what's coming next, I've felt a need to read from Isaiah 58. Somehow I've been unable to resist the simplicity and strength of the words, and even though they were hand-delivered to the Israelites a little less than three thousand years ago, they deal with eternal issues that are just as relevant today. I get caught up in the passion of the opening lines: "Shout it aloud, do not hold back. Raise your voice like a trumpet" (Is. 58:1 NIV). What follows deserves to be screamed, not whispered or filed away for a later date. This is a real-time issue that must capture the attention of everyone, everywhere: "Day after day they seek Me out; they seem eager to know My ways, as if they were a nation that does what is right and has not forsaken the commands of its God. They ask Me for just decisions and seem eager for God to come near them" (v. 2 NIV). It's those words 'seem' and 'as if' that are the problem. Their heart's clearly not right and they're heading for a fall.

God answers their question about why He seems to have ignored all their premium quality religious acts: "On the day of your fasting, you do as you please and exploit all your workers... You cannot fast as you do today and expect your voice to be heard on high" (vv. 3-4 NIV). Then come the lessons once again, the recapping so that even those of us who have been dozing at the back finally get it: "Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice... to set the oppressed free... to share your food with the hungry and to

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# What Does Our Love Revolve Around?

*Continued from p. 1*

provide the poor wanderer with shelter - when you see the naked, to clothe him, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?" (vv. 6-8 NIV). It really doesn't get much clearer, does it? The persecuted, the abused, the hungry, the homeless, the poor - **these are the people around whom our love must revolve, not ourselves or our failed ideas of being impressively religious.**

God is clear about the result of all this: "Then your light will break forth like the dawn, and your healing will quickly appear... Then you will call, and the Lord will answer; you will cry for help, and He will say: Here am I" (vv. 8-9 NIV). For years we've searched for intimacy in our worship. We've sung songs that talk about God being close and our lives being close; we've chased after His Voice and searched for His plans. And all along we've missed the key to true intimacy: "If you do away with the yoke of oppression, with the pointing finger and malicious talk, and if you spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed... The LORD will guide you always; He will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land and will strengthen your frame. You will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters never fail" (vv. 9-11 NIV).

And if we do, then more than the payoff of hearing God's Voice and

carrying His love to those that need it most, more than that fantastic image of being like a well-watered garden soaked in life itself, Isaiah makes clear that God's people start to take up their place in history: "Your people will rebuild the ancient ruins and will raise up the age-old foundations; you will be called Repairer of Broken Walls, Restorer of Streets with Dwellings" (v. 12 NIV).

And there's even more: "Then you will find your joy in the LORD, and I will cause you to ride on the heights of the land and to feast on the inheritance of your father Jacob" (v. 14 NIV). And all of this from stopping trying to impress God with our attempts at being "spiritual" and having good services that impress those around us. All of this from feeding someone who is hungry, from giving clothes to the poor, from defending the powerless, and speaking up for the weak. All of this - all of this history - gets made from the simplest of acts. **If only - if only we can learn to love more than ourselves.**

There's another truth behind all of this. The fact is, it can be hard to look out and try to make our love revolve around others. It's easier when it's all about us. Why? Partly because it's always been this way - from stories of couples tasting forbidden fruit to kings on rooftops spying soon-to-be widows, and bad-tempered prophets heading to Spain

because they couldn't face the prospect of God extending mercy to anyone but His own people. This is the way it has always been with us, the continual struggle as we place ourselves on the throne instead of God and His *Outrospective* approach to life.

It seems as if it's perhaps a little harder than ever these days. All around are forces pushing us to obey our thirst, to give in to our impulses because "we're worth it," to take hold of life and make it in our own image. We're meant to want - and try to have - it all: the looks, the clothes, the income, the home, the relationships, the career. Everything designed to polish us up and make our lives so much better.

**But we know the truth about life, don't we? We know that in spite of the pressure to conform, a life revolved around us cannot lead us to true happiness.**

I always liked it when we played a gig and we got to sing our song about being a history maker. Over the years in the band, we've sung it hundreds of times, feeling that the lines had a sort of power to leave people feeling inspired, pumped, and primed to get on and live a remarkable life that would make history. But there is more; there has to be more. If we're going to be history makers - and the future of millions of lives depends on there being more and more of us out there that are

signing up to do so - then for most of us, it will be for a pretty specific set of reasons. **We will make history by choosing to live our lives as a series of small acts of selfless living.** As Mother Teresa said, "There are no great things; only small things with great love."

If we can get that into our DNA, the two billion Christians in the world could end world poverty in a matter of weeks. That's the kind of history I want to see us making. Forget the inward focus; and just like those ancient words of Isaiah 58 promise, **we will hear God more clearly and be in closer step with His power and His purpose if we stop making all this about ourselves and start to simply fix the problems and meet the needs that are around us.** It's as simple as that.

When we look out beyond ourselves, when our love for others pushes us beyond the comfortable, when we place our treasure in rebuilding lives, it is then that we find ourselves living among the clearest signs that God is at work in our lives. So this is one revolution that will not be televised. If we get it right, it won't need to be; the evidence of love in action will be blazed all over our lives, transforming our neighbourhoods and breathing hope into the atmosphere. It's as simple as that.

- Martin Smith, in: *The Love Revolution*, Joyce Meyer, Faith-Words, 2009.

## Obeying the Spirit of God

"A fool gives full vent to his anger, but a wise man keeps himself under control" (Proverbs 29:11).

The workplace can be a pressure-packed world. The demands that are often put on us can bring out things that we never knew were there.

Sometimes we begin to think that the source of that pressure is to blame for our response to the pressure. It could be an event, a spouse, a boss, a client, a child, or even a driver who cuts us off in traffic.

I recall responding to a close friend one time, "If you had not done that, I would never have responded that way." Later I learned that this response had little truth to it. We all choose to get angry. No one else is to blame for our anger.

"The circumstances of life, the

events of life, and the people around me in life, do not make me the way I am, but reveal the way I am" writes Dr Sam Peeples.

This simple quote has had a profound impact on how I view my anger now. Anger only reveals what is inside of me. I can't blame anyone but me for my response to a situation.

I have learned that anger is only the symptom of something else that is going on inside of me. This quote now resides on my refrigerator door as a daily reminder of the truth about my response to life's situations.

It has been said that anger is like the warning panel on the dash of your car. It is the light that tells us something is going on under the hood and we need to find out what the source of the problem is. I discovered that the source of anger is often unmet expectations

or personal rights. We believe we are entitled to a particular outcome to a situation. When this doesn't happen, it triggers something in us.

At the core of this is fear, often a fear of failure or rejection, fear of what others think, fear of the unknown.

If you struggle with anger, ask God to reveal the source of that anger. Ask Him to heal you of any fears that may be the root of your anger. Ask God to help you take responsibility for your response to difficult situations.

Source: *TGIF - Today God Is First*, Volume 1, Os Hillman

"In the calmness of the morning before the mind is heated and weary by the turmoil of the day, you have a season of unusual importance for communing with God and with yourself."

"Great indeed are our opportunities; great also is our responsibility."

"Measure your progress by your experience of the love of God and its exercise before men."

"True Christians consider themselves not as satisfying some rigorous creditor, but as discharging a debt of gratitude."  
- William Wilberforce

# JY HET 'N "RAAK" GEBED

## INLEIDING

Binne die eerste weke nadat ek die wedergeboorte deelagtig geword het, en waar ek Jesus gevind het, of Hy vir my, was ek reeds vol vuur en ywer vir die Here. My pad met die Here het begin met 'n soektog, en 'n honger en dors om by God uit te kom. Na 'n lang soektog het ek op ouderdom 25 by Jesus uitgekom. Dit het so gebeur: Ek is genooi na dienste van 'n kerk buite die kring van my eie denominasie. Daar het ek baie van Jesus gehoor. Jy moet weet, ek was soekend. Ek het alles ondersoek. En daar het ek die lewende Woord van God gehoor. Ek het ook na binne gekyk. Selfondersoekend. Bid-dend.

Ek het bewus geraak van my eie verlore en sondige toestand omdat ek ook "in sonde ontvang en gebore is," soos ons almal. Dit leer ons in verskeie kerke se leerstellings, en dit is gegrond op Psalm 51:7, "Ky, in ongereg-tigheid is ek gebore, en in sonde het my moeder my ontvang." Dit is weer gegrond op ons erfsonde in Adam. Daarby saam kom ek

onder die oortuiging van my eie daadsonde. Soos Paulus dit neergepen het: "...want almal het gesondig en dit ontbreek hulle aan die heerlijkheid van God" (Rom. 3:23).

Stephan Joubert belig hierdie teks en noem dat dit dikwels beskou word as die vertrekpunt van die "groot nuus" van genade. Joubert beklemtoon dat sonde nie net slegte dade is nie, maar 'n toestand waar die mens die "merk mis" van God se oorspronklike plan vir ons lewens. Dit is 'n universele werklikheid wat niemand uitsluit nie. En om aan die "heerlikheid van God" te ontbreek, beteken dat ons nie meer die beeld van God reflekteer soos wat Hy bedoel het nie. Sonde het die konneksie tussen die skepping en die Skepper se lig verbreek.

Dit maak my sondelas nóg groter! Maar dan kom ons by vers 24 uit, en Joubert vul dit hier aan: die boodskap stop nooit by vers 23 nie. Hy koppel dit onmiddellik aan vers 24, wat verklaar dat ons gratis en sonder verdienste

geregverdig word deur God se genade. Hy sien dit as God wat die "rekening vereffen" wat ons nooit kon betaal nie. En so het ek by Jesus, my Middelaar, uitgekom! Hoe het ek dit prakties beleef? Hoe het dit my gebedslewe beïnvloed? Hoe het ek 'n "raak" bidder geword?

## 1. MY SONDE-OORTUIGING DIE VERTREKpunt NA GENADE

Een aand het ek in my kamer op my knieë voor God gestaan. Dringend. Ernstig bewus van my sondige toestand, maar ook bewus van God se genade om my te red. Toe hoor ek God met my praat. Nee, ek het Hom nie gesien nie, maar Hy het met 'n hoorbare, onmiskenbare Stem met my gepraat: "Neem Jesus aan as jou Persoonlike Saligmaker" (sien Joh. 1:12). Dit beteken, nooi Hom in jou hart in, met die belydenis van jou sonde en sondige toestand. Dit is wat Martin Luther gedoen het toe hy opkruip met die trappe van die *Scala Sancta*, en hy die teks Rom. 1:17 bedink het wat sê: "Die regverdige sal uit die geloof lewe." Dit beteken: nie uit die werke nie, maar uit genade. En

Martin Luther sê: "Dit was my wedergeboorte." En dit het ek ook verstaan toe die Heilige Gees deurbreek en aan my die wedergeboorte skenk! Dit was oombliklik. En skielik, in daardie heilige oomblikke, het 'n groot blydschap in my binneste posgevat (Gal. 5:22)! Die woord deur Paulus vul verder aan: "Want die loon van die sonde is die dood, maar die genadegawe van God is die ewige lewe in Christus Jesus, onse Here" (Rom. 6:23).

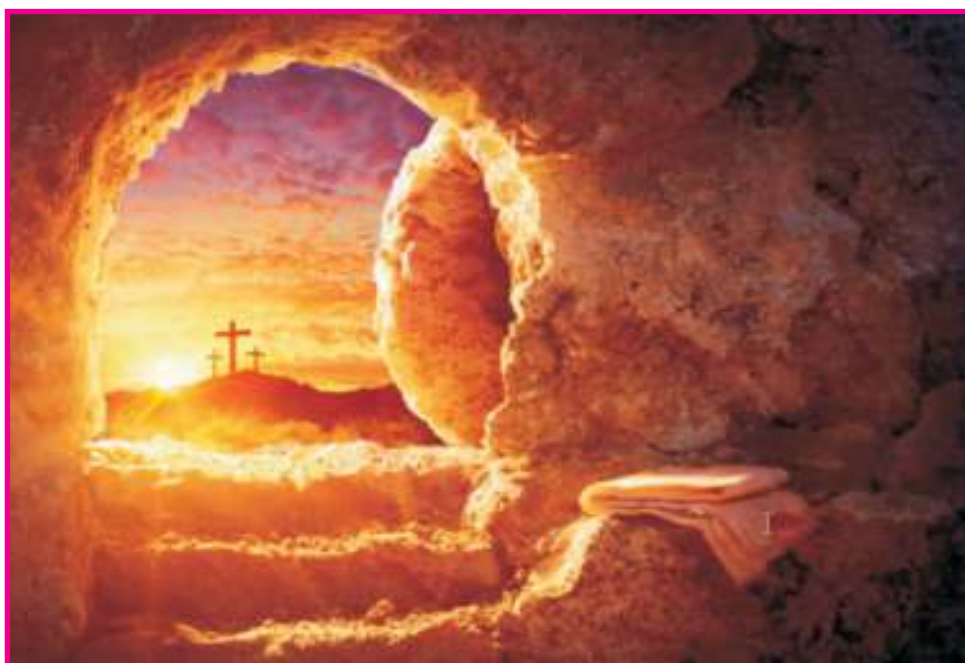
## 2. DIE HEERLIKE GEVOLG VAN REDDING: DIE GEES IN MY

Die Heilige Gees woon nou in my! My sonde is vergewe, en ek is nou 'n lewende kind van God. Dit is waarvoor Jesus op die kruis gesterf het - sodat ons kan lewe. Johannes skryf: "Hy wat in die Seun glo, het die ewige lewe; maar hy wat die Seun ongehoorsaam is, sal die lewe nie sien nie, maar die toorn van God bly op hom" (Joh. 3:36). Nie alleen het ek Jesus gevind en die Heilige Gees voelbaar in my kom woon nie, en het hierdie groot, onbeskryflike blydschap van my posgevat

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## GO TSWA LEBITLENG GO YA MO PHENYONG - TSHOLOFELO YA BADUMEDI

(FROM TOMB TO TRIUMPH - HOPE FOR BELIEVERS)



### DITEMANA

"Ya re Jesu a tla, a fitlhela a setse a le mo lebitleng malatsi a le mane ... Jesu a re: 'Tlosang letlapa.' Maretha... a mo raya a re: 'Morena, ka nako eno go setse go na le monko, gonne o na le malatsi a le mane a sule'" (Johane 11:17, 39).

"Gonne jaaka Jona a ne a nna malatsi a le mararo le masigo a le mararo mo mping ya tlhapi e kgolo, Morwa Motho o tla nna malatsi a le mararo le masigo a le mararo mo teng ga lefatshe" (Matheo 12:40).

"A goa ka lentswe le le kwa godimo

a re: 'Lasaro, tswela kwano!'" (Johane 11:43).

Mme jaanong Keresete o tsositswe mo baswing, a nna lebutswapele mo go ba ba robetseng. Gonne e re ka loso lo tsile ka motho, le tsogo ya baswi e tsile ka motho. Gonne botlhe ba tla phedisiwa ka Keresete jaaka botlhe ba swa ka Atame" (1 Bakorinthe 15:20, 22).

### DIKAKANYO

Lasaro o ne a le mo lebitleng malatsi a le mane pele ga Jesu a mo tsosa (Johane 11:17, 39, NKJV). Jeso o ne a le mo lebitleng malatsi a le mararo, go tloga ka thapama ya

Labotlhano go fitlha ka tsogo ya baswi mo mosong wa Sontaga (Matheo 12:40; 1 Bakorinthe 15:4, NKJV). Ditsogo tseno ka bobedi di bontsha maatla a Modimo mo losong mme di tlhomamisetsa Bakeresete gompiono botshelo jo bo sa khutleng ka tumelo mo go Ene le ka tumelo ya Gagwe.

Morago ga go keteka Paseka, eo e gopotsang loso lwa ga Keresete lwa setlhabelo jaaka Kwana ya rona ya Paseka, Bakeresete ba bidiwa go tshela tumelo ka lorato, borutwa, le phetogo e e boitshepo. A re ketekeng madi a Paseka a ga Keresete. Lasaro (a sule malatsi a le 4) le Jesu (a le malatsi a le 3 mo lebitleng). Bobedi jwa tsoga, bo supa gore loso lo fentswe! Lasaro o ne a tshwantshetsa Jesu.

Gompiono, mo gare ga dikgaratlho tsa tiro, lefatshe le le sa kgathaleleng, dikgatelelo tsa letlapa, seno se kaya tsholofelo e e sa khutleng: "mabitla" a gago a go itlhoboga ke a nakwana. Ikanye maatla a ga Keresete a tsogo go bona nonofo mo botshelong jwa gago le phenyo mo maleong. Go na le tsholofelo go na le botshelo. O sule mme a tsoga gore re nne le TSHEPO!

Baya kwa pele go rata Modimo ka botlalo le go rata ba bangwe jaaka o ithata. Lebogela se Jesu a re diretseng sone mme o bontshe



Johan Zerwick  
Sêlê ke 083 458 3837

lorato lo lo oketsegileng le go tlhokomela baratiwa ba gago le batho ba bangwe. Jesu o re swetse rotlhe mme a tsoga. Le rona a re tsogeng re nne le pelo ya mongwe le mongwe. Lo ineele jaaka ditlhabelo tse di tsheleng, lo ntšhwafaditswe mogopolo kgathlanong le mekgwa ya lefatshe.

### THAPELO

Rara wa Legodimo, ke a go leboga go bo o tsositse Lasaro le go fenya loso ka Jesu morago ga malatsi a le mararo. Re maatlafatse ka Mowa wa Gago go tsoga letsatsi le letsatsi, re dire mme re nne le botshepegi. Ntšhwafatsa mego-polo ya rona, tlosa dipoifo tsa rona, mme re bolele botshelo jwa Gago. Ka leina la ga Jesu. Amen.

# The Head

- Cara Ray, <https://cara-ray.com>



*"Behold the Lamb of God!" John cried, then stepped aside from view. I left it all and followed Him, believing it was true.*

*"Where are you staying?" we asked, unsure of where He led.*

*"Come and see," was His reply, "just where I lay My head."*

*We travelled dusty roads and fields, wherever He would go, His gracious words and healing touch restored the weak and low. Acquainted with our weakness, He lay sleeping in the stern. The wind and waves would shake our souls and test what we had learned.*

*"Peace! Be still!" He calmed the storm and filled our hearts with fear.*

*"Who is this Man the winds obey, and all creation bears?"*

*Up to the mountaintop we climbed, my brother, friend, and I.*

*Then blazing glory covered Him, we feared that we might die.*

*Dazzling white, His garments shone; His Face alight with flame.*

*The Father's Voice from heaven spoke; we trembled at His Name.*

*"This is My Son - now hear Him well." We kept what we had seen,*

*Until He rose, and we with Him would share in things unseen.*

*The Kingdom He was ushering in, the now and the not yet.*

*The sick were healed, the dead were raised, and darkness felt His threat.*

*His enemies were closing in. A "friend" left to betray.*

*But I stayed close and leaned on Him, "How could He go away?"*

*We followed to Gethsemane. We could not watch and pray.*

*Our sleepy heads were heavy, while our Saviour did obey.*

*Great drops of blood and sweat fell down from His anguished brow.*

*The weight of sin upon His head, the Father did allow.*

*Their torches snaked along the path with orders to arrest.*

*A kiss. A sword. An ear made whole, the Prince of Peace addressed.*

*One word befell His enemies. They tumbled to the ground.*

*I followed from a distance. I did not make a sound.*

*They took Him to the courtyard, and we waited by the door.*

*A servant girl said, "I know you! You've been with Him before!"*

*My friend denied. The rooster crowed, and I happened to see.*

*Jesus turned and met his gaze. My friend fell to his knees.*

*They struck my Lord upon His face. They spat into His eye.*

*"Are you the King of the Jews?" they mocked - He did not deny.*

*A crown of thorns they twisted and shoved upon His head.*

*"Give us Barabbas!" came the cry, "Release him to us instead!"*

*They nailed Him to the rugged cross. He hung there in the sun.*

*He gave His mother to my care before His work was done.*

*"It is finished!" was His cry, His head He gently bowed.*

*"Surely, this was the Son of God!" the soldier said aloud.*

*I did not know what I should do. Where could I go from here?*

*He was the Way, the Truth, the Life - the future was unclear.*

*We hid away in grief and fear. We wondered what was next.*

*Nightmares filled my head and heart; I never could find rest.*

*Early the next morning, Mary came to us and said,*

*"The stone's been rolled away! Did they take away the dead?"*

*I, the one whom Jesus loved, ran ahead in haste.*

*We looked inside and saw the cloth set neatly in its place.*

*We gathered in the Upper Room, and there He did appear.*

*No greater joy has e'er been known, or news so good to hear!*

*He is risen from the dead, our sins He has atoned.*

*Death's lost its sting, and we are free - for He now sits enthroned.*

*What shall we say about His head that wore the crown of thorns?*

*His rule and reign will never end, His Name the saints adorn.*

*A thousand crowns upon His head, reviled, He'll be no more.*

*The Church is His - He is the Head, forever He's adored.*

## "ONS LEEF NIE VIR HIER EN NOU NIE"

*"En wat sal ek nog meer sê? Want die tyd sal my ontbreek as ek van Gideon, Barak en Simson en Jefta, Dawid en Samuel en die profete sou verhaal, wat deur die geloof koninkryke oorweldig het, geregtigheid uitgeoefen, beloftes verkry, bekke van leeus toegestop, die krag van vuur uitgeblus, die skerpte van die swaard ontvlug, krag uit swaakheid ontvang het, dapper gewees het in die oorlog, leërs van vreemdes op die vlug gedryf het. Vroue het hulle dode deur opstanding teruggekry, en ander is gefolter en wou geen bevryding aanneem nie, om 'n beter opstanding te kan verkry. Ander weer het die proef van bespottinge en géselinge deurstaan, ook van boeie en gevangenis. Hulle is gestenig, in stukke gesaag, versoek, deur die swaard vermoor. Hulle het rondgeloop in skaapvelle en in bokvelle; hulle het gebrek gely, hulle is verdruk, mishandel - die wêreld was hulle nie werd nie... Daarom dan, terwyl ons so 'n groot wolk van getuies rondom ons het, laat*

*ons ook elke las aflê en die sonde wat ons so maklik omring, en met volharding die wedloop loop wat voor ons lê, die oog gevestig op Jesus, die Leidsman en Voleinder van die geloof, wat vir die vreugde wat Hom voorgehou is, die kruis verdra het, die skande verag het en aan die regterkant van die troon van God gaan sit het"* (Heb. 11:32-38a; 12:1-2 OV).

In Mindanao, die naasgrootste en suidelikste eiland in die Filippyne, woed daar 'n dekadellange konflik. Christene word hewig vervolgd. Op 20 Februarie 2013 is pastoor Rey Debarido (44), sy vrou, Renaly, en twee van hul dogters, Catherine Faith met 'n M16-geweer en 'n .45-pistool doodgeskiet. Die polisie het 156 patroondoppies op die moordtoneel gekry. Hul 16-jarige dogter het die aanval oorleef en is nou in 'n veilige plek. Toe verslaggewers haar vra hoe sy voel oor haar gesin se moordenaars was haar antwoord: "Ek moet die Here vertrou om hulle te ver-ander."

Mindanao is 'n baie moeilike plek om die Here te dien, maar die broers en susters daar ervaar God se genade op 'n baie spesiale en merkwaardige manier. "Ek het hier dosyne Christene ontmoet wat hul Christenskap in moeilike omstandighede uitleef en die evangelie uitdra," vertel dr. Jason Peters van *Christen Sending Internasionaal*.

Een van die plaaslike Christene, pastoor Noel, lei sewe dae van die week om halfvier die oggend gebedsbyeenkomste wat deur sowat 80 mense bygewoon word. Met 'n glimlag het hy opgemerk: "Ons werk nie aanvallend nie, maar voortmarsjerend."

Op 'n keer, terwyl 'n ander groep gelowiges by 'n vroegoggend-byeenkoms was, is hulle dorpie aangeval. Hulle het vinnig buitentoe gehardloop, 'n klein bootjie gegryp en dit na die strand gedra. Naby die strand het hulle 'n klomp mans gesien wat besig was om swaar wapentuig op die strand af

te laai. Hulle het egter net rustig hul bootjie in die water gesit en weggeroei. Die bootjie was net vir drie mense gemaak, maar hulle kon 12 mense daarin kry! Die see was daardie oggend so kalm dat die klein bootjie omtrent nie eens heen en weer gewieg het in die golwe nie. Wonderbaarlik kon hulle veilig ontsnap. Later het hulle die hartseer nuus gehoor dat 7 ander bote daardie oggend tydens pogings om te ontsnap, gesink het.

Die oorheersende tema van hul byeenkomste is dat Christene oorwinnaars is. Hulle kan egter nie in eie krag oorwin nie, maar is net veilig binne ons Meester se wil. Hulle oorwin omdat hulle leer om minder lief te wees vir die "hier en nou" as vir die "dan en daar".

Mag God ons help om met 'n ewigheidsperspektief te leef, uit Sy genade en tot Sy eer!  
- Die Vervolgdes, *Jacqueline Leuvennink, Lux Verbi, 2015 [via Christen Sending Internasionaal]*.

# DIE KRUISINGING

**L**aat ons in hierdie Paastyd nadink oor Jesus se kruisdood. Ons vind die aangrypende verhaal opgeteken in al vier Evangelies (Matt. 27:32-56; Luk. 23:26-49; Mark. 15:21-41; Joh. 19:17-37).

Matteus verhaal as volg: *“Vanaf die sesde tot die negende uur het daar duisternis oor die hele aarde toegesak. Teen ongeveer die negende uur het Jesus met 'n harde stem uitgeroep: ‘Eli, Eli, lemá sabagtáni?’ Dit beteken ‘My God, My God, waarom het U My verlaat?’ Toe sommige van dié wat daar staan, dit hoor, het hulle gesê: ‘Hy roep na Elia.’*

*Dadelik het een van hulle nader gehardloop, 'n spons geneem, dit in suur wyn geweek, op 'n riet gesit, en vir Hom gegee om te drink. Maar die ander het gesê: ‘Wag, laat ons sien of Elia hom kom red.’ Toe het Jesus weer met 'n harde stem uitgeroep en Sy asem uitgeblaas.*

*En kyk, die voorhangsel in die heiligdom is van bo tot onder in twee geskeur, die aarde is geskud en die rotse is oopgebreek. Die grafte is geopen en baie liggame van ontslape heiliges is opgewek. Hulle het ná Sy opstanding uit die grafte gekom, die Heilige Stad binnegegaan en aan baie verskyn.*

*Toe die centurio en dié wat Jesus saam met Hom bewaak het, die skudding en die dinge wat*

*gebeur, sien, was hulle vreesbevange en het gesê: ‘Hy was werklik Seun van God!’” (Matt. 27:45-54 DV).*

Die kruisdood is miskien die afskuwelikste marteldood van alle tye. Dit is waarskynlik deur die Perse of die Fenisiërs uitgevind en later deur die Romeine oorgeneem vir die allerergste misdadigers. 'n Romeinse burger mog onder geen omstandighede gekruisig word nie. Trouens, die welbekende Romeinse advokaat en staatsman, Cicero, het 'n keer gesê dat die woord 'kruis' nie eers in fatsoenlike geselskap genoem behoort te word nie. Die kruisdood was iets vir slawe of buitelandse rebelle. En nou ook vir Jesus.

Die lyde wat 'n gekruisigde moes ondergaan, was onbeskryflik. Die liggaamlike pyn was al meer as erg genoeg. Bloedverlies, ontsteking van die wonde en bloedvergiftiging, die liggaamsgewig wat die wonde in die hande en voete verder oopskeur, spierkrampe en gewigte wat wil breek, die inwendige organe wat dreig om te skeur, die asemhaling wat al hoe moeiliker word, die bloedsomloop wat nie meer kan funksioneer nie en in die meeste gevalle uiteindelik die dood veroorsaak, blootstelling aan die natuur, die son, die wind en die weer, 'n ontsettende dors...



Tog was die geestelike foltering miskien nog erger: nakend in die baar, deur almal bespot - die malende mensemasse, die gruwel-oë van die sensasiebelustigdes; die verveeldheid van die Romeinse soldate op hulle roetine-wag; hallusinasies, oordromme wat wil bars, oë wat wil breek - maar wat tog nog steeds die spot, die hoon die dierlike barbarisme meganies deurgee na die brein toe. En voor die gekruisigde is daar maar een sekere uiteinde wat wag: net die dood. Miskien binne 'n paar uur, soms egter eers na twee of drie dae.

Vir 'n Jood was die heel ergste egter nog die godsdienstige aspek. Die kruishout stoot hom weg van die aarde: dit is asof die wêreld hom nie wil hê nie. Maar die hemel wil hom ook nie ontvang nie, want so sê die Skrifwoord: *“Vervloek is elkeen wat aan 'n hout hang” (Deut.*

*21:23; Gal. 3:13).*

Laat ons in hierdie onthou-tyd van die Pase aan Jesus se smartlike lyding dink. Hoe groot was Sy offer nie! Dat dit alles uit liefde was. En dat dit vir ons een en elkeen volbring is.

Hierdie verhaal eindig egter nie by die kruis nie - dit gaan voort na die opstanding, die Hemelvaart, en die sending van die Kerk. En dit vervolg vandag nog met die uitnodiging van Jesus wat ons deel wil maak van Sy verhaal: *“Kom na My toe, almal wat vermoeid en swaar belas is, en Ek sal julle rus gee. Neem My juk op julle, en leer van My, omdat Ek sagmoedig en nederig van hart is, en julle sal rus vind vir julle gemoed. Want My juk is draaglik en My las is lig” (Matt. 11:28-30 DV).*

- Verwerk vanuit notas van Tjaart van der Walt

## The Cut That Confirms the Call

**T**here's a truth we seldom like to admit: sometimes being called by God means facing the criticisms of the world. Jesus said it plainly: *“Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 5:10).*

He didn't say avoiding persecution brings joy. He said being in it does. **That means rejection can be a result of obedience. Criticism can come as confirmation. And hardship might be evidence that you're doing something right.** 2 Timothy 3:12 echoes it: *“Everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.”*

It's not punishment. It's proof. If no one's resisting what you carry, it might mean you're not carrying anything threatening to darkness. And here's where it flips: persecution and favour are not opposites - they're overlaps. Two

sides of the same coin called obedience.

Favour isn't just about applause - it's also about assignment. And sometimes, being celebrated by God means being criticised by people. Think about Joseph. Highly favoured, but misunderstood, mistreated, and thrown into a pit. Or Mary. “Highly favoured”, yet ridiculed and wrapped up in scandal. Favour didn't shield them from hardship - it sent them into it. But it was never without purpose.

I was reminded of this while visiting San Gimignano, Italy, with my wife. We were filming with Andrea Bocelli (still surreal), and while exploring the town, we stepped into a cathedral built in 1148. Simple. Sacred. Beautiful. As we stood inside, light streamed through a stained-glass window above the altar. It stopped me in my tracks. Each piece of glass was shaped differently.

Some were smooth, others jagged. Some colourful, others muted. But all were cut - intentionally - to fit the larger design.

And when the light passed through? It wasn't the unbroken pieces that made it beautiful. It was the cut ones. That's favour.

It's not always about smooth edges and perfect conditions. It's about being fit into a greater story, where God shines through the places we've been pressed, misunderstood, or wounded. Favour and persecution often show up together - not as contradictions, but as companions.

Favour doesn't protect you from the fire - it gives you purpose inside it.

So does God play favourites? In a way - yes. But not like we think. Lisa Bevere once said, “God

doesn't love us all the same; He loves each of us uniquely.” And Augustine echoed, “God loves each of us as if there were only one of us.” God's favour isn't limited. It's tailored. It's not that He chooses one person over another - it's that He chooses each of us for something specific.

**So if you've been walking through criticism, pressure, or spiritual tension - don't mistake it for abandonment. It might be evidence that you're in the middle of your calling.** You've been cut to fit. And the same light that breaks through stained glass is ready to shine through you! At the end of the day, favour isn't just about God blessing us - it's about God using us. And sometimes, the greatest signs of His favour aren't the easy moments, but the ones that push us closer to Him. Keep trusting. He's making something beautiful out of you!

- Tauren Wells

# JY HET 'N "RAAK" GEBED

## Vervolg van p. 3

nie, maar Hy het my in opvolging van my belewenis van wedergeboorte ook gedoop met die Heilige Gees. God het my as't ware ingedompel in Sy Heilige Gees. Ek het onbeskryflike, bomenslike krag van die Heilige Gees ontvang en beleef en wonderwerke sien gebeur in antwoord op gebed.

Ek kon berge versit met my kragtige getuies! Ek woon al die kerklike aksies by. Beywer my om by al die aktiwiteite betrokke te wees. En veral ook die biduur! Daar neem ek deel en wag my beurt af om te bid! Want die "vurige gebed van die regverdige het groot krag." En ek bid met vuur en ywer onder die salwing van die Heilige Gees, want Hy het my lewend gemaak.

Daar was 'n senior bedienaar van die Woord wat reeds afgetree het, maar voluit nog bedien het en betrokke was by mense in nood. Hy was 'n bidder. Na die biduur sê hy vir my hierdie woorde met erns en nadruk: "Jy het 'n raak gebed!" Dit was ongeveer 55 jaar gelede.

Later, met my geestelike groei, sou hierdie woorde al meer en meer by my insink, en sou ek die volle betekenis daarvan besef en beleef, tot vandag toe. God het gesê: "Oefen jou in die godsaligheid." En hoe meer ek my oefen in die kennis van die Woord en my verhouding met God soos dit nou vir my oopgaan, hoe kragtiger word my gebede! Want ek leer om die geopenbaarde Woord te bid, soos die Here dit vir my oopmaak - veral ook wanneer ek in diepe beproewing kom. En dit is nog steeds so. Die kern is: 'n "raak gebed!"

### 3. 'N EERSTE SLEUTEL TOT 'N RAAK GEBED: DISSCIPLINE

Vanoggend in my stiltetyd bring die Heilige Gees hierdie insident vir my na vore. Wat is 'n raakhou? In my jong bedieningsjare besoek 'n onafhanklike makelaar ons. Hy sê vir my sy makelaarsbesigheid se naam is *Kolhou*. Ek was self nie 'n sportgeesdriftige nie, maar moes uitvind: 'n *kolhou* (ook bekend as 'n "hole-in-one") is 'n seldsame prestasie in gholf waar 'n speler die bal direk vanaf die afstelhokkie met die eerste hou in die gaatjie slaan. Ek pas hierdie begrip toe in my gebedslewe waar ek 'n *kolhou* slaan, 'n trefferhou teen die vyand wanneer die Heilige Gees oor my kom en ek bid en 'n wonderwerk gebeur!

In boks is dit 'n "uitklophou." In die konteks van rugby onthou ek vir Naas Botha, nr. 10; hoe hy met die bal afsit na die doellyn van die ander span toe, volspoed hardloop en dan so in die hardloop die

bal deur die pale skop. Dit was merkwaardig! Dis 'n *trefferhou*! Die krieketkolwer slaan weer 'n ses. En ek sien op die TV een van ons kolwers slaan ses sesse in 'n ry! Sulke trefferhoue kan ons in ons gebedslewe kry as ons konstant deur die Heilige Gees in Sy krag bid met erns.

Ek herinner my aan nog 'n gebeurtenis. Ek was slegs 13 jaar oud maar baie bedrewe met my kettie. By die skoolkermis kon enigeen 'n beurt kry om te skiet en 'n vark te wen. Mense staan toue om 'n beurt te kry. Jy koop 'n kaartjie vir een sjieling. Toe kom my beurt. Drie klippies, 'n kettie, en jy trek los om drie plankies wat opgestel is, sowat tien treë ver, raak te skiet. Ek klits die plankies om en die varkie is myne! 'n Mooi wit varkie! Dit was 'n *trefferhou*, 'n *kolhou*!

Hoe kon ek dit doen? Deur dag vir dag op die plaas te oefen. Só is die wanners hulle wat volhardend oefen in hulle gebied. So word wêreldrekordhouders gebore - op alle gebiede. So word deur volharding groot akademiese reuse "gebore." Deur jarelange navorsing. Dag vir dag se beoefening. Dink na oor die Bybel-figure: Dawid het na baie oefening met sy slingervel die beer en die leeu en uiteindelik vir Goliat oorwin, elke keer met 'n "kolhou." En dit geld ook vir ons gebedslewe.

### 4. 'N TWEDE SLEUTEL: OORGAWE

'n Sleutel van kragtige gebed is: toewyding tot algehele gehoorsaamheid en oorgawe aan Jesus Christus en om voortdurend Sy opdrag uit te voer. Dan kom Sy salwing wat my in staat stel om te doen wat ek moet doen. En ek beleef: Met die grootste beproewing en aanslag van die vyand kom ook my grootste kolhou! Want ek is bestem om 'n oorwinnaar te wees.

Jesus het gesê: "In die wêreld sal julle verdrukking hê, hou goeie moed, Ek het die wêreld oorwin." Jy is ook bestem om 'n kolhou-bidder en bedienaar van die Woord te wees! Dawid het gesê: "Laat die woorde van my mond en die oordenking van my hart welbehaaglik wees voor U aangesig, o HERE, my rots en my verlosser!" (Ps. 19:15). Elkeen van ons wil graag ook so kan bid.

Jy sê dalk, "Ek is so moeg! Uitgeput. Ek staan moeg op. Hoe doen ek nog 'n kolhou-gebed bid? Ek kan nie eers die een voet voor die ander sit nie!" Ons moet inderdaad omsien na ons liggaam en ons gees. Neem eers 'n fisiese voorraadopname. Dalk is jy nie baie aktief nie. Hoe lyk jou dieet?

Kry jy te veel suiker in? Dan gaan slaap jy met 'n vol maag met 'n hoë suikerinhoud? Sien eers om na jou liggaam en dan ook na jou gees. Moet ook hiérin nie oortuimel en oorboord gaan met oefening terwyl jy jou geestelike oefening versak of afskeep nie.

Luister wat sê die Woord: "Maar die wat op die Here wag, kry nuwe krag... hulle vaar op met vleuels soos die arende, hulle hardloop en word nie moeg nie, hulle wandel en word nie mat nie" (Jesaja 40:31).

### 5. 'N DERDE SLEUTEL: DEURSETTINGSVERMOË

Die sleutel wat God in jou hand sit, begin by toegewyde gebed, al voel jy niks. Sommige neem eers 'n tyd van gebed en vas. Bid die geopenbaarde Woord, wat jy self kry of van ander kry. En as 'n lied by jou opkom en jy het dit al gehoor, sing dit van harte saam. Wat jy in gebed vandag saai, sal jy môre maai.

Wie slaan 'n kolhou? Die bidders wat geleer het om met intense, volhardend gebed op die Here wag. "Soek die HERE terwyl Hy nog te vinde is; roep Hom aan terwyl Hy naby is" (Jes. 55:6). Gaan jy deur 'n diep beproewing? Paulus skryf aan die Romeine in dié verband: "...verbly julle in die hoop; wees geduldig in die verdrukking; volhard in die gebed" (Rom.12:12).

### 6. 'N VIERDE SLEUTEL: VERWYDER DIE BLOKKASIES

Watter blokkasies is daar in jou lewe? Is daar rykdom, status, posisie, eer, of geldmag? Hoe groter die mag, hoe groter die offer om 'n ware, kragtige wonderwerker van Jesus te wees. Dan sal jy in staat wees om opreg te sê soos die ryk jongman: "Ek doen al hierdie dinge van my jeug af..."

Sommige kan vir ons sê hulle het van kleins af kerk toe gegaan, katkisasie vir 'n jaar gedoen met die predikant, diaken geword, hulle bydrae vir die kerk gegee het. Maar daar is nog 'n leemte. Dit voel soos Regardt van den Berg getuig het: "Daar is 'n gat in my hart!" Dit is leeg! En toe kom ook hý by Jesus uit, en hy hoor in die kerk die boodskap dat Jesus gekom het om daardie "gat in sy hart" met Sy heerlijkheid te vul.



So sal ook jy by Jesus kan hoor: "As jy volmaak wil wees, doen afstand van alles, kom dan hier en volg My." Toe kom ook hý by Jesus uit.

Ja, jare het ek Hom hierin gedien. Maar ek was nog kragteloos in my gebede. Want hoe meer intens die smartlike vuurood, hoe meer intense gebed word vereis.

Daar moet gedurig groei plaasvind in ons geestelike lewe, om nog meer diensbaar te wees vir God, omdat ons Hom so liefhet!

Dit bring my voor 'n keuse. Jesus het gesê: "Julle kan nie God en mammon dien nie." En Paulus sê: "Julle kan nie aan die tafel en die Here sit en ook aan die tafel van die duiwels nie." Josua sê: "Kies dan vandag wie julle wil dien."

### SAMEVATTING

Mag ons ons gebedslewe bou op die fondasie van ons redding en die genade van die Here. Hy roep ons om kragtige bidders in Sy Koninkryk te wees. Kom ons lê ons daarop toe om te bid met dissipline, oorgawe en deursettingsvermoë. Kom ons verwyder alles wat in ons pad staan en gee oor aan die Heilige Gees se leiding.

Jesus sê: Ek het My alles vir jou gegee, nou vra Ek jou alles. En die keuse sal ons volhardend doen en bely vir die res van ons lewens totdat Jesus kom. Word kragtig in gebed! Amen.

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# FOREVER WITH THE LORD

## INTRODUCTION

Easter is the time when we remember the death and resurrection of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. We remember His violent suffering. We remember His conversation with the thief on the cross. We remember the last words He spoke. We remember the darkness that covered the earth. And we remember His sacrificial death and His burial.

BUT we also remember His resurrection! We remind ourselves that He conquered death and hell. We remind ourselves that He stands victorious through all eternity. He is the greatest attested fact of ancient history. He is the resurrection and the life. We remind ourselves of the life He promised us as a result - our future and the hope we have in Him. We will meet Him in the air. And so we look forward to the eternal life He has for those who believe. And so we will forever be with the Lord!

*"Brothers and sisters, we do not want you to be uninformed about those who sleep in death, so that you do not grieve like the rest of mankind, who have no hope. For we believe that Jesus died and rose again, and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in Him. According to the Lord's Word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord Himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever" (1 Thess. 4:13-17).*

## 1. WE HAVE A HOPE

There are those who have no hope: *"You do not grieve like the rest of mankind, who have no hope."* (1 Thess. 4:13). Hope is far more than a mere positive feeling. Mere human hope is based on feelings, wishes, or circumstances. It is uncertain and rises and falls based on external circumstances. It can disappoint and may never come to pass. It leads to anxiety and uncertainty.

But the hope we have in Christ is completely different. It is divine hope that comes from God and its foundation is His character and promises. It is sure and steady, not shaken by circumstances. The hope we have in God is based on His faithfulness, His Word and what He has already promised.

His hope brings peace, strength, and confidence. This hope says: *"I will trust God - no matter what happens!"* Because He is faithful, your hope can stand, even when everything else changes or is shaken.

## 2. THE KEY IS TO BELIEVE THAT JESUS DIED AND ROSE AGAIN

*"For we believe..."* (1 Thess. 4:14). What do we believe? *"...we believe that Jesus died and rose again..."* The foundation of the Christian faith is the fact that Jesus died and rose again. His death was a demonstration of God's love for us. The fact that He rose again confirms His divine nature and guarantees the promise of eternal life.

Most historians will agree that Jesus existed and that He died by way of crucifixion. The resurrection is the great challenge for those who do not believe. The result of His resurrection was a time of transformation for His followers. They were changed by this experience. They were transformed from scared disciples hiding in an upper room to fearless witnesses, bold and prepared to die for what they had seen and experienced. People are not normally willing to die for a lie.

Over 500 people were witnesses to the fact that He was seen alive and they testify through the millennia to the resurrection and appearance of Jesus after His death and burial. This gives us certainty that Jesus was in fact the Son of God. The resurrection of Jesus stands as both a historical reality and a profound truth of faith. This gives believers confidence in the promise of their own resurrection. This belief is the foundation of our faith. His death dealt with sin and His resurrection gives us life. It gives us the assurance that God keeps His promises and that eternal life is real.

## 3. WITH GOD IN OUR LIVES, DEATH IS NOT THE END!

Death is viewed as the end to natural life as we know it. If Christ had not risen, our faith would fall apart. But because He has risen, we can stand firm, everything is safe and secure in Him. Death, over which no one had any control, was finally conquered!

We can see that death was not the end but the beginning of a new time and a new life. Death became a door to another dimension. Jesus's resurrection is the key to our own future. Because He lives, we too will live. *"For we believe that Jesus died and rose again, and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have*

*fallen asleep in Him"* (1 Thess. 4:14). His resurrection gives us hope beyond death and the grave.

Death is not the end but a transition to eternal life with Christ. God has the ultimate authority over life and death. Those who are *"IN HIM"* are united with Jesus and He gives them the gift of eternal life. *"For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life"* (John 3:16).

## 4. THE LORD HIMSELF WILL RETURN

Not only do we have the promise of eternal life, but we also have the promise of His return. *"For the Lord Himself will come down from heaven..."* (1 Thess. 4:16).

What do we know about this wonderful promise? We know that the angels assured the disciples that Jesus would return in the same way in which He left. The Lord Himself will come down from heaven. His coming will not be a quiet or a distant affair. *"The Lord Himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God..."* (v. 16).

We know that His coming will be a triumphant occasion. There will be a loud shout, the voice of the archangel will be heard and there will be the sound of a trumpet. It is a picture of divine intervention. It will be unmistakable, and it will be a moment of great significance, it will be powerful and majestic! The trumpet of God will signal the resurrection and gathering of believers. It will be a turning point and a pivotal moment in history.

## 5. THE DEAD IN CHRIST WILL RISE

Believers are assured of the hope of resurrection: *"...and the dead in Christ will rise first"* (1 Thess. 4:16). This resurrection of those who have died will be the confirmation of the victory over death, as seen in Jesus's Own resurrection. Only those who were *'in Christ'* will experience this. That is why it is so important that we have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ - that's what it means to be *'IN CHRIST'*.

The promise of this 'moment in time' provides hope and assurance for those who believe. It makes life after death a certainty. The dead in Christ will rise first. No believer will be forgotten or left behind. The grave is not a permanent place - it is temporary ground. The great preacher Charles Spurgeon often encouraged people by saying that God

knows exactly where His people are, even in death.

## 6. WE WHO BELIEVE WILL MEET THE LORD

The Bride of Christ will arise: *"After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air"* (1 Thess. 4:17). This passage of Scripture indicates a very specific sequence of events. This passage also shows us that when the Lord returns there will be Christians who will be alive to see it in person. What a glorious day that will be for them and what an unfortunate day it will be for those who do not believe, those who are not *'IN CHRIST'*. There will be a clear division and it will be too late to change things. Both the living and the dead believers will be taken up to meet the Lord in the air. What a spectacle it will be!

This reunion will be a celebration as believers will be reunited, both with each other and with the Lord. The bride of Christ will rise and a gathering of His people will take place, and together we will meet the Lord. It will be an encounter like no other!

## 7. FOREVER WITH THE LORD

*"And so we will be with the Lord forever"* (1 Thess. 4:17). And here we see the promise of eternal life with the Lord. What a blessing to be *"FOREVER WITH THE LORD!"* This event or moment in time will move into the realm of eternity. Christians, the children of God, will never be separated from their Lord again. Our dwelling place will be with God and God's dwelling place will be with us. *"...And I will live in the house of the LORD forever"* (Psalm 23:6).

If you have never given your life to God, then this could be a special moment for you. IF you want to make a decision right now, take a moment and earnestly pray this prayer:

Dear Lord Jesus, I know I have sinned in my thoughts, words and actions. There are so many good things I have not done. There are so many sinful things I have done. I am sorry for my sins and turn from everything I know to be wrong. I know You gave Your life upon the cross for me. Gratefully, I give my life back to You. Now I ask You to come into my life. Come in as my Saviour to cleanse me, come in as my Lord to control me, come in as my Friend to be with me, and by Your grace, I will serve You all the remaining years of my life in complete obedience. In Jesus Name. Amen.

- Pastor Andrew W. Roebert  
<https://alivetogod.com>

# Laat die Woorde van My Mond U Welbehaaglik Wees

## INLEIDING

Die tempo van ons lewe is so snel. Versnellend en drukkend. Daar is só baie verantwoordelikhede, verwagtinge (intern en ekstern), invloede, en gebeure. Dit kan lei tot diep emosionele uitputting. In hierdie 'n besige wêreld is 'n mens geneig om reaktief te word en te kla oor alles wat druk. Die petrolprys styg, 'n nuwe vlaag van korrupsie word ontbloot, daar is al hoe meer slaggate in die pad, dienslewering is swak, vakmanskap ontbreek, administratiewe ondersteuning neem lank... Die lys gaan aan en aan.

Dit is gaaf om 'n mens se frustrasies met iemand te deel en dit só te verwerk, maar dan moet daar 'n keerpunt kom. Murmuring kan egter oorgaan tot sonde wanneer dit 'n simptome van 'n ondankbare hart en ongeloof word (Num. 21:4-6). Die gevaar is om te verval in 'n negatiewe denkpatroon en ander ook negatief te maak.

Ons sien hoe die psalmis deur hierdie proses gaan: daar is klagte weens stryd en siekte, maar dan is daar 'n keerpunt, en daarna 'n geloofsuitspraak, lewers rondom die keerpunt in sy denke en woorde sê hy, "Ek is moeg van my gesug" (Ps. 6:7 OV). Daarna spreek hy in geloof, "Die Here het my smeking gehoor; die Here neem my gebed aan" (v. 10). Dit is 'n goeie voorbeeld vir ons elkeen: ons erken die probleme, maar gee dit in geloof vir die Here. En dan verander ons spraak. Dit is die pad wat ons elkeen moet stap. Maar hoe kan ek my gesprekke positief maak?

## 1. WAAR IS MY FOKUS?

Die Hebreërskrywer herinner ons dat ons ons fokus op Jesus moet plaas te midde van al die stryd en dreigende sonde: "Daarom dan, terwyl ons so 'n groot wolk van getuies rondom ons het [verwysend na die voorbeelde van Ou Testamentiese gelowiges soos na verwys in hoofstuk 11], laat ons ook elke las aflê en die sonde wat ons so maklik omring, en met volharding die wedloop loop wat voor ons lê, die oog gevestig op Jesus, die Leidsman en Voleinder van die geloof, wat vir die vreugde wat Hom voorgehou is, die kruis verdra het, die skande verag het en aan die regterkant van die troon van God gaan sit het. Want julle moet ag gee op Hom wat so 'n teëspraak van die sondaars teen Hom verdra het, sodat julle in jul siele nie vermoeid word en verslap nie. Julle het nog nie ten bloede toe weerstand gebied in julle stryd teen die sonde nie" (Heb. 12:1-4 OV).

Ons kan verskeie elemente uitlig: sonde en laste kan ons gees

maklik verswelg en vermoei, maar ons moet dit aflê. Die kern van hierdie proses is om op Jesus se voorbeeld te fokus. Hy het soveel stryd beleef, maar Hy het vasgehou aan Sy roeping en dit met doelgerigte fokus vervul. Hierdie gedagte moet 'n geestelike krag in ons ontketen wat ons in staat stel om ons roeping en geestelike loopbaan met uitnemendheid te voltooi, sonder om deur sonde oorweldig te word. Wanneer my fokus reg is, sal my denke en my woorde wat volg, ook heilsaam en lewegewend wees.

## 2. SPREEK WOORDE VAN LEWE

Soms is 'n mens bloot onnadenkend en praat oor die eerste ding wat in jou gedagtes opkom. Dit is 'n teken van 'n ongedissiplineerde innerlike lewe. Ons moet egter leer om te onderskei tussen woorde wat lewe bring en woorde wat dood bring (of geen positiewe bydrae maak nie).

Ander kere word woorde uit 'n rebelse of ondankbare gees gespreek, en dit is nie woorde van lewe nie. Ons sien 'n voorbeeld hiervan in Johannes 6. Jesus vermeerder die brode vir die skare. Die volgende dag volg daar 'n besinning (in die sinagoge in Kapernaüm) oor Jesus se identiteit en roeping, gegee hierdie wonderwerk, asook God se eise m.b.t. die toehoorders.

Daar is diegene wat weier om te glo, al het hulle 'n wonderwerk beleef: "Toe murmureer die Jode oor Hom, omdat Hy gesê het: Ek is die brood wat uit die hemel neergedaal het" (v. 41). Jesus sê dat hulle nie moet murmureer nie, maar moet glo. Hierin is vir ons ook 'n sleutel tot gedragsverandering. Wanneer ons gekonfronteer word met onverstaanbare gebeure of onbegryplike pyn, is ons enigste Toevlug die Goeie Herder wat Sy lewe afgelê het vir die skape.

Ons moet onself afleer om te murmureer en eerder in geloof en vertroue kies om stil te bly, of nog beter, om in nederige geloof positief ons vertroue uit te spreek. Die dieper waarheid moet ons inspireer om op te hou kla en die kernwaarheid vas te gryp: God is goed en God sal selfs my node en seerkry gebruik om Sy doel in my lewe te bereik.

Ons sien dat selfs Jesus se dissipels begin murmureer het: "En baie van Sy dissipels het gesê toe hulle dit hoor: Hierdie woord is hard, wie kan daarna luister? En Jesus het in Homself geweet dat Sy dissipels hieroor murmureer, en Hy sê vir hulle: Is dit julle tot 'n aanstoot?" (v. 60-61).

Jesus daag die toehoorders uit om te glo, omdat Hy die woorde van die lewe spreek: "Dit is die Gees wat lewend maak, die vlees is van geen nut nie; die woorde wat Ek tot julle spreek, is gees en is lewe" (v. 63).

Hoewel baie dissipels Hom verlaat het, het die Twaalf gebly. Petrus gee die rede: "En Simon Petrus antwoord Hom: Here, na wie toe sal ons gaan? U het die woorde van die ewige lewe. En ons het geglo en erken dat U die Christus is, die Seun van die lewende God" (v. 68-69).

Laat ons dus onself uitdaag om woorde van die dood te vermy, en woorde van die lewe en geloof te spreek, gegrond op die Voorbeeld van Jesus en die werk wat Hy in ons harte verrig het.

## 3. WORD VOL EN LOOP DAN OOR

Moegheid en pyn is baie keer die oorsaak van klagtes. Ons vind baie voorbeelde hiervan in die Psalms. Dit is eg menslik. Maar ons word geroep om op 'n hoër vlak te funksioneer. Die eenvoudige antwoord is dat ons na die Bron van heling en verfrissing moet kom.

In Johannes 4 nooi Jesus die Samariaanse vrou (en ons) om Hom te vra vir die lewende water: "Jesus antwoord en sê vir haar: As jy die gawe van God geken het en geweet het Wie Hy is wat vir jou sê: Gee vir My water om te drink, sou jy Hom gevra het en Hy sou vir jou lewende water gegee het... Elkeen wat van hierdie water drink, sal weer dors kry; maar elkeen wat drink van die water wat Ek hom sal gee, sal in ewigheid nooit dors kry nie, maar die water wat Ek hom sal gee, sal in hom word 'n fontein van water wat opspring tot in die ewige lewe" (v. 10,13-14).

Jesus leer die skare in Johannes 6:27, "Moenie werk om die spys wat vergaan nie, maar om die spys wat bly tot in die ewige lewe, wat die Seun van die mens julle sal gee; want Hom het God, die Vader, verseël." Jesus is die Bron van geestelike voedsel, deur God goedgekeur. God het Sy stempel op Jesus se bediening geplaas. Jesus het dus in God se outoriteit gewandel.

Ons moet daarom na Hom toe kom indien ons ewige spyse wil verkry. Jesus bevestig dit met 'n bekende 'Ek is uitspraak': "En Jesus sê vir hulle: Ek is die brood van die lewe; wie na My toe kom, sal nooit honger kry nie; en wie in My glo, sal nooit dors kry nie" (v. 35). Jesus gee ons die ware, geestelike voedsel, sodat ons eie geestelike honger versadig kan

word en dat ons dan weer vir ander met hierdie bonatuurlike voedsel kan voed.

Ons kan natuurlik baie troos vind in Jesus se uitnodiging, "Kom na My toe, almal wat vermoeid en belas is, en Ek sal julle rus gee. Neem My juk op julle en leer van My, want Ek is sagmoedig en nederig van hart, en julle sal rus vind vir julle siele; want My juk is sag en My las is lig" (Matt. 11:28-30 OV).

Laat ons na Jesus kom - Hy sal vir ons lewende water en lewende brood gee - 'n standhoudende stroom wat nooit ophou vloei nie.

Laat ons dan toelaat dat hierdie wonderlike waarhede en geestelike voedsel ook na ander sal vloei. Dit is soos die oliekruid van die weduwe - deur Goddelike ingryping het die nie leeggeraak nie. Ons moet vol wees van die Heilige Gees en van die Woord, en só 'n positiewe krag in die alledaagse lewe wees; 'n bron van wysheid en vrede en genade en woorde van bemoediging.

## 4. GOEIE GEWOONTES - DISCIPLINEER JOU DENKE

Paulus herinner ons dat ons die ou lewenswyse moet aflê en vernuwe moet word in ons gees en gemoed. Dit sluit onder andere die volgende in, "Laat daar geen vuil woord uit julle mond uitgaan nie, maar net 'n woord wat goed is vir die nodige stigting [opbouing], sodat dit genade kan gee aan die wat dit hoor. En bedroef nie die Heilige Gees van God nie, deur wie julle verseël is tot die dag van verlossing. Alle bitterheid en woede en toorn en geskreeu en lastering moet van julle verwyder word, saam met alle boosheid. Maar wees vriendelik en vol ontferming teenoor mekaar; vergeef mekaar soos God ook in Christus julle vergewe het" (Ef. 4:29-32 OV).

Ons moet onself dus dissiplineer om woorde tot opbouing te spreek, vriendelike woorde van genade en ontferming. Op hierdie manier sal ons vreugde bring aan die Heilige Gees, wat ons ook sal lei in ons denke en ons spraak wanneer ons op Hom steun.

In Fil. 4:8 moedig Paulus ons aan, "Verder, broeders, alles wat waar is, alles wat eerbaar is, alles wat regverdig is, alles wat rein is, alles wat lieflik is, alles wat loflik is - watter deug en watter lof daar ook mag wees, bedink dit."

In Kolossense 3 vermaan Paulus ons op 'n soortgelyke wyse, "As julle dan saam met Christus opgewek is, soek die dinge daarbo waar Christus is en aan die regter-

Vervolg op p. 9

# Laat die Woorde van My Mond U Welbehaaglik Wees

## Vervolg van p. 8

hand van God sit. Bedink die dinge wat daarbo is, nie wat op die aarde is nie. Want julle het gesterwe, en julle lewe is saam met Christus verborge in God" (v. 1-3). Ons het gesterwe en die ou, natuurlike mens afgelê. Nou moet ons soos 'n nuutgemaakte mens dink en praat.

Nog 'n kosbare vermaning vind ons in 1 Tim. 4: "As jy hierdie dinge aan die broeders voorhou, sal jy 'n goeie dienaar van Jesus Christus wees terwyl jy jouself voed met die woorde van die geloof en van die goeie leer waarvan jy 'n navolger geword

het. Maar verwerp onheilige en oudwyfse fabels, en oefen jou in die godsaligheid. Want die liggaamlike oefening is tot weinig nut, maar die godsaligheid is nuttig vir alles, omdat dit die belofte van die teenwoordige en die toekomstige lewe het" (v. 6-8).

Ons moet dus onself met die woorde van die lewe en geloof voed, sodat ons die waarheid van die valse kan onderskei. Ons moet onself oefen in godsaligheid, dan sal ons ons roeping kan uitleef.

Ons moet ons mond ook oefen om positiewe en goeie dinge te

spreek, sodat ons nie in 'n negatiewe gewoonte van voortdurende klagte of kritiek verval nie.

Petrus herinner ons ook, "As iemand spreek, laat dit wees soos woorde van God" (1 Pet. 4:11 OV). Ons verkry die genadegawes van God om ander te dien, spesifiek ook in die woorde wat ons spreek.

## SAMEVATTING

Daar is baie dinge wat ons aandag vereis en waarvoor ons kan gesels (kla). Laat ons egter fokus op die ewige dinge wat werklik saak maak. Laat ons eet van die Lewende Brood, drink van die

lewende water, en genoeg opberg sodat ons ander ook kan voed. Laat ons onself dissipliner om die goeie te soek en te spreek, ten spyte van die feit dat daar so baie is om oor te kla.

"Laat die woorde van my mond en die oordenking van my hart welbehaaglik wees voor U aangesig, o Here, my rots en my verlosser!" (Ps. 19:15 OV). Wanneer ons God op hierdie manier behaag, sal Hy ons Vrede wees en ons lewe transformeer tot 'n fontein van lewe vir ander en onself.

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# When My Warning Light Comes On

## WARNING LIGHTS

Last week, the "check engine" light came on in my car. A little orange symbol appeared on the control panel of my vehicle and my first thought was, "How much is this going to cost to fix?" Life's little inconveniences are never... convenient!

After a few moments, I began to think with a different perspective. This little engine indicator was a reflection of all the miles my car had transported me without issue in the past, it was a warning to take care of the issue right now in the present, and it reminded me that if I did check the engine, my future transportation would be assured. I did a reset in my mind and suddenly, the light was a blessing!

Listen to King David change his perspective in the song we know as Psalm 42: "I say to God my Rock, 'Why have you forgotten me? Why must I go about mourning, oppressed by the enemy? My bones suffer mortal agony as my foes taunt me, saying to me all day long, 'Where is your God?' Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise Him, my Saviour and my God'" (Psalm 42:9-11, NIV).

David starts out with a series of questions. And don't we all ask these questions? "Why have You forgotten me? Where are You, God? Why is my soul so downcast?" These are all valid questions that often come up when the "engine" of our soul is experiencing a breakdown. But, then David changes his perspective and changes his dialogue. Just like the "check engine" light in my car changed

from a problem to a blessing, David shifts his thinking away from the problem and to the promise of the Presence of God. Put your hope in God!

Do you have a problem that needs a fresh perspective? Could that problem actually contain the possibility of realising a promise from your King and your God? Put your hope in Him today and watch for the miracles to follow!

## ARE YOU RUNNING ON EMPTY?

When I took my car to the mechanic, he diagnosed the problem. I had pushed the limits of my fuel gauge! I put off filling up with fuel for so long that air had gotten into the fuel line. I was literally running on empty!

Have you ever felt that you were running on empty? King David did. Listen to him share about the burdens of his life:

"As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God? My tears have been my food day and night, while men say to me all day long, 'Where is your God?'"

These things I remember as I pour out my soul: how I used to go with the multitude, leading the procession to the house of God, with shouts of joy and thanksgiving among the festive throng. Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise Him, my Saviour and my God. My soul is downcast within me; therefore I will remember You from the land of the Jordan, the heights of Hermon - from Mount Mizar.

Deep calls to deep in the roar of Your waterfalls; all Your waves and breakers have swept over me.



By day the LORD directs His love, at night His song is with me - a prayer to the God of my life" (Psalm 42:1-8, NIV).

David is honest and open about his current reality, and I love that David concludes his heartbreak with "a prayer to the God of my life." If you are running on spiritual empty, I want to encourage you to refill your heart with honest conversations with God in prayer.

There is nothing you cannot bring to God in prayer. A genuine heart-to-heart conversation with God, without fancy words or pretense, can sustain you for days and you'll come back again and again because God is a brilliant conversationalist!

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to

God" (Philippians 4:6, NIV).

"Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is - His good, pleasing, and perfect will" (Romans 12:2, NIV).

When the mechanic finished with my car and reminded me to keep my gas tank full, he mentioned that he had reset the "check engine" light. We all need a spiritual reset from time to time. My prayer is that the truths from God's Word will refill your spiritual tank and help you to reset your mind, heart, and soul!

## PAY ATTENTION TO YOUR PERSONAL FUEL GAUGE

We all need to pay attention to our spiritual warning lights. I began to reflect on why I had ignored my personal "fuel gauge." Honestly, I

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# When My Warning Light Comes On

*Continued from p. 9*

had many excuses but the truth was, I was preoccupied with so many things in my life that I ignored something that should have been so obvious - my need for fuel! I turned a blind eye to the empty state of my fuel tank because I was too busy to notice. What a sad commentary on my life!

My friend, what are you ignoring in your life right now? What are you missing because your mind and heart are distracted? I have found that when I am present in the moment, I notice what needs to be noticed!

As we focus our minds on Jesus in this sacred moment, let's notice the Presence of God as we sit quietly and worship Him. I love the following verses about the power of Presence, solitude, and worship. I pray they encourage your heart right now:

*"This then is how we know that we belong to the truth and how we set our hearts at rest in His Presence, whenever our hearts condemn us. For God is greater than our hearts and He knows everything"* (1 John 3:19-20 NIV).

*"This is what the Sovereign Lord, the Holy One of Israel, says: In repentance and rest is your salvation, in quietness and trust is your strength..."* (Isaiah 30:15 NIV).

*"Exalt the Lord our God and worship at His footstool; He is holy"* (Psalm 99:5, NIV).

## CHECK YOUR STEWARDSHIP

A friend of mine stopped by my office recently and shared about his spiritual exhaustion. He commented that his life felt empty and shallow and that his relationship with Jesus was running on empty.

Having just been through my encounter with a "check engine" light and my own experiences with ignoring my own fuel gauge, I asked him if there were any warning signs happening in his life that he was ignoring. His transparent answers were very eye-opening.

He mentioned that months before, he had stopped giving and serving. He listed out all the excuses he had made to drop these two essential parts of his spiritual journey, but then commented, "When my life became all about me, I knew I was going in the wrong direction."

My friend, if your heart and soul feel empty today, do a quick check on your stewardship and your service! Proverbs 3:9 says, "Honour the Lord with your

*wealth, with the firstfruits of all your crops, THEN, your barns will be filled to overflowing and your vats will brim over with new wine"* (Proverbs 3:9, NIV).

Ephesians 6:7-8 says, "Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not people, because you know that the Lord will reward each one for whatever good they do, whether they are slave or free."

There is nothing more fulfilling than following the example of Jesus and joining Him in service to other people. This will put fuel in your spiritual tank! And when we steward every aspect of our lives well, there is the promise of blessing that allows our lives to be filled to overflowing!

## RESTORING BALANCE

One day, I was between appointments and stopped to grab a quick bite to eat. As I ate in my parked car because I was in such a hurry, I actually nodded off and fell asleep in the parking lot of the eatery!

In looking back, I am somewhat embarrassed but also thankful for the lessons learned. We all need faithful friends to warn us and speak truth into our lives. Don't allow isolation to drain your spiritual tank, and always remember this little piece of wisdom, "If the devil can't make you bad, he'll make you busy!"

Also, we need to rest regularly. Listen to the Word of God, as I should have before my impromptu nap in the restaurant parking lot! "Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls" (Matthew 11:29 NIV). "The fear of the Lord leads to life; then one rests content, untouched by trouble" (Proverbs 19:23 NIV).

Take a moment and rest in God. If you are struggling or if you know of someone who is struggling, reach out. Take the spiritual initiative to refill your heart.

## HOW TO FILL YOUR SPIRITUAL TANK

The mechanic who diagnosed my engine problem is actually a good friend. He uses his shop as a place to share Jesus. On more than one occasion, he has used my car to teach me a spiritual lesson.

While Glenn was making sure that I had not ignored other aspects of my car's maintenance, another customer walked into the waiting area of the shop. Glenn noticed the man's stooped shoulders and furrowed brow and asked a simple question, "Are you okay?"

That question opened the floodgates and the man's story came pouring out.

Glenn used the opportunity to talk about Jesus and while the man did not give his heart to Christ in that moment, the opportunity was there, and the seed was planted! I love my friend Glenn and his infectious heart for sharing Jesus.

When I ask Glenn why he shares his faith so freely and enthusiastically, he replied, "Because Jesus told me to and because it fills my heart with so much joy!" Jesus, in fact, did tell us to share about Him. Matthew 28:18-20, He gives us His "Great Commission": "All authority in heaven and on Earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:18-20 NIV).

Talking to another person about Christ can fill your whole spiritual tank in a matter of minutes. When you actively engage in fulfilling the Great Commission, and join with Jesus in seeking and saving the lost, God pours His blessing and His passion into your life.

## HOW ABOUT A SPIRITUAL RESET?

Let us change our spiritual perspective. In the PAST, we may have failed, but we were made alive together with Christ. Jesus conquered death so that we could share in His resurrection life. Our old self was crucified with Jesus at the cross, and now we are new creations in Jesus with the old things passing away and all things becoming new (2 Corinthians 5:17).

The PRESENT is a gift where we choose to acknowledge His Presence in every moment. The

nearness of God gives us a new reason and purpose for living as we welcome God into every moment of every day.

In the FUTURE portion of this life, God will accomplish His plan and my part is to surrender my future without fear, and to boldly claim that my future is secure in Him.

Even though the world seems undone, my surrender is not a crazy, hopeful wish but it is the realisation of a promise from a faithful God and HE is faithful and true.

And let's add one more piece - ETERNITY! I cannot wait for that moment beyond my temporal future when I cross over into an eternity with Jesus. I picture the moment when Jesus, the God over all I was, all I am, and all I became, welcomes me home. Picture it my friend: one day, you will behold Him, and your entire life will fade into the background as you come Face to face with the One who carried you through it all!

We can live free from the guilt and pain of the past. We can live with a confident calm in the present. We can live with a secure hope for our future. And... we can run towards the finish line of Heaven knowing that our Lord and Saviour will greet us with the words, "Well done, good and faithful servant."

## Prayer:

Lord Jesus, I pray that You, the God of miracles, would empower my friend to reset their spiritual life on You and You alone. I pray that Your goodness and grace would fill their hearts to overflowing, and that YOU would empower them to accomplish all you have for them on this miraculous day known as TODAY! Thank You for allowing us to reset and refocus. Amen.

- 7 Ways to refresh your faith  
<https://jesus.net/miracle>

## Oase van Hoop

### AGS Baillie Park Gemeente

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





OASE VAN HOOP

-KOFFIE KAFEE-

HEB. 6:19

est. 2023

