

MANNA

THE

BREAD OF LIFE



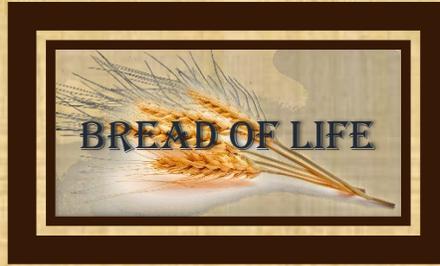
Matthew 4:4

But he answered and said, it is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

MEDITATIONS ON THE WORD OF GOD

BY

PIETRA DE BOD



Dedication

I know that I can do nothing without You Lord. I am the pen, but you are the hand that directs and writes. Thank you for writing on my heart what only You can.

I rest in You my God.

I love You.

Commentaries

An array of meditations written with Holy Spirit presence and precision. This book will take you on a journey experiencing the author's life. It will provide spiritual manna to those who most need it. It captures your spirit and fills you up from the inside. The devotion, obedience and love that the author has for Jesus is clearly evident throughout this book. Manna - the Bread of life will most definitely fill you in more ways than one. It is a must read!

Chantel Stouffs

Everybody at some stage in their life is faced with a huge mountain to overcome. Some more frequently than others. Like every climb, following someone's footsteps makes the task of overcoming that much easier. Many cliffs of life have been scaled and bolted by someone before you. Finding these bolted routes makes what seems impossible to overcome, possible for everybody. God has sent many of His chosen before us to mark out the way. Pietra is one of His chosen. Faced with challenges most would run from, she has persevered in prayer, study and faith. Opening up new routes for us to follow.

Manna – The Bread of Life is meditations on her routes, painstakingly and meticulously marked out for you to follow. You will find great wisdom, encouragement and sustenance throughout this collection of meditations published for a time such as this.

Ivan Stouffs.

Eating bread satisfies for mere moments in time. Ingesting the Living Bread of God which is His Word, fills every crevice in our souls with an eternal fill. Once a bite is taken and chewed and chewed some more, the living bread takes on an eternal and true manifestation in our being. The old dies and renewal springs forth from the conquered crevices. What can I say about this book – the author chewed numerous bites of Bread very thoroughly and meditated on it without reprieve. The words will fill you, as it is from the Bread-house of Heaven.

Simoné De Wet

God's devotion to us is through His pure expression, His Son. Jesus Christ who was, who is, and who is to come. The Word. Christ Jesus asked all to answer His knock on the door of our hearts. His knock came discretely through life events. To open the door is to hear His voice.

1 Corinthians 4: 21 asks a clear question. "What will ye? Shall I come unto you with a rod, or in love, and in the spirit of meekness?"

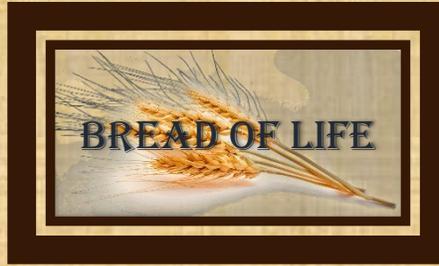
Since the escape, He still knocks. Those who hear begin to sup with Him. I write this commentary as a relatively new disciple in Christ. For me to understand even a single verse of scripture, or even a single connection in His Word is to 'sup' with Him. When we meditate on scripture, sometimes our thoughts and emotions overflow to written devotion. This is why our cup runneth over. It is the foam of the Holy Spirit overflowing our cup. When we overflow, we express our love, life and insights through our own 'lower case' words. And when we share our overflowing words of devotion with our Christ family, we fellowship.

Pietra first shared these meditations through our online fellowship family on the Ministry Revealed Forum during the final month, weeks, and days leading up to the Escape, prophesied in Luke 21: 36. They are also fellowships because we encouraged, cheered, prayed, or shared our own thoughts online as we read them. My experience while reading them has been to realize a few things: First, we are not alone in our daily spiritual struggles. Second, if we find a sliver of resonance in a devotional, more than likely, therein resides a specific Holy Spirit message for us as individuals. Third, and most importantly: thoughts which bring insight and devotion come more easily when we are in fellowship with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit brought repeatedly to my attention repeating cycles in my life around certain behaviours, thoughts, alignments, relationships, and even attitudes.

Sometimes all those things aligns by grace. In those moments, we connect more fully. We feel the love, we understand the scripture, and we "get" the devotional. Without alignment, however, the dark glass we see through darkens. This is one reason why repentance is a key to our life in Christ. Some of these meditations are deep, lonely, and painful to contemplate. Some are joyful and all are set apart -qodesh. These are the meditations of a person who has processed a great deal from her youth to the moment of the Escape. These are the mediations of a person who has been given an extra dose of pain and struggle. Yet, is walking with the Word in her heart, and in her art. These are the meditations of a person who has been a mentor to many, including my 'old self'.

I hope you find blessings as you read them.

Karim Philippe Fasla



Index

	PAGE
LOOK TO HIM	7
GOD'S WELL	9
NOTHING	12
TWO ATTITUDES	14
NOT MY WILL, BUT YOUR WILL BE DONE	17
HIS WORD	21
MY WORD	25
THAT THEY MAY KNOW ME	28
DYING OF THIRST NEXT TO THE FOUNTAIN OF LIFE	32
TRUE PROPHETS	35
THE GOD WHO WASHES FEET AND SETS TABLES	40
COME UP TO THE MOUNTAIN	44
A KERNEL OF WHEAT	49
FROM SLAVERY TO FREEDOM	52
FROM ABOVE	56
BETRAYED WITH A KISS	60
FAITH WORKETH BY LOVE	64
A LIVING SACRIFICE	70
I AM WHO I AM	75
PROXIMITY	79

	PAGE
RUTHLESS LOVE	82
THE HIDDEN PLACE	85
YOUR LOVE IS BETTER THAN WINE	88
LOVE IS...	90
THE WAY TO AUTHORITY	93
CHOSEN	96
SHARING IN HIS SUFFERING	100
WHOSE REPORT DO YOU BELIEVE?	103
SHUT UP IN HIM	108
THE GIFTS HE GIVES	110
THE TALLER THE TREE, THE DEEPER THE ROOTS	114
REDEEMING LOVE	119
CLOSING WORD	122



LOOK TO ME

Are you running this race to win it? Some of us can barely put one foot in front of another. Others are running, but left Jesus because He was too slow. Are you running it to win it? Are you putting away every encumbrance that may cause you to stumble?

Through fear and circumstances the enemy gets it right to take your eyes off Him and unto your mountains and storms. As the Samaritan woman at the well you start looking to other cisterns, broken cisterns with polluted water. You read book after book, this seminar and this "Word from the Lord". Even though these very things may be done in the Name of Jesus your eyes are still not really on Him. "**LOOK TO ME**". But you look to yourself. You look to others. Foolishly you imagine yourself in control, trying desperately to control yourself and others, only to find yourself drowning. You know logically you cannot control others, but still you try until all your efforts are exhausted and you as well. "**LOOK TO ME.**"

When Peter walked on water, he became overwhelmed when he saw the waves. These were not small waves, it was a storm. And in the same way our Father never minimizes our experiences. Like storms and tsunami waves they rise over our heads, threatening to drown us. Great faith filled Peter when He saw Jesus on the water. However the moment he looked to the storm and looked away, he sank.

We all have our days that we sink. We sink because as those fiery darts are firing at us, we for that moment, take our eyes off Him. The sad part is, we take those we love down with us. That nasty backchat, that unforgiving spirit, that hurtful retort. Instead of loving them, we complain and murmur. Instead of compassion and mercy, irritation and indifference. Deeper and deeper we sink, until our hearts cry out in desperation. Emotions of anger drown His sweet soft words of comfort and wisdom. Before we know it the storm no longer resides without, but it threatens to drown us from within.

In my desperation I prayed, "You told me to look to You, but I was looking at everything else, but You. My child, my husband, my workload, my pain, everything but You. Peter had You physically right there in front of him Lord! It is easier to look to You when You are standing right in front of him! I would also believe as he did if you stood right in front of me."



GOD'S WELL

In the account of the Samaritan woman in John 4, we read about her finding Jesus sitting at the well. She is astounded by the fact that He is even speaking to her, being a Samaritan and a woman. He first asks her to give Him water and later starts to tell her that if she only knew who was speaking to her, she would ask Him for water and not the other way around.

I find it interesting that the prerequisite for this living water is knowing Him. This knowing Him is an invitation extended to us today, to not just know about Him, but to actually know Him personally. Did Jesus not say that His sheep knows His voice? (John 10) He is telling this woman that He Himself is that well of living water and that it is His desire to fill her till she overflows. The first thing she needed to know is that He is the Messiah. But He does not just desire her to know He is the Messiah. No, He wants to go even further. He desires true worshippers. Those who will worship Him in Spirit and in Truth. Those who worship Him in this way, has the living water flowing through them. They know Him. This woman was confronted with her sin. Her idolatry. She was confronted first with THE TRUTH and then the truth of herself. She is the picture of the Bride of Christ, a gentile. She has had five wells already, five husbands, from which she had drunk, and still came out thirsty. This is how He introduces Himself to us. He says, I am the Messiah, I want you to confess your sin and deal with it, and I want you to become a true worshipper. I want you to leave all other wells for Me. I am your well for your every need. David said, "All my springs are in you". And this is how we get to know Him. Until we are not willing to face the truth about ourselves and truly repent from them, not just in word but in deed as well, how will we be the true worshippers that He seeks?

In Genesis 24 we find the head servant of Abraham, making covenant with him that he would search for a wife for Isaac. He too sits at the well when a beautiful girl, Rebekah comes with her cistern. She in contrast with the Samaritan woman, is a virgin. She is absolutely beautiful. The servant asks her for water as well. Rebekah not only gives to him, but draws out even more for all his camels and men. He starts to give her jewellery and asks her about her family. She gives him place to stay and his camels and men are looked after. He also receives water to wash His feet. In this picture of the two woman we see the transformation of a sinner (the Samaritan woman) into a beautiful Bride (Rebekah). This head servant resembles the Holy Spirit that comes and beautifies the Bride with gifts, which can also be seen as the gifts of the Spirit. She, on the

other hand, has a role to play as well. She is the one now that serves. She provides a place to sleep, and gives water to him and his men. Rebekah resembles the Bride of Christ washing the feet of Christ and His disciples. She serves. She also leaves behind her family and follows the head servant. So the Bride leaves her country, her family and all that is of the earth, to follow the Holy Spirit, to meet her Isaac.

The first miracle that Jesus did, was turning water into wine at the marriage ceremony in Canaan. The Samaritan woman was promised living water, but the Bride is given the best...new wine! Wine has with it the understanding of grapes, of being grafted in. This new wine symbolizes many things, but for me it symbolizes the very covenant Jesus made with His disciples at the last supper. It is said, that the words He spoke to them regarding the wine and the bread is "Will you marry me?"

From our very first meeting with our Lord at the well of the Samaritan woman, He introduces Himself to us as our Messiah, but at the well of Rebekah, as our Husband. Our whole Christian journey is that of courtship. Preparing His Bride, beautifying His Bride and loving His Bride. We are all at different phases in our journey of courtship. This has absolutely nothing to do with how long you are saved, but rather whether you have left all for your Isaac. To become a Rebekah requires that you leave all behind. In all of this, we find the Holy Spirit being the one who makes us willing and able to do His will. Without the living water of the Holy Spirit to wash us, refresh us and to revive us, we will remain at the well of the Samaritan woman. This is a good start, but He desires that we will leave all the wells we have depended on for all our lives. There can only be one well. God's well. He is our well and His desire is that we will become ourselves a well from which others will drink. From His well, flows not only living water, but new wine. New wine, reserved for those who have left all behind.

We will soon come to sit at the marriage banquet. I am betting the best new wine will be served. He has prepared a table for us before our enemy and our cup will surely run over. The Husbandman and the Vine, has prepared their wine for the Bride.

He calls to young and old, poor and rich, to come to this marriage supper, prepared for His Bride. Eagerly the Bride awaits, because she has made herself ready.

Have you left all behind? Have you left the wells of this world and followed Him? Or are you still at the Samaritan's well? Leave your wells and allow the Spirit of God to not only fill you with His living water, but with His new wine, even now.

Scripture ref:

Revelation 19:6-9

6 And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thundering, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigns.



NOTHING

How many times have you said I can do nothing without God and cried out to God in surrender?

“Help me Lord, I’m drowning!”

But when we look again, we have taken things into our own hands. Once again we have tried to persuade by our own means to get them to do as we say. Tried to convince those we love of the need to follow the Lord with all their hearts. Trying to make them see things as they ought to. Having lashed out insults or retaliated in kind, just as they do to us. Where is our nothing? Nothing equals empty. Am I really empty if I still produce the fruit of anger and bitterness? Are you empty? Or do you find yourself still wanting to get in the last word? Have you asked yourself whether your reason for offense is just as much validated in God’s eyes as it is in yours? In the end it does not matter what we think of a situation, but rather what He thinks.

No longer is it about my circumstances. My circumstances will drive many to tears, but it is about doing the will of God in spite of them. We come to a point where we realize that nothing we say or do will change those around us, and that the only one we can change is ourselves.

I have long ago come to the conclusion that unless I change, my circumstances will drown me after each wave of panic, insults, blasphemies and loneliness. No, no longer can I be swayed and tossed about by these waves. I have to start swimming instead of drowning. I have to fight back again. Only not in my own strength. This time it will be God fighting my battles.

Yes, here we are. Having started in the Spirit, but coming to depend on the flesh again.

The only reason for that is that our nothing is not nothing. Still there is pride, still there is self-effort and still we do not trust. Unless we die to all our plans of how to fix something or change something, we will time and time again meet up with our inability. And it is these very circumstances where we feel so out of our control that He uses to bring us to complete surrender.

You can choose to fall on the Rock, or the Rock can fall on you.

He has to bring us often to this place of complete weakness and defeat so that there will be no more plans. I call it the most horrible right place to be. This is where we come as a child and fall into His arms. Not in our strength, but in complete utter surrender.

Before we can say I can do nothing without God, we ourselves have to be brought to nothing. Empty of all our plans and no longer leaning on the arm of flesh. He really does not need our help. He is only moved by faith.

Scripture ref:

Jeremiah 17: 5 – 10

V5 Thus saith the Lord; cursed be the man that trusts in man, and makes flesh his arm, and whose heart departs from the Lord.

V6 For he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh; but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land and not inhabited.

V7 Blessed is the man that trusts in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is.

V8 For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreads out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit.

V9 The heart (my heart) is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?

V10 I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings.

Notes:





TWO ATTITUDES

When I read Acts 5 about Ananias and his wife and how they decided to lie to the Holy Spirit regarding the amount they received for their land and that they secretly decided to keep a portion of the money for themselves, I find it quite drastic the fact that they died so instantly. And yet, these things are for an example to us.

Compare that incident with the end of the chapter. The disciples have been locked up in jail, ridiculed and flogged for not adhering to the Sanhedrin commanding them not to preach any more in His name. However, after being flogged, they praised God that they were counted worthy to be able to suffer and share in the suffering of Christ to preach Jesus Christ.

In this lies two attitudes of the heart. He who is willing to give up his life, will gain his life, but he who keeps his life, will lose it.

I realize that to come to the point that you do not hold onto your life, i.e. your possessions, your dreams, your time, your family, marriage, even your comfort, everything, is a work the Holy Spirit does in us. The Holy Spirit uses our circumstances around us to show us where we still hold onto something or someone. He is faithful to draw our attention to that which lies in our hearts. But Ananias and his wife lied to the Holy Spirit. Maybe they lied to themselves too. After all, surely God would not want them to give literally everything? We think surely God will not go that far to show us in life what lies in our hearts? And often that which is of God we see as an attack of the enemy.

And so it is so easy to believe we have given all, but the truth is that the Holy Spirit knows our hearts better than we do. We see dimly, but when we come into the light of His presence, His light comes and light up the darkness. His Word comes and the Sword is yielded by our High Priest that cuts to pieces the living sacrifice on the altar. He divides soul and spirit and He discerns the intents and motives of our hearts. He shows us what lies in the secret corners of our hearts. He shows us the things we are unwilling to deal with or too painful to lay bare. Because He will not be satisfied with only one part of our heart, even if it is 99%. He wants it all. He paid for it, it is His, and He intends to spring clean in order to take full possession.

The truth is that we are unable to give up our lives unless He helps us. We can do nothing without Him. Nothing. This is why the faith that we have is refined with fiery trials, in order that we may be able to stand in the midst of every single storm. For our standing will be IN Him. The words, Yet, I do not live, but I have died, and the life that I now live, I live in Christ, cannot just be words or an ideal or even a prayer. It has to be reality. And reality has a price. Unless we understand that God is ruthless in His quest to get us to the point of laying everything on the altar, we will not have the same disposition. We have to be focused on what His focus is.

The more we spend time with Him who is reality, which is truth, we will see ourselves as we truly are. It takes God to know man. The more we know Him in those times of intimate communion and prayer, the more His light and truth shines upon our hearts. The reality is that every time I lose a part of myself, I gain His life in me until He truly and completely lives in me and through me. This is a process and He is patient and so we need to be too. He is never in a hurry and He is outside of time. And He has promised that He will fulfill the work He has started IN us.

So we can rest in the process, enjoy the journey, even if it has mountains and valleys. We as His beloved children and Bride can rest assured that He will turn all things together for good, for those who love Him. Every single thing.

Are you willing to be stripped as He was stripped? Are you willing to lay down on the altar as He was on the Cross? Before I knew of how He worked, I always saw whatever horrible thing happening to me as an issue of spiritual warfare. Now I know, Father allowed it and is showing me something of my heart. The warfare comes after I have learned what He desired to show me. Not before. Are you willing to forsake your possessions and home as He left His Father and home in heaven? Are you willing give Him everything? Because if you do, know that you will be sharing in His suffering and therefore will share in His glory. That's a promise He gives.

Scripture ref:

John 15:1 – 8 / Romans 8: 17

1 I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman.

2 Every branch in me that bears not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that bears fruit, he purges it, that it may bring forth more fruit.

3 Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.

4 Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.

5 I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same brings forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.



NOT MY WILL, BUT YOUR WILL

BE DONE

Whenever I read these words "Not my will, but Yours be done", I see Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemané on His knees. Drops of blood falling from His face. The first drops of blood He shed for us. I am of the opinion that it was there in that garden where He died first. The cross was the physical manifestation of what has already occurred in the garden.

Gethsemané means Oil press. It was there where Jesus who is the Olive Tree, was pressed, even crushed for us. Instead of oil, blood. His blood. God's blood. The statement "Not my will, but Yours be done", denotes a choice He had to make. Always a choice. Gethsemané was the sum of all His moments, to bring Him to the cross. This was the purpose for His coming. All of His life, every moment since birth to bring Him to this ultimate goal. The cross. When I watch the movie "The Passion", the part that has the most significance and pierces my heart, is the part where Jesus on the way to Golgotha, falls and holds unto the cross. In a split second it looks as if He is embracing the cross with such devotion. There are many scenes in that movie that is very significant. But somehow through all these years, that one scene said so much to me. For me it is an expression of how much He was given over to what He was destined to do. Yes, I know it is a movie and not the real thing. However, Jesus and the Father are one, and the cross is central to the expression of God's love for the world.

I believe that Jesus from birth were exposed to the cruelty of crucifixions. It was not a one-time thing. From a young age He must have seen this happen in Jerusalem. Even as Moses lifted up the rod with the snake on it, Father saw all the way into the future where His own Son would be lifted up, and take the curse of sin upon Him. Cursed is he who dies on a tree (Deut. 21: 23). He was the Lamb slain before the foundation of the earth. And yet, we see Jesus in the garden dying a certain death to His will. How is it possible that being God, He had to still die to His will? Some will say it would mean to be separated from the Father or other reasons. Whatever the reason, He still had to lay His will down and choose to be crushed and crucified.

John 10: 18

18 No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again.

The love of God transcends all our categories to the extent where it loves the cross that you will die a cruel death on. I think of the early martyrs and how they all wanted to die for Jesus. For them this was the ultimate expression of their love for God that they could honor God with. To die on a cross like He did was the preferred way to die.

I find myself this morning faced with my desire to go home. This desire is placed next to the scale of wanting to work for Him. Evenly balanced. I have to believe that Jesus was somehow also in that exact place where we find ourselves. The longing He had to be with the Father had to far outweigh our desire to be with the Father. I woke up in the middle of the night with these words of "Father not my will, but Yours be done".

The disciples could not even stay awake, yet they boldly proclaimed their loyalty to Him and then everything went wrong and downhill that very night for them. I feel as if we are exactly in the same spot again. We as those who watch, find ourselves in the garden with Him with His admonishment to watch and pray. And this we do. We want to be counted worthy to escape ALL these things. Many of His disciples have stopped watching in these last days and there are still a few of us left. He intimately knows those who are faithful.

Unless we have our own personal Gethsemané, where we like Jesus say "Your will be done, not mine", we may too flee like Peter and the rest of the disciples. If they were subject to this even whilst being with Him through all the years and seeing the miracles, like the resurrection of Lazarus, healings, feeding the thousands, and still deny Him and run away, what makes us think we will not? The issue of dying for Him stands before us now, just as the issue stood before Him to do the Father's will in Gethsemané. Yes, some will not die and there will be divine protection, but what if your dying will be of the likes of Stephen that will be the changing of Sauls into Pauls, which will result in a great harvest? Will you be able to lay your life down? I believe that the infilling of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost was for that exact purpose. To endure persecution and to have the strength and even the desire to lay down their lives, for the gospel's sake.

Acts 7: 55 - 60

55 But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God,

56 And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God.

57 Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord,

58 And cast him out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul.

59 And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.

60 And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

8 And Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles.

Like Paul they said:

Philippians 3:10-14 KJV

10 That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;

Let's face it, we rather be conformed to His image than His death.

In Gethsemané He made the decision. This is where He laid His life down. All that was left, was the will of the Father. Nothing else. This is not a decision He made when He stood before the cross. The decision was already made in the garden..."Dead man walking".

Sitting still in His presence during my quiet time, I heard, "Many want to come Home, but -so few are willing to stay". There it is again. The scales. One scale desperately wanting to go Home and the other, desperately wanting to work for Him. We cannot have it both ways. Jesus is the patterned Son. If He had a choice, we have one too. This is not a guilt trip. This is about reality. To be endued with power for this exact purpose. Lord knows we are going to need it. When they were waiting, they knew that it was for this purpose. To be filled with power to do all the works Jesus had proclaimed, but also to die for Him should it be His will. Not one death was wasted. Not one death in vain, but every drop of blood brought forth a harvest.

Psalms 116:15 King James Version (KJV)

15 Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.

John 12:24-25 King James Version (KJV)

24 Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it brings forth much fruit.

Talk is cheap. We have to put our money where our mouth is. We can either be a Peter before the cross, or a Peter after the cross. To us He is asking the same...

"Do you love Me?"

"Yes, Lord. You know we do. "

"Then feed My sheep."

The other reality is that we do not have to do it. There will be others. You can go home and be with all those who have gone before us. You don't have to face it. He is asking. And He knows whom He has predestined to die for Him. But He is still asking.

Gethsemané awaits us. Your Pentecost has to be preceded with a Gethsemané, because your Pentecost comes with a purpose. The choice is now. Jesus did not die in His own strength. He died by being strengthened by the Father. So will we, but we have to make the choice.

Not my will be done Father, but Your will be done.

Scripture ref:

Luke 22: 39 – 46 (King James Version)

39 And he came out, and went, as he was wont, to the Mount of Olives; and his disciples also followed him.

40 And when he was at the place, he said unto them, Pray that ye enter not into temptation.

41 And he was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and kneeled down, and prayed,

42 Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done.

43 And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him.

44 And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.

45 And when he rose up from prayer, and was come to his disciples, he found them sleeping for sorrow,

46 And said unto them, Why sleep ye? Rise and pray, lest ye enter into temptation.

Notes:





HIS WORD

I sense in me a move of His Spirit in me crying out for the preservation of His Word. I find myself crying over how His Body, including myself, go about His Word. The Spirit in me just started crying out in me for the preservation of His Word.

I fasted from food and any communication with anyone outside my immediate household. That meant no talking to anyone. The reason why Father led me to this, was to have me all for Himself so that He could talk and no outside distractions. Well, it was very difficult. Not the food, but the no communication. The desire to give my opinion or make my ideas known, or to share something funny or just a cheer was always lurking at my door. You have no idea how many messages I had to catch up with. However, on various occasions people wanted to know if I was doing okay, having not heard from me. At first I said and did nothing, but then I thought I will just let them know I am on a fast and will be back. That's just being nice I thought. However, that was disobedience. That's all that is to it. No if's and but's about it.

Knowing how my Father deals with me, He did not allow the opportunity to go without a lesson. It was not an easy one.

I had to ask myself, "Why did I answer them when I knew I received instructions from Him not to?"

I considered them. I did not want them to feel rejected. In truth, I chose their and my own feelings above His. I thought to save them from rejection, but in the end rejected Him. The real issue was not the communication, but rather what was in my heart. The Word says guard your heart with all diligence for out of it flows the issues of life. The issue will always be our hearts. The fear of man rather than the fear of God. And yet, the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom. Why would I fear more to be rejected by man than to be rejected by God? I think this question is so vital, so I will make it personal.

Why do you fear more to be rejected by man than the rejection of God? Do I only see His directions and commands as suggestions?

After all, God does not force us to do anything. Does God ever say anything and not mean it? Have I become so familiar with Him that when He speaks I forget that He is God and prefer Him to be just my friend? Do I tremble at His Word? The Word says that He searches for those who tremble at His Word. Do I really? The Word even says that He has exalted His Word above His Name and yet I do not tremble.

Psalm 138:2 King James Version (KJV)

2 I will worship toward thy holy temple, and praise thy name for thy lovingkindness and for thy truth: for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name.

Is it holy ground to me when He speaks? Am I indifferent to His words? Does His spoken Word and written Word have power over me? And do I not in fact judge the Word by choosing to be indifferent? Am I in fact not saying, "I will be the judge of that"? Whereas I am to be judged by the Word. Do I truly treasure His words to me? Or have I become so familiar that when He speaks it is as if an old friend has spoken to me. Do I tremble? Does this mean we have to fall to the ground each time He speaks? No, I am talking of remembering Who is speaking to us and to never lose sight in our heart and mind, considering and standing in holy reference to the Creator who spoke all things into existence by His word.

Have I grown so familiar with Him that He cannot speak to me in His sovereignty, but has to meet me at where I am at spiritually? Does He have to come down to my level as only a friend and lover? What does this say of my preference? Lord, speak to me as my friend and lover of my soul, but not as my God, lest I feel I have no choice. Could it be that the reason we do not tremble at His Word and what He asks of us is because we would like to still hold on to our choice, whether we are willing to obey or not. After all, He would not force us and when we are ready we will obey. Paul said, knowing the terror of God, I persuade man. Is His written and spoken word holy to me? I had to ask myself these hard questions and kill this religious spirit that will so easily say, "Yes, I do tremble, yes, I treasure His Word and I love His Word" when in reality my life testifies to the contrary.

Is it possible that He has not spoken to me yet as very God, but only as my Bridegroom and Friend, because I do in fact not tremble at His Word? Not because He does not want to, but that He needs to trust me with that kind of Word. To not throw His pearls before the swine, of which I seem to be one of. My disobedience, however small in other's eyes, gives me away. How easily I forget that He is the very Word when I am indifferent to His disciplines in my life.

Hebrews 4: 12 – 13 (King James Version)

12 For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

13 Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.

Eternal security and grace has become our "get out of jail free ticket" that we should not fear. Yet, the same love that says there is no fear in love of judgment, is the same love that is our motive for obedience. The love that He says, "If you love Me, you will do my commandments."

Have I become so comfortable in the reclining chair of grace that I no longer truly fear Him, even though the Word clearly states the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom? To love God is to fear God. Does our own confidence not betray us? Does it now show how much we lean on our own understanding? Is this not the pride of life that caused Adam and Eve to not fear God's word and listen to the serpent's word? Lucifer did not fear God and caused the insurrection even though he was in His holy presence in heaven? Pride. Pride is at the heart of not having the fear of God, as much as humility is at the heart of fearing God. Isaiah said, Lo, I am a man of unclean lips. To acknowledge you are a man, dust, is the first step and then to acknowledge that what comes out of your mouth, which is the heart, is the next. Your words are tainted and defiled because you are a man first. And He is God...pure and holy. We desire that all must hear us, but do we hear Him? We demand respect and obedience from our children, but do we give this to Him? They must listen to our word, but do we listen to His word, and tremble? Can we bear to be shut up with Him and His Word and only His Word or do we need the entertainment of conspiracy theories, the next big thing? Can we shut out the many voices competing against His voice, not just for a day, but for a season and more, should He require it?

He searches the whole earth to find those who tremble at His Word. The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom. It would indeed be wise to tremble at His Word so that we too may consider the value and gravity of His Word in our lives, by which we will one day be judged.

Scripture ref:

Psalm 119 (Some verses – King James Version)

13 With my lips have I declared all the judgments of thy mouth.

14 I have rejoiced in the way of thy testimonies, as much as in all riches.

29 Remove from me the way of lying: and grant me thy law graciously.

30 I have chosen the way of truth: thy judgments have I laid before me.

31 I have stuck unto thy testimonies: O Lord, put me not to shame.

38 Stablish thy word unto thy servant, who is devoted to thy fear.

43 And take not the word of truth utterly out of my mouth; for I have hoped in thy judgments.

63 I am a companion of all them that fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts.

72 The law of thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver.

97 O how love I thy law! It is my meditation all the day.

130 The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple.

136 Rivers of waters run down mine eyes, because they keep not thy law.

167 My soul hath kept thy testimonies; and I love them exceedingly.



MY WORD

The question is not what we think of our words, but rather what He thinks of it. The realisation that He is called the Word should give us pause to think the value He places on words. Words that in today's society and media are used to manipulate, create fear, and control. I have yet to come to value words the way He does. Not that He does not have a sense of humour. Because I can safely bet that He does. But my words...do I have the carte blanche to do with them just like I want to? The Word says that we are living epistles for others to read, but we are also speaking daily to others by what we say or write. Do we do this with trembling?

You might say, Come on! You are taking this way too serious! I don't think so. He has taught me through the years to value words. Words like authenticity, holiness, ultimate, perfection, morals. These are not just words...these are the very things that forms society and moulds His precious saints into His image. Do I use them flippantly? Not anymore. I use to. It had a very nice ring to it. But the real question is, is it true? Is holiness true in me? Is ultimate surrender true? Is authenticity? Unless these things are true in me, I can speak about them till I am blue in the face, but it will carry no anointing with it. It will fall to the ground because it is not true of me. But He has worked these words in my life and so when I hear them now, the Spirit in me reacts in a way that it never did before. They now have value and are a vital part to my very life. It is now etched into my heart. But what about my other words? I want all my words to be used for His glory. Either in me or for His Bride. Do I tremble? Have I given Him all of my words? Are my words holy to me?

His Word is a fire and a hammer. It builds, breaks down, slices and separates. The value is not in the paper it was written on, but the value is the Author. Just as He is the author of His Word, I am the author of my words. Do they build, do they break down? Is He in control of all my words, or have I selectively chosen the religious ones? We all will be held accountable for every idle word we have spoken. The mere thought should make us stagger.

Do I have the right to take His Word and use it on others when it is not true in myself, just because it is doctrinally true? I don't think so. I am deeply humbled and repent today of using my words for my own purposes. The extent that He will go to use us has no bounds. It really does not. I

am still struggling with this...I wish it was not true. It is not about bad language or crude jokes...for me it is about whether I have given Him all of my words. Tall order. But there is always grace.

He is the Word and His word will never return void. When He speaks, we should tremble. This is something He has to work in me and He has started by giving me a renewed love and jealousy for His Word. I have been listening to Psalm 119 lately. It caught me yesterday...this Psalm 119 was probably the very psalm He carried so close to His heart. It is as if I can hear Him holding on to every word of it during His time as the Son of Man here on earth. Whether His Word is spoken or written, I want to tremble. Whether my words are spoken or written, I want to tremble, lest I find myself using them for my purpose. All belongs to Him...all.

My prayer:

Psalm 19:14

14 Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer.

Scripture ref:

Isaiah 66:5 King James Version (KJV)

5 Hear the word of the Lord, ye that tremble at his word; Your brethren that hated you, that cast you out for my name's sake, said, Let the Lord be glorified: but he shall appear to your joy, and they shall be ashamed.

1 Corinthians 2

2 And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God.

2 For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.

3 And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling.

4 And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power:

5 That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.

6 Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought:

7 But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory:



THAT THEY MAY KNOW ME

This is eternal life that we might know God and the One whom He has sent. (John 17) To know God. What does it mean to know God?

I read Psalm 139 and I see verses stating, Thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou know my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understand my thoughts afar off. Thou compass my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word on my tongue, but, lo, O Lord, thou know it altogether.

This loving God of ours knows us so well. We are as an open book before Him. He searches our hearts continually and knows our thoughts, dreams and even the words we will speak. He is familiar with all our ways. However, God wants to be known by us in this same way. Through my journey with the Lord from the very first time that I have given my life to Him, I have sought to know Him. But without knowing, I actually sought His hands and not His face. What this means is that I was seeking Him for what I needed and not for His sake alone. My own life was so broken and torn, and all I wanted was just to survive. I could understand and appreciate the need to know Him, but my life was so broken that I needed His hands more. I needed to be lifted up. Our loving Father knows this and encourages us to cry out to Him in a time of need. This is His heart, to save His children.

I wonder how often He speaks to us in the smallest every day moments, just like a friend or a spouse and we do not hear. He wants to be known by us. Not just by what He can provide and bless us with as our Father, but to be known by us intimately as we are known by Him. To know His thoughts, His desires, His pain and anguish, His joy and His ways. He wants to be known by you. This is the place of abiding.

Father says to us "STAY!" The high priests came only once a year to make sacrifice and could not stay in the Holy of Holies. However, He is saying stay to us. Dwell in the secret place and abide under the shadow of the Almighty. Jesus is that secret place and He is at the right hand of Father, His shadow, the shadow of Psalm 91. We are triune beings. Our body is the outer court, our soul the inner court and our hearts the Holy of Holies. We truly are the temple of God. He is in us, and we must abide, stay there with Him. We are not to leave and must wait till He speaks. Jesus

gave one of His greatest sermons ever in John 15 about abiding. With all the references in the Word one can clearly see that God is saying, I am in you, you are My temple, seek My face!

How are we to seek God's face? We do this by setting time apart for worship and meditation on the word of God. Once we sense His presence, we start to meditate on what we read and in introspection, draw near unto Him with a repentant heart. This is the outer court and it takes obedience and diligence until it becomes the most natural thing. Here we wash ourselves with the water of the Word. Once we have done this we draw into the inner court of our soul. It is here where we are led by the Holy Spirit in a more tangible way. We receive revelation and eat of the manna of God. This is also the place of petition and intercessory prayer. We soon realize that we have come to the end of our doing and find ourselves entering into His felt presence. A sense of not wanting to do anything, but just be as His presence fills our being and all around us. This is where we have to learn to wait on Him as we enter into the Holy of Holies. Here we meet Him at the mercy seat and what we have to say is now irrelevant. The only thing that matters is His agenda and purpose. There is no haste. Unless you are willing to wait on God, you will not know Him as you ought. Here we are still and enter into His rest. In this place He wishes to show us who He is. Here we learn to know His voice intimately as He speaks to our hearts. This is the sweet communion He desires with us, not once a day, but as a fixed abode in Him until He becomes our all in all. From out of this place we are to live. This is to be our disposition, from out of the Holy of Holies. This is indeed possible, but we have to be willing to allow Him to work in our lives, that is to say work in the outer court and inner court.

Jesus said that He would send the Comforter to abide in us - He is already there the moment we are born anew of the spirit. The problem is not Him abiding in us, but we that have to abide in Him.

This is not about once a day seeking His face in prayer, which is essential, but rather an abiding in that place never to leave, just as Jesus abides with the Father now. We have to ask ourselves how Jesus got to abide in Father, being a man just like us. He knew His Father intimately! The important thing I believe of what He is saying is - Do not leave the holy of holies. According to the Strong's the word Name refers to who that person is - his likes, dislikes, character, authority etc. So, if Father keeps us in His Name, He is doing the keeping, that we may be one with Him and the Son. The understanding is that we abide or remain in Him to the extent that we know Him. This is why He says seek My face. Know Me, for when you know Me, you will know My authority, My love, My likes and dislikes - all of Me, and this will not only sanctify you, for I am the truth, but it will generate the faith you need to always remain in Me and I in you. If you forget who I am and stop meditating on My attributes, your eyes will turn to this world. Come into My presence with thanksgiving in your heart and into My courts with praise, remembering who I am.

He told Moses to go to Pharaoh and say "I AM" sent him. Jesus came to this earthly Egypt to say I AM is here. He came to declare the Father's Name just like Moses. But the people refused to seek Him and know Him.

Abiding is to know Him, which causes us to be sanctified and live holy lives. We are being filled with His Spirit and love, by living in obedience to Him. This is how our joy will be full. It is all in the Name of God. The most heart wrenching thing is that His children do not know Him. They still struggle with fear, anxiety, pain, strongholds and some question His love. They do not know Him as they ought. If our earthly Fathers want their children to know them, how much more our heavenly Father!

The greatest revelation is I AM!

I AM YOUR FATHER.

I AM YOUR CREATOR,

I AM YOUR DELIVER.

I AM YOUR SAVIOR.

I AM YOUR HEALER.

I AM YOUR PEACE.

I AM YOUR HUSBAND.

I AM YOUR PROVIDER.

I AM WITH YOU.

I AM YOUR TEACHER.

I AM YOUR COMFORTER.

I AM THE WAY, THE TRUTH AND THE LIFE.

I AM THE LIVING WORD.

I AM ENOUGH.

I AM YOUR MANNA.

I AM YOUR ALL IN ALL.

When we know Him, we abide continually in Him and His love abides in us. This is why nothing will be able to separate us from the love of God - nothing! God is the one that sought Adam and Eve first after they have sinned. They were hiding, but He came to find them. And finally Jesus came in the flesh and the I AM dwelt among us. But leaving, He sent His Spirit to dwell in us so that we may know Him and now I AM abides in us. Promising that He will never leave nor forsake us. This is our God who will come back again, soon, as the Lion of Judah, the Alpha and the Omega! To know Him, is eternal life, is to be kept in His Name, to abide in Him and He in us, in the secret place. In Him we live and move and have our being.

God's desire is that we will know Him as we are known. Some of His children knows the enemy better than Him. This is a hard truth. We often spend more time searching out the ways of the enemy, than seeking His face in the secret place. Our Father wants to speak to us, to reveal Himself to us in an even deeper way. Deep calling unto deep, until we are swept away into Him. This is why Jesus told Martha that that which Mary has will never be taken from her. Because she is in that secret place. Knowing His hands, what He does for us, gives us the outline, but knowing His face, the substance. We ask for visions, dreams and miracles, but we need to be reminded that Miriam and Aaron was reprimanded with the words that yes, He speaks to them in dreams and visions, but to Moses face to face. The highest honor for us is to seek His face where He can speak to us face to face. Not only so that we may know Him, but that His desire to be known by us may be fulfilled and His Father heart may experience the joy of such union with His children. This is what makes our God different from all the others...we know Him. Paul made this unknown God clear to the Greeks with all their other God's they served. So we too have fellowship with Him that He may be made known to those who hunger and thirst for the Truth.

Scripture ref:

Song of Solomon 2: 14

O my dove, that art in the cleft of the rock, in the secret places of the stairs, let me see thy countenance, let Me hear thy voice, for sweet is thy voice.

Notes:





DYING OF THIRST NEXT TO

THE FOUNTAIN OF LIFE

This was the title of a chapter in a book I read. I found it to be so true. I look back at what Father has taught me and it blows my mind the depth and truth in this one small statement. Dying of thirst next to the fountain of life.

He is the fountain of life. But after one revelation after revelation, we still find ourselves coming so very short of the glory of God. Do you find yourself there where you are the one moment so overwhelmed with what the Lord shows you, and the next moment you find yourself flat down on your face, as you succumb to the same sins you have desperately tried to stop? Out of the fountain of your mouth comes bile, the bile of your heart and you wonder how is it possible to have bitter and sweet water still after all these years.

Saddened by this truth we find ourselves dying of thirst, for righteousness, next to the Fountain of Life. Not just any fountain, but the very river of life!

The reality is that you can lead a horse to the water, but you cannot make him drink. Guess who the horse is? Yip, that very river means absolutely sweet nothing if we do not drink. I can tell many people of this wonderful life-giving water. The beauty, the glory and even its wonderful healing properties. Even the fact that it is life and love itself, the very Spirit of God. But if I do not drink, I will still be dying of thirst.

So how do I drink? Faith. The just shall live by faith. Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God. How full is your fountain of the Living Word of God? In the moment when all of me wants to vent and retaliate at the injustice of life, at that very moment, I am to pray and draw out like the Samaritan women the living Word. Just keep quiet and pray. I have to drink from the fountain within. She laid down her cistern. Her cistern was broken. Unless you acknowledge the holes in your cisterns, all your techniques, therapies, courses, medications and step 1 to 10's, you will never put them down. You will keep on flogging that dead horse to run

because you believe he will. He needs to show us this so that He can be that living Word in us, we become the cisterns of life that He again pours out into others.

I wonder how many times Jesus prayed within when they cursed Him? When they called Him Beelzebub? Or when they called Him a liar and a blasphemer? Before He uttered those words, "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do"? How many times did He just kept quiet and prayed in the secret chamber of His heart in absolute dependence on the Holy Spirit?

How painful the death of self when unfairness and injustice face us. It is not easy to die to this. To die to want to have the last word or to right a wrong and just simply trust Him. To put your cisterns down, and take up His. It really is not easy. But all He needs is for us to humble ourselves in that moment and surrender. To let go and allow the injustice to be used by Him. Of course I am not talking about flat out abuse. We should always seek out safety. I am talking about the marriage filled to the brim with animosity. The rebellious child rolling her eyes and endless backchats. The anniversaries and birthdays forgotten. The hurtful and resentful words piercing your being day in and day out until you rather just die and escape all these things.

As much as we are victims, the bile in our hearts that is poured forth in those moments, the murderous thoughts and backhanded remarks with the aim to hurt, are all indications of the true state of our hearts, and not those who hurt us. We are responsible for our heart. Not they. And we alone can make the decision to take up His cistern of living water, the Word, and pour it into our hearts until it washes us and fills us to the brim.

It takes many years for us to see our own protective mechanisms, bad habits, selfishness and just how opinionated we are. He has to repeatedly place us in positions where we can hear what we say as evidence to what is in our hearts. Unless we become truly honest about what lies there hidden, where no one else sees it outside our homes, we will remain the same year in and year out. We also must want to see it. Some of us are so depressed and live our lives seeking only that which may bring us temporal joy. We run from who we are because we do not want to face who we are. It hurts too much and it is way too much effort. We have already decided that this is who we are. We are not willing to put the work in and change. Everybody else has to accept us as we are.

And yet, we are so miserable. Dying of thirst next to the fountain of life.

The only way we will start living from this fountain is if we drink. The more we meditate on the Word, the more every drop of water starts to fill us gradually until it becomes a stream. The stream then becomes a fountain of life for those around us. It takes work and effort, but it is so worth it. The more we drink of the water of the Word, the more it shows us the areas we need to deal with and the more we long to be cleansed and made whole.

A lot of people want God to heal them. They want Him to just take away their anger or depression etc. But the reality is that He have done His part on the cross. We have to do our part and take



TRUE PROPHETS

The prophets of Baal feasted at the table of Jezebel. It does not say whether they were actually in her service, but rather that they were feasting at her table. One could easily see in what compromising position this would place them in seeing that one does not bite the hand that feeds you. One can only imagine what such a feast looked like! Voluptuous fruit and new wine, sumptuous and beautiful to all the senses and extremely inviting. The laughter, the dance and the euphoria of friendship. Who would not want to sit at a table as this? A feast not only where you can have your fill, but a feast to lose yourself in, a binge. The kind flesh revel in.

In contrast to this we find Elijah in the wilderness in solitude eating bread and water. No one to share his food with, no one to laugh with or be merry with. We see this same Spirit that resided in Elijah in John the Baptist. Alone once again in the wilderness, eating locusts and honey. Wearing clothes that would most definitely not win him any brownie points and a strangeness about him that made him not one of the boys. These strange and peculiar people called of God is in stark contrast to those prophets who feast at Jezebel's table.

We as children of God are exhorted in 1 Corinthians 14 to seek for the gift of prophecy. The lines of the office of the Prophet and the gift of prophecy are often blurred. We have not been properly taught the difference and therefore often throw both into the same category. But is it? What constitute someone to become a Prophet of God? What are the dealings of God with such a one to become His ears, eyes and mouth? How much of his life is spent in preparation to walk in integrity as the oracle of God. And when he speaks, how does one know whether that which is said is truly of God? Does it not stand to reason that just as many will be deceived by a false Christ, will also be deceived by the false prophets? Could it be that the two seem very similar? The Anti-Christ will do great miracles. He will heal people and probably also call fire down. Even the elite will be deceived the Word says. We know that he will speak great things against our Lord and Savior, but it is guaranteed that he will not do it in the beginning. No, just like the false prophets of our day, he might sound doctrinally correct and very spiritual. He might even know the Word as well as the back of his hand. How are we to know between the truth and the lie when the lie sounds and looks like the truth? I am not talking about outright deception that often

tickles the ear. I am talking about the lie coated in truth. Is that not what the snake in the garden did? He is a master at deceiving.

The contrast between the Prophets of Baal and Elijah's has not changed. They may even look the same in appearance, but their preparation and disposition is vastly different. The true prophets of old were persecuted and stoned. Isaiah was sawn in half and so also the other suffered terrible deaths.

Our Prophet and King often found himself in solitude with His Father going out into the wilderness to receive His food for the day. Jesus only started His ministry at 30 years of age. We are not told what the preparation was that He had to go through, but what we do know is that when He came on the scene, he went to John the Baptist. Like John the Baptist and Elijah, and so many others before Him, He was misunderstood, rejected and persecuted.

The true prophet stands alone before the Lord. He answers to only One. Not in exclusivity, but in submission and humility. For unless there is an identification with the lost and even the sin, there can be no intercession or authenticity. In this solitude he receives his bread and water. Not the written bread, but the living bread. This bread broken and torn and in his heart echoes the words of his Lord, "One shall not live from bread alone, but from every word that proceeds from the mouth of God." The prophet lives from every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. There in this solitude, the still small voice of God is his life and nourishment. He knows Him because he feasted with Him. So that when he is told to leave the cave of solitude, he speaks with identification and authenticity with the One who gave him the authority so that he can say "thus sayeth the Lord." Who is sufficient for these things?

At the Lord's Table He feeds you what you need. At this table his own eyes is not only open to the state of the people of God, but like Isaiah he falls down and cries,

Isaiah 6:5

5 Then said I, Woe is me! For I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.

There he finds himself face to face with God, naked and exposed to the truth of his own unclean lips. There he sees as God sees and he is undone.

Compare this to the many voices one would hear at Jezebel's table. Will you be able to hear His still small voice in the midst of the many other voices? Do not be fooled to think that at her table will we only find the worldly and sensual. No, as the master of deception, she will feed you the spiritual. You may even experience a thrill or a sensing of the 'Holy Spirit' move upon you or strangely your surroundings and circumstances confirms the words spoken. Many has been slain at the hands of this horrible wicked woman, the very one who rides the beast in the time we find ourselves in. Is it any wonder that as she is the one who slays the prophets in history will once

again rise up to slay the prophets of God again in this time? She knows very well who they are. They are not usually on the stage, or have a wide audience. But they are often in the background, until God releases them. And when the Word comes, it is like a fire and a hammer, and it overthrows her altars. The attack will be severe and with great viciousness.

Where everyone else is cheering the latest prophecy, he will strangely stand back and wait on God and when it is required of him to speak up, against the grain of what everyone else believe, he will do it. Not in arrogance or in seeking disunity, but it will be a cry out of the depths of his being, seeing the thing as it truly is. He will be like a thorn and will be poking all in the eye. He will be as Elijah when Ahab confronted him and said, "Are you the one who troubles Israel?" Are you the one that upsets the applecart and our unity? Are you the one that judges us? And they will find ample reason to judge him, because often the prophet is one that strangely do not have it all together. His marriage is in shambles or his children are in rebellion. Something God would orchestrate to keep this man on his knees, not only in dependence on him, but to constantly humble him. But who will recognize such a one as a true prophet?

He fears God and not man. And even as he speaks, he will feel utterly alone and bereft. Like Elijah after his conflict with Jezebel, he will run to his cave, only to be fed again by the One whom he loves and fears. The message in him will ALWAYS cost him in the same way that Elijah said that there would be no rain, and had to endure the drought with them. It will be a constant dying over and over, not the elevated state we see of the many prophets of today. The truth is he is not even guaranteed that God would answer every time with fire, for the prophet is himself subject to God's sovereignty and God is not obligated to explain it to him. Remnant prophets are forged not at the table of feasting, but at the table of leniency. There where dependency and utter surrender is forged into his very being.

Are you willing to be dealt with, even in solitude? Do not think this solitude has an expiry date on earth. It does not. There is often no pleasure found in the words he has to speak, for the true word of God is a fire and a hammer. A sword that pierces right into the marrow of the bone and divides the soul from spirit. It exposes and lay bare the intents and motives of the heart and leaves the hearers fuming with rage. For those who have ears to hear, it is as the healing balm of Gilead.

Jesus cautioned us to judge righteously. Who can truly judge righteously unless you allow the Eternal judge to judge you first? David prayed, "Lord, judge me."

I leave you with the words spoken about Jesus and the Spirit that rested upon Him, that I believe rests upon the true prophets of God.

Isaiah 11

11 And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots:

2 And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord;

3 And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears:

4 But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth: with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked.

5 And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins.

Scripture ref:

Jeremiah 23

17 They say still unto them that despise me, The Lord hath said, ye shall have peace; and they say unto every one that walks after the imagination of his own heart, No evil shall come upon you.

18 For who hath stood in the counsel of the Lord, and hath perceived and heard his word? Who hath marked his word, and heard it?

John 5: 30 – 44 (King James Version)

30 I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me.

31 If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true.

32 There is another that bears witness of me; and I know that the witness which he witness of me is true.

33 Ye sent unto John, and he bare witness unto the truth.

34 But I receive not testimony from man: but these things I say, that ye might be saved.

35 He was a burning and a shining light: and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light.

36 But I have greater witness than that of John: for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me.

37 And the Father himself, which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me. Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape.

38 And ye have not his word abiding in you: for whom he hath sent, him ye believe not.



THE GOD WHO WASHES FEET AND **SETS TABLES**

In the book of John we read about Jesus washing the feet of His disciples telling them that the servants are not greater than their master and that we too must wash each other's feet. He takes off his coat, which resembles the act of divinity He removed to become a man. And He goes down on his knees, the very act of intercession and washes their feet with water, the water of the Word of God. In essence He was saying, I want you to humble yourself, pray for each other and wash each other with the Word. He could have made this message clear in any other way, but He chose to bring this particular message across in this way for a reason. The importance of humility, to serve. "God is humble" is expressed by this loving act.

In Psalm 23 we are told that our cup runs over and that He sets a table for us in the presence of our enemies. If we think about this for a moment, would it not have been more regal and royal of the King of Kings, to have His angels set the table? But once again, we are brought to the truth of "God is humble." Here only the best is set on the table. Fine china with gold trimming and crystal glasses shining in the light of His glory, cutlery set in perfect rows. The best wine, the best bread...His blood and his flesh. Here He says, come sit, I want to dine with you. He even says that He will serve us.

At this table we would think the honoured guest would be Him, and so it is, but does the guest of honour serve others? Yes, He does. Why? Because the love in Him is compelled to express itself to the object of His love...you.

2 Samuel 9

9 And David said, Is there yet any that is left of the house of Saul, that I may shew him kindness for Jonathan's sake?

2 And there was of the house of Saul a servant whose name was Ziba. And when they had called him unto David, the king said unto him, Art thou Ziba? And he said, Thy servant is he.

3 And the king said, Is there not yet any of the house of Saul, that I may shew the kindness of God unto him? And Ziba said unto the king, Jonathan hath yet a son, which is lame on his feet.

4 And the king said unto him, Where is he? And Ziba said unto the king, Behold, he is in the house of Machir, the son of Ammiel, in Lodebar.

5 Then king David sent, and fetched him out of the house of Machir, the son of Ammiel, from Lodebar.

6 Now when Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, was come unto David, he fell on his face, and did reverence. And David said, Mephibosheth. And he answered, Behold thy servant!

7 And David said unto him, Fear not: for I will surely shew thee kindness for Jonathan thy father's sake, and will restore thee all the land of Saul thy father; and thou shalt eat bread at my table continually.

8 And he bowed himself, and said, What is thy servant, that thou should look upon such a dead dog as I am?

9 Then the king called to Ziba, Saul's servant, and said unto him, I have given unto thy master's son all that pertained to Saul and to all his house.

10 Thou therefore, and thy sons, and thy servants, shall till the land for him, and thou shalt bring in the fruits, that thy master's son may have food to eat: but Mephibosheth thy master's son shall eat bread alway at my table. Now Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty servants.

11 Then said Ziba unto the king, According to all that my lord the king hath commanded his servant, so shall thy servant do. As for Mephibosheth, said the king, he shall eat at my table, as one of the king's sons.

12 And Mephibosheth had a young son, whose name was Micha. And all that dwelt in the house of Ziba were servants unto Mephibosheth.

13 So Mephibosheth dwelt in Jerusalem: for he did eat continually at the king's table; and was lame on both his feet.

We are all a Mephibosheth, completely and utterly dependent on being carried to the table, dead dogs, only fit to sit at the Master's feet. But yet, to us, He says, "Come, come sit at the table I have set for you." What love is this that sees us as the Sons and Daughters of God, and not the dead dogs that we are? That washes us, cleanses us, gives us a new robe, a ring, new shoes, and kills the fatted calf, so that we may feast. We that have walked away and have deserted Him!

And yet, Jesus said, "So do unto others." So go out and love as I have loved you, extravagantly. I have to take note of how the Creator of all stooped down to do the ordinary thing of washing

feet and made it a divine act. Once I step out from the feast that He has prepared for me this morning, sitting at His table and eating of the Bread of the Word of God in my quiet time, I am to make the everyday act of my life, divine, by humbling myself. You see, there is no divine sense of washing dishes, ironing, cleaning the house, taking care of children or husband/wife or even that which one does at work. It is so earthly and not at all heavenly! Exactly! How we serve others is a demonstration of how we serve Him in reality. Insignificant acts become acts of worship and turned into that which is holy. All of our lives are sanctified and set apart for Him so that when we do these things, we know that here we serve Him, in the ordinary. Dare we believe this to be true? What man sees as foolishness, God sees as wisdom.

Does this subject seem insignificant? How many times have you heard that we need to serve others and love others? We know this. But have you truly considered and meditated about how He sees it? Have you considered the fact that He sees no difference between your quiet time in the morning, and the moment you set your foot out that door to face this world? The humble God who washes feet and sets tables.

I am humbled this morning by our loving Jesus. Humility is love and love is humility. His attributes cannot be separated from one another. The Lord our God, He is one. Yet we as His representation, as His Sons and Daughters of God, make a distinction between that which is earthly and heavenly. I am not referring to the flesh, I am referring to everyday things and responsibilities in life. We separate our intimate quiet times with Him and call this holy from the rest of our day, and fail to see that what we do the rest of the day is an extension from that time with Him. Not so that He just bless the rest of the day, but that that time with Him never ended. He is all in all.

May we serve others in this day, by humbling ourselves, allowing our Lord to create a right spirit within us, knowing that all is holy when set apart for Him and unto Him. Priests unto God, holiness unto God in everything. May our everyday life reflect the glory of God!

Scripture ref:

Psalm 23: 5 - 6

5 Thou prepare a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anoints my head with oil; my cup runs over.

6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

John 13:12-21

12 So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you?

13 Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am.



COME UP TO THE MOUNTAIN

One of the most profound things for me ever said by God is that we are to seek Him. We have a God who does not only want to be worshipped, but to be known. An intimate God. A God of fellowship. From the moment He have said those precious words, countless people have been on this one single quest...to find God. I find it interesting how He pursues us with His Spirit, and once we are found by Him, He asks us to seek Him. A divine hide and seek so to speak.

But who can really know Him? Is it even possible to really know Him? After all, is He not unsearchable? Are not His ways higher than ours and His thoughts not as our thoughts? Well, the mere fact that the invitation is extended means that He has made a way through this impossibility. But, it will not be by our rules. And most importantly, it will be by faith.

The first man to have had the fellowship of knowing Him was Adam. Adam blew it. Big Time. But we find Abraham, the man of promise, the Father of faith who it is written of that his obedience was accounted unto Him as righteousness. Let us not divorce faith from this obedience. I am sure some men would be saying that it took some serious faith to obey this unknown God for Abraham at the time to circumcise himself and his child. No easy task. And as amazing as the relationship between Abraham and God, the one I do want to focus upon is Moses.

God had something different in mind for the one we know as the type and shadow of our Lord Jesus. He was also invited by God. An invitation to come up the mountain and just be there. Not do there, but be there. I have climbed some mountains and the normative is that it is not easy. Granted there are not many high mountains in those areas, but it is deserts. Not an easy climb at all. He was told that only he could go and the others had to stay below. There God would meet him and give him the commandments for the children of Israel. Six days he had to wait and on the seventh day God answered him from out of the smoke. Smoke, for six days. So it was not a worship service, it was thundering and lightening and holy terror. Disorientation comes to mind. Six days, the number of man. And He answered him on the seventh day. The day of completion and rest. What happened in those six days of waiting? Waiting for us is already too much to bear in this microwave society. Just the climb alone would have cost him so much already. I am sure that as he reached the top he was worn, tired and afraid. And then to sit in

that condition for six days in smoke not even knowing whether it would be another six days. God did not tell him I will be answering you on the seventh. So this was a waiting “until”. God does not call many people to come up the mountain. It is not one of those free lucky packet tickets for all. This does not mean all is not included, but rather there is a price to pay.

We know that Jesus rent the veil of His flesh and in that moment the veil within the temple tore from the top to the bottom. Signifying that the invitation came from above to below. He sent His only begotten Son from the mountain of God to fulfil the law, and where Moses broke the tablets, He who encapsulates the Law was broken in half Himself. Just like the covenant made with Abraham, our Savior was torn and took the curse of that covenant upon Him. Even though we are the ones that broke it by our disobedience. Torn for our sins. We have grown so use to all these words and to our shame when we hear the words “come up to the mountain and be there” we hear it as just another invitation. Like come to the front and give your heart to Jesus. We have lost the magnitude of what it means to go up to the mountain of God to be with Him. There where He will speak to you like no other place. It will not be the same speaking that you will hear at the foot of the mountain, or even halfway. There He will speak to you concerning His people. And there, you will not speak. There you will just be. There you will be enormously aware of the dust you are and the mercy to know Him.

The first sending was that of Moses. To be sent is to be Apostolic. One cannot be sent without having been dealt with God. There is God-sending and Man-sending. When Moses came down from that mountain, the meekest man was filled with righteous indignation and broke the tablets of stone. We would like to see this as braking the law, and yes it is exactly that. But in that moment we see the enactment of what we have done to His Son, by breaking His law. Moses, having been with God up the mountain, could speak for God. The purpose and foundational imperative of an Apostle, a sent one, is to make God known as He truly is and want to be known, and not as how we would like to perceive Him. He sends out His Apostles to speak to us, but mostly to demonstrate to us, who He is. If only we had eyes to see and ears to hear.

In John 1 we read that in the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. Then we read about a man that was also sent by God.

John 1:6

6 There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.

In verse 8 the Word says that he was sent to bear witness of that Light. John the Baptist grew up in the desert. Living from honey and locusts. A weird man indeed. One of those we would likely not give a second look at...be honest now. However, the Word says that he was sent from God. Not long after this, Jesus was sent from God as well. Dwelt among them and His own did not recognize Him. Even though a one greater than Moses was sent.

John 1:17

17 For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.

It says in verse 19 that the Priests and the Levites were sent by the Jews to enquire of John just exactly who he was. They wanted to know whether he was the Messiah and that he should just say so plainly. Or maybe Isaiah or Elijah?

These were also sent men. But by whom? The Jews. In verse 22 they implore him to make it plainly that they may go tell them who sent them. Verse 24 we read that the Jews who sent them, were Pharisees.

John's magnificent answer was "I am the voice".

This man who was sent of God is also the one that recognized the true Messiah as opposed to those who were sent by the Pharisees, who did not when He was among them. Boldly he proclaimed, "Behold the Lamb who takes away the sin of the world!" In verse 34 it starts with, And I saw...

These words should stop us in our steps. What kind of seeing is this that he could see in the spiritual the dove descending and abiding on Jesus? Do we think it to be a special privilege given to John for that specific moment, because after all someone had to do it? Or is it possible that this kind of seeing comes from a man that was raised by God in the desert? One who has learned the voice in order to be "the voice"? One who has been alone with God in order to know His voice instinctively?

We have to realize that to be able to demonstrate to others who God is, will mean that we would have been in that place where all our categories has been dealt with. All our pet sins, our traditions, spirituality and opinions. Every category that defines us. So that when you are in His presence, you are but an empty shell. A man that has waited six days in the smoke. Is this a literal six days for us? No, but the number is the number of man and I would like to be bold enough to say that until you have come to the end of your being and find your being only in Him where only He exists, you will only perceive and understand Him through the filters of your own experiences and categories. You will claim you know Him from out of your spirituality or traditions or experiences. But this proclaiming of who He is, is of another kind. Because when you truly know Him, it will not be your words of persuasion, but the essence of God will emanate from your being, because you have found your being in Him. You will be His voice by your being without even saying one word.

How often have we heard the words, "Preach the Gospel at all times, and if necessary use words." Are you proclaiming Him more by your words than your being?

Jesus met Nathanael in that same chapter. When Jesus saw him it was not the first time, but He saw him earlier under the fig tree. I can imagine that Jesus' seeing is different than others and so when He saw Nathanael under the fig tree, He really saw him. Saw him as he truly is, so that He could cry out, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!"

Earlier we have John calling out Behold the Lamb of God, and now we have Jesus crying out, behold a man without guile!

All our seeing and all our speaking must come from out of that place. The mountain of God. It is His aim that we must find Him. Really find Him. He even gave us a clue. I am up on the mountain. And better yet, I am also in you to help you get up the mountain. Because I want to be found by you.

Nathanael said Rabbi, thou art the Son of God, thou art the King of Israel.

Let us just back track here...All that out of "Behold, and Israelite indeed, a man in whom there is no guile? To be guileless, is to have no hidden motives. No other intentions, no hidden agendas. Jesus said on the Mount of Olives:

Matthew 5:8

8 Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.

This is why Nathanael recognized Him. He had eyes to truly see. Once again, just like John the Baptist, I do not believe that this happened so that a verse could be written in the Bible about a man without guile, but rather that we would take note that to know Him as He truly is, one has to meet with Him in the mountain. Unfortunately the mountain is preceded by a desert, but just like Jesus who spent countless hours in the desert alone to pray, He too had his moment on the mountain where He was transfigured before their eyes. When you truly meet with God, He transfigures you. You are forever changed.

What a holy invitation. The desire of God to be known and the fact that He invites you and me. He has made a way through His Son that we may come to Him with boldness, but we need to not cheapen this grace by thinking that it will cost us nothing. It will cost us. It will cost us faith to enter into that place. But what kind of faith? There is entering in and there is a true entering in. Deep calling unto deep. The more we enter, the more we become as dust. Deeper into our nothingness and utter frailty in the sight of His Holiness that is a consuming fire. And yet, He desires that we will know Him in this capacity as well, because His holiness is His love.

Let us not be so quick to say I know God. We are known by Him if we seek Him, but to truly know Him does not come cheaply. He is truly beyond comprehension, but if we are willing to pay the price of knowing Him in this way, He will deal with us accordingly. Our seeing, our hearing and our speaking will no longer be our own. With fear and trembling we will know that we will never speak lightly of how much we know Him.

Let us humble ourselves before Him, and He will lift us up. Let us seek His face anew, being willing to allow Him to strip us of all our categories and let us lay aside what we think we know and "Come up and be there."



A KERNEL OF WHEAT

Jesus said in John 12 that unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and die, it remains alone, but when it dies it will bear much fruit. This falling to the ground is a prerequisite for dying. It is not the dying in itself, but what needs to happen before the dying.

It is the humbling of the soul to an obedience that leads to death.

There is no other path to this sure death than the path of humility. In order for the corn of wheat to fall it has to be loosened from the rest of the corns. This loosening causes the saint to walk alone with no knowledge of how long it will take to see the daybreak, which is a vital part of the dying process. It is a choice, just like Jesus when He left His heavenly dwelling and when agonising in the Garden of Gethsemane. And so once the decision is made, the corn of wheat falls to the soil of our hearts. This heart will have been prepared and ready to receive the seed of life. The will has been given over unto Him.

Therefore, the Father comes and buries this seed in the heart. This seed lies in the depth of the heart, where only the Spirit of God can see. If I say, surely the darkness shalt cover me; even the night shall be light about me. (Ps. 139: 11) For some the darkness seems as if it will never end. And during this process, one cannot but feel..."My God, why has thou forsaken me?" Even Jesus cried this out on the cross.

In the waiting there is a stillness, a knowing that He is God. The seed buried in the tomb, in the womb of God, the grave remains silent hidden in Him. Dark is the night of the soul who waits patiently and in faith for this Resurrection Life to be birthed. Until, the time has come. He makes all things beautiful in His time. He is the Resurrection and the Life!

For it is He that plants and He alone that grows. For everything there is a season and a time. For everything, for dying and for life.

We have been planted in the soil of this earth and our husbandman has seen to the growth and maturity. Daily He watches over us even as we eagerly await His return. Soon from out of the grave, we will rise to newness of Life in Him. Be patient, He will not delay. He has promised that He will return.

Scripture ref:

John 12: 24 25

John 12: 24 Verily, verily, I say unto you. Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abide alone: but if it die, it bring forth much fruit.

V25 He that love his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal.

Ecclesiastes 3: 1 – 2; 11

V1 To everything there is a season and a time to every purpose under the heaven.

V2 A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted.

V11 He hath made everything beautiful in His time: also he hath set the world in their heart, so that no man can find out the work that God makes from the beginning to the end.

Psalms 139 King James Version (KJV)

139 O lord, thou hast searched me, and known me.

2 Thou know my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understand my thought afar off.

3 Thou compass my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways.

4 For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O Lord, thou know it altogether.

5 Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me.

6 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it.

7 Whither shall I go from thy spirit? Or whither shall I flee from thy presence?

8 If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there.

9 If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea;

10 Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.

11 If I say, surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me.

12 Yea, the darkness hide not from thee; but the night shine as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee.

13 For thou hast possessed my reins: thou hast covered me in my mother's womb.



FROM SLAVERY TO FREEDOM

Jesus said that "It is finished". The meaning of this is so all inclusive that if we had to believe and apply it to all of our lives, it would increase our faith and cause us not to walk as mere men. He desires that we would walk in the truth of what He has done and who we are.

But the truth is that many have learned the Christian language and say things very often when it has not yet become a reality. Truth is reality, and if we are not walking in the truth, we are not in reality. We are walking a lie, whilst speaking a truth. Father wants us to be the truth, not just proclaim it. For this He has to remove every falsehood we still believe. Jesus has done the work and has finished all that Father has given Him to do, and is seated at the right hand of Father, waiting for His enemy to become His footstool. We are no longer slaves, and have been set free to walk in this freedom.

It has been documented that slaves that have been in slavery for a very long time do not know how to be free. If they were sleeping on the floor for years, they find it difficult to adjust to a bed. They would literally be more comfortable on the floor than on the bed. They keep living as slaves, even though in reality they have been set free. So we too find ourselves enslaved in our thinking. This dual lifestyle frustrates and condemns us, and the enemy loves it so. Our identity remains as slaves in our minds, whilst our true identity is in Christ, our new owner, who has bought us with His blood. We know in our innermost being that this life we are now living, is supposed to be lived in the Spirit and with great power.

THE JUST SHALL LIVE BY FAITH!

THE SLAVES SHALL LIVE BY FEAR!

I am a child of God, accepted in the Beloved by my Father who IS my strength and makes me more than an overcomer, by faith. I am a new creation.

Our boast is in the Lord, but only to the degree that we have faced our weakness and embraced His truth. The weakness of the flesh that is unable to fulfil the will of God cannot just be something we say, but it has to be such a reality to us that drive us to utter dependence on Him. He has to show us. We are all a Thomas that has to be shown in order to believe. He has to show

us how weak we are, so that we will be so utterly dependent upon Him. Our degree of dependence is our degree of faith in Him. This dependency is the heart of abiding. Abiding in Him, the truth. For it is only the TRUTH that will set us free. This Truth is that which exposes the lie in us and around us, so that we may no longer walk in darkness and stumble as slaves, but that we walk in the light, even as He walks. Our true identity lies hidden beneath all the lies. But we have been given the truth, even in our hands, as the very living Word of God. If we then have the Truth of the Word within our hands, how is it that we are still walking as slaves?

Romans 8: 1 says there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus....we have been set free.

Do you truly believe this? Jesus said, "Only believe!" Truth cannot set us free unless we believe. And we only truly believe to the degree that we have faced the lies that still bind us. We hold the key, we choose either by our unbelief or by our faith.

Scripture ref:

Romans 8 King James Version (KJV)

8 There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

3 For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:

4 That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

5 For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.

6 For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.

7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

8 So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.

9 But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

10 And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.

11 But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwells in you.

12 Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh.

13 For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.

14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

15 For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.

16 The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:

17 And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.

18 For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

19 For the earnest expectation of the creature waits for the manifestation of the sons of God.

20 For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope,

21 Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

22 For we know that the whole creation groans and travails in pain together until now.

23 And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.

24 For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man sees, why doth he yet hope for?

25 But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.

26 Likewise the Spirit also helps our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

27 And he that searches the hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because he makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.

28 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.



FROM ABOVE

We often dwell and meditate on the life of Jesus here on earth. But how often have we given thought of Jesus, the Only Begotten Son, before His incarnation? Before the Word became flesh and dwelt among us. Before time and before matter.

How will we really be able to grasp with our tiny hands the magnitude of the relationship between the Father and the Son before time? God is infinite, we are finite. God is I AM, the self-existing one, we are created. We would marvel in brokenness and awe if we had to just have one glimpse of the love between Father and His Son. Being one with the Spirit, they decided to send the Son, the Word to become flesh for us. To leave this bliss and glory to be born of a virgin, to enter this world with the cry of a little baby, helpless and dependant on His parents. From a place of absolute power and total glory, to dust. To ignore the relationship between the Father and the Son would leave our appreciation and gratitude limited. We will go from gratitude to adoration, from seeing to knowing. One can only imagine the ever existing love that have been between them. The unity between them that always existed to "My God why have Thou forsaken Me?" Can we ever begin to understand the anguish?

But there came a day, when they decided to make another. For love finds full expression in loving the unlovable and the unworthy. We have no idea of the relationship between Adam and God, for Adam was made for fellowship with God – he was the object of His love. Even though He knew that this object of His eternal love would turn in rebellion from Him and would fall from grace, He still created him and He still loved him. To save man would mean to satisfy His own wrath, and only He could satisfy His own wrath. This Almighty Self-existing God left His home, this beautiful heaven, His Father, the joys and worship of the angels and came in the frailty of human flesh. He parted from the loving embrace of Father into the cold embrace of sin. From life to death He came.

He is the Lamb slain before the foundation of the earth and whilst we were sinners He died for us. We say this so often to others and it is so easy to just say these words without considering the weight of it. God, stripped Himself from all that is divine and chose death to all that is glorious, beautiful and holy. He grew up as a child with all our temptations and died a cruel and

brutal death on a cross. Be still and ponder in amazement and worship in the love of our God! He who is God, stripped Himself to become a man. This happened in heaven first, before it happened on earth. He is the beginning and the End at the same time, outside of time. The Lamb slain before the foundation of the earth.

This act of humility and love is the essence of God. This is who He is...He is love. The full expression of love, is a suffering love. The love that does not consider who He is, but strips Himself to become our servant and humbles Himself to obey even unto death.

Yes, we can say that Jesus knew that there would be a resurrection, but we fail to see that on earth, He came as the Son of Man. He was just a man, tempted like us in all things and even worse than we have been. And yet He never sinned. Hell and all the demons had their sights on Him and had one aim, which was to cause Him to sin and kill Him. To take Him down and make sure that He would not succeed in His mission. Now we have become the enemy's target. Hell hates us with the same hatred it hates Him and will do what it takes to take us out.

What a love! What a sacrificial love! There is no other kind of love like this. Love is sacrifice. Love humbles itself and gives full expression once it has poured every drop out. He loves me this way. He loves you this way. He went through all of this for us. We like Adam, are the object of His love.

Jesus said, love one another, just as I have loved you. Are we willing to give up our comfort, our time, our possessions, our family, and our honour – our lives? Another word for witness is martyr. All of Jesus' disciples were martyred, except John. The question is not whether we will be martyred, the question is, are you willing. Only His Spirit can do such a work in us, and I believe that, that work is a true revelation of His love for us. This love knows no bounds. This love has no price too big to pay. This love confounds all reason and this love is unlimited and this love is God. When we receive this revelation of His love and He pours this love into our hearts, we receive the full expression of who He is. The truth is, He has already given us all of His love. He gives liberally and without partiality. Only we have to believe.

I asked the Lord to pour out His love in me. I was not asking for a little stream of love, I was asking for a revelation of this kind of love we have been talking about now. He told me that I do not know what I am asking. He was right, I did not. His answer to me was, "No one has greater love than he that is willing to lay down his life for his friends." "Are you willing to lay your life down for this love?"

Yes, Lord.

God will never force us, He always invites, always prepares the heart, but in the end, the decision will ultimately remain with us. This is the narrow road. And yet, this is exactly what He did for us.

Scripture ref:

Philippians 2 King James Version (KJV)

2 If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies,

2 Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.

3 Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.

4 Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.

5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:

6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:

7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:

8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

1 Corinthians 13

13 Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not love, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.

2 And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not love, I am nothing.

3 And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not love, it profits me nothing.

4 Love suffer long, and is kind; love envy not; charity vaunt not itself, is not puffed up,

5 Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil;

6 Rejoice not in iniquity, but rejoice in the truth;

7 Bears all things, believeth all things, hopes all things, endure all things.

8 Love never fails: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.



BETRAYED WITH A KISS

John 13 paints the picture of Jesus and His disciples having the last supper. As it was the custom in that time, one sat on cushions at a very low table. This probably explains how John was the one lying on Jesus' breast. He loves them dearly and I can only imagine how often they sat at a table at night and the wonderful fellowship they had with our Lord. It was probably a time of teaching set aside for His disciples.

However, on this particular night, Jesus tells His disciples that it would be their last time together like this and that one of them would betray Him into the enemy's hands. One would think that they would know that this was Judas, but John leaned upon Jesus' breast and asked Him who it was. This awful truth was concealed from them, but Jesus knew. Jesus knew that it would be so, because He knew that prophecy had to be fulfilled. He knew from a young age that one of His disciples would betray Him. Even this same night Jesus told them that they would deny Him and like sheep be scattered. This too was the fulfilment of prophecy.

Can we imagine even how difficult this must have been for Jesus to have loved them all and know that in His hour of need, they would all desert Him and some even betray Him? Of course we would love to rationalise the fact that He knew all along and that He had a long time to get use to the idea and accept it. But human nature, which Jesus had, is to self-protect. We often push people away before they can do us any harm. But Jesus prayed in John 17 how He desires that Father would keep all that He has given to Him, in His Name.

This does not sound like someone that is about to be betrayed and deserted.

So knowing all of this, in John 13, Jesus takes off His upper garment and girds Himself with a loincloth to wash His disciple's feet. The very same disciples He knew was about to desert Him.

This washing of the feet, is not one moment in time, but rather it is the sum of all His moments whilst He was here on earth. As the Savior who served.

Taking off His upper garment represents leaving heaven to become a man. From King to servant. In 1 Peter 5: 5b it says that we are to clothe ourselves (apron ourselves) with humility towards everyone, for God sets Himself against the prideful, but He gives grace to the humble. Peter, the

one who betrayed Him three times, wrote those very words. I can imagine that as He was writing those words, the very night that Jesus washed His feet, played out in His memory. He could probably still hear the shrill cry of the rooster.

In Phil. 2: 5 it says, Let this same attitude and purpose and humble mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus, who, although being essentially one with God and in the form of God, did not think this equality with God a thing to be eagerly grasped or retained, but stripped Himself, so as to assume the guise of a servant in that He became like men and was born a human being. And after He had appeared in human form, He abased and humbled Himself and carried His obedience to the extreme of death, even the death of the cross.

In essence, His whole life on earth portrays the servant heart of God. This clearly states that even though He knew that as God, He deserved to be served, He served others, even those that would deny and betray Him. I have been betrayed a few times in my life. Never has my mind gone to serving them in humility. I could scarcely pray for them after I have mustered the grace to forgive, and sometimes it took years. Betrayal cuts deep. Betrayal carries with it the shock of disbelief and extreme hurt. It is not easy in the least when our trust is shattered.

Jesus said in John 15 to His disciples after washing their feet that the servants are not greater than their Master. They too would be deserted and be placed on trial, but that they can be of good cheer, because He has overcome this world. Note, He said those words before being actually crucified. He said it in past tense. Meaning He has already done it. Jesus' life was a testimony that the prince of the world had nothing in Him. How He lived and not just how He died was together the victory won for us. Gethsemane was the place where the victory was accomplished for us. The moment He said not My will be done, but Yours, was the moment that He bruised that serpent's head. What happened on the cross was the expression and fulfillment of what has taken place before the foundation of the world. He is forever the Lamb slain before the foundation of this world.

Jesus is the patterned Son to whom we look to. The way He walked and lived. We look to Him to overcome, not to ourselves. Humility will always be a choice. It is not something that will come over us like a cloud or a feeling, but it is a choice to lay down your life. Especially for those who do not deserve it. Very often we would like the Lord to take away anger and the desire for vengeance. Or we want Him to give us the grace to not get so selfish or over sensitive. I would like you to know that you will be waiting for a long time. It starts with us. A deep humility, a choice, to lay our lives down is what He asks of us. Follow Me and take up your cross.

In John 10 Jesus told them that nobody forces Him to lay His life down, but that He lays His life down on His own accord. Many struggles we have lie in the root of pride, if not all. But if we do the first act of humility, He will follow it with grace to lift us up.

God's requirement of us is to serve those around us. This renders the enemy powerless, because he can in that moment find nothing in us, if we do it with a sincere heart out of love. By this the world will know that you are My disciples, if you love one another.

Scripture ref:

John 13

13 Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end.

2 And supper being ended, the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him;

3 Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God;

4 He rises from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself.

5 After that he poured water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded.

6 Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet?

7 Jesus answered and said unto him, what I do thou know not now; but thou shalt know hereafter.

8 Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, if I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.

9 Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head.

10 Jesus saith to him, He that is washed need not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all.

11 For he knew who should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean.

12 So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you?

13 Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am.

14 If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet.

15 For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.

16 Verily, verily, I say unto you, the servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him.

17 If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.

18 I speak not of you all: I know whom I have chosen: but that the scripture may be fulfilled, He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me.

19 Now I tell you before it come, that, when it is come to pass, ye may believe that I am he.



FAITH WORKETH BY LOVE

Do we truly believe that He loves us the way He says? The evidence is not by what we say, but by how we live. Our life is the expression of our faith, not just our words. He said that a tree will be known by its fruit. Father loves us so much, but our lack of faith is directly related to whether we believe it or not.

This world brings with it such fierce trials that causes many across the world to question whether God is love. They lift up their fists in defiance and curse God. Many believers say that they believe God is love, until something terribly tragic happens, and then the questioning starts. Why would He allow this? He says He is love, but love does not do this? We measure God by our standard, instead of His Word. We look at our circumstances and call this His fruit. We say look what He has allowed when He could have stopped it! What matter the most is not whether we believe God's love for us when we feel blessed and love, but when we hear the report of cancer, divorce, suicide, child disorders and war. Do we believe His love then? In the midst of these things our song is to rise in adoration and we are to proclaim His love to all, especially to those who do not understand. Like Paul and Silas, we are to worship Him in our bonds.

We are to give an account to those around us for the hope that we have. But, before we can do this, I need to ask you. Is there any fear in your life? Fear about your children, your family's future and your finances? Do you fear the dark, do you fear the unexpected? Do you fear that He might only have the best for others, but not for you? Do you fear that He might ask you one day to do something that you won't be able to do? Do you fear that you will not go with when you hear the trumpet call? Do you deep down in yourself feel that you are not good enough? Do you have fear? Because unless you deal with this fear, the Word says that you have not been made perfect in His love. This very fear, which would seem to this world as reasonable given your circumstances, are the very testimony of a love that is not made perfect yet.

Do you dare to cast your fear away and believe? The Word says that faith worketh by love. Knowing, truly knowing His love, will have the fruit of absolute trust, no matter what the circumstances. This is not just a question of resisting fear, this is about coming to the truth of whether you trust Father in ALL things. We have to be brutally honest with ourselves and acknowledge our fears to Him and then allow the Spirit of God to bring conviction. Fear is what

causes us to not believe the Word of God in totality. We take only that which we think might be applicable and the big and lofty things are for the super spiritual. But God's love to us is extended with such abundance. He loves us freely and boldly. He carries us in His love, He showers us with His love and it is the very force which drove Him to the cross. The cross is the full expression of His love for us!

We rest in Him when we come to the revelation of His love. We come to a place of trust. Are you truly in that place of trust? Examine yourself. Ask yourself, "Do I trust Him with everything?"

Faith and love is inseparable. To the degree that we believe He loves us, is the degree that we trust Him. No matter what you testify to others about His love for all, the proof is in the pudding. God wants to remove all doubt from your heart about Him. All fear must go. The just shall live by faith.

Our Father wants us to abide in His love, and from this relationship of absolute trust, live our lives. From this place of trust, nothing is impossible for us and we are eternally secure and at rest in His love.

Scripture ref:

1 John 4: 16 - 18

16 And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwells in love dwells in God, and God in him.

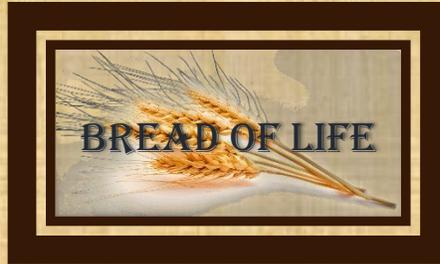
17 Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the Day of Judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world.

18 There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear: because fear hath torment. He that fears is not made perfect in love.

19 We love him, because he first loved us.

Notes:





A LIVING SACRIFICE

As I take communion I am reminded that the first thing I say when breaking the bread, is to thank Him that His body was broken for me. Not surgically and clean, but torn, bruised, scourged, whipped and pierced. I am reminded that as I drink my grape juice carefully out of my cup, that His blood was splattered all over the ground, on His precious body, His head, running over His eyes and mouth, pumping out of His body like a fountain, with every heartbeat. As He stumbled with that heavy cross on His back all the way to Golgotha, a trail of blood followed Him all the way to the cross, until the last drop of blood fell to the ground.

Romans 12:1 says that we must present our bodies as a living sacrifice unto Him, which is our reasonable service. I have to ask myself, "Would He that has presented His body to us broken and torn, and His blood poured out of gaping wounds, require of us anything different? These are hard words, difficult for us to understand in the church culture where "Jesus is love", is basically the only attribute of God. But our God is holy. And the sacrifice He requires is holy. But what constitute a holy sacrifice.

We all are a royal priesthood unto God. The role of the priest is that of holiness. When we look at Leviticus we find that blood was placed on their earlobe, right thumb and toe. When a sacrifice was made there was literally blood everywhere and on everything. Priestly business is a bloody business. Jesus, as our High Priest, said, "Father, a body thou hast prepared for me to do thy will." He was speaking of the sacrifice of His body. As our High Priest He offered Himself on the altar of the cross. The high priest had to go once a year into the Holy of Holies, with little bells and a rope tied around his waist. People knew that once those bells stopped ringing, the high priest was found with sin in his life, and was dead and they could merely pull him out. Every high priest through the ages knew that his life was a living sacrifice. He knew that he was giving his life for the people and this was his calling, but also something he chose even before he entered. They entered with the fear of God.

We are this body of Jesus. A body presented to Him as a living sacrifice, as priests. We gladly give Him our hearts and those tangible things of this world that has occupied our hearts. We esteem those who have given their lives in sacrifice for His Kingdom and secretly hope that we would never have to come to this point. Somehow, we have gotten it right to write on the bottom

of the contract of being a living sacrifice, in fine print, that giving our lives were optional. Maybe forced, we would do it, but surely we do not have to make a decision now. Do we? Hebrews 11 tells a story of great heroes of faith. Some died natural deaths, but the last part of the chapter becomes a bit gruesome. These heroes of the faith stand at the gate of Hebrews 12, our cheerleaders! Cheering us on to run this race with patience. To not only not give up, but to look to Him. Dare we write our name in at the last chapter of Hebrews 11? By faith, Pietra...

And here in lies the crux of the matter. Jesus is the Author and Finisher of our faith. He decides what needs to happen...He wrote the book of your life. You still have a choice. Romans 12:1 ends with "so that you may know the good, acceptable and perfect will of God." This is the choice - good, acceptable or perfect. He will not force any of us, but He does not want us to be ignorant of the price. For the good, the acceptable and the perfect, there is an individual price. The stakes gets higher each time. The race for each of us will finish eventually, because He has written our race, and He finishes what He starts. But how we finish, will depend on us.

Jesus finished His race by doing two things. He endured the cross and He despised the shame. Despising the shame is to not allow that which is done to us to cause us to stumble, even if it is at the hand of God. He took the shame on Him as part of the price He paid for us. He endured the cross because He knew it was Father's perfect will for Him. How did He do it? Verse 2 says, who for the joy set before Him...

What was that joy? The Word says, He is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. The highest honour for the highest price. Just as there is a price to be paid for the good, acceptable and perfect, there will be a reward for the good, acceptable and perfect. Our God is just and faithful in all His ways.

For some He has prepared this heart of sacrifice. They are the priestly ones that enter into the Holy of Holies, having given their lives even before they have gone in. They are the living dead so to speak. They enter as dead men into His presence, but come out in newness of resurrection life. No flesh may enter into the Holy of Holies.

I realize these words are not easy to read and one is apt to read them quickly without taking into consideration that when we present our lives as a living sacrifice that there is an ultimate sacrifice in the end. Our flesh rebels and squirms away as the coward it is, but our spirit says "yes and amen!" He requires of us to count the cost for the Kingdom of God. Over and over in the Word we find an ultimate requirement...your life! How we perceive and choose to take that is completely up to ourselves.

As the Priest so the people. Our Father always prepare us. Some are at the good, some acceptable, and some has gone over to the perfect. This does not happen overnight. No, Jesus himself was thirty years in preparation before He started His ministry. I can imagine that His preparation was the good, His ministry was the acceptable, but His death was the perfect.

This meditation is not to condemn or judge or throw the guilt card on the table. It is simply something Father is speaking to me about, and I have no doubt to many others out there. God loves us equally, no matter where we find ourselves in the good, acceptable or perfect. He knows what we can give and what He has invested in us to get us to that point. Jesus Himself, was sweating big drops of blood the night before entering the perfect. His whole being was crying out, because at that very moment He was counting the cost. Absolute sacrifice requires absolute obedience. This moment was the culmination of all His moments as a living sacrifice. How will we ever be able to truly understand the dependence He had on Father in that very moment to be able to die right there in the garden, before He entered into the Holy of Holies, as our High Priest? He too, was just a man.

Father, we desire to do Your will, but we are utterly weak and but dust. But we know, when we are weak, You are strong. Like Stephen, we too long to see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of God, when the heavens open. Some of us are enduring terrible abuse, pain and sorrow even in this day. These very things are divinely placed and allowed in our lives that we may be a living sacrifice. We cannot do this without You. Give us the grace to walk in the season that we are presently in, whether it is the good, acceptable or perfect. Give us understanding and discernment to see the Sculptor's divine hand shaping us in this season to be a vessel of honour. A vessel that can be poured out for You. May You be glorified in our lives as we present our bodies as a living sacrifice unto You. Help us not to lament about where we are and mourn because we have not moved forward as we should have, because You turn all things to good for those who love you and are called by Your Name. You meet us where we are, and not where we think we are supposed to be. Right here, in this moment, living moment to moment, You love us unconditionally and extravagantly, with no strings attached. Pure love, leading us to holiness unto You. Making us Priests unto You not just in name, but in truth. We glorify You Father. Holy, Holy, Holy, are you Lord God Almighty! Amen.

Scripture ref:

Romans 12: 1 - 2

12 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

Hebrews 12: 1 - 8

12 Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,



LOVING THE UNLOVABLE

One would think that loving someone is the easiest thing to do. Surely it cannot be that difficult? When Jesus said that the two greatest commandments are to love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind and strength and the second one, like unto the first, to love your neighbour as yourself, I have to wonder whether He did not in actuality meant the most difficult commandments are these two. Meaning that out of all of them...these will be the most difficult.

Yes, I am quite familiar with the fact that within these two commandments the whole of the law is fulfilled. But this law of love is to be fulfilled in us. It makes me think of when someone comes to you and asks, "Okay, what do you want to hear first? The good news or the bad news?" Good news is that we have love to Him. The bad news...well you get my point. I cannot but believe that the one goes before the other. That unless you love Him with all your heart, mind and strength, you will be quite incapable of doing the other. To love a loving God that has been so longsuffering and have pursued us from birth by His Spirit, even if we did not know it, is a lot more inviting than loving people around us that is so the opposite of Him...unlovable. Of course, His requirement for us to love Him with all our heart, mind and strength is no small thing. It requires of Him to ruthlessly deal with all the categories of heart, mind and strength. All our idols, our way of thinking and its categories and then to get us to the point where there is no leaning upon the flesh. That is dying to self in a nutshell. What a journey of self-discovery, but also of discovering who our God is. What an honor, even if it does kills self in the end! His life, exchanged for our miserable one.

But then we find the writing at the bottom of the page that catches our eye. What? I have to love him? You mean the one who gossips about me? The one who verbally abuses me day in and day out? You mean the one who wants nothing to do with me? You mean that one who has been using me for years and shows no remorse? Yip, that's the one! We can understand loving and forgiving those who hurt us occasionally. You know, the ones that bite your head off because they have been having a bad day. Or the ones that cut in in front of you on the freeway. Or even your noisy neighbour that just have no idea of time. But surely not the one who has been verbally abusing or gas lighting me? Surely those who are so cruel in their nature and shows no remorse, but are just simply the most horrible hard hearted individuals need to be put in their place! They

cannot get away with what they are doing! They need to know that they have crossed the line and be told that you will not take their abuse! Just so you know, I am not saying we should stay in situations that may cause us physical injury.

I have come to realize that everything has degrees. Just like trees have to grow higher and higher, the roots need to grow deeper and deeper. We have read about the Wurmbrands, the Dimitri Dudemans and Brother Yuns. Now that was abuse! And yet, these giants in the faith is known as the most humble people you can find. God's attributes cannot be separated. His love is His holiness, is His humility and I can go on and on. They could not part His garment. So love cannot be separated from holiness and humility. The taller we grow in Him, the deeper we have to go in humility. The deeper we go in humility, the more it hurts. It's a fact. I cannot help but think of Jesus, Creator of all things, going down on His knees to carefully and lovingly wash the feet of the ones who all would desert Him in His time of need. I cannot help but think of how He on the cross forgave them all whilst having been mercilessly been beaten and crucified. Neither can I forget how He met them at the shore, getting a fire ready and preparing a meal for His beloveds.

His requirement of us is so ultimate. Who is sufficient for these things? No one. Only He can do it through us. Now before you sigh a sigh of relieve, just so you know, it will take your co-operation. It will take of you to do. Love is a verb. Feelings come through your obedience in humility. You do not start to feel love and then act out of that love. You are going to have to make the tough decision to choose to love. This will mean that you decide to act out. You could say fake it till you make it. When you are still in that place where you can do it out of your own strength and can muster up the self-control to keep quiet or forgive because you know you have to, please do not think that that is the end to it. Because the love He requires of us is none other than the love of 1 Corinthians 13. We look at that chapter and we think that it is just plain impossible...but such nice words. But this is the very thing He is working in us by working the first commandment in us. To love Him with all our heart, mind and strength. Because unless He has thoroughly dealt with us in this area, we will surely be lacking in a huge way in the second commandment. The second one is the doozy. With God we cannot get away. With man, we still have a chance. After all, they do not hold life and death in their hands like God. But what He wants us to know beyond everything, is that the one is like unto the other. Those are His words. You cannot say you love Me, who you cannot see and hate your brother that you can see.

It will require us to not hide behind our spiritual defenses of I forgive you or keeping quiet when insulted or abused. It will require of us to go on the offensive. To act out. To do something. Love is a verb. We will have to start to bless those who hurt us and spitefully use us from the heart and pray for them from God's perspective and how He has seen us all along who deserve His wrath. We will have to choose to spend time with them and as Jesus said, not just give our coat, but our undergarment as well. We will have to wash their feet, when those very feet stomp over us daily. We will have to express our love, even if it takes all the strength and grit in us to just utter those words, because they so do not deserve it. Love covers a multitude of sin. It has

covered my multitude. John 3: 16 says that God so love the world that He GAVE...His only begotten Son. He gave. He did not just speak, He gave. And He still gives all the time. Daily we are surrounded with His goodness towards us who do not deserve it. God is humble.

I do not write this meditation lightly. My task is set before me and I cannot deny it. It will not be an easy one. It will require of me a further dying that I frankly are not looking forward to. But, this is not my first rodeo, so I know my reward awaits. Even if it will only be in heaven. I have a choice to make. Will I sit in the comfort of making spiritual decisions of forgiving, not retaliating, and blessing those that hurt me daily in prayer, or am I going to act out on His grace that He will give me, if I choose to love them the way He wants me to. I am by no means saying that forgiving someone and not retaliating is small or insignificant. I would say it is absolutely necessary for the next step, because unless He has worked that in you, how will you be able to go over authentically into the next step, which is to show that love?

Maybe I am preaching to the choir, or maybe there is someone out there today that needed to hear this message. If that someone is out there, please know that you are not alone. It is a lonely journey. But He promised that He will never leave us, nor forsake us. These people are the proverbial thorns in the flesh. As Paul says, this was allowed to keep him from thinking highly of himself. But God told him His grace is sufficient for him to help him.

That means that His grace is what we need. Not our ability or our effort or anything we can do. Just His grace. And He is saying...I am giving it to you.

I received this message from Father a few days ago, not knowing why He was telling me this and for what. But, here I am and I have a choice. Do I go back and hide, or do I step up and love. I am guessing He will not ask us one day whether we knew what date He would come, or were we up to speed with the enemy's plans, but rather, "Did you love them? Did you love the unlovable the way I loved you?"

His love is sacrificial. It is ultimate. It leaves no one out and it is a death to the giver but life unto the receiver. He is indeed the God who sees. Vengeance belongs to Him and no one will one day get away with it. But we are called to be living sacrifices. We are called to be those who will do mighty through the Lord. Not as the world would do it through strength and might, but through His Spirit. There is no greater force than love. He is ready to pour out His love in us by His Spirit, if we choose to be poured out by Him. He will sustain, He will give strength, He will uphold, He will comfort, He will renew and restore and He will keep pouring that endless and boundless love of His into the hearts who keep pouring it out. Vessels that are holy, vessels that are humble. Vessels that serve. Not just when it goes well, but especially when used and abused in this world. What love and what a holy God we serve! His ways are far beyond our understanding. He is altogether lovely and worthy to be loved and praised! He loves the unlovable through us. We are only the vessels. He can only do it through us, if we willingly lay our lives down. And He will keep on filling us.

Let your light so shine that the world may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.

I'm going to let this little light shine.

Scripture ref:

John 15: 9 - 27

9 As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love.

10 If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.

11 These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.

12 This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you.

13 Greater love hath no man than this that a man lay down his life for his friends.

14 Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.

15 Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knows not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.

16 Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.

17 These things I command you, that ye love one another.

18 If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you.

19 If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.

20 Remember the word that I said unto you, the servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also.

21 But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me.

22 If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloak for their sin.

23 He that hateth me hateth my Father also.

24 If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father.



I AM WHO I AM

The Lord gave each one of us a particular personality. This personality is who we are, but also who we are meant to be – created for His purposes. In essence each individual personality is reflecting the different character of God.

We are all living stones built up in Him. As His body we represent the Father to this world in the same way as Jesus did in the midst of this crooked generation. We are to be Christ on earth. Collectively and in unity we are not just His arms, hands, feet, ears and mouth, but the Word says we have the mind of Christ. We are a new creation. Christ in us, the hope of glory.

God has uniquely and personally shaped our characters to fulfil a specific role in this world, in your world. We cannot all be leaders, or counsellors, or evangelists or preachers...believe it or not, there is a certain personality type connected to all these gifts. Does this mean we cannot do these things if our personality type does not go with them? No, we can do ALL things through Christ Jesus! But I believe He made our personality in such a way that these gifts and offices He gives becomes a natural. We hear things like “he is a born leader” or “He has such a shepherd’s heart” etc. He had a plan right from the beginning when He made you. Not only does He give us a certain personality, but He orchestrates our life’s circumstances to bring His character into our personality. This is all to fulfil His purpose for us individually and collectively as the Church.

For we are His workmanship in Christ Jesus, created unto good works, which He has preordained that we should walk in them. Each one gets to play a vital role in the Kingdom of God. Each one of us, showing to the world...this is what God is like. As children of God, we bare the character of our God, just like in a family on earth, where the different children are different in character compared to one another, but all like the Father. They have the same character traits as the father.

So not only does the Lord build our character to have the fruits of the Spirit as we abide in Him, but He gives us certain personality traits of Him, and He then bestows gifts and offices upon us to fulfil His purposes. And the icing on the cake....He fills us with His Spirit! This is so that in all these wonderful things we are in Him, we do not have to live after the dictates of the flesh, but be controlled by the Spirit.

2 Peter 1:3-4

3 According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:

4 Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

We truly have no need of anything. Everything we need is in Him!

This is why we should not desire to be like other personality types – more assertive, more introvert or extrovert, more gregarious or more creative etc. As wonderful as all these things are, they were not what Father planned for us. Our focus must be His purpose not for our lives, but for His...His Kingdom! We do not all know what that specific purpose is, but He does. And the longer we fight against the grain of what He has divinely ordained, the longer we will look to others and not to Him – the Author and Finisher of our lives.

This brings me to communion. Drinking His blood and eating His flesh. DNA, research shows, is like a book. A very long book. It is our book of life. It contains genetic and physical traits of our parents and so much more. Who is our Father? God is. We eat His flesh, the broken bread. For our vile body of flesh, once we have died with Christ on the cross, we receive a glorious resurrected body. But we now live in Christ, the bread broken for us. We have His blood and His body. He is our head and we are His body. This thought just amazes me! We are truly a new creation IN Christ Jesus! No longer of this world, but Jesus' prayer has been fulfilled of John 17.

John 17: 22 - 23

22 And the glory which thou gave me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one:

23 I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.

This is how we move and live and have our being. He has truly given us all things!

Our personality type is to glorify God and not ourselves. Never are we to excuse our sin as just the way we are. We should continue to allow the Potter to form the clay into His image daily. But we must be soft pliable clay in His hands. We are truly fearfully and wonderfully made! When we embrace who we are, we in essence embrace Him. Thank you Lord for making me just like You.

God's desire is that we will be holy. He installs and knits into our being a unique character and personality, lavish us with the gifts of the Spirit and pours His divine nature into us. That we may be children of the Most High God. Like Father, like Son.

Scripture ref:

Jeremiah 18: 6

6 O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? Saith the Lord. Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in mine hand, O house of Israel.

Psalms 139 King James Version (KJV)

139 O lord, thou hast searched me, and known me.

2 Thou know my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understand my thought afar off.

3 Thou compass my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways.

4 For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O Lord, thou know it altogether.

5 Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me.

6 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it.

7 Whither shall I go from thy spirit? Or whither shall I flee from thy presence?

8 If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there.

9 If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea;

10 Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.

11 If I say, surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me.

12 Yea, the darkness hide not from thee; but the night shine as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee.

13 For thou hast possessed my reins: thou hast covered me in my mother's womb.

14 I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knows right well.

15 My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth.

16 Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them.

17 How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! How great is the sum of them!

18 If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand: when I awake, I am still with thee.



PROXIMITY

John 6:44-45

44 No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.

45 It is written in the prophets, and they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.

The Lord says that His sheep knows His voice. This knowing speaks of an intimacy that is not one of just knowing the written Word, but also Him who is called The Word of God. It is easy to assume we know Him because of our biblical knowledge and to pride ourselves in this knowledge. But His voice is twofold. It is written and it is a Person. We know this, this is not new to us. But Father draws us to Jesus according to John 6: 44. He draws us to teach us and to love us. We have heard often of John being the apostle who laid his head on our Lord's bosom. The disciples Jesus loved dearly. This laying on His breast is such an act of complete surrender and rest. How did John amongst all the other disciples come to this place, and not they? And is it not amazing to know that John was the disciple that Jesus revealed Himself to in the Book of Revelations? We also know that John is one of the 12 disciples that did not see death in martyrdom as they did, but died of natural causes, like Simeon. John, is our example of the Bride in intimacy with her Lord. Her place is in very close proximity of Him...on His breast, close to His heart. This is a different knowing than that of studying the Word. This is a place of knowing Him.

He says His sheep knows His voice. In Song of Solomon it says in chapter 1:4 Draw me, we will run after thee, the King hath brought me into His chambers.

The Bride of Christ is drawn into the chambers to there commune with Him. To know Him, to lay upon His breast and to love Him and be loved. What is your proximity to Him today? Are you close to His bosom? Is your ear close to His heart? Do you have an ear to hear?

Luke 9:27-36

27 But I tell you of a truth, there be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the kingdom of God.

28 And it came to pass about an eight days after these sayings, he took Peter and John and James, and went up into a mountain to pray.

29 And as he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and glistening.

We see John, Peter and James going to the mount of transfiguration. John means God has been gracious, speaking of being saved by grace. Peter means rock and James means Jacob, surplanter. How come these three disciples were privy to go with the Lord to see His glory? Is it possible that they were in His inner circle? Were they drawn by the Father into the chamber? Those who were drawn into His chamber that He could reveal Himself to? Why did He not allow all His disciples to see His glory? Maybe some of us is John, or a Peter or James? Your proximity will determine this. Just as the tabernacle is built out of the outer court, inner court and most holy place, so His bosom is that chamber of the most holy place.

He reveals Himself to those who seek Him. To those who long for His presence and there they learn to know His voice.

John 20: 1 - 4

20 The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and sees the stone taken away from the sepulchre.

2 Then she runs, and comes to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, they have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him.

3 Peter therefore went forth, and that other disciple, and came to the sepulchre.

4 So they ran both together: and the other disciple did outrun Peter, and came first to the sepulchre.

Notice that the other disciple, which is John, outran Simon Peter. John went before Peter. So the Bride will go first and He will reveal Himself to her as the risen Lord. John saw Him as the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, revealed in heavenly visions on the island of Patmos. There His Lord once again, drew Him to be alone, to reveal Himself to him.

John 21: 7

7 Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved saith unto Peter, It is the Lord. Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt his fisher's coat unto him, (for he was naked,) and did cast himself into the sea.

John is the one recognising the Lord. He knows Him.

20 Then Peter, turning about, sees the disciple whom Jesus loved following; which also leaned on his breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrays thee?

21 Peter seeing him saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do?

22 Jesus saith unto him, if I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou me.

23 Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die: yet Jesus said not unto him, He shall not die; but, if I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?

Once again, we see the Bride in John. As important as we see this, is it not more important to know how he became the Bride. Is the place of the Bride not on her Bridegrooms bosom? Is this not the place where He draws us even in this day, if only we would come? This is the place of knowing His voice amongst the many other voices, even amongst ourselves.

I want to be a John, even more than I want to be a Peter or a James. Yes, I want Him to use me, but more than that, I want to know Him.

Draw me Lord, and I will run with You. I want my proximity to be close to You every day. Amen.

Scripture ref:

Revelation 1

1 The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants, things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John:

2 Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw.

Notes:





RUTHLESS LOVE

Sometimes Father asks us to place things upon the altar so that He may consume it and out of the death of that sacrifice, new life may be brought forth. I had one of those moments when I had to place my daughter upon the altar. We have to remind ourselves that the altar is a place of death. Whatever you give to Him is not to receive it back. It is an ultimate giving. So when we place something on God's altar, we have to know that there's no taking it back.

However, when I knew that the Lord was requiring me to give my daughter to Him, I found that I had doubt in my heart whether any life would come out of it. I realized that in my heart was not just doubting, but also a very deep sense of discouragement has settled over me. Discouragement born from years and years of suffering and struggle and so much pain. Something that came to mind during all those years was my general disposition which was that of complaining and murmuring. I complained and murmured until I drowned in self-pity and despair. Anyone who would look from the outside in would completely understand my murmuring. But the issue is not understanding, but what this complaining and murmuring did to my walk in Christ. It was breaking my spirit daily. There were often moments of refreshments with the Lord during these wilderness years that were the source of strength that I needed so desperately to go on. Very much like the water out of the rock. Just enough to face a day, one day at a time. However, this wilderness experience seemed as if it had no end. I came to the conclusion that my Christian walk would always be one of despair and heartache and that I just had to endure it. I would just have to always learn how to deal with things and trust God to take it all away one day. But in truth I was so discouraged that life felt like a jail sentence...and it was for me. So consequently my heartache and suffering never went away. In my heart I was displeased with the Lord's chastisement and discipline. Secretly in my heart I was displeased with Him. I felt it too severe and ruthless the stripping I was going through. Naked from all I had and loved and my shame was ever before me. I was the Christian who always suffered and seldom had any joy. You know..."the needy ones".

In Hebrews 12: 3 it says that we must think of Him who endured from sinners such grievous opposition and bitter hostility against Himself, so that you may not grow weary or exhausted, losing heart and relaxing and fainting in your mind.

Truth is, I did loose heart, I grew very weary and I did faint in my mind. I was overwhelmed with sorrow and in my heart I found it very difficult to understand why God would go so far to teach and mould me.

In the book of Hosea the Lord asks him to marry this prostitute that resembles Israel. We are all this prostitute with our many lovers. Our lovers come in so many different forms and God knows the true state of our heart when we often are not aware of them. I realized that my sin was the reason why I had to go into such a wilderness period. It was so that He could win all of my heart and in the end my experience caused me to seek Him with my whole heart. But the part that really got to me in my meditation was that He being our intercessor and High Priest, has been acquainted with all my sufferings through all those years and was not indifferent neither did He for one moment take any joy in it. He was touched with my infirmities and His heart was broken over my sorrow. He was longing to help me whenever I called out to Him.

My sin to be stripped from me required this kind of scourging. It is a difficult truth to hear, but He allowed it all. The stripping had to be ruthless, it had to be painful and I had to suffer. Sin brings with it death, the very death is the cross we take up every day. Paul said: "I die daily." Suddenly I saw that the pain, suffering, despair, loneliness, worry, burdens heartache and brokenness that I endured was exactly what He endured, but He had the world's. I was touched in the knowledge that the suffering I endured whilst in this wilderness period and all the sin, was what I, by my sin, have placed on Him on the cross. My sin and the consequence of that sin I placed on Him. I could identify with His death upon the cross by my own death of self. It had to be ruthless, because His death was ruthless. I had to endure the pain and suffering so that I could identify with the cross, not just from knowledge, but by experience.

My suffering had meaning and purpose, more than just to mould me, but to help me to identify with Christ, to share in His suffering. But, it also prepared my heart to feel as He feels, to see and hear. It prepared my heart to be one with His.

What kind of Father loves so ruthless that he scourges his children? The One who in Isaiah 53 it states: "Yet it was the will of the Lord to bruise Him, He has put Him to grief and made Him sick."

The Word says that if we share in His suffering, we will share in His glory. I can tell you that my circumstances have not changed one bit. They are exactly the same. But I have changed. Because I was willing for Him to strip me and judge me. I found a freedom and a peace in Him that truly surpasses understanding and is not dictated by my circumstances. I have died with Christ. This is not something I by faith claim to be mine. No, I entered into that death. Like we enter into the baptism water of the Jordan, so we enter into that death. How long it takes, is up to Him. But be encouraged, though the night may tarry and it seems as if it may never end, one glorious morning the sun (Son) rises within you to proclaim a brand new day and life in abundance flows from your innermost being.

Do not let discouragement and despair cloud your mind. Fix your eyes on Him...Your Redeemer draws nigh.



THE HIDDEN PLACE

I am aware lately of a great sense of safety. Not an invisible place, but rather as one protected by her Lover. A hiddenness in Him that has come through the years, where I am, just like Him, quiet in my love for Him. A rest in this love that is surrounded by this hedge of protection. A jealous protection, fierce and loyal. Is there any safer place than in Him?

I am struck by the knowledge that He has made a way for me. Personally, for me. It is so easy for us to be all inclusive to the point of generality, and we can nod our heads with agreement that we know that He has made a way. But today, I am overwhelmed and still in my love for Him. By taking from Adam's side a rib, Eve was made. This beautiful creature, from out of him, out of his side. So the ark had a door also on the side, from which Noah drew the dove in and Jesus, pierced in His side, brought not only deliverance, but brought forth His Bride. Me. You. I asked Lord, why the side? His answer, there you are hidden. He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.

So what makes me feel so safe is this hiddenness? He has hid me for so long. During this season we find ourselves overwhelmed with loneliness. Wandering through life feeling as if no one understands and no one sees. The work He does in us becomes unbearable at times and never ending. Dying a slow death alone in the tomb of His side for years. The tomb of God is indeed His side. The very place from where He will reveal His precious Bride. The place of hiddenness. Not only is this the place from where she is formed, but it is also the place to where she will return in glory. A Bride prepared and made ready to stand beside the Bridegroom. This is also the place from where she will be sent out again.

I imagine that the harvest workers are the ones that have given up all through this time of hiddenness, longing for souls. His desire has become theirs. "She is bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh!" exclaimed Adam joyfully. Our Lord and Saviour will return with a bow, but who are the arrows? I believe it is the harvest workers, sent out all over this world during those 40 days. They have been hidden in His quiver all these years, made ready for such a time as this. They have not yet had the opportunity to bring souls to the Lord. Of course, this does not exclude those who have, but there is a reason why these were hidden in Him for such a time as this. Others who have gone before us will enter into His rest, for they have indeed laboured in the

field, but the harvest workers go in when the hard work of preparing the ground and sowing the seed has been done.

Isaiah 49:12

Listen, O isles, unto me, and hearken, ye people, from far, The Lord hath called me from the womb, from the bowels of my mother hath he made mention of my name. And he hath made my mouth like a sharp sword, in the shadow of his hand he hid me, and made me a polished shaft; in his quiver hath he hid me.

This hiddenness does not make us more special. Others have gone before us, they were indeed the Elijahs, the John the Baptists, preparing the way. The Harvest Workers will be reaping the precious seed they have sown. Can we truly think that the harvest workers have greater value than the sowers? No, we cannot. As a whole the Body has many parts, all for the glory of God.

Anna in Luke 2 is such a prophetess Hidden for years in the temple. It is said of Anna that she had lived with her husband seven years from her virginity. She was a widow of fourscore and four years. Maybe a reference to the wilderness? She did not depart from the temple but served God with fasting and prayers day and night. But the moment the revelation of the Christ came, she spoke to all of Him to them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem. Either way, these are types and shadows of the hidden arrows in the quiver of the Lord that will go out and speak of Him to those who look for redemption. For everything there is a time and a season. God prepares all hearts for the seasons that He was written in their book. Some books will be closed so that they may enter into His rest, others books will be opened to the last chapter. He will fulfil and complete the work He has started. Perfection in His time.

Scripture ref:

Isaiah 49:2

He has made My mouth like a sharp sword, In the shadow of His hand He has concealed Me; And He has also made Me a select arrow, He has hidden Me in His quiver.

Psalms 7:13

He hath also prepared for him the instruments of death; he ordaineth his arrows against the persecutors.

Psalms 18:14

Yea, he sent out his arrows, and scattered them; and he shot out lightnings, and discomfited them.

Psalms 21:12



YOUR LOVE IS BETTER THAN WINE

Song of Solomon 1:4

4 Draw me, we will run after thee: the king hath brought me into his chambers: we will be glad and rejoice in thee, we will remember thy love more than wine: the upright love thee.

This wine that competes with His love can be many things. It can refer to that which is of the Spirit for our Lord turned water into wine. He has saved the best for last. This wine could resemble His gifts and the fruit of the Spirit. For the vine is the source of the wine.

However, I realize that as I needed Him desperately to live a holy life during my seasons of healing and sanctification, and desperately clung to Him, so even now in this time of restoration where I no longer walk in the flesh, but in the Spirit. I need Him to walk in newness of this life He has given me since that healing, but also to surrender under the control of His Spirit. After many years of falling and getting up, He had to bring me to a place of utter dependence to just put one foot in front of the other. My surrender was utter and I was as a helpless babe, not only longing for strength, healing and life, but utter dependant on Him to give it to me. He brought me to this dry and barren land of my soul. We tend to decorate our dry and barren land. We place friends here and there. We fill it with talents and even some righteous acts. In fact, our barren land can look quite beautiful to others and in all our joy for these beautiful things of this world we forget that without Him, without His life and love, we are utterly and completely barren and dry.

So now after He has stripped me of all these things and this barren land of my soul stands naked before Him once again, He comes and clothes me with His love and His goodness. He give gifts as He did to the helpless babe of Ezekiel 16 He found along the way. The one unwashed and unsalted, naked with her umbilical cord still fastened to this world. He washed her, salted her body and clothed her. Then He betrothed her to Him and lavish her with gifts.

We call these gifts, the gift of speaking in tongues. The gift of wisdom or knowledge. The gift of prophecy, of faith or healing. He gives us these gifts in His love for us.

I realize afresh that just as my utter dependence was necessary to be healed emotionally to be sanctified and made whole, that through stripping me as to make me utter barren, so my utter

dependence is required with the gifts He gives. The moment I depend on my gifts I am indeed loving the Wine more than His love. We all long to be used by Him, to know His power and His glory, especially in these last days. But do we long for it more than we long for Him? Do we truly long for His love more than His wine? We grow use to His love and His felt presence. To some of us it comes easily and without us knowing, it becomes every day. Is it any wonder that He hides himself from us? So that we may never stop seeking Him.

Our God is still the God that desires that we seek His face. Over and over again. A relentless pursuit of Him alone. He orchestrates circumstances that leaves us depleted of strength and understanding, leaving us with more “whys?” than answers and brings us continually to utter dependence, if we allow Him.

He will never stop drawing us with His cords of lovingkindness. Have you started relying more on your gift than on Him? Have you desired your gift and to be used by Him more than Him? His call to you as His Beloved Bride is “Desire My love more than My wine”. He will not take His gifts from us, but let us do as John in 1 John says ...little children, keep yourselves from idols.

Oh Lord, You alone are my reward. You are my cup and my portion. You are mine and I am Yours. Amen.

Scripture ref:

Psalm 63

63 O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is;

2 To see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary.

3 Because thy lovingkindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee.

4 Thus will I bless thee while I live: I will lift up my hands in thy name.

5 My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips:

6 When I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night watches.

Notes:





LOVE IS...

As I am sitting here with tears streaming down my face, I am so conscious of something only Father can reveal. You know, reading the same scripture over and over through the years and then one day the penny falls into the slot and "Ding, ding, ding!"

Jesus told us that all of the law is summed up in these two:

Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

38 This is the first and great commandment.

39 And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

40 On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

The magnitude of these two laws hit me so hard today. Note He says that on these two commandments hang ALL the law of the prophets. Another thing is that He says that the second is like unto the first. What I have failed to see (discern from the heart) is that He is saying to me, do not think that loving your neighbour is less important than loving Me. Because it is not. You make a grave mistake when you do. In those two commandments that fulfill the whole of the Law, I stand judged before My God. I love Him so much and He knows I do, but when I stand before him very soon, I know I will have fallen far short from loving my neighbour as myself. Don't get me wrong, I do love people, but we tend to deal with God's Word as if it is a menu. "I will have the salad, but no cheese. And some extra dressing please." This is how we treat His Word and we do not even know it.

Jesus said, No one has greater love than He who lays down his life for his friends. What kind of love is this? What kind of love lays his life down for his friends? I will lay my life down for Him, but will I do it for my friends?

Philippians 2: 3 says, Let nothing be done through strife and vainglory, but in lowliness of mind, let each esteem others better than themselves.

Wow! I don't know about you, but I'll be honest, I do not always meet up to this standard. And that's exactly it, it is a standard. Not an opinion, nor a grand idea, example or a suggestion. It is a standard that God has said he requires of us. If we then fall so far short of this, how will we ever be willing to lay our lives down for others?

To love our neighbour as ourselves takes of us to see just how much we do love ourselves. In today's psychology everyone is told that they need to love themselves in order to love others. Having been in my past involved with counselling for 16 years, I can say with absolute clarity that mankind has no problem with loving themselves. In fact that is the very essence of the problem - The love that man has towards himself. Jesus said, take up your cross and follow me. Paul said, "I die daily." The whole point of the cross is to deal with the great "I" of our hearts. Blinded and deceived we follow the doctrines of this world, mostly because we feel we need it so much. Yes, like me, some have gone through horrific circumstances in life. They have been beaten physically and emotionally to a pulp by loved ones and circumstances out of their control. It leaves a person scarred and it leaves you feeling unloved, unwanted, used and no good. BUT, there was ONE despised and rejected of men. He had no comeliness about Him and His own did not know Him or accept Him. He said, "Nobody takes My life, but I lay it down for My sheep." And then right after He said in John 15 about no one has greater love than he who lays his life down for his friend, He says, "You are My friend." You have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you to bear fruit.

You who have been beaten, rejected, abused, thrown away, spitefully used, ignored and unappreciated...You my friend, who feel not good enough and think you will never be, You He died for. You are His friend. And He has chosen you. Chosen you to not stay in the same place of trying to seek your worth, but to believe that this very act of Him dying for you, slaughtered by your sin, LOVES YOU! Whilst you were a sinner, He died for you. He laid His life down for you. Your worth will never be found in what others say or do. It might give you hope and some strength to put one foot before the other, but there is only ONE place of worth – in Him. You are accepted in the Beloved and the cry of His heart is that you would believe it. It is a choice, not a feeling. Your feelings are the very ones that keeps you bound. But faith gives you wings to fly out in the open invitation of His love.

He wants us to follow Him, take up our own cross in a two-fold way. First, to die to self and then to lay our lives down for others. Love is like a fountain. It has to flow in order for life to remain in its water. In all our desires to be loved, He has shown us how to receive it. "Love Me and love others." Nowhere does He say "See how much love you can get from others. Make sure to fill that void created by life." But rather, true to the paradoxes of the gospel, He says to love is to be loved.

Do they deserve it? Let me ask you this. Do you deserve it? And yet, He took the first step to love us. He who does deserve it. Such is the love of our God.

May the fountain of your heart run over today wherever you are, for they are thirsty, so thirsty in this barren land. The fountain of life and love is in you. Know that you are loved, and love.

Scripture ref:

1 Corinthians 13:7-8

7 Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, and endures all things.

1 John 2: 8 - 11

8 Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him and in you: because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth.

9 He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now.

10 He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him.

11 But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes.

Romans 8:36-39

36 As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.

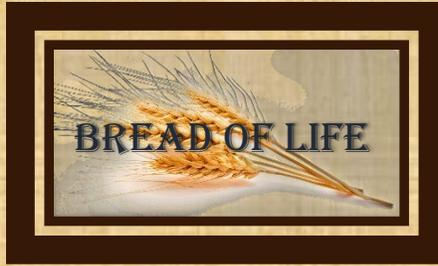
37 Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

38 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,

39 Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Notes:





THE WAY TO AUTHORITY

We all crave to stand in the authority that God has given us. After all, did He not say I give you authority over all the power of the enemy? This is our right and from the Father, our mandate to take back the land and that which the enemy has stolen from us and our loved ones.

But just like righteousness, there is the gift of right standing with God, which is our position in Christ through His finished work on the cross, but also there is the working out of this righteousness in our lives. Father is not fooled and also the world, by our words and lofty ideals, if we are not authentically the thing that we claim ourselves to be. And so it is also the case with authority.

We find that in the book of Acts there were a few men driving out demons in the Name of Jesus, but unable to. The demons screech at them saying, "Jesus we know, and Paul we know, but who are you?" Suffice it to say that their authority was not acknowledged at all. The demons tore these men that they ended running for their lives. How is it that at the Name of Jesus these demons did not run for their lives? Is it possible that authority given is only recognized when authority is authentic? We only have to look at Jesus, the life He lived and Paul as the very emulation of Jesus once the cross has had its full effect on him. The Resurrection Life from a life having gone "down."

How is this authority then worked out in our lives? The word authority denotes not superiority, but rather responsibility and influence among many others. We have all seen how we as parents just lose it with our kids and they in the process lose all respect for us. We try to get them to submit to our authority by our choice words and even the tone of our words. And sadly, we all too often fail at this. How often have we seen this played out in churches when special care is given from the pulpit to make a point come across by changing the tone of the message? A subtle manipulation at play. Not to say that there is not the necessity as the Spirit leads to change our tone of speaking, for even this needs to be under the control of the Spirit of God. There is a saying, the only way up is down. The road to authority is paved with two words...submission and obedience.

We have seen how our children obey. They bite on their teeth and give an eye roll here and there and follow it up with a lazy, “okaaaay”. Is this how we are treating our heavenly Father? Are we maybe inwardly dragging our feet in our obedience and submit because it is expected of us? Is this how authority is obtained? Our heavenly Father requires of us joyful obedience born out of love in the same way we do with our own children. I have learned through the years that authority is given in proportion to your obedience and what you have overcome in your life. Taking back the land is more than just taking what is yours because it is your right. Taking back the land is to place your authority on every inch of the ground because you have humbled yourself in obedience unto Him in that particular area. He says in His Word, “God resist the proud but shows grace to the humble. Therefore, humble yourself and He will lift you up.” This lifting up is not to get you to stand, but rather it is to place you in a greater place of authority. Should He give you greater authority if your obedience is not in humble submission? Surely not! For us, it is easy to obey Him when the cost is not too great. We joyfully obey. But what about those times where it will cost you? Will you not only obey, but do it joyfully? This obeying in humble submission is working a death in you that the Spirit recognize and reward in His time. The world out there needs true and authentic authority. It is not done in words. It is done through a humble attitude of the heart.

Philippians 2: 3 says, Let all things be done without deceit and murmuring, with lowliness of mind. And let all esteem others better than themselves.

This is the way up. There is no other way. That boss you just cannot see eye to eye with. That ex-husband or wife. That rebellious ungrateful little brat sitting loafing on the couch. That woman that just cut in before you. That endless chores of housecleaning or menial work that nobody sees you do day in and day out. Or maybe you have known for long that He has asked you to do something and you just have ignored it for so long, because it will cost you too much. Every day a going down. Deeper and deeper.

I hope to encourage you with two things. He sees and He will reward. Do not think that it is too small for Him to take note of. But also do not pride yourself in it as well. Wait on Him and be faithful with what He daily requires of you to do and do it faithfully and joyfully. Even if it means suffering,

Always preach the gospel, and if necessary use words.

Jesus said, Let your light so shine that the world may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. Know that even if they do not see, He sees.

Be willing to do the most degrading and monotonous job whenever and however He asks of you. Do it simply because He, the great I AM, stripped himself from all His divinity and became A MAN. He humbled himself and became obedient, even unto death. This same Son of Man, will be honoured as the Son of Man to which all will bow their knee one day. As a man He humbled himself for us that He may be the patterned Son for us to emulate. Not as God, but as a man in whom the Spirit of God worked and by Whom He lived by. To see that with His Spirit in us, we



CHOSEN

Overwhelmed. This is how I feel. Overwhelmed by the love of God. Praying with my daughter last night, knowing that this child has gone through so much hurt in her life. From the age of two, suffering from Sensory Integration Disorder, she has had bouts of anger, being unable to give expression to the inner turmoil of her little body.

Everybody was the object of her rage from this young age. There were times that I said to the Lord, "Lord, this one is broken. May I get a new one?" Unbearable heartache from the beginning of her life and my motherhood. And because of all that is involved with this disorder, with it comes the endless rejection, like a permanent bully following her. Constantly reminding her that she is "no good". Not worthy. An irritant. Unlikeable. Weak. A bother. An embarrassment. Troublemaker. Unloved.

Did she have her role to play in all of this? Sure. Did hormones come knocking on her door and make it worse? For sure. But through all the years, those words came and made nest in her head. There they brought every other shameful and abhorable behaviour and slowly but surely, she believed it.

In a way this sounds like most teenagers and none of us is exempt from rejection. We all have our story. We all had our bouts with rejection and self-image problems. But life does not give anyone breaks just because you had a hard upbringing or because you feel bad about yourself. No, life tells you to suck it up and get going. And so we do. No time for pity parties. And true, pity parties are not okay.

However, as I was praying for my daughter, I just sensed this overwhelming love God has for her. This child so undeserving of His love, who has blasphemed Him and rejected Him verbally over and over, has been pursued by Him. He never stopped. He just never stopped. I found myself worshipping Him for His love of the druggie, the prostitute, the beggar, the rebellious teenager, the hardened murderer. Yes, even for the successful businessman. Why?

I have heard how people say that God is love and therefore it is His nature to love. He cannot help Himself but love us. Somehow that does not sit well with me. No, He says, I will have mercy

on whom I will have mercy. He says before you were born I knew you. I have loved you. This love pursues the unlovable. This love pursues the rebellious and hardened hearts.

Like adopted children, the “throw aways”, He chooses the ones no one wanted. He seeks them out in a crowd and they become the overwhelming object of His love. He adopts them and brings them into His house and the process of trust begins. Never losing sight of His love for us, He is hurt by our rebellion and disobedience. He is our Father. Not a robot. He feels, He receives and takes in. Consuming all the pain we give Him into that great big heart of love of His. This love endures all things, bears all things, hope all things. It thinks the best of us, even when it knows the worst of us. It continues to pursue us in a bond of trust. And the aim is always to break down that wall of mistrust. The one with the many bricks called rejection, not good enough, unloved, pain etc. Carefully He deals with each brick until we start to no longer see Him through the rubble, but see Him as He is. Our Father. Our Father who loves us, pursues us and the same Father who said, “I will not leave you orphaned”.

And He takes those very bricks that was used to build the dividing wall, into another wall. This wall is now built around us and He surrounds it with songs of deliverance. He becomes our wall. Our defence, our strong tower and safe place. He places watchman on our walls and gives His angels charge over His loved ones, demanding a daily report. Not to check whether we have obeyed, but because He loves us. Our Father truly loves us. He loved us from the beginning in our unlovable state. Just as we are. And His desires to change us is the expression of that love and not the expression of His disapproval.

For God SO loved the world that He gave His only Son that whomsoever believe on Him may have eternal life. John 3: 16

Yes, we are adopted. But that adoption speaks more than anything of His love. As a parent we do not choose what type of child we will have. Although science is desperately trying to alter everything natural. But, when you are adopted, the adoptive parents choose a child only on the basis of wanting to love a child. He chose me. He chose you. In spite of everything we did and are, He still chose you.

We are adopted by Him because we are CHOSEN BY HIM.

This is why we do not need to fear. Nothing will separate us from His love. Because His love for us is not dependent on who we are or what we do. His love is solely dependent on Him. I remember many years ago that I did something foolish. It was very sinful and my heart broke into a thousand pieces. How could I do this to Him? I was crushed. So disappointed in myself for hurting Him. I remember His words so well.

He said, “There is nothing you can do or not do that can make Me love you more or less”.

That was such a defining moment. It meant that His love has reached full capacity. It's on lockdown. His love cannot become less, but it cannot become more either. It is fixed. Stable and sure. It is not influenced by us in any way. Yes, we hurt Him. But He still loves us. This is

the grace of our Father's love. The Word says love covers a multitude of sin. It really does, and because it does, it inspires us to love Him by obeying Him. Because He has done so much for us. Loving us even before we knew Him.

Romans 5:8 King James Version (KJV)

8 But God commends his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

In truth, He wants us to just be His children and believe that He loves us this way. Unconditionally. And in truth, all His dealings with us, is to break down the dividing wall. Once that is done, the angels rejoice as we start to walk in the manifestation of the adoption of the sons and daughters of God – THE CHOSEN ONES.

I want to encourage you that He loves you just the way you are, but loves you too much to want anything to separate you from knowing His love. Your walls cannot separate you from His love, but it can separate you from knowing His love. He will keep pursuing you until it is all broken down with the one aim...to abide in you.

He will not leave us orphaned. No, He is coming to get His children. He is coming to get you.

Scripture ref:

Psalm 27: 8 - 10

8 When thou said, Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek.

9 Hide not thy face far from me; put not thy servant away in anger: thou hast been my help; leave me not, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation.

10 When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up.

Ezekiel 16: 1 - 13 King James Version (KJV)

16 Again the word of the Lord came unto me, saying,

2 Son of man, cause Jerusalem to know her abominations,

3 And say, Thus saith the Lord God unto Jerusalem; Thy birth and thy nativity is of the land of Canaan; thy father was an Amorite, and thy mother an Hittite.

4 And as for thy nativity, in the day thou wast born thy navel was not cut, neither wast thou washed in water to supple thee; thou wast not salted at all, nor swaddled at all.

5 None eye pitied thee, to do any of these unto thee, to have compassion upon thee; but thou wast cast out in the open field, to the lothing of thy person, in the day that thou wast born.

6 And when I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thine own blood, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live; yea, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live.

7 I have caused thee to multiply as the bud of the field, and thou hast increased and waxen great, and thou art come to excellent ornaments: thy breasts are fashioned, and thine hair is grown, whereas thou wast naked and bare.

8 Now when I passed by thee, and looked upon thee, behold, thy time was the time of love; and I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness: yea, I swore unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee, saith the Lord God, and thou becamest mine.

9 Then washed I thee with water; yea, I thoroughly washed away thy blood from thee, and I anointed thee with oil.

10 I clothed thee also with broidered work, and shod thee with badgers' skin, and I girded thee about with fine linen, and I covered thee with silk.

11 I decked thee also with ornaments, and I put bracelets upon thy hands, and a chain on thy neck.

12 And I put a jewel on thy forehead, and earrings in thine ears, and a beautiful crown upon thine head.

13 Thus wast thou decked with gold and silver; and thy raiment was of fine linen, and silk, and broidered work; thou didst eat fine flour, and honey, and oil: and thou wast exceeding beautiful, and thou didst prosper into a kingdom.

Zephaniah 3:17 Amplified Bible, Classic Edition (AMPC)

17 The Lord your God is in the midst of you, a Mighty One, a Savior [Who saves]! He will rejoice over you with joy; He will rest [in silent satisfaction] and in His love He will be silent and make no mention [of past sins, or even recall them]; He will exult over you with singing.

Notes:





SHARING IN HIS SUFFERING

Jesus, as our Head, is the Great High Priest, presently ever interceding for us. We are His body, a royal priesthood, living stones built up in Him. He represents us in heaven before the Father, and we represent Jesus here on earth as a royal priesthood. He is the head, we are the body. We are as intercessors and a royal priesthood to identify with His sufferings. Not just in the act of intercession, but as a lifestyle.

Sharing in His suffering comes in many forms. It means to endure the continuous onslaught of the enemy. As we start to take the Kingdom by force on our knees, the enemy will try to advance and tempt, ridicule to demotivate and paralyze us in the spirit, in whatever way necessary. We also need to know that the enemy cannot do anything without God allowing it. He had to go to God to tempt Job. God sets a hedge around His people. A breach is caused either by sin in our lives, or God sovereignly allowing it in order to grow us. So, in like manner just as it pleased the Lord according to Isaiah 53 to bruise the Lord and make Him sick, we have to realize that some things Father God allows.

I read a quote written many years ago that said: "Whatever comes your way, whatever trial, first had to go through God the Father, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit to get to you. Therefore it MUST have great purpose"

This is the way God turns ALL things for good for those who love Him, even if we do not understand at first. In this way, we share in His sufferings. Jesus walked this earth and He was tempted and tried by the enemy, every single day. But He overcame and how He walked on this earth is why He is called the Patterned Son. So we share in His suffering when we walk as He walks, daily laying our lives down and resisting the enemy in all the forms he comes to attack us.

Hebrews 12: 2 – 3 states, look to Jesus who endured of sinners such grievous opposition and bitter hostility, enduring the cross, for the joy that was set before Him, who is now seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

Hebrews 5:7 says, who in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from death, and was heard in that He feared; though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered.

Jesus's promise to me and you is that He will never leave nor forsake us. In His greatest hour of suffering, He was forsaken, so that you would never have to suffer alone. He had to fight the hosts of hell alone, but you do not have to. He had to bear His pain alone, but you do not have to. We never have to face any temptation and onslaught alone. He will always be with us. So great is His love.

The revelation of the cross is not only the revelation of Jesus Christ, but a revelation of myself. In coming face to face with the cross, I come face to face with my apathy and callous heart. God calls us not only to be saved, but to pray for the lost. We are not just His Body in word, but we are to live out the reality of it as a royal priesthood. There is no such thing as a ministry of intercessor. We are all a royal priesthood and therefore called to intercede. No ministry can survive without continuous prayer-life as foundation. We are all intercessors. As His Bride, being one with Him in Spirit, we will see as He sees, hear as He hears. What breaks His heart, will break ours. What makes Him rejoice, we will rejoice in too. For this very reason, being one with Him will cause us to intercede for the lost. We will be broken in heart and spirit about the lost. Are you?

God desires spiritual offspring. We are His Son's Bride and the reward we give Him is children. He desires children. So we as the Bride are to travail in prayer for spiritual offspring. Like Hannah we are to lament our barren womb and cling to the promise of Isaiah 54 with the promise of spiritual children. God has covenanted with His Bride that she would give Him sons and daughters! Like a grain of wheat we are to die in the ground as was with Jesus in Gethsemane, and produce many more.

This does not come naturally and I think God ordained it that way. Intercession is both identification and the laying of one's life down. It is a disposition and it is also an act.

Jesus said in John 15, No one has greater love than he who lays down his life for a friend. You are My friends.

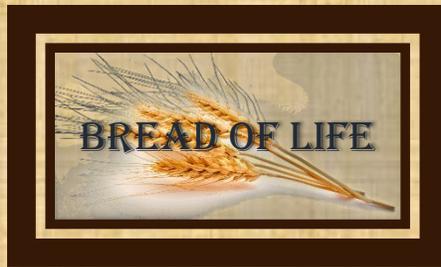
Scripture ref:

Isaiah 54 King James Version (KJV)

54 Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with child: for more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the Lord.

2 Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations: spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes;

3 For thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left; and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited.



WHOSE REPORT DO YOU BELIEVE?

Jesus asked in Luke 18: 8 will the Son of Man find faith on earth when He comes? One thing that I have learned through the years is that it does not matter what I confess, in the end it only matters what is true - what is true in me.

I have lived with fear all of my life. Molested as a young girl, fear was used to keep me silent. Through my teenage years the fear of rejection, abusive relationships. Fear always my portion and my constant companion. And for the last 15 years fear moved into my home. My daughter suffers from social and general anxiety birthed from the sensory integration disorder she has – an inner chaos of senses that are overstimulated with which she as a small baby had to live with. And because she had to live with it, so did I. Did I pray? Did I drive out demons or change her diet? Did she go on meds? Yes, yes, yes. And still I was intimately acquainted with fear that moved uninvited into my home. It slowly started to choke the life out of my marriage. It stole my child's life and it robbed me of peace. In its place it exchanged all these things with isolation, disappointment and heartbreak, anger and bitterness, friendships lost and broken dreams. It stole my life. And being the mother that I am, I was not going to take this lying down. I was going to fight and fight I did. Almost to the point of death. I ended up on pills for depression and suicidal thoughts. I wanted out. I just could not do it anymore. For me, every day was survival. All because fear came to stay. Desperately trying to gasp for air as I managed to get my head just above the water, only to be hit by the next bigger wave, year in and year out.

Breakthrough came! Breakthrough in the midst of all the chaos and a peace that now resides. You see, I had to face the truth, not the fear. My eyes were always on fear. All my life. And it is this fear that coils like a snake around your neck and squeezes the life out of you. And all I could see was the effects of this fear. Chaos. But once I reached the end of all my plans to save my marriage, my child and myself, and fell exhausted and depleted into the everlasting arms of love, a seed of faith started to grow.

The Word says that faith worketh by love (Gal. 5: 6). And perfect love casts out all fear. I realized it all boiled down to whether I truly believed that He loved me. You see, the evidence of whether I truly believed that He loved me, was in my faith walk. The just shall live by faith. He had to bring me to the end of all my plans and cause me to miserably fail. He had to confront me over

and over with the fact that I was leaning on my own understanding, whilst all the while thinking that I was doing His will. But the truth was, I was driven by fear, not faith. So no matter how much I confessed faith and that I trusted Him, it was not true, and so it does not matter what we confess, only what is true.

Now this monster has been silenced in my life. I see it a mile away and hate it with every fibre of my being! However, the waves that have confronted me all those years and almost drowned me, has now come over the mountains across from the world as a tsunami. Greater, stronger and bigger. Now it not only threatens my family, my neighbourhood, but my country and the world. The spirit of Jezebel in its full capacity threatens the Elijah Company. Do we think ourselves better and stronger than Elijah? Even as Elijah had to face his fears, so we too must. Do we realized that this not just an attack on families or the master plan of the elite, but the spirit of Jezebel riding on the beast, coming from out of the ocean of men? Rising to take its place of authority over mankind and control in order to establish its kingdom? It is now that we are to stand in faith. We are to stand in authority and power.

But faith worketh by love. And if I have not sufficiently dealt with my unbelief in my life, which at its core is not knowing how much He loves me, my faith will run like a dog with its tail between its legs in the face of this tsunami that has come upon this world, just like Elijah ran from Jezebel. Do not underestimate this spirit. Unless we deal honestly with our personal fears in the light of the truth of His love for us and find ourselves still fearful about where the money will come from, where will we find food, how will we protect ourselves and what if one of our children became sick, all these fear driven questions, no matter how logical or natural, will drive us into greater fear and in the end controlled. We will not be able to stand and resist, not in truth.

The Word says that whatever is not of faith is sin – Romans 14: 23.

I am asking myself the hard questions? And I choose willingly to look myself in the mirror and try to authentically answer the question of whether there is any doubt in me.

What went through the disciple's minds when they heard that some of them would be killed and others thrown into prison? He told them He was leaving and would be back. Each one of them confronted with their fears and that moment. Anyone of them could have decided that this is not what they signed up for. But none was lost, except the son of perdition. Each one had to individually face the demon of fear that would come and hunt them down every single day. The only way to confront him is by faith and that faith worketh by love. Do you believe that He is fully in control of your life? Do you believe that nothing ever happens to you without Him knowing about it? Good or bad. Do you believe that He will use it for His glory? That you can trust Him even if it does not make sense? The reason why we desperately need a revelation of His love is because faith worketh by love. In Romans 8 Paul says that nothing, not life or death, nor principality or power, things to come or tribulation will separate us from His love. Does this mean that we will not face death or principalities? No. But if we are secure in His love, these things will not separate us from the security of His love. Paul said:

Acts 20:22-24

22 And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there:

23 Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me.

24 But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.

Do you really believe it? Have you shed your religious garments and faced the truth or your unbelief? Unless we are willing to admit the areas of unbelief in our lives, we will not believe that His love is stronger than death (Song of Solomon 8: 6). Our words, our confessions has to be our reality and not religious lingo. This is the nitty gritty, the put up or shut up. This is where you have to become very honest with yourself because the Word says that without faith it is impossible to please Him and that those who seek Him must believe that He is, and is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. The Israelites could not enter into the Promised Land because of unbelief. The giants were too big. There is a Promised Land for us, but we can only enter by faith. Now is the time to deal with unbelief and doubt and not later. At the tomb of Lazarus we find one single verse that strikes to the core of how our Saviour feels about unbelief...Jesus wept (John 11). He was grieved in His spirit each time a situation arrived where He had to rebuke His disciples for their unbelief, or as He calls it little faith. He is so patient with us, and desires us to grow in our faith because it is the very evidence that we trust Him and believe that He truly loves us. That we believe His Word. Jesus wept.

God is faithful and true. There is no lie in Him and it is His desire to show Himself true to you. That He truly loves you. Fear not is mentioned 366 times in the Bible, one for every day, including a leap year. There is no coincidences with our Lord. He knew that we in our frailty will have to be reminded every day that fear will come, but to be of good courage, He has overcome this world. Fear not! This is the attack on the Church at this moment. Not the virus or even the master plan of the elite. Our warfare is not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers and wickedness in the air. The principality we are dealing with is the Jezebel spirit. Where is your focus? I believe the greatest veil over our eyes to be able to see whether we truly believe or not, is a religious spirit, which is part of the Jezebel spirit. As long as it can get us to believe that we do trust Him when in fact we do not, as evidence by our unbelief in certain areas of our life, it has us trapped and when the moment of confrontation comes, will we have the faith? Fear has only one purpose – to rob you of your faith. Examine yourself.

No wonder Jesus asked whether He will find faith when He comes, He knew that fear would grip humanity.

Whose report do you believe?

Personal note: I strongly feel that it this time, as important as it is to minister and evangelize, the Bride needs to focus to be as Ruth at the feet of Boaz, to be as Mary at His feet. We are entering possibly into Passover, where Mary just before He was crucified entered into the room, knelt before Him and broke open the very costly jar of oil...representing her life poured out for Him. This is the most important place for the Bride now. To be found at His feet. Where will He find you?

Scripture ref:

Isaiah 41

41 Keep silence before me, O islands; and let the people renew their strength: let them come near; then let them speak: let us come near together to judgment.

2 Who raised up the righteous man from the east, called him to his foot, gave the nations before him, and made him rule over kings? He gave them as the dust to his sword, and as driven stubble to his bow.

3 He pursued them, and passed safely; even by the way that he had not gone with his feet.

4 Who hath wrought and done it, calling the generations from the beginning? I the Lord, the first, and with the last; I am he.

5 The isles saw it, and feared; the ends of the earth were afraid, drew near, and came.

6 They helped everyone his neighbour; and every one said to his brother, Be of good courage.

7 So the carpenter encouraged the goldsmith, and he that smootheth with the hammer him that smote the anvil, saying, it is ready for the sodering: and he fastened it with nails, that it should not be moved.

8 But thou, Israel, art my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham my friend.

9 Thou whom I have taken from the ends of the earth, and called thee from the chief men thereof, and said unto thee, Thou art my servant; I have chosen thee, and not cast thee away.

10 Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.

11 Behold, all they that were incensed against thee shall be ashamed and confounded: they shall be as nothing; and they that strive with thee shall perish.

12 Thou shalt seek them, and shalt not find them, even them that contended with thee: they that war against thee shall be as nothing, and as a thing of nought.

13 For I the Lord thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not; I will help thee.



SHUT UP IN HIM

David said, "All my streams are shut up in You." This simply means that God is his source. But we are also hidden in Christ with God. We are a tree planted by the streams who bears fruit even in the year of drought, but we are also filled with the streams of living water.

When we read about Isaac and Rebecca's account how the bondservant, who is a picture of the Holy Spirit seeking a Bride for the Son, we see this beautiful virgin, giving water to the servant and his camels. She desires to go with him immediately to meet the Son. We find the same account or mirror account in John 4 where Jesus meets the Samaritan woman at the well. She however is not a virgin, but has had five husbands. But this time, she is not the one giving the water, but He is the one giving the living water of the Spirit. This also speaks of the water of Genesis being the Old Testament law and the water of the New Testament in John 4 speaks of the water of the Word written on our hearts, becoming living water flowing from out of us. Therefore the promise that those who worship Him will worship Him in Spirit and in truth. The promise has always remained that not only will the water be around us, but also in us. All our springs are shut up in Him. And He is waiting on us to come and drink of this fountain of life daily. Not just that we would grow, because roots need water to grow, but also that we may have life and be cleansed from the inside out. As we go into the tabernacle of our hearts, we are to wash ourselves with the water of His Word. So the Bride is to prepare herself in this season with the washing of the Word.

Word received:

Do you not know that all your streams are shut up in Me? Did I not tell you that out of your innermost being will flow rivers of living water? For when you are shut up in Me, you will drink from these very living waters. For you are shut up in Christ, and when you are in Me everything you need comes from Me. All the hidden treasures of wisdom and understanding is in Me. So keep the well, the fountain of your heart pure, for out of it flows the issues of life. Did I not tell you that you cannot have bitter and sweet water from the same fountain? Therefore, keep diligent watch over your fountain. I said that I would abide in you and if you abide in Me and My Word in you, these living waters will flow from your innermost being. Be zealous therefore for

the keeping of this fountain. Remain in Me and I will wash you continually with the water of My Word.

You will indeed worship Me in Spirit and in truth, but only as those waters are purified and flows through you. I seek pure worship, pure devotion. This devotion only comes as you drink of Me. Come therefore, all who are thirsty after righteousness and I will give you to drink. I am the fountain of living water.

Scripture ref:

Colossians 3 King James Version (KJV)

3 If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.

2 Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.

3 For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.

Proverbs 4: 20 – 27

20 My son, attend to my words; incline thine ear unto my sayings.

21 Let them not depart from thine eyes; keep them in the midst of thine heart.

22 For they are life unto those that find them, and health to all their flesh.

23 Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.

24 Put away from thee a froward mouth, and perverse lips put far from thee.

25 Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee.

26 Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established.

27 Turn not to the right hand nor to the left: remove thy foot from evil.

Notes:





THE GIFTS HE GIVES

We all know the familiar verse where Jesus says that He has come to give us life and that in abundance. He also said that His ways are not our ways...kind of like the small print on the contract that we often miss.

All have their preferences. Some would like their dreams to be fulfilled, others want to know their purpose. Some want a fresh infilling of the Spirit. We would like to be healed or waiting on an answer of what the next step must be. We pray for reconciliation and marriages to be restored. Children to be saved. Finances to be sorted out once and for all. But then He surprises us and we find ourselves confounded. "Why Lord? You call this an answer to prayer?" we ask. "Is this how You reward my faith? What kind of a cruel joke is this?"

Instead of giving you what you so desperately asked Him for in prayer, He gives you the gift of loneliness. Or the gift of suffering and physical pain. The gift of being misunderstood, unappreciated and rejection. The gift of sickness or a child with a disorder. A husband or wife passed away. How can this be life in abundance you ask? Where is the life in that? This is not life, this is death!

You see, the life He gives is not only life in abundance, but that very abundance comes from His life, His essence. It is Resurrection Life. This life can only come out of death. You can be satisfied with that which is earthly or that which is heavenly. But once you decide for the heavenly, death will have to have its full way in you. In the pursuit of Him, He gives gifts. But oh, how our eyes need to be enlightened to not setting restrictions on how He will give the gifts we desire of Him. The gift of joy comes through the gift of sorrow. He wants to be your source of joy. The gift of strength through weakness. He wants to be your strength. The gift of true friendship and fellowship through loneliness. He wants to be your best friend. The gift of wisdom by being confronted with your pride. He wants to be your wisdom and not have you lean on man's wisdom. The gift of peace through war and the gift of love through rejection. Because He gives you His peace, not the world's peace and He is love.

Paul said, I want to know Him and His Resurrection power, to share in the fellowship of His suffering. This he said from a smelly and filthy cold dungeon of Rome. Rejoicing in his suffering

for the gospel's sake. When Jesus came to this earth, He did not come triumphantly on a white horse in all His majesty and glory. But rather, He stripped himself of all his divinity. He learned obedience by what He suffered. Isaiah 53 says that He was rejected and despised of men. He was ridiculed. He had no comeliness about Him that He should be desired. There was nothing about Him that stood out as a person. He was just a normal man. But what did stand out about Him was His love and through suffering.

To many He was just another man that could do miracles. In those days He was not the first to proclaim that He is the Messiah. This is why the Pharisees required a miracle of Him in order to believe Him and acknowledge His authority. He told them that when the temple is broken down, He will raise it in three days. We know He was talking about His body and the cross. Jesus is the express image of the Father, of the Father's love. He is known as the suffering servant. But, very soon every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that He is Lord. We all will lay our crowns at His feet.

The gifts He gives come not in the form we want them to be, just as He did not come in the form they wanted Him to be. But ultimately, whatever we ask of Him, in the end we find it in Him. HE IS THE GIFT.

The Psalms says, delight yourself in the Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart. To delight in Him is to not only know His ways, but also to embrace His ways. It takes many years to see these gifts of Him in the light of immeasurable good. All good gifts comes from the Father of light, in Whom there is no shadow of turning. He gives grace to the humble, to those who humbly accept these gifts. By this we are saying, Father whatever comes my way, whatever You allow, came through You, through Your Son and the Holy Spirit, and therefore must have great purpose." He is not caught off guard by your circumstances and then all of a sudden has to jump in to action to save the day. No, but rather, He allows, knowing that a prayer request has come through for more of Him. There is no greater gift. The gift of sharing in His suffering, the gift of the suffering Servant.

Knowing Him in His suffering is what the end result of suffering is. The purpose. It colours the fine outline of our perception of Him in to see clearer and to gain wisdom. The enemy does not want us to see this. He would rather we side with him and accuse our King of cruelty. "Foolishness!" he would say. "Does He call Himself good and do this to you?" But alas, once the dust has settled and our thoughts have calmed down, we hear Him say, "Come follow Me, and take up your cross."

Laying down our perceptions and our "wisdom" of how we think things need to happen are the beginning of graciously taking the gifts He gives. The wrapping of these gifts are so painful causing a death in us too much to bear. But once opened and received with willingness, it produces the fruit of righteousness in us. A peace, a joy and love that no man can take from us. No one can take from us what we have shared with Him in those times of loneliness, weakness, pain, sickness, and rejection.

My question today is, as hard as it is for you, "Will you receive His gift?"

Father, some of us have lived so long with the gifts you have given us. It has become the gift that just does not stop giving. It is difficult to receive them because of the death it works in us. I know that You carefully select them and sometimes we just don't understand why You do not just let these things go away. It is very difficult to see through our glasses this pain and sorrow as a gift. Give us new glasses. The disciples looked upon the cross and the sheep were scattered. What was the greatest act of horror and suffering and a senseless death to someone so beautiful and pure, but in fact the pouring out of Life in abundance. Will You come and touch our eyes that we may see? Will you open the deaf ears to hear? Will You please give understanding and wisdom. But most of all, will You give grace to accept Your gifts and to trust You to have Your way in us, through them. It is so difficult Father, we need You. Help us to let go of the Why and to trust You. To rest in You, even if we do not understand. We love You Father. We love You.

I pray this in Jesus Name, Amen.

Scripture ref:

Isaiah 53

53 Who hath believed our report? And to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?

2 For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him.

3 He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

4 Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

5 But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

7 He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.

8 He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? For he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken.

9 And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.



THE TALLER THE TREES, **THE DEEPER THE ROOTS**

Moses was known as the meekest man. Paul said, "I am nothing". These two men, besides our Lord are the two most profound men in the Bible to me. Yes, there are many more that stand tall, but concerning changing and influencing society and the spiritual realm, we have these two giants.

What was it that caused these men to be so rooted in who they were? And at the same time we hear Paul say, follow me as I follow Christ, and "my gospel". He said words, like I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. What boldness and audacity in the light of saying he is nothing! We like to quote these words, because in reality, the Spirit of God is in us. But to what degree is this a living reality in our lives? And how does it become the very truth we have our being by? Moses had his rock. Paul had his Damascus road. Peter had his 3 roosters, David his Bathsheba. Elijah his Jezebel and Abraham his Hagar. There are many more, but the point I am trying to make is that even though the Lord thoroughly dealt with each of these individuals after these pivotal moments, these moments were the turning point. Please do not mistake this for a conversion moment with regard to changing from this world to being a child of God. I am talking about being a Christian and having this pivotal moment where God shows you who you are. Who your really rare. Moses was faced with his disobedience. Paul with his spiritual pride. Peter, his unfaithfulness. David, his lust. Elijah his fear and Abraham his unbelief. And so we can go on and on. But these moments in their lives were the turning point. Face to face with who they really are. Smacked with the truth. Please note that Moses had just brought the whole of Israel from out of slavery right to the brink of the Promise Land. Paul was the most well-known Pharisee, with a knowledge and zeal for God like no other. Peter had a love for God that made him proclaim boldly that he would never deny Him and would die for Him, with the revelation

that He is the Son of God. David became king of Jerusalem. Elijah just defeated the Baal prophets and Abraham had the promise of being chosen by God to be the Father of many nations.

Why is it that at the height of their lives, they fell so hard? Every tree is the sum of his roots. Not in stature, but in durability and quality. Jesus said that we will know them by their fruits. But the reality is that even the fruits are influenced by the roots. We are a planting of the Lord and we are only as good as our roots. Some have many fruit, but they are genetically modified like those in the shops. He wants the real thing, and so should you. It appears that at the root of all the falling of these mighty trees, was pride. The Word says that pride comes before the fall. This is not new to us. But I guess I want to bring your focus to the fact that these were men established and tall in the Lord. They had a history with Him. As we say “they were not born yesterday”. But God, knowing how deep their roots went, had to lay the axe to the root. I believe He prunes us regularly and the dead branches are thrown away. But there comes a day, where He lays the ax to the root of your life – PRIDE. All the fruit of the flesh is fed by that root of pride. All fruit of the Spirit is fed by the root of humility. Years and years go by where we are so grateful for His pruning. We see His hand upon us and often the truth hurts so much. But then later we rejoice when we see new buds and the promise of His life in us. But this is only the pruning.

It seems that the Lord has a habit of letting tall trees fall. He does this, because after many years of growing and growing and reaching new heights for the Lord, the subtle roots of pride grows in the dark unawares. We get so use to the new heights and scenery that we don't see what lurks in the dark. We become self-confident and bold in the Lord. I don't think there is a higher accolade in this life than being called meek. Or being called nothing. We, in our pride, want to be called “man or woman of God”. We secretly want the applause and acceptance of man, even whilst boldly professing we do not. We want to be the “go to” person.

Psalm 24

24 The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein.

2 For he hath founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the floods.

3 Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in his holy place?

4 He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully.

5 He shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation.

6 This is the generation of them that seek him, that seek thy face, O Jacob. Selah.

7 Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in.

8 Who is this King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle.

9 Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in.

10 Who is this King of glory? The Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory. Selah.

I can imagine that when David wrote this that he was thinking of Moses. He was thinking about what kind of man Moses was. What kind of person gets an invitation from God to “come up and be there”? The dealings of God is far beyond our understanding. He searches our hearts and knows it far better than we can ever. The King of Glory wants to come in, but the ax has to be laid to the root. There has to be a final knock out. The whole root has to be taken out. Do you believe that the Lord can do that, or do you rather want to say it is just man’s sin nature? Are you willing that He spare you nothing when it comes to pride? Do you hate pride as the source of all sin or do you consider it as a feeling or disposition? For it is the root of all sin and unless you allow Him to deal with the root, you can expect the fruit from that root.

The reason why “the taller the tree, the deeper the roots”, is because the deeper we sink into our “nothingness”, the more rooted and grounded we are in His love.

Ephesians 3: 14 – 21 (Amplified version)

14 For this reason [\[d\]](#)seeing the greatness of this plan by which you are built together in Christ, I bow my knees before the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,

15 For Whom every family in heaven and on earth is named [\[t\]](#)hat Father from Whom all fatherhood takes its title and derives its name].

16 May He grant you out of the rich treasury of His glory to be strengthened and reinforced with mighty power in the inner man by the [\[H\]](#)oly Spirit [\[H\]](#)imself indwelling your innermost being and personality].

17 May Christ through your faith [\[a\]](#)ctually dwell (settle down, abide, make His permanent home) in your hearts! May you be rooted deep in love and founded securely on love,

18 That you may have the power and be strong to apprehend and grasp with all the saints [\[G\]](#)od’s devoted people, the experience of that love] what is the breadth and length and height and depth [\[o\]](#)f it];

19 [\[T\]](#)hat you may really come] to know [\[p\]](#)ractically, [\[e\]](#)through experience for yourselves] the love of Christ, which far surpasses [\[f\]](#)mere knowledge [\[w\]](#)ithout experience]; that you may be filled [\[t\]](#)hrough all your being] [\[g\]](#)unto all the fullness of God [\[m\]](#)ay have the richest measure of the divine Presence, and [\[h\]](#)become a body wholly filled and flooded with God Himself]!

20 Now to Him Who, by (in consequence of) the [action of His] power that is at work within us, is able to [carry out His purpose and] do superabundantly, far over and above all that we [dare] ask or think [infinitely beyond our highest prayers, desires, thoughts, hopes, or dreams]—

21 To Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations forever and ever. Amen (so be it).

Once we see how deep this root of pride goes through His dealings with us, the more we see the extent of His love and mercy. I praise God that where sin abounds, grace abounds even more. And that love covers a multitude of sin. Moses and Paul's boldness in the Lord was both the knowledge of the extent of their pride and the extent of His love in the light of their pride. Paul really could say he no longer lived, because the root of his life, that is to say, the Pride of life, has been uprooted and he now lives from and out of a new root – the root of Jesse. The Son of God.

I end this devotional with a prayer of Andrew Murray, one of the greatest theologians of the 19th Century. (I highly recommend his book called Humility by Andrew Murray, also available on audio on Youtube, or can be download on pdf file via google.)

Prayer for humility by Andrew Murray:

Heavenly Father, may Your great goodness be known to me. Take from my heart, every kind and form and degree of pride, whether it be from evil spirits, or my own corrupt nature. Awaken in me the deepest depth and truth of that humility which can make me worthy of being but your servant, a vessel through which you can manifest the riches of your wisdom, power and goodness.

Scripture ref:

Philippians 2: 3 - 8

3 Do nothing from factional motives [through contentiousness, strife, selfishness, or for unworthy ends] or prompted by conceit and empty arrogance. Instead, in the true spirit of humility (lowliness of mind) let each regard the others as better than and superior to himself [thinking more highly of one another than you do of yourselves].

4 Let each of you esteem and look upon and be concerned for not [merely] his own interests, but also each for the interests of others.

5 Let this same attitude and purpose and [humble] mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus: [Let Him be your example in humility:]



REDEEMING LOVE

Only once a woman's husband has died is she allowed to marry another. Otherwise she is considered an adulteress. This husband in the Word refers to the "Old man" in Romans 7. Our sin nature. But, the word husband carries with it the idea of love. For whom you are married to, you love. It is a matter of the heart.

Jesus is the "other man" or Last Adam we are to marry, once our old man has died. If we do not empty our hearts from our "husbands", our other lovers, for some of us are like the Samaritan woman who had five husbands, we are adulterers. The curse that came over Eve, which is a type of Church, is that her husband will rule over her. This first Adam is the old man or sin nature that rules over Eve. But we have been made a new creation, a new Eve, God's Eve, to marry Him.

Ruth's husband died. She is a beautiful picture of the Bride of Christ, where the old man has died. She was a gentile, but her mother Naomi, was a Hebrew. Boaz at first did not know who she was and knew that she was a gentile. He started to notice her in the field with the other harvest workers and started to care for her even before she knew him. In the same way, our Boaz has cared for us even before we knew Him. I have known you before you were formed in the belly. He died for us whilst we were sinners. Naomi suggests to Ruth to go to Boaz and lay at His feet...the very posture of Mary at the feet of Jesus, choosing the best. Ruth here shows us the heart of the Bride that works hard in the field, but chooses the best of laying at Boaz's feet. Even though she did not know him and also did not seek him, because Naomi sent her, he chose her.

Isaiah 65

65 I am sought of them that asked not for me; I am found of them that sought me not: I said, Behold me, behold me, unto a nation that was not called by my name.

The end result is that He spreads his skirt over her, making covenant with her and taking her under his care. He gives her provision and he secures her safety. This is exactly what has happened to us. We have given our lives to Him and He comes and daily provides for us and protects us. We are betrothed to Him, we are His.

We need to understand that no where do we read in the Word that Ruth was madly in love with Him. Very often we also come to the Lord the first time out of utter desperation. Not because we are in love with Him. Jewish marriages are often arranged marriages and they do not know

each other well enough to be in love. Always a binding contract to take care of one another and the enduring and mature love would follow.

So it is with us and our Husband. We get insight and revelation of Him through the years and slowly but surely we start to mature in our love for Him. But our struggle is the old man that keeps on visiting. He keeps on coming into our hearts, daring to lay in the bed that was made only for our true love. Just as Paul says that we must keep our marriage bed undefiled, so even so our spiritual marriage bed we must keep undefiled. If my husband cheated on me and told me he loves me every day, would I think he only thinks he loves me? Of course! Why do I think it would be different with God? He is the Redeeming Love that takes us as His wife. He has redeemed us as the Redeeming Kinsman, from the old man. The shoe has been cast and the land of our heart has become His. He has the right to the whole of our heart's land. Even though He hates divorce, He divorced Israel because of her idolatry. Because of her other lovers. We are not to boast because we have been grafted in, but we need to ensure that we too do not hide secret lovers in the chambers of our hearts.

He said in the Word that if we love Him, we will do His commandments. Love is obedience. We prove our love for Him by our obedience. A lover wants to please the one she loves. It is the natural outflow of this love. So in the same way our disobedience, even in small matters, reveal to us the state of our heart. Many struggle for years with other lovers that just do not get the message. God will not force us to love Him utterly and completely, but He does require it. We have to divorce all the other lovers of our heart and have nothing to do with them.

Here in is the whole of the law. Thou shalt love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your mind and strength, and your neighbour as yourself.

Two fold. He wants all of us, and we need to love others as we love ourselves. The one reflects the other. The way you love others is the way you love Me. Ruth's main concern was Naomi. She loved her Naomi as she loved herself.

God has a very high standard. But I believe this is the portrait of the Bride. Her old man has died, she has left family and friends, she loves Naomi (Judah) and serves others, she is a harvest worker, and she has no other lovers.

This is the Bride that ravishes His heart with one look of her eyes. She has dove's eyes and she is a garden enclosed only for Him. She is her Beloveds and her Beloved is hers.

Scripture ref:

Romans 7

7 Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth?

2 For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband.

3 So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man.

4 Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.

Revelation 21

21 And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.

2 And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

3 And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.

4 And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.

5 And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful.

6 And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.

Notes:





A CLOSING WORD

To the reader:

I realize that life is not fair. Some people are dealt much more difficult cards in life than others. But we all serve the same God in Christ. One who is without partiality. He loves all His children and has promised in James 1 that if we need wisdom, we may come and ask Him and He will give us liberally. Only we must ask in faith.

To live an authentic Christian life asks of us to face the reality of who we are and to be healed of the blows of life. We always have a choice of whether we will become depressed and feeling sorry for ourselves or whether we are going to take Him up on His Word. If He says His Word is true, then we have a choice whether we will search this out. This will mean that we will have to play by His rules. There is no other way to live the authentic Christian life than to die to self.

These meditations came during very trying times in my life. No doubt you find yourself in even greater trying trials. You may have the urge to see God as uncaring and cruel. But even if you do, like with me, if you turn to Him and give Him the chance, by doing things His way, He will prove Himself to you.

All He asks is that you will seek His face with all your heart. And when you do, you will not only learn who you are, but who He is. All the wisdom in life is shut up in Jesus Christ.

I pray you will find Him to be your light in the darkness you find yourself in, because where He is, darkness has to flee!

With a sincere heart,

Pietra de Bod