



Spiritual Growth

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SPIRITUAL GROWTH

We are all walking the way of life.

It is so important to take care how we walk and where we walk.

Our preparation needs to focus more on the spiritual than the natural.

Continuously we must think about how we can be the salt and the light to others.

1. Choose the way of a champion.
2. The criminal on the cross.
3. Don't let them label you.
4. The school of life.
5. Is there a storm in your life?
6. Doing God's will.
7. Christ's standard of belief.
8. Many are called, few are chosen.
9. Build your house on the rock.
10. Keys on the road of life.

CHOOSE THE WAY OF A CHAMPION

Matthew 7:24-27;

'Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock.

But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash'.

In the Lord's teaching about those who built their houses on the rock rather than on sand we are told several things that are crucial for the times we are in now.

First the storms beat against both houses, but only the house built on the rock would stand.

The storms are coming, but if we have built well, we will remain standing.

To build on the rock, we must hear the words of the Lord first and then we have to obey them. Let's just look at the choices we have to make: Verse 24 and verse 26.

Do not be controlled by fear!

If we look around we see a world that is going to see the greatest time of harvest ever. There are so many of our family and of our friends who need to turn their lives to Jesus Christ.

Our preparation needs to focus more on the spiritual than the natural. Continuously we must think about how we can be the salt of the earth and the light to others.

Hebrews 1:3;

'The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word'.

We must know that where the Word of God is, there is power.

To know God's presence is to know His power.

God does everything with power.

To speak His name is one thing, but to speak His Name in faith is power. Satan does not have power over us as long as we remain in the Word of God.

That is why: 'Who can be against you, if God is with you'.

That which is on your inside is far more important than that which is on the outside. If He walks in our midst healing will happen and breakthrough will come.

God expects a lifestyle of positive faith from us even when our circumstances are not perfect. Be bold to say: 'It is well', even in the face of trouble, because how I feel has nothing to do with how I am. No one is healed or blessed without faith.

It is not the trials and testing that are important. It is how we react on these that is important.

CHOOSE THE WAY OF A CHAMPION:

We are the sons and daughters of love, therefore, let us act love. Follow in the light of love – let love lead.

This is the time that we should love our neighbours as ourselves. Your neighbour could be your enemy, your friend or those who do not share the same faith as you. Love them all.

We should let love be the uppermost in our hearts because all our doings without love are nothing.

A person who does not love will not forgive.

A person who does not forgive cannot receive God's mercy and favour.

This is the reason why many are suffering around the world today.

I say all these things because I see that love is lost in our society today. We go to school together, we eat together and we work together. However, when we return to our various places of worship we begin to criticise and to condemn one another.

Why? This is hypocrisy!

We should be known for our love – irrespective of where we are.

We should know that:

* Love sees beyond hatred. Even when we are hated we should love;

- * Love sees beyond intimidation. Even when we are intimidated we should love;
- * Love sees beyond jealousy. Even when they are jealous of us we should love.
- * Love sees beyond criticism. Even when we are criticised we should love.

Love is patient, it does not express itself in anger.

Love is humble, it does not express itself in arrogance.

Love is hope, it does not express itself in self-pity or despair.

Love is goodness, it does not express itself in evil.

Yesterday man was his brother's keeper, but today he is his brother's destroyer.

For example: Yesterday your neighbour would wake up in the morning being your friend, but today we are strangers because of politics, religious reasons and cultural reasons.

Therefore, instead of criticising our society and our fellow men, let us do what is good and change the bad we see around us.

Let us walk in the light of love.

The main cause of all the stealing, killing and destruction today is to keep treasures for ourselves and our relations.

But the relations, the family and children whom we are keeping those things for, what becomes of them?

What can anyone achieve with stolen things? Can you achieve greatness and success? NO. Peace and comfort? NO.

This is what happens to our children today because they are nurtured with stolen things.

Remember: What comes from God will be used to rebuild His Kingdom.

What comes from the truth can be used to build our lives.

What comes from stealing will be taken away from you.

What comes from destruction will eventually destroy you.

Our leaders, how were they elected?

Was it a stolen mandate or the will of the people?

Those who created yesterday's pain cannot control tomorrow's potential. Nothing happens for nothing and nothing comes by chance.

In the course of my life I have seen those who chose to succeed and those who chose to fall. Choose the way of a champion. Choose the right path. Choices make champions. Sometimes you have to make choices that will have an influence on the rest of your life. Will you sink into self pity or will you use your hindrances and change them into opportunities?

If the day breaks in the morning light will shine brighter and brighter until we see full daylight. As we walk we will see more clearly as we move on. There will be more clarity and we should be able to see where we must tread with the increasing light.

This is supposed to be true in the life of every believer, regardless of the circumstances.

If it is not what is happening in your life you have somehow missed a turn. In the Lord the wrong road never turns into the right road. If we have missed a turn, the only thing we can do is to return to where we missed the turn and then get back on the right road.

The only commandment in the Bible with a promise is:

Ephesians 6:2-3; 'Honour your father and mother (which is the first commandment with a promise), so that it may be well with you, and that you may live long on the earth'.

Now, everybody does not have fathers and mothers to honour or some of you are not interested in following them because they were not great examples.

But, practically it means that we must honour them – if possible, and partake of their teachings.

The Lord says today:

- Do not use your own power to overcome your difficulties.
- Stay in My grace.
- Let me win the battle for you.
- It is not by power, nor by strength, but by my Spirit that you will overcome all.
- When I do that for you, you will be prosperous in My Name.

THE CRIMINAL ON THE CROSS

'Life is a coin. You can spend it anyway you wish, but know you can only spend it once.'

It is a life full of choices.

When we take time to reflect on our lives, we often realise that so many things in life did not turn out the way it was supposed to be. So many regrets – a life spend unfruitful.

Let us look at life:

Luke 23;

32: 'Two other men, both criminals, were also led out with him to be executed.

33 They crucified Jesus with the criminals - one on his right, the other on his left.

39 One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at him: aren't you the Christ? Save yourself and us.

40 But the other criminal rebuked him. Don't you fear God, he said, since you are under the same sentence?

41 We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong.

42 Then he said: Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.

43 Jesus answered him. I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise'.

Jesus said to him:

'I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise'.

The amazing thing about this request was that it was granted! Just try to picture the scene.

A criminal asking God's Son for eternal life?

But try to imagine the appeal being honoured, well, that steps beyond reality. But as absurd as it may appear, that is exactly what happened. He who deserved hell got heaven.

What was Jesus trying to teach us?

What was He trying to prove by pardoning this criminal, who in all probability had never said grace, much less done anything to deserve it? This man was being found not worthy to live in the Roman Empire anymore – but Jesus was finding him worthy to spend his life in paradise.

Everyday the world is trying to convince us that the human race is headed nowhere - that man has no destiny.

If man has no duty or destiny, the next logical step is that man has no value. If man has no future, he isn't worth much. He is worth, in fact, about as much as a tree or a rock or as an animal.

No difference.

There is no reason to be here, therefore, there is no value.

We live in a world with no principles, no ethics and no standards. It is your value system against mine. You think it is blue and I think it is green. Life is reduced to weekends, and paycheques and quick thrills. Now this is man's value system. It is not God's.

In God's book man is heading somewhere. He has an amazing destiny. We are being prepared to walk down the church aisle and become the bride of Jesus.

We are going to live with Him. Share the throne with Him and reign with Him. We do count. We are valuable.

And what is more, our worth is built in. Our value is inbred.

You see, if there was anything that Jesus wanted everyone to understand, it was this: A person is worth something simply because he is a person. Simply because he was made in God's image. This is why Jesus treated people like He did. Think about it.

* The girl caught sleeping with a man she shouldn't have slept with – he forgave her.

* The impure leper who asked for cleansing, he touched him.

* And the blind case on the roadside – he honoured him.

* And the man with a lot of self-pity near the pool of Siloam – he healed him.

* And then the case study on the value of a person by Luke, called 'the tale of the crucified crook'.

If anyone was ever worthless, this one was. If any man deserved dying, this man probably did. If any fellow was ever a loser, this man was at the top of the list. He was nothing – he had nothing. Perhaps that is why Jesus chose him to show us what he thinks of the human race.

Maybe this criminal had heard the Messiah speak. Maybe he had seen him love the lowly. Maybe he had watched him dine with the punks and the pickpockets on the streets. Or maybe not.

Maybe the only thing he knew about the Messiah was what he saw now: a beaten, slashed, nail-suspended preacher.

His face full of blood, his bones peeking through torn flesh, his lungs gasping for air.

Something, though, told him he had never been in better company. And somehow he realised that even though all he had was one last prayer, he had finally met the One to whom he should pray.

And then he said: 'Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom'.

Jesus looked at him and saw what was in this man's heart, and he answered: 'Consider it done. Today you will be with me in paradise'.
Now why would Jesus do that?

What in the world did he have to gain by promising this murderer a place of honour in paradise? What in the world could this dying man ever offer in return?

I mean, the Samaritan woman I can understand. She could go back and tell the tale. And Zacchaeus had some money that he could give back. But this guy? What is he going to do? Nothing.

That is the point. Listen closely.

Jesus' love does not depend upon what we do for him. Not at all. In the eyes of the King, you have value simply because of who you are. You don't have to look nice or perform well. Your value is inbred.

Think about that for a minute. You are valuable just because He loves you and He loves you unconditionally. Not because of what you do or what you have done, but simply because you exist. Remember that. Remember that the next time you find yourself in the middle of someone's ambition. Remember that the next time some trickster tries to hang a tag around your neck.

The next time someone tries to pass you off as a cheap buy, just think about the way Jesus honours you ...and smile.

I do. I smile because I know I don't deserve love like this.

None of us do. All of us – even the purest of us – deserve heaven about as much as that crook did.

All of us are signing on Jesus' credit card, not ours.

And it makes me smile to think that there is a grinning ex-con walking the golden streets, who knows more about grace than a thousand theologians.

No one else would have given him a prayer. But at the end that is all that he had. And in the end that is all it took.

Jesus Christ came into this world to reach those who feel that nobody cares. The Lord's love surrounds the one who trusts in Him.

The Lord Jesus Christ does care and He is reaching the lonely and the desperate, the confused and the hurt and the depressed.

Christ is reaching out to you now.

Have you surrendered your life to Christ?

Pray to God and give Him all the unpleasant things in your life. Your hurts, your disappointments, your fears, your failures and your sins. Give them to Him and leave them with Him.

Let Jesus heal you inside and forgive you and cleanse you.

He will change you and turn your sorrows into joys and your fears into peace. Submit to Him and He will give you a new direction in life.

Living your life for God:

Jesus Christ gives us a new start in life and a new life to start. Not only do you need to surrender all your sins and failures to Him, but all the good things as well.

Give Him all your talents and your abilities.

Give Him your plans and your opportunities, your energy and your time, as well as your love.

Your promise?

* From now on I am going to use my talents and my time according to God's will.

* From now on I will live for Christ Jesus, no matter what the cost, to help and to love and to reach this world for Him.

* I will love God with all my heart, my soul, my mind and my strength and will love my neighbour as I do myself.

Important:

* We only have one life, it will soon be passed:

Only what's done for Christ will last.

* The will of God will never lead us where the Grace of God cannot keep us.

* Where God guides, He provides.

* Our priority must be to seek first God's Kingdom and His righteousness, then all these things will be add

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DON'T LET THEM LABEL YOU

I believe that God has a perfect will for everyone.

He desires through the Holy Spirit to develop and lead you to be the man or woman that He saw from the foundation of the world.

What we see today is that God's people are bound to an identity or a label.

Christian churches are filled with seminars, often organized and run by their pastors, elders or deacons, who are trying to help the members understand themselves and each other, by their personality type. That binds them to a label.

They are asking you to be like an image they see.

It is important to know that you need to be set free from anybody and anything that wants to label you.

That does not mean just from leaders and teachers, but also from parents and friends and anyone else who have labelled you. You may have labelled yourself!

You must be set free from all of that because it prevents the work of the Holy Spirit.

There are so many fables and doctrines in church. They usually show us who we are not in Christ. They have done a wonderful job of breaking us down.

An example of profiles:

There was this woman in the church that used to be in astrology – the knowledge of stars.

She came to Christ and she did everything right, but she never fell out of agreement with astrology.

She firmly believed that she could help the church to see their future – how to identify with the sun and the moon and the stars.

It took a while to prove to her that all these stars and signs were wrong. She would say to you that you are a Leo or a Libra or a Sagittarius and that is who you are, and that everything that is going to happen to you in future, will rotate around this.

But that is wrong! She was binding people to a specific personality. She always said that if you are a Leo, certain things of a Libra will be impossible for you to do.

But Jesus said in ***Luke 18:27;***

‘What is impossible with men is possible with God’.

In astrology there is no changing into God’s image.

If you are a Leo with a certain personality, you are stuck with it, and you are going to have a bad day.

And even more: There is nothing that you can do about it.

No, we cannot go with this. The only thing it does is binding people.

It is time to trash every label that somebody has put on you, because it is binding you and prevents the work of the Holy Spirit.

Do not be bound to your past just because they labelled you.

I read about someone who was a pastor of a church.

He attended a seminar about profiles for pastoral leadership.

On this seminar it was said that the best man to be set in leadership should always be an extrovert, and that introverted people would always naturally follow extroverts.

After they have done all these tests, they determined that he was an introvert, and should immediately step down as a pastor.

They said he should be taken from his pastoral duties.

They also said that he should only be a deacon or maybe an assistant pastor and that someone else should be the leader of the church.

Now, there is no verse in the bible that says this.

In fact, many of God's greatest leaders were introverts.

Now this pastor: Who called this man anyway?

Who calls a man to ministry – the church or God?

God uses weak vessels to turn the world upside down.

The Word says the twelve disciples were unlearned men – but they changed the world.

If we look at characters in the Bible: Moses was an introvert.

Jeremiah said: 'Who am I? I am a child. Why choose me?'

What about little David? He was on the backside of the sheepfold.

He was doing the lowliest of all duties.

There was no occupation in those days with a lower status or rank than tending sheep.

Negative words bring negative attitudes: 'How I hate maths!'

'I don't like reading'.

'I am going to commit suicide, just like my dad'.

What happens when somebody labels you with something that is positive? You start to conform to that image. Just follow it.

If you want to be perfect and good in Christ, just get a word that you can hold onto and go for it.

The opposite is also true:

If you listen to the wrong words and look at the labels they put on you, you will become sick because you are driven into something that is not the work of the Holy Spirit. It is the work of another kingdom.

Labels in Medicine:

If you look at the labels in medicine, all you have is what the devil has done to the human body.

You can see clearly the breakdown in creation.
Everything normal starts to give in.

Remember: You may have a disease, but you are not a disease.

The enemy wants you to become one with disease.
And people start talking about: 'My cancer – my diabetes!'
He wants your nature, your body, your soul and your spirit to be identified with something other than what God created.
He wants other people to come along and label you.
You will now become one with this image for the rest of your days.

We see in the Bible how people were labelled:

If you look at the 'Gaderene demoniac'. That is what they called him.
There was a label put onto this man.
The only thing that separated that man from what God created him to be from the foundation of the world, was a spirit of insanity.
Jesus called that spirit 'an unclean spirit'.

This tormented man was supposed to be in his right mind, living at peace with his family. Jesus Christ delivered him.
When everything was over he went back with a sound mind to live in peace. Do you think the local community labelled him?
Most likely they did. After all, they had reason to.

God wants us to see Him behind all creation.
Never look on what the devil has perverted.

What is a problem? You very often start comparing yourself to other people. We look at other people, and use them as a example of comparison.

Good advice: Please don't do it!

My desire is to release you back into the kingdom of God without all these sacred cows hanging around your neck.
They are accusing you and are tearing you down. The biggest problem we have in rejection is comparing ourselves to another.

Why would you compare yourself to other anyway?

They did not create you. God did.
They did not call you. God did.
They did not save you. God did.
They did not anoint you. God did.

They are not going to redeem you.

They are not going to deliver you.

They are not going to heal you.

Just leave other people alone!

Paul said: 'Follow me, as I follow Christ'.

Don't be a follower of some other human image, no matter how spiritual they are. I am not your standard and neither is anyone else.

If you follow some of the sin that was in Paul, you are in trouble.

The only thing Paul did was to show us how to be in relationship with God. He taught us how to stay in our calling and in our anointing, and still deal with all the bad stuff in our lives.

What is an autoimmune disease?

It is a disease where your own body will destroy its own flesh and tissue: Lupus, Multiple sclerosis.

The church over years has become something like that.

It destroys itself. It is amazing how we want to evangelise the world, but we kill ourselves.

We judge each other after the flesh, binding each other.

We do not allow the Holy Spirit to truly lead someone into who God has made them to be.

I cannot bind you to what is not of God. I cannot make you one with evil. I need to give you all the chances you need – that is to become holy.

I can help you to separate yourself from evil and sin.

Can you separate yourself from it?

If you are struggling with stuff that was brought on you from your generations, it is time for you to take control.

The baggage that comes with generations will tie you up.

It is going to tell you that you have a different personality and that has nothing to do with who God created you to be.

That is what we call a generational curse of your ancestry.

Many of you will not be healed until all these labels are stripped off you, because you have become one with what the devil has done to your life.

One of the most common labels that people have is the fear of man and sin in your life.

If you bind yourself to the personality of sin to whatever degree, you have bound yourself to it of your own free will.

I want to bring you to a place to encourage you, because when you are faced with what you are not, that is all you can see.

The most important thing is to realize that you allowed sin – now that has an effect on your life.

We are so often blinded to what has happened to us.

What then is the law of sin?

Paul says in Romans 7 that there was still sin in his life.

He also said he did things he didn't want to do.

In church we have this mentality that because we are born again, we are sanctified and holy. That is where all things go wrong.

Freedom still requires responsibility.

Your abilities will take you to the top, but it is your character that will keep you there.

Let us read again ***Galatians 5:1;***

'It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery'.

Gal.5:25 'Get in step with the Holy Spirit'.

Over the years we realize: the church has been teaching so much promise, but no discernment, so we are still in bondage.

We have been taught how to be good, but making goodness part of your heart, is another matter.

Remember that God's last great move on earth will be for us to become pure and obedient.

Can we do more than what we are already allowing God to do in our lives? Jesus said: Your words can move mountains.

There is a time to talk and there is a time to listen.

I tell you, all we can do is to be led to a place where God the Holy Spirit can perfect this in our lives. So, start listening to God – for if you cannot do that, we cannot get the curse broken in your life.

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THE SCHOOL OF LIFE:

The school of life offers some difficult courses, but it is in the difficult class that one learns the most – especially when your teacher is the Lord Jesus Christ.

Psalms 32:8; 'I will teach you, and guide you in the way you should go. I will keep you under my eye'.

In this school there will always be testing - testing of many kinds. But, listen to God's Word:

James 1:2-3; 'Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance'.

As we walk in life, times will come where you really think this is the end. 'I am not going to make it, Lord! Not one more day Lord'. You feel that things are too tough and the road too steep.

In this, when you feel you are dying, be it a sickbed or a great test emotionally – and you stand at the gate of eternity – you see things from a different perspective than when you think you may live for a long time.

You really come to the point where all the doors seem to be closed.

But, at the end of all this, you must be able to say: 'Even though I was looking into the valley of the shadow of death, I was not afraid'.

It is in times like these that Jesus comes the closest, taking your hand and leading you through. When it is all finished, is the time that you feel and you know: 'I am free!'

Remember the words of Jesus to the church at Philadelphia:

Revelation 3:8; 'Behold. I have set before you an open door, and no man can shut it'.

Psalms 30:11 'Then He turned my sorrow into joy! He took away my clothes of mourning'.

It is in the school of life where our faith will be tested.

Hebrews 11:8 'By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going'.

In your life you have to understand that these are the first lessons in learning to trust Him completely. To really have faith in where He is taking you. Without faith it is impossible to please Him.

Believe God's Word, no matter what you see in the natural.

There are always prices to be paid and altars to be built.

It is then that the Lord will come and say: 'Because you were faithful, I will open new things in your life'.

These are our first steps on the path to complete dependence on Him, and obedience to His guidance.

In life there is always a time where you do not understand.

Listen to the story of the wife of a missionary, many years ago:

This family stayed in Ruanda in the 1970's – they were missionaries there. The man was absolutely devoted to his task.

When his wife learned that she was going to have another baby, she rebelled against God. She said that they had five children and that it seemed unfair to have another baby.

She was not in good health and looked upon having another child with great sorrow and unhappiness. She was so weak, she feared to have this baby at the mission station.

There were times when she wished God would take the baby.

The time for the birth arrived. There were no doctors nearby.

They had no one to leave the other children with, so they all got into the truck and drove to a town 200 miles away. There was a good hospital there. There they stayed until the baby was born.

Her husband was in a hurry. He always said that he would always stay in that area – it was his calling – no matter the circumstances.

When they returned to their house with the new baby, they learned that in the few days they had been gone, the rebels from the mountains had come.

They had murdered every person in the entire area. Everybody at the mission station was killed, and all the people who worked there.

She knew that, had they been home, they would all have been killed.

Crying she said: 'This little child was sent by God to save all our lives. Never again shall I rebel against His ways for our lives'.

The Holy Spirit:

Then comes a time when you will receive more of His Holy Spirit. A greater impartation of His presence and His power.

God does not fill those with His Holy Spirit who just believe in the fullness of the Spirit, or those who desire Him, but those who obey him. You must really have a desire to be filled with His fullness.

I personally came to the point of saying: 'I, Gerrie de Haas, without the Lord Jesus, cannot be victorious'.

And I have learned that I am absolutely dependent on Him.

And the price? Love – unconditional love. Everything in my life has to surrender. Because of this, He has made me rich in the Spirit.

I have learned well the secret of victory.

It comes through obedience.

God is not interested in your success, He only wants faithfulness.

A few things you learn in the school of life:

Forgiveness:

In my life I had to do it – and I knew it.

The message that God forgives has a condition to it: That we must also forgive those who have injured us.

Jesus said: 'If you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses'.

This is not only a command of God, it has to be a daily experience

In the walk of life: Those who are able to forgive their former enemies are able to return to the outside world and rebuild their lives, no matter what the physical and the emotional scars.

Those who nurse their bitterness will remain cripples.

It is as simple and as horrible as that.

Many times I had to be quiet. The people I had to forgive were just standing there. I stood there with coldness clutching my heart.

But forgiveness is not an emotion – I knew that too.

Forgiveness is an act of the will, and the will can function regardless of the temperature of the heart.

Just shout: 'Jesus, help me!'

You should call out: 'I forgive you, brother, with all my heart!'

What happens after forgiveness? You will feel God's love so intensely. You will realise, this is not your love.

You have tried, but did not have the power to do it on your own.

It was by the power of the Holy Spirit, as recorded in

Romans 5:5

'And this expectation will not disappoint us. For we know how dearly God loves us, because he has given us the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with His love'.

John 10:10 – God gives:

There was an elderly woman talking to a young girl who has just gone through a breakup in a relationship.

This woman has been a missionary for many years.

The girl asked: 'Why did you never marry?'

The older woman said: 'The Lord had other plans for my life'.

The girl: 'Did you ever fall in love and lose someone as I have?'

'Oh yes' said the woman. 'I know the pain of a broken heart'.

The girl: 'But you were strong, weren't you. You were willing to let God have his way in your life'.

'Oh no' said the woman. 'I had to fight a battle over it. I was twenty three years old. I loved a boy and I believed he loved me.

But, I had no money and he married a rich girl. It hurt so much, I could never really love again. God started to use me in the mission field and I am happy today'.

The girl shouted: 'But you loved and lost! Do you believe that God took away your lover to make you follow him?'

'Oh no', the woman smiled. 'God does not take away from us.

He might ask us to turn our backs on something or someone we should not have.

God never takes away. However, God gives.

If I reach out and take someone for myself and the Lord steps in between, that does not mean He takes away.

Rather it means He is protecting us from someone we should not have, because He has a far greater purpose for our lives'.

We have to keep our eyes open to God's better plan.

Remember: Happiness is not found in marriage, or work or ministry or children.

Happiness is found in being secure in Jesus.

Quit thinking of the past:

Let go of past failures and traumas. Self-pity is the super glue of hell that ties you up to the past. Keep your mind on Christ.

Guard your heart:

Guard your heart against doubt, unbelief, discouragement and despair. Have patience. God's timing and ways are perfect.

In the power of the Spirit:

Then there was a time when the presence of the Holy Spirit came. With His presence comes power.

This comes when you cross your line – crossing the line of life. With the power comes a greater responsibility.

You will learn in the school of life: When you minister in His Name, be careful that you are walking in wholeness.

Jesus specifically warned His followers not to try to minister in His Name, without His power. Now, whether I am walking in the bright light of His presence, or abiding under the shadow of the Almighty, I know that He is not only with me, He is in me.

1 John 4:4

'Greater is He who is in you, than he who is in the world'.

To be able to stand for Christ:

Corrie ten Boom once wrote:

When I was a young girl, I went to my father and said: Daddy, I am afraid that I will never be strong enough to be a martyr for Jesus Christ, and die for my faith.

Her father said: 'Tell me, when you take a train trip from Haarlem to Amsterdam, when do I give you the money for the ticket? Three weeks before?'

'No daddy, you give me the money for the ticket just before we get on to the train'.

'That's right', my father said. 'So it is with God's strength. Our wise Father in heaven knows when you are going to need things too.

Today you do not need the strength for a martyr, but as soon as you are called upon for the honour of facing death for Jesus, He will supply the strength you need – just in time'.

Authority over demons: In time the challenge will come:

One day a man of God said: We know God's promises and God's command, but who amongst us has ever been willing to obey

Mark 16:17

'And these signs shall follow them that believe; in My name shall they cast out demons'.

Over the years I learned and obeyed God's promise.

I have seen so much of the demonic and seen so many deliverances – just because God wants us to believe in His Word.

It is tragic to be around people, especially men of God, who do not recognise the fact that we are surrounded, not only by angels, but also by the powers of darkness.

When the existence of evil spirits is recognised by the heathen, it is generally looked upon by the missionary or the church as 'superstition' and ignorance; whereas the ignorance is often on the part of the church.

There are so many who are blinded by the prince of the power of the air, to the revelation given in the Scriptures, concerning the satanic powers.

We need to recognise the enemy in order to overcome him.

God wants and expects us to be conquerors over the powers of darkness – not only for the sake of personal victory and the liberation of other souls – but for His glory, so that His triumph and victory over His enemies may be demonstrated.

You have to learn that there are places and situations that it is only by claiming the blood of Jesus that you can stand and not fall.

The same is true in a city, or school, or even a church building.

If Jesus Christ is not recognised as Supreme, then darkness rules.

I can always be an over comer when I stand in the power of the Blood of the Lamb.

Obedience is easy when you know you are being guided by a God who never makes mistakes. You are not called to convince anyone. You are simply called to be an open channel for the Spirit of God to flow through. You can never be anything else, even though you may think so at times.

Follow the pathway of obedience, let the Word of God do its own work, and you will be used by God far beyond your own powers.

Happiness is not dependent on happenings, but on relationships in the happenings.

The reality of heaven:

Heaven is not a myth or fairy tale: heaven is a prepared place for prepared people.

Theology in the hands of the Holy Spirit is a beautiful science.

But in the hands of unbelievers it is death.

If you want to find where heaven is, listen to the simple faith of those who read only the Bible and trust only in God, not in material things.

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IS THERE A STORM IN YOUR LIFE?

In life we often see how two people can face with the same circumstances, yet each one of them handles the situation differently. One person might panic and allow fear to come in, whilst the other person remains calm and focused on finding an answer to the problem.

We find such a situation one night when Jesus and his disciples set sail on a ship across the Sea of Galilee.

Mark 4:35-38;

‘That day when evening came, he said to his disciples, "Let us go over to the other side."

Leaving the crowd behind, they took him along, just as he was, in the boat. There were also other boats with him.

A great windstorm arose, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped.

Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him and said to him, "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?"

Jesus was on the ship with his disciples.

They were ‘all in the same boat’, facing the same circumstances.

A storm had arisen and huge waves were beating against the ship and the boat was filling with water.

This was no small test the disciples were facing. The men on the boat were experienced fishermen and they had many a storm in their day. But this one was devastating and on that night they were afraid. The disciples panicked during the storm, but Jesus was fast asleep! They woke Jesus up and cried: 'Do you not care that we're about to die!'

Jesus got up calmly and dealt with the problem. Both Jesus and the disciples faced the same ordeal, yet each handled the situation differently.

Mark 4:39-40;

'He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, "Quiet! Be still!"

Then the wind died down and it was completely calm. He said to his disciples: "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?"'

There are several lessons we can learn from this story:

Lesson 1: God never promised we would be free from troubles. No one is free from the storms of life.

I wonder if the disciples had the idea that because Jesus was aboard, it would be smooth sailing. But notice: Jesus did not prevent the storm from coming in the first place. Yet how many times have you heard people ask: 'Why did God let this happen?' Jesus was asleep. He was not even aware of the storm.

Tests and trials come to all of us and no one is free from these challenges. Jesus himself told us that we would have trials and tribulations. He said that to each one of us.

John 16:33;

'I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have trouble. But be of good cheer, I have overcome the world'.

Jesus didn't promise we would never encounter problems. Some ministers have given people the idea that as believers we're never supposed to have any troubles. But that is wrong! We have a spiritual enemy, Satan, and he is always testing us to find out whether we are up to the task of living to what we say we believe. The minute you say that you are a over comer, Satan will test that.

Jesus told us we would have problems but he didn't stop there. He told us what to do in the midst of our storms and tests: 'Be of good cheer, for I have overcome the world'.

When Jesus came to earth as a man, he resisted every temptation of the enemy. He lived a sinless life and was willingly beaten and crucified. In that He defeated death, hell and the grave. Jesus did not 'overcome the world' for himself – he did it for you and me.

Lesson 2: Entering of God's rest.

When Jesus and the disciples set sail, he had just finished teaching the multitude. The Bible says that He was taken just as He was. He must have been tired because we know that he went into the back of the boat and lay down to sleep.

Here we see that the human body can become tired and weak and it needs to be refreshed and recharged regularly.

But that night was different. Imagine him sleeping on a small boat in the middle of a fierce windstorm. He must have been sleeping soundly, because the Bible says the disciples had to wake him up.

In the same sense believers should be able to lie down and sleep peacefully and soundly, just as Jesus did on that ship, even if we are facing a test or a trial. And when we wake, we should go through our day resting in the shelter of the Saviour's arms.

When we talk about 'resting' in the Lord, we are not talking about literally sleeping or even lying down to rest. We talk about living in a state of peace that passes our natural understanding.

The storms of life may be raging, but when you are resting in the Lord, you have a sense of calm in your spirit.

When you trust the Lord and rest in him, you can remain calm in the midst of trouble.

Lesson 3: Jesus' authority over destruction:

After the disciples awakened Jesus, he commanded the winds and the sea: 'Quiet, be still!' In this act we see Jesus exercising absolute authority over creation and over the enemy's attempts to use nature to bring forth destruction.

Remember: In the beginning Jesus was with God in the creation of man. Jesus was also present when the heavens and the earth were created. That is why, when Jesus spoke to the sea in the midst of

that storm, the water and the sea recognised the voice of the Creator.

Jesus understood the forces of nature that opposed them that night on the Sea of Galilee. But he also understood the evil forces behind the storm, and he dealt with the situation accordingly.

In Mark 1:23-25 we read that Jesus entered a synagogue and said to the evil spirit that was present in a man: 'Be quiet, and come out of him!'

Then in Mark 4 he said to the sea: 'Quiet, be still!'

Jesus understood that the devil was the force involved in the storm, just as Satan was also in that evil man in the synagogue. He dealt with these situations the same way.

Lesson 4: Jesus delegated that authority to the church:

After Jesus' resurrection from the dead, he spoke to his followers concerning his authority and power.

Matthew 28:18;

'Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go with it.'

Mark 16:17;

'And these signs will accompany those who believe:'

Jesus demonstrated his power and authority on earth when he healed the sick, cast out demons, raised the dead and commanded the elements to obey him.

After his resurrection he said: 'I give my power to my church'.

When you now use your God-given authority against the enemy of your soul, the devil recognises that authority, and he has to obey.

Lesson 5: 'Let us go over to the other side'.

Mark 4:35;

'That day when evening came, he said to his disciples, "Let us go over to the other side.'"

It seems that the disciples had overlooked this phrase too.

Jesus, the eternal Word of God, had declared ahead of time exactly where he and the disciples were going: 'To the other side' of the sea.

Yet when the windstorm came up, the disciples yielded to what their senses were telling them, and they forgot what the Word of God had said.

Jesus said concerning his Word: 'Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away'. The Word of God is eternal. That means it is not subject to change.

When Jesus said: 'Let us go to the other side', that is just what the Master intended to do. Had the disciples held fast to Jesus' words, they would not have given place to panic and fear.

We are convinced that they could have calmed the storm themselves on the authority of Jesus' words.

Instead, Jesus rebuked the winds and the waves became calm.

Then Jesus said to his disciples: 'Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?' He was actually saying: 'Why did you not handle this storm? Why did you have to wake me up?

I have already given you My authority.

Jesus Christ died and was in the tomb for three days.

What made him come back to life again?

This was not the act of man, but a supernatural thing.

Jesus said when he was still alive: 'On the third day I will rise again!' Now, just because he said that and there was power in his words, it happened. It was his own Words that raised him from the dead!

Today he says to each one of us: 'Become what you say!'

'Become what you believe'.

Every one of us as believers is going to experience tests and storms in life. The enemy is going to challenge you to find out if we really believe what we claim to believe.

When the waters are calm and the sky is blue, it is easy to say:

'I believe God's Word', but when storms rage on the sea of life, what will you do? Will you cry out: 'God, why did you let this happen?'

Or will you find peace in his arms? On the authority of God's unchanging Word, you can stand against the storms of life and see the winds of adversity cease.

Not only can you experience peace in troubled times, you can 'cross over to the other side' of those troubles and enjoy the victory God has in store for you.

DOING GOD'S WILL

God's Word will never fail us – it is our ultimate measure of faith and action.

Psalm 119:89-92;

'Your word, O LORD, is eternal; it stands firm in the heavens. Your faithfulness continues through all generations; you established the earth, and it endures. Your laws endure to this day, for all things serve you'.

God's Word is forever settled. It will never change. What it states today, it will state into eternity.

You are not going to get God to change His mind to agree with you. You will have to change your mind to agree with Him.

This means that God has set His Word as a boundary beyond which no Christian should go. If it is not in the Bible, you should not do it.

God only has to say something once for it to happen. God does not have to say again that human beings can be healed, can be delivered and set free. He has already said it, and it is a fact.

Now it is up to Christians to establish God's Word on earth and to establish His kingdom on earth. We will do that by removing all the work of the enemy from the emotions and bodies of sick human beings.

God does not have to do anything for the healing of any person. He has already done it. It is just for us to receive and claim our healing. It is up to us to accept the fact that God has already defeated His enemy.

What is the evidence of an old mindset – our old way of thinking?

- * The church was taught to depend on people.
 - * An old mindset is always looking for God to speak to them through another person.
- In the Old Testament it was usually the prophet that spoke for God.

* It is also a mindset that will be trying to earn or deserve God's blessings, rather than believe that everything we get from God, we get by grace.

* It is a mindset that will always be afraid that God is mad at them about something. They also believe that God will be mad at them if they do not do everything right.

* Therefore they are always afraid to do anything without a clear leading to do so.

They also get this type of word from the pulpit: 'Don't do anything without permission, or you will get in trouble'.

Most people are waiting for a phone call from God, when He has already sent them a letter. Most people seem to be waiting on God to tell them specifically what to do and when to do it.

They don't realise that God has already told us what to do and given us examples of how to do it.

In short: You are still waiting for a word that has already been given to you years ago.

One year, ten years – you are still waiting. And missing it!

The employee of least value to a company is the one who always has to be told what to do.

The most valuable employee is the one that finds what needs to be done and does it, without being told. Any specifics we may need will be given AS WE GO, and not UNTIL we go. Don't wait.

If the 'how-to' was important, God would have specified how to.

God works according to the principles of good management.

He tells you what to do and gives you the guidelines within which you must work, but then He leaves the how-to up to you.

Always remember that the written word of God is more sure than a voice speaking from heaven.

- Once we accept the word of God as our final authority, we must begin to retrain our mind to think in line with God's will.
- The Bible is the revealed will of God.
Everything that we need to know about how to live the way God wants us to, has been provided to us.
- God cannot require you to do what you cannot do.
- God cannot hold you responsible for what you cannot know.

We must train our mind to think in line with God's will.

Romans 12:1-2;

'Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God - this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, **but be transformed by the renewing of your mind**. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is - His good, pleasing and perfect will.'

Please note that you cannot do God's will until your mind is renewed by the Word of God.

Don't try something you cannot do - it will harm other people.

We can be in God's will, but are you in His perfect will right now?

God requires us to find out what the good, pleasing and perfect will of God is. If God will change from minute to minute and from person to person, we can never know, let alone prove His will.

How can we prove His will? 'Be transformed by the renewing of your mind'. You must renew your mind by the Word of God and start thinking differently.

You renew your mind by changing the way you think about things, until every thought agrees with what the Bible says about it.

I still find so many young people who live together .

They usually end up in my rooms with lots of problems.

But every time you address the issue of open doors because of sexual sin, they get angry. They refuse God's Word to change them.

You can quote the verses, and tell them what God says about this, but they keep on being stubborn and emotional about it.

The problem? If you cannot renew your mind to live within God's will, your problems will never end.

Since your mind works like a computer, whatever is in your memory will stay there until it is deleted and replaced with new information. Because of this, it is not enough to learn Bible verses; you must pull down any thought that does not agree with the Bible.

For the Word of God to be truly effective in our lives, we must be in a place where our first thought is what the Bible says.

When we are born into the Kingdom of God, we are born into the royal family. All the rights of the royal family are there already.

The 'renewing' is what allows what is inside us, to come out. To fully allow the 'real' you to come forth, you must know what the Word of God has to say about every subject, and you must begin to ACT on every scripture you learn.

Romans 8:14; 'Because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God'.

James 1:22; 'You must be doers of the word, and not hearers only'.

- Your mission as a Christian is to manifest the Lord Jesus Christ in each and every situation that you are involved in.
- You are commissioned to do the works that Jesus did and greater works than He did because He went to the Father.
- You are sent as He was sent.
'Peace be with you, as my Father has sent me, even so I sent you'.

Do not use your own power to overcome your difficulties.

Stay in God's grace. Let Him win the battle for you.

It is not by your power, nor by your strength but by God's Spirit that you will overcome all.

Prayer:

Lord, I surrender my own free-will and my own will-power to you. I surrender all. It is not I that live anymore but Christ living in me. AMEN,

God wants us to go and do it.

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MANY ARE CALLED, BUT FEW ARE CHOSEN.

Have you ever known someone you would call a 'born leader?'

Or do you know someone who is blessed with such a beautiful voice you would say they were 'born to sing'?

Have you also seen the heartache that follows if people are not doing what they were 'born' to do? There is definitely a difference between being called and being chosen.

In **Matthew 22:14**; Jesus Christ said these words; 'Many are **called**, but few are chosen'.

NIV: 'Many are **invited**, but few are chosen'.

He was stating a fact. The fact is still as true today as when Christ first stated it. Many Christians are invited by God to His service, but few are ever chosen and appointed to walk in that service.

Christians are often called in childhood. Some are called comparatively late in life.

Between the time when a Christian is first called to service, and the time when he is actually appointed by God to that service, there is always is a period of testing and purification.

Often, the more responsibility required in the service to which a Christian is called, the more intense this purification process will be. Only those who successfully endure these trials will be chosen to actually carry out the service.

In the book of Judges, we see the life of **Gideon**.

When Gideon first blew the trumpet to call the people of Israel to God's service against the Midianites, 32,000 men answered the call. By the time that Gideon had subjected his followers to the tests which God appointed, however, he was left with 300 men.

Less than one percent of those who were invited, passed all the trials and were chosen for service.

I suspect the proportion is not really any higher today – if at all.

Nevertheless, God's wisdom was justified by the event. Gideon was able to do more with 300 tested, disciplined men than he could ever have accomplished with 32000 mere followers.

Once again, the same applies today. One tested, trained, disciplined, self-denying servant of Christ, is worth a hundred Christians who are merely members of some group or organization.

Most modern evangelism goes for the counting of converts.

I believe God is more concerned with producing disciples.

During the days of His earthly ministry, Christ could have numbered his converts by the thousands, but in the last hours before the cross, He was left with just 11 men who remained disciples.

He had revealed himself alive on one occasion to over 500 men, but only 120 went up to the upper room to receive the blessing of the Lord. He warned them that without His power they could not be effective witnesses for Him – but so many did not show up. The true progress of God’s kingdom depended upon quality, rather than quantity.

TWO TYPES OF TESTING:

There are two main ways in which God tests Christians who are called to service:

- * By allowing things to become hard, and
- * By allowing things to become easy.

In the parable of the sower in **Mark 4**, Jesus spoke of the seed that fell on *stony ground*. He compared it to Christians who ‘last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away’.

But He also spoke of the seed that fell *amongst thorns*, and compared it to Christians in whom ‘the worries of the life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things come in and choke the word, making it unfruitful’.

In these trials, some Christians are not prepared to endure opposition, persecution, loneliness, poverty or apparent failure for of the Gospel.

Others cannot remain steadfast in the midst of worldly ease and comfort, popularity, wealth and success.

Those whom God accepts for His service, must neither be deterred by the one, nor entangled by the other. The Bible continually warns Christians that they must expect to undergo trials.

In **James 1:2-3** we read:

‘Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance’.

The Bible also gives us many pictures of God’s faithful servants and of the testing through which they had to pass.

One of the classic examples is **Job**.

In Job 23:10-12, we read Job's own testimony concerning his trials:

'But he knows the way that I take; when he has tested me, I will come forth as gold. My feet have closely followed his steps; I have kept to his way without turning aside.

I have not departed from the commands of his lips;

I have treasured the words of his mouth more than my daily bread.'

In verse 12 we find the secret of Job's victory. It lay in his attitude towards God's Word. Those who esteem God's Word above all else, will always come through their trials victorious.

Another servant of God who endured several trials, was

Jeremiah.

Jeremiah was a very young man when God called him. Jeremiah himself thought that he was too young to be a prophet at all.

One of the most difficult trials for young Christian people to endure is loneliness.

Faithfulness to God holds them away from the empty, worldly pleasures and activities, in which they see others of their age falling into, but they sometimes feel left out.

Jeremiah himself endured this particular test. But, like Job, he drew his strength to endure from his attitude, from God's Word.

This was his mark as a true servant of God.

He said in ***Jeremiah 15:16***;

'When your words came, I ate them; they were my joy and my heart's delight, for I bear your name, O Lord God Almighty'.

Moses is another great servant of God who learned to endure testing. His first trial was that of worldly rank and pleasure.

Brought up in Pharaoh's house and king to be after Pharaoh, he could have enjoyed all the wealth and culture and luxury of Egypt.

When he refused to fall for this temptation, he was rejected by his own people, and persecuted by Pharaoh, and had to endure 40 years of exile and loneliness.

Still he overcame all these trials, because he never allowed the appeal of temporary wealth and glory to blind him to the true glory of God, and the eternal reward that God offers.

Hebrews 11:26

'He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward'.

Today many Christian young people are not seeing the true glory and eternal reward of real Christian service, by prospects of worldly comfort and success.

THE WEIGHT OF THE CALL:

The Bible uses three powerful words regarding the calling of God.

(1) First, it is a '**high calling**'. See **Philippians 3:14**.

It is on a different level from all the other interests and claims of life. In a Christian's life nothing else may take precedence over the calling of God – neither a home, nor any family or earthly ties.

Luke 14:26;

'If you want to be my follower you must love me more than your own father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters – yes, more than your own life. Otherwise, you cannot be my disciple'.

(2) Secondly, the call to serve God is a '**holy calling**'.

See **2 Timothy 1:9;**

It is something sacred, to be guarded jealously from all compromise or defilement. It demands dedicated time of prayer and spiritual self-emptying. Its fulfillment demands our strength, our time and the development of every gift and talent we possess.

(3) Thirdly, God's call is a '**heavenly calling**'.

See **Hebrews 3:1**.

The voice that calls us to Christian service comes from heaven. Whether it comes as a 'still, small voice' or as 'the sound of many waters', it is the voice of the almighty God.

Today, when God calls Christians to specific ministry, the first reaction of many is to seek the opinion of others. Who will send me? Who will finance me? As a result, the voice of God is soon drowned out by the opinions of men. But to the Christian who is called and who is willing to put all his confidence in God, there comes a blessed assurance from God's own Word: **1 Thessalonians 5:24;**

'The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do it'.

The fulfillment of a Christian calling depends supremely and solely upon God Himself.

DON'T DELAY:

Lastly, the calling of God is urgent.

When Joshua put before the Israelites the call to service of God, he said: 'Choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve'.

(Joshua 24:15.)

The call of God does not wait upon man's convenience.

We may not postpone our decision to surrender to Him to some more 'convenient season'.

The devil says 'tomorrow', but God says 'today'.

There is a warning in the Bible against waiting to answer the call of God. It describes people who, in their prosperity and self-sufficiency, turn away from the call of God.

In fact, later when they change their minds and turn back to seek God, it's too late. God has withdrawn Himself. The voice that once called is now silent. The hour of opportunity has passed.

Whether His calling to you is **general** (like in Micah 6:8), or **specific** (like in 1 Peter 4:11), let me encourage you to heed His call.

Take it seriously.

Dedicate yourself to being steadfast in your faith, even in the face of trials and tribulations.

Don't become another name added to that of the 'many' who were called and invited, but never chosen.

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BUILD YOUR HOUSE ON THE ROCK:

Matthew 7:24-27;

Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock.

The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock.

But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash'.

In the Lord's teaching about those who built their houses on the rock rather than on sand, we are told several things that are crucial for the times we are in now.

First the storms beat against both houses, but only the house built on the rock would stand. The storms are coming, but if we have built well, we will remain standing.

To build on the rock, we must hear the words of the Lord, and then we have to obey them. Let's just look at the choices we have to make: Verse 24 and verse 26. Do not be controlled by fear!

If we look around, we see a world that is going to see the greatest time of harvest ever. There are so many of our family and of our friends who need to turn their lives to Jesus Christ.

Our preparation needs to focus more on the spiritual than the natural. Continuously we must think about how we can be the salt and the light to others.

Hebrews 1:3;

'The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word'.

We must know that where the Word of God is, there is power.

To know God's presence is to know His power.

God does everything with power'.

To speak His name is one thing, but to speak His Name in faith is power. Satan does not have power over us, as long as we remain in the Word of God. That is why the words: 'Who can be against you, if God is with you'. If He walks in our midst healing will happen and breakthrough will come.

God expects a lifestyle of positive faith from us, even when our circumstances are not perfect. Be bold to say: 'It is well', even in the face of trouble, because how I feel has nothing to do with how I am. No one is healed or blessed without faith.

SIN IS OUR GREATEST ENEMY:

There is a connection between Satan and sin.

Satan cannot do a thing without sin in one's life.

Without sin in your life, Satan is powerless.

Sin is the root cause of all pain.

Mark 2:3-5 and 10-12;

'Some men came, bringing to him a paralytic, carried by four of them.

Since they could not get him to Jesus because of the crowd, they made an opening in the roof above Jesus and, after digging through it, lowered the mat the paralyzed man was lying on.

Verse 10: But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins. He said to the paralytic, I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home'.

He got up, took his mat and walked out in full view of them all. This amazed everyone and they praised God, saying: 'We have never seen anything like this!'

In this portion, Jesus had a choice between forgiving and healing the paralytic. Jesus has the authority to forgive sins.

Forgiveness of sin strikes at the root of all pain. When your sins are forgiven, you are blessed, redeemed, delivered and saved.

In forgiving the paralytic his sins, Jesus dealt with the root specifically and not the ailment.

He likened this to a good medical practitioner who would deal with the root cause of a sickness, before the sickness itself.

Such a practitioner would ask his patients questions and it would help him to strike at the root of the ailment.

If a medical doctor can do as much, how much more our Lord?

Jesus is the great Physician – never a sickness He cannot heal.

Jesus is concerned about your welfare, both physically and spiritually. When He heals, He does so effectually and for the salvation of your soul.

In **Mark 2:5**, Jesus said to the paralytic: 'Your sins are forgiven'. That is a word of hope for sinners like us.

Jesus chose to deal with the root rather than the pain itself. Sin is the disease of the soul. When it is pardoned, you are healed. Sin in the soul is the cause of sickness. If we knew no sin, we should know no sickness, poverty, depression or any form of affliction.

We bring sin upon ourselves. In **Romans 7:15** the apostle Paul said: 'What I don't want to do is what I find myself doing'. This means sin is a spiritual thing under which we are powerless, and no one can say no to sin, unless God is involved.

If God is for us, nobody can be against us. As Christians we do not have to worry about Satan or be frustrated by his tactics. We are to stand boldly in Jesus' Name. We have the power of Jesus' Name at our command. We have the power to command the enemy to leave.

Our combat is not against flesh and blood, so stop fighting your brothers. Our target is the principalities, demons of all kinds and authorities and other satanic powers. You have the power of Jesus at your command – so, you need not worry about Satan.

PRAYER:

Thank you Father for your promise that no harm will befall us and no disaster will come near us, for You will command Your angels concerning us to guide us in all our ways.

We will tread upon the snake and the serpent because you love us.
AMEN



KEYS ON THE ROAD OF LIFE

We are all walking on the path of life. It is so important to take care how we walk and where we walk.

In a church people are actually choosing the direction they want to go in or not. They go in all directions by their own will and they will determine the route they will take. Sometimes the route ends in a crisis. Now a crisis is not something that just comes. A tragedy or a drama does not come quickly or just happens. A crisis is actually the end of a road or a path that has already been chosen a while ago. A person continues to move down a pathway and as they are moving down the road, it ends in a crisis.

Now, things will keep on changing in your life. God is doing a new thing all the time. God is putting things in order. God's passion is not worship, because if his passion is worship, then trees would sing. No, God's passion is order – even down to the smallest little thing. Everything God made is in order – it is balanced. Everything about God is balanced.

So we must realise that God is doing something new – and he also wants to do something new in the church.

Everything that God has planned, will come to pass.

God wants us to go and change the world, but he first wants to change us.

All of a sudden we realise that things that used to work, don't work anymore. Things are different. If you are a leader you will understand that. We keep changing things and as our minds are changing, our hearts will change. We must just always come to answers.

For every believer there is a truth and every believer has to take hold of this truth. You will know what God wants you to do.

We don't always have to fast and we don't always have to pray to find out what God wants us to do.

He really wants us to know what His perfect will is.

When you begin to look into the life of a person, you can pretty well tell why certain things happen, because there are pathways in this world to know.

Life is not so much by chance, life is really about choices. Everyone makes choices. These choices bring consequences. These consequences bring a life and that life becomes your destiny.

I believe that God desires for people to be leaders in the next generation. We must be able to leave something for our children. The world is declining and becoming more secular every day. Our fathers were people of ethics. People of character and of high standards. They were people who would never allow something immoral to go on around them.

But in the last generation there was a change. Something happened in the last part of the previous century. Our country went from a principal based nation to an emotional based nation. So the world today is based upon emotions.

Now, if the foundations of life have been taken away from us, what are we going to do? Where are we going?

We realise that:

- * Drug addicts are not really addicts, they are just people without direction. They just have a need to be loved.

- * Boredom is a lack of direction.

When young people say they are bored it is just a lack of direction. As soon as a person has a passion, they are not bored anymore.

- * Therefore, loneliness is not the lack of affection, it is a lack of direction.

We must start thinking in a new direction as God transforms us into a new person by the way we think.

KEYS ON THE ROAD OF LIFE:

No. 1: We lose so much in life because we do not listen and obey our instructors:

One of the greatest deceptions in church is the 'mercy deception' – that 'God is merciful'.

It forms a doorway – a back doorway in the house of the church. The mercy deception means that there are no consequences for 'wrong-doing'.

If there are no consequences for wrong-doing, then what are the rewards for right-doing?

If a person who does evil and does wrong receives the same consequences as a person who walks in holiness, then what is the benefit of walking in holiness?

If there are no benefits for me to walk in holiness, then why can I not be like anyone else? That is exactly what the church is doing!

Thirty years ago you could tell the difference between a Christian and a non-Christian, but today it is very difficult to tell the difference. Statistics show that more people in the church will get divorced than people in the world.

55% of people that are first time married get divorced inside the church. These are people who call themselves born-again.

Over 40% of people that claim bankruptcy are people that call themselves born-again Christians.

You see there really is not much difference between people in the church or people who are in the world.

We lose so much in life because we do not listen and obey our instructors and leaders.

We are so deceived! You see, people think that they don't have trouble in churches. That is not true.

What happens is that if we begin to confront issues in people's lives, they leave the church. So, in order to keep them in church we don't confront the issues, because there are always some churches down the street that will let them come in.

They always say: 'Come in, we love you. God is merciful. We are not going to say a thing about what you do wrong'.

The greatest doorway of deception in the church is the doorway of mercy, because at the end we think there are no consequences for evil.

Remember: The waves of yesterday's disobedience will wash up upon the shores of tomorrow!

You must understand that, if God gives you an instructor in church – listen to him! Jesus did not save you to make you feel good. He saved you because he has a purpose for your future and that purpose was not for you just to hang around.

Proverbs 5:12-14;

You will say: 'How I hated discipline! How my heart spurned correction!

I would not obey my teachers or listen to my instructors.
I have come to the brink of utter ruin in the midst of the whole assembly'.

Did you ever think about this?

This guy was in church and he was destroyed in church!

Why? He refused to listen to his leaders.

If you make wrong choices, know that consequences will come into your life. You need not stay there!

One of the myths of young people is that they think they have enough time to overcome these consequences.

You think that with time all your problems will just go away.

They just never do. 10 years, 20 years – they are still there.

God will give you a second chance. He will give you a fresh start because his mercies are new every morning.

They are new, but they are not the same.

No. 2: Give up worry:

Remember: Today is the tomorrow you worried about yesterday!

Philippians 4:6-7;

'Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.

And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus'.

Until you have faced the anxieties of life, they will just never leave, no matter what you do or pray.

So many of you in life have to fight fear and anxiety, but until you have learned to face fear, it will not go away.

You also cannot cast out a 'spirit of fear' whilst you are in fear.

Give everything in prayer to Christ Jesus .

No.3: When people don't have problems, they create them.

People will somehow manufacture problems.

If you don't have problems, make sure that you don't create some.

The greatest test that you will ever go through in your life is not the test of cancer. It is not the test of any type of disease and it's not the test of divorce.

The greatest test that you will ever experience in your life is the test of abundance, because that is the test that most people fail. People instead of using money as a tool for what God desires for them, get mixed up. Money changes them.

All of a sudden they buy a second house, holiday homes or farms and when it is holiday time you can't find them.

All of a sudden church attendance goes down.

The other great test is whether you can keep on standing – despite the disadvantage that people never really loved you.

Remember: Don't create problems if you don't have some – stay away from them.

Learn how to multiply your life when the waters are calm.

Most individuals don't reach out to God until they are in the midst of a storm.

Don't do that – do it the opposite way. When things are calm you can make up all the ground and go after things.

No. 4: The disappointments of the past still plays a role in your life today.

You and I treat people based upon the way that other people have treated us.

Example: There is this girl. She has had a kind of a rough past, but somehow she turns around and gets saved.

She had so many guys and so many things in her life, but finally she comes to Christ. She is so excited and so happy and she finds her place in church and things are going well.

Now a holy fellow, someone in church, comes along. He has had a wonderful past, no problems, no sins and he falls in love with her.

Everything is just great and they decide to get married. They marry and stay together. Now every bit of pain that she has ever experienced in her past is now unleashed on the one who didn't do it, and everything falls apart.

These are truths and they happen daily.

Watch out and do not allow the disappointments of the past to rob you from your future.

No. 5: We all have a past but people have the right to your future.

The most important things in your life are the relationships you have, because they will determine the outcome of your life.

We are in relationships for what we like or dislike or do together.

The only way that I can guarantee the people of my future is to never look at my past, because that will rob them from my tomorrow.

My family tolerated the worst moments of my early life.

When I went home at night after work, I didn't go with my problems, I went home with my patient's problems.

I went home with your problems, asking God to give me the keys to unlock the issues of your life.

That affected my outlook and it affected other people.

No. 6: The ten lepers.

As Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem, ten men who had leprosy met Him. They stood at a distance and called out: 'Jesus, Master, have pity on us'. He went to them and said: 'Go show yourselves to the priests'.

As they went, they were cleansed and it was just wonderful and great.

Now, one, seeing that he was healed, turned back and came to Jesus. He fell at His feet and began to thank him.

Jesus turned around and asked: 'Where are the other nine?'

Now, because he came back, Jesus touched him again and said: 'Son, your faith has made you whole'.

But Jesus said: 'Because of your returning and because of your gratitude, you will be made whole!'

No.7: Surrender everything you have to Jesus.

Allow Him to change you and be positive about the future.

Become what you believe!

