


THE Source

February 2020

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Let 2020 be a year of *Salvation*

Shane Dowinton

*“It is the glory of God to conceal a matter,
to search out a matter is the glory of kings”*

Proverbs 25:2

Our faith in Christ is a journey of discovery. Jesus describes Himself as the way.

I love that in the context of family St John's church walks out this road of discovery in fellowship, sharing the nuggets of revelation that life in Christ brings. My take on this verse is that hidden in the details of life are precious revelations of God's goodness and faithfulness. In the articles of this edition of The Source we have great Godly wisdom revealed through men and women from our own fellowship. Phil, Denise and Nick share critical keys to spiritual growth that they have learned as they have walked their road with the Lord.

In a quiet time with the Lord recently I was praying about the new year 2020. In my own terrible handwriting the number read like SOZO which is the Greek word in the New Testament for salvation – forgiveness, healing, deliverance. I sensed the Lord's challenge. Will 2020 be a year of salvation? It is the core of the gospel after all. Jesus has given His church the keys to the Kingdom of God, we are to be Jesus in this world.

I feel that Holy Spirit is gently prodding us to flex our faith. The more we use our faith to draw heaven to earth the more we will see His kingdom come. My prayers for us at St John's this year are;

Let us pray bold and
audacious prayers;

Let us hunger and thirst for the
kingdom of God;

Let us be a demonstration of purity and
power to the community around us;

Let us be recognised by the fact that
we have been around Jesus.



Have a blessed 2020

Shane



Finding the promise and saying *yes* to the journey

Denise van Coller

Genesis 18:9-15 gives the account of God promising Abraham that Sarah will have a son. We see Sarah, who is past childbearing age, eavesdropping on the conversation. It is here that we witness two of Sarah's failings: first, she laughs at the very idea of God's promise, and secondly, when God asks Sarah why she is laughing, she denies it.

We read again of Sarah in Hebrews 11:11, but this account seems like a completely different story:

“Sarah’s faith embraced the miracle power to conceive even though she was barren and past the age of childbearing, for the authority of her faith rested in the One who made the promise, and she tapped into His faithfulness.”

(The Passion Translation)

What happened between the point of laughter and denial of what God had said, and this account in Hebrews? I believe there may have been some kind of journey, where, at some point, Sarah began to live out the promise, and in that journey she discovered relationship with God.

There have been several episodes in my life, where, like Sarah, God gave me a promise and then, also like Sarah, I had to journey that promise out with God.

One such episode occurred in 2009, the year God healed me from 10 years of depression and anxiety. I do not want to focus much on those years except to say that they were an extremely dark and frightful time in my life. Leading up to 2009, God in His goodness and grace had brought me over the years to a place of stability. I was on medication and my life had been brought under control. I was at the point where I was happy to live on medication for evermore - at least I had a life. I can testify of God's hand and His intervention in so many ways during those years. He never left me nor did He forsake me, even if I was not walking in the fullness of what Jesus paid for on the cross.

At that point of my walk with God I had been taught that the power of the Holy Spirit and the manifestations, miracles and gifts etc. that you read about in the early church were unique to that time in history. I most certainly could not expect any of that in my life today.

A few years after we had moved up to the Waterberg, God started teaching me about His Holy Spirit and the baptism of the Spirit. I learnt that the signs and wonders and the outpouring of the Spirit is for the church today and was something that I could have.

In 2009 I was baptized by immersion and baptized in the Holy Spirit. The spirit of anxiety and depression that had oppressed me for 10 years was broken and I was healed; I came off my medication that night!

Since then I have walked 10 years in freedom – a walk that has taken me from that point of healing, through the process of walking out the healing to beyond, where I am now involved in a ministry that helps lead other people into their own freedom. Isn't that amazing!

The initial walking out of this miracle was not easy, and there have been some truths that I've had to learn along the way:

Habits: The first thing that God taught me was how to deal with patterns of behaviour that had become entrenched habits during those years of anxiety. I couldn't cope with a negative emotion, frustration or anger. They would build up to a point of explosion and a complete loss of control. This brought me to a place of fear, as I never knew what I was capable of doing when in that space. It took me days to recover from one of those outbursts.

So here I was after my baptism, on a euphoric high that lasted about two weeks. When I came back down to earth, it was with a crash: I had one of those explosions. I was gutted and confused. What was happening here? My husband's response was that I should trust what had happened the night I was delivered.

What was happening?

If the enemy has been vacated from a place, he is going to seek re-entry. He will use the same things against you as he did before. I had changed, the miracle had happened in me, but the same pressures and stresses and triggers were still out there. When you react out of habit, the enemy comes with the question: Are you really healed?

What is the strategy?

- Trust that the stronghold has been broken. I had to tap into God's faithfulness and trust the One who had given me the promise.
- Use the weapon of obedience. I had to take a stand for my freedom.
- Say "yes" to the process. Part of the process was breaking those habits and developing new pathways in my mind.
- Renewing of the mind: choose to take every negative thought that is not truth, captive (2 Corinthians 10:5), choose to believe I can do all things through Christ Jesus who lives in me (Philippians 4:13). Choose to believe that the old has gone and the new has come. This was not something I felt – it was something I did. Was it hard? Yes! Did I meet resistance? Yes! For the first year I marked off every day that I made it through. Creating the new path became easier until one day I realised it was easier to take the new path than the old one. It was a two year process.



How to make the choices to maintain freedom:

There is a difference between freedom and liberty: freedom is your escape from something, whereas liberty is the ability to choose and to make wise choices in order to maintain your freedom. Think of a bird trapped in a cage. When the door is opened, it flies out, free from bondage, free from captivity. Now, it needs to make wise choices out there to maintain its freedom. It is not a wise idea for the bird to now drink from the cat's bowl. It is important to set boundaries: don't expose yourself to stuff that might rob you of your freedom.



God worked a miracle that night of my baptism. In the moment, my healing was done, it was finished. Yet, there seems to be this process of having to walk it out and steward it wisely. Perhaps the reason for this is that in the stewarding process one is forced to press in to God. That pressing-in results in relationship with God and knowing His heart.

In the process, in this developing of relationship, God breaks into your circumstances and reveals something of Himself - either to reinforce a truth, or to teach you something new.

You have moments where you really experience the favour of God. This results in the faith journey - your trust grows in the faithfulness of the One who makes the promises.

You know the beautiful thing about Sarah? She has been recorded as a woman of faith despite her failings. Somewhere along her journey her laughter and unbelief became a genuine expression of joy at the birth of Isaac, whose name means 'laughter'.

You see, there is a promise to be found in every circumstance, where God sees the full potential and the outcome. You need to find the promise and say “*Yes*” to the process.

The Lord is my Shepherd

Phil Calcott

If you're like me you probably have some passages of Scripture that you tend to neglect. Leviticus and Lamentations might be near the top of your list. But Psalm 23? Perhaps not so much. And yet for many years I largely ignored Psalm 23. I think I felt that it was simply so well-known, it was maybe even overused. How wrong I now consider that opinion to be. Anyone who has been anywhere near me in 2019 will know that this Psalm is now the passage of Scripture that I dwell upon most. What happened? Well, basically, I think God in His grace knew that 2019 was going to be the year when I needed Psalm 23.

How could a poem written by an ancient king who lived 3000 years ago be relevant to me in 2019? The key is the fact that King David, to whom many of them are attributed, was a poet – but also a prophet. *And so, Psalm 23 is about David's relationship with God, an expression of the amazing way God cared for him as a good shepherd would care for his sheep. But it is also much more than that. It's about me – and you – and any who would acknowledge Jesus Christ as their Lord and Shepherd.*

In John 10 Jesus said:

"I am the good shepherd".

He is directly referencing Psalm 23 and claiming to be that Shepherd that David speaks of.

He then makes it clear that David is not the only sheep He's going to care for. "I have other sheep... they too will listen to my voice". Jesus calls all of us to come to Him and accept Him as our shepherd. But this is no casual arrangement. Accepting Jesus as shepherd is accepting Him as Lord – as the complete boss who owns us as completely as a shepherd owns his flock. This is hard; it runs against our intense desire to be lord of our life. Peter Farrant described the decision to accept Christ's lordship as being like squirming under a barbed wire fence. We have to humble ourselves completely and metaphorically get right down on the dirt. But it is totally worth it, as the rest of the psalm describes.

A very important point to understand is that the sort of shepherd/sheep relationship David and Jesus are referring to is completely different from the one we know today. David would have had a very close relationship with his sheep. He would go in front and they would follow. During the night the shepherd would even sleep outside with the sheep in the fields or in front of the gate of the sheepfold so that nothing could come in to harm the sheep. He would sometimes carry a little lamb that was having a hard time in his arms. The shepherd's whole life was looking after his sheep. It's in this light that we must see Psalm 23.

Let's take this verse by verse:

"I shall not want."

There is a lot of ways in which we can be in want and many things that we may need. It doesn't matter where your need is, be it finances, relationships or worries about your kids. If the Lord is your shepherd He will provide for you.

"He leads me beside the still waters..."

In 2005 we went to Israel in August and it was really hot. It was about 55 degrees centigrade when we arrived at the Dead Sea. We had to get back into our air-conditioned car and drive away because we could not bear that heat. Then in Galilee we came by a little stream in a ravine. There were trees and shade and it was cool and beautiful. Suddenly I thought of this verse: "He leads me beside still waters." I suddenly realised how precious those still waters are in a burning hot land. The relief they brought. Jesus promises to do this for all his sheep in the stressful and frantic world we now inhabit.

"He restores my soul."

This is a most amazing verse, and a wonderful promise. If we are honest all of us carry hurts and wounds from this turbulent life. How can we heal them? We try with our relationships, careers, holidays and bank accounts. It doesn't work. Our creator, who made our souls, knows that while these things can be good, only He is able to restore the souls of His creation. No-one else cares like our shepherd does. No-one else has the power to heal and restore like he can. David is sharing what He has experienced – and what we too can experience.

"He leads me in paths of righteousness for His own name's sake."

Life is filled with choices. Which path to take? How can we possibly know where each one leads? Here we have an amazing solution to this challenge. David says "He leads me in paths of righteousness." Wow, that's what I want, the Omniscient God leading me in paths of righteousness. But maybe this only applies to really awesome people like David. No. I love the last five words of this verse "...for His own name's sake." This amazing offer is open to us all – because it depends on God and not us. He promises to do this because of who he is, dependant only on us being His sheep and submitting to the shepherd's will.

"Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil for you are with me."

On 19 March I realised why my loving Shepherd had emphasised this psalm to me for two months. I suddenly really needed Psalm 23 like never before. At 7am I woke up feeling an intense pain in my left eye. As I tried to wipe my eye I realised two things. First, the pain was not in my eye – it was behind, in my brain. Second, I discovered I was completely paralysed down my right side. Soon I was at the focus of the full-scale medical emergency, as I was having a serious stroke. Friends have commented, "That must have been so scary." Actually not. I have a strong memory of being strapped to a gurney and rushed down a hospital corridor, the ceiling lights flashing past. I could do nothing to affect this disaster I was the centre of, and yet as the doctors strapped on an oxygen mask and stabbed me with needles and drips, I can say with absolute confidence that I was at peace.

I feared no evil. Later my cheery neurosurgeon would show me the MRI scans of my brain, and the brain cells that had died. "Strokes like yours to the brain stem are rare ... and almost always fatal," he remarked. If the stroke had extended even 1mm further mine would have been. I would never have woken up that morning. I would have gone into a permanent coma.

But the story doesn't stop there. As I mentioned, I was completely paralysed down my right side. My stroke was to my Pons – the most sensitive part of the brain's movement control system. All the signals to control your body are funnelled through this small 'bridge' – and half of mine was now dead tissue. As I lay in my hospital bed my doctors solemnly told me my recovery would be partial at best. I should start learning how to sign with my left hand, as the fine control to do such things was very unlikely to return to my right. As I sit here typing this with both hands (and totally able to sign with my right hand) I can only say "... but God." On 11th July, in a wonderful miracle, Denise responded to God's call to pray for me, and The Shepherd touched me so dramatically that the video taken that evening of me eating with my right hand is hilarious for the look of complete amazement on my face. I could suddenly use that oh-so-useful right hand again. Four months of physio had only resulted in slow horribly partial improvements. In an instant The Good Shepherd brought my right hand to life.

There is so much more to say, but in conclusion I would like to affirm that I have taken a hike through The Valley of the Shadow of Death, and I can say with absolutely certainty that my Shepherd was with me.

*How could I fear evil with the
Creator and Sustainer of the
Universe at my side?*

What about you? The human death rate is pretty close to 100%. One day you too are going to visit The Valley of the Shadow of Death – and not return. We all are. Is the Good Shepherd going to be with you? Will you fear no evil? Will you know that you will dwell in His house for ever? This is the most important question you can ever answer in your life. The Good Shepherd is calling you – yes, you – He wants all to be part of His flock. To know the provision, restoration, guidance and peace that this brings.

All He requires is for us to humbly accept we are just one of His sheep – and we want The Creator of The Universe to be our Shepherd. Can you really say no to that?





I've singled out eight points which I challenge myself with, and I want to share them with you, as eight keys to your *breakthrough to intimacy with Jesus*.

1. LIVE BY THE WORD OF GOD

Living by the Word of God essentially means you read His Word, the Bible. It means you believe it, you trust it to guide your life and obey it. It's a living scripture, thus requires a response, an action from us.

1 Peter 1:22-23: ²² Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for each other, love one another deeply, from the heart. ²³ For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God.

Now we have TV, all kinds of books and various forms of media at our fingertips. And I am certainly not saying we should only read Bible, but what I hope to convey here is the importance to spend at least a portion of our day in God's Word.

2. IF THE SPIRIT OF GOD IS NOT MOVING, MOVE IN

The Spirit of God moves by faith, so if we had to walk into a situation or place where the Spirit of God does not exist, the spirit of God will move based on who we are, and our capacity for faith.

If something is not happening it might well be because we're not stepping far enough out of our comfort zone. But one thing I do know is that, as a reborn Christian an awful place to be is where the Spirit of God is not moving. So it's up to us to light the fire of the Holy Spirit.

God has called you to go to where the Spirit of God is NOT moving, by FAITH, and ignite the Spirit, with your Godly spirit.

3. TAKE COMMUNION OFTEN

In essence what is communion? Isn't it a time, a chance to confess our sins, to accept the grace and the forgiveness of our Saviour at the cross? Now obviously we don't have to have bits of crackers and some grape juice to get complete forgiveness. But who wouldn't want to start every day with a clean slate, before we are polluted by the broken world we live in? We only get that clean slate because of an exchange that happened 2000 years ago between God and us.

1 John 1:7: ⁷ But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.

4. DESTROY THE WORKS OF THE DEVIL

I know for certain that there is a devil, I hate him and I hate his works. Scripture says he walks around like a roaring lion, devouring and destroying everything he can!

1 Peter 5:8-9: ⁸Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. ⁹Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings.

The devil is real and his works need to be destroyed, but the fantastic news for us is that Jesus has already conquered the devil, so all we need do is arrive with Jesus in our hearts, and on our lips!

5. FAITH IS SOMETHING THAT GROWS – EXERCISE IT

Scripture tells us that faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God. Faith is believing unquestioningly in something that hasn't happened yet. Faith demands that we do something - believe and obey. But I don't really think faith comes that easily, and after the scripture I hope you see why:

Romans 10:17: ¹⁷Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the Word of God.

There are two parts to this: Firstly, we're able to get a message; and secondly we're only able to access our faith, once it has been confirmed through the Word of God. So they have to align themselves.

Romans 10:17 encourages, almost prompts us to exercise our faith. Faith acted on, leads to greater faith! And we nourish it with the Word of God.

6. BE OBEDIENT

When pursuing breakthrough in your life, do you think God would give us an option to be a Christian when it suits us? Can we be given a slot during the week to be a Christian?

So if we choose a Christian lifestyle, shouldn't we be obedient to Christ?

Some of the scariest verses in the Bible are Revelation 3:15-16: ¹⁵I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! ¹⁶So, because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of my mouth.

In our faith, we are either full on committed or not. I would be the first one to admit that God would have every right to spit me out!

7. BE A SOUL WINNER

The greatest honour we have as Christians is to lead people to Jesus. Teaching, preaching, healing, worshipping, prayer, communion, all the gifts of the Spirit (Ephesians 6:10) - these are all amazing gifts from God for our blessing. These are all gifts for OUR growth, development and enjoyment. But the selfless act of being a Soul Winner for God is what makes a true disciple.

8. EMBRACE REVIVAL

I would suggest that the greatest revival is already here. Never before has God poured out so many of His gifts of the Spirit. One of the reasons why I know we are in the last days is that the devil is fighting so hard to strike terror in our hearts! But God has armed us with His gifts, so we don't have to worry.



Smith Wigglesworth, one of my heroes in the faith said:

“The secret of spiritual success is a hunger that persists...It is an awful condition to be satisfied with one's spiritual attainments...God was and is looking for hungry, thirsty people.”



Serving our community

Thank you for your prayers and support!



Lethabo Kid's Club feeds up to 500 children every Wednesday and also uses this opportunity to share the Gospel with them.

We also have a Bible study for the youth on Saturdays. These youngsters mainly come from Leseding, a township where many people are unemployed.

As the new school year start youngsters are also helped with an item of school clothing that they need most.



The Kholofelo Association helps young people who have passed matric get a tertiary education through distance learning.

FNB Account
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The Kholofelo Association Acc. # 626 55988 0374

FNB Account
Bank Code # 250655
(Lethabo) St Johns Soup Kitchen Acc. # 620 999 298 15





Nedbank Current Account
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Lorenzo and Thumette Cloete, new managers of The Fold, with their children Jenaya and Malachi. They are fitting in very well and doing a great job!

The Fold helps vulnerable and orphaned children in the Limpopo area. Eight children live in a house with a house mother who cares for them and creates a loving family environment. The Fold also has a private learning centre that provides quality education with individual learning for each child's special needs. Their aim is to create a loving and secure environment where children have hope for the future.



The Marketplace provides local crafters with a space to sell their wares and generate an income.

The Marketplace is now open every day except Sundays, to the public to come in and browse all the items for sale. Contact us here if you are interested in selling items through The Marketplace: 24riverschurch@gmail.com





Reflect while colouring in...

Wonderful Counselor

Mighty God

Everlasting Father

Prince of Peace