

THE Source

May 2019



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Shane Dowinton



St John the Baptist Community Church

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Please Join Us!

Men's Bush Breakfast
at 'Exciting Times' (Joan Baber's)
Shane: 074 430 2827

Wednesday Night Bible Study:
at Craig and Trish's, dinner at 18h00
Trish: 083 690 0061

Send your Church or Family News to:
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Wisdom is a Person

I've just spent a couple of days in the Tuli area of Botswana. We have a horse safari company there and I go up periodically to look at the horses and the camps and speak to our horse guides. I love it and I'm constantly reminded of how beautiful Africa's wilderness is. I know it is a privilege to be there and I'm so grateful.

The Tuli area has the largest free roaming herd of elephants south of the Zambezi, between a thousand and 1500 animals, and right now with the Limpopo River up and good rains throughout the region they are as common as cattle as they range across the Limpopo floodplain. I'm also struck by the amount of cats that we see there - lion, leopard and cheetah are common sightings. There was even a fresh kill in a Mashatu tree at one of our camps the other day.

Of course, it's important for me to remember while I'm there that these creatures, though wonderful to see, are also dangerous animals. If I walk in the bush alone or just wander off the trail, I suddenly feel very vulnerable and I have to turn my senses up a notch. The African wilderness is not for sissies and I shouldn't take it too cheaply.

Thankfully, I am around skilled and experienced bush people who are able to

walk the trails with me, guide me when it's needed and warn me when I have missed a danger lurking ahead of me. In many respects those guides are my map, my experience and knowledge, and more than that they are my wisdom in the bush.

Ok, what does that have to do with Proverbs? Well, Solomon was at great pains to let his children know that life has obstacles, challenges and dangers. He had faced them himself and he wanted them to be prepared for every eventuality, hence the book of Proverbs.

He had learned that seeing the world through the eyes of God was beneficial to seeing life correctly, but he took that a stage further and implied that wisdom, the very substance of thriving in life, was a person.

Solomon describes it like this:

"Listen as wisdom calls out! Hear as understanding raises her voice!" (8:1)

"Listen to me! For I have important things to tell you." (8:6)

When one of my Botswana guides calls out to me and says: "Shane. Stand still, walk slowly towards me. Stay close to me, don't talk." I tell you, I listen. There are lions in the bush and my senses are not as tuned as his. I choose to listen and follow his instructions, wouldn't you?

Proverbs goes on:

*"My advice is wholesome..." (v 8)
"I, wisdom, live together with good judgement. I know where to discover knowledge and discernment." (v 12)*

Being obedient trains me, it teaches me how to live in a hostile environment:

"Common sense and success belong to me. Insight and strength are mine. Because of me, kings reign, and rulers make just decrees." (v 14, 15)

I learn to thrive not just survive. This wisdom becomes attached to me.

Wisdom is a person, and His name is Jesus Christ. We live with an incredible mystery; God chose to send His Son so that we might walk out our lives and eternity in relationship with Him. And the wonder of it is that being attached to God in relationship is being attached to wisdom. The Apostle Paul says it like this:

"I want them (the followers of Christ) to have complete confidence that they understand God's mysterious plan, which is Christ himself. In Him lie hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." (Colossians 2:2)

Wisdom is our most valuable asset in life if we want to thrive. Wisdom is found in relationship with Christ.

The African wilderness reminds me constantly that life is wonderful and beautiful but also full of hidden dangers and challenges. I need the help of wisdom, experience, knowledge and understanding.

All of these I find in a good guide.

All of these I find in Christ.



by Shane Dowinton



School Nurse brings hope to learners in Vaalwater



Grace Ismael is passionate about her vocation as school nurse and counsellor in Leseding Township, Vaalwater, where she helps students with health and social issues, nutrition, teenage pregnancy, alcohol & substance abuse:

"As a Christian I have realised that even those learners who feel rejected because of their past history can be motivated and transformed. Psalm 94:14 says: "For the Lord will not reject his people; He will never forsake his inheritance." I want to let learners know that God loves them and He will guide them through their studies if they have faith and hope."

Grace is based at Meetsetshehla High School, but also follows a weekly roster to visit other schools as planned by management. She provides counselling and health education to students, and also gets involved in life orientation activities such as gardening, planting of trees and recycling projects.

Her presence in schools has relieved teachers of the work of attending to learners with different issues on daily basis. When difficult issues arise she can help learners in a professional way and, if needed, refer them to different stake holders such as the clinic, Social Development and South Africa Social Security Agency (SASSA) departments.

"I have learnt that many students lack parental guidance and love a counselling session and support helps them," says Grace. "I also do home visits to assess home situations of certain learners if their issues need to involve parents and guardians," she adds.

Grace has planted a vegetable garden with the students. This adds to daily nutrition at the school's feeding scheme and is also useful for hospitality studies practicals. She has strengthened the Student Christian Organisation. "We meet once a week and learners take turns to share the gospel and testimonies. Lives are transformed and students are helped to become the youth we need them to be."

The dedicated nurse says: "Every workday is filled with happiness and love knowing that I am called to bring change to the students and their families. Nursing is indeed a calling when you work with passion and dedication towards achieving the students' goals."

"I believe charity begins at home and if our students can be supported and motivated from their homes, then it will be much easier for the teachers to educate them without facing tough challenges. I give thanks to God Almighty for using me to reach out to schools and make a difference in students' education journey."

Grace will gladly receive and distribute donations of the following at schools:

- Sanitary pads for girls to enable them to attend classes without missing out due to menstruation.
- Clothes for less privileged students in both secondary and primary schools.

Grace Ismael: nurse@meetsetshehla.co.za



The Spirit and Truth of Worship by Craig Pidduck

There's the beautiful story of Mary in the gospel of Luke who buys the most expensive perfume she could afford and anoints Jesus' feet with it, her tears of adoration and acknowledgement of His Lordship mixing with it, wiping His feet with her own hair. If I were to paint a picture of what worship would look like it would be a portrait of that particular scene because it describes the heart attitude of adoration for our Saviour.

Jesus would often take His disciples and retreat to a quiet place where He'd be alone with His father, praying to Him and hearing from Him, worshipping Him. In Matthew 17 it says that Jesus was transfigured before His disciples; His face shining as the sun, and His garments became white as light, this after being with His Father.

Worship is way more than singing a few hymns and closing our eyes - it is an extreme intimacy that changes us because when we are that close to our Heavenly Father, we simply can't be the same after. We are literally "glowing" after that, and others are drawn to us by it. So I don't know about you, but I really want more of this!

Worship leader Denise van Coller sums it up beautifully in her account of what worship means to her:

"Worship is acknowledging the Lordship of God in my life; it is communication with God in all things at all times, and a declaring of God's character over myself and my circumstances. The most obvious form of worship is music - which is my love language, and one of the quickest ways I can come into His presence. However, music is not the only form of worship; it can also be prayer, reading, enjoying nature - anything that pulls you into His presence.

Why worship? Because it triggers our experience with God and is the key to living victoriously. Worship elevates us above our current circumstances and overwhelms those circumstances with the nature of God. It gets us into a place where we can experience God's truth over our lives versus the 'facts' of our circumstances that dominate our daily experiences. Worship leads us into truth - what God says about me, what His promises are for my life - it changes the atmosphere and allows God to break through, to be our provision."

"But the time is coming—indeed it is here now – when true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth. The Father is looking for those who will worship Him that way. For God is spirit, so those who worship Him must worship in spirit and in truth." John 4:20–24.

Worship is definitely not a certain series of religious activities, or to recite a particular prayer, or sing a certain song - it is about encounter with the living God, who wants to communicate and commune with us and to reside in us.

Today there's often a slight rift between congregants of different backgrounds and ages about which type of worship is more appropriate for their church. Some, like my own dear mother, like the older hymns played on the organ, whilst some prefer the modern songs on the synthesized keyboard. But none of the above actually guarantees a better or lesser engagement in worship.

Worship is not bound to a style of music or geographical location. The place of worship is centred in the heart of every believer! So worship actually goes with us and is not confined to a fixed place or only to Sundays.

Worship cannot be measured by how sweetly the singers sang or how long it went on for. It is purely an experience of being close to God, praising and adoring and just loving Him. It can happen anywhere and at any time where the heart is willing. It is our spirits which cry out to Him and speak out His praises, leaving us feeling fulfilled. It is our heart attitude.

God encourages us to worship Him - not because He needs it to feel loved and appreciated - but because it leads us to feel blessed. Worship encourages us, strengthens us and lifts our spirits - it is always to our benefit.

Paul notes in 2 Corinthians 3:18 "And we, who with unveiled faces all contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into His likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the spirit."

So by gazing at the unveiled glory of the Lord, we can be more like Him, we see the truth revealed by Jesus Christ our Lord, which is transforming. The more we lift Him up with songs of praise, the more we adore and trust Him, the more we testify to His work in our lives, the more we worship Him, the more we will become like Him.

So how do we prepare ourselves to worship in spirit and in truth?

- Confess sin and reconcile with people where needed - this is a prerequisite for true worship.
- Clear your mind of fears or stress by praying: "Oh Lord, just take this burden from me now so I can focus on you, I just want to worship you now."
- Really desire to worship Him, in Jeremiah 29:13 the Lord says: "You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart."
- Humble yourself before entering His presence, recognising your unworthiness, but at the same time remembering that you are His own child, so you can cry out "Abba, father, I love you!"
- Focus on the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the only one deserving of worship.
- It needs to come from your heart, not just your mouth.
- If God isn't first in your life, if you have elevated any person or anything above Him, you need to reposition Him to the highest place of honour.





How do you show a Christ-like attitude in the face of persecution?

Barend Pretorius

How do you respond to bad things that happen to you - when you are terribly wronged by someone or when things are not working out according to what you've prayed for?

To my shame I must admit that I often get rebellious. I easily forget all the miracles and blessings in my life and all the times that God answered my prayers and just focus on this one difficulty which has come my way.

Joseph is one example of a person in the Bible who suffered a lot but showed a Christ-like attitude to deal with challenges in his life (Genesis 50:12-21). He was thrown into a pit by his brothers, left for dead, rescued by Reuben only to be sold into slavery. Later on in his life he spent years in a filthy Egyptian jail because of lies told by Potiphar's wife.

Through all this Joseph served the Lord and made the best of every situation. Eventually the Pharaoh dreamt a disturbing dream and Joseph was the only one who could explain the meaning. And so he was released from prison and became a man of power in Egypt in the time of famine, in charge of the Pharaoh's grain stores.

Now Joseph's brothers came to buy grain and he was able to provide for them. His father Jacob and his brothers moved to Egypt. But then Jacob dies and Joseph's brothers fear that, with their father dead, he will now repay them for their cruelty against him.

Joseph wept when his brothers came to tell him that his late father said that he must forgive them.

Clearly Joseph's brothers still had no relationship of love and trust with him. They don't trust him yet, so the reconciliation is incomplete. Yet, this is how he answers them in Genesis 50:19-21 (NIV):

But Joseph said to them, "Don't be afraid. Am I in the place of God? You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives. So then, don't be afraid. I will provide for you and your children. And he reassured them and spoke kindly to them."

Here Joseph makes three statements that show a heart changed by grace. If we can adopt these three attitudes it will allow us to live in peace even when faced by adversity.

1. Am I in the place of God?

With this statement Joseph refuses to take God's place, he avoids God's chair - leaving justice to God. Joseph does not keep a grudge but forgives his brothers. When his brothers ask: "Please forgive us," Joseph says: "of course I forgive you, am I in the place of God?"

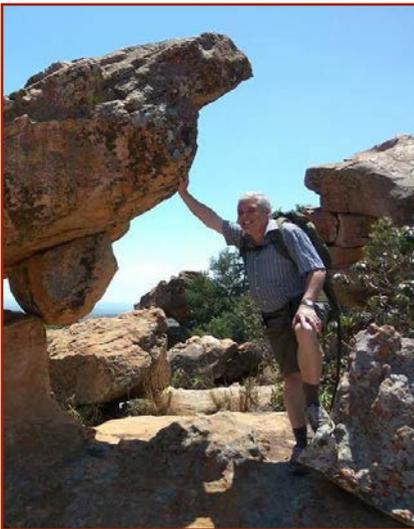
Rom 12 "Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. Live in harmony with one another. Do not be conceited. Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody."

Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: 'It is mine to avenge; I will repay, says the Lord.'"

Only God has the right to judge. Only God has the knowledge and the power to judge perfectly without becoming evil himself. If someone wrongs us and we refuse to forgive, nurse our anger and want to take revenge, ironically we will become evil ourselves. We will become self-absorbed, self-centred and pity ourselves.

2. You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good

Joseph sees God's providing hand in man's malice. He takes God's view. If we are lost in a valley we must drive to the top to get a better view, to get perspective. How should we look at the problems in our lives? From the top – to get God's view. If we believe in Jesus and commit our lives to Him nothing can destroy God's love and plan for our lives. That is what Joseph is telling his brothers.



Romans 8:37-39 is true for us.

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Evil is real and life is ordinarily filled with evil but God is always good and right and sovereign. The optimist says: "Things will get better tomorrow." The pessimist says: "Life is hard and will never get better." That is to say: If things go well - God is good. If things don't turn out as we want them – God is bad.

That is NOT what Joseph is saying. Joseph says: Evil is real, my life was filled with pain, don't expect otherwise, but God is always, always working it for good.

3. And he reassured them and spoke kindly to them.

Joseph repays evil not only with forgiveness but with practical affection.

He shows God's love – replying with affection and compassion to wrongs. The reason why Joseph was able to do this and love his brothers is because he knew that God loved him even though he didn't deserve it. He knew God and he knew that God was taking care of Him.

We can also do what Joseph did. In fact we can do much more, because we have much more than Joseph had. We have Jesus. Jesus was also given a cup of suffering, and was betrayed and killed. Jesus is the ultimate Joseph, He is the ultimate example of good being brought forth out of evil. Jesus became a servant, He became poor and He died for us, to work everything for our good in this life and to give us eternal life.



As we bowed our heads over lunch my friend Jeff prayed: "Father, thank You for letting us breathe Your air and eat Your food." Jeff had just been through a difficult job loss, so his heartfelt trust in God and recognition that everything belongs to Him profoundly moved me. I found myself thinking: Do I honestly understand that even the most basic, everyday things in my life are really God's, and He's simply letting me use them?

When King David received offerings from the people of Israel for building the temple in Jerusalem, he prayed, "But who am I, and who are my people, that we should be able to give as generously as this? Everything comes from You, and we have given You only what comes from Your hand."

*Then he added, "All of it belongs to You"
(1 Chronicles 29:14, 16).*

Scripture tells us that even the ability to produce wealth and earn a living comes from Him (Deuteronomy 8:18). Understanding that all we have is borrowed encourages us to loosen our grip on the stuff of this world and live with open hands and hearts – sharing freely because we're deeply thankful for the kindnesses we receive daily.

God is a generous giver – so loving that He even gave up His Son "for us all" (Romans 8:32). Because we have been given so much, may we give Him our heartfelt thanks for blessing small and large.

What borrowed blessing can you thank God for today? How does it help to know that every good gift is from Him? Whatever is ours is God's.

*submitted by Marilyn Cook
by James Banks - odb.org/2019/04/01/borrowed-blessings*





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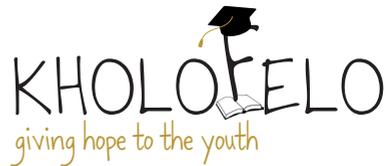


The new year started with most of the same children returning, with a few new ones filling empty beds from last year. We've had a lot of hunters coming to visit with donations of game meat. We also have Moji Kitsi from Welgevonden coming to our learning centre once a week to teach the children about environmental awareness. Micky and Retha had an entire day at Welgevonden learning what Welgevonden is doing in the Waterberg in regards to teaching environmental awareness to the community.

We have a lot of new artwork on our walls from a visitor who spent a month with us. Our older children were able to have a sports day with a group of homeschool students. In March Waterberg hands of hope and FASA (Fellowship Alliance South Africa) came and spent time with our children and house mothers. April was a very busy month. We had Ministro Journey come with 4 men for a week. They did a lot of repair work and lots of fun things to do with the children. Philip also got the garden planted with 2100 seedlings that were donated.



A happy place - great singing, learning about Jesus and milk. Between 300 and 600 come each Wednesday to sing and praise and listen.



Supporting students for tertiary studies.

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 Branch # 260 249
 St Johns Soup Kitchen (Kids Club) Acc. # 620 999 298 15

Family News



Emma represents South Africa in Mountain Biking

Congratulations to Emma van Coller who came third in the Africa Mountain Biking Championships held recently in Namibia.



Shwe To Go creates vibrant African Needlework



Shwe To Go is a group of seamstresses who make lovely décor and fashion articles from brightly coloured African Shweshwe fabrics and recycled materials. Their range of products includes items such as coasters, Christmas tree decorations, table mats, gift bags and hair bands.

Founded by Saint John's Community Church, the group meets on Tuesdays and Fridays at the Farmers' Hall for sewing training with Carol Van Der Merwe and business workshops with Izzy Warren Smith and others.

This project aims to create employment and teach valuable entrepreneurship skills such as wholesale and retail pricing strategies, marketing, quality control and basic bookkeeping. The products are sold through the company and the designers take 60% of the income, leaving 40% for materials and company development. So far the company profit has been used to purchase fabrics, sewing machines and other needle work equipment.

For more information or curio shop orders please contact Laura 083 419 1929