

THE Source

April 2020

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St John the Baptist Community Church



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*Banking Details: FNB Modimolle, Branch no 260247,
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Please Join Us!

*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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A message of *Hope* Shane Dowinton

At the time of writing this, we are 15 hours from going into “Lock down” due to Covid19. We live in interesting times indeed. Apart from during the world wars of the 20th Century, there have been rare occasions when the whole world faced a single issue together. The present threat of a contractable virus puts us in that position for the first time in more than 70 years.

Recently, I was at a conference in Johannesburg. I was seated waiting for the next session to begin. Like most people these days I was checking my phone texts, suddenly I received a whole lot of WhatsApps all related to the virus. But my mind was immediately distracted by a voice which said “Which virus are you going to watch?”. It was not something I would ordinarily think and so I followed its lead. The next words were another set of questions “What are you seeing? What are you hearing?”. I sensed now that this was the Lord’s prompting.

The previous evening at the conference we had seen miraculous healings in more than 300 people. The deaf had regained their hearing, many with physical disabilities had been set free of them and the testimonies had been truly remarkable.

Not only that, but Sean Feucht had shared story after story of miracles and wonders in Iran, Iraq and Afghanistan, the growth and the resilience of their churches and resistance to persecution in the name of Jesus.

I sensed that the Lord was challenging me to keep my eyes fixed on Him; that His Kingdom is on the increase and that He is at work in the world reconciling it to himself. It was a powerful encouragement and has been a strength to me as this situation in the world has grown.

I don’t believe for one moment that we should ignore a clear and present crisis, I do believe that we should take every precaution to do what is asked in the practical need to prevent the onset of Coronavirus. **However, there is a larger picture, a God picture, that we need to be attached to when we process our circumstances.**

When I think of the words associated with the crisis – fear, isolation, distancing, anxiety, panic, they are words of the enemy not of the Lord.

They fly in the face of Jesus Christ who calls us to deeper relationship with God the Father and with each other. Fellowship and the unity of the church are Christ's prayer for His church. Peace and joy are hallmarks of the Kingdom. They put us in tension and opposition to this present threat of infection.

And so, the church has risen to its circumstances. I have seen so many creative solutions to the halt on our gatherings. To steal an apt phrase, the church has gone viral! Social media has gone haywire with messages of hope and joy, worship videos are everywhere, prayer groups formed over WhatsApp and Zoom. We have probably been in greater connection as a local and global church than ever before. Obviously not what the devil intended!

The pandemic has put pressure on us as followers of Christ. *Where are we putting our hope? Who are we going to put our trust in? Where are we going to find solutions? Who will give us the peace in this hour?*

My devotional life has been set ablaze by the Lord. His Word has come alive. Verse after verse of encouragement for those in the wilderness, those in exile, those locked down and captive to the enemy. The Lord sings to me daily through Psalms and sends words of hope that resonate with our circumstances. He says "Who are you going to believe, Shane?"

We feel the weight of this crisis in different ways. We may have been hit economically; we might feel the sting of loneliness and isolation; we might sit under the dark cloud of fear or anxiousness. But the Lord will not leave His people.

He never leaves us nor forsakes us. He is here. He is present. And He is speaking over each and every personal situation.

Go to His Word and speak with Him.

Go to Him in prayer.

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, 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." – Philippians 4:6-7

Go to Him in worship and praise.

When Job faced the onslaught of Satan and had lost everything it says "... he fell to the ground in worship." - Job 1:20

To praise and worship God is to bring us into His presence immediately, it pulls Him into our circumstances. We lift our eyes to Him.

Go to His table and remember Him.

"You prepare a table for me in the presence of my enemies." – Psalm 23:5

Take communion. Remind yourself of who He is and what He has done, over and over again. Interestingly, the enemy can see us but He can't touch us!

Take heart church! We may not know the future but we know that the Lord is already there. Let's use this opportunity to know Him better, to seek His face, and to learn to love well.





Resurrection Power

Part 1

Craig Pidduck

This article is based on a sermon delivered in March 2020. At the time I almost didn't bring this message because I thought it was better fitted to Easter. I actually called up Peter Farrant who was charged with the Easter message to discuss my predicament, but as I said to him then, I was absolutely 100% convinced that the Lord wanted me to bring this message the next time I spoke, albeit the timing seemed wrong. Peter agreed that I go ahead; neither of us knowing the lockdown would cancel our Easter service. All glory to God whose timing is flawless.

In the movie *The Passion of the Christ*, Mel Gibson who directed it attracted a lot of criticism from some saying it was too violent, too bloody and not entirely accurate.

But historical documents and the accounts of witnesses over the years describes a far more gruesome scene. We must realize that a Roman soldier was a terrifying thing, and allowed the Empire to keep complete control of their subjects by ruling with fear.

The Romans were renowned torture specialists, and actually prided themselves on their development of crucifixion as one of the most awful, slow and painful, executions one could ever dread to receive.

The soldiers that flogged and crucified our Lord would have been well-trained hands at the practice, having probably done a few hundred by the time Jesus was sentenced.

They were so confident that they had completed their task of crucifying Jesus that there was no need for them to break His legs, because when they pierced His side and saw the serum had separated from the blood which looked like blood and water that flowed out, they knew beyond any shadow of a doubt that their job was done - Jesus was most certainly, very much dead.

In fact it says: When Pilate heard Jesus was dead at noon, he was surprised. In Mark 15:44 "Pilate couldn't believe that Jesus was already dead, so he called for the Roman officer and asked if He had died yet. The officer confirmed that Jesus was dead..."



So the naysayers who spread the anti-resurrection story that Jesus hadn't really died, in fact He was only unconscious and later revived and managed to roll this incredibly heavy stone away from the inside of a dark tomb in His injured state, after being beaten half to death and then crucified – well they have no leg to stand on – it would simply be impossible. Jesus was dead and His body completely lifeless when they placed Him in the tomb.

Then there's the other group of doubters who realize they can't dispute the facts of the crucifixion, so they agree He was dead when placed inside the tomb, however the disciples came in the night and stole the body away.

But the problem with this story is – again – remember those fierce Roman soldiers? Well there were two of them posted to prevent this very thing from happening; they literally guarded that tomb with their lives.

Matthew 28 tells us that the religious leaders upon hearing that Jesus was no longer in the tomb bribed the guards, instructing them to say that the disciples came and stole the corpse, and that they would cover for the guards if the governor found out – in other words put in a word or most probably also a large bribe to the governor to ensure they would not be executed for their failure to protect the corpse.

But of course, we know the truth from all the eyewitness reports of what really happened to Jesus, from the accounts given in our Bibles.

Luke 24 says:

“But very early on Sunday morning, the women went to the tomb, taking the spices they had prepared. They found that the stone had been rolled away from the entrance. So they went in, but they didn't find the body of the Lord Jesus. As they stood there puzzled, two men suddenly appeared to them, clothed in dazzling robes. The women were terrified and bowed with their faces to the ground. Then the men asked: Why are you looking among the dead for someone who is alive? He isn't here. He is risen from the dead! Remember what He told you back in Galilee that the Son of man must be betrayed into the hands of sinful men and be crucified, and that He would rise again on the third day?

Then they remembered that He had said this. So they rushed back from the tomb to tell His eleven disciples – and everyone else – what had happened.”

So here is a group of women on their way to apply the necessary burial spices to the corpse of Jesus as was custom; the two Mary's are there, Joanna, and some other women who were the first to witness the empty tomb.

Shortly after they report the matter, Peter also runs over to see for himself and sure enough finds only the linen wrappings left in there, and slowly but surely this report spreads amongst Jesus' followers.

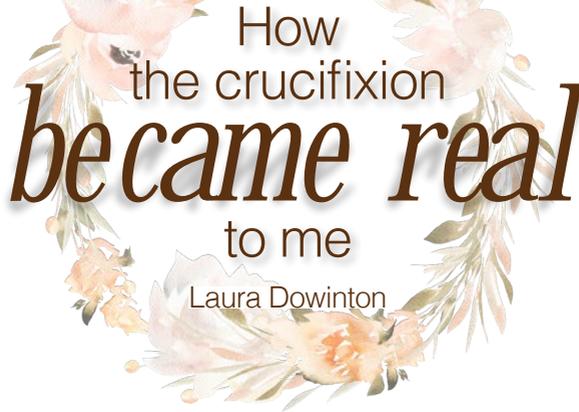
Now these early eyewitness accounts are some of the most exciting news reports ever recorded in our Christian history! They are as exciting as the news the angels shared with the shepherds thirty-three odd years earlier that mankind's saviour had been born in Bethlehem.

Not only did the women see for themselves that Christ's body was no longer in the tomb, but they are met there by angels in dazzling robes who tell them that He is risen! Can you just imagine the excitement among them that day?

The angels ask them, "Why are you searching in a tomb for someone who is alive?" This is so significant, as often in life we run into people who look for God among the dead. They study and search the Bible as a mere historical document and go to church as if they were attending a memorial service. But Jesus, although dead for a couple of days, has risen from the grave. Out of an awful, painful death, life came back to this man. And because of this, all the pain and power of sin and death was destroyed!

*We have new life
through Him,
because our Saviour lives.*





How
the crucifixion
became real
to me
Laura Dowinton

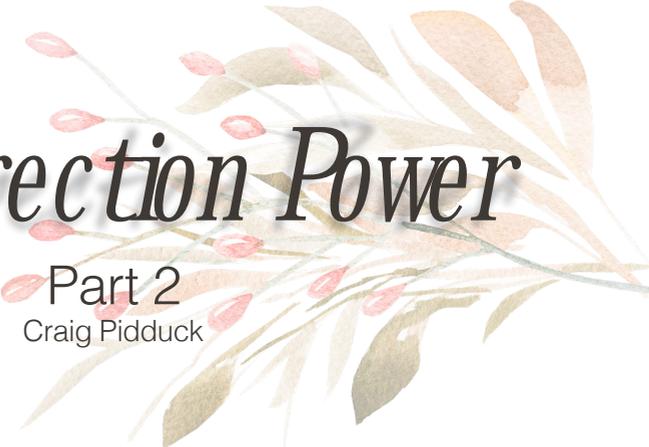
I have always found focusing on Good Friday particularly hard, and these are my reasons;

As Christians we hear phrases like “Jesus died on a cross for us” or “Christ was crucified” and they roll off the tongue along with liturgy and other Christian phrases and they become a normal part of our vocabulary. But then two things happened to me; I had a child and I watched the movie *The Passion of the Christ* (Mel Gibson, 2004).

For those who have heard my testimony I have often said I battled with fully coming to an open relationship with God as I just could not understand unconditional love, I always said: “I knew what I was doing when I did what I did, so why does asking for forgiveness after the fact get me off the hook?” and then we had Jess, in that moment I understood unconditional love and it was heart-breaking, and in that same heart wrenching unfathomable flood of emotion I also understood why God would forgive us because of His unconditional love for us.

Then came *The Passion of the Christ*. I apologise if the following offends anyone but for me this is the only example I can think of that explains it. I once had a long conversation with a friend about her rape. Now a woman can say to you: “I was raped,” and you feel for her, you say: “Oh no that’s terrible,” but until they sit with you and walk you through the detail, the absolute horror, the brutality you have no idea. We can say the word rape but not focus on the meaning of that, and in the same way we can say: *Christ was crucified!* without focusing on what exactly those three words mean and for me that phrase carries the same gravity. Watching *The Passion of the Christ* gave me the detail, the absolute horror, the brutality and turned that phrase into a reality I find crushing.

The knowledge that all this was done willingly, in love for us, so we can be victorious, is almost too much to take in, but take it in we must and never ever take it lightly.



Resurrection Power

Part 2

Craig Pidduck

John 11:25 - Jesus told her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Anyone who believes in me will live, even after dying. Everyone who lives in me and believes in me will never ever die."

As terrible and unimaginably painful as the crucifixion was, the opposite is true in how wonderful the resurrection was, probably the most important and significant event in the history of mankind.

No wonder so many have tried to sow lies into it and attempted to lessen the power of the resurrection - because it is the hope of every believer that we will rise to be in heaven too with our Lord someday.

The stone was rolled away by the angels not so that Jesus could get out, but so His followers could get in and see for themselves. And then of course the Bible tells us that He later physically appeared to the disciples and many others.

We read of the two believers travelling to Emmaus who have that wonderful experience with Him, and then we see Jesus suddenly appearing in locked rooms in the midst of His followers, who touched Him, spoke with Him, even ate with Him, until they saw Him raised up to heaven before their very eyes.

The Old Testament prophets foretold that this would all happen, that they would look upon the one they had pierced, that not a bone in His body would be broken and that He would die and rise on the third day.

Jesus is alive today and He reigns in the heart of every believer who has given his or her life to Him. He is seated at the right hand of God the father and He is the head of His church. He is the bridegroom, and we are His bride. And He will come again as He promised to take us home to be with Him forever.

Because Christ rose from the dead, we know that the kingdom of heaven has broken through into earth's history. Our world is now headed for redemption, not disaster. God's mighty power is at work destroying sin, creating new lives, and preparing us for Jesus' second coming.

1. Because of the resurrection, we know *death has been conquered* and that we too will be raised from death to live forever with our Saviour.

2. The resurrection gives authority to the church's witnesses in the world. If we just look at the early sermons in the book of Acts, we note that the apostles' most important message was the proclamation that *Jesus rose from the dead*. That was the trump card they used that converted thousands of people.
3. The resurrection gives meaning to the church's sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Like Jesus did with His followers on the way to Emmaus, *we now break bread* with our risen Lord who commands us to honour Him with communion.
4. The resurrection helps us find meaning even in great tragedy. No matter what happens to us as we walk with the Lord, *we have hope for the future*, assured that Christ is alive and ruling His kingdom.

In 1 Corinthians 15: 12, Paul says the following: "But tell me this – since we preach that Christ rose from the dead, why are some of you saying there will be no resurrection of the dead? For if there is no resurrection of the dead, Christ has not been raised either. And if Christ has not been raised, then all our preaching is useless, and your faith is useless. And we apostles would all be lying about God – for we have said that God raised Christ from the grave. But that can't be true if there is no resurrection of the dead. And if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, then your faith is useless and you are still guilty of your sins. In that case, all who have died believing in Christ are lost! And if our hope in Christ is only for this life, we are more to be pitied than anyone else in the world.

But in fact, Christ has been raised from the dead. He is the first of a great harvest of all who have died. So you see just as death came into the world through one man, now the resurrection of the dead has begun through another man. Just as everyone dies because we all belong to Adam, everyone who belongs to Christ will be given new life. But there is an order to this resurrection: Christ was raised as the first of the harvest; then all who belong to Christ will be raised when He comes back."

...and then skipping to verse 32: "If there is no resurrection, let's feast and drink, for tomorrow we die!"

But praise God, we know the truth which sets us free, and we are empowered through His Holy Spirit, who testifies of His love for us and implores us to live a life that's worthy of being counted as His children. In Christ alone is our hope found.

Only when people encounter the living Saviour personally, will they be able to fully comprehend the power of the resurrection. Today, in spite of more than 2000 years of evidence and witness, many people refuse to believe it. One wonders what more will it take? For the disciples it took Jesus appearing to them in their midst to believe. It took Thomas physically seeing and touching Jesus to believe.

And for many people today, it takes the presence of alive Christians, you and I, who are willing to testify to this truth because of the love He has shown us first.



Encouragement

during Covid-19 lockdown



Juliet Calcott

I've been inspired during my hour of prayer by the significance of this being the time of preparation for Passover. This followed the plagues – which were each a judgement on a false god worshipped by the Egyptians. The angel of death passed over those who had the blood of the lamb on their doors. We are about to celebrate the death and resurrection of the Lamb of God that this foreshadowed.

I do believe this time is a wonderful spur to prayer as this is a most significant moment in world history and the Lord is calling all his people to be awake and pray the prayers that the Holy Spirit leads us to pray. Also, that we take shelter personally under the blood of the lamb who purchased for us not only healing now but also – even more significantly - eternal life.

Just imagine – a vast portion of the world's Christians set apart from the busyness of life for 21 days and available to discern and release our Lord God's mighty purposes into the world through united prayer. We are about to experience birth pangs. As the shofars call out - God is at work. Something unprecedented is going on in the spiritual realm. Let's all play our part and press in to Him and become caught up in Him, everlasting Father, beloved Saviour Jesus, and comforter and empowerer, Holy Spirit.

Philip Calcott



God is not taken by surprise by this crisis. He is not scrambling to make a plan. He foreknew all of this – and where it's going. He sees the next year as clearly as the past one. He is completely in charge and control. And we are the sheep of His flock. He gave His very life for His flock. How will he not also give us all things?

It is helpful to remember that all of the New Testament was written at a time of great tumult and trouble – the like of which we have never seen. And the church grew. And God's word spread. And the Kingdom invaded the world. God doesn't promise us easy times, but He does promise to be with us in everything – and His will is that Christ is glorified and his Kingdom grows in every circumstance.



Summe Kamupambe

Here are six things God is doing in my life during this pandemic and lockdown:

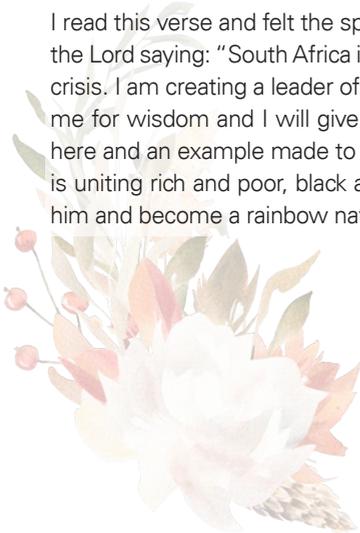
1. Reminding me again that I am not the centre of the universe. I am loved and valued but I am a very small instrument within a much bigger orchestra.
2. Deepening my new love for the local church. Fellowship with my brothers and sisters is something to be truly cherished. I look forward to the day we can all meet together again.
3. Showing me the rich rewards that can be found in the mission field of my own home. The little people running around the corridor in my living room need to know Christ as much as everyone else in the world.
4. Introducing me to the concept of endurance. I know the Christian life is not a sprint, it's a marathon. In the midst of all this global panic, I have found pace with the strong and steady stride of God's people our eyes all fixed on the prize that is ahead of us.
5. God is once again connecting me with other ministries in Uganda, Scotland and Mozambique. Our fellowship together is breaking many walls across the world.
6. Giving me quality time with Karabo and the kids as we are able to worship, pray, play and share communion together regularly.

Shane Dowinton



Exodus 34:10 NIV – I am making a covenant with you. Before all your people I will do wonders never before done in any nation in all the world. The people you live among will see how awesome is the work that I, the Lord, will do for you.

I read this verse and felt the spirit on it. I was praying for South Africa this morning and I felt the Lord saying: "South Africa is a bright light in the continent and in the world in this present crisis. I am creating a leader of nations in Cyril Ramaphosa. He is mine and he has turned to me for wisdom and I will give it to him because he has asked. There will be breakthrough here and an example made to the world. Leaders will look here for answers. His leadership is uniting rich and poor, black and white. South Africa will walk out her prophecies through him and become a rainbow nation."



The LORD REIGNS and His will is being done. He is in total control. He is on the throne and we have free access to Him through Jesus His Son!

“I look up to the mountains; does my strength come from mountains? No my strength comes from God, who made heaven and earth and mountains.” Psalm 121: 1.

Thank you Lord that *You reign supreme, We trust in You alone.*

 Mark Warren-Smith

In praying and seeking to discern, at least as far as it is wise or possible, and thinking of what Shane shared, I wonder if South Africa is not uniquely placed at this time? Geographically it is placed between the so-called ‘first’ and ‘third’ worlds. Also it sits between the Western nations and those of the East. In terms of its people, the mixture of cultures, languages and religious systems is remarkable. What a place for God to be at work.

In South Africa, St. Johns is unusual because it is on the edge by being in the bush; and unusually on the edge by having such a heart for God in the mix of the peoples who belong to, and are touched by the church.

St. Johns is so well placed both

- i. to intercede; and
- ii. to model something new as a believing community in step with Spirit – especially at this time. (Not least because as a community the past is valued and the future is sought with such good hearts.)





kid's club

Marilyn Cook

FNB Account
Branch Code # 258629
M.J. Cook T/A St John Soup Kitchen Acc. # 628 4130 2285

Despite not being able to have weekly meetings, Lethabo Kid's Club continues to feed the vulnerable people in the Leseding community during this time.

Those being assisted with food each week are a young widow, a young girl recently returning to the Lord, a young man whose family refuse to help him, a small boy with problematic health, a father raising three children, and an elderly man whose family we have not been able to locate. We found him in a terrible state and had his place cleaned up, a toilet dug, given him a haircut and arranged that he gets water for a bath every week as well as clean and ironed clothes. We prayed with him and he is responding well. Now the government has stepped in to take him to a safe place where we hope and pray he can be happy and well cared for.

We're very anxious to be back with the children at Kid's Club and pray that they are remembering the things they have learned about the love of Jesus for them.

Please note that Lethabo Kids' Club has new bank details:

(FNB) First National Bank, branch – Vaalwater, Branch code: 258629, Account name: M.J. Cook T/A St John Soup Kitchen, Account number: 628 4130 2285

We thank you for your continued support.



FNB Account
Bank Code # 250655
The Kholofelo Association Acc. # 626 55988 0374

The logo for KHOLOFELO features the word "KHOLOFELO" in a bold, black, sans-serif font. A graduation cap is positioned above the letter 'O'. Below the word, the tagline "giving hope to the youth" is written in a cursive, gold-colored font.

KHOLOFELO
giving hope to the youth

The students are all doing well in their studies and will complete their courses at the end of the year except one who will only finish mid-term next year.



**Nedbank Current Account
1445126591
Branch # 144547**

Like the rest of the world, the Corona virus has affected life at The Fold, a place of refuge and education for vulnerable children. All the children and staff were required to return to their homes. The government closed the schools and the children had to be sent back to their relatives. None of them are allowed back until the virus has run its course and the government says life can return to normal. The day before the country shut down, Lorenzo Cloete was able to take food parcels to all the children.

Please pray for the country and especially for our children and staff during this time.

We are very glad that Paul and Micky Prince made it back safely to the USA after some difficulty in arranging flights out of South Africa. They are well and have completed their two weeks of quarantine at home. We will miss them at St Johns' and pray God's riches blessing over them as they continue His work in fundraising for The Fold.



Congratulations



We pray God's richest blessing on Summe and Karabo Kamupambe who were married on 14 March 2020!