

Erlo Stegen:

After I saw myself (as if) I was in that Hindu temple, I entered into the service at the old Mapumulo cowshed and knelt at one of the chairs and cried together with the others, about my sinfulness. God dealt with us so severely, that at times there were pools of tears below our chairs. God put us through His 'refining mill' of revival.

Besides other Scriptures, the main verse we studied together was John 7:37-38. I also remembered Jesus' words to the Samaritan woman (John 4:13-14), "Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst".

Then I thought of people who came to Christ, but still go to worldly places, looking for the entertainment and sins of this world to quench their thirst. They still craved for the world. They would secretly buy worldly music and explicit magazines and books. Their clothing would also be as one, not born of God, but born of the world. Yet they are the ones who had come forward to accept Christ. In my own life I was conscious that things were not in accordance with God's Word. I would find myself up and down spiritually, sometimes longing for services and sometimes not. I would feel drained spiritually - not overflowing with the promised "rivers of living water". I had to admit that I had not found that water that Jesus spoke about.

I still remember the exact spot, while I was driving, where God spoke to me and said, "What if I come to take you now?" I wasn't keen on Him coming just then. But in the book of Revelations it says, "Behold I come quickly", and the bride responds, "Come, Lord Jesus". It does not say, "Come later Lord". Jesus also said in John 4, "But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life". These things troubled me, and I would wrestle with the Lord.

The Word that struck me most was Jesus' words, "He who drinks of this water will never thirst again." I had to admit time and again to God, "But here I am, thirsting again".

I remember how I would sometimes wake up at night completely wet with sweat, though I had no fever or cold, sweating because of my struggle. I would pick up the Bible, already open at John 4, where the Samaritan woman asked of Jesus, "Give me of this water so that I wouldn't have to return to this well repeatedly". I admitted to the Lord that that was my condition. I had to come back again and again. I cried to God to give me His water, never to thirst again.

Many weeks and some months passed by. I was so engrossed in seeking the Lord that I sometimes forgot to eat. I cried to God to such an extent that sometimes as I walked to church, some of the local black people would say amongst themselves, "There's a tramp, but he hasn't reached the bottom yet".

The Bible writes of how Jacob wrestled with God, after he sent his family over the brook. Have you ever had to wrestle with God?

In our family we had the tradition at Christmas time, to sing carols, and exchange gifts. However, that particular Christmas, I forgot completely that it was Christmas. On Christmas day I preached a sermon which had nothing to do with Christmas. Afterwards someone reminded me that it was Christmas, and only then did I realise it. I had been so gripped by seeking the Lord's face that I had completely forgotten that it was Christmas.

One day as I was walking to the service I suddenly realised that I hadn't shaved. At that time it was a shame for a man to walk around unshaven. Immediately I thought, "what the world would think of me?". The Bible says we are "dead to the world." You see, I believed, but not as the Scripture says.

Where were the living waters? We must believe, as the Scripture says - not as the Lutherans, Catholics, Baptists, Dutch Reformed, etc. say, but as the Scripture says. The Holy Spirit went through my life and pointed out one thing after the other. I remembered Jesus' words (John 12:47 - 48), "I did not come to judge the world ... the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day". I realised that I did not believe as the Scripture says, for God's Word says we are dead to the world, but I was still very much alive to the world's opinion.

There are so many other things, that I cannot mention all - there's just no time.

I also read the text about being "the least". "When you are invited to a feast, do not take the chief seat, but the lowest, lest you be humbled when a more important than you arrive." "Let the greatest be the servant of all". I

said, "No, Lord, this is too much". I thought that by implication, when there's a black man carrying a suitcase, I should offer to carry it for him. I said (as the saying goes) that they'll sit on my head. I'll be abused. When I sat down to meal or went to bed, I didn't even think of my neighbour, whether he had enough to eat or shelter to rest.

However, in stead of God releasing His grip, He only tightened it. I said to God that with such a life I'll lose my life and die. Then God answered me, that that is exactly what He expects of me. Everything in me rebelled. But then I cried to God to do it in my life; that I am prepared to die, and that He should take no notice of my contrary desires. I was even afraid of being accused of being a communist, because of my relationship with the blacks. God squeezed all my "whiteness" out of me.

I had no time to blame or criticise others - I saw myself as the greatest sinner in this world.

At another time I saw (in a vision, as it were) people sitting in three rows; those at the bottom were the children of the world; in the middle were luke-warm Christians with sad "coffee-pot" faces, but those at the top had faces shining like angels, on fire for God. I cried to the Lord to make me as they were.

I asked God to take no notice of my contrary feelings, but to give me that heart and life which is in accordance with His Word.

One day as we were together in that cowshed where we had our meetings, praying together, we heard the rushing of a mighty wind, like pressurised air. All of us knew, God has come down and was present with us.

A Christian came in saying that there was a "sangoma" (witch) outside, wanting to see me. Before that time I had driven thousands of miles and spent a lot of time trying to convert witches and others in the occult, and they would simply reply that their gifts are of God. They would say that as we had our God (Jesus), they had theirs (the spirits of the dead). But this time, as I spoke to her and asked her what she wanted, she said, "Can Jesus set me free? I am bound with chains of hell. I am on my way to hell. Can Jesus set me free?" I couldn't believe my ears or eyes. I asked her who spoke or preached to her. Nobody, she replied. Who told her that she was chained with chains of hell?

Nobody. She said, "Don't waste my time, I am on my way to hell, and I want to know if Jesus can break these chains."

She had a training school for witches, and walked for 7km to get there. I asked someone to counsel with her, so that she would be cleansed from her sin and receive Jesus. Then she asked me to pray with her to be delivered from the evil spirits in her.

She mentioned the spirits by name. Then we entered my sitting room with some others. She went on hands and knees and started to crawl on all fours. She looked like a ferocious animal, ready to jump on its prey. We prayed for her and called on Jesus who conquered the devil to cast out these spirits. Then, dogs began to bark in her. After that, she spoke to us in fluent English, despite having had no exposure to English. Then pigs grunted and screamed inside her. Then the demons said, "We know of Jesus, but we've never met the fire of the Holy Spirit. It's becoming too hot for us. We have to leave". They left 100 at a time, till all 300 left her. As soon as she had been delivered, her face changed from that of an ferocious animal to the face of a saint or angel, having walked with God for a long time.

Then, people began to pour in, under conviction, seeking the Lord and His forgiveness. There was no church-bells or any advertising, but they just came. They explained how convicted they were of sin. I prayed a general sinners prayer for forgiveness but they said, "No, not like that - we want to mention and confess our sins by name". And we counselled from morning till evening, day after day.

Many of them had to be home at a certain time, but they refused to return until they had made right with God.

A lady brought her child to be prayed for. His arm was dislocated and badly injured. After prayer he was healed.

There are so many things God did which we've never spoken about, because some would be sceptical and say, "Impossible".

Sometimes God would touch the people as they sat under the preaching. A certain black man, whose eyes had been opened, walked up and down in front of the congregation, saying, "I always said that Christianity is the religion of the whites, but today I have experienced that Jesus is my God."

Believing as the Scripture says

Another girl (Thoko), who had a hunch-back, and who's limbs were pulled together because of a disease she had for 9 years, was brought to the service and we prayed for her together with others. They had pushed her in a wheelbarrow to the lorry which had fetched people. After prayer she was the first to stand up and testify how God healed her under prayer. She climbed onto the lorry by herself.

This revival is so precious to me and I will not exchange it for any diluted version.

Has God put you through His mill? Do you know this water of Jesus that quenches your thirst forever, and springs up unto Eternal Life?

Get back to the Bible! Believe as the "Scripture says".