

THE REVIVAL STARTS WITH ME...



Ludmila Plett

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Publisher:
Waters of Life mission
Wasser des Lebens e. V.
73527 Schwäbisch Gmünd
Germany

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All excerpts from the Old and New Testaments correspond
to the New Living Translation of the Bible.

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The original book was published in Russian language in
1989

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The revival starts with me...

This book, first brought to the world in December 1989, is the personal story of Erlo Stegen, an evangelist and missionary from South Africa, through whom a spiritual revival took place in 1966 among the violent and militant Zulu tribe, then the largest and most civilised tribe among the African population of that country. It is based on 28 tape recordings of the minister's sermons made during services held from 1970 to 1987 at the Kwasizabantu mission station in South Africa and during his missionary trips to various cities in Germany. One of the reasons why thousands and millions of people read this book to review their lives before the Lord, weeping over their sins, was that the author Ludmila Plett used the audio recordings (translated from German into Russian) that touched and broke her own heart, bringing profound changes in it, resulting in her personal spiritual revival. Over time, this book was translated into Dutch, Polish, Estonian, Latvian, Slovak and now in English.

PREFACE

Dear Friend! This book is a personal account of Erlo Stegen, an evangelist and missionary from South Africa, through whom the Lord brought a spiritual revival among the violent and militant Zulu tribe. This tribe of about seven million people is the largest and most civilized tribe in South Africa.

This revival began at the end of 1966 and has spread further, reaching not only the people of this country but also the people of neighboring African states and many people in various countries in Western Europe and other parts of the world.

This book is based on more than twenty original audio recordings of Erlo Stegen's preaching during the first seventeen years, which were in different cities in West Germany and at the Kwasizabantu mission station, which was the center of revival.

The thought of writing this book was placed into my heart by the Lord during my visit to this mission station in December 1986, twenty years after revival began. The voice of God, which could not be resisted, sounded again and again in me, urging me to undertake this labour. What I personally saw and experienced in this place of spiritual revival literally turned everything in my soul upside down, making me think and reconsider many things; and I thank God for all that He has done in me. I pray to the Lord that what has left an indelible mark on my heart may serve as a blessing to many more.

Many problems were encountered in the process of translating and compiling the book, involving the difficulty of transposing the lively oral language of preaching into the narrative style of a coherent literary story. In addition, the form of expressions in German and Russian “Russian is the language of the original book” often differs significantly from each other, which created challenges in accurately conveying the preacher’s thoughts when translating them. I hope that, having encountered possible stylistic errors and inaccuracies during reading, the reader will show understanding in this matter, concentrating his attention not so much on the form as on the content of what is written.

Ludmila Plett

Opening Prayer:

O Lord! Lord of lords! You who overcame darkness and hell, sin and all unclean powers! You who rose from the dead and to whom all authority in heaven and on earth has been given. We pray to you, our Lord and our God. Be with us and in our midst! You have transformed water into wine. Transform also this time and this place that it may become a blessed hours and a blessed place to Your Glory.

“I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat is planted in the soil and dies, it remains alone. But its death will produce many new kernels – a plentiful harvest of new lives.”

John 12:24

Introduction

As I begin my story, I want to first go back a long way to the last century. In 1840-1850, in the northern part of Germany, in the city of Hermannsburg, there lived a Lutheran preacher named Louis Harms. At his preaching, the Lord granted revival in the vicinity of the Luneburg Plain. More and more people came to the church until there was no more room. At this time, one meeting a day was not enough, and Louis Harms had to hold another service in the afternoon. But even this was not enough, so great was the thirst to hear the Word of God. Then he began to hold three meetings a day. People walked dozens of kilometers to attend the Sunday service.

In those days, the people of Hermannsburg were quite poor. The children of the peasants led an unclean life. They drank heavily and lived completely in sins, but at the preaching of this pastor the young people began to repent. They stopped drinking and fornicating, they stopped cunning and deceit. One day they came to Louis Harms and said, “Listen, Pastor! We would like to preach the gospel to the Gentiles. They, also, need to hear what we hear. After listening to them, Louis Harms agreed. But then the question arose about their spiritual education. After discussion, it was decided to send them to study at the University of Hamburg. A couple of weeks later they came back disappointed and depressed. It turned out that the professors found them too silly to receive the education needed for a preacher.

Despite this, the young people did not want to accept this situation, and then Louis Harms sent them to another university, in the city of Bremen. But the same thing happened to

them in Bremen, and they had to return home again. But even this second failure could not extinguish their desire to become missionaries. So Louis Harms had no choice but to open his own school to train these young people for missionary service.

When the first problem was solved, the next problem arose: how do these evangelists reach Africa now? Louis Harms' great desire was that they go to East Africa, to Ethiopia, to the Gala tribe a brave dominant tribe who spent their lives in battles and wars. He was sure that if they repented, they would bring the gospel to all Africa. Finally, it was decided to build a ship. It was a matter of faith because their church was not rich. But they trusted in God and prayed, asking Him to give them everything they needed to build the ship. Shortly afterwards, the owner of a company in Hamburg promised them to donate iron and some other materials for this purpose. Another owner gave them the needed wood, and so they were able to build a small ship, which was named Candacia¹.

In 1854, when Louis Harms sent the first missionaries to Africa, he told each of them when they parted, "I would not wish to see you here again! We part until one day we meet in heaven!" Thus, these missionaries never returned to their homeland, dying far away in heathen countries. Their life among semi-civilized tribes was certainly not easy, but they sacrificed it for the gospel.

Leaving Germany, the ship set course for East Africa. But when they stopped near Mombasa as they approached, all the doors to Ethiopia were closed to them. So, disappointed, depressed and broken, they had to go back. We can only imagine how they felt.

On the way back, their ship docked at the wharf of the city of Durban in South Africa. They took out their trumpets² and started playing them while standing on the deck of the ship. At this time a missionary by the name of Merensky was in Durban, who had arrived in the same province of Natal from the Berlin Mission in the same year. Hearing the sounds of

¹ Candacia is the name of the queen of Ethiopia (Acts 8:27)..

² Musical instrument.

trumpeters playing, he immediately determined that they were Germans. As he boarded the ship, he met the missionaries from Hermannsburg, who told him their sad story. Having learned that they had not received permission in Ethiopia for their missionary work, Merensky began to comfort and encourage them. "Stay here, among the Zulu tribe!" he said, "They are no less strong and warlike than the Gala tribe. Take the Gospel to them! They don't know anything about the Lord either!"

Taking his advice, the missionaries decided to stay in South Africa, and since then people of German descent have been well known to the Zulu tribe. This is how missionary work first began there. It was more than ten years after this event before the first of our ancestors of the Stegen family also entered the port of Durban on the same ship, the *Candacia*, to settle permanently in South Africa. They did not come here as missionaries, but as farmers who by their peasant labour were to assist the missionaries in their work.

The province of Natal thus had several white communities, many of whom spoke German. German churches and German schools began to be built. People began to settle in and find their way around their new place, but unfortunately it often happened that they lost their first love for God. But God works in mysterious ways, and His plan is fulfilled in due time. The German missionaries thought that after their first failure everything would go wrong, not as it was supposed to. They could not have foreseen that God's plan for them was different. He closed the door to Ethiopia to open the door to South Africa. God holds all the keys! How often we are convinced that everything in our lives is going wrong, not the way it should be or the way we want it to be. The recognition of this depresses us, and as we fall down and lie spiritually on the floor in despondency and despair, thinking that now everything is lost, everything has gone wrong, we do not know that what is happening to us is only the beginning of God's providence. It is a beginning, but not as we imagine it to be, but as God has made it according to His will. Therefore, blessed is the man who humbles himself before God, ready to do His will.

Chapter 1

Childhood. First sincere conversion.

The fact that we are in South Africa, like the whole South African missionary story, is also a miracle of God. Our ancestors who came to South Africa in 1869 were our great-great-grandparents on our mother's side. On our father's side, our foreparents came here later in 1881-1883. In all our South African ancestry there were never preachers.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, all communication between our forefathers and the relatives who remained in Europe was cut off, and we have heard nothing of them since. Some of those who belonged to our ancestry, living in South Africa, eventually separated from the church, but my father's house remained strictly Christian. We kids were taught to go to church every Sunday that we didn't like, and so as a kid, I decided that when I become an adult, I would throw it all overboard. It is not surprising, therefore, that we had no desire to pay much attention to our faith. Sometimes we even tricked or cheated to avoid going to church, for example, by complaining of severe headaches because we wanted to do something else. When the parents left for church, the remaining children would gather together and begin an exciting game of football. The headaches of course went away immediately.

So, despite the fact that we together with our parents were considered strictly church people who diligently attended services in our Lutheran church, we nevertheless, were completely sinners. There was a dance hall in our farmyard. They used to clean and polish the ground all day so they could dance better. There were weddings, engagements, and other gatherings. There were people from all around. They were drunk and partying until morning. If it was a Saturday night, it was not uncommon for the next Sunday morning to get calls from concerned parents asking if we knew what had happened to their sons because it was time to go to church, and the young people still had not come

back from last night's party. After that, we had to go find them. Then it turned out that young people returning from such parties were so drunk that they were not able to get home and went to sleep halfway home. All this did not prevent them, having sobered up, from singing and playing music in the church service the next Sunday morning with the most pious appearance.

This continued until one event took place in our church that played an important role in the lives of many, including my own. Our former pastor and preacher was transferred elsewhere, and another came to us. In the past, we children used to take sweets with us when we went to the service. Often we would fall asleep as soon as the sermon began, or slowly eat our candies. However, with the arrival of a new pastor, this situation has changed. He preached better than any other preacher we've ever known. His sermons were informative, interesting and at the same time quite short, which we especially liked. Also, this pastor showed a lot of understanding to us kids. For example, during Easter, when as usual there was a motocross race in the nearby town of Pietermaritzburg, we went to him and asked him if he could shorten his preaching so that we could get to the motocross on time. Having agreed to this, he spoke then for only ten or fifteen minutes, and we children were just delighted with it, exclaiming, "This is the best pastor in the whole world! Just the kind we need! We could not wish for a better one than this!"

In reality, this pastor was a very unhappy man and apparently felt that something was not right in his life and his ministry. As a child, he had no peace in his heart. As he grew up, he thought that by becoming a pastor and preacher, he would get that desired peace. Having decided so, he went to Europe, where he studied theology for a long time. Being a very capable and highly gifted man, he showed great success in his studies, so that after graduation the professors did not want to send him back to Africa, wishing to leave him for pastoral work in Europe. They convinced him that in Africa he would only destroy his talent. To this he answered them

jokingly, “You know, I have one problem in my homeland. All the bananas grow crooked for some reason. So, I want to try to straighten them.” Then they said, laughing, that he was hopeless for enlightenment, and therefore he could go to his Africa. When he returned home, he became a missionary and after a while he came to our church.

However, later on, the pastor’s position and ministry could not fulfil his spiritual need either. Then he thought he should preach more often and more zealously, and began to hold meetings several times a week, as a result of which he became so overworked that he was unable to carry the load and had to seek medical help because of the onset of neurosis.

There was a good Jewish doctor in the area who wasn’t a believer. After the examination, this doctor said to him, “Mr. Pastor, it is amazing to me that you Christians fear death so much! I have long noticed this in my patients who are religious. I cannot understand why you, believing in the Messiah, so tremble at death?” Those words were like a bitter pill to our pastor.

To avoid developing a severe neurosis, the doctor advised him to leave the pastoral ministry for at least three months and even to go to hospital for in-patient treatment. Having rejected this offer, the pastor returned to his home discouraged and depressed. The doctor’s words troubled him, and after some reflection he said, speaking to his wife, “It cannot be that there is not a man in the whole world who can help me. I feel like my soul is missing something. I don’t know what it is, but there has to be someone who can tell me!” After that, he set out on a journey, deciding not to return until he had found the answer to his question, at least for that he had to travel half the world.

After a while, he came to the capital of South Africa, Pretoria, where he met a man who was an evangelist but was neglected and humiliated by many. Despite the fact that many bad things have been said about this minister, being in great spiritual need, our pastor decided to go to him in the hope of receiving spiritual help. Oddly enough, sometimes

it is even a good sign if a lot of unkind things are said about someone. In verse 26 of the sixth chapter of the Gospel of Luke it is said, "Woe to you when everyone speaks well of you." Satan cannot be silent, remaining quiet, if God is at work in any person or place. This is exactly what happened here. This evangelist was indeed a true child of God.

When they met, our pastor's first disappointment was that the evangelist's knowledge of the Greek language was significantly inferior to himself, and that his knowledge of the Hebrew was generally poor. "What can such a person do for me," the pastor thought, "If he doesn't even know the languages the evangelist needs! What can he advise me when my own knowledge is so much better than his?" However, this evangelist knew the Living God and was a man who knew how to pray. As he listened to his visitor, he inwardly prayed fervently for him, saying, "Lord Jesus, I beg you! Break down the barrier that stands between you and him! Shine Your light into this man's heart because he needs You..."

After listening attentively to the guest, he invited them to pray together, and as they knelt and cried out to the Lord, our pastor suddenly felt a light shining into his heart, and at that moment the depth of the meaning of the words was revealed to him, "Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me." (Revelation 3:20). At the same moment he realized that all this time the Lord was outside him, not inside him, that he had Him only in the mind, not in the heart and not in his life. With a child's faith he began to ask, "Lord, come into my heart and my life." It seemed to him a miracle when he rose from his knees transformed and with inner peace. It was the most important day of his life.

After that he went straight back to our church, and the next Sunday when he stood behind the pulpit again, his preaching was so different that it seemed as if he was preaching to us for the first time. As we listened to him, we realized that something had happened in his soul. Another

man and another Christian stood before us. The old was gone. Everything had become new. There was also a great change in his life. It made a great impression on everyone there. Then I realised that this was exactly what I needed, because I could not overcome the sin that had become my constant problem.

There were six children in our family: five brothers and the youngest sister. It used to happen that when we went to the Holy Communion, we were tormented by the consciousness of our sinfulness. But after making general confession and refraction, we would return home with the joy of relief. But as we walked two or three kilometers from the church to the house, we brothers started arguing with each other. One said one thing, the other another, and each proved his point. We regretted it, but the inner peace and joy were lost. It broke my heart, and I was sad that I got dirty again and now I have to wait three months again to get forgiveness again. When the desired day came, and I was forgiven, I was sincerely glad, but, as before, remained naughty towards my parents. If they told me something, I usually contradicted them.

At that time, I did not have the proper reverence for my father. I always told him what I thought and did what I wanted to do. But each time I felt that I was not acting as a child of God, but as a child of the devil. My conscience tormented me, because I knew well that by doing so I was breaking the commandment, "Honor your father and mother," and therefore I was sinning. The consciousness of this made me deeply unhappy, and I said again and again, "God! I will not do it again because I do not want to do it!" But as time went on, it was the same thing all over again. When our pastor experienced closeness with the Lord, he said that we needed Jesus in our lives and that we could not become different on our own. He is the only One who can help us overcome sin and get free from Satan's power. Then came a moment of change in my life. Praying and crying, I said, "Lord Jesus! I need You! Save me and destroy my disobedience, take away my quarrels, arguments and disagreements..."

That's how I got converted. After that, no one had to tell me to go to church. On the contrary, I was very sad if I could not be in church with everyone else. The Lord began to work in our home as well, so that soon the dance floor became a place of preaching and studying God's Word. It wasn't long before our house was filled with people. Often 400-600 people would gather to hear the Gospel. Now no one danced here anymore, but worship services and the study of God's Word were held.

After repentance, the Bible became the most precious and wonderful book for me. I didn't like to read before. When I had to read books in school, it was a punishment for me. Now that Jesus has come into my life, the situation has changed dramatically. I could read the Bible or about revivals day and night. My heart was filled with great joy when I heard or read how people came to Jesus and how the Living God touched them. Nothing else existed for me. It became the most important thing in my life.

When my family went out to visit and called me to come with them, I constantly refused, finding some excuse to stay home. I didn't tell them that whenever I had a chance to be alone, I would pick up my songbook and start singing. I had never sung before, but after Jesus came into my heart and began to work, I never stopped singing. Often, when I was alone, I would kneel down with my Bible in my hands and read it so kneeling. If my family was at home, I would quietly take my Bible and, saying I was going for a walk, go somewhere in the sugar cane bushes or in the forest, and there I would have a wonderful time alone with Jesus, letting Him speak to me. Wherever I went and wherever I was in the field, on the tractor, on the farm – my New Testament was always with me. I read one chapter after another, learning them by heart. No one forced me to do this, but the Word lived in me and was as sweet as honey.

My peers and friends were having fun, dating girls and then sharing that with me. They couldn't understand why I was living like this! For what?! Do I really have so much time for the Bible?! But Jesus was so great to me! He became

my first love! Especially the words of the promises gave me great joy and pleasure. For example, in the fifteenth chapter, the seventh verse of John's Gospel, I read, "If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you." I said to myself that if this were the only promise in the entire Bible, it would be the greatest jewel of all the treasures on earth. However, this was not the only promise. I read on, "Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete." (John 16:24).

These words filled my heart with jubilation. For according to them, if the Lord abides in us, and we in Him, then we can ask Him for anything we desire; and the joy we find in Him is special, great and perfect. And one more promise that is forever imprinted on my heart, "Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father." (John 14:12).

It was in 1949-1951. I was still very young, so I believed deeply and accepted it all. If you read the words spoken by Jesus, "Very truly I tell you," you really believe that everything said is true, because the Lord is not a deceiver. As I read in Matthew, Mark, Luke, John about the works that Jesus did, I thought that according to the promises given, if you believe in Him, you can do the works that He did. And not just those, but more than those! I can't tell you what it meant to my heart. It was like an open sky for me! I think now you can understand why I had no time to meet girls or any other worldly things. Jesus and His Word has become all I have.

Chapter 2

The call to ministry and the cost of disobedience

At the time when I was totally absorbed in reading the Bible, I had not even a thought of becoming a preacher. I kept saying then that being a teacher is the worst thing that can happen, and being a preacher was the last thing at all. *(Forgive me these words. Today I am a preacher myself and said now only what I thought about it at that time)*. Just like my parents, grandparents and great-grandparents, I wanted to be just a farmer. My ideal was to make money. Even as a young boy I wanted to make money and for this purpose I even planted a whole hectare of tobacco on my own. Money was my god. While my peers were going out with their girlfriends, I was trying to earn money. My motto was “Money first, then everything else”.

When I finished school, I immediately returned home to the farm to help my father in his work. And it was while we were happily living and working together on our farm that I first heard God’s call to labour in his field. Shortly before, our mother had given each of the children a book. I received a book by Werner Heukelbach, which was about a man who had undergone a profound change from a godless man to an evangelist. It was just right for me. When I felt in my heart that God was calling me to labour for Him, I immediately said, “Yes, Lord! If this is what You want, I am ready!” Of course, during this period of burning and first love for the Lord, I did not think about what it would cost me.

I immediately went to my parents and brothers, as well as to our pastor, and announced that I was sure that the Lord was calling me to the ministry. The pastor was very pleased with this and immediately offered to go with him to the Eastern Transvaal to a conference where the best and world-famous preachers would gather. I willingly agreed, confident that this trip would be a great blessing to me. It was the first time in my life that I was away from my family without the

usual farm work and there was enough time for reflection. This is where I first seriously considered for the first time what would be in store for me if I left my farm work and became a pastor. I didn't even think about missionary service at that time, because at the time, African people were not recognized as people at all. In South Africa, this was not a big deal. In South Africa, it was nothing special. Not only that, but it also applied to people of other nations who were not of the African race. To us, they were like second-class people, lower than us.

So were our views on other churches, communities and faiths. In our eyes only our own church was the only spiritual church, and only we had the true and pure doctrine, though in reality it was certainly not so at all. We looked down on other believers, thinking that a reform among them was long overdue. However, the Lord is so gracious that through this, some of them might be saved in some way. As for us, our salvation was a matter of course, and the fact that we would go to heaven was not even in the slightest doubt. By the way, this approach is the spiritual sickness of almost all Christians, isn't it?! For some reason, each one considers his own concepts higher and more correct than the concepts of another, and in this way he does not even notice that he humiliates and tramples on the one for whom Christ also died.

So, while in the Transvaal and thinking about my proposed future ministry, I thought it would be the end of my favourite farming life. In addition, I would have to part with my parents, brothers and sister. I also thought that I did not want to be poor like many of those who were in this ministry. But money means something in life, too. Thinking back to our pastor and others like him, I thought that I would not be able, as they were in poverty, to preach, baptise, perform funeral ceremonies over the dead, and so on. And anyway, who knows what else it would bring me... No, it wasn't for me. Now I was ready to give up my hasty decision, realising that I wasn't capable of going through with it.

However, there were some really good preachers gathered at this conference, and as I listened to their preaching in the evenings, my heart softened and I said, “Lord! No, I’m ready to do this! I’m ready!” In the morning, however, my heart was hardened again, and I repeated that I would go back again. Then evening came again, and in listening to the Word, my heart melted like butter, and I was willing to follow God’s call. But the night would pass and the next morning the old thing would happen again – I wanted to go back.

This continued until one day I was determined to return home and become a farmer. But there was one problem that puzzled me. After all, I told the pastor that God was calling me to labour. What would I say to him if he asked me why I used to say one thing and now another? Why did I just a short time ago declare that God was calling me to service and convince others of the sincerity of my motive, and now I suddenly turn back? Such questions, of course, I did not want to hear, remembering what I had been taught in school, that a man should be a man of his word. We have a saying in Africa, “A man is a word – a woman is a dictionary”. Unfortunately, the opposite is true in life. But anyway, I didn’t want to find myself in such a stupid position.

The second thing that also troubled me was, what would I answer my mother when she would certainly ask about how to understand now the words of assurance about God’s calling and my exact opposite act?

I was still thinking about this when a good idea suddenly came to my mind. While at the conference, I often heard people testify that God had sent them a word from the Scriptures. When I remembered this, I was very happy, thinking that this explanation would be a great way out of my predicament. Then I could go to our pastor and tell him that I must have been mistaken, because God was just testing me, just as He had tested Abraham. He only wanted to see if I would be willing to sacrifice my life to Him as Abraham had to sacrifice his son. And because I was willing to follow His call, He saw my heart and believed me, just as He had

once been convinced of Abraham's faithfulness. Just as then God let Isaac live and did not allow him to be killed, so now He does not require this sacrifice from me, and He has sent me a word from the Bible to prove it. I will say the same to my mother, so it will be wonderful and very true. No one will be able to object, argue or oppose it. So, all I could do was to pray that the Lord would reveal to me the appropriate place in Scripture.

That same day, I found a secluded place, sat down on a rock, took my Bible in my hands, and began to mentally tell God how my next life should go. I will return home and become a farmer, but I will support churches and missionaries financially. In addition, my home will always be open for prayer and Bible study. In short, I explained to Him in detail how my future life was going to be, and I envisaged every last detail of it. Having finished such planning, I said, "But, Lord, I don't want to do all this without You, because without God's blessing there can be no success. May Your hand accompany this labour! Therefore, I ask you to give me such a word of the Holy Scriptures as will be your seal upon all that I have spoken to you," and then I opened the Bible at random, hoping at that moment to see the place in bold print. But my gaze stopped on the plain type and I don't know how it happened that I saw only one verse before my eyes, "Jesus called out to them, 'Come, follow me, and I will show you how to fish for people!'" " (Matthew 4:19).

Angry, I shut the Bible with the only desire to throw it as far away as possible. Anger and rage boiled up in me, and I said, "Lord, I will prove to You that I will not do this! I will not be a trapper of men! I don't agree with You and would rather go through my life without You!"

When I got back to my room, I packed my things and briefly told the pastor that I was going back to Natal to see my parents. In reply to this he remained perfectly calm without saying a word to me, and only after a while he asked.

"Erlo, are you really quite sure that this is God's will for you?"

“Yes!” I answered sharply without delay, and immediately repeated, “Yes! And let us leave this conversation!” So, I lied to him.

It is terrible that Christians can lie so easily. That day I learnt how hard and wicked the heart of a believer can be. After all, I was already a child of God.

The pastor took me to the railway station, and before leaving I phoned home, telling my parents that I would be in Pietermaritzburg tomorrow morning at six o’clock. The next morning, I was met at the railway station by my father and some of my brothers. We were very fond of each other. When we met, one of them came up to me and said cheerfully, “Ah, Erlo, it is good to have you back! Truly, our God is a God of love, so He has brought you back to us again!” Of course, at that time he could not yet guess what had really happened. But I knew it wasn’t the God of love that brought me back, because I had rebelled against Him by turning my back on God and saying I couldn’t walk with Him that way.

A few days later, when my mother and I were alone in the house, she asked me, “Erlo, what happened? You told us that God had called you to be a preacher and to work in His field. And if so, why did you come back so soon?”

What could I say to her? Nothing! The only thing I was capable of at the time was to get angry. It was the easiest way, which is always an indicator that something is wrong. I realised that nothing could help me now, and that at this moment I could do nothing but swear. I answered sharply, “Mum, if you don’t want to see me here anymore, then just tell me!” I quickly left the room, slamming the door loudly. That was the end of my songs and Bible reading, which I did not touch again.

The next year and a half were hell on earth for me. Then I learnt that disobedience costs a thousand times more than obedience. It’s a hard road to go against God. It’s something I never want to go through again! Often we say, “No, I can’t pay that price! Such a sacrifice is too great for me! I can’t bear it!” Just believe me, my friend, that disobedience will cost you much more.

After that time had passed, I went into my room one day, knelt down, and for the first time in all that terrible time I picked up my Bible and opened it. My eyes fell on the lines that spoke of God's love for me. It is difficult to put into words what was happening at that moment in my tormented heart. "Lord!" crying I said, "How is this possible? Even though I have struck You in the face and turned away, You still love me?!"

I cannot explain to you in detail what happened to me. I can only say that God's love disarmed and shattered my frozen heart. It melted like an ice flake in the sunlight. I cried like a child, unable to understand why God still loved me. What for? After all, I had upset Him so much...! At that moment, I experienced what God's love means. It's hard to understand without experiencing it.

A few days later I picked up my Bible again and again, opening it at random, I read, "Jesus said to Simon Peter, 'Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?' " (John 21:15). At that moment, I felt as if Jesus were here in my room, speaking to me and asking me the question, "Erlo, do **you** love me...?" I loved my parents, my brothers and sister, my parents' home, our farm very much. However, now the Jesus question was, "Do you love **Me**...?" Yes, I loved Him! I couldn't help but love Him!

Peter answered, "Lord, You know that I love You." Jesus says to him, "Feed my lambs," and then the same question is asked again, followed by the same answer. Once again Simon Peter heard the words of his Master, "Feed my sheep." This was repeated three times. When Peter was asked the third time, he was sad, and I was sad too. As Peter wept, I said, "Lord, you know that I love you!" And He answered me, "Feed My sheep." It was final. I immediately got up from my knees, found my mother and said, "Mum, now a new life begins!" Then I went to our pastor and told him that my hesitation had come to the end, for what had passed was for me equal to death.

That was the beginning of a completely different life. I went straight to Bible school, and since then I have never

again had any doubts about what the Lord had called me to do. I often feel very sad when I meet children of God who say that they do not know what God's will is for them. But this is something that should be very clear to us! It is not he who says, "Lord, Lord, Lord!" but he who does the will of his heavenly Father who will enter His kingdom! Not the one who works miracles in His name, but the one who knows the will of God and obeys it.

Chapter 3

Twelve years of “walking in the wilderness.”

In 1951, while preparing for an evangelism ministry, I said something before God that later brought me many difficulties. “Lord!” I said. “This step has cost me very dearly. I left everything for this, my father’s house, my inheritance, my parents, my brothers and sister, everything I have and could have. So, I ask You in Your Name, if I now follow You, please, on one condition, that it not be a game of church. If I am going to preach the Gospel, then I want to do it the way you once did. Let it not be in temples, but in fields and meadows, in mountains and valleys. I want to take Your Word to the people only as it is written. I want to work for You in this way, Lord, and live in this way, so that Your Word and Your promises can be fulfilled in my life and in my ministry. I want to teach and speak as You have taught and spoken. For You said, “As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.” (John 20:21).

After graduating from Bible school, something happened that I did not expect. The Lord opened doors for me to the Zulu, the tribe of African people among whom we lived. Never before had I expected to labor with African people, much less among the Zulu. I could hardly speak their language. My knowledge of the Zulu language was the worst of anyone in our family. So, I could not understand why God was calling me! After all, I was preparing myself for labor among the whites! But the Lord’s plan was different, and loving Him, I wanted to do His will in this. So, I became a missionary.

It used to happen that when I was among white people, I had to be very careful and prudent, watching what and how to say things so as not to offend anyone with my words. This was not a problem among the African pagans. I could say to one of them, for example, “Listen, you need to repent! If you don’t, you will go down alive to hell!” Some time passed and African people said to me, “Yes, Christianity is

good. We got a lot of good things through it. We now have schools and hospitals. We also have the opportunity to learn a trade. With the coming of the missionaries, civilisation has come to us. But Christianity is still something foreign to us, something that came to us from the whites. Christianity is the religion of white people. It is their tradition in which they grew up. We also have our own religion and our own traditions. You white Christians have your Gods, God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. We have our idols and our gods who also have their own names. Although Christianity is not a bad religion, it is not enough for us, because it is like water poured on a fire. It can quench the flames, but it cannot go deep down to the root of life. So, we still need our gods, and we must continue to sacrifice to the spirits of our dead.”

In this way one finds a half-heartedness and divergence of their faith. When they become Christians, they are half Christian and half pagan. When they come to church they pray to the Lord, but in their homes they continue to serve demons and offer sacrifices to the spirits of the dead.

I must say that for the Zulu, communion with the dark forces of hell, witchcraft and spiritualism are an integral part of their lives, their daily bread. Already in the womb the child is under the influence of witchcraft. Witchcraft is also used during childbirth. And so it goes on for the rest of their lives. Therefore, it becomes something natural and quite normal for them, and communication with the spirits of the dead is an everyday and ordinary phenomenon. But the worst part is that none of this is a figment of their imagination or just imagination of something, but actual reality that can be underwent, felt and experienced for themselves. Evil spirits talk to them so that it can be heard. Snakes and wild animals come to them. I personally experienced this and therefore could not tell them that the devil could not act and manifest himself in power, as it was a reality to them.

In addition, they said to me, “Christianity is certainly a good thing. It’s just a shame you’re missionarying to us Africans! It would be better if you preached to whites, teaching

them how to live their lives properly. Repent first you, white people! We work for white people and we know them! White people can be angry and irritable! They know how to fight and quarrel! They often have no love at all!”

Some of the Zulu went even further and told me bluntly, “We don’t want you! Preach to your white people! See what they are doing! They go to the cinema, are smoking, drinking and live in debauchery! Don’t preach to us about repenting and turning to God! Turn first you, white people, and then we’ll see what you mean by that!...” I think you can imagine what might be going on in the heart of an evangelist who is preaching to them about turning to the Lord.

Six years after I began my missionary work, I prayed fervently one day, saying, “Lord, give me wisdom and the power of Your Holy Spirit that I may convince these people that You are not only the God of whites, but the God of all, and that Jesus is the Son of God, the Savior of the world, of all nations, and that no one can come to the Father except through Him.” I then prepared myself well, intending to speak to the Zulu, of whom several hundred had gathered that day. Starting with the Old Testament, I told them about how the prophets had prophesied the Messiah and how He was finally miraculously born of the virgin Mary, as well as how Jesus was in the temple as a twelve-year-old boy. I then proceeded to the account of His baptism in the Jordan, His temptation in the wilderness, and His further ministry up to His martyrdom on the cross of Golgotha. Finally, I told them how on the third day, having risen from the dead, the Son of God ascended into heaven, where He now sits at the right hand of God the Father, who gave Him the whole world. In doing so, I emphasised that for us who live on earth, there is no salvation in any other name but the name of Jesus Christ and that the day will come when He will come again to judge the living and the dead. Therefore, anyone who does not believe in Him loses eternity. I convinced the listeners that no other name is holy and that Jesus alone is the Way, the Truth and the Life for all people, no matter what color or nationality.

I finished my preaching with this message, "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever! Everything changes, but He does not! He is the same today as He was two thousand years ago! So do not go to your witches and sorceresses! Do not go to the dead, but go to the One who has risen from the dead and is Lord over the dead and the living! Come to Jesus with all your sins, needs and problems! Leave the dead gods behind! Come to the living God!"

Of course, when I said that, I had no idea where it would lead. One of the listeners of this meeting was eagerly listening to what I was saying. This is something we preachers don't usually expect, satisfied that our preaching goes over people's heads. Immediately after the meeting, an elderly woman came up to me, "Tell me, preacher, is it really true what you just told us?" she asked me, "Of course it is, I could not have made it up. There is no deception in the service of God. Everything I have preached is true." I answered her. "So, the Lord Jesus, the God of the white people, is the Living God?" she asked me. "Yes, He is the Living God." calmly I replied. "Can He do today what He did two thousand years ago?" she asked. "Yes, of course He can." I answered her. "Can you talk to Him?" she kept asking me. "Yes, I can! We Christians call it prayer. Every person can pray."

Then she exclaimed, "Oh, how glad I am that I have finally found a man who serves the Living God! I have a grown daughter. She is a madwoman. Would you please ask your God to heal her?"

I felt as if the butter had fallen from my bread at her words. All my courage and determination disappeared instantly. "Oh, Erlo! You stupid donkey!" I thought to myself. "That's where you cornered yourself. Why didn't you think to leave yourself some loopholes to fall back on! What are you going to do now?! How will you get out of this mess...?" *(Such a shaking I must have experienced at that moment).* Thoughts flashed through my mind with lightning speed, "What if I asked her if she was sure it was God's will for her daughter to become healthy?" But then another thought

flashed through my mind, “Erlo, but it was you who just told them to go to Jesus with all their needs and problems, not to witches and sorceresses!” And again I thought, “Yes, but it could be a cross that the Lord has put on her! It can happen too! It could be God’s will! Besides, in God’s plan, there is a time for everything. Why does she think that now is the time for her daughter to be healed?”

“You poor, primitive mum!” I said mentally. “If you were a white European, then we would have had a clear conversation about it! But you are African, and you are talking like a small, unintelligent child!...” *(That’s what I thought at that moment. In reality, this African woman had come to Jesus with that same simple, trusting, childlike faith of which the Lord had once said, “If you do not believe, you are like children...” And it wasn’t she, but I was that silly little boy!)*

Yeah, but what am I supposed to do now? I didn’t want to show her that I was at an impasse. I asked the woman where her daughter was, if she was here. “No, she is at home. It’s one kilometer away from here, and we can drive halfway and then we have to walk.” replied the mother, “All right,” I said. “I’ll be free soon and then I’ll come with you.”

On the way she told me that she has been a widow for the past four years, that her son works in the big city of Durban, and that she now lives with her son’s wife and her deranged daughter. When we finally reached the place and I looked inside her hut, I cried out loudly in fright and amazement, “You haven’t told me half of what I see here!”

In the middle of the African hut there is a pole on which the thatched roof is held. A grown-up girl was tied to this pole with a wire. The wire cut so deeply into the body of the unfortunate woman that blood trickled out of the cuts. There were countless wounds and scars on her arms and body. Some of them were already healed, while others were still fresh and bleeding. This madwoman had an inhuman, supernatural strength. She was tearing at her restraints so terribly that the wire cut her hands like a knife. At the same time, she kept speaking in some incomprehensible alien language. This is not unusual among the Zulu. They call such spirits

“zizuas”. If a person is possessed by this spirit, he has the ability to speak in incomprehensible languages, as well as in different foreign languages, such as German, English, Indian, and so on. “How long have you had her tied up like that?” I asked the mother. “For the last three weeks. And all this time she has been talking like this, day and night. She doesn’t eat or sleep. If we bring her food, she grabs the plate and throws it against the wall.” she answered. “But why don’t you use something softer, a rope at least?”

“It’s no use,” the woman sighed. “We’ve tried everything. She breaks the strongest ropes on herself. If she manages to escape, she runs away and is very hard to catch. She runs like a wild animal from one house to another. She runs into the fields and vegetable gardens of her neighbors, tearing out corn, cabbage and other vegetables, she breaks and devastates everything in her path. People get angry. Men come with dogs or sticks and beat her terribly. When she is chased away, she runs away into the mountains and does not return for a long time. It’s raining, thundering, lightning, cold weather is coming, and even I don’t know where my daughter is.”

The woman looked at me and with tears in her eyes asked, “Can you imagine what it means to my heart to have such a child?! Oh, it would be better for her to die than to live like this...!”

After calming down a bit, the poor mother continued, “My daughter tears her dress to shreds and runs naked through the streets. It is also very dangerous to others. If she bites someone, she sinks her teeth deep into the body and does not unclench them until someone else comes to help the victim. So, when people see her, they hide and lock themselves in their huts and houses. Then she runs into the school. The children jump out of the windows in terror to escape. The headmaster convened a committee and said that this could not go on.

Weeping, this poor woman showed me her empty barn and said, “I have no more cows, sheep or goats. What I did not sacrifice to the spirits, I had to sell to pay the witch

doctors. For they demand a lot of money for their sorcery. But in the end, they also said that our gods could no longer help me. Now I'm completely poor. I have no more money. My strength is also running out. You know, preacher, very often I have wanted to take a knife and slit my daughter's throat in cold blood with my own hands. But something has always kept me from doing so. It was like someone was telling me not to do it because it was a big sin. Then I wanted to end my own life. But what stopped me was the thought of what would happen to my child afterwards. Who would take care of her? Oh, how glad I am, that I have finally found a man who serves the Living God! Now I have hope that my daughter will be healed and saved!"

Those words were like a knife stabbed into my heart. I was ready to weep. At that moment I remembered Gideon's words to the angel of God who had been sent to him, "Where are all his wonders that our ancestors told us about?" (Judges 6:13). Inwardly I cried out to God, pleading with Him, "Lord, grant this miracle! You have the power to free this poor girl and heal her!"

After promising this woman that I would return to her again, I went to my friends and co-workers and, after sharing my experience, asked them if they would be willing to pray with me for this girl. All readily agreed to do so, promising to leave all their jobs for such an occasion. "You see!" I told them, "We have been praying for six years for an revival that has never happened. Who knows, maybe this will be the spark we need to light a fire. For if the girl is healed, it could be the beginning of revival, because the whole tribe from young to old knows about her. Oh, what a victory that would be for our Lord! Then all Zulu will know that Jesus is the only true God!"

Then I went to my parents' farm and asked them if they could spare a room where the madwoman could stay while we prayed for her. My father and mother agreed, and we, along with several other men, delivered the insane girl to my parents' home. The whole tribe in the neighborhood already knew and talked about it.

As soon as she entered the room she had been given, she immediately broke the chairs and overturned the table. Then we had to take all the furniture out of the room, leaving only the bed. After that she tried to break the bed by ripping the springs out of it. We had to remove the bed too, putting a straw mat and a blanket on the floor. Her last prank was that she broke the window frames, smashed the windows and bent the iron bars. After a few hours, the room looked like a pigsty with not one but many pigs in it.

For three weeks, day and night, we fasted and prayed, but the demon-possessed woman was not healed. All this time she was singing satanic songs, which she made up herself. People advised us to always say the name of the Lord and invoke the Blood of Jesus Christ during prayer, because then the demons would run away. But the demon did not run away. On the contrary, it immediately began to curse and blaspheme the blood of Christ with such terrible words as only Satan can do. It was frightening and disgusting. She sat naked in her own filth and beat her feet on the concrete floor as if someone were hitting it with a huge hammer, intending to smash it. This went on for many hours, and even from a distance one could hear the terrible stomping, the terrible laughter, and the blasphemous songs. It was a real act from hell.

After three weeks my strength was exhausted and I was like a nervous wreck. I could not understand what was happening. We were doing everything the Bible taught us to do, but it wasn't working. Practice was at odds with theory. I felt like the scientists of this world who believe in evolution, proving that there is no Creator and no God. Such people say that millions and billions of years ago we were fish. Then those fish grew legs. Later on, not only the frog but also the monkey evolved from this. Then somehow the monkey lost its tail, giving rise to the human race on earth. They could even identify times and periods of development, but amazingly, they were always missing one "little thing" – a missing link in the chain of evolutionary development. Many years ago, we had a Professor Schmidt

in South Africa who discovered the fish, the *Culicensis*. He was convinced that he had finally found the missing link in evolutionary development. But to his great disappointment, it was not to be.

I felt the same way about my situation. Everything the Bible says was theoretically true, but in practice it was not. This was a bitter pill for me.

What was I supposed to do now? Go back to the mother and tell her that her daughter was not healed! But the whole tribe in the neighborhood knew that Christians were praying for this girl. They heard me preaching to them, saying, “Don’t go to witch craftsmen! Do not sacrifice your oxen and goats to spirits! Jesus is the answer to every problem, so go to Him! He never says no! Sorcerers and idols yes, but Jesus never!” Now, what now?! Now I have to go to that girl’s mother and tell her that God has deceived us, not only us, but all those who preach the Name of Christ! But how could I do such a thing?!

We prayed with all our might, “O Lord! It is not about our name, but about Your Name of the Living God! It is about Your authority and power! What will the gentiles say if she comes back as crazy! Oh, move Lord! Perform this miracle, not for our glory, but for Your Name’s sake, for Your glory...” However, our desperate call and all our prayers were in vain. God in the sky was silent. It was terrible!

In the end I had no choice but to go to the girl’s mother and tell her that we could not help her daughter either. It was very hard for me, and I prayed fervently, “Lord! I cannot look people in the eye now! After all, I need to be honest with them! How can I preach and convince them of something when they have seen that it is not true! I can no longer be a hypocrite myself! I have a conscience too! I have to be honest with myself! Lord, I can’t stay here any longer! Please, if you can, send me somewhere else...” The Lord was merciful to me and I was able to go somewhere else. It was the neighbourhood of Hanover and the southern coast. I stayed there for two years.

By this time, I had stopped believing that the Bible was the complete Word of God and that everything written in it was true. Some of it was, but not all of it. Of course, I was convinced that God was not a deceiver, and I thought that the reason for the Bible's inconsistency could have been something else. There were no typewriters as there are now, so everything was written by hand and passed from one person to another. This is how the Bible was rewritten from generation to generation over many centuries. It is natural that in the process of the many rewritings of the Bible by many people, some errors may have been made in it. As a result, some parts of Scripture may not be what was written in the beginning. In this way everything could be well explained.

So, some things in the Bible are true and some things are not. Therefore, when I preached, I now kept only those passages that I thought were true in my understanding and experience, and tried to avoid those passages that I thought were false. For example, Jesus said to the Samaritan woman, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst." (John 4:13-14). In my view, it was misunderstood and completely wrong. After all, I had travelled everywhere and was doing evangelism. I have been in many churches and communities. Hundreds and thousands of people were receiving Jesus. They were coming to that Source and drinking the water that He gives. They drank His living water, but afterwards they were thirsty again!

Walk through the homes of modern Christians and look at the things of the world that are in them. Newspapers, magazines, entertainment items, and so much more, even erotic books and pornography. I have known young men who could not walk past newsstands and bookstores without looking at the pictures of naked girls that are displayed there. They even bought them and hid them at home from their parents. These were people who believed in Jesus, who drank of His water, but who had a constant thirst for the world and worldly things. Are there any people in the world

thirstier than Christians? How many among them are those who have a thirst not only for the world, but also for sin, which they commit, if not directly, then indirectly; if not openly, then secretly. Some have cravings for cigarettes, others for alcohol, others for sex or other disgusting sins. Children ask their parents why they are not allowed to go to the cinema or dance while others can. It can be very hard for parents to raise their children properly, and they are all Christians! The Bible says, "Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in them." (1 John 2:15). But look at Christians! Look at the Christian youth of today and compare them with the people of this world! How great is the difference between them? In verse 2 of the twelfth chapter of Romans we read, "Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind." You see, Scripture clearly says that Christians are not to be conformed to the world and this age. But is that what it really looks like? Once drunk, never thirsty again! No, there is no such thing! Therefore, it is clear that God could not have said that. He is not a deceiver. Therefore, these words are just an error in Scripture. So, I have found many similar passages in the Bible that I have found unsuitable for Christians today.

I also found the Book of Acts unacceptable for us in these days because it was for the first Christians and ended in the first century. Of course, there were still revival times after that, but they too are in the past. We, too, tried praying sincerely and wholeheartedly for revival, and we did it for so long that in the end we became satiated, tired and stopped. Later, when a member said to me, "Erlo, we need to pray for revival," I, taught by bitter experience to balance in such situations, answered him indulgently, "Ah, dear brother! You are too hot in these matters! I used to think the same way. There was a time when we even tried to pray for revival with all our hearts, fervently and sincerely, but years passed and revival never came. In all probability, it was only in the beginning, as a manifestation of fervour and the first love. For us it is no longer possible. I think that in this matter you will

also come to know the truth when you reach a mature spiritual age.” (*So far have I gone, lost in my human thoughts*).

Over time I have learnt to observe. You have probably noticed that in different parts of the world, in different churches and denominations, different things are given priority. For example, Americans always emphasise the importance of faith when they preach. The main thing is to believe! “It doesn’t matter how things are on the inside! As long as you believe!” When I heard this, I thought that perhaps this was the secret and the key that I had been looking for a long time. Maybe I had failed because I had too little faith. Inwardly encouraged, I decided to do an experiment, believing that if you can’t decide to do something, you can’t get it. And so, at the next meeting, I gave a preaching on faith to everyone, always emphasising the words “only believe”. In the most eloquent words I persuaded my listeners that the most important thing we need is faith. All we need is faith, and then we can move mountains!

And do you know what happened after that?! Among those present at the service were people who had a blind person in their family. When they heard me saying that you only need to believe and then you will see the glory of God, they were very happy. After waiting for the preaching to end, they quickly went home, brought their blind father to me, and said, “We have heard now that if you believe, all things can come to pass. Our father is blind. Could you pray for him that he may see?”

“Wow...” I thought, “I wonder what it’s going to cost me now?” However, without giving the appearance of doing so, I asked them.

“Do you believe it too?”

“Yes, of course!” they said.

“Good,” I said. “Jesus asked every sick person who came to Him if he believed.” (*By this I consoled myself that I would not be the only guilty one, if this blind man did not see. Then, at least, they would be guilty too.*)

I asked them to come back later for prayer, and then I tried to gather all my faith into a big pile, wishing only that

I had it like a huge mountain. Unfortunately, I did not think about the words of Jesus, who said that if our faith is the size of a mustard seed, it is enough to move mountains. It's a shame that we Christians have it backwards on this issue, it takes faith the size of a mountain to move a mustard seed.

And so, at the appointed time they came. Having prepared well, I hoped that now I would have enough faith to pray like them too. Laying my hands on the blind man's head, I prayed and believed. When I finished praying, I quickly opened my eyes and looked at the sick man. Alas, he remained blind. I shook my head, unable to understand. I had so much faith!... These people left me disappointed, and I continued to stand there for a long time, repeating, "Lord, I don't understand it! Yes, I really don't understand anything anymore!"

After the unfortunate case with the blind man, I said to myself, "Enough Erlo! Never in your life will you dare to do such a thing again! Don't be such a foolish donkey from now on! Watch yourself, and when you preach, be careful and prudent! Don't forget that there must always be a way out, so that something like what happened before doesn't happen to you." As a result, my preaching became deliberate and judicious. Thus passed another six years of my evangelical ministry.

The missions took place in a large tent in which I held gospel meetings twice a day, morning and evening. When I went to a place, I stayed there for eight to twelve or even fourteen months, during which time I preached the Word of God. And every time I did so, I would see the same recurring picture. At first the meetings were attended by about a hundred people, then two hundred, four hundred, six hundred. Then the number of attendees began to decrease in reverse order, and by the end of the year no more than a hundred people were coming again.

During the evangelistic meetings, hundreds of people came to the Lord. It was quite common for two hundred people to come forward after the meeting and declare their desire to receive Jesus as their Saviour. It was even common

for the entire crowd of many hundreds to turn to the Lord! However, a few months passed and there was nothing left of it. Nothing! Everything went back to the way it was. During one evangelistic meeting, my staff and I sold hundreds of Bibles, but it made no or very little difference in people's lives.

At this time other preachers came to me and asked me how I was able to gather hundreds of people for my services. Unfortunately, they saw only this and did not realise that I felt like the most miserable person on earth. I could see what was really going on, where I started and where I ended. What was it? We strive to evangelise the world – and in fact godlessness is spreading more and more. I was not able to understand and explain it.

In addition, I was constantly haunted by a thought that came from deep within me and made me very sad. Usually, when I was evangelising, I tried to pitch my tent in the most crowded place so that I could gather people more easily. In doing so, I always thought, "Erlo, you are not like John the Baptist in this. He held his services in the desert, far away from human settlements, with no people at all. However, in spite of this, almost all of Jerusalem came to him. Not only Jerusalem, but also Judea, Samaria, and even the neighbouring states. But you, Erlo, you yourself go to the people and yet you have trouble attracting them to you. John," I asked him mentally, "How did you do it? What was your secret...?" But unfortunately, I didn't know.

"Could it be," I reasoned, "that John had a strong personality, able to draw people to him? Or perhaps he was able to use some particularly strong expressions in his speech?" I reread his preaching again and again and only wondered. I doubt if there has ever been another preacher who would have decided to preach as John the Baptist did. "John!" I said to myself in amazement, "If you were to preach like that in present days, your head would be cut off even earlier than it was in your days!"

I myself have never met, nor has anyone else ever told of a preacher who dared to speak as John did. "You brood

of vipers!” He addressed the people who came to him to be baptised, that is, those who wanted to turn to the Lord. “Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? Produce fruit in keeping with repentance.” (Matthew 3:7-8). Today, however, people come to worship services, accept Jesus as their personal Savior with a smile, walk back out and continue on with their lives. They break with very few of their former lives and often months later the same old story is repeated.

What could have been John’s secret?! It was not the acrid or the wild honey that was his food that caused the power of God to work in him! He wore leather belt and camel-hair clothes, but that could not play a decisive role either! Could he have performed miracles? But then what was his miracle?! We do not read of any miracles or bodily healings performed by him. The blind did not see, the lame did not walk. So, what was that?! What was what?! – This man was **preaching about sins**. Yes, but it’s not very popular and especially not these days. A preacher once asked me, “Tell me, Erlo, what do you preach about? If I talk about sins, for example, during the service, calling them by their proper names, the listeners immediately feel uncomfortable and start squirming in their chairs. Maybe I’m a stupid man for trying to talk about sins...”

But, dear friends, wasn’t that why Jesus came, to rebuke us for our sins? That is why He was called Jesus, that is, the Savior, because He had to point out to His people their sins and their lawlessness! John the Baptist, who was sent to prepare the way of the Lord, did just that. He spoke directly and uncompromisingly about sin, calling for repentance and cleansing. But why were people drawn to such preaching in those days, but now they avoid it? This was a mystery to me that I could not solve. “Lord,” I pleaded, “grant me also the ability that John had!” But in spite of my prayers, the same thing happened in the next evangelisation hundreds came, many Bibles were sold, but by the end there were only a small number of people who wanted to follow the Lord.

And so, while I was busy with these thoughts, I was suddenly reminded of a story I had once experienced. In 1956 I was in the south-west of Africa, in Namibia. It's a very dry country. There is no gold in it, but the people of Namibia say that this is not so important to them, because if they had water, it would be more valuable to them than gold. One day we visited a farmer there who offered to show us something. At a distance of a few meters from his house there was a borehole and a pump for taking water. Taking a cup, the farmer pumped some water into it and, holding it out to me, offered me a taste. I took a sip but could not swallow it and spat it out, after the farmer told us his story.

They did not need to drill deep to get this water, and there was plenty of water. But their joy was premature. It turned out that the water contained so many different salts and other chemicals that spoilt the taste of the water that it was completely undrinkable. So, they decided to use it to wash their laundry. How disappointed they were when after the first wash all the clothes began to spread. In an attempt to comfort his wife, the farmer suggested that she water flowers and vegetables in the garden. After two weeks, all the flowers and vegetables began to wilt and die. Then they realised that this water was not good for anything at all, because everything is destroyed where it goes.

As soon as the farmer finished his story, the thought flashed through my mind like lightning, "Hear this, Erlo! It is the same as your preaching the Word of God! The more you preach, the more souls you kill! That's why less and less people come to the meetings. You are preaching death to people!"

Dear friends! The consciousness of it kept me awake, devouring my soul like a cancer. I could not forget it. "O Lord!" Again and again I repeated, "So, the more I talk, the more harm I do to You?" This is exactly what happens to many Christians. Oh, if they would only keep silent! It would be better for the Kingdom of God! Today it suffers not from a lack of preaching the Word of God, but from an excess of it. Christians now speak too much, and through

this the name of God is neglected. It would be better if they did not talk about the Word of God, but rather lived by the Word of God!

So, after twelve years of missionary and evangelistic service, I felt that I could no longer continue to live and preach in this way. I realised that all these years had been nothing but walking in a spiritually barren wilderness. “Erlo,” I asked myself mentally, “what have been the fruits of your labor during these twelve years? Do you know even twelve people who, having repented through you, would have a heart on fire for the Lord? Even one soul in a whole year!!! No,” I confessed to myself, “I cannot show them! So, do I really have to keep doing this pointless service?! No! Absolutely not! Wasting my life like this?! For what?! Other people are making money, enjoying their lives. Why can’t I have that? Why do I have to go through this life as a poor preacher and frustrated missionary, preaching something and convincing others of something that is theoretically true, but in practice does not function?! If God is the same today as He was before, and if His Word has not changed, then why do things look different in our Christian life?!” I asked, but got no answer, I searched, but found no way out. I was close to despair...

Chapter 4

The word becomes alive

In 1966 I came to Mapumulo, a small town one hundred and twenty kilometers north of Durban. Here I had once held my evangelistic meetings in 1963, during which hundreds of people had been brought to the Lord. Now there was only a small congregation of twenty or thirty people left.

When I came to worship in this small assembly, I had to become a peacemaker first of all. Oh, how these people quarrelled, sometimes tearing each other's hair out! One had something against the other, the other could not forgive the first. They could not understand each other. Seeing all this, I realised that God could not be among us until His children put their lives and their relationships in order. For God needs his conduits, and we Christians must be them. Our problem in this age is not the millions of pagans who do not know God, but the believers who are standing in the way of the Lord. Terrible as it may seem, it is often the Christians who do more damage to the work of God than the ungodly. These are the ones about whom the third chapter of the Revelation of John the Evangelist says, "...you are neither cold nor hot."

One day, when we were gathered together as usual, I said to everyone, "You know, friends, I am thinking more and more about what I said in 1951 when the Lord first called me to labour in His field. I said then that I would agree to become a preacher, but on one condition – that I would not engage in playing church. Today, looking back over the past twelve years of missionary service, I have to admit that everything I have had is nothing but a game. I feel spiritually bankrupt and can no longer work as I used to. Look at the dance floor," I continued, "When the orchestra comes, there are two hundred or more people there, while we have twenty or thirty at prayer and study of the Word. Look at football! During a game you can count eight hundred or nine hundred fans, but we have a maximum of one hundred people at our meetings. If the Lord is still the same today, if the Holy Spirit

has not changed, and if the Bible is indeed the Word of the Living God, how can we understand all this! If we look at the non-Christian creeds and ideologies that now possess the minds and hearts of people, they are moving forward in their continuous progress, while Christianity is going downhill. According to statistics, 38% of mankind belonged to Christianity in 1945, and this number is expected to drop to 10% or even lower by the year two thousand. It is a sad fact, but it is true! At no time in the existence of the earth have there been as many pagans as there are today, and if things continue like this, we Christians will soon disappear!”

Then, turning to the silent and attentive Christians, I asked them, if they would agree to meet every day at seven o'clock in the morning and six o'clock in the evening to study the Bible, pray, and seek the face of the Lord with all their hearts. “Who knows,” I said, “God may have mercy on us and come near to us and begin His work among us.” After listening to me, they all agreed. So this little group of twenty or thirty people began to get together regularly every morning and every evening, and from that time our conversations took on a completely different character.

One Word that particularly puzzled us was in John 7:38, “Whoever believes in me, **as Scripture has said**, rivers of living water will flow from within them.” These were the words that Jesus cried out on the last day of the great Jewish feast. At the beginning of the seventh chapter of John’s Gospel we read that Jesus did not want to go into Judea, but went into Galilee because the Jews were seeking to kill Him. When the feast of the Jews was approaching, Jesus’ brothers said to Him, “Leave Galilee and go to Judea, so that your disciples there may see the works you do. No one who wants to become a public figure acts in secret. Since you are doing these things, show yourself to the world.” (John 7:3-4).

Answering to his brothers, who at that time did not believe in Him, Jesus said something special, “My time is not yet here; for you any time will do.” (John 7:6). There is a deep meaning in these words of our Saviour. He is telling

us that a person who does not have true faith in Jesus can do whatever he wants, whenever he wants, in other words, he can dance to his own tune. Jesus could not do that. He was so dependent on His Heavenly Father who sent Him that He could only do what He wanted Him to do and say what His Father said.

By this the Lord teaches us, His followers, that we too can do nothing without Him. Of course, we can do what we want to do and when we want to do it. But it will be done according to our will, and therefore it will not stand. Besides, anything we do on our own is valueless in the sight of God. But just as Jesus was dependent on the Father, so we must be dependent on Him and be one with Him. This truth, friends, we need to know deeply.

John chapter 7 goes on to tell us that after Jesus' brothers had gone to the feast, He also went, not openly, but secretly. It was a feast where Jesus had the opportunity to speak to the people, but He did not do so. When the last day of the feast came, Jesus could not keep silent any longer and cried out with a loud voice, "Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, **as Scripture has said**, rivers of living water will flow from within them." (John 7:37-38). Now, even though He was well aware of their secret plans to kill Him, Jesus stood in front of the people so that they could see Him. He did not just speak calmly, but cried out loudly.

It's interesting that the word "exclaimed" (Greek word "krazo"³) is also used in Scripture where it tells how Jesus, when crucified on the cross, "Having cried out with a loud voice, gave up the spirit" for the last time. (Mark 15:37). Therefore, the words He spoke to the people on the last day of the feast had something in them that would break and tear His heart. Christ did not think about what it would cost him when He spoke them. The main thing was that those who believed in Him should hear and understand the significance of what He was telling them.

³ Greek word, denoting a scream or loud cry bursting out in a moment of sorrow, distress, fear, need.

Dear friends, what was so important for the Christians of that time to hear is also important for us today. So, let's try to get to the heart of the meaning of these words so that we can understand what Jesus wanted to say to those who believe in Him.

Let us begin with the first phrase, "He who is thirsty, come to me and drink!" So, he who has no thirst, who is fed and satisfied with himself, let him remain in what he is in. With such a person the Lord can do nothing. Such a one is only a burden to Him. But he who is spiritually hungry and thirsty cannot be satisfied with anything other than true bread and true water, which he seeks until he finds, whatever it costs him, even at the cost of freedom.

Then Jesus said, "Whoever believes in me, **as Scripture has said**, rivers of living water will flow from within them." Note that we are not talking here about drops, but about rivers, about great streams, not ordinary water, but living water. Where such water enters, new life begins. And if one river can turn a desert into a blooming garden, how much more can many such rivers do!

We all know that flowing water is something that cannot be held. And if a dam or other obstacle is erected in the way of the water flow, the water, continuously accumulating, will acquire even greater force, which will either destroy this obstacle in some weak place, or, having risen in its level up to its top, will flow through it, overflowing wider and wider.

This means that if we believe in Jesus **exactly as the Scripture says**, then the power and life of the Holy Spirit will flow out of us in a mighty living stream that neither the spirit of this world, nor atheism, nor anything else will be able to resist. The more Satan opposes us, the greater will be the power of these waters. Notice also, friends, that Scripture does not say that these streams must flow from the belly of a pastor, preacher, or other minister. These words are addressed to everyone who believes in the Lord. And if you believe in Him, then this applies to you too!

In that memorable year of 1966, as we read and meditated on this passage of scripture, we asked ourselves, is this the case with us? We looked for these streams in our own lives, but we did not find them. But if we believe in Jesus, there is no need to tell others, because the streams of living water flowing out of us will bear witness to it.

“Tell me, how many of you believe in Jesus?” I asked the audience a very simple question, “I do,” each one replied. “Good!” I continued. “But then, according to Scripture, rivers of living water must flow from our womb! And is that the case with us?” No, it wasn’t in our lives. But why?

So, that was the first problem we immediately faced then. Even though we believed in Jesus, we didn’t have these streams of living waters that the Word says should flow out of us. What’s the matter? Could it be that there is something wrong with our faith in Jesus itself? Or is all our faith just an appearance, a lie and self-deception! But is it really true?! After all, we were absolutely convinced that we believed in Him! Then is there something wrong with what Scripture says about the streams of living waters? There must be some reason for this discrepancy!

And then it hit us like a flash, “**...as the Scripture says.**” Therefore, if we pervert Scripture, we are guilty! In the last chapter of Revelation it says, “...If anyone adds anything to them, God will add to that person the plagues described in this scroll. And if anyone takes words away from this scroll of prophecy, God will take away from that person any share in the tree of life and in the Holy City, which are described in this scroll.” (Revelation. 22:18-19). Shaken, we prayed, “Lord, we are guilty if we have really perverted Your Word. But Lord! You know we did it unknowingly! It’s not like we wished it!”

On further reflection, we have come to the conclusion that it is these words “as the Scripture says” that are crucial. It is important that we be obedient to what Scripture says, and that we believe not just as we used to believe or were taught to believe from childhood, but that our faith be exactly as Scripture says. After all, if Jesus drew people’s

attention to Scripture in those days, basing their faith in Him on it, then we should all the more follow it!

But how and what does Scripture say? That was the question we wanted to find the answer to. So our Bible study and Scripture study began anew.

Before proceeding, I told the audience that we would conduct our study of the Word of God in such a way that, while accepting it with childlike faith, we would not act like ignorant children who, having broken the pie, try to get only the cream out of it for this happens, unfortunately, in some religions and Christian denominations that pick and choose from the Bible and preach mostly only what they like. Such a highlight, for example, could be the theme of God's grace and God's love.

No, we decided to stand as it is, before the light of Scripture, without excuses or embellishment, looking the truth straight in the eye. Putting aside our minds, we were willing to accept it as the Word of God and to let that Word speak to us, whether or not it agreed with our perceptions, concepts, and feelings. In addition, we agreed to take in the whole book when studying, without jumping from one place to another, so that we could have a clear and complete picture of what we were reading.

Our text was the Acts of the Apostles. I don't know how or why it happened, but we started with this book. As soon as we began reading, the Holy Spirit began to speak to our hearts, humbling and breaking them. Immediately from the first verses the Word of God struck us, and the more we read, the more and deeper it touched us. Line by line we traced the lives of Christ's disciples.

Shortly before His ascension, Jesus gathered them together and commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to remain there until the Holy Spirit came upon them. In response to this, the disciples asked their Master if the time had not now come for him to restore the kingdom to Israel. Answering them, the Lord said, "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you;

and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” (Acts 1:7-8).

This shows that Christ’s disciples were preoccupied with something that should not concern them. But Jesus stopped them and directed their attention to what should be most important to them, to be empowered by the Holy Spirit to be His witnesses.

Dear friends, with this passage of Scripture the Lord pointed out to us the possibility of the children of God being preoccupied with something that is not only unimportant, but also distracts them from what is important, just as the disciples of Christ were preoccupied with calculating the time of the beginning of the restoration of the kingdom of Israel. When Jesus noticed this, he stopped his followers, saying that it was not their business to determine times and dates.

Unfortunately, Christians very often deal with the same problems of setting hours and times. The Lord said, “I have come to bring fire on the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled!” (Luke 12:49). But we, the disciples of Christ today, talk about anything and are busy with many others, while the heart of the Lord Jesus weeps and breaks.

So, the Lord forbade His disciples to leave Jerusalem, because that was where the Holy Spirit was to come upon them. Jerusalem was a den of robbers in those days! The most terrible thing that had ever been committed took place in that city. The Anointed One of God was crucified there, and the disciples had to hide in closed houses. Jesus did not allow them to leave, but commanded them to stay where they were.

Dear friends, this was the first and very important lesson for us. We are human beings like them, and they were like us. And we humans tend to run away from difficulties, don’t we? Because when things get so hard that we can’t bear it anymore, we try to leave the place as soon as possible. It is not uncommon for us to hear from guests who come to our mission station, “Oh, how nice it is here! It is not like ours! If I could stay here all the time like you, then of course I would also be on fire for the Lord!”

Modern Christians often justify their unfaithful lives by saying they have difficult family circumstances or an impossible husband who is never satisfied. The husband thinks the wife has a much easier life. Parents think the children have no worries, and the children think the parents are happy. That's the way everyone thinks. A wife is able to leave her husband, saying that it is impossible to live with such an egoist, and the husband leaves the family, convinced that he simply can no longer be under the same roof with such a grumpy wife. One says that he wants to run away from this house. Another is looking for a new place to live because he can no longer stay in his local church.

But you know, if I am useless where I am, I will not be useful anywhere else either. The Zulu say, "If I am a rotten potato, I will not become healthy by getting into a bag of good potatoes. On the opposite, other potatoes will start to spoil from me, until at last the whole sack rots". If my own life is unclean and wrong, if my Christianity is rotten, I will rot and make everything unclean wherever I go. If I am good for nothing in my "Jerusalem," I am equally unfit for anything else. Is this not why, knowing this human weakness, Jesus commanded His disciples not to depart from Jerusalem. He said that when the Holy Spirit came upon them, they would be empowered.

There are many Christians who are convinced that they have the Holy Spirit, yet they have no power. I have met people of faith who claim to be baptised with the Holy Spirit, but sadly they too often have no power. Even if they are right, but then how do we tie this together and how do we explain the baptism with the Holy Spirit without having power? For the proof that a person is filled with the Holy Spirit is the presence of the indwelling power of that Spirit. The eighth verse of the first chapter of the Book of Acts says, "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you..." So, according to the Lord Himself, **the power of the Holy Spirit** is the evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Power is Greek for "dynamos." The meaning and significance of this word is well reflected in the familiar word

“dynamite.” You know, of course, that the explosive power of dynamite is not used in sand and soft soil, but in rocks and stony places. Dynamite is used where everything else is ineffective. The power of the Holy Spirit works in the same way. It manifests itself where it is most difficult or unbearable. Where it is darkest and where the ground is hardest, it is most effective, powerful and efficient. This was the power Jesus promised His disciples to use in Jerusalem, where the ground was hard as granite. It was there that this “dynamite” was needed, capable of blowing up any rock.

So, power! But a power for what??? Jesus said to His disciples, “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” Notice that Christ then told His disciples that they would receive power not to heal the sick or to work miracles, which is considered by modern Christians to be the most valuable gift and the greatest manifestation of the power of the Holy Spirit. No, through the mouth of Jesus, the Word of God tells us, “You will **receive power to be my witnesses.**” This means that the one who receives the power of the Holy Spirit becomes a true witness for Christ.

Witness – (Greek: martius) literally means “martyr”. You know that a martyr is a person who gives his life for Christ. Therefore, the power of the Holy Spirit makes us capable of being witnesses for Christ, that is, martyrs. It is the power to be faithful and uncompromising to the end, the power not to look back but to go forward, the power to look death in the eye and enter into it as the first martyr Stephen did. When stones flew at him, his face shone like the face of an angel, and he saw the sky open.

What happens to us, friends, when stones are thrown at us? When people say unfair, hurtful words to us? When they hit us where it hurts the most? What do we look like then?! Does our face shine like the face of an angel? Do we see the sky open? Or does it close and hell open for us? But this is what a man filled with the Holy Spirit looked like! A man of faith! A follower of Christ, kneeling on his knees, with

stones flying at him, his face shining like the face of an angel of God, and as he was dying he said, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them.” (Acts 7:60).

Yes, this is truly a power that can only be given from above! A husband who is able to go all the way to his end, to death! A child of God, who does not change his “colouring” like a chameleon, who, depending on the external environment, looks one way or another, who “climbs” spiritually upwards, then “falls” downwards, and so again upwards or downwards.

So, the power of the Holy Spirit is the power that enables us to become a martyr for Christ. When I came to this point, I thought that we cannot be martyrs here in South Africa, and that in order to become martyrs we have to go to countries where Christians are persecuted. But then the words of the Apostle Paul suddenly came to my mind, “In your struggle against sin, you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood.” That is, to put it another way, “You have not yet struggled with sin unto death” (Hebrews 12:4).

Therefore, a person who has the power of the Holy Spirit has the ability to resist sin by fighting to the point of bloodshed. Only such a Christian becomes a true witness of Jesus Christ, which in the practice of life is expressed in the following, “I would rather die than fornicate with another woman”; “I would rather die than steal”; “I would rather die and let my blood flow than be a hypocrite and lie!”

Do you see what that means?! Sin is a greater danger to us than persecution for our faith in Christ. In fact, persecution is sometimes even good for Christians. They often make a person burn more for Christ! In persecution one is more likely to discover whether he is a true Christian or a false Christian. We may sit in meetings with hypocrites and bury them as good Christians, but how horrified we will be when we see them one day in hell! And maybe we’ll be there with them. And this will certainly happen if we do not learn to distinguish between Africans and a race of white people! It is not the colour of our skin, but the colour of our heart that matters to God!

Our hearts should be broken and weeping at the realisation of this! Are we not today as the Word of God speaks of the people of the end times, "But mark this, There will be terrible times in the last days. People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God having a form of godliness but denying its power..." (2 Timothy 3:1-5).

Why do you think that is? Because of fornication and adultery?! Yes, that's what we think! Yet the Bible says that the hard times will come because people will have the appearance of godliness and call themselves Christians, but will deny His power! This is truly the worst thing imaginable! When we realised this, we were so deeply shaken that we asked ourselves, what does this look like for us and what condition are we in? We were broken and wept, realising our weakness and spiritual impotence.

After Jesus ascended into heaven, the disciples came back and prayed together. Mary, Jesus' mother, and his brothers were with them. Scripture says that they were all unanimous in their prayer. It was this unanimity that was special to us! It was not yet the day of Pentecost, and the Holy Spirit had not yet been sent to earth. But the Cross of Jesus Christ and His Resurrection were enough to unite these people into one, so that they could be one in prayer with one soul.

Do you realise, friends, how deeply the cross of Jesus Christ on Golgotha was able to penetrate into the lives of these people! Some Christians today say that they cannot be unanimous and of one mind because they are not yet filled with the Holy Spirit. But this is nonsense, because the cross of our Saviour alone is already enough for this! The cross of Golgotha alone should be enough to remove enmity, quarrels, strife and discord from the lives of God's children forever! For in those days the cross of Golgotha alone had such great significance that even the brothers of Jesus Christ, who had

not believed in Him before, finally believed and were with His disciples! All this touched our hearts deeply and with tears we said, “Lord Jesus! Grant that Your Cross may have the same significance in our lives!”

As we continued our reading of the Book of Acts, we traced the subsequent life of Christ’s disciples. When on the day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit was poured out on the apostles and other Christians, the people who had gathered were amazed when they heard them speaking in different languages and dialects. Some of them scoffed, thinking that they had drunk sweet wine. The apostle Peter refuted this and explained that what had happened was exactly what the prophet Joel had prophesied, “In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people...” (Acts 2:17-21).

So, if the time described, which was two thousand years ago, is called by God the last days, how much more does it apply to our time! If this prophetic word was so important to the Christians of that time, how much more important it should be to you and me today! If the lives of the Christians who lived in time two thousand years from the second coming of Christ looked like this as we read it, then what should our lives be like!

I am sure, friends, that if there is any difference between the first Christians and us today, it can only be that we must burn more for God than they did! Please, do not ask me if I myself believe that this is possible! Yes, I believe it, and I believe it with all my heart! If the word of Christ’s second coming is not a deception, but a great truth, then the knowledge of it should so inflame our love for God and so ignite us in His service that our burning will be even greater than that of the forefathers of our faith! Only in greater burning can there be a difference between them and us! Only in that and nothing else!

Then we read that when the promise was fulfilled and the disciples received the power of the Holy Spirit, three thousand people repented on the first day. Have you ever tried to count how many different nations and languages were there? Think of it! Thousands of people, every day

unanimously coming together with one spirit, one mind and one heart! How is that possible?! People with different languages, from different parts of the world, are together in thousands and have the same thoughts! Do you know the properties of the soul? Do you realise what it means when a large gathering of people have one heart? It is not just outwardly and not because they belong to the same church or congregation! No, it is a unity that comes from the depths of the soul. For me, this was the greatest miracle of all!

It used to be like this. If a question is asked, everyone will have different opinions about it. So we were confronted with all kinds of opinions. And there were only 20-30 of us. I remember one of those gathered said at the time, "How good it is that I don't have to see that sister all the time, because if I had to communicate with her every day, I would have had a neurosis a long time ago!" So, you see, even Christians can have neurosis from each other. Or do you think there was not a single woman among those three thousand? Oh, no! Men and women, young and old, gathered in the temple every day in perfect unanimity and with one heart. We do not read a word about divisions, nor do we find any mention of disputes or disagreements.

Look closely at these people, friends, and you will realise that for them Jesus was not only a hobby, not only an occasion for bread breaking, or an hour and a half, or even a half-hour church service (*as I have seen in Germany*). Alas, such strictly set regulations of church service times have become no longer uncommon in modern Christianity. Once, when I was earnestly warned before a meeting not to prolong my preaching for more than half an hour, I could not understand it. "Tell me, what's happened? Why are people in such a hurry to get home? Or is there supposed to be something else after the meeting?" I asked in surprise. "No," I heard back, "there won't be anything. It's just people rushing home. After all, everyone has their own things to do."

Yes, dead Christians can do that. Children of God can be dead too. Although they often spend hours in front of the

television. Today's Christians have plenty of time for newspapers, magazines, and worldly books that do not honour the Lord. But the impression of the Christians of that time is quite different. For them Christ was their life. Everything else was secondary or even extraneous, because those who had their own property – houses, estates, lands – selling everything, brought the price received and laid it at the feet of the apostles. So no one called anything his own, but they had everything in common, and no one lacked anything. What a church! Oh, what a church it was!

Then we understood why the place was shaken when those Christians prayed! We pray, but the place shakes us! Our children shake us! Some husbands are swayed by their wives! The souls of others are swayed by their relatives! Yes, there are many things that can sway us! But when those Christians prayed, then the place was shaken. Then their prayer made all Jerusalem shake and turn over!

We modern Christians often live under fear! We are pre-occupied with thoughts of what will happen to our children? What will happen to us? What will the future bring? However, it is quite understandable why such questions occupy the life of the relaxed, powerless Christian, who from terror cannot sleep if the door is not locked, and who from all his fears and anxieties is sometimes close to insanity. No, my dears! This is not the Spirit of God! Such Christians and such a church cannot shake the world, much less the gates of hell!

Therefore, the more we read, the more our hearts were broken and melted. Our fellowship was no longer hours of study of the Word and prayer meetings, but hours of weeping and heartfelt crying to God.

When we compared ourselves with the church of that day, we were ready to fall to the ground in shame for our Christianity. I pleaded with the Lord that on the day of judgement He would not let us stand with that church, and that I myself would not have to stand with the Apostle Paul, who could have said to me, "Erlo, tell me about your missionary work, then I'll tell you about my missionary work." Or that Peter would not say to me, "Show me the

church where you were pastor, and I will show you the church where I was pastor.”

“O Lord!” I said, conscious of my nothingness, “Do I even have the right to call myself a Christian? Do we still have the right to be called the church of Christ?”

As we continued reading, we came to the fifth chapter of the Book of Acts, from which we realised that while God is at work, Satan is not slumbering either, doing his best to hinder the work of God. When Ananias saw what was happening, he felt that he should also sell his land. The husband and wife agreed to keep some of the sale price, and Ananias came and laid the rest at the apostles’ feet.

Peter, a man filled with the Holy Spirit, who is the Spirit of truth, immediately sensed that something was wrong. He immediately asked Ananias if this was the price he had sold his property for, and if it was all the money he had received, to which Ananias answered in the affirmative without fear. Then Peter, turning to him again, said, “Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land? Didn’t it belong to you before it was sold? And after it was sold, wasn’t the money at your disposal? What made you think of doing such a thing? You have not lied just to human beings but to God.” (Acts 5:3-4). And when Ananias had heard these words, he fell down breathlessly, and the young men carried him away, and buried him.

Not knowing what had happened, Ananias’ wife Sapphira came to the same place three hours later. When Peter saw her, he immediately asked her, “Tell me, whether you sold the land for so much?” What could she do? She could not let her husband down! She wanted to be faithful to him!

You will agree that the problem of our time is that couples are often not united, that there are many disputes, quarrels and disagreements among them, which was not the case in the first church. There the couples were also unanimous. This wife was united with her husband, but this unity was not blessed.

When Sapphira said her, “Yes,” Peter said, “How could you conspire to test the Spirit of the Lord? Listen! The feet of the men who buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out also.” (Acts 5:1-10.) At these words the woman fell dead and was buried beside her husband.

In 1966, as we read this story, we asked ourselves, would any of us wish to become a member of such a congregation? Isn’t it true that such a step would have been quite risky? After all, this was a community where sin was not tolerated, where lying and unfaithfulness were condemned without delay and punished without compassion. What would have happened to us in it? What would become of our sins and little sins that are often not so little. “Well...” upon reflection we said, “Maybe it’s even good that we don’t have such churches among us.”

I wondered how I would behave if Ananias were my brother or Sapphira my sister. How would I feel? What would I do if I found out what had happened to them? Perhaps I really should say, “Thank God I didn’t live at that time!” Who knows, maybe after such an incident, I would consider it my calling to go around to churches and warn others to beware of these “evil” people! “Brothers and sisters!” I would probably say to everyone, “Is this love?! Think to yourself, can God act like that?! No, of course not! So be careful and beware of them, for it is not the Spirit of God that works in them...!”

Or, for example, if I or you were in Peter’s shoes. What would you say if Ananias brought you the money? How would we react? Perhaps we would have hugged and even kissed Ananias for it, saying, “Oh, dear brother! God bless you! At the next membership meeting, I will propose that you be elected deacon or even congregational leader, because we really need people like you!” (*Isn’t that right, friends? After all, we do need people who bring money to the church!*).

But Peter said no such thing. Men filled with the Spirit of God said differently, “Let these men go to the grave rather than live and be in church with their sin!” Do you see what the first church of Jesus Christ looked like?! It had such a

holiness of God that sin was punished with nothing less than death! Then, of course, one can understand why this church was able to overturn the whole world and shake not only the earth, but also the foundations of hell! And thank God that this church did not become a laughingstock to the world, as it often, unfortunately, happens in our time.

Dear friends! Having dealt with this passage of Scripture, we did not go any further, but went back to the third chapter of Acts to follow Peter and John as they went into the temple. There was a man who had been lame from his mother's womb and was sitting at the entrance to the temple asking for alms that day. The two Apostles looked at him attentively, and then Peter said, "Look at us! ...Silver or gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk." (Acts 3:6). With these words, he took the lame man's hand and picked him up. At the same moment, a miracle happened in front of everyone.

At this point in Scripture we paused to look at this case more closely, from the first point to the last. The first thing Peter and John did was to look carefully into the eyes of the sick man. I must say that Peter's behaviour surprised me very much. "Peter!" I mentally addressed him and reasoned. "How could you do such a thing! Have you forgotten that only a few days ago you committed the most horrible act, shamefully denying Christ? And now, unashamedly, you look people in the eye with calmness!" And Peter, as if answering, spoke to my heart, "Yes, Erlo. I know this fact better than you do, because I have experienced it myself. Yes, I did not resist, and my denial was terrible! But when I saw the eyes of our Master turned towards me, my heart was broken, and I wept bitterly. In great remorse I turned to Jesus, asking for His forgiveness, and He forgave my sin and forgot it. So I was able to look people in the eye again in peace. Thank God that I no longer have to walk through the valley of weeping and the shadow of death!"

Oh dear friends, this is the good news of the gospel! Jesus has forgiveness! Even if our sin is as scarlet, it will

still become whiter than snow. And let me tell you, great sinners have one great advantage – they love Christ more! The Pharisee who invited Jesus to his house for dinner saw a prostitute who washed Christ's feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. This "righteous man" thought that the Lord was unaware of the disgraceful woman at his feet. Christ, however, knew the man's thoughts, and turning to him, said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I came into your house. You did not give me any water for my feet, but she wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. You did not give me a kiss, but this woman, from the time I entered, has not stopped kissing my feet. You did not put oil on my head, but she has poured perfume on my feet. Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven – as her great love has shown. But whoever has been forgiven little loves little." (Luke 7:44-47).

We must recognise that these words of Jesus are still valid today. People who have sinned greatly and terribly in their lives have a great advantage over us "righteous" people, they are able to love the Lord much more. There is something marvellous in this! The more thorough and deep the work of God, the more the Holy Spirit convicts us of our sins – the deeper our brokenness and the greater our love for the Lord. Some of us are unable to love Jesus deeply because we have never really recognised our lawlessness or felt our sinfulness. This is the reason why we do not truly love the Lord.

This was the first important point we then considered and understood. Next Peter says to the lame man, "Look **at us**." These words were unbelievable to me because they went completely against all the teachings and my theology. In Bible school we were taught that when we witness to others, Jesus should always be the centre of every phrase. So I could not understand how Peter, a man filled with the Holy Spirit, could make such a big mistake. You can't say that! You should have said, "Look at Jesus! Look at the Cross of Golgotha! Look at the Word of God and at God!" For no man, no righteous man, can dare to say, "Look at me," or "Look at us," because the eyes of all men must be

fixed only on Jesus and in no case on man. "Oh Lord!" I thought, "Did You not make a mistake in entrusting Peter with the keys of the kingdom of heaven? How could You put Your trust in such a man!!?"

Perplexed about this, we turned again to the Word of God and read this in the Second Corinthians in chapter 3, verse 3, "...you are a letter from Christ, the result of our ministry, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God."

So, that's what this is all about! So, according to the Scriptures, Peter and John were the exact letter that God wrote by His Holy Spirit. That is why they could say to the lame man, "Look at us," and I am absolutely certain that when the cripple looked at them, he saw in them not only Peter and John, but the image of Jesus Christ. In the eyes of these men he saw the glory of our Lord and the glory of the Cross. Otherwise he would have reacted to Peter's words differently than he did. He could have said, "Peter, how can you say that! Don't you know that from my mother's womb I was lame! Don't mock me!" But his reaction was different, and when Peter took him by the hand, he immediately jumped up. Such is the power of our Saviour!

What can we say, these men of God were indeed the letter of Christ! Then we learnt that we have no right to witness to others about God and preach the gospel before we can say to people "look at us". If we are not a worthy example, then we have no right to open our mouths. I want to say it again. We have no right to tell someone about the Lord or to share our testimony before we can say to that person, "Look at me," because otherwise we will only harm the work of God and His kingdom. By not reflecting the image of Jesus in ourselves and our lives, we are what Christ once said the Pharisees were, "So, you must be careful to do everything they tell you. But do not do what they do, for they do not practice what they preach. They tie up heavy, cumbersome loads and put them on other people's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to lift a finger to move them." (Matthew 23:3-4). Even today, he is a modern

Pharisee who preaches truth to others, but he himself does not live according to it.

Peter and John were true witnesses for the Lord! What does that look like for us, friends? Are we the letter of Christ today? The same one that can be “recognised and read by all men?” (2 Corinthians 3:2). Oh how unfortunate it is that believing people today do not read the Bible much. Some Christians say they don’t understand it. They understand the newspaper better! And they are really more busy with the newspaper than with the Scriptures, even they are called children of God. How such a combination is possible, I don’t know. But there is something that even the illiterate in Africa can read. And do you know what it is? They read us Christians and pointing their fingers, they say, “Look at this man! He calls himself a Christian, but listen to the way he swears and quarrels. Look how he argues and gets angry!” Yes... What do you say to that if we really are not the message of Christ and our lives do not reflect the true gospel.

Once a married couple from Germany came to our mission. After they had been here for a while, they said, “Oh, it is so hard for us in our country! Our neighbours do not want to hear anything about the gospel! It is much easier for you and the pagans. Here in Africa you can preach and tell people about God. We can’t do it in our own town or even in our own homes!

When we visited these people on a missionary trip to Germany, they told us something else about their “horrible” neighbours who lived one floor above them. On one occasion they had lowered the microphone of their tape recorder to the bedroom window of the Christians and recorded everything that was going on between the husband and wife and their son, and then presented the tape to them as a gift with their best wishes. When the surprised Christians, burning with curiosity, switched on the tape, they heard them arguing and quarrelling among themselves in their bedroom, and the insolent response of their disobedient child. At the end of their story these Christians concluded indignantly. You see now what terrible, unscrupulous neighbours we

have, and people in Germany in general, if they are capable of such things!

“Thank you very much,” I thanked them for the story, “Now, I can understand why these people don’t want to know anything about the Gospel. If I were your neighbour, I probably wouldn’t want anything to do with Christianity or the God of such Christians either. I would similarly not want to hear about such a gospel that makes cats and dogs out of people!”

You see, friends, our lives must be consistent with the gospel we preach! That’s the secret. What does it look like for us? Let’s ask ourselves, “Do I see the image of Jesus in me? Am I His likeness? Do my wife and our children see Jesus in me?”

A world-famous preacher, who was invited everywhere, once took his wife with him on a trip. He had such an amazing oratorical talent that listening to his preaching was a great pleasure and delight to the listeners. He was able to preach in a way that few others are able to do! On this trip, while he was in a church, two honoured women from the congregation sat next to his wife in the front row. After this minister’s preaching, everyone sat for a long time in rapt attention, amazed at the gift of his talent, the precision and beauty of his speech. No one dared to break the reverent silence. The preaching was so stunningly powerful and faithful that the only word that could be said at the end of it was “Amen”. Finally, one of the ladies accompanying the man’s wife could not resist whispering in her ear, “What a happiness it must be to be the wife of such a preacher!” then she replied, “Ah! You don’t know what he’s like at home!”

So, dear friends, if our life cannot make a proper impression on our wife and our own children, how much less is it able to influence the devil and his powers of hell! Then we will be nothing but a laughing stock to the world. The Lord can do nothing with such people, but the devil can! Wouldn’t it be better to start sweeping at our own doorstep before we judge and criticise others?

But let's return to the story of John and Peter. After first saying to the lame man, "Look at us," Peter, continuing, said, "Silver or gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you." (Acts 3:6). As far as we know, John did not have the gift of healing. Of course, this does not mean that he did not have the power of the Holy Spirit or that he is not an empowered apostle. Certainly, he had the authority and such power that we should be thankful that he is no longer alive today, or we would be very uncomfortable if he were our preacher today. That's what he used to say, "The one who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work. No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God's seed remains in them; they cannot go on sinning, because they have been born of God." (1 John 3:8-9). So, based on these words, one can determine without any problem who is truly born again and who is not.

What should we say now, having examined ourselves in the light of these words of Scripture? Isn't it worth exclaiming, "Ah John, it is good that you are already dead, because the Christians of the twentieth century cannot agree with you. You, John, are going too far! Such a thing is simply impossible in our day!"

However, John, being also a man like us, simply and naturally had the power of God, having experienced it to such an extent that he was unable to understand how a man, when born again, could continue to live in sin. The Bible teaches us, "If you have stolen, do not steal again. He who has lied, let him lie no more. Whoever has committed adultery, never do it again, and so on." The end of sin! After all, the Lord – the same Lord who was crucified for us, once said, "Go and sin no more!" You see, friends, what was the language used by Christ and the first Christians who were filled with the power of the Holy Spirit! Surely, then, we can understand why they had the authority given to them from above and were not ashamed to say to those around them, "Look at us."

The apostle Peter could calmly say to a blind man, "I have no silver or gold..." Can we remain calm when our

wallet is empty? After all, it often happens to us in our lives. If things are going well, then we smile and our face glows with contentment and joy. Then we can say to someone else, "Look at us." But if things are going badly, if we are at a financial dead end and we have to really say, "We have no silver and gold?" Do we not then worry, thinking about what to do now and how to go on living? Peter, even though he had no money, could still calmly say, "Though I have no silver and gold, look at me! I give you what I have!"

I remember while reading these words, I told my small group of Christians a story that took place in a large Catholic church where almost two thousand people were gathered. Not only did they have offering boxes there, but they also had a large table by the door. After the service, when everyone had left, the table was literally full of money, that is, figuratively speaking, full of, "gold and silver." As the old priest and his young assistant were collecting and counting the offerings, the old one said to the young one, "Look at this, young man! Today Peter could not have said that he had no silver and gold..." – "Yes," replied the young minister thoughtfully. "Only, unfortunately, he cannot also say, 'In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, rise up and walk!'"

"You see," I continued, addressing the crowd, "How the picture has changed in our day. What the first Christians once had, we have now lost, and what they did not have, we have found and own. And this 'something' is very important in our lives, isn't it? Sometimes it even plays a decisive role in deciding the question of whether or not to fulfil the will of God. It is even possible that in this matter we remind ourselves of Judas Iscariot..."

Before I could finish this sentence, something unexpected happened. Suddenly, in the middle of the meeting, a young girl with tears running down her cheeks stood up and, turning to me, excitedly said, "Oh, please stop it! I can't stand it any longer! Let me pray!"

I was confused and didn't know what to say to her. At that moment I had all kinds of thoughts running through my mind. This girl had only been converted to the Lord for three

months, and I had no idea what she was going to pray about. It was the first time in my experience that someone stopped the service in the middle of preaching. She interrupted me literally halfway through. I was stumped.

Finally, stopping my hesitation, I said, "All right, pray." And this girl began to pray. It was a simple but fervent prayer. In the most uncomplicated words she tearfully asked, "Lord Jesus! We have heard Your word and Your promises! We have heard how mightily You worked in times past among the first Christians, and what Your church looked like. Oh, could you send us again that Spirit which was in your first witnesses, that your church and your children today, in the twentieth century, might be as your Bible teaches it to be?!"

Friends, I cannot describe to you right now what was going on in my heart as I listened to this prayer. It was as if something inside of me was on fire and I remembered the words that the two disciples said to each other when they recognised Jesus in the One who met them on the road to Emmaus, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?" (Luke 24:32). As I thought about it, I realised that I was experiencing perhaps the same thing that those disciples were experiencing. It was as if the prayer that was spoken was from the Holy Spirit.

After this African girl stopped praying, I finished the meeting, went to my brother whom I was staying with in Mapumulo, and said, "Friedel, I experienced something unusual today. The service was interrupted not by terrorists, but by prayer. And if that prayer was from the Holy Spirit, then I believe revival is very near. The Lord will come into our midst as in the old days, and the church of Christ will be as it was two thousand years ago!"

It was only a week and a half after that, and God, who opened the heavens, came to us.

Chapter 5

The revival starts with me

Dear friends! Before I go into the story of how the Holy Spirit began to act in our midst, I want to tell you something else.

As we gathered daily to study the Word of God and earnestly, wholeheartedly cried out to the Lord, asking Him to begin to work among us and bring revival, something happened that we did not expect. The Holy Spirit took hold of the biggest and worst sinner in our midst. And you know who it was? It was me, Erlo Stegen. It was with my life that the Lord began His work.

What happened to me reminds me of what happened to a man who was a pastor of a church in America. This pastor was literally groaning under the weight of his ministry. For a long time there had been no spiritual growth and movement in his congregation. Everything seemed dead and cold. The young people wanted nothing to do with the gospel. The leaders of the church were hard-hearted people. Thus, this pastor saw no way out. On Sundays, when he stood at the pulpit, he felt as if his words were hitting a stone wall.

Then one day he heard about another servant of God who was having a great revival in his congregation and through whom the Lord was working in the power of the Holy Spirit. When he heard about it, he immediately decided to go there to find out the secret of their spiritual revival, and thereby get the key to solving his own problem.

He went to a place two thousand kilometres away from them. When he got there, he introduced himself and greeted the man of God. He immediately began to tell him of his need, asking permission to stay with them for two weeks to see how they gathered, how they prayed, how they planned and conducted their services, and so on. "My congregation," he complained, "Is spiritually completely dead! The deacons and elders are very stale and cold people! They don't want

to hear or know anything! And our young people are generally preoccupied with the world.”

“Ah, dear brother!” answered, after listening to him, this man of God, who was quite an original man, “You need not stay here so long, for I can tell you the cause of it now and give you the prescription at once. You can go back to your home today, and when you arrive, go into your office and take out the furniture and everything in it. Then sit on the floor, take a piece of chalk in your hand and draw a circle around you. When the circle is closed, pray earnestly and sincerely, asking the Lord to send revival to that circle and to act on it.”

Of course, such words could not endear them to the person to whom they were directed. It is not uncommon for the men of God to be unfriendly and to act in a manner that disregards the rules of courtesy and good manners. This advice was like a bitter pill for the pastor to swallow. He was deeply indignant, for this advice was not a compliment to him, and he began to argue that the cause was not in him, but in the congregation, that it was not the shepherd who was at fault, but the sheep. He was as nervous as Naaman, who was unwilling to go and dip in the Jordan, thinking it was a filthy river unworthy of his washing. But the servants persuaded him, and when he humbly did what the prophet had told him to do, a miracle took place.

This pastor, after all, had calmed down and humbled himself. When he returned home, he decided to try to do what he had been told and sat down on the floor and did it literally. Then he prayed earnestly, asking the Lord to begin His work with him. He now realised that he personally needed revival himself. And when he stood at the pulpit the following Sunday and began to preach, he soon noticed two men among the crowd who were sobbing and crying. After the meeting they came to him and with tears in their eyes began to say that their lives were not in order because they had been joined to sin. This was the repentance of these young people, who were already living a completely worldly life, forgetting that he who joins himself to the world becomes

an enemy of God. This was the beginning after which the Lord lit His fire in this congregation.

Dear friends, in giving this example, I want to say that exactly the same thing happened in South Africa. The Lord began to work in a way that I did not expect. In the past, when I was asked what I thought was the reason for our coldness and lack of spiritual revival, I always had many explanations. I have said that for some people it is material prosperity and wealth, while for others it is excessive poverty that causes them to steal. I have also said that it is not easy for a white missionary to work among African people, who have a militant spirit and do not want to leave their paganism and their own traditions, considering Christianity to be a white man's religion. In addition, I was convinced that worldly men were capable of nothing but drinking and fornication. I blamed the youth for their worldliness, believing that girls had only boys in mind, and boys had girls, sex, and the lusts of the flesh.

So, I always blamed others for the lack of revival and saw errors and sins in my neighbours, in the congregation, in preachers who are themselves lukewarm. But when we began to pray earnestly for revival, God began by shining His light on my own life and making me deal with my own sins, not someone else's.

After that I had no more time to notice the sins and faults of others, because I saw only my own. At that time, I forgot all people and was preoccupied, if I may say so, only with myself. Before that I was so spiritually blind and deaf that with eyes I could not see and with ears I could not hear. I only saw that I was a child of God, that I was saved and called to be a preacher of the Gospel. I had no doubt that my calling was to speak repentance to others, which I did for twelve years, urging people to leave their sins and accept Jesus as their personal Savior. And so I labored zealously, saying that I would preach until fire came down from heaven! But the fire did not come down, and so it went on until the Lord revealed to me the real reason for it by putting His finger on me personally. Many years have passed since

then, but I still remember it as if it was yesterday. I think you will also find it interesting if I tell you about it in order.

So, as I have already said, having decided to have an in-depth examination and study of the Scriptures, we met every morning and every evening for two or three months. Our services were then held in an old cowshed, which we had converted into a meeting house by throwing out all the manure, cleaning and whitewashing it. At that time I was not yet able to understand this lesson that the Lord wanted to tell me, "Erlo, if you want My Holy Spirit to work through you, then you too must first go through a cleansing process." It wasn't until the Lord led me through this process that I was able to see how much muck and dirt was in my life that was upsetting the Spirit of God, preventing Him from doing what we had prayed and asked diligently for. Often we are not the proper channels through which the pure living waters can flow, so in telling you about myself, I want to show you by example why the Holy Spirit cannot work through us if we are unclean vessels and corrupt instruments like I once was.

So, one Saturday after the morning meeting some Zulu Christians came to me and asked me to reschedule the evening meeting at two o'clock in the afternoon, so that those of them who lived far away could return home by daylight. Of course I readily agreed to this.

When we were assembled at the appointed time, I happened to glance out of the window and saw the judge, the town manager, the postmaster, and the chief of police coming to play on the tennis court, which was across the road, just opposite our barn. Suddenly, I felt ashamed, and I thought of what they would say about me when they saw me kneeling here with Africans, praying and crying. I guess they'll think my head's not right. But what should I do? Shall I postpone the meeting by telling the Africans to come at six o'clock in the evening after these people have gone? But what would the Zulu, to whom I had promised, think of me? As I continued to think about it, I suddenly had a good idea. I'll close the window and then the people outside won't be able to hear what's going on inside. I got up and went to

the window, and as I was closing it a certain voice said to me, “All right, Erlo, close the window. Then you will be inside, and I will stay outside and will not be able to come in.”

Dear friends, I understood this voice immediately. At the same moment it became clear to me that it was not the window or the glass, or the white people outside, but it was my pride and arrogance that separated me from the Living God! Thus, for the first time in my life I realised that the Spirit of God is the **Holy** Spirit. Hundreds and thousands of times I had spoken of the Holy Spirit, but I had never experienced His holiness. I had been preaching about the Holy Spirit without knowing what I was talking about. Now, in His great mercy, God revealed to me something about the holiness of His Spirit. At the same moment I realised how disgusting pride looks in the eyes of God! The realisation of this shocked me so much that, standing in front of a small group of Christians, I wept bitterly like a little child. When I looked up, I saw before me in large letters the words, “God resists the proud!”

Then it became clear to me where I stood and where God stood. Until then I had always thought that the devil was the cause of all my troubles and that he was always against me. Now the Word of God told me that God Himself is my adversary. If it were only Satan who opposed me, there would be hope, with God’s help, of defeating him; but if God Himself opposes me, I have no hope. I never realised that there were two opposing forces at work in my life, two giants: the devil, the prince of this world, and Almighty God! “Erlo!” I said to myself in shock, “Your situation is hopeless!”

Dear friends! In everything that we encounter in life, the most important thing for us should be that God is for us. If He is for us, who can be against us?! Even if the whole world is against us and God is on our side, we will win. The union of one man alone with Almighty God is a power immeasurably greater than the power of the whole world and the darkness of demons! If the whole world stands for us and God is against us, then there is no hope for us.

Now, when I realised that God Himself was confronting me, proud and arrogant, my eyes were finally opened, and I understood instantly why things had been the way they had been for the past twelve years, why people had not repented, why the soil of people's hearts had remained unyielding, and why my preaching had borne so little fruit. How could I expect anything else if God was not with me?!

Not being by nature a person who cries quickly and easily, at that moment I was not ashamed of my tears. I was ashamed of my sins! My heart was breaking with pain, and standing in front of this small congregation, I sobbed like a little child. Everyone looked at me in bewilderment, not understanding what had happened. Then, without being able to stop weeping, I told them that I was a sinner, that pride dwelt in my heart, and that God Himself opposed me. Then, unable to speak any more, I called them all to prayer, and falling on my knees, I cried out, "O God, I am a wretch, forgive me! There is no man in this world who is so profane and unclean as I am! I am the greatest sinner of all sinners! Have mercy on me, Lord. Save me!..."

So, pride and arrogance were my sins that the Lord first brought to light, showing them to me in all their nakedness. Then He began to open the depths of my heart, showing me one thing after another and performing His cleansing process over me. It was the time of Christmas. In the old days, for our family, and especially for us six children, Christmas days were the most joyful and happy days. Already a month before this holiday we were singing Christmas songs. We felt this wonderful time within us and rejoiced like swallows flying to the warm south. But Christmas 1966 was special. After the holiday, a brother from the Zulu tribe came up to me and asked me if I knew it was Christmas? No, I didn't know that. I had just forgotten about it. We didn't have a Christmas-themed sermon, we didn't have a tree and decorations, we didn't have a Christmas feeling. But it was the most blessed Christmas of my life! God was busy with me! I had only one thing on my mind and begged Him to forgive me and have mercy on me. Everything else did not exist for me anymore.

A few days after the incident in the barn, when our little congregation was gathered again to deal with the Word and prayer, I arrived there late. I heard singing, and something urged me to go to the meeting immediately. But I stopped myself with the thought that I could not do that because I had to change my clothes first. After all, I couldn't stand in front of the crowd with a Bible in my work clothes without a jacket and tie! What will that person say about me then, and what will the other person and the third person think?! What impression would it make on them? At that moment three personalities, whose opinion I particularly valued, came to my mind.

And suddenly, like lightning, I was struck by the words of my favorite prophet Elijah, which he said when he stood before his godless king Ahab, "King! God before whom I stand..." Think about those words, friends, and imagine the position the prophet was in at that time! Do you know what it means to stand before a king, before the ruler of your country? Have you had to go through such an experience? I had to stand in front of the king, the first ministers and presidents of the country, so I know very well what it means.

The prophet Elijah, standing before a king who has the power to kill or release him, says with boldness, "King! God before whom I stand..." Standing before his earthly king, he felt the presence of God so much that he saw Him alone before him. The presence of the King of all kings was far more important to him than the presence of an earthly king. And me?! I can't say that! And after all, I was not standing before the king, but before the opinion of the people who were elders in the community! I cared about what they would think and say about me! So I stand in front of a church and when I preach, I ask myself if they will like it, if they will accept what I am saying, and if I am hurting them with my words. I do not ask myself how God looks at it and what God will say about it! I am incomparably more worried about what people think!

This is how I realised, friends, the danger a preacher and pastor of a congregation is in when he preaches the gospel

and tries to please people by choosing words according to their heart. At that moment the Lord reminded me of the words spoken by the apostle Paul, "...If pleasing people were my goal, I would not be Christ's servant." (Galatians 1:10). "Paul! You also said that you did not want to be unworthy when preaching to others! But where do I stand now, and how do I look before the light of the Word of God?" I exclaimed mentally, "For I always told my hearers that I came to them as a servant of the Lord, when in reality I was someone who deserved to be thrown out of the church!"

So the Word of God condemned me again. It was not for nothing that Jesus warned that He did not come to judge the world, but that the words He spoke would judge us. I had experienced what it means to be rejected when preaching to others.

Shocked, I stood weeping, when suddenly a picture appeared before my eyes, which even today I could still paint if I were an artist. I saw a huge pagan temple with numerous gods and idols in it. There was a man in this temple who would go from one idol to another, kneel before them, and with his forehead bowed to the ground, pray and worship them. When he turned his face in my direction, I was horrified to see that this man was me. So, the Lord showed me how He saw me and who I was in His eyes.

This vision was tearing my heart apart. I was ready to scream... For twelve years I persuaded other people not to worship other people's gods, because God is the only God we have, and everything else is idolatry that comes from the devil. And now I could see that I myself had been praying to other gods, worshipping men and their opinions, which in the eyes of God was nothing but idolatry.

It is difficult to put into words what I experienced during those moments. Everything swam and swayed before my eyes because of the unbearable pain in my soul. I stood like that for a long time, unable to move from the spot, then I turned round and staggered slowly into the meeting room. At that moment I could not preach, I could not parse the Word, I could only say through tears, "Let us pray!" and

falling on my knees, weeping, I begged, “Lord, forgive me! Oh, be merciful to me, a sinner!...”

It was a time in my life when I forgot that I was a believer and a child of God. It is one thing to talk about God and quite another to experience a personal encounter with Him!

“Lord!” I cried out, “Have mercy on me, a sinner! Destroy all the idols that are present in my life...!” Now I was no longer preoccupied with the poverty or wealth of others, the sins of youth and the mistakes of my neighbours. I was a sinner! Everything else I had forgotten.

So, even before the revival began, God took me into His mill, which grinds slowly but finely. And whoever has not gone through such a thing will hardly know what I am talking about. But those who have been through it know **exactly** what I mean.

In those days I forgot that I had been a preacher of the gospel for twelve years, forgot my spiritual education, and prayed only like a publican in the temple, “Lord, have mercy on me a sinner!” Like a tax collector, I beat my chest, recognising myself as the biggest and last sinner in need of deep repentance and forgiveness. I was so stupid, blind and deaf that the Lord had to take me by the scruff of the neck and literally rub my nose in every sin.

One such day I was walking to a prayer meeting with my Bible in my hands, as usual. The way was near a shop where many people were gathered. As I was passing through the crowd, I accidentally touched my face and noticed that I had forgotten to shave. We were taught as children that it was a disgrace for a man to go out in public unshaven. I stopped in surprise. Immediately I thought, “What will the world say when it sees me in such an unkempt state?!” And again, like lightning, the words struck, “What will the world say about you?! But does not the Bible say that you have died to the world and are dead to sin?!” So the Scriptures spoke to me again, and again the light came into my mind and my heart.

You see, friends! During revival, the Word of God becomes alive and active. It hits us and penetrates us through

our heart. At such a time we can no longer be like the goose and the duck, from which the water rolls away as soon as they reach the shore, or like the stone that lies in the water for years but remains dry inside. In times of revival, Scripture becomes truly the hammer that breaks the rocks.

“Lord!” I said, “I believe in You, but I don’t believe the way the Scripture says! It says that he who believes in You is dead to the world. I am not dead to the world!”

Yes, I was not dead to the world. The world lived in me and had a great influence on me. It sat on the throne of my heart, ruling over me. I was more dead to the living God than to the world!

This is how I got the clue. Being alive to the world and sin, I was not able to believe as the Scripture says, and therefore could not be the source of living waters. After all, the Lord had said very clearly that rivers of living water would flow from the womb of only those who believe exactly as the Scriptures say. I could now understand why my life was like a dry, waterless desert, why people’s hearts were closed to the Word I preached, and why the words of God’s promises were not being fulfilled in my ministry. I also realised why we do not have an revival in South Africa. The reason for this was because I was a barrier to the Lord! He could not work through me, because there were many satanic things in my life and in my heart that oppressed and quenched the Spirit of God. But revival is the work of the Spirit of God - the Holy Spirit!

My heart was broken and weeping as I realised this! I could not find peace and began to beg the Lord to help me overcome this so that I might become a new man and a vessel fit for His use. In response, He showed me the warm condition of my heart. I saw three steps. On the lowest step there were a great many people gathered, on the middle step there were considerably fewer, and their long, elongated faces looked sad and dejected. On the topmost step there were only a few people, but their faces shone and radiated like the faces of angels. They were filled with life and light. Oh, how I wanted to be like those on the top third step!

I did not immediately realise the depth of the meaning of what I had seen. But a few days later, when I opened my Bible as usual, the words of God stood before my eyes, “I know all the things you do, that you are neither hot nor cold. I wish that you were one or the other! But since you are like lukewarm water, neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth!” (Revelation 3:15-16). So the Lord showed me what cold, lukewarm, and hot Christians are, and how terrible a lukewarm spiritual state looks in His eyes.

Literally translated from the Greek, the word “spit” means to spew the contents of the stomach outwards and is derived from the word “vomit”. We all know that vomiting occurs when a person is ill. He does not find peace and relief until he vomits, that is, until he vomits out what is in his stomach.

Do you understand why I am talking about this? Do you know that any believer who is neither cold nor hot spiritually, but only warm, brings only suffering to the Lord. Figuratively speaking, such a Christian, being in the Lord, causes Him “vomiting”, and the Lord is “suffering” until He finally casts him out of Himself.

With this comparison I want to tell you, dear friend, that if you are in the Lord, it is not a complete guarantee of being with Him in eternity. If you are lukewarm, you are on a dangerous way. The Lord says that it is better to be a cold, stale, hardened pagan than a lukewarm Christian. Such a spiritually warm believer is the best object for the devil, and therefore the worst for a loving God. Flies gather on the dung heap, but Satan and his spirits gather wherever there are lukewarm Christians. Lukewarmness is the perfect place with the right climate for the dark forces of hell. In fact, they are neither too cold nor too hot. When we bathe, we mix hot and cold water. In the same way, Satan willingly “bathes” using both. In the hands of the devil, warm Christians are his best tools.

If you want to get acquainted with impure thoughts, with big sins and little sins, then go to the lukewarm Christians. There you will find everything and everything you can

think of. The apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthians that they had sins that even the pagans did not have. And this is indeed the true case. I could now list a great many sins for which the pagans do not even have a name. Yet among lukewarm Christians they are to be found!

Therefore, if Jesus does not lie and the Word of God does not lead us astray, then woe to him who is called a Christian, but is neither cold nor hot in his spiritual state. Woe to the soul that does not burn for Christ! It would be better for it to be cold than just warm! There is no impulse to pray and read the Word of God, while the newspaper is often in their hands. To burn for the Lord, saving people's souls for Him - there is no such priority, for it has become something secondary. For there are more important things to do. Such are lukewarm Christians without a burning heart, who go from one fall to another. They often complain that they do not succeed, which is not surprising. How can they succeed if God is not with them?! They are only things that make Him vomit!

Understand me correctly, friends, and believe me that with our spiritual warmth there can be no heaven for us, but only hell, which is prepared for such. The realisation of this should shake us up and bring us out of our spiritual slumber, so that we may finally begin to pray, "Lord, have mercy on us sinners!"

That is exactly what happened to me. When God showed me the warmth of my heart, I realised that all my sins came from that spiritual warmth. I remember throwing myself on my bed and crying out to Him, "Lord, give me a heart on fire, burning for You day and night! Banish from me this lukewarmness, all my spiritual laziness and sluggishness! Give me a heart according to Your will! Have mercy on me! You came to light a fire in us! So light it in my heart! Start here with me, Lord. I give myself to You! I give myself completely! Take my life! Do with it what You want to do with it, as You desire!" And in response to these cries, God went on and on, continuing to do the work He had begun on me.

I was reminded of something that was said many years ago by our first Minister, Heinrich Verbut. Speaking to us, the people of different nations in South Africa, he said that we should love those around us as ourselves. Many years later, the Lord reminded me of this. "Remember those words?!" He said to me, "That man is gone. He has been killed. But remember how he said that you should love your neighbours as you love yourselves. Today it is not the first minister of your government who is telling you this, but the King of all kings and the Lord of all lords. Tell Me, do you love your neighbour as yourself?"

Yes... If you find yourself before the Living God and He asks you this question, you need to think carefully before you answer, "Lord!" I said, "To be honest, I have given my life for the African people. For their sake I have sacrificed all that I have, yet in spite of that I do not know whether I can say that I really love them as myself."

"Erlo!" I heard the voice of God again, "I am not asking you if you gave your life for them. I am asking you if you love your neighbour with the love of which Scripture speaks. Do you love him as you love yourself?" (*In First Corinthians chapter thirteen verse three it says, "If I gave everything I have to the poor and even sacrificed my body, I could boast about it; but if I didn't love others, I would have gained nothing."*)

"Jesus!" I confessed, "To be perfectly honest, I cannot say that I love my neighbour as myself. For if I have to spend the night somewhere and am offered a bed, or if it is lunchtime and I am given something to eat, I do not even think of asking if everyone else has a place to sleep and if others also have food to eat. If I get something, I am satisfied and I don't care if my neighbour has the same. Oh no, Lord! I do not love my neighbour as myself!"

God continued what He had started and took the next step. He said, "What you want people to do to you, you do to them. Is that what you do, Erlo?"

"Jesus!" I almost groaned, "And I don't have this! My God, no, I don't have that either! When I come to a place,

as a preacher I always get the best of it. People are very friendly to me. And if they are unfriendly, I can't forget it and I tell them directly about it. Of course I don't tell anyone about my own sins, but about the sins of others – of course! About the mistakes of others – yes, but about my own – certainly not!"

"Erlo!" turning to me, the Lord spoke again, "The first shall become the last, and whosoever of you is the greatest shall be the least and servant of all. I Myself have given an example in this. Did I not wash the feet of others? As the least, have I not been a servant to all?"

"Lord!" I lamented, "And this is not the case for me either! Others wash my feet, not I them! No, I am not the least of these!" (*Oh, how flippantly I could say that to others! But when God puts your own face to the fact, it's serious*).

"What's your deal with African people?" a new question followed, "Are you really their servant?" (*Yes, friends, in front of men you can evade such a question, but in front of the Living God you cannot.*)

"Lord!" I pleaded, "Not again!!! I just can't do that! If I come somewhere, someone from the Zulu tribe comes up to me and takes my suitcase. And now, if an African man or someone else comes, I have to go over and help him carry his suitcase?! No! Should I be the least of these?! No, Lord, no! Shall I be a servant to all?! Shall I serve everyone?! But that's impossible, Lord! People will sit on my neck and push me around! Then I won't have any authority! What would happen?! No, Lord, I can't do that! If I have to do that, then I won't be able to exist! Then I will lose my own life!"

"That's exactly what I want!" replied the Lord, "Don't you know that he who spares his life will lose it, but he who loses it for My sake will have eternal life! Erlo, enter death!"

"Oh, Lord! Is there anything else that would be as hard as dying! To die! To leave everything behind! To give up everything! To deny myself! To be ready to enter death..."

And again I heard the voice of the Lord, "Erlo! If you are not ready to be a servant to all, to be less, to be nothing,

then stop praying for revival!” And so I found myself at a dead end, in a vise...

Day and night this struggle continued. Waking up at night, I was all wet. At that time I was not sick, I did not have the flu, I did not have a fever. The reason for this was the struggle going on in my heart. Sometimes it seemed like I couldn’t stand it. But the Lord kept on going.

One day, through His Word, He said to me, “Erlo, what you do to the least of these who believe in Me, you do to Me. And therefore on the Day of Judgement I will judge in this way: I will take the least in your eyes and say that what you have done to this man you have done to Me.”

I was shocked, “What, Lord?!”

If the Lord Himself speaks to you, the Word you seemed to know suddenly begins to reveal itself in some special way, and then its true meaning becomes clear to you.

Then I asked myself who is the least in my eyes. Ask yourself the same question. Who is the least in your eyes? Do you want to test your spiritual life to see how deep it is? Do you want to measure your love for the Lord and see how close you are to Him? Then look at your attitude towards the least of these who believe in Jesus Christ. Know that your attitude toward the Lord is no better than your attitude toward this man, and that you love Jesus no more than you love him. This is a valid and true picture of your Christianity in the light of eternity! Everything else is just a lie and deception, which is only an outward “holy” gloss, because the truth, as the Lord said is, “What you have done to the least of these, you have done to Me.”

When you see everything in the light of God, it can be deeply disturbing, turning everything in you upside down. However, that is actually a good thing, because what is in your vessel will come out.

So, I had to confess to the Lord that things are not as they should be according to God’s Word. Whether a child has enough blankets to cover itself, whether it is warm, is of no concern to me, as long as I am warm. If I don’t sleep next to a person who snores, then everything is fine. Let

others sleep with him. But the day will come when the Lord will say, “Do you know that I was with you and I snored?” And then there will be nothing left but to say, “O Lord! If I had known it at that time, I would have willingly slept beside You...”

This is how we can be tested one day by God. Tested at a time when we do not expect it at all. The Lord will appear to us in the form of a sick person, a cripple, a blind person, a beggar, a humiliated brother or sister, and will expect love and compassion from us. In that hour we will be weighed on the scales of God’s Word, and then the truth of our love will be measured. These are real facts, friends, and if we are not prepared to take them seriously now, if we do not face them honestly today, then we will have to do so on the day of judgement. And that will certainly happen if God is not a liar and the words of Scripture are true.

One day, standing under a tree, I could observe such a picture. Several African people, whom I did not know, were laughing and talking among themselves, pointing at me. “Look at how that white man looks!” they said, “He’s probably a drunkard, but not one of the worst!” I don’t know what I looked like at that moment, but this is how the Lord can humble and humble the proud and arrogant. I used to look down on people, but when God began His work over me, then others looked down on me.

As the days went by, the Lord continued to bring my life to light, revealing hidden thoughts, deeds, and things I had not paid attention to before. He said, “Erlo, when you interacted with that child, that woman, and your brother, did you do so in the way Jesus would have done? Were your being and your behaviour His being and His behaviour? Why are you silent, Erlo?! Tell Me, how is it with you, and how is it with that one...?”

And that’s when I couldn’t stand it, “God! I can’t take it anymore! I can’t!” and I heard back, “Erlo! Didn’t you pray for revival? And now you say you can’t take it anymore! Well, all right. Then leave it at that. Then I will not come! You ask for revival, begging Me to come to you, and

when I begin to act, you say you cannot! Don't you know that when I come, I begin My judgement with the house of God, not with those outside it!"

You can understand now, friends, why so many people pray for revival, but very, very few experience it. Many of them end up dying before they get what they asked for. And do you know why? Because for most of these pious ones, praying for revival is nothing more than just playing pious words on their lips. But God does not like theatre! He wants nothing to do with hypocrites! I believe with all my heart, and I say this openly to all, that if our lives are in accordance with the Word of God, then there is no need to ask for revival, because it will surely come as a natural consequence of right living and true faith. Neither should we pray for streams of living water, because as soon as our faith becomes consistent with Scripture, they will immediately flow out of our lives and out of our spiritual womb. Therefore, if we pray, it is better to ask the Lord to help us to put our lives in order and to have a faith that is in harmony with the Word of God.

So the Lord did His work on me until I finally said, "Lord! Do whatever You want! I am willing to pay any price, even if I have to taste death! I am ready! I want to be ready! And if You see that I am not yet, make me so!" But in doing so, I dared to say something to God that I am still very ashamed of today. I asked, "Lord, send us revival, but please do it in such a way that there is order in everything, that everything goes according to the customs to which we are accustomed - clearly and soberly without far-fetched and fictitious things." (*By that time we already had our own orders and laws, our own established pattern of godly Christian life*).

In response to this, God said to me sternly, "Erlo! Who are you and who am I?! Are you My teacher and I your disciple? Can you tell Me how to act?! If My Holy Spirit works and I begin My work, I do it as I want to do it, not as you imagine! Therefore, if you do not humble yourself, bowing down before Me, if you do not leave your ways and your

ideas, then I will not come. For your ways are not My ways, and your thoughts are not My thoughts!” (*Yes... Such a thing can break and crush the heart*).

Today, of course, I realise that only what God abides in and what is done by God Himself is true. Everything else is a figment of the mind and human imagination. There is order only where God is present. Where there is no God, there is no order. Even if the external situation looks calm and everyone is silent as mice, in the mind everything is stirring, swarming and rummaging. Only there is true order, where God reigns and directs everything. Without this order there can be no order.

When God works, He does things the way He wants them to be done. We cannot dictate and prescribe to Him, or can we tell Him that it must be this way or that way. God is sovereign, so all His actions are sovereign. Guidance is only His right! He is not our servant, our child, or our disciple! He is not our little dog that we call and lead on a leash wherever and however we want. No, He is the living God, the Lord of lords! Only if we give Him the opportunity to act in our midst as the Living God, He can come to us. Otherwise we will pray in vain for God’s action. So in this matter the Lord brought me to the point where I was able to say that I was ready to accept His Deity and undivided dominion.

Dear friends! All this time, while God was busy with me, I had no idea that in revealing my sins to me, He was at the same time working in the hearts of the other members of our community. The same wave of repentance was sweeping over the others, and the Holy Spirit was doing His work, revealing to each one his sinfulness and bringing him to realise and repent. One went to his neighbour, asking forgiveness for his unfriendliness. Another condemned himself for not speaking to the child in the right tone of voice and without peace in his heart. Husband made peace with his wife, wife with her husband, children with their parents, friends with their friends. They would say to each other, “Forgive me, I said bad things about you. Forgive me because there

was bitterness in my heart against you. Forgive me because I judged you instead of coming to you personally with it, as the Bible teaches us to do.” In this way they were putting their lives in order and making peace with their neighbours.

A man wrote me a letter and asked, “Brother, forgive me! I spoke wrongly about you. Please forgive me, for I am now convinced that you are a servant of God!” Oh, now I had no right to charge others, for I was a sinner myself who prayed, “Lord, have mercy on me! Save me from my sins!” Others also prayed this prayer, saying, “Lord, save us or we will die here!”

So, God worked then in our hearts and continued His work until He had cleansed us from all that grieved His Spirit. And when all the sinful satanic things were removed from our lives, when the way was prepared for the Lord to work, then suddenly one day, at a moment we did not expect at all, the heavens opened and the Holy Spirit came down upon us from His height just as it had happened in the days of the Apostles. If you want to know what I experienced, I can only say that at that moment I felt as if someone put his hand on my head and bowed it down low, while my spirit prayed in humility to the One who shed His blood on Calvary.

In First Peter 4:17 we read that the work of the Lord always begins with judgement on the house of God. It is here that the Holy Spirit does His work. He does not begin with the sins of others, the sins of children, or the sins of parents, but with our own sins. Dear wife! It does not begin with your husband’s sins! Then You will have to put your own house in order first! And you, husband, forget your wife’s sins! Purify your own life!

My friends! This is the **good news**! You don’t have to wait for your neighbour! It can begin with me and with you! And then it will be necessary to leave your favourite sins and remove from your life and from your own heart everything that grieves the Spirit of God. For the fact is that the sin of others, the wrong actions and vices of our neighbours and so-called “enemies” cannot extinguish the burning of the Holy Spirit in our own lives.

It is not by chance that the Word of God says that we should not grieve the Holy Spirit and quench Him, because it is a fact that those who know the Lord are able to do what the ungodly cannot do. It is not they who reject God, but we Christians who grieve and extinguish the Holy Spirit by our impure lives and many sins.

There is no point in expecting unbelievers to be converted if our own lives are not an example and light to them. And even if it happens, and someone suddenly believes through us, then the words that Jesus said to the Pharisees will be fulfilled, “What sorrow awaits you teachers of religious law and you Pharisees. Hypocrites! For you cross land and sea to make one convert, and then you turn that person into twice the child of hell you yourselves are!” (Matthew 23:15).

The church and congregation cannot be more spiritual than their leaders. If the congregation and its members are on a higher spiritual level than the pastor, then he can no longer be their leader. The preacher’s own life must be pure and his relationship with God must be right so that the Lord can work through him.

If there is no spiritual revival, we cannot blame anyone else but Christians themselves. If God is not working where you are, who is to blame? – Not the world, not fornicators, not homosexuals, but the godly who are called the house of God! Therefore it is with them that judgement must begin, whether they want it to or not. And this is the truth! Whether it is sweet news for you or a bitter pill, you must swallow it! You are standing in the way of the leading of the Holy Spirit, perhaps just as I once did! Come to South Africa, and I will show you the place in Mapumulo where I stood and wept, when I realised that it was not someone else, but I who was standing in the way of revival! And I repented then!

Chapter 6

From darkness to light

In John 16:7-8 Jesus says, “But in fact, it is best for you that I go away, because if I don’t, the Advocate won’t come. If I do go away, then I will send him to you. And when he comes, he will convict the world of its sin, and of God’s righteousness, and of the coming judgment.”

The Comforter Spirit (Greek: *parakletos*) means the One who comes to our side, touching our shoulder with His shoulder. This is the One who came on the day of Pentecost, who opened the heavens and came down to the people gathered in Jerusalem from all over and began to speak to them in the language they spoke. On that day everyone present could understand God’s speech and what the Holy Spirit was saying to them. But not everyone repented. Some, seeing and hearing what was happening, laughed, thinking that the speakers were drunk with sweet wine. However, in spite of this, they were also able to hear in their own language the great works of God.

Therefore, the Holy Spirit can speak in a language that anyone can understand. And if He begins to work, then neither skin colour, nor language, nor religion, nor anything else matters. The Holy Spirit can touch every heart. He knows the languages of all nations. He can speak to people who are totally illiterate and to scholars of this world. He speaks to sorcerers and sorceresses, to doctors and professors, to godless people and theologians, to students and teachers. We can only marvel as we watch the Spirit of God work on these people.

Immediately after the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, God began to work in our area, bringing new and new souls and crushing the strongholds of Satan. There was no bell ringing, no invitations, no prior organisation. The Holy Spirit, who had once gathered people on the day of Pentecost, was now doing the same work. This was the solution to the “problem of John the Baptist” that had plagued me.

He was already filled with the Holy Spirit in his mother's womb, the same Spirit who began to work in us.

The first person who came to us then was a witch who herself had a school in which she taught magic to others. As she was a complete stranger to me, I asked her what she wanted. "I want you to pray for me," said the witch, "I want Jesus! I am tired and fed up with my life. I am bound in the chains of hell!"

"What?!" I interjected, not believing my ears. *(I could not understand it. For twelve years I had tried to turn these people to the Lord. I sat with them for weeks, preaching the gospel, but I was unsuccessful. They called their witchcraft a gift from God, claiming that God Himself had given it to them. Now this sorceress has come herself, asking me to pray for her so that the Lord will break the chains of hell that bind her).*

"Who was talking to you?" I asked her.

"No one!" she replied.

"Who told you about God, then?"

"No one!"

"Have you ever been to a church service?"

"No, I have never been to a meeting in my life."

"Who invited you to join us?"

"No one."

"Yes, but I don't understand!" *(My eyes must have been round with amazement, and hers too).*

"How did you come here?! Who told you we were here?"

"Please," the sorceress interrupted me, "don't ask me all these questions! I am on my way to hell! If Jesus does not save me now and deliver me from the devil's chains, I will descend alive into hell today. I am damned for all eternity, so there is only one hope left, that Jesus may still have mercy on me!"

Yes, but I didn't even know how to pray for these people. After thinking for a while, I called some of the staff and explained to them what was going on. Then I asked the witch if she would be willing to accept Jesus as her personal

Saviour and confess her sins. Because the Bible says, "People who conceal their sins will not prosper, but if they confess and turn from them, they will receive mercy." (Proverbs 28:13). So, if you confess your sin without having a firm decision to break with it, then such a confession is meaningless. It's just a "holy theatre". But he who confesses his sin and forsakes it receives forgiveness and mercy. "Are you ready, having confessed, to leave your witchcraft, breaking with it forever?" I asked the sorceress. "Yes!" she answered firmly, willing to give herself completely to Jesus.

The next question that came up was how to pray with her. After all, she is possessed. I remembered that I had previously tried to command evil spirits to come out of a person in the Name of God the Father and the Blood of Jesus Christ, to which they only laughed and blasphemed the Lord. They took my commands as humour.

So how do we pray for her? We went to my room and, sitting on chairs so that a circle was formed, we began to sing. It was an Easter hymn about the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. We sang that He had conquered death, sin, hell and all unclean powers; that His Holy Blood cleanses and redeems us.

When we sang this hymn for the second time, the sorceress suddenly rose from her chair and, getting down on all fours, began to turn and twirl, making movements like a wild beast. At that moment she resembled a tigress preparing to leap upon her prey. One of our staff was so frightened that he jumped up and ran out of the room in fear, and we had to call him back, telling him not to be afraid, because Jesus is the Victor.

Outwardly it looked as if demons and Satan himself were looking at us from the eyes of the possessed woman. It was horrible! And then the following happened. This completely illiterate woman, who had lived all her life among African people, began to speak to us in the purest English. Then a lot of dogs started barking out of her, and the sounds they were making were not something fake. It was real dog barking. Then the pigs started squealing and grunting.

In the Name that is above all names, we commanded the unclean powers to come out of this woman. We invoked the Name of the Triune God. In response, hooting, laughing and jeering, the evil spirits said, “We are three hundred strong warriors of the devil here, and this woman is our home. We will not forsake her!” We continued to pray, when suddenly the demons cried out, “Oh, now we are getting unbearably hot! The fire of the Holy Spirit is burning and eating us!”

After that the first hundred came out, then the second. The third hundred demons left with a terrible cry. But before this happened, the evil spirits said something that was unusual and significant to us. They said, “We knew about God the Father and God the Son, but we had not yet had an encounter with God the Holy Spirit. And since He has come, His fire is eating us!”

Then I remembered the words of scripture, “...It is not by force nor by strength, but by my Spirit, says the LORD of Heaven’s Armies.” (Zechariah 4:6). Besides, I used to be unable to understand what the New Testament teaches us by saying that “For we are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places.” (Ephesians 6:12). As I read these words, I thought often about how we can do this. It was as if my eyes were opened at that moment, it is not the flesh that fights against the spirit, but the Holy Spirit against the spirits of darkness.

The Lord Jesus once said so, “I have come to set the world on fire, and I wish it were already burning!” (Luke 12:49). John the Baptist preached the same thing, calling God and the Holy Spirit a consuming fire, and we were convinced of the truth of these words in practice that day.

After the evil spirits came out of this woman, her face changed unrecognisably and her whole appearance was instantly transformed. Can you imagine what an old sorceress looks like with an evil sullen face, and deep wrinkles. Now she looked like a woman who had been sitting at the feet of

Jesus for years, sanctified by His close presence. Her face was shining and radiant as if the sky were reflected in it. With a heavenly smile she said, "Oh, how wonderful! Jesus has set me free and redeemed me! He has broken the shackles of hell on me!"

Dear friends, this is a picture I will never forget. Seeing it, one can only bow before the Lord in great humility. Oh, how wonderful He is, our Saviour and Redeemer!!!

After this one came the next witch, then another and another. First came witches and sorceresses, then those possessed by evil spirits. They came and said how many demons were in them. Some had hundreds, others thousands. Some had legions. Many demons said that they would not come out without shedding blood. Indeed, such possessed people would have prolonged vomiting of blood before they were free. In those days we asked everyone without exception.

"Who told you about the Lord?"

"No one." they were saying.

"Did you know about each other before?"

"No, we haven't."

"But how did you know we were here? How? What did you come through? Who prompted you to do this?..."

No one, not one of those who came had heard about it from anyone else. All of them, without exception, were supernaturally directed. So we experienced in practice that the Holy Spirit went into houses and huts and literally brought people in just as He did on the day of Pentecost.

People said, "We found no rest because something inside was urging us to go. We were realising our sins as we had never done before. We felt and knew only one thing, that it was necessary to go, and so we went." Some said, they heard a voice that said, "Go to such a place and there you will be told what you must do." Others saw a vision. So they came to us in many different ways. They came from near and far. Some of them had battered, swollen feet because they had to walk for weeks to get to where we were.

This went on incessantly for days and nights, so that for two or three months we hardly slept at all. I would never

have thought that a human being could get by with so little sleep. We realised that only God could do it. Often we did not have enough to eat, but in spite of this we did not feel tired or hungry. The Lord carried us on eagle's wings.

When we left the door of the house at any time of the day or night, we found a crowd of a hundred, two hundred, or even three hundred people in the courtyard, standing in the street, waiting for us. Violent, bloodthirsty men, who did not want to know anything about Christianity before, were sobbing and crying like little children, as if someone had beaten them with a stick. They were in a state of spiritual defeat, and, if I may say so, were brought to the ground. The Holy Spirit was opening their eyes to their sins, to the righteousness of God, and to His judgement.

"Why don't you go to work?" we asked them.

"We can't," they answered.

"We can't sleep anymore."

"But what's wrong?!"

"We are sinners! Can God forgive us?"

People who had not previously known what it meant to weep were now literally weeping, asking the same question, "Is there still hope for us? Is forgiveness possible for us?"

"Yes," we answered.

"But you say that because you don't know how badly we have sinned!"

Then we took our Bibles in our hands and read to them from Isaiah 1:18, "Though your sins are like scarlet, I will make them as white as snow. Though they are red like crimson, I will make them as white as wool." They only shook their heads in response. God had given them such deep realisation and repentance!

The Holy Spirit revealed their sins so clearly that some people lost faith that forgiveness was still possible for them, and we had to comfort and encourage them with words of Scripture. Thus a well-known pagan man sat in a room and wept so bitterly that I could not bear it and left everything and went to him.

“Tell me, what is your problem?” I asked him. “Oh!” he sobbed inconsolably. “I am a sinner! A few centimetres to go before I fall into the underworld!”

In John’s Gospel in chapter sixteen verse seven Jesus says, “But in fact, it is best for you that I go away, because if I don’t, the Advocate won’t come. If I do go away, then I will send him to you.” This raises the question, “What will this Advocate do if He comes? How will He comfort people?” The Bible answers it this way, “And when he comes, he will convict the world of its sin, and of God’s righteousness, and of the coming judgment.” (John 16:7-8).

In this way, He points people to their sins. “Is that supposed to be any consolation at all?” some will say, “It is impossible to comfort a person in this way!” You know, God comforts a person differently than we, human beings, would do that. We sometimes say, “Just don’t tell a person about his sin! You’d drive a man mad!” But, my dear ones, if God comforts, He sends the Holy Spirit, who first of all points out to the person his sins, and who at the same time knows how to comfort.

This is why it is so difficult to understand how it is possible that a person filled with the Holy Spirit can continue to live in sin. For that is the essence of the Holy Spirit, the Comforter Spirit, that He points man first to his sins, and also to the truth, righteousness, and judgement of God. And this can indeed be experienced in one’s own life if the true and not the counterfeit Holy Spirit is at work. Then you feel as if the day of judgement has already come for you. People lose sleep, cannot eat, cannot go to work. They find no rest in anything, and this state of mind continues until these souls come to a deep brokenness of spirit, convinced of their sinfulness. They are no longer satisfied with common prayers of repentance and secret confession of their sins in private prayer before the Lord. They will not rest until they have brought their spiritual impurity into the light, that is, until they have called every sin by its name in a personal and deep confession.

There have been times in the practice of our ministry when we have prayed for an entire congregation of four

hundred or five hundred people, asking the Lord to forgive the sins of each and every one of them. When we finished the service and let the people go home, they did not leave. They sat and wept, and everyone had the same need – to bring their sins in personal confession, calling each one by name. Without this they did not feel forgiveness and deliverance. Common confession of sins and common prayer in such cases, if I may put it that way, are simply not fit for purpose.

Ephesians 5:13 says, “But their evil intentions will be exposed when the light shines on them.” And First John 1:7 says, “But if we are living in the light, as God is in the light, then we have fellowship with each other, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, cleanses us from all sin.”

You see, dear friends, the Word of God itself tells us that the blood of Jesus Christ washes and cleanses us only when we living in the light. The cleansing power of our Saviour’s blood does not manifest itself when we hide our sins and thus walk in darkness, but when we bring them into the light and then follow Christ in the light.

By the way, during confessions, some of the sins brought to light seem insignificant when viewed through human eyes. However, if God truly reveals Himself to a person, then the “small” sin looks huge, bigger than the biggest mountain. For example, every husband who looks at a woman with lust is called an adulterer by Christ, and every man who is angry with his neighbour, thinking him a fool, is called a murderer.

That is the measure and standard of the One we call our dear Saviour! This is the standard of the loving Lord Jesus! Of course, this approach is not the standard of the lukewarm Christian who looks at such things through his fingers, thinking that it is only half the trouble and is no big deal. However, if we see and experience God’s holiness and His presence, then we will not think that way. If we do not recognise it here on earth, we will have to be convinced of it in another place. Only then will that day be a day of judgement for us. Here or in eternity, but for each of us it must be

fulfilled one day! If we do not pass through the mill of God now, we will have to pass through it at another hour.

When I am in Europe, I often hear these words, “Yes, for the Africans in Africa it must be like this, and for us it must be different.” But, my friends, there is only one Bible for Africans and whites, for Africa, for Europe, and for all other countries and continents! No other is given to us. God is light, and whoever enters into this light is made light himself. How often we see people who come to confession with sad and depressed faces. But when they reveal their spiritual uncleanness and the Lord forgives their sins, their transformed faces shine and glow, reflecting the One who is light Himself.

So, God kindled His fire among us, and the Spirit of the Lord, encompassing the souls of men, and Himself drew them from darkness to light. It would take many hours to describe in detail how this happened, so I will give just a few examples.

A young girl came home from school and sat down to rest under a lemon tree. Suddenly a blackboard appeared before her eyes, on which an invisible hand was writing words, each of which was the name of a sin she had committed. After reading the long list, she grabbed a black charcoal and a piece of old paper that had been thrown by someone and began to write. When the student had written out the last word the blackboard disappeared, and at the same moment a great fear, a realisation of her sinfulness and deep remorse seized her so that she ran without rest for several kilometres until she found us. “Here are my sins!” she said, holding out to us this scrap of dirty paper, “God has revealed my whole life to me. Is forgiveness still possible for me...?” So, she repented.

It has happened that completely illiterate people have experienced something similar. It was the case of a young pagan who had never attended school and could neither read nor write. One afternoon he was working in the field. It was a clear sunny day and there was not a single cloud in the sky. Suddenly there was darkness, and in that darkness the young man saw a lighted blackboard on which someone was writing

something. Everything written spoke of his past life and all the sins he had committed, and this totally illiterate young man could read every word. After he read the last line, the darkness disappeared and the bright sun shone again.

He was so shaken by what had happened that his whole body trembled, not knowing what to do. Finally, he remembered that there was a Christian woman in the area and ran to her. When he ran into the woman's hut, he asked, "Can you write?" and, hearing an affirmative answer, continued. "The Lord suddenly showed me my life and revealed all my sins. I never thought that I was such a terrible sinner, nor could I suppose that God was so holy, and that I could not stand before His holy face with all my impurity! I will recount my sins to you now! Please write them down!"

So he dictated to her what was written on the blackboard and she wrote it down. After that he had to walk twenty kilometres to where we were. Out of breath and wet with sweat, he immediately told us about his experience and, handing me a written sheet of paper, said, "Read it! All this I have done in my life! There is no man on earth more sinful than I am! What will happen to me? Can you help me? Can God forgive me?"

And then I showed him the way to the Cross, saying that the Word of God says, "But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness." (1 John 1:9). When he heard these words, he was at first unable to absorb them, but then he began to ask us to pray for him. My team and I readily bent our knees and brought all that he had revealed to the Lord's feet.

From this prayer he arose a new man and, shining with joy, said, "Now I have to go to my parents, brothers, sisters and relatives, because since my childhood I have been a very naughty child. I was not also faithful in the place where I worked." Then he travelled back and when he returned he put his relationships with his family, friends, relatives and others in order. This is how he met God in his life and made peace with Him.

The Lord has many ways and means of speaking to the heart of man. Often He does this through the reading of Scripture. We have come across many instances where a Bible somehow appeared in the homes of illiterate people whose children could read. These people would later come back and say that God had spoken to them the moment the children began to read aloud the Bible they had found in their hands.

One day a Zulu woman who was a witch came to us. She told us that she had heard a voice speaking to her that said, "Take the Bible and read this chapter and this verse." Obedient to this command, the witch went in search of it. She was illiterate, but when she found the Bible and opened it, she found to her great amazement that she could read. After reading the place indicated, she believed in the Lord. Her next step was confession and repentance.

This case is not the only one. Illiterate people who became Christians, coming to us, told us that they heard a voice saying to them, "Take the Bible and read it." Interestingly, when they opened the Bible, they could read, but when they closed it, they lost that ability. We have heard them read the Bible many times, and each time we have been convinced of the truth of their words. I would like to tell you in more detail about one such incident that happened to an illiterate man.

If the Zulu fell ill, they did not go to a doctor, but to a witch doctor or sorceress to learn from him the name of the person who, in their opinion, had brought the disease or other misfortune upon them. So, a famous witch doctor had a twenty-five-year-old son named Mabango, who was his father's right-hand man and a good assistant in witchcraft. One day this young man became seriously ill. He had gangrene of his toe. Because of the terrible rotting, the pain was so severe that the young man was simply unable to bear it. His father's witchcraft did not help, and then sorcerers were summoned from Rhodesia (*Rhodesia, region, south-central Africa, now divided into Zimbabwe in the south and Zambia in the north*), a neighbouring African country more than two

thousand kilometres away. But even they were unable to help the sick man. So my father went to Mozambique and brought the most famous sorcerers from there. But even these devil's servants were powerless. The young man was forced to endure terrible torments.

It was the same time that we were invited for that area to preach the Gospel. One of the Christian converts who lived there came to this son of a witch doctor and said, "Listen, we have messengers of God coming here! Go to their meeting and ask them to pray to the Lord for your healing!"

"No," replied the sick man, "Witchcraft and Christianity cannot go hand in hand! Spiritism and worship cannot go together!" But the pain in his leg was so intolerable that he was literally forced to go to the service. There he sat in the last row, trying to be unnoticed. Of course, the preacher had no idea that this son of a famous witch doctor was in the meeting. He was just preaching the Good News, but the words of his sermon were so clearly addressed to the sick young man that he tried to hide behind the backs of those sitting in front of him, thinking, "Who told this preacher about my sins? Who could have told him all about me?!"

Dear friends, this can only happen when God works through His true Holy Spirit. First Corinthians 14:24-25 says that if an unbeliever enters the assembly of God's people, the secrets of his heart will be revealed in the light of the Scriptures, so that he will fall down, worship the Lord, and say, "Truly God is with you."

Not realising how his life had become known to the preacher, the sick man thought that the person who had invited him to the meeting had gone and told him all about him beforehand. By the way, in South Africa we always say that if people feel and think like this, it is a very good sign. Often this happens before a person starts to repent in dust and ashes.

This is exactly what happened on that time. Through the preacher's mouth the Lord revealed not only the sins of this son of a witch doctor, but also his whole past life. After

the meeting, when the others got up and walked away, this young man could not get up from his seat. He felt as if he were glued to his chair. Those who were sitting on his right and left had long since left the meeting, but he continued to sit. When the preacher saw him in this condition and approached him, he began to weep, saying, "I am a terrible sinner on my way to hell! Without Christ, I am lost! Can Jesus forgive my sins?"

After, this broken pagan opened his heart and confessed his sins, God touched him and he was instantly healed of his terrible disease. The preacher did not even pray for his healing. But when the Lord had mercy on his soul, He also healed him of his bodily sickness.

A short time after the incident, the young man had a dream one night. The sky opened before his eyes and he saw a Bible coming down to him. When it stopped in front of him, he heard the voice of God speaking to him, "Mabango, open your Bible and read Proverbs, chapter eight from verse one." to which he exclaimed, "Lord, but I can't read! I'm illiterate because I never went to school!" And then the same voice said to him, "If I command you to read, then you shall not say that you cannot do it! For I am He Who created your mind and your eyes!"

Then Mabango took in his hands the Bible that had come down to him from heaven, and the moment he opened it he could read. It was the first time in his life, and this is what he read, "I call to you, to all of you! I raise my voice to all people. You simple people, use good judgment. You foolish people, show some understanding..." When Mabango closed the Bible after reading this passage, it immediately disappeared.

The next night the dream was repeated. Again the heavens opened and the Bible came down to him. The same voice of God said, "Mabango, take the Bible and read the 49th chapter of the Book of the Prophet Isaiah, verses 15 and 16." He took the Bible and read, "Never! Can a mother forget her nursing child? Can she feel no love for the child she has borne? But even if that were possible, I would not

forget you! See, I have written your name on the palms of my hands..." Then the Bible disappeared into the sky in the same manner as it had appeared.

On the third night he again saw the same vision and heard, "Now read the Book of the Prophet Jeremiah, chapter 1 verses 4 to 7." Opening the place, Mabango read the following, "The Lord gave me this message, 'I knew you before I formed you in your mother's womb. Before you were born I set you apart and appointed you as my prophet to the nations.' "

"O Sovereign Lord," I said, "I can't speak for you! I'm too young!" The Lord replied, "Don't say, 'I'm too young,' for you must go wherever I send you and say whatever I tell you." "

When morning came, Mabango could not wait any longer, so he packed up and went in search of a Bible. He walked from one hut to another, asking if they had a Bible. He walked for a long time until he came to the home of the local preacher. Mabango was sure that here he would get the book he wanted. When he saw the owner, he immediately asked him.

"Please tell me, do you have a Bible?"

"Yes!" He asked embarrassed.

"May I borrow it from you?"

"No! What do you need it for? You can't read and you will only make it dirty. You are the son of a sorcerer, and you never went to school, herding your father's sheep and goats." Keeping pace with him, the young man pleaded, "Yes, that is true, but let me at least once take the Bible in my hand!"

This behaviour seemed strange to the preacher, and he invited him to come into the house. Taking some books from the shelf, he laid them before him and said, "Guess which one is the Bible?" Mabango immediately pointed his finger at it and asked, "Please allow me to read from it?" Upon opening the Bible, to his own amazement and to the amazement of the preacher, he could easily read every word of it.

Since then, this formerly illiterate young man can not only read fluently but also write well. All this was given to

him by God. With Bible in hand, he travelled through dozens of villages and towns, bringing the Gospel of Salvation to the people. Through his preaching hundreds of souls turned to the Lord.

One day he attended a conference in a large city, where some of the most famous preachers and theologians were gathered. There he asked permission to speak to the audience. Looking at him with obvious disbelief, he was given five minutes to do so. After he had spoken for five minutes, he was asked to speak for another fifteen minutes, then another half hour.

After this sermon, which lasted more than an hour, he was surrounded by astonished theologians. "Tell me, young man," they asked him, "Where did you study theology and what Bible school did you graduate from?"

In the language of the Zulu tribe, the word "Bible school" sounds the same as "Bible". Holding his Bible up, he answered them, "The Bible".

"Yes, that's understandable!" impatiently interrupted the theologians. "But we would like to know at what university did you study and where did you acquire such knowledge?"

Mabango picked up his Bible again and said, "I was taught by this Bible." However, the theology professors still did not understand what he was telling them.

This former illiterate son of a sorcerer has been an employee of our mission for many years and a vessel through which God works in great power.

Dear Friends, this is not a fairy tale, but a true story, witnessed not only by Christians, but also by completely unbelieving people. The Lord works beyond our requests and human understanding. He has been given authority in heaven and on earth and is unchanging yesterday, today and forever.

I will now continue with the development of the revival. From the time it began, it became common that if anyone who came to us repented and turned to the Lord, it was within a fortnight or three weeks after his return home that

he would call us to him. "What's the matter? What happened there?" We would ask, and we would hear in reply, "Our whole neighbourhood is in motion!" When we got there, we found from two hundred to four hundred people sitting under trees or in the open air, waiting for us.

"What happened here?" we asked them. "This man who lives among us has repented, and looking at his life, we feel that we too must repent and receive the same God." (*The souls of the people were like a ripe field ready for harvest.*)

In this way the Spirit of God reached into more and more areas, so, that within a week hundreds, sometimes even thousands, would turn to the Lord. There were times when in one day the number of converts reached several thousand.

At such times, dance floors, bars, football fields and tennis courts were usually closed. Why, you might ask? Because the people just didn't have time for that anymore. They went out and preached the gospel. Even the illiterate and children carried the message of salvation. Of course, they had no idea about theology! But they knew something else, "Jesus forgave us our sins! Jesus saved us! Through him we have become children of God." In this way they carried the words of the living gospel to others.

And when people began to come in hundreds and thousands, when the Lord began to work in spirit, soul and body, almost everything we read about in the Acts of the Apostles was repeated. The great power of God dwelt among us, manifesting itself in many ways, including healings, miracles, and signs. Many sick and crippled people were brought and laid on the grass, and often before the meeting began the Lord touched them and healed them.

I remember when one blind man came. We were gathered in the open air that day. During the meeting his eyes suddenly opened. I will never forget how he walked forward with his now useless stick and kept saying, "I always said Jesus was the God of the white man! But now I know that He is my God! He is my God!" As revival began, this expression of African people that Jesus is the God of white people ceased to exist. Now they say, "He is our God!"

Now I would like to bring to a close the story of the demon-possessed girl whom the Lord did not heal once through our prayers. Then I had to return her to her mother, saying that we could not help her. By the time the revival began, more than six years had passed since then.

When I remembered this, I asked the Lord to see her, if she was still alive. And one day, when we were in a place holding a meeting, we met a poor mother who had aged unrecognisably with grief over the years, as if twenty years had passed instead of six. Oh, how happy my heart was when I saw her again! And do you know what happened?! God performed a miracle! The girl was set free and no longer needed to live in the mountains. She also found the Lord Jesus. Such is our Almighty God and such is the Living Gospel, which is the great power of God!

I also told you about the blind man who was not previously healed by my prayer of faith, and I experienced damage and bitter disappointment in doing so. After, the Holy Spirit was poured out on us and began to work, the Lord taught me this too – divine faith. He said to me, “Erlo, forget your so-called faith. It is of no importance to Me...”

Dear friends, I know, of course, that Hebrews 11:6 says that, “without faith it is impossible to please God; for it is necessary that he who comes to God should believe that He is, and that those who seek Him should be rewarded” These words of Scripture were fulfilled in the time of Christ. Whenever a man came to Jesus, He asked him, “Do you believe?” If the petitioner begged for forgiveness and healing, Jesus asked, “Do you believe that this can be done?” And only after hearing the affirmative, “I believe”, He said, “According to your faith, it will be done for you.”

So, the fact that we must have faith is, of course, undeniable. However, the difference is that what we call faith and what Scripture calls faith are very different things. For example, in John 5:44 Jesus says this, “No wonder you can’t believe! For you gladly honor each other, but you don’t care about the honor that comes from the one who alone is God.” Do you see how God rates faith? He tells us plainly that if

we expect and receive honour and glory from men, we cannot believe in Him.

But what is faith? This is a subject that needs to be discussed separately, so, in order not to stray too far from my story, I want to say just one thing right now. Jesus did not say that we should believe in our faith, but that we should believe in Him. Faith is a strange thing. The more we focus on our faith and look at it, the smaller and smaller it becomes until it disappears altogether. But if we look to Jesus, then faith grows and multiplies, even though we are not aware of it.

Often, when we have great miracles in our mission, people come and ask me if I felt a particularly great sense of faith at that moment. Then I am surprised when they ask and answer, "Wait, let me think and remember, did I have faith at that time or did I not have it? Yes, I suppose it was. We must always have faith." Only this answer usually does not satisfy them and the question follows again, "But how did it happen anyway?" I am saying, "I simply came to the Lord the way a child comes to his father. I asked Him as a Father, and He fulfilled my request."

You know, the Lord once said to me, "Erlo, leave and put away your so-called faith. Think and strive better that your relationship with Me is always in order." Do you see what in God's eyes is the main thing? It is important that our connection with the Lord is constant and unbreakable, and that there is nothing in our lives that separates us from Him. If that connection or that relationship with God (whatever we call it) is in order, then He can work through His Spirit without hindrance.

Let us now return to the interrupted story. When they first heard of the Lord, many of the pagans left their past and came to Him, surrendering themselves to His full authority. In doing so, they had no way of knowing everything at once about their future new life. Even if it had been possible, they would not have been able to grasp it all at once. It is not without reason that Jesus, speaking to His disciples, once said, "There is so much more I want to tell you, but you can't bear it now." (John 16:12). In the same way, these believing

African pagans, having received Christ, went back to where they lived, and then the Lord Himself continued to guide them so that after a while they came back to us to clarify for themselves the new things in the Christian life that He had pointed out to them.

As I said before, there are many African people who are totally illiterate, who cannot read and write. Many of them have no idea about the Word of God and have never heard of it, so God Himself becomes their teacher. For example, one day an old woman who used to be a bitter drunkard repented and believed. After that she returned to her home, but a few days later she came to us again and asked, "Tell me, if I am a Christian and Jesus lives in my heart, can I not drink wine anymore?" Surprised by her question, we asked her how she came to this, and then she told us the following.

"When I was returning home from your place, I went round to my friends' house out of old habit, wishing to have a drink with them. But as soon as I took a few sips, I felt sick. I had to run out of that house immediately because I started vomiting. The vomiting went on for so long and was so painful that I thought I was going to die. Nothing like this had ever happened to me before. A few days later I tried drinking wine again and the same thing happened to me. Now I can't tolerate alcohol at all. Tell me, do Christians not drink wine at all? Does it go against the Christian life? I feel that God has changed me a lot. I now have a completely different nature that He has given me. A great many of the things I used to do, I can no longer do. Is that right? Is it right?"

You see, friends, from the moment of repentance and conversion, Christ became her life. Thus we were again convinced in practice of the truth of Scripture, which says, "This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!" (2 Corinthians 5:17).

At the beginning of my story I said that the Zulu people have their children under the influence of witchcraft from

the mother's womb, and thereafter magic, service to demons or spirits of the dead and sacrifices become their daily bread.

And so such a Zulu became a Christian. One day he was invited to visit his brother, who had sacrificed to the spirits of the dead before he came and had conversational fellowship with them. The new Christian convert did not know that a sacrifice had been made that day. When the sacrificial meat was served to him and he began to eat it, an incredible thing happened. In front of the people, his whole body suddenly began to swell. The swelling was so big that he was unable to lift his eyelids to look.

Then he urgently called his brother to him and asked him what kind of meat he had been given. When he heard that the meat was idolatrous, the sick man asked to be taken home immediately and fell on his knees and begged the Lord to forgive him for his sin of ignorance, and during this prayer the inflammation and swelling immediately disappeared. Then the man realised that he could no longer offer sacrifices and eat idol sacrifices. This is how the Lord spoke and still speaks to these people. There is much that He teaches them, and they, like sheep, hear the voice of their Shepherd. After believing, Christ becomes their life, and the Bible their guide. He fills a man's life with Himself to such an extent that his whole appearance and being are completely transformed. Wives become like Jesus, husbands begin to see Jesus in them, and children reflect the image of Christ.

I must say that family life among the Zulu people follows the well-known proverb, "A dog is commanded by a stick," and that "dog" is most often the wife. So, one such African woman came home after accepting Christ. Her husband was the worst drunkard in the whole area. He was a terribly wicked and cruel man. His wife and children often had to sleep outside or in the cornfield because every day he beat them with a stick. The husband spent everything on drinks and the wife had to feed her family alone. So there was never peace in their home because the wife did not have the strength to keep quiet, and it usually came to arguments and fights. But one day there came a moment when the

woman repented and turned to the Lord. A few days later her husband asked, "Listen, wife, what has happened to you?" amazed at the sudden change in her. "Why do you ask that?" she answered question by question. "But you've changed so much! You no longer speak to me the way you used to. You've become more obedient than you've ever been before! You were always trying to have the last word, as if you were the head of the house and not me! Now you're doing things differently. You honour me so much that I feel like a king in the house!"

And indeed, when her husband came home drunk, as was her custom, she no longer asked him where he had come from or where he had been for so long. Instead, she brought him a basin of warm water to wash his feet, made his bed, and treated him calmly and affectionately. The astonished husband shook his head in bewilderment.

"Tell me," he inquired, "have you become a Christian?! Have you not accepted the white man's God, have you?" It must be said that when people of the Zulu tribe become Christians, they are not in a hurry to talk about it, because to say so would be to expose themselves to mortal danger. If a child tells his parents that it has become a Christian, it will be expelled. We have many children in the mission, even very young children, who have been cast out of their homes and families. The Zulu call those who become Christians traitors, because it is considered that such an African person takes the side of the white people and, rejecting his own religion, adopts the religion of the white people.

That's why the woman kept silent when asked by her drunken husband. He could have killed her for it. But her husband kept on asking her until she confessed that she had indeed been with the whites in Mapumulo and had accepted their God. Then he said, "If the God of the whites was able to do to you what I was not able to do with a stick, then there is something in it! So, I would like to go there too!" The next day he came to our worship service and immediately repented.

We had a very famous lion tamer in South Africa. He once frankly confessed that he could tame any lion, even the most ferocious, but not his wife. So, it is no wonder that it is a real miracle for some husbands when the Lord begins to work in their wives' lives and changes them radically. The wife does not need to say much or testify much at all. If her husband sees a miraculous change in her life, it wins him over without words. Remember, dear wives, that the husband's heart is always peculiar in that he cannot and will not accept anything if his wife begins to teach or preach to him. This opposition to her words will be observed even when he realises that his wife is saying the right thing. This is the heart of man. Therefore, knowing this, Jesus promised to help you, wives, if you obey and submit to your husbands. It is by right behaviour that a woman can quickly win her husband's heart and win him to the Lord. We were able to see this as soon as the revival began, and since then the question of the husbands' repentance has ceased to be a problem. They repented one by one.

The children who believed in Jesus also came home and did not say a word, but their behaviour and life changed so much that after a few days their parents started asking what had happened to them. In the past, we used to have to tell them two or three times to go to bed, or to do their homework, or to help them wash the dishes and tidy up the house. At this point arguments and contradictions usually began, "Oh, mum, why do I have to do this job and not someone else?! Why do I always have to wash the dishes?!" Now, without waiting for their parents to tell them to do it, the children did it themselves. When the father and mother returned home, they would find everything tidied up, washed and cleaned, and they would ask the children in amazement where they had been and who had taught them how to do it. Thus, parents came to know and receive the Lord through their children, and this fire burned and spread through the life of Christ reflected in those who came to know and receive Him.

The believing children went to their schools, and the fire of revival began to spread there, encompassing not only

other students but also teachers. One of these cases will be the subject of my next story.

Shortly after revival began, some parents (who are now our best mission workers) came to me and told me that they wanted to withdraw their children from school. Surprised, I asked them why they wanted to do so, to which they replied that if they did not do so, they could not continue to preach the Word of God. Even more surprised, I continued to ask them the reason for their decision.

“Doesn’t the Bible tell us,” they said, “that he who cannot manage his own house is not able to manage the fellowship either? We learnt that our children were disobedient at school, did not do their homework well, and were not only mean to other students, but also disobeyed their teachers. So, we must decide on one thing – either our children will repent or we must stop preaching the Word of God!”

“Well, well...” I thought, “What’s going to happen now?” The parents continued, “We prayed about it and decided not to let our children go to school. We don’t want to spend the money God gives us on educating our children. It is better for them to remain unschooled than to be clever Satanists!”

Hearing this, I was ready to grab my head, thinking that such an approach could lead to the end of revival. However, these parents remained firm in their decision and did not allow their delinquent children to attend school, explaining it this way, “Children, we preach the gospel and tell people about the Lord Jesus, and the Bible teaches us that if a minister of the church is not able to keep his children in obedience, then he cannot govern the church. You are disobedient and are not being light and salt in the school, tying our hands and feet and shutting us up. It cannot go on like this! If you serve the devil, we will not educate you further!” Thus the Christians took their children out of school.

After that, one week passed, then another, after which they brought the children to our mission and, praying, asked the Lord to help them in this matter. After a while the children began to repent one by one. Many of them were not

more than seven or eight years old, others were twelve or thirteen years old. The Lord sent into these children's hearts a deep realisation of their sins and repentance. They asked their family and friends for forgiveness, then came to me and purified their lives in confessions. The children then asked their parents to allow them to go to school to apologise to the teachers and their peers. The parents agreed, but warned that at the same time they would like to see the fruits of their repentance. The children promised that from now on they would live for the Lord in school.

Then these parents came to me asking me to give them a car to go to school. They asked me for advice on what to say to the principal after what had happened. After all, they had taken their children out of school without any explanation.

"That's your business, my friends!" I replied. "After all, I wasn't the one who told you to take your children out of school. It was your own decision. You said then that God Himself had revealed it to you. And if that is true, then He will also reveal to you what to do next. So in this case I cannot advise you personally." (*Dear friends, we always do this because we human beings must not take the place of the Holy Spirit and God Himself, Who must always be first and last in everything. And if any soul comes to us and asks for advice or guidance, we in turn ask such a person, "And what does the Lord say to you?"*)

So, these parents took my car and with undisguised fear and trembling went to the school. Their fear was explained in particular by the fact that the principal of this school did not want to know anything about the Gospel and forbade Christianity in the school, wanting nothing to do with it.

When the parents arrived at the school, the first thing they did was to pray without getting out of the car, asking the Lord to be with them and to go ahead of them, preparing the way. When they opened their eyes after praying, they almost fainted. The school principal was standing in front of their car. Imagine their even greater astonishment when this director, addressing them, spoke in a trembling voice,

“Dear friends, I feel before you a criminal, a man with a guilty conscience. Please forgive me!”

The shocked parents didn’t even know what to say. It was the other way round. They were the ones who had made the mistake of taking their children out of school without any explanation! They had come here to apologise to this man! But before they could say anything at all, the principal himself apologised to them. Eventually they all walked together into his office. As they sat down at his desk, the principal addressed them again with the words, “I have a feeling that I am very guilty before you...”

“No,” the Christians stopped him, “It is we who are guilty before you! We are the ones who have sinned! We have done wrong by taking the children out of school without any explanation. So we want to tell you this reason now. We preach the Word of God, the Gospel, and the Bible says that if we are ministers in the church, and we are not able to manage our own homes, we are unworthy of our ministry. We heard that our children were disobedient and disruptive in class, did not do their homework well, and some of them even smoked and quarrelled with their classmates. That is why we decided that we could not go on like this. Either our children would repent or we would have to stop preaching the Word of God. We had no other choice, so we decided to leave the children at home. We would rather they remain illiterate than be educated and become servants of the devil!

At these words of the parents, a fountain pen fell out of the principal’s hands. “My dears!” he said. “Let me gather all the parents to tell them all what you have just told me, and ask them all to do the same! After all, how different our system of teaching and all work with children would be if all parents rose to the level you have reached! In addition, I want to tell you that from now on I am opening the doors of this school to preach the gospel! Any time of the day, whenever God alone prompts you to do so, welcome to join us! We will set aside all classes and do a worship service. Our doors will always be open to you, and you can always preach the Word of God here!”

When asked by the parents if they could now send their children to school again, the principal happily replied in the affirmative. On Monday morning all these children, starting with the youngest, came to school and first of all went to the principal to ask for forgiveness. Then they asked him for permission to speak to all the students. Then the headmaster gathered all seven hundred students together, and the Christian children stood up and began to ask forgiveness for living unkind lives and being unfaithful to the Lord Jesus.

As the children were condemning their wrong lives, asking the other children for forgiveness and testifying for the Lord, one by one the teachers began to sob and then cried loudly. The disciples also wept after them. Thus the Holy Spirit visited the school and hundreds of young souls turned to Christ, cleansing and restoring their lives. For three weeks the fire lit by the Lord travelled through schools and various other educational institutions, reaching even the University of the Zulu Republic. Thousands of children and youth were reached by the Word of God and the Holy Spirit. This is how the Lord won the victory! Where did it all seem to begin? A “wrong” act! That is the way of our Lord! He often comes when we do not expect Him, and He acts in ways we do not assume!

Dear friends, if you have ever experienced spiritual revival, I don’t think you will be satisfied with anything less! If you are satisfied with anything less, it is only because you have never tasted the joy of revival! If you recognise God in His Glory, Majesty and Power, then you will watch and pray, asking your Lord to help you to live in such a way that nothing comes between you and Him!

Chapter 7

Enemies of revival

If we pray for revival, we must not forget the difficulties that will inevitably come with it. This is because spiritual revival is what the devil particularly hates. True spiritual revival can be summarised briefly as the work of the Holy Spirit in dedicated and faithful servants of God who, empowered from above, go out into the mission field. And if these messengers of God invade Satan's kingdom, he is certainly not indifferent. At such times he makes every effort to hinder or at least obstruct the work of God. For this purpose he uses his vessels, of which he has more than enough, not only among the people of the world, but unfortunately also among those who call themselves Christians. In confirmation of this, I will tell you about what we had to experience just before the revival began and in its further development.

First of all, the devil tried to do everything he could to prevent the revival from beginning. At a time when we were meeting daily to seek the face of the Lord and put our lives in order, I was suddenly summoned to the burgomaster's office. When I came to him, I saw the judge there as well. After greeting me and asking me to sit down, they began to ask me where I held our meetings. I told them that I preach in an old barn, which used to be a cowshed. When they heard this, they wanted to know exactly where it was.

In explaining the reason for the summons, the burgomaster said that there were people in the area who had written a complaint against me to the nearby town of Pietermaritzburg. They did not want me to preach the gospel to them and insisted that I be removed from their neighbourhood. Thus the places where I was not allowed to enter to preach were named. It must be said that we in South Africa have freedom to preach the Gospel. But if, for example, an African king or chief of a tribe declares that he wants nothing to do with Christianity, our white government takes

this into consideration because it does not want to infringe on the rights of African population of the country.

There are also some churches whose private interests are protected by the government. The fact is that when the first missionaries came to South Africa in the last century, they were given full ownership of large farms with large tracts of land. They were surrounded by African pagans, and if any Zulu accepted Christ and became a Christian, they were cast out. There was no more place for such African people among their fellow tribesmen, so, they found refuge on the large farms of the white missionaries. In this way thousands of hectares of land became the property of the church communities that had been formed there, and they had complete control over the life in these settlements located on their territory. Their rights and powers are protected by the government and the state. It was these kinds of churches that did not allow me to stay and preach in their neighbourhoods because I did not belong to them or their organisations. In their complaint the church leaders wrote that they did not want me to lead their sheep away from them (*meaning, of course, their spiritual sheep*).

So, even though I had official permission from the South African government for my missionary work and had the right to preach anywhere, in this case the local church owners could allow or forbid me to be on their property.

Realising the situation, I put the matter in the hands of the Lord in mental prayer, for I felt that I must remain in Mapumulo. And so the judge and the burgomaster ordered me to bring them a detailed plan of the area. When they examined it, they found out that the border of the disputed territory runs through this barn, not in the middle, but on its northern side. It turned out that only $\frac{1}{8}$ of the barn – its north-eastern corner, was on the free territory, and $\frac{7}{8}$ of its area was in the area forbidden to me.

Then the burgomaster asked me in which part of the barn I was during my sermon. I replied that I was preaching standing to the left of the table, which was in the corner of the barn on its left side. On comparing these landmarks with

the plan, the judge exclaimed in amazement. It turned out that during the sermon I always stood at the dividing line, just on the prohibition-free side, while the church sat on the prohibition side. The matter ended with my being allowed to preach further. So, wonderfully God solved the problem at that time, and soon afterwards revival began.

You see, dear friends, the devil has almost succeeded in thwarting the work of God. But if we walk humbly before God, obeying Him in all things, He destroys all of Satan's schemes and intentions. For nothing is impossible to God.

It was only two or three days after the revival had begun that we were again banned from holding services. This time it came from a man in authority who did not want to know anything about Christianity. He forbade us from holding services under the pretext that the place where we were meeting was not for a church, but for industry. And then I thought that this would be the end of revival. But even though people may forbid us from meeting, they can never bind the Holy Spirit and the Living Word of God. Since the day of the ban, we have not been able to hold services and prayer meetings in this area, but the fire lit by the Lord has not stopped burning. God Himself went ahead of us, continuing to bring people's souls and breaking down the barriers that arose before us.

The man who, applying the law, forbade our meetings was a godless man with only one seven-year-old son in his family. Soon after he rebelled against us, he was transferred to another province, the capital of our country, Pretoria. When he and his family arrived there, disaster struck. While his seven-year-old son was out for a walk, a large dog came running to the house out of nowhere and tore up the child, so that he died on the spot. This was God's retribution on the man who had become an obstacle to revival. We were told later that after the incident this godless man started going to church.

Another man, who acted in concert with the first one and who also rebelled against us, had healthy, normal

children. But when he stood in the way of revival, another child was born in his family who could neither live nor die, suffering terrible torments.

When the devil failed to prevent revival from the outside, he tried to do it from within, seeking out souls fit for his use.

One family that was in our church at that time rebelled against revival, believing that accepting the Lord and going to meetings was enough to be a Christian. They argued that there was no need to meet daily twice a day as we did, because there were also chores and responsibilities at home that needed time. There were four daughters in this family. After this family rebelled against us, all these girls fell into fornication within one year, with the result that each of them was expecting an illegitimate child.

Another family in our church also opposed revival, calling us too extreme and fanatical. They wanted to lead a quiet and comfortable Christian life, and tried to persuade others to do the same, with the consequence that all the sons of the family were imprisoned, after which the mother came to us, asking me to visit them in prison.

There are many more examples of God executing His judgement on those who oppose His work. On the one hand we have seen the love and faithfulness of God, and on the other hand we have seen His judgement and vengeance, confirming the truth that God will not be scolded.

And yet, despite the fact that we have repeatedly seen and been convinced that God is with us, it was difficult for me to bear the restrictions imposed on me, and I often prayed for a long time. In this sorrow, I was driving once in my car past the forbidden area for me, when suddenly the words of promise came to my heart, "I will give you this people and these lands as an inheritance." Struck, I exclaimed, "Lord! How can this happen if I am prohibited from entering this area by the court?!" However, the words spoken by God are still being fulfilled.

Certainly, we continued to pray, although not openly. And then one day a woman came to us, who worked for

the burgomaster, and asked us to pray for her as she was possessed. At that moment, I thought that perhaps her request was indeed sincere, but it could also be a trap for us, so I said that I could not pray for her because I wanted to obey the authorities. After all, the Bible teaches us to obey the law and authority. After explaining this to her, I sent her back to the burgomaster to explain to him why I refused to pray for her.

A few days later, I was summoned to the magistrate's office. When I arrived there, the burgomaster asked me why I refused to pray for the woman who worked for him. I replied that I could not do so because I was prohibited. "No one can forbid you to pray for a person!" he objected. "Yes, but I pray for people not alone, but together with our colleagues," I clarified. "And they often sing during prayer." The burgomaster fell silent and pondered for a long time, then, turning to me, said, "Well. You can do it."

Oh, how we rejoiced then! It was like a breakthrough in the wall of prohibitions! After that, we could gather together again, sing, and pray for people.

In a woman who worked at the magistrate, there were legions of evil spirits who told us that they would not come out of her flesh without shedding blood. And indeed, for many hours the possessed woman was vomiting blood as the unclean spirits came out of her.

Shortly after this incident, one day at midnight we were gathered in my bedroom and prayed fervently. At that time I was living in Mapumulo in my elder brother's big house, where were many rooms and no outsider could know which one we were in. Suddenly our prayer was interrupted by a loud knock on the window. Rising from my knees, I went to the window and, opening it, saw two African men standing before me. When I asked them what they wanted, they said that they had been sent specially for me.

It turned out that about ten kilometres from where we were, a Zulu man whom I did not even know had died. The last wish of this deceased person was that I should perform a funeral service at his grave.

Foolishly, without thinking or questioning the Lord at all, I immediately told these people the first thing that came into my mind - that I could not fulfil this request because their area was forbidden to me. (*It is true that our tongue is inflamed by the fire of Gehenna, and therefore often speaks too much ahead of our common sense*). When I realised my mistake, I asked the two men to wait while I prayed about it.

Kneeling down, we got clarity about what we should do. After that I suggested that these men stay with us for the night and in the morning go to the burgomaster and tell him about the last will of the deceased and why they had come to us. It was no longer my problem, but the problem of the rulers, who knew as well as anyone that the last wish of the dying must be fulfilled at all costs. Otherwise, there would be an uproar and a wave of indignation that could turn into a revolution.

After listening to the messengers, the burgomaster sent them to those who were directly responsible for the area. What could these rulers do who did not want me in their lands?! After all, they also knew very well that they could not oppose, because, according to African beliefs, if any man dares to go against the will of the dying, he will be severely punished for it by the fact that he will be constantly haunted and tormented by the spirit of the deceased. Such are the notions and beliefs of African pagans.

Finding themselves in a desperate situation, the local rulers were forced to write to the burgomaster to give me permission to enter their area for no more than two hours to perform the burial, after which I must leave immediately. So, I had in my hands a written authorisation to go to a funeral in an area forbidden to me. This turn of affairs brought us so much joy that we were ready to fly.

When we arrived at that place on the appointed day, hundreds of people were already gathered there. It was a great opportunity to preach the gospel! It felt like it was not a funeral, but a wedding. We had no reason to be sad, because it was so wonderful to stand on the ground of victory!

A few days after this incident, messengers came to us again with the same request. The last will of the other deceased was the same, that I should conduct a funeral service at his grave. We sent the messengers again to the burgomaster, and he sent them onwards, until the whole procedure was repeated again, whereupon the messengers again gave me permission. Thus for the second time we held our open service at the funeral. A short time later someone died again, and again in the same forbidden area.

You see, friends, we are servants of the One who holds the keys of hell and death, and for whom nothing is impossible. God once used Pharaoh so that His name might be glorified. Today, the Lord is using men like Pharaoh, who are hard-hearted and cruel, so that His great and holy name may be magnified!

In the course of a few weeks, we performed about ten burials, all in territory forbidden to me. The last wish of each deceased person was that I and my staff should be the ones to bury him. Finally, the burgomaster couldn't stand it any longer and said to the owners of the land, "What do you mean?! On the one hand, you forbid this man to come to you, and on the other hand, almost every five minutes you give him permission to do so!"

During those weeks of burial, thousands of people were caught up in the Holy Spirit. Thus the Lord used the death of some to raise the souls of many others to new life in Christ!

In this way God opened doors for us to evangelise in that area that remains open to this day, so, even the rulers who formerly opposed us have now become our friends and often invite us to visit them. After the funeral services, the people would say, "This is the gospel we desire, and these are the people who should preach to us!"

Dear friends, I must say that what we experienced is not an exception. Where God begins to act, Satan is bound to act. Revival, about which everyone says only good things, cannot be revival from the true Holy Spirit. Why, you may ask? Because if the devil is calm, it shows that this kingdom belongs to him and that he is the master of it. When he is

furious, it is a good sign that he is losing something. In such a case he will make every endeavour to hinder the work of God, using for this purpose the vessels which (however, as bitter as it is to admit) he very often finds for himself among those who consider themselves pious children of God.

It was exactly the same at the time of Christ. The Pharisees were considered to be the most pious. Today, the word "Pharisee" has become a name, an offensive and even insulting word, and if we are called Pharisees, we can even get angry, can't we? But in those days these were people who were at the highest level of worship. The Pharisee fasted twice a week, sacrificed a tenth of his income, prayed a lot, and performed things that others often did not do. These were men who had prayed earnestly and fervently for four centuries that God would send the Messiah to them. But when their prayer was finally answered and the Messiah was sent to them on earth, they hated Him and crucified, nailing Him to the cross of Calvary.

The Pharisees cursed Christ because He did not come as they thought and imagined. It was because during the four centuries they had been praying for the Messiah, they had formed their own doctrines and ideas about His coming to earth. They created their own picture of it and believed that when the Messiah came, He would surely appear as a king and sit on His throne on Mount Olivet. They even used scriptures that seemed to confirm their ideas.

This is why the image of His coming was unacceptable to them. "How can anything good come from Nazareth?" they said. "Besides, we know where He comes from, and the Scriptures tell us that when the Messiah comes, we will not know it, because He will suddenly appear among us...! How dare this impostor claim to have come from heaven!" They continued to be indignant. "Is not Jesus the son of Joseph, whose mother and father we know? We also know his brothers and sisters..."

Of course, today we may only be laughing about it. But I must say that it is very dangerous to know only half the truth and to see only half a thing.

These most devout and most spiritual people of that time became opponents of Christ only because His appearance was contrary to their concepts and ideas. This was the reason why they not only did not experience revival, but became its fiercest opponents.

Many centuries have passed since then, but this example should serve us well in our day. As it was in the days of Christ, so it is always necessary to count on the fact that it is those who pray for revival who may become its opponents when it begins, and such may be the people among us.

It was not for nothing that Jesus said that we must not pour new wine into old wineskins, because it would cause double damage, the wineskins would burst and the wine would flow out. So, in order for God to pour His New Wine into us, it is important that our old wineskins be able to be renewed. Or, to put it another way, if we want the Lord to revitalise our spirit and begin to work in our lives, then we must be willing to leave all that is ours, to give up our old concepts, perceptions, thoughts and ways, and to embrace the Lord's thoughts and the Lord's ways.

Revival is not possible until we humble ourselves and deny ourselves, allowing the Lord to act as He wills. After all, He is our Lord, and a master has that right. If we do not agree to this, then not only will we not experience revival, but we will become enemies of it when it begins.

I know a man who some years ago said that when praying for revival, we should watch and stand guard over our hearts, so that we would not be enemies of it when it came. However, even though he said that, this is exactly what happened to him afterwards. When revival began in their midst, he became the leader of the adversaries. The reason for his rebellion was that God had used people he had not expected, and because revival had begun in a place where he thought it could not possibly happen.

Such examples, unfortunately, are not uncommon. Many years ago, at the southernmost point of South Africa, at the Cape of Good Hope, there lived a man of God named

Andre Morey, who was a pastor of a Lutheran church. The Lord sent revival to the place where he was. It happened during a prayer meeting where they were praying for revival. There was an unremarkable girl of mixed-race descent who always sat in the back rows. During the common prayer this girl asked for permission to pray separately. When she received this permission and began to pray to heaven, the unexpected happened – God heard her and the Holy Spirit came down and began to work.

Who would have guessed that it would happen like this! Some wept, others prayed fervently, others repented in brokenness, and Andre Morey, observing the scene, wanted to stop everything. He resisted, believing that it was wrong, that things should have been different. As the preacher and pastor of this church, who himself had prayed for revival, he rebelled against it, claiming that what had happened could not be from the Lord. However, God Himself suddenly spoke to this man, commanding him not to quench the Holy Spirit. It was only after Andre Morey recognised this sin and repented of his opposition that God took him into His inheritance and made him a vessel for His glory. So as you can see, we can pray for something, but if it doesn't happen the way we thought and imagined, we can rebel against it.

We had a similar experience in South Africa. When the revival began in late 1966 and the beginning of 1967, I rejoiced and said, "Oh, what a great victory this is! All of Christianity will now triumph and rejoice with us over this breakthrough in the realm of darkness and spiritual gloom!" But what was my disappointment when instead I had to endure a fierce rebellion in the face of Pharisaic, legalistic Christianity. For ten years the doors of all Christian churches were closed to us, and this continued until people became convinced that only true spiritual revival can bear such fruit.

However, if we look at the whole history of Christ's Church, we can see that every time the Inquisition is organised not by godless people, but by believers who consider

themselves pious and fighters for the truth. Remember what happened at the time of the Reformation, when the Catholic Church firmly rejected the new doctrine! Rivers of blood were flowing in Europe at that time! Martin Luther had been declared a criminal and disenfranchised, so anyone could kill him with impunity. Oh, if only every Lutheran pastor and preacher would think about this more often!

In John Wesley's time, the Anglican Church also resisted and rebelled against true Christian teaching. It went so far as to say that, being deprived of a pulpit to preach from, Wesley was forced to stand on his father's grave, saying, "From here you cannot drive me away! Here my father is buried, and here I can preach!"

Yes, my friends, being a true Christian, following Jesus faithfully, is worth something! When people say bad things about people, when they are persecuted, when they try hard to disprove what they are saying, that is usually a very good sign. Can you name me one prophet or other true man of God that everyone speaks well of! Even our Lord and Master was said to have a demon in Him, to be "out of His mind" and to perform miracles by the power of Beelzebub. It is not by chance that, addressing His disciples, the Lord said, "And since I, the master of the household, have been called the prince of demons, the members of my household will be called by even worse names!", But "Be happy about it! Be very glad! For a great reward awaits you in heaven." (Matthew 10:25, 5:12).

Life shows that when a Christian is not serious about his Christianity there is peace and quiet around him, but as soon as he really converts and gives his life to Jesus, he immediately becomes a great danger to the devil, who does everything he can to break and defame such a child of God.

Dear friends, if there is such a preacher of the Gospel among you, to whom no one opposes and whose words all without exception agree with, then there is something wrong with him. The words of the Holy Scriptures are sounding for such a one, "What sorrow awaits you who are praised by the crowds..." (Luke 6:26). Woe to him who stands behind the

pulpit trying to please his hearers, and when the whole church says “yes” and “amen” in response to his sermon. Such a one should leave the pulpit as soon as possible, for he invites the wrath and curse of God upon himself.

If we preachers take our ministry seriously, if we preach the Word of God to the people as it is written, it is simply impossible that everyone without exception agrees with it, much less Satan. If the devil remains silent, without showing concern, then the question arises, “What are we preaching about? What are we saying and teaching?!” Remember what happened when true men of God, prophets and apostles spoke to the people! Think of the reaction to the words of Jesus, the One who came to save His people from their sins! What did it look like then and what does it look like now?

Do you know that after some of my visits to Europe, young people cannot forgive me for the way I have spoken of them. Why, you ask? I’ll try to explain it to you. Among the pagans, girls keep their virginity until marriage – European youth cannot even hear about it. What is accepted among the Pagans is rejected among white Christian nations and is considered too extreme, backward and impracticable. Isn’t that so?!

White women say to me indignantly, “What are you preaching! This is impossible! That we should submit and obey our husbands?! No, it’s not for our civilised age!” One European preacher even said to me, “No, Erlo! That was only in the old days. Today, many women are scientists, teachers, doctors, nurses. So, should they also be expected to submit to their husbands?! No, now men and women are equal!”

Dear friends, what are we holding on to?! What is our reference point and our guide?! Doesn’t the Word of God matter anymore?! Where are the people who dare to stand before the whole world and say that the Word of God is still valid today, that it has the same meaning in our age as it did before, and that God’s will must be done among us on earth as it is in heaven?!

Realise, that my main task is not for people to turn to God and repent, nor is it for the sick to be healed. The most important thing for me is to speak what the Lord has sent me to do! And in this I must be faithful to Him, not only now, but always, until the hour of my death. It does not matter whether I die or live on, whether I am praised or disliked! None of this matters! What matters is that the truth is preached, no matter what the reaction of the hearers may be!

The Apostle Paul in First Corinthians 9:16 says, “Yet preaching the Good News is not something I can boast about. I am compelled by God to do it. How terrible for me if I didn’t preach the Good News!” Neither can I preach otherwise! I must tell you only the truth! What else can we preach if the Word of God is no longer valid?! What else do we have to hold on to and build on?!

Yes, it costs something to be a true Christian! But thank God that Jesus once said, “Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift each of you like wheat. But I have pleaded in prayer for you, Simon, that your faith should not fail. So when you have repented and turned to me again, strengthen your brothers.” (Luke 22:31-32).

My friends, the One who prayed like this for Peter prayed for his followers! So thank God that He still gives His faithful servants the strength to go through everything! To go through whatever it takes! But woe to the servant who does not have the courage to follow his Lord uncompromisingly, forsaking the crooked paths of man-pleasing! Woe to him who does not have the courage to speak the truth and fight for it! Woe to the preacher who cares about pleasing people! It would be better for him not to preach, for the Word of God says about such people, “But cowards, unbelievers, the corrupt, murderers, the immoral, those who practice witchcraft, idol worshipers, and all liars – their fate is in the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death.” (Revelation 21:8).

And in conclusion of this topic I want to say something else, and it should be a red thread through all of the above.

If a person becomes an opponent and an enemy of revival, there can be only one reason for it - the sin that has found a place in his life, and very often this sin is fornication. Whether you believe it or not, it is so. You can take my words to heart and it may be years before you come to the same conclusion if the truth comes out.

There is much uncleanness among God's children and, unfortunately, very often among preachers. I am not your enemy, brothers, but neither am I a friend of the modern "scribes, Pharisees and Sadducees"! He who stands behind the pulpit must have a pure heart and preach the Word of God from a pure heart! We do not need other teachers! It is better for us to live without them!

Chapter 8

God is a consuming fire

Dear friends, when I talk about revival, I often compare it to the sun. At sunrise and sunset, it is like a red ball, which we can look at in peace, and it is often difficult to tell whether it is the sun or the moon by its mere appearance. At such times we see the sun without its powerful, blinding and warming power. But things begin to look very different when the same sun at noon, having risen high and high, is at its zenith and shines in all its power in such a way that there is no need to look at it to be sure of its presence, because you can feel the heat coming from it. When the sun goes down again, it will again look like a red ball, because the power of its dazzling radiance has again been lost.

This is exactly what happens in habitual Christianity. God is like the sun at sunrise or sunset. At the time of revival, however, God is the sun at its zenith. Then He acts in His glory, power and majesty, in His great radiance, splendour and holiness. In doing so, one experiences things that would be unthinkable at other times. In the days of the early Apostolic Church, Ananias had to die shortly after the Day of Pentecost because of his deception, and his wife died after him for the same reason. And today there are terrible fornications committed in the churches, but nothing of the kind happens. These days there is hatred, hypocrisy, lies, envy and revenge, yet nothing unusual happens there. People go on with their lives in peace. However, when the Lord reveals Himself in all His might, when He acts in His great power as the Risen One and reveals Himself to man in all the majesty of His Godhead, extraordinary and amazing things begin to happen. Some of these experiences in South Africa I would like to share with you.

The first incident took place in Mapumulo, where the revival began. One day we were gathered together as usual and prayed fervently, asking, "Lord! For through Your Holy Word You say to us, 'I have come to set the world on fire,

and I wish it were already burning!’ (Luke 12:49). Here we are, O Lord! Light your holy fire! Do what You came to do! Baptise us with Your Holy Fire, Your Holy Spirit!” That is, humanly speaking, we reminded the Lord of the words spoken by John the Baptist, “He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.” (Luke 3:16).

As we were praying like this, something happened that had never happened to us before. One of the crowd suddenly cried out, “Woe is me! My eyes are burning like fire! Oh, I am burning! Woe is me! I am a man with unclean eyes! Lord, I beg you, forgive me!” This was followed by a cry from another of the praying people, “Woe is me! My mouth! My tongue! Oh, woe is me!” This was reminiscent of what the prophet Isaiah had experienced. When he saw the Lord sitting on His throne in glory and heard the seraphim crying out, “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts!” he cried out in fear and trembling, “It’s all over! I am doomed, for I am a sinful man. I have filthy lips, and I live among a people with filthy lips. Yet I have seen the King, the LORD of Heaven’s Armies.” (Isaiah 6:5). So, we experienced then in practice that our God is truly a consuming fire (see Hebrews 12:29).

Again, amidst the prayer, there was a cry from one of those present, “Oh, my feet! My feet are burning as if on fire...!” In his desperate need, this man tore off his shoes and threw them to the other end of the room. He beat his hands on his feet as if he wanted to extinguish the flames scorching him. Of course no fire was visible, for what was happening was a spiritual experience, but the unfortunate man was in such agony that we feared he might die. It was the Lord who was in our midst and touched everyone where he was unclean. I could go into detail now about what was the cause of such experiences, but I think you can imagine for yourself what unclean eyes, unclean lips, unclean tongue, and feet walking in unclean places mean.

One African preacher, who had been a great blessing to many people and through whom many had turned to the Lord and experienced deliverance, suddenly also cried out loudly, “Oh, I am perishing! Lord, have mercy on me, a sinner!”

When we finished, he told us that while praying he felt as if someone was cutting him in two. In describing it, he used the same words we read in Matthew 24:48-51, where the Lord tells the parable of the wicked servant, "But what if the servant is evil and thinks, 'My master won't be back for a while,' and he begins beating the other servants, partying, and getting drunk? The master will return unannounced and unexpected, and he will cut the servant to pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." (Matthew 24:48-51).

This brother was in great fear and trembling from his experience and asked us very much to pray for him. So we gathered in a circle and began to pray. During this prayer he suddenly got up from his knees and went out into the centre of the room and began to twist and wriggle like a snake, repeating again and again, "I am in a darkness that is impenetrable, pitch black. Oh, what darkness it is! I can't even see my hand!" (Although it was a clear, sunny day). Seeing him squirming and writhing in the middle of the room, we stopped praying. This was the first time we had experienced something like this and we didn't know what to do next. He continued to cry out, "I am in pitch black darkness with weeping and gnashing of teeth...!" (*Dear friends! We experienced these words of scripture firsthand then, looking at the African brother who was a preacher of the gospel.*)

We resumed our prayer again, asking for him, "Lord, have mercy on him! Forgive him!" Finally he came to his senses and said, "It is impossible to describe in words what I have just gone through. The darkness I was in was literally palpable. It is truly an outer darkness, beyond which there is no greater!"

We began to plead this man, urging him to turn to the Lord without delay and to put his life in order in repentance, but he did not reveal his secret sin. A few days later he was gone. He died like Judas Iscariot, a death I would not wish on anyone. The people who removed his body told me afterwards what a horrible sight it was. It was only after his death that what had been done in secret became known. There was

uncleanness in this man's life. It turned out that he had done abominable things to some of the young girls in the church, criticised and condemned his neighbours, and slandered other ministers. For all this the vengeance and judgement of God befell him. So, we experienced then something of the baptism of fire. This was not the only incident. It happened several more times afterwards.

In another place, where many people were gathered, who were also praying fervently to the Lord, something happened that could be compared to the powerful noise of a huge jet plane flying very low over the building. When the Holy Spirit thus descended upon them, the place shook. The ceiling of the room shook and the walls wobbled. Among those present was one man who was a terror to his whole tribe. If he intended to kill someone, he did it with rare cruelty and cold blood. Calmly, without outward anger, he took his spear, and approaching the intended victim, carried out his plan. All the men of his tribe trembled before him. He was a truly cruel, godless, bloodthirsty pagan who feared nothing and no one.

It is not known how he came to be in that meeting, and it was only by the guidance from above that this terrible murderer witnessed the power of God at work. When he heard the mighty noise, and saw the ceiling move and sway, and the whole building shake and tremble, he fell on his knees and in great fear and trembling truly repented. He could not leave this room without turning himself and his whole life over to his Saviour in great repentance, purifying it deeply, to the very foundation. After his repentance a radical change took place in him. He became a completely different person, and to this day he is a wonderful example to Christians and pagans alike.

In another place, one hundred and fifty or two hundred kilometres from Mapumulo, Christians were also gathered to pray that the Lord would also light His fire in their pagan village. The room in which this prayer meeting took place was too small, so all the furniture had to be removed. Some of the people sat on chairs, but most of them sat on the floor.

There was a woman who was also a Christian. When everyone was praying fervently, she suddenly began to fidget restlessly in her seat and cried out, "Woe is me... I am not worthy. I was not even allowed to enter this assembly!... How could I dare to stand before the face of God with all my sins!" She jumped up from the floor as if she were standing on a hot cooker. Weeping and sweating, she repeated, "Oh, I am burning! Woe is me! How guilty I am..."

Then, apologising, she asked the assembled Christians to allow her to leave the meeting. When she received their consent, she did not leave, but literally ran out of the room, and without stopping ran the whole kilometre uphill to her home. When she entered the hut, she rushed to her husband, begging him for forgiveness, "God created us wives to be helpers to our husbands," she said to him, "and I have not been a helper to you! I have not been the kind of wife I should have been according to the Scriptures! I have not been a good example to you! The Lord has revealed this to me! Forgive me, husband! Please forgive me!"

When she received his forgiveness, she began to go from one of her children to another, saying, "Oh, children! Forgive me! I have not been a good mother to you! How often have I scolded you and been angry with you! How often I have been displeased and angry, saying words that should not be said! Please forgive me unreasonable!"

Having done this, she ran from one neighbour to another, and repenting, made peace with them. "Forgive me," she said with tears, "I have said bad things about you! Forgive me, I am a great sinner!" Then this woman ran to the white people for whom she worked and, brokenhearted, asked their forgiveness.

Having borne the fruit of repentance, she went back to the assembled Christians who were still in that room, and kneeling down, she began to pray, "I thank you, Lord, for this opportunity you have given me. I thank You for Your mercy and for this favourable time You have given me to put my life in order! I thank You, Lord, for being able to come with all my sins, and for giving me this opportunity

to go to people and ask their forgiveness for all my wrong words and actions!"

Many years have passed since then, but to this day this woman remains a living witness for the Lord Jesus. She had experienced firsthand that God cannot be mocked?! She experienced the holy presence of God, and now, if she talks about it, she knows what she is talking about. I would also like to add that this deep repentance was not without fruit. Her husband, who was at that time a bitter drunkard, repented and became a good example to many pagans. Her children also believed and served the Lord with all their hearts. Three of them became missionaries and workers in our mission.

In the Book of the Prophet Malachi we read, "But who will be able to endure it when he comes? Who will be able to stand and face him when he appears? For he will be like a blazing fire that refines metal, or like a strong soap that bleaches clothes. He will sit like a refiner of silver, burning away the dross. He will purify the Levites, refining them like gold and silver, so that they may once again offer acceptable sacrifices to the LORD." (Malachi 3:2-3).

I don't know if you have ever seen gold being refined? We have many gold mines in South Africa and I have seen this process many times. Whenever I have seen it, I have thought that the Lord, like a smelter, will refine us as He refines and smelts silver and gold. He is not in a hurry. He sits down on His seat and says, "So, now through the fire..." And blessed is the man whom the Lord cleanses now! For it is better now than on the day of judgement, when everyone will have to go through the fire! But woe to the one whose life is not purified and led through the fire, and not just through the fire, but through the fiery furnace!

I remember another case. In 1967, a young girl came forward. It was a very deep repentance. After her conversion her heart burned for Jesus. She went around the houses and villages, testifying to people about God and calling them to surrender to Him. In doing so she said to everyone, "Just don't come unless you want to receive Him with all your

heart, because God will not allow you to play with Him!" Hearing these fervent words of appeal, many people left their old sinful lives and came to the Lord. This girl's name was Lillimo.

Unfortunately, the burning of her first love was short-lived. Soon her spiritual life began to fade. She no longer came to prayer meetings regularly and was not present at every service. More and more often, citing fatigue, she stayed at home. So, she gradually withdrew further and further until the fire of God was completely extinguished in her. After this she began to lead a horrible life, and by going out indiscriminately with all boys and married men, she became the lowest of harlots. A little more time passed and she became well known for her disgusting, unbridled debauchery. The matter ended when she had a child with a man who had three wives and became his fourth wife.

Nine years later, in 1976, one Sunday morning she came unexpectedly to our mission station. On that day we had to go to a remote branch of our mission, two hours away. Seeing Lillimo just before we left, I asked her where she came from and what she wanted. Unable to hide her embarrassment, she lowered her head low and replied that she would like to come back to us again. "All right," I said, "I don't have time now because we have to leave, but there will be a meeting here at Kwasizabantu too, hosted by other staff. So, you can go there."

Later I was told that there were about a thousand people at this service, who sat on either side of the hall, leaving only a narrow aisle between the rows. Lillimo sat closer to the front, not far from this aisle. On this day the weather was clear and sunny and there was no sign of rain, however, as soon as the meeting began, a few clouds appeared in the sky, which literally before our eyes turned into dark thunderclouds and, moving quickly, approached and hovered over the building where the people were gathered. *(This is not a fairy tale, and I am not making this up. My little daughter, who was only a few months old at the time, was brought by African female employees to the meeting*

and was lying in a pram standing in the aisle, not far from this woman).

The meeting was going on as usual when suddenly lightning hit and struck Lillimo. There were people sitting to her right, left, behind and in front of her, but the lightning, without affecting anyone else, struck her directly with such force that she was thrown into the air and thrown aside, right into the passage between the people. She lay on the concrete floor for a while, unconscious. After a few hours, she regained consciousness and spoke in a low whisper because she could not speak louder. Half of her body was paralysed.

"I wish I could talk to the preacher!" she whispered. "Please call him to me!" When he came to her, she opened her heart to him, confessing her sins for several hours, beginning in 1967. This preacher was a man who had already been through a lot and had many people confessing to him, but he had never heard such a confession before. His heart was breaking, and he wept. She went through the past nine years, bringing to light all that she had done. Day by day she opened her life like a book and confessed her sins with remorse coming from the depths of her heart. After she had done this, she was taken to the hospital of our mission.

When we returned from our trip that day, late in the evening, we were struck by an unusual sight. Hundreds of people were standing on the street outside the hospital in complete silence.

"What happened here?" I asked, surprised at the silence. "Did anyone die?"

"No," I heard in reply.

"The Lord visited us today and was in our midst."

"Yes, but why are you standing here like this? What happened?"

"Lillimo is lying there in the room... Could you go to her?"

As I was hesitating, a member of our staff came up to me and said, "Please hurry up! Go to her quickly!"

When I entered, I immediately saw Lillimo lying motionless. Seeing me, she said quietly, "You still remember

me, don't you? You know also what my repentance was like! You have not forgotten, I suppose, how I burned for the Lord from the day I turned to Him! But then I rolled backwards and fell into sin. There are a few more things in my life that I need to tell only you about."

In this way she reopened her heart and the sins she wanted to tell me about. After she did this, the Christians began to pray for her. The Lord heard our prayer and Lillimo was completely healed of her paralysis. Standing up on her feet, she said, "Now I must go to my mother as soon as possible to ask her forgiveness. How often she has warned me, guiding me to the path of truth! But could a possessed girl listen to what her mother told her! Oh, how guilty I am before her! How I desire to see her, to put our relations in order!"

One of our staff members took the car and drove her to her parents' house. When she got there, she rushed to her mother saying, "Oh, Mum, forgive me! Today the Lord met me on the road in the form of a great light just as he once met Paul! He has thrown me to the ground by sending lightning from heaven..."

"Child!" interrupted her mother. "Enough of deceiving us! You are a singularly skilful liar. What nonsense! What lightning are you talking about? It was a clear day!"

"Mama!" repeated Lillimo. "I'm not lying now! I was really struck by lightning..." And she told her mother what had happened, asking for her forgiveness.

Returning to us at the mission station, she said, "It will be several weeks before I can see you again. I have to go through many villages and towns where I have wandered and sinned in many different ways. I want to visit these places again to get my life in order, asking everyone for forgiveness. Please pray for me! Now I must bear the fruit of my repentance!" So, she left to put it into practice.

Dear friends! What does it look like for you? Do we have to wait for lightning to strike or fire to come?! Blessed is he who believes without seeing. So why do you wait for the wrath of God to manifest itself?! Isn't it enough that the

Lord spoke to you today, using this example?! Do you have to wait for something like that?! Isn't the Word of God enough for you?! Or do you want to make God a liar?!

The Bible says, "...Today when you hear his voice, don't harden your hearts as Israel did when they rebelled." (Hebrews 3:15). The Lord may have spoken to you as you read these words. Have you obeyed Him or have you gone on with all your sins?! Do you dare to go on living as you have done before?! You come before the light of Scripture with a burden of sin and leave with the same burden! Or do you think the Lord will continue to bear it?! How much longer?!

Even if we do not survive the lightning strike and this building does not shake like a tree under the pressure of a mighty wind, if we do not feel the burning fire of God's wrath in our bodies, is it not enough that the Lord speaks to us now!

Perhaps in these moments He is saying to you, friend, "Repent and be converted! Stop sinning! Cleanse your life!" And if you have heard that voice of God in you, pointing out something wrong, what has your response been to Him? Have you put it in order? Did you, wife, go to your husband and ask him for forgiveness? Or are you saying your husband is more guilty than you? Forget it now! You won't lie in the grave with him! Maybe you'll die before him and he'll repent after your death. And you, husband! Are you all right with your wife? Children, how do you stand before the Lord now?!

Now is the auspicious time! Now is the hour of forgiveness! The hour in which we must be reconciled to the Lord! Therefore, everything that does not please Him and with which we cannot stand before His holy face must be removed! Let us do it today, so that when the last hour comes, we will not be burnt up in the fire of His wrath together with our sins!

Chapter 9

Test and examine yourself

In the Gospel of John, chapter five, verse thirty-nine we read, “You search the Scriptures because you think they give you eternal life. But the Scriptures point to me!” These words of the Lord were once directed to men who hoped to obtain eternal life through the Word of God. In confirming them in that aspiration, Jesus directs the same words to you and me today.

Studying the Scriptures is something every Christian should do. Scripture is like a mirror in which we see ourselves in the light of eternity. Of course, you know that a mirror exists so that when we look into it, we can see if our appearance is all right. But if we want to see our spiritual condition, we need to take the Word of God into our hands. Then in his light our works will be revealed to us. In saying this, I do not mean to say that we should not look to Jesus. Certainly we should do so. But the miracle of God is that when we look at Jesus, we see ourselves. If we keep looking at Him, then His glory, His holiness, His love, and His mercy also shine upon us.

The revival that the Lord gave us in South Africa was born precisely from the Word of God. It came when some Christians decided to allow the Word of God to operate in their lives as the Lord intended. In that unforgettable year of 1966, when the children of God came to that decision, the Scriptures began to become alive and effective.

Having experienced it firsthand, many Christians in our country now say this, “If there was ever a time in all of human history in which the Word of God would be of particularly great importance, it is the time of today, the time in which we now live.” So, one might excuse the Christians who lived two thousand years ago if they said that the Scriptures were not written for them, but for the Christians of the last centuries but there is no excuse, and there can be no excuse for us Christians who have reached this time.

Dear friends, while on earth, Jesus said that He did not come to judge the world, but that the words He spoke would be our judge. And if that is true, then it is the Word of God that should be our foundation. It should be crucial for us, our benchmark and our measuring stick. Otherwise, we will float on the current of this world without even noticing it. This is because we will get used to many things that we as Christians should never accept. Did you know that a frog jumping into hot water immediately dies? However, if the same frog is put into cold water and slowly warmed up, it will continue to live in it even at a higher temperature, because its body will also warm up slowly accordingly.

In the same way, we can gradually become accustomed to many things in our spiritual life. Various worldly things and other things that are not in harmony with the Bible can gradually creep into the church, taking hold of people's thoughts and hearts. And it will happen so imperceptibly that **we will not even notice it**. And so we will confirm ourselves and confirm others in what is not true at all. But if the forefathers of our faith had risen from their graves and seen this, what would they have said to us?...

Have you ever had to swim in a big river? For example, in our Indian Ocean there are so-called undercurrents, which are very dangerous for swimmers. If you swim in one without orientating yourself towards the shore, you will only come to your senses when you are swept far away from the shore by the undercurrent. It will happen completely unnoticed by you and it may happen that behind you there will be rocks on which you will be thrown by the ocean waves and you will pay for your indiscretion with your life. This is also why in our spiritual life we must constantly study the Scriptures, checking and testing whether I am still a Christian in my life, whether I am building on the Word of God, whether I am fulfilling what God expects of me, and whether I am on the proper spiritual level in the scale of God or whether I am already being carried away from the truth by some foreign current.

At the beginning of the revival there was among us a courageous and spiritually sober Christian with a heart on fire for the Lord. He never went to extremes, remaining always calm and judicious. Two or three days after the revival began, when we were gathered as usual in our barn, he turned to me and asked, “Erlo, where are those **two words** from the Bible that were written on the wall here yesterday?” Surprised, I answered him that no words had been written on the wall or on the paper yesterday. However, he went on to say that the words were there, with the first line containing one word written in English, “**test**”, and the second line containing a word written in the Zulu tribal language, which meant “**examine**”.

I began to convince him again that there was nothing on the wall. He shook his head and said that he remembered it exactly and could even draw what the words he had read above the door on his way out looked like. I still looked questioningly at the place he was pointing to, finding no glue marks or even a nail to hold the paper with the words written on it.

When I returned home, I picked up an English Bible and, praying, I asked the Lord to speak to me through His Holy Word. Then, opening the Bible, I read the verse that caught my eye. It was a passage from the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, chapter 13, verse 5, “Examine yourselves to see if your faith is genuine. Test yourselves.” So, these were the same words “**test and examine**” that our brother was telling me about.

Amazed, I thought to myself that I had never paid attention to these words before, or even remembered that they were in the Scriptures. From then until today, these words “test and examine” have become like a necklace around our necks and have become our slogan. They have been a great blessing, so we want to continue to obey them.

In the same way, friends, test and examine everything that comes your way. But before you test anything, check yourselves first, whether you are still in the faith, whether you are still on the path of truth, or whether you have already

drifted away from it. Only the Word of God can serve as our guide in this case. Unfortunately, this is often very different for us Christians. It is very easy for us to compare ourselves to others, like children who say, "Those guys are doing it, why can't we?" How often one hears, "If he does it this way, why can't I! Why should I be dissatisfied with my life and my spiritual condition, when all the other brothers and sisters in our church, and in many other places, live in the same way, but are nevertheless satisfied!"

Unfortunately, this is the attitude of most Christians today, though the Bible teaches us to examine ourselves not by comparing with other believers, but in the light of the word of God. This is exactly the light in which we must walk before the Lord! If we continually test and examine ourselves, if our lives and our faith are in accordance with the Scriptures, then we will surely become springs from which rivers of living water will flow to feed thirsty souls.

If we do not check and test ourselves, then it may happen that **God Himself** will test us and weigh us on the scales of His Word, and it will happen at a time when we do not expect it, as it happened in a well-known Bible story. King Belshazzar, Nebuchadnezzar's son, was well aware of all that his father had endured. He had certainly been told that because of his pride and arrogance he had been deprived by God of his sanity, and for seven years he lived like a wild animal, eating grass. However, knowing this story well, Belshazzar did not humble himself before the Lord during his reign, living the way he wanted to live. He was probably swept away by the "undercurrent" at some point.

One day he had a great feast where he ate and drank wine with his friends, wives and concubines. When he was drunk, he ordered the gold and silver vessels that his father had brought to Babylon from the temple in Jerusalem to be brought to him. When the vessels were brought and he and his guests began to drink wine from them, at the same moment he saw a hand writing on the wall against him the words, "MENE, MENE, TEKEL, and PARSIN." A great terror seized the great king, and he cried out with a loud voice,

calling for those who could explain to him the meaning of the written words, promising a great reward for it, but no one could help him in his need.

In such a difficult situation, the queen came to Belshazzar's rescue. She said that there was a man named Daniel in their kingdom who served the Living God and who had been a great blessing during his father's reign. When Daniel was called and brought before the king, he reminded him of the story of Nebuchadnezzar, saying, "You are his successor, O Belshazzar, and you knew all this, yet you have not humbled yourself. For you have proudly defied the Lord of heaven... But you have not honored the God who gives you the breath of life and controls your destiny!" (Daniel 5:22-23).

You see, friends, it sometimes happens in life that a person who many years ago had a special experience of intimacy with the Lord (through which God revealed Himself to him in glory and power) forgets it as time passes. Perhaps, you have made a vow to the Lord at some time and have forgotten it over time. Or maybe some of you had parents who were believers and you have felt the power of your father or mother's prayer when they prayed for you. But now they are gone. They are dead, and their prayers and everything else are forgotten. Yes, people forget many things, but God does not forget!

So the hand sent from God wrote on the wall the words, "MENE, MENE, TEKEL, and PARSIN," which means, "You are weighed on the scales and found very light."

I don't know how judges are judged in your country, but in South Africa we asked some judges who were friends of ours why a criminal who had committed a serious offence was given a lighter sentence than the law prescribes. And then it was explained to us that if a person committing a murder was under the influence of alcohol and was not aware of his actions, then there is a slightly different approach to him. That's how human law judges. But God took a different approach. He weighed Belshazzar just as he was drunk and immediately reported His decision, "you are found very light." As you can see, God

has His own yardstick and His own scale, and it is the Word of God.

Think seriously about these words, “You are weighed and found very light”. After all, God still has the same yardstick today – His Holy Word. And on this scale we must constantly weigh ourselves, checking every day our walk before Him. You may ask, how do we do this? Then open your Bible and it will teach you. For example, the Old Testament says, “Thou shalt not kill”, but the New Testament calls someone who is angry and resentful at his neighbour, calling him unkind words, a murderer. This is the first example of the measure that God has for us.

In Matthew chapter five, verses 23 and 24 it says, “So, if you are presenting a sacrifice at the altar in the Temple and you suddenly remember that someone has something against you, leave your sacrifice there at the altar. Go and be reconciled to that person. Then come and offer your sacrifice to God.” Notice, how the Word of God approaches this issue? It does not say that you have something against your brother, but that “someone has something against you.” In that case it is you who go to that person and make peace with him. Only then will the gift you bring be accepted by the Lord as a favourable sacrifice.

Do you see what God’s benchmark is for us, and what His scales are! Now weigh yourself on it! Do you find yourself too light?! You do not know when, at what time, and in what moments of your life these scales, which are in the hands of God, weigh you. King Nebuchadnezzar and his son Belshazzar had such an amazing testimony from God in this as perhaps no one else. Both were weighed by God suddenly, at a moment when they did not expect it at all. And how is it with you, dear friends?!

You also know that we are not allowed to commit adultery. Adultery is an abominable sin. We in South Africa, among whites, have a very negative view of it, and yet one in three couples divorce. And in the big city of Johannesburg, statistically every second family is destroyed. But the saddest thing is that this also applies to believers. Pastors of

different churches have told me that they have families in which the children have different surnames because the first child was from the first husband, the second child has the surname of the second husband, and the third child has the surname of the third husband. Such terrible things are happening in South Africa!

But Jesus, in whose name we call ourselves, goes beyond our human concepts of adultery in this matter, “But I say, anyone who even looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart.” (Matthew 5:28). Do you understand this, husband?! As soon as you look at another woman once, with impure thoughts, in the eyes of the Lord you have already committed divorce and become an adulterer!

What, too fanatical?! Too narrow a way to go and too steep a mountain to climb?! Is that even possible?! Then it’s better not to marry too! That’s what the disciples said when Jesus spoke to them about it... What is the situation with this issue in your life, friends? In times of revival, the Word of God becomes alive and sharp, indeed sharper than a double-edged sword. And this Word will be decisive for us on the day of judgement. We will not pass by it! No, we will not pass it! And we will not flee from it, for it will catch up with us! For it is the words of Jesus Christ Himself, and therefore the realm of God!

However, that is not all. What, for example, does Scripture say about backbiting, gossip, and slander? The Bible tells us that, “If another believer sins against you, go privately and point out the offense...” (Matthew 18:15). If we do not go to him, but talk about his sin with someone else, the sinner will go to perdition, but we will also go there with him, because not only did we not help him, but we discussed it, trampling and humiliating him in the eyes of others. This is the measure of God for those who do not act according to His Word.

Unfortunately, we always forget that if the Lord acts, He always starts with us Christians. We are the experts in claiming that His action will not be directed at us, but at

others. But let's see what Jesus has to say about this, "And why worry about a speck in your friend's eye when you have a log in your own?... Hypocrite! First get rid of the log in your own eye; then you will see well enough to deal with the speck in your friend's eye." (Matthew 7:3,5).

Do you see how the Judge of all judges – the One who will judge everyone on the day of judgement evaluates us?

According to our concepts and our view, our own sins and mistakes are speck, and the mistakes, sins and shortcomings of our neighbours are logs, about which we talk and think a lot. God looks at it just the opposite, calling us hypocrites who need to first pull the log out from our own corrupt hearts and bad lives.

There are people who only talk about the sins of others. They even drink coffee and tea and cakes over such conversations. At the same time, news come thick and fast, "Have you heard that someone has done this and that?! Do you know what that child did?!" There's something I'd like to say to such gossip lovers. Before you talk about other people's children, tell us about your own! If you are an honest and sincere person and a true Christian, before you talk about the sins of your neighbours, you should first talk about your own sins! Do you understand what I am saying? From now on, don't ever forget that, because that's what the Bible teaches us! If we do not want to see it now, we will have to wake up on the day of judgement, when it will be too late to fix anything, because eternal perdition has come, which is an endless time of hell torment.

I guess you can see now, friends, why I often tell people to think carefully before they start praying for revival. Do you know what it means when the Word of God becomes decisive and effective, when it is truly "yes" and "amen"? Then you will not be able to go on living your sinful life as before, because you will truly have to turn to God and put your life completely in order! Would you say that this is not easy? Yes, of course it is! But that is the light in which we must walk – in the light of God's Word!

Do you participate in the Lord's Supper? Did you know that God's Word says that before we take the bread and juice of the fruit of the vineyard, we must test and seriously examine ourselves. In First Corinthians 11:27 it says, "So, anyone who eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord unworthily is guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord." This means that if you eat the bread of the Supper and drink the wine of the covenant unworthily, you are committing judgement against yourselves. It is no coincidence that it is followed by the words, "That is why many of you are weak and sick and some have even died. But if we would examine ourselves, we would not be judged by God in this way." (1 Corinthians 11:30-31).

I have repeatedly told doctors in South Africa not only to examine their patients but also to ask them if they have taken the Lord's Supper. It is important that doctors, whether believers or not, keep this in mind. Doctors who are Christians should be especially aware of this. This is why there are many weak, feeble and sick children of God who do not receive the Lord's Supper with dignity. We are many, but there is only one bread, so we must be united. How is it in your churches, friends? Is there unity among your brothers and sisters? Is there unanimity?...

The wine is a symbol of the blood of Christ, which we must not trample on with our feet. With it we are redeemed and owned by God! Do we realise this?! When we drink from the cup of Christ's sufferings, do we really consider what His Word says about it? "You cannot drink from the cup of the Lord and from the cup of demons, too. You cannot eat at the Lord's Table and at the table of demons, too." (1 Corinthians 10:21). What do you say to this, friends? Do you drink from two cups – the cup of this world and the cup of Christianity and worship? Are you sitting on two chairs...? If so, then do not dare to partake of the Lord's Supper, for it will serve to damn you.

You may object that you have been receiving the Lord's Supper with bitterness in your heart and inability to forgive others for a long time, but nothing has happened to you so

far. But do you know that in doing so, you put a noose round your own neck with your own hands!

How often have you prayed this prayer, “and forgive us our sins, **as we have forgiven** those who sin against us”? It means that God will forgive you just as you forgive others! Not one bit more! If you do not forgive someone, God will not forgive you either! You give Him the right to do so by telling Him to forgive you exactly as you do!

Have you not read the parable of the man to whom the master forgave a very great debt, but who was unwilling to show mercy to his fellow debtor? And yet the debt that this wicked man demanded of his neighbour was only a tiny fraction of what was forgiven to himself. Do you remember what his master did when he heard of such an act? Then he became angry, saying, “...You evil servant! I forgave you that tremendous debt because you pleaded with me. Shouldn't you have mercy on your fellow servant, just as I had mercy on you?” (Matthew 18:32-33). When he said this, he put the wicked slave to torture until he paid all his debt to him. So the man's hard-heartedness led his master to recover the debt he had previously forgiven.

At the conclusion of this parable the Lord speaking to us, says, “That's what my heavenly Father will do to you if you refuse to forgive your brothers and sisters from your heart.” (Matthew 18:35).

As you can see, the Bible is not a book of fairy tales, and I am not one who doubts this. I am convinced that the Word of God is still completely valid today! Therefore, woe to the man who is convinced that the Lord has forgiven his sins, but he himself does not forgive his neighbour who has sinned against him! Woe to him! And if you are such one and claim to be on the way to heaven, I will not believe it, because what matters is what the Bible says, not what people think. Every man is a liar and the Lord is the truth, so I trust and build only on what God says because we will be weighed on the scales of His Word.

Dear friends! You come from different churches and different denominations. How is it with you? No, not in your

church, but in each of you personally? Do you weigh yourselves on the scales of the Word of God? Do you live according to what you say? Maybe you preach to others about revival and the Holy Spirit's work among them and the kingdom of God being built up. Whose kingdom are you encouraging and what forces are you dealing with? Perhaps, you speak of spiritualism of the powers of black magic, and do not know that you yourself are in the "black hand" because you tolerate such things in your life that are not the fruit of the Holy Spirit!

Are you sure you have eternal life! Then search the Scriptures, which are the truth, and they will tell you whether you will receive eternal life or not! It is a terrible thing if someone lives with the hope of receiving salvation and eternal life, and at the end of his journey sees that it is not true at all! This is why it is necessary to examine and test ourselves and our lives in the light of the gospel, doing so continually throughout our journey of following the Lord!

Just recently we had an instructive incident. A man of German descent, whose ancestors came to South Africa many years ago, was of high position, authority, wealth, and was considered a good Christian in his church. Suddenly, he fell ill and when he went to the doctor and was examined, he heard something shocking. The doctor said that he was powerless to help him because he had an extremely serious form of cancer and his condition was hopeless. Can you imagine what a shock that message was?

One of our staff members visited this patient and this is what he told him, "Ever since I learnt about my illness, something unusual has been happening to me. Day after day, my whole life, starting from childhood, passes before my eyes like a film. So, I remembered that a long time ago I promised something to some people and did not fulfil it. I immediately called my son to take me to them by car. When I got there, I told them that my life was coming to an end, and that the Lord, in revealing to me all that was wrong in it, had reminded me of this guilt – my debt to them. Through this I learnt what a great deceiver I had been. To

make amends, I took out my cheque book and issued them a large sum”...

“My brother!” the man continued, turning to his visitor. “Don’t talk politics with me, I have no more time for that! Don’t say anything about what’s going on in the world and don’t say anything about money! Unfortunately, this used to be my purpose and life, but now I don’t have time for it! I have to prepare for eternity! The end of everything! All my thoughts, words, deeds and actions stand before me now, and oh, how I grieve that I have lived like this...!” Thus this man was nearing his end, but it was still a time of grace for him.

Dear friends, let’s check ourselves today, while our future is still ahead of us! After all, we do not know how much time each of us has left! In the German Bible these words of Moses’ prayer are literally translated as, “Teach us to think on the fact that we must die, so that by thinking about it we may acquire a wise heart.” (Psalms 90:12). One day we will have to stand before the Lord, whether we are sure of our salvation or not. We must always count on the fact that one day, at a time when we do not expect it at all, God will come into our lives. Then He will come with His scales to weigh us! And woe to us if we are too light!

It may be that God will come not when we are on our knees or behind a pulpit, but when we are watching pornography or with a prostitute. Perhaps, He will show us mercy so that we do not fall ill with the terrible disease of AIDS. *(For this is an opportunity every fornicator must now reckon with, for this is the judgement of God upon the wicked, and let all the world hear it!)* But even if our flesh remains healthy, what benefit is there if our soul goes to hell! The Lord can also weigh us at the moment when we are envious, irritated and angry, when we have evil thoughts, or when in our arrogance we exalt ourselves over others! Yes, we do not know what that moment will be like for us or where it will take us.

There was a very beautiful girl in America who was everything and a diamond to her parents. She stood out and

towered above everyone else, being recognised as “first” from her school years. Later, while studying at university, she was chosen as a beauty queen and everyone couldn’t get enough of her. Her parents were very proud to have given the world such an unrivalled beauty. On the day of her coronation as beauty queen, a great feast was organised. At the sight of their daughter crowned with a beautiful crown, the heart of the father and mother was filled with joy and jubilation. But the ball was over and people began to leave. As soon as the parents, having said goodbye to their daughter, returned to their home, the telephone rang unexpectedly. After picking up the phone, the girl’s mother heard the doctor’s anxious voice, “Come immediately! Your daughter is in the intensive care unit! There has been an accident and her condition is extremely serious!”

When the parents arrived at the hospital and entered the room where their daughter was lying, the mother could not recognise her beautiful daughter. Her face was distorted and disfigured. She was lying in a special suspended bed because her spine was broken and her legs shattered. There were drips and various apparatuses, syringes and medical instruments lying around.

The mother quietly walked over and sat down. The girl was still conscious and felt her presence. “Mother!” she opened her eyes and whispered quietly. “Mum, the day of my death has come... Mum, you taught me how a young girl should put on make-up. You also taught me how to light a cigarette beautifully and how to lift a glass of wine so that it tinkles. Mum, you taught me how to dress, but you didn’t teach me how to die...! And now I’m dying! Tell me, what I must do now?!” But the mother was silent. A lump stood in her throat, and tears rolled from her eyes in continuous streams. “Mum! Hurry, I’m dying! What must I do now?!” But the mother could say nothing. That was how this girl died. She was weighed on a scale and found very light.

Tell me, friends! If you were to die now, what would this moment be like for you?! What would it look like in your life?! Would you also be found too light, or would you

be living according to the Scriptures? Would the Word of God be able to confirm this? Would Jesus be able to tell you too, "...Well done, my good and faithful servant. You have been faithful in handling this small amount, so now I will give you many more responsibilities. Let's celebrate together!" (Matthew 25:21).

Are you ready for this? Are we ready for this? Think about it! Look at it in the light of the eternity that will inevitably come! I'm not preaching Erlo Stegen to you! Forget me! For I come and go! Do not speak of me to others, for in doing so you only harm my ministry and my commission! Talk about Jesus and be faithful to Jesus! Get your life in order! It should be according to the Scriptures, but what does it look like for you? Oh, how I wish His holy presence could do in your life what happened here in South Africa!

Chapter 10

Stand up and confess your sins!

In the Book of Joshua chapter seven there is a description of a story. The people of Israel were defeated and had to flee from their enemy. Achan had committed a theft which led to the misfortune that afflicted the children of God. In this chapter from the sixth to the thirteenth verses we read, “Joshua and the elders of Israel tore their clothing in dismay, threw dust on their heads, and bowed face down to the ground before the Ark of the LORD until evening. Then Joshua cried out, ‘Oh, Sovereign LORD, why did you bring us across the Jordan River if you are going to let the Amorites kill us? If only we had been content to stay on the other side! Lord, what can I say now that Israel has fled from its enemies? For when the Canaanites and all the other people living in the land hear about it, they will surround us and wipe our name off the face of the earth. And then what will happen to the honor of your great name?’ “ (Joshua 7:6-9).

Responding to this cry, God said to Joshua, “...Get up! Why are you lying on your face like this? Israel has sinned and broken my covenant! They have stolen some of the things that I commanded must be set apart for me. And they have not only stolen them but have lied about it and hidden the things among their own belongings. That is why the Israelites are running from their enemies in defeat. For now Israel itself has been set apart for destruction. I will not remain with you any longer unless you destroy the things among you that were set apart for destruction. ‘Get up! Command the people to purify themselves in preparation for tomorrow. For this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: Hidden among you, O Israel, are things set apart for the LORD. You will never defeat your enemies until you remove these things from among you.’ “ (Joshua 7:10-13).

Dear friends! Here in the practice of life we see what our Lord looks like and what it means to walk with God. We see the people of God after their greatest victory, when the

walls of Jericho fell before them. Oh, how they praised and glorified the Lord then, knowing that it was not their own merit, but a manifestation of the power of God's might! And so, when they had experienced this amazing victory, Joshua, the man of God, not knowing anything about what had happened to Achan, sends scouts ahead with full confidence of a new victory to come.

And we pastors and preachers! How often we have no idea what is going on in our churches and ministries! We see people in church on Sundays, and almost all of them, with few exceptions, look outwardly like angels. Standing before them, we preach about the great love and mercy of God, that God died for us and because of His death on the cross of Calvary, we have salvation and forgiveness of sins. Hearing this, of course, it is not hard for them to believe! In doing so, everyone goes to heaven without much difficulty! But, dear ones, our task is to tell them first of all that they cannot see the face of the Lord before they leave their sins, at least until they stop lying and stealing! I do not mean to say that we should always tell people that they are going to hell. However, if we stand with the Bible in our hands at the tomb of the deceased, we are at least obligated to tell those still living to repent if they do not want to go to that terrible place of eternal torment!

So, Joshua, after his glorious victory over Jericho, thinking that all was still well, sent scouts to the city of Gaius to investigate. When they returned, they reported that the people living in the city were small in number and that two or three thousand soldiers would be enough to defeat them. After a council it was decided to send three thousand men. With full confidence of the victory, this army left their camp to take possession of the city and its people.

However, events unfolded in a very different way. Something happened that no one expected. The enemy was too strong and the people of God were forced to flee, leaving thirty-six soldiers dead on the field of an ignominious fight. When Joshua heard of this and saw God's chosen people fleeing, while the pagans were jubilantly celebrating the

victory, he tore his clothes in grief and fell with his face on the ground before the ark of the Lord, exclaiming, “Oh, Sovereign LORD, why did you bring us across the Jordan River if you are going to let the Amorites kill us? If only we had been content to stay on the other side! ... Canaanites and all the other people living in the land hear about it, they will surround us and wipe our name off the face of the earth. And then what will happen to the honor of your great name?” (Joshua 7:7,9).

This is how this great man of God prayed together with the elders of his people, realising that they now had no strength to resist the enemy, that the devil had become too strong, and that the people of God, defeated and broken, were lying on the ground. All day long until evening they cried out to God, until He answered them, and turning to His servant, sternly said to him, “Arise, why have you fallen on your face?” That is, in the language of our time, “Stop praying! Why do I need this?!”

You will agree, friends, that in the Christianity of our century there is a lot of talk about prayer and the need to pray more. How often do you hear this now, “Why is our spiritual life fading away! Why is there no revival? Why is there no spiritual growth? Oh, perhaps we need to pray more! We should spend many days and nights in prayer! We also need to fast more!... Why do we not have streams of living water flowing from our wombs?! Why are so few of God’s miracles being performed in the world today? Why does the world triumph and the devil win victory after victory?! Why?! Oh yes, we really need to pray as much and as hard as we can!” And, agreeing with this, we gather in prayer meetings and pray, pray, pray...

However, let us turn to this example. When Joshua and the elders had prayed and cried out to the Lord as long as they had, God Himself appeared to them and said, “Enough, stop!” Turning to His servant, He said, “Why have you fallen on your face and why do you cry out like this! Why do I need this! Get up, for sin has entered into the midst of My people and must be expelled!”

You see, dear friends, prayer meetings have no meaning if we do not cleanse our lives from sin. Often people come to us asking how we view fasting. And then I tell them that I consider it better if people declare fasting not to their stomachs, but to their sins. It is better to eat normally without giving food to sin than to fast and continue to sin.

Believe me, there is no point in fasting if sin continues dominating over us. What good is it if we are fasting and our face is depressed and we are gloomy, unfriendly, angry and impatient? Do you think such a fast is pleasing to God?! No, it is nothing else than something human and therefore without meaning and significance before the Lord. I know a Christian who fasted very often and for long periods of time, but, as his wife and children testify, it was during these days of so-called fasting that he was especially intolerable to his household and all those around him.

However, this question of bodily fasting was also of interest to the Pharisees at one time, to which Jesus said to them, "Do wedding guests fast while celebrating with the groom? Of course not. But someday the groom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast." (Luke 5:34-35). So, as you can see, if the Bridegroom is in our midst, there is little need for fasting, if He is not, then of course we have to fast.

So, the Lord says to Joshua, "Get up! Why are you lying on your face like this? Israel has sinned and broken my covenant!"

Dear friends! You who hold prayer meetings! Do you hear these words of the Lord?! He says even now, "Why do you pray so much? Why have you fallen on your faces?!" Being angry with His redeemed people, the Lord explains to His servant, "I will be with you no more, unless you destroy from your midst the archenemy!"

There are many preachers who say that the Lord will be with us to the end of the age, and if we are children of God, He will never leave us. I cannot understand how anyone can say such nonsense! After all, the Lord is the same yesterday, today and forever! He does not change! The God

of the Old Testament is also the God of the New Testament! And this God once said to Joshua, **“I will not remain with you any longer unless you destroy the things among you that were set apart for destruction.”**

Of course these are terrible facts, but whether we like it or not, we must take it to heart! Otherwise, all our Christianity is just theatre, and our “God” is just an idol we have created according to the desires and whims of our heart. This is not the God of the Bible, but only a fiction of our mind and our imagination! In First Corinthians chapter ten verse eleven it says, “These things happened to them as examples for us. They were written down to warn us who live at the end of the age.” And this story is also recorded in the Bible and has great significance for us who live in the end times.

As can be seen in this example, the prayer of those who cried out was interrupted by God Himself who told them to stop praying because there was something among them that needed to be put in order because Israel had sinned.

These words “Israel sinned” are probably hard for us to understand. It was not Israel who sinned, but only one man, Achan! Why is God angry with the whole nation of Israel?!

Do you see the scale of God?! Only one man from the ranks of Israel sinned, but the Lord is talking about the whole nation.

Dear friends, the strength of a chain made up of individual links is determined by the strength of its weakest link. This means that if there is only one weak ring in the whole chain, the whole chain will hold no more than that weakest part. It is exactly the same among Christians. Everyone who is in our ranks is one with us and we become inseparable, so the sin of one member brings a curse on the whole church. Only when wickedness has been exposed and punished, or when the person who has done the sin has been expelled from a given environment, will all others be free. This is exactly what happened in this case. When the nation of Israel cast out of their midst the one on whom the curse lay, God began to dwell among them again. Only after, not before!

One more thing to note. At the moment when the Lord suddenly spoke to Joshua, all those gathered around the tabernacle stopped praying. It is no accident that the Word of God says “stay awake and pray,” and the word “stay awake” comes first. Unfortunately, we Christians often do the opposite. We put prayer in the first place, and stay awake in the second or even last place, or even forget about it at all.

God speaks to Joshua and opens his eyes to what he had not even thought of during his prayer and crying to heaven, but which was the cause of their defeat and the wrath of God.

Is it not so with us now, dear friends? What good is it to pray for revival and spiritual victory for the people of God if sin is in their midst?! If we call ourselves the Church of Christ and want the Lord to dwell among us, then we must purify ourselves. After all, God Himself said, “You must be holy because I, the LORD your God, am holy.” (Leviticus 19:2). When something unclean and unholy enters our midst, God is removed or completely departs from us, because there can be no fellowship between the clean and the unclean, the holy and the accursed. If we want God to dwell in our midst, it is necessary either to destroy what is cursed, or to expel from our midst the one who has bound himself to sin and does not want to part with it. Without doing this, the people of God cannot achieve victory.

This is exactly what Joshua did. He called all the people who began to come to him, as God had said by tribe and family. Thus Achan, whose sin was the cause of Israel’s defeat, was identified. Turning to him, Joshua said, “My son, give glory to the LORD, the God of Israel, by telling the truth. Make your confession and tell me what you have done. Don’t hide it from me.” Realising that he had been exposed, Achan finally confessed, “It is true! I have sinned against the LORD, the God of Israel. Among the plunder I saw a beautiful robe from Babylon, 200 silver coins, and a bar of gold weighing more than a pound. I wanted them so much that I took them. They are hidden in the ground beneath my tent, with the silver buried deeper than the rest.” (Joshua 7:19-21). This is how the sin that had been committed was discovered.

Notice, friends, that Achan only discovered his sin when God Himself pointed it out. He had the opportunity to do it before, but he did not want to take it. He concealed and covered up his sin so that no outsider would know about it. But nothing is hidden before God, and you see how the Most High views what has been done.

We Christians, in such cases, most often say simply, “O Lord! Forgive and have mercy on us sinners,” like the blind man who cried out, “Jesus, son of David, have mercy on me!” In answer to this, Christ called him and asked, “Tell me, what do you want Me to do to you?” Then the blind man spoke of his blindness, after which Jesus touched his eyes.

You see, friends, why am I talking about this? We need to always, as they say, “take the bull by the horns.” A prayer like “Lord, forgive me and have mercy on me” will not help. It only covers up our spiritual uncleanness. By revealing Achan’s sin and bringing it to light, God said directly that there is a cursed thing among His people, that a theft has been committed, but the guilty one hides it, thus deceiving others. When Joshua challenged Achan to confess, he confessed that he had indeed taken the sworn thing and buried it in his tent. Then the men who had been sent there dug up the hidden things and brought them back and laid them before everyone, after which Achan and his family were stoned. Their corpses, along with their livestock and possessions, were burned with fire and a huge pile of stones was laid over them as a reminder that God does not tolerate sin.

As we think about this example, we might be tempted to say, “But why were his wife, sons, and daughters stoned together with Achan? After all, the Bible says that no one will be punished for the sins of another?” Unfortunately, the Bible does not tell us this, but we can assume that Achan’s wife and other members of the family knew about his deed, but whether out of ignorance or wilfully kept silent about it.

Of course, one might ask Achan’s wife, why didn’t she run to Joshua and tell him about her husband’s unfaithful actions and bring it to light? After all, by doing so she would have saved her own life, the lives of her children, and maybe

even her husband's life! Why did not the wife stand in the gap in this matter?! Why didn't the sons rise up and say, "Father, God will not tolerate this!"

Unfortunately, it is not uncommon for people to join together in sin and cover up evil. This is what husbands do when they see the sin of their wives. It is very often done by wives when their husbands sin, and by parents who cover the sin of their children by silence. So, men join together in the work of sin, instead of taking God's side, saying, "God will not tolerate it, so I cannot be in on it either!" So, in this case, the silence of Achan's family members was the reason they shared his fate and were put to death.

Through this story, the Lord is showing all of us who are called by His name that there is no way forward if sin is in our midst. You see now, friends, why things are the way they are in our churches. For God, who once did such things, is the same God today. And if you have not yet had such an encounter with Him, know that the time will come. It may not be in this world but in the future, but it must happen one day! Then the Lord will become manifest and real, and then the truth will come to light before heaven and before the earth. This is an inevitability, whether we believe it or not!

One more point I would like to draw your attention to. Speaking personally to Joshua, God says to him, "I will no longer be with you, unless you destroy the cursed one from your midst! When Joshua heard this, he might have exclaimed, "Lord, what does this have to do with me?! Why have you forsaken me? It was another man of your people who sinned. I have been faithful to You!" But the true servant of God does not do this. The words "Israel sinned" are enough for him. He is inseparable from the people and accepts with them their guilt and their punishment. Think about it, pastors of God's people! Think seriously about it!

Now let's turn to the New Testament to get even more clarity on these matters. In First Corinthians chapter five, verse eleven, the Spirit of God speaks to us through the Apostle Paul, "But I have written to you not to associate with anyone who, although he is called a brother, remains a

fornicator, or a cuckold, or an idolater, or a backbiter, or a drunkard, or a carnivore; with such a one, not even to eat with him." We may not only sit at the same table with such people, but also partake of the Holy Supper with them!

What shall we say to this now when we stand before the light of God's Word?! What has God become to us?! What has become of Christianity?! What does the Bible mean to us today?! If it has lost its meaning to us, then let us throw it into the fire. If it is the Word of God, then why do we disobey it?! Have we forgotten that disobedience in the eyes of the Lord is the same as the sin of sorcery, and that opposition is equated with idolatry? Can you now understand why many of the Christians are as bewitched, powerless, entangled in the nets of the devil, knowing no rest at night, without peace in their hearts, having the appearance of godliness, but denying the power of God!

It's because we don't take the Bible seriously. It has become like a book of fairy tales to us! If it is the Word of the Living God, when will we ever come to the point of accepting it in fear and trembling as the true Word of God! Did not the prophet Isaiah say that God dwells in those who fear the Lord and tremble at His name! And what are we doing with the Word of God today? Modern theologians are literally tearing it apart, saying that it means something different! And we ourselves! We Christians! What are we doing with the Word of God? Perhaps we are already trampling on it with our feet, counting it as dung and filth. We are not ashamed to sit at the same table with a man who calls himself a convert, a Christian, and a child of God, but is envious, greedy, selfish, and lives promiscuously with a young girl or a married woman! And we put up with all this, saying we need to praise and glorify the Lord more and pray more! Oh, what darkness!!! While our light should be shining stronger than ever, we ourselves are in darkness!

"Joshua! Get up! This is no time to pray and lie on your face! There is something wrong with the people of God! Get up My servant, let the people be sanctified! As long as the cursed thing is in your midst, do not count on My help,

presence and blessing! I cannot live with and abide with such a people!”

This is how the Lord had once departed from Israel, and there were only two possibilities – either to cast off the curse or to lose God. Praise the Lord that Joshua was willing to do whatever it took to keep God with them! What about us? Are we willing to do the same?! Are we willing to remove from our midst and from our own lives that which is accursed in the eyes of God? Are we willing to do all we can to make our prayers and our gifts heard and accepted by God?

You know, if we have a prayer meeting in our mission station, we don’t start it before we have asked everyone if there is anything dividing us and if there is anything in any soul that has not yet been put in order. Until this is done, there is no point in praying, otherwise it would just be unreasonable. We are simply wasting time when we kneel down and pray while something stands between us! Until this is cleansed and removed, it is better not to have a prayer meeting at all. Perhaps things would look very different in the world if Christians prayed less, because if we pray and our lives are out of order, then we are an open door through which Satan easily enters. Prayer without wakefulness and pure life is a good opportunity for the devil. And this can be easily seen in the examples of false teachings and sects. Many of them started with nothing but prayer.

Dear friends, I want to repeat again the words of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount, “So, if you are presenting a sacrifice at the altar in the Temple and you suddenly remember that someone has something against you, leave your sacrifice there at the altar. Go and be reconciled to that person. Then come and offer your sacrifice to God.” (Matthew 5:23-24).

You see, the Lord does not tolerate you coming to His altar in prayer without having reconciled with your neighbour, with your brother, sister, husband or wife, because such prayer has no meaning! What does it look like with you? How many unreconciled Christians walk the world! There is a lot of anger, resentment, malice and discord. And with

such hearts you bow down and pray, seeking to receive this or that from the Lord!

How are things going in your home? In the First Epistle of the Apostle Peter, chapter three, verse seven, the Word of God says to husbands, “In the same way, you husbands must give honor to your wives. Treat your wife with understanding as you live together. She may be weaker than you are, but she is your equal partner in God’s gift of new life. Treat her as you should so your prayers will not be hindered.” (1 Peter 3:7). So, husband, if you do not have a proper attitude towards your wife, if you have bitterness against her in your heart, your prayer has no meaning, because it will not be heard by the Lord.

We had a brother who had his eyes opened by God’s grace in this matter. He told us that when he prayed, he used to shout “Hallelujah” so loudly that he could be heard by the neighbours three houses away. It seemed to him that this was the way he should confess the Lord without shame in front of people. Yet at the same time he quarrelled with his wife every day and roared at her like a lion. Do you think his prayers and play of “holy words” could have had an impact on others in such a life?

I have to tell you this, friends, because it is what the Lord leads me to do, and I need to be faithful to Him! I am His servant and I must do what He commands me to do. I do not want it to be said of me one day what God once said of the prophets, “For the leaders of my people – the LORD’s watchmen, his shepherds – are blind and ignorant. They are like silent watchdogs that give no warning when danger comes. They love to lie around, sleeping and dreaming.” (Isaiah 56:10). So, a prophet and preacher should be like a dog that, when warned of danger, begins to bark.

Let us now return briefly to the story of Achan. In revealing his sin, God called all the unclean things he had done by their proper names, saying that he had not only taken what he had sworn, but had also broken the covenant, concealed, lied, and denied. With this I want to say that we will not receive help, forgiveness and deliverance if we are

superficial in our confession. When confessing sin, we must go to the root of it and pluck it out with the root. It will do no good if we only cut off the top of it. If you steal, you should not say, "I don't know how it happened. It was just my mistake. I wanted to return it later..." and so on. When you confess, say straightforwardly that you are a thief. Do not say that you have impure thoughts when you see this or that. Better to say before the Living God that you are a fornicator and an adulterer. For every person is what he thinks. A person's thoughts are the true picture, because they come from his unclean and unconsecrated heart.

I have no doubt, friends, that there are many souls among you who sincerely want to put their lives in order and bring their sins and all their spiritual uncleanness into the light before the Lord, therefore, addressing such, I want to say now something on this subject to each one personally. If you having been to confession, find afterwards that the secret of it has not been kept, never again go to him who was the only witness between you and God. I repeat, never go to that person again, because he has been unfaithful, and God will be his judge! No one else must enter into the secret of your confession. Only you, God, and this minister, whose own life must also be thoroughly cleansed.

The Lord commanded Joshua to gather the people so that they could cleanse themselves from the covenant. Without this cleansing God could no longer be in their midst. Do you see now what you need to do if you want to have revival? Do you know what you need if you want to have streams of living waters flowing out of you? Forget prayer! Forget fasting! That's not what you need right now! Settle up with the sin in your life! Go to your neighbours! Are you all right with them? Look at your past! Has it been cleansed? Have you been reconciled with everyone? And if you want to be reconciled now, do not go to the person and say, "You were wrong in this and that, and you made a mistake there," and start arguing and proving your righteousness. If so, you should not go at all! Stay where you are with your filth and your sins! You can only be reconciled if you go the way of

self-humiliation! He who does not humble himself cannot be exalted! He who does not lose his life for the Lord will not gain it! This is the way of God!

Many are praying for revival, and to such I want to say something now. Although I am not a prophet, or even the son of a prophet, I can say this very definitely. You can pray for revival all your life, until you die, but you will never get it unless you do what God says, "Stand up and cast out what is cursed! Cleanse each one's life, and in this way the whole church will be cleansed! Be holy, for I am holy!"

Dear friends, if we want to have the Living God among us, we must avoid sin and be cleansed from it! What has God's redeemed people become today?! What has happened to the army of Christ's warriors in our last days?! Where is he, spiritual Israel?! Where is Zion?! Read the sixty-fourth chapter of the prophet Isaiah and consider these words, "Your holy cities are destroyed. Zion is a wilderness; yes, Jerusalem is a desolate ruin." (Isaiah 64:10-11).

The first church in Jerusalem was filled with the presence of God! Sin was not only not tolerated there, but was punished by death without delay, to show once and for all that no wickedness could enter the midst of the people of God! What has become of the church now? What has it become? What has it become in the minds of the people?

For some, the concept of church consists of being baptised, attending it at Easter and Christmas, then being there on their wedding day and finally, for the last time, at their own so-called 'Christian' funeral. They think that if you accept Jesus, you become a child of God. Then you can live any way you want. It doesn't matter how. It is enough to be called a child of God. Only God, who is the same unchanging God yesterday, today, and forever, says to us now, as He did to Joshua, "...I will not remain with you any longer unless you destroy the things among you that were set apart for destruction." (Joshua 7:12).

Anyone with ears to hear should listen and understand!

Chapter 11

What God has taught me through Zulu

In First Corinthians chapter nine we read, “Even though I am a free man with no master, I have become a slave to all people to bring many to Christ. When I was with the Jews, I lived like a Jew to bring the Jews to Christ. When I was with those who follow the Jewish law, I too lived under that law. Even though I am not subject to the law, I did this so I could bring to Christ those who are under the law. When I am with the Gentiles who do not follow the Jewish law, I too live apart from that law so I can bring them to Christ. But I do not ignore the law of God; I obey the law of Christ. When I am with those who are weak, I share their weakness, for I want to bring the weak to Christ. Yes, I try to find common ground with everyone, doing everything I can to save some. I do everything to spread the Good News and share in its blessings. Don’t you realize that in a race everyone runs, but only one person gets the prize? So run to win! All athletes are disciplined in their training. They do it to win a prize that will fade away, but we do it for an eternal prize. So I run with purpose in every step. I am not just shadowboxing. I discipline my body like an athlete, training it to do what it should. Otherwise, I fear that after preaching to others I myself might be disqualified.” (1 Corinthians 9:19-27).

Dear friends, I thank the Lord from the bottom of my heart that I have been able to be a missionary to African people by His definition, because it has been a great blessing to me. By our human nature, we whites are very different from Africans, not only in the colour of our skin, but also in our lifestyle, behaviour, customs, habits and much more. For example, when we stand up to someone who is coming in, we show them respect. African people, on the other hand, remain seated. According to them, standing up is a dishonour to the person coming in. African people never make eye contact with the person they are talking to because it

is considered insolence. Their family life is also quite different. Polygamy is still prevalent among those who remain faithful to paganism, and the relations between the members of their large families are unusual and strange to white people. Seniority is very strictly observed, and all sorts of rules as to the legal position of the members of the family are observed. Of course, this is not all that could be said about their lives, and I have given only a few examples to show the great difference that exists between us of different nationalities.

However, even though all the tribes and nations that inhabit the earth are very different from one another, we Christians are nevertheless called to be a blessing to all and truly the Lord's disciples. And Jesus said that we cannot be His followers unless we deny ourselves. It is impossible to be a blessing to our neighbours, regardless of race or nationality, unless we learn to esteem others above ourselves. When we are called servants of the Lord, we must be able to deny ourselves, but not only that, but we also need to die to ourselves; and this must not be just pretty words on our lips, but our life. It is impossible to do any other way! It is not for nothing that the Apostle Paul says in the above verses that he humbles and enslaves his body. And this is certainly worth something.

If we are not prepared to enter into death with our self and our flesh, we cannot become Christ's disciples, and therefore we will be unable to be a blessing to others, which is precisely our calling! After all, according to Scripture, we are supposed to be a blessing not only to our loved ones and those around us, but also to the world we live among! Don't believe it? - Then look into the Word of God and you will find it confirmed in the words of Jesus Christ who says, "...Go into all the world and preach the Good News to everyone." (Mark 16:15), and also elsewhere, "Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you." (Matthew 28:19-20).

After all, can we teach others to keep God's commandments if we do not keep them ourselves? Can we make others disciples of Jesus if we are not disciples ourselves? Can we say to others, "Don't steal" when we ourselves are dishonest?! Can we teach others to be humble while we ourselves are arrogant and incapable of humility?! We simply do not have the moral authority to call them to be transformed into the image of Christ if they do not see Jesus in us and if the glory of Christ is not reflected in our lives.

The well-known preacher and evangelist Charles Spurgeon once told his students in a lecture, "When you speak of heavenly things, your faces should shine and your lives should reflect the glory of God! When you sing about heavenly things, your voices should sound like the voices of angels! But if you talk about hell, then your faces can remain as they are, and that will be enough."

You see, friends, we're often unable to make disciples of Christ because in ourselves only hell and the devil. If we do things in our lives that are not what the Bible teaches us to do, then we are not disciples of Jesus but disciples of Satan. Of course, we may call ourselves disciples of Christ, but unfortunately we are such only by title. How often you see people who call themselves Christians, but when you look at their lives, you see that the devil is their teacher, not Jesus.

Because the Lord sent me to African people, I learnt a lot from them. We can learn a lot from our neighbours. Whoever always says "I know" is a fool and in reality most often does not know anything. These are not my words. The Bible tells us so. We must always learn, also from those around us. In South Africa, I often tell people that we have the great advantage of living in a country where are many races, tribes and nationalities. This should serve us well because it gives us a good opportunity to learn from each other. We can learn a lot of good things even from children, and it must be said that we really have a lot to learn from them. It is not for nothing that Jesus, when instructing His disciples, once took a child and set him before them and said, "...I tell

you the truth, unless you turn from your sins and become like little children, you will never get into the Kingdom of Heaven.” (Matthew 18:3).

Shortly after revival began, I had a moment when I felt a great heaviness in my soul and felt an inner need to relieve it with someone in prayer. On reflection, I decided to delegate another brother to lead the next meeting, and to retire to the mountains to pray in solitude. I thought of all the Christians I knew, choosing the most spiritual family with whom I could share my prayer fellowship. So, having made my choice, I started on my way. After travelling several kilometres by car and then climbing high into the mountains, I finally reached the place where these people lived.

When they saw me, they were so happy. My face at that moment was serious and concentrated, because, according to my understanding at that time, one could not be cheerful on a day of fasting and prayer, making one’s face as sour as possible. In contrast to me, however, the hosts were as happy as children, and their faces were shining.

“Oh! What a surprise for us!” they exclaimed. “Tell us, what induced you to come to us?”

“You know,” I replied, “I would like to devote the whole of today to fasting and prayer.”

“Fine! But before we start praying, we’ll make you something to eat first.”

I must say that the Zulu people are very hospitable. You can’t go into their house and leave before you’ve had a meal. And a cup of tea doesn’t count. The Zulu can’t understand how you can let a guest go without feeding him. Even if they are poor, they will put everything they have in front of them, and if they have just one chicken in their yard, they will cook it for you.

That is why, when my friends started talking about food, I immediately protested, saying that I had no time to eat or drink today, because I wanted to spend the whole day in fasting and prayer. They laughed heartily in response. “What!!!” they said through their laughter. “Wouldn’t you like the Lord to say to us one day, ‘I was thirsty and you did

not give Me water, I was hungry and you did not give Me food?’ Do you want to set a trap for us?! No, of course not, we will not allow that, and we will not obey you in this! So, kindly come into our house.’ “

So, I had no other choice but to go into their hut and sit down, and they went to catch a chicken... You can't cook a chicken that's been caught right away. You have to butcher it, skin it and gut it. So I sat there waiting, and it seemed to me that I was waiting not for hours, but for an eternity. It's interesting that we white people are somehow always in a hurry to get somewhere. We're always running out of time. We're always in a hurry, wanting everything to be as fast as possible. By the way, this is the shortest way to a mental hospital or, at least, to neurosis. Africans, on the other hand, are in no hurry. They always have time.

And so, as I sat waiting for the meal to be prepared, I said to myself, “Oh God, how I squandered this Sunday, which should have been the Lord's Day! What an irreparable mistake I have made! Oh, I wish I hadn't come here! For I could have prayed with others! How much I could have done today! And now this whole day can be considered a lost day! A day that should have been a day of fasting and prayer has been spent waiting for food! Have I not been foolish?”

So, scolding myself, I continued to sit there, constantly looking at my watch. And time went on and on.... It was now lunchtime, and I was still waiting for food. At last they brought me a cold drink, then a cup of tea. Then they set the table, which was literally bursting with food. There was a lot of food! Chicken, various kinds of other meats, rice, potatoes, salads, vegetables, fruits... It was a real royal meal, and I was the only one sitting at the table. (*According to Zulu customs, the honoured guest is left alone at the table. Before the meal begins, the hosts leave the room so that the guest can feel completely free during the meal*).

The hosts asked for a blessing, and I began to eat. Although the plate in front of me was unusually large, there was not enough space on it to hold even a little of the food

that had been prepared for me. The husband and wife fed me so diligently that in the end I said it was no longer called eating, but munching. As soon as I had finished my plate, they served me a dessert and a drink. After that, they brought me Coca-Cola.

“My friends! I can’t go on! It is already a sin to be so full and drunk!” I pleaded.

“All right, all right!” they said. “We will just take out the dishes now, and then we will pray.”

“Oh!” I almost groaned. “How can I pray now with my belly so full!” (*You see, at that time my prayers were still coming from my stomach, not my heart!*)

After the table was cleared, we finally bent our knees and began to pray. Not a couple of minutes later, the place below us shook... I was unable to comprehend what was happening. Clutching my head, I cried and kept repeating, “Lord, I don’t know You! How can this be possible? Oh, I really don’t know You, my dear, loving Lord!”

In this way, I began to know God anew, recognising Him as I had never known Him before. I had known Him from stories, painted Him in my imagination like a picture, and built Him with my mind like a statue. And this was not only my error, but the error of so many people, who through centuries and generations, through teachings and books, have created an image of God for themselves, making an idol for themselves with their minds and their imagination. We can claim that God is such and so, that in serving Him everything must go the way we do, and if we come to Him, it must look like this and no other. And in doing so we do not even notice how terribly we sin. After all, we are not allowed to make idols for ourselves! We must not build images! We must not serve deities!

We can tell pagans that they worship other people’s gods, and yet have the biggest statue erected by our own imagination. **That “God” who is as we imagine him to be, who gives us everything we desire and does exactly what we expect him to do, is nothing but an idol of our imagination!** This is not the living and true God!

That is why I wept like a child then, and my heart was broken with the bitter realisation of what kind of “God” I had really served all the long years that had passed. So, again and again the Lord revealed Himself to me through these African people, revealing Himself so differently than I had imagined that for days, weeks, and months I could not stop saying, “Lord, I don’t know You at all! O my God, how different You are!”

Therefore, dear friends, when everything will be tested by fire on the coming day of judgement, many of our things will be burned up in it! Much will be reduced to dust and ashes, much of what was valuable to us here on earth will be of no value! These are only human customs and ceremonies, the fruits of our minds and imaginations, all that must die in us.

That’s exactly what happened to me then. Everything I had learnt, all my concepts and ideas had to be buried and started again. At that time I was like a little child who was learning the ABCs of spiritual life for the first time. Being in this position, I could no longer do anything of myself. I could no longer rely on my mind, so, I had to put all my trust in the Lord and follow Him as He led me. It was something completely new, something I had never known before, but that is why I can now say that living in the spirit is living in a completely different world. And if we don’t know that and we don’t live that way, if we don’t agree to be totally controlled by the Lord, then we shouldn’t pray for revival.

Our old life and our spiritual bellows must be completely renewed. Otherwise, even if God gives us the fullness of His Spirit and fills us with His new wine, there will be no point, because in a short time it will appear that we have lost it all. It may even happen that those who have not received the Holy Spirit will be on a higher spiritual level than those who have had a wonderful testimony in their lives. The Bible says that His thoughts are not our thoughts and our ways are not His ways. Therefore, there can be no life with God and a constant walk with Him unless we are

willing to sacrifice our thoughts and our ways for it, saying, "Not my will, but Yours, Lord, let Your will be done!"

That is why I am immensely grateful to the Lord that I was able to learn so much from the Zulu, who were so different from me, a person of a different race. Watching their lives, seeing their childlike trustworthiness, obedience in following the Lord and faithfulness to Him, I was able to review and, with God's help, correct many things in my life.

As I said before, a characteristic of white people is that we are always in a hurry and always in a rush to get somewhere. African people are not like us in this. They tend to be slow and unhurried. It should be said that, in general, all non-white nations are like this by nature.

I met a man who was an evangelist and pastor of a very large church. He was also a member of the non-white race. One day during our conversation he said, "You know, it's very strange. When I go to white people's churches, I am amazed to see how haggard and tired the pastors and preachers are. If a leader has three thousand members in his church, he has no time at all. It is hard to get hold of him, he is always busy and in a hurry. I have heard more than once that because of their excessive spiritual work, many of them have had to seek medical attention for illnesses that developed as a result of extreme fatigue. Personally, I find it hard to understand. Our church has thirty thousand members, and anyway, I always have time, and I can talk to someone for hours."

You see, friends, there are not many churches among white people that have three thousand members. Often they are churches with only a few hundred or even dozens of people in need of spiritual care, but even that number is too many for pastors to handle, and they get tired of them quickly. I think it is because they have a wrong approach to the matter and because they are always in a hurry. It is likely that such ministers have not yet entered into the rest of God and have not learnt what it means. Remember the incident when Christ was in the boat with His disciples during the storm, who were filled with fear and terror, trembling before

the storm, while their Master slept peacefully. He slept in perfect peace because He had it within Himself...

In order to understand the importance and depth of the meaning of these words about rest, let us look at another example of inner rest, but not with God in the flesh, but with an ordinary man. The first man, Adam, did not worry about his wife, as many young people do now, who already at the age of twelve or thirteen think about girls or boys. They often lose peace in thinking about it, spending sleepless nights! In some it goes so far that they become depressed. Among them there are even those who for this reason end their lives by suicide just because things in this matter are not going the way they would like them to. It is a terrible thing to commit suicide! There is only one way left for a suicide, and that is to eternal destruction! So think carefully before you commit suicide!

A Catholic priest once said, "It is better to kill someone else than to kill yourself. It is not as dangerous as suicide, because if you kill someone else, you still have a chance to repent and be forgiven. But if you end your own life, then repentance and forgiveness are no longer possible!" Of course, in quoting these words I am not saying that they are absolutely correct, but as to the question of the murderer repenting and receiving forgiveness, such a possibility does exist.

So, while the Lord was preparing a wife for Adam, Adam was in a state of complete rest and was sound asleep. This deep sleep had been sent to him from above. God Himself saw that it was not good for Adam to be alone, so He took care of him.

It is interesting to note that before this deed was done, Adam was tested by God, who brought all the animals before him, suggesting that he give each of them a specific name. (*In the Old Testament, a name always characterised the essence and character of a given creature*). So, all the animals passed before Adam, and having the gift of discernment, he was able to characterise each one of them by giving it an appropriate name. When, for example, a baboon passed

by him, he did not call it a man. Similarly, he did not call a monkey a man, in spite of its great resemblance to himself. Even if many scientists of our time are unable to see the differences between man and monkey, Adam was able to do so quickly and unmistakably. I also have no doubt that his capacity for discernment was incomparably greater than that of us modern Christians, who in the spiritual life sometimes recognise the monkey life as human, calling the unsaved believers and spiritual people, those whose lives bear absolutely no witness to this.

But Adam was able to discern, and therefore there was no helper for him among all the living creatures that passed before him. Then God put him into a deep sleep, so that at that time He might prepare a wife for him. Adam did not have sleepless nights, he did not think or ponder about a partner or friend, he did not worry about his future, he left it all to God. God alone knows what we really need and what we don't need.

In this way there is a life of rest and peace of God. It is not by chance that the Lord says that it does no good for a man to worry and fuss. We cannot make ourselves taller or change the colour of our hair. He who cares much is sinning much, so Scripture points out to us that there is the possibility of a life of rest and constant inner peace for both young and old alike.

But let us return again to the fact that we are often impatient and in a hurry. In the word of God we often find the expressions "those who wait for the Lord" and "those who trust in the Lord". Those who in their trust in God are able to wait patiently for the fulfilment of His will are said to receive new strength. The Bible also tells us directly and quite clearly that whoever believes is not in a hurry, and such can only be those children of God who know how to wait for the Lord and trust in Him.

You can be constrained on all sides, go through life's storms and tempests, and still have peace and quiet in your heart. It is written for a reason, "Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand.

His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 4:7). If this peace of God is disturbed in our heart, something is wrong. When something happens to us, we need only look into our heart to see if the peace of God is there. If it is not there, it is a sure sign that Satan has already entered. It is like a red traffic light, which is a warning signal, saying that something has entered our lives that should not be there. It is then urgent to stop and go back to the point where this inner peace was lost. This is what we must always do if we are to draw near to the Lord again.

Do you remember in the Book of Revelation, speaking to the church at Ephesus who had lost their first love, the Lord does not say that they should pray and ask for more love and more fire in the ministry? No, He says, “Look how far you have fallen! Turn back to me and do the works you did at first...” (Revelation 2:5). So, you too, think back to the time when you first repented and were converted. Do you remember what you felt and experienced then? You should do exactly the same now. Everyone who has lost his first love for God, who no longer has a fire in his heart and whose zeal has grown cold, must repent and turn to the Lord as he did in the beginning, because during the period of his spiritual cooling he has turned back into a pagan.

It is not for nothing that the Lord says, “Do the works you did at first” that is the works of repentance that you did in the beginning. This means go back to the place where you sinned. You do not need to pray for more love. You just need to repent and turn back. And when that is done, God’s fire will be lit again. The main thing in such a case is that we should remember where our fall took place and, returning to that place, put it in order. We cannot build our spiritual life on dust and ashes, that is, on sin, because such a structure will not stand and will surely destroy. We must build on the only sure foundation, the Lord Jesus, so, all dirt and spiritual filth must be removed! Without doing this, we can never move forward in our spiritual life.

Sin not only affects the soul, but also our flesh, which is why so many people are sick and suffer bodily. God knows very well what is good for man and what is harmful to him. Those who do not know God, when they get drunk, do not think about the fact that it is sin, but their flesh suffers and becomes sick. They also do not know that smoking is not allowed, but their body feels how harmful it is. It is the same in our spiritual life. When we give place to sin and show unfaithfulness to the Lord, we are condemned by our conscience, we suffer and torment our souls, which then affects our health.

You see, God's laws and commands have been written in us, in our flesh, since the foundation of the world, so if we go against them, we rebel first of all against ourselves, harming ourselves. Therefore, we will only receive inner peace and rest when we obey the Lord. In doing so, the Word of God will be like a medicine that will help us in many ways.

African people know this. They are well aware that trusting in the Lord brings deep peace in the heart and peace of mind. Therefore, they are very patient in their waiting. It is from them that I have learnt what it means to wait for the Lord and that waiting for God is not a lost time.

If the people of the Zulu tribe go to their king, they get up early in the morning. They have to be at the king's house as soon as the sun rises. When they get there, they knock in a different way than we usually do. They stand on the road or at the gate and announce their arrival by praising their king and singing songs of praise to him, saying that there is none like him among all kings, that he is the lord, lion and master of all nations. This glorification of the king and the clicking of the tongue is their knocking. So, they stand outside until the king sends his servant to them with a command to enter. But even then the man does not enter the king's house, but only approaches its door. Only then does the king himself, addressing him personally, invite him to enter.

I have met Zulu people who stood for hours in front of the king's house waiting for his permission to enter. There

have been occasions when I have approached such a man and asked him if he was sure that the king was aware of his presence, to which he calmly replied in the affirmative.

“What did he tell you?” I continued to question.

“He said nothing,” he answered calmly.

“How nothing?” I did not understand. “Where is he now? In his house?”

“No, he went away in the car.” *(It was learnt that the king, having woken up and come out of the house, saw him and, turning round, went away to bathe, change his clothes and have breakfast. Then he got into his car and drove past without saying a word to him).*

“When is the king coming back?” I enquired in amazement.

“I don’t know,” shrugged the man.

“Then what are you doing here?”

“I’m waiting for him.”

“And how long will you wait?”

“Until he comes back again.”

“Oh!” I exclaimed, unable to restrain myself. “What a wicked man this king is after all! How could he just walk past you in silence and leave?! No, if I were you, I would have left a long time ago...!”

“What are you saying, white man!” the Zulu interrupted me indignantly. “How can you talk like that?! He is my king! If I leave this place now, it will be tantamount to a blow and a spit in his face! Woe is me if the king returns and does not find me in this place! For he has seen me, and therefore I have no other choice! I must wait for him until he returns! And I do it willingly, because he is my king, my lord! By not doing what I like and what I want, he shows me that he is my master. If he were to ‘dance to my tune’ fulfilling my desires, he would not be my king, but he would be my equal! However, he is my lord, and therefore it is not he who must obey me, but I must be in subjection to him!”

So, the Zulu waits for his king. He is not annoyed or indignant. He waits patiently until the king returns and speaks to him. Therefore, if you tell such people that God is

our King and that it is necessary to wait for Him, it is perfectly understandable and self-evident to them. "Of course," they will immediately agree. "After all, a king is a king!" It is not for nothing that the Word of God says that those who wait patiently for the Lord receive new strength, "But those who trust in the LORD will find new strength. They will soar high on wings like eagles. They will run and not grow weary. They will walk and not faint." (Isaiah 40:31).

The spiritual downfall of the white man and his Christian life is that he is always in too much of a hurry. Everything has to happen quickly for him. And it is precisely because we are always short of time that we have none for the Lord and for our neighbours. Everything in our lives revolves only around us, and we are idols to ourselves. Things should only be the way we want them to be. Even God must do what we want Him to do! Everything must go according to our thoughts and our plans! We have already become gods to ourselves! African people have a very different way of thinking and living in these matters than we white people do, and there are many things in Christianity that they understand much better than we do.

We whites choose our leaders and rulers to do what the people want them to do. If they do not do what we expect them to do, we re-elect or overthrow them. Our chiefs rule for four or five or more years and then we vote to elect others. African people don't do that. For them the chief is the leader for the duration of his life until he dies. He is the king and therefore rules as he wishes and as he sees fit. All power is in his hands and he alone is authorised to decide all matters. He alone can rule and all others must obey his will.

There is so much talk these days about elections, about the right to vote, about human rights to this or that. For Africans, these concepts are totally unfamiliar. We believe that everyone should have the right to vote. They, on the other hand, say that only one person has that right – the one who is the king or the chief of the tribe. It is true for them, and therefore they cannot understand how it is possible that our governments rule with opposition around them. In the

concepts of African people there can be only one conversation with the enemy and the opponent – he must be killed by stabbing him in the heart with a spear. They have no other approach to solving such issues. The enemy must be destroyed at all costs! The Word of God says that if any house or kingdom or nation is divided in itself, it cannot stand. African people understand this very well.

Of course, such matters fall under the heading of politics, and I am not a politician and cannot say whether such an approach is right or wrong in the realm of politics. Nor do I mean to say that what is immutable for African people is right and perfect. In talking about this, I just want to emphasise that if we white people carry our ideas about government into our spiritual lives, it comes straight from hell. And the way African people act in their political issues is something we Christians need to implement in our spiritual lives. Jesus is the only one who can rule over us! He alone must be our Lord and King, first and last! There is no place for anyone else or anything else! There can be no opposition to the Lord in the life of a Christian! Jesus must be our one and only Lord and King!

That is why it is so good to preach the gospel among the pagans. If you tell them that Jesus is King, Lord and God, they know that when they give themselves to Him, they must do so once and for all, that from that moment on no one else can rule in their lives, and that they must now live for Christ alone, without compromise. They do not need to be told that from now on they cannot serve two masters. They realise this very well, saying, “Yes, of course! After all, God is King, and He alone rules over all things, and we must be faithful to Him until death.” On this basis, it is not difficult for them to expect and hope in the Lord. Their reasoning is as follows, “Well, now that we have brought our need to God, we can fully surrender it to Him, and in His time He will act. All we have to do now is look to Him, follow Him, and live for Him!”

Dear friends, I have told you how African Christians approach the most important spiritual issues. What does it

look like for you and me? How often we get tired of waiting, don't we! How often the waiting becomes overwhelming for us, and we get nervous, unable to endure any longer. But why?! Some people even consider it a sign of high spirituality, but sadly, it is just the opposite. It indicates rather that we are still very carnal. People who are constantly running here and there actually are working very little. It seems to them that they are doing a lot, but in reality it is insignificant. But if we wait patiently for the Lord, things look very different. For He has one day like a thousand years, and He can do in one day what would take a thousand years of hard work. I have had to see this from my own experience.

Before revival began, I was constantly busy. My evangelisations continued for eight to ten or even twelve months, often two meetings a day. Like Peter who fished unsuccessfully all night long I too tried my best to catch nothing. I became tired, and unable to go on like this, I decided to give up. After twelve years of fruitless service, when I had lost heart and had almost given up, the Lord appeared to me and said, "Erlo! Go to the depths."

The same words He once said to Peter, who responded to it, "we worked hard all last night and didn't catch a thing. But if you say so, I'll let the nets down again." (Luke 5:5). It was because Jesus said these words, and Peter obeyed Him, that in a short time so many fish were caught that the net began to break and the overloaded boat struggled to stay on the surface. So, if we work in the flesh, we can do it all our lives until death, but very little or nothing will be accomplished. But if we work in the Spirit, we will accomplish much more, seemingly without doing anything special.

After revival began, there were many days in my life when I could say, "I have borne more fruit to the Lord today than in all my previous twelve years!" And that was indeed true. Twelve years of hard, intense work could not compare to just one day! But it required learning to trust and obey the Lord, doing only what He commanded. At the same time, many things began to be fulfilled in my ministry that only God can do, and then it became possible to run on and on

without getting tired or weary. All I had to do was to stay in constant contact with Him, without grieving or quenching His Holy Spirit.

Staying at the feet of Jesus is the most important thing in our spiritual life. The Bible tells us to pray without ceasing. Of course, this does not mean that we should spend our whole lives on our knees with our eyes closed. These words of Scripture signify a constant connection with God and the continuity of our relationship with Him throughout time. It is also important that our lives consist of total submission to the Lord, confirming that He is indeed our King and Lord. It is through this that we receive blessings and new strength from Him.

Just like an African man waits for his king until he comes, so, we need to do the same in our prayers. It is very important that we also wait for our Lord and not run away from Him after waiting half a day, a week, a month, a year or even more. Unfortunately, it often happens that after waiting for a while, we run away shortly before the Lord comes to us, like Saul, who lost all his blessing because he did not have the strength to wait for Samuel to come and did something he should not have done.

Oh our human haste and hurry! How much harm it does us, and how often I used to experience it! "Hurry!" I pushed myself. "We must hurry to the meeting! We mustn't be late!" And there we are, as fast as we can, on our way. In this hurry I could even leave a man who had a great need. And so... When we arrived at the appointed place at the appointed time, we would find that the people had not yet gathered and the service would have to start later. In such cases we had to sit there and wait. "You see, Erlo!" the Lord said to me. "You have not been led by Me, you have not been in the Spirit..."

Of course, there are times when we are too slow and therefore late, like one preacher who came to a meeting when the church had already gone. The next time he came, he was too late again. Confused, he shared with a brother who was a farmer and asked him to pray with him that the Lord would show him what was wrong. He wanted to know

what God wanted to say to him through this. Then the farmer explained to him, "Don't you realise that you just have to get up earlier in the morning?" So, Lot and his family were told to hurry out of Sodom, but he did not hurry.

So, the main thing is that our relationship with the Lord is in order and that we obey Him in all things. Then God Himself will guide us, because He knows best when to hurry and when to wait. If you become nervous and impatient, know that it comes straight from hell. This is the spirit of Satan, not the Spirit of rest and peace of God in which we need to abide. In this way we only harm ourselves and the work of God.

Unfortunately, by their haste and hurry, many missionaries also make a great mistake. As I have already said, African people are by nature very slow. If a meeting is to begin at eleven o'clock, they are sure to come later. Of course, there are other reasons for this, for example, many do not have wristwatches, some of them have to walk a long way, and so on. And if the missionaries arrive at the appointed time for the meeting and the people are not there yet, they become nervous and therefore sin. So, one sin leads to another, and the whole blessing is lost. Instead of getting nervous, would it not be better to ask yourself the question, "What am I here for?" After all, the purpose of coming is to preach the gospel. So, what difference does it make whether it is done at eleven o'clock or twelve o'clock? The main thing must remain the main thing, and everything else is secondary. If we remain quiet and let the peace of God guide our hearts, it will keep us from sin and help us to wait patiently for what the Lord sees fit.

Yes, people can have a hard time waiting. We can lose our presence of mind if someone, forgetting about punctuality, makes us wait for ten or fifteen minutes. For us, it's just terrible! However, if you are nervous and angry, isn't it terrible?! Or is it not too bad?! It's like I couldn't handle it. I got nervous. What's the big deal? It can happen to anyone. It's nothing. We can be so unreasonable! So blind! And yet have the appearance of piety!

My friends, we must not sin! It was no accident that Christ said to the woman caught in adultery, "Go and sin no more." Even when others sin, it does not give us the right to sin! If our neighbours do wrong, we must still do right. And if they are carnal, we must still be spiritual. Our life and walk before God must be in the Spirit. God is Spirit, and our relationship with Him must be unbreakable. If we act according to the flesh, we are at enmity with God and therefore cannot be in union with Him. All these are so-called "trifles", but they are not trifles at all. It was through the Zulu that God taught me all these things. I had to learn a lot from them and revise things.

If pagans accept the gospel, they simply have to change. In doing so, everything becomes different for them. But did you know that we Christian nations need to do the same? We also need to change completely if the Living Gospel comes into our lives. We, white people must change just as much as African people, because they have a coarse and dark paganism, and we have a more refined paganism. And it is this "Christian paganism" that we must bring and lay at the feet of Jesus, after which our whole life must be under the constant control and guidance of the Holy Spirit. There is a lot of so-called "godly" stuff that comes straight from hell. But if we allow the Holy Spirit to work in our lives unhindered, He changes us completely, making us truly children of God.

We can go to the Jews and the Hellenes, the Arabs, the Greeks and other nations and there we can see what a great difference there is between us human beings. What shall we say when we come in contact with them? "Ah, you are quite different! Your notions and views, your way of life are so different from ours! What strange people you are! How can you think like that...!" But think about it, is it right of us? Should we expect them to change to become like us?! Unfortunately, this is the mistake we most often make. Our task is not to make others like us, but to acquire them for the Lord. Remember what the Apostle Paul said about this, "When I was with the Jews, I lived like a Jew to bring the

Jews to Christ. When I was with those who follow the Jewish law, I too lived under that law. Even though I am not subject to the law, I did this so I could bring to Christ those who are under the law. When I am with the Gentiles who do not follow the Jewish law, I too live apart from that law so I can bring them to Christ. But I do not ignore the law of God; I obey the law of Christ. When I am with those who are weak, I share their weakness, for I want to bring the weak to Christ. Yes, I try to find common ground with everyone, doing everything I can to save some.” (1 Corinthians 9:20-22).

I hope you understand what I am trying to say? It is true that there are some Christians who go to the other extreme in this matter. We once had a preacher on a mission who said, “When I am among drug addicts, I also take drugs. If I am with smokers, I also smoke to get them for the Lord.”

This approach is fundamentally wrong. Even if outwardly we become weak, inwardly we must be spiritually strong and sturdy. It is not for nothing that Apostle Paul emphasised that although he was like a stranger to the law to those who were strangers to the law, the law of Christ remained in him. Of course, we must not be hypocrites, but the main thing is that we must know how to deny ourselves and forsake our own, gaining other souls for the Lord. We need to have a similar approach to spiritual matters. Of course, this does not mean that we should do wrong if the people in our midst do wrong. But we must be able to humble ourselves, allowing God Himself to show them the way to the truth.

For example, there is an issue among God’s children that causes much debate and disagreement. In the twelfth chapter of First Corinthians we read, “There are different kinds of spiritual gifts, but the same Spirit is the source of them all. There are different kinds of service, but we serve the same Lord. God works in different ways, but it is the same God who does the work in all of us. A spiritual gift is given to each of us so we can help each other. To one person the Spirit gives the ability to give wise advice; to another the same Spirit gives a message of special knowledge. The

same Spirit gives great faith to another, and to someone else the one Spirit gives the gift of healing. He gives one person the power to perform miracles, and another the ability to prophesy. He gives someone else the ability to discern whether a message is from the Spirit of God or from another spirit. Still another person is given the ability to speak in unknown languages, while another is given the ability to interpret what is being said. It is the one and only Spirit who distributes all these gifts. He alone decides which gift each person should have.” (1 Corinthians 12:4-11). Further on in the same chapter, the Apostle Paul says, “Are we all apostles? Are we all prophets? Are we all teachers? Do we all have the power to do miracles? Do we all have the gift of healing? Do we all have the ability to speak in unknown languages?” (1 Corinthians 12:29-30).

There are some Christians who argue that everyone should speak in other tongues. Others believe that this is wrong because it does not agree with what the Bible says, which teaches us that the Holy Spirit works as He wills, dispensing gifts to God’s children as He sees fit. All this does not happen according to a predetermined scheme, but according to the will of God. One person is given one gift, another a second, and a third a third.

So, two people with different ideas on the issue of other languages met. One said that everyone, without exception, should speak in other tongues. The other denied this and on the basis of the above-mentioned Scriptures, tried to convince his interlocutor that the gift of other tongues was one of the many gifts of the Holy Spirit, and therefore the statement that all should speak in tongues was not in accordance with the teaching of the Bible.

So, they sat at the table and reasoned, proving each one right, and the one who spoke the truth suddenly became angry. Then his interlocutor, noticing this, said, “If you are right and the truth is on your side, then why are you nervous and angry?” The first brother could not forget these words for a long time afterwards and repenting he begged, “Lord, forgive me! I say that I know the truth, and yet I am angry.

I claim to have a pure, irrefutable gospel, and yet I get nervous, argue, and quarrel!”

You see, friends, how wrong this is! We must keep peace in our hearts under all circumstances, have intimacy with the Lord, and walk in His Spirit, testifying to the truth not with our tongue, but with our lives. Otherwise our Christianity is worthless. If we are nervous, irritable, impatient, sullen and angry, anyone who looks at us can point a finger and say, “Look at him! And he calls himself a Christian!” Do you really think that by being like that you can get another person for the Lord? Of course not! But how often, unfortunately, the Christian tries to do so! How often it happens that we open our mouths and begin to speak, instead of, after praying in our hearts, asking the Lord in humility what His will is, and what He expects from us at this moment. How important it is at such a moment to ask our Heavenly Father, “Lord, what do You want me to do?” or “What should I say now?” And if the Lord does not answer us anything, we should also keep silent and say nothing.

We cannot gain souls and be a blessing to others unless we are willing to deny ourselves and, forsaking our own, honour the other above ourselves, becoming for each one what he is. Only when we are willing to do this can what the Apostle Paul wrote about be fulfilled in our lives, “When I was with the Jews, I lived like a Jew to bring the Jews to Christ. When I was with those who follow the Jewish law, I too lived under that law. Even though I am not subject to the law, I did this so I could bring to Christ those who are under the law. When I am with those who are weak, I share their weakness, for I want to bring the weak to Christ. Yes, I try to find common ground with everyone, doing everything I can to save some.” (1 Corinthians 9:20,22). May the Lord help us also to reach a spiritual state in which it will not be difficult to deny ourselves. For only then God can use us to save other souls!

Paul said of himself that he was blameless under the law, leading an exemplary life, yet he was willing to deny

himself. He knew what it cost, so he could say, “For I swear, dear brothers and sisters, that I face death daily...” (1 Corinthians 15:31). Only in this way, by dying daily, can we crucify ourselves to Christ by carrying our cross in humility. This cross is heavy and has nothing to do with the cross that some people wear around their necks. Such a cross is very light and not difficult to wear. But the true cross is not light and not as pleasant. When Christ carried His Cross, He sometimes fell down under the weight of it, so, that another person had to help carry His burden.

The cross of a Christian is not something small either. When carrying it, you cannot walk straight with your head held high, but you must bow low under it. The man who truly carries his cross is humble and bowed down. This is the sign that he is carrying his cross and Jesus is in his heart. If a person is arrogant and proud, if he thinks he is smarter and higher than his neighbours, then the devil lives in his heart. When I say that, I am not wrong, because only the devil can put pride and arrogance in our heart. This could not be done by Jesus, who said, “...Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls.” (Matthew 11:29). A person who truly has Christ in his heart is meek, kind and gentle to others. He cannot be rude and hard-hearted to his neighbour, because the Lord was never like that.

Oh, how important it is for us to learn to carry our cross! He who carries the cross cannot defend himself. When he is beaten, he can't retaliate, because he carries the cross, and therefore he is condemned to death. Such a person has no more rights. He no longer owns anything. He becomes the laughing stock of the world, which does whatever it wants to do with him. He is nailed to the cross, and all he can do is pray for those who are crucifying him, just as Jesus once did, saying, “...Father, forgive them, for they don't know what they are doing...” (Luke 23:34).

Bearing one's cross daily, humbly enduring abuse and insults, is an essential part of the life of one who calls himself a Christian. I do not know whether a person has the right

to be called a Christian if he does not carry his cross. Such a one may long ago have been one of those about whom the Apostle Paul, grieving, wrote, "For I have told you often before, and I say it again with tears in my eyes, that there are many whose conduct shows they are really enemies of the cross of Christ." (Philippians 3:18).

So, it is possible to be called a Christian, but in reality to be an enemy of the Cross of Christ, going against it. Those who are unwilling to deny themselves, who constantly accuse others and seek excuses for themselves, cannot be friends and followers of the One who carried His Cross without complaint to Calvary. Oh, how terrible it is to preach about Christ to others, but to be rejected because you did not carry your own cross and did not want to deny yourself. And what a pity it is if we call ourselves Christians all our lives, and are sure that we really are Christians, and at the end of our journey we find that it was all in vain, and that our fate is eternal condemnation!

Chapter 12

How to become a favoured vessel

Dear Friends, If you look around with eyes that are not blind but truly open, you will be horrified at the way things look in the world today. Especially sad is the fact that in the last fifty years the total number of people who belong to Christianity has almost decreased threefold, while other non-Christian creeds and godlessness are spreading further and further. In almost all churches, with few exceptions, attendance at services is declining, and therefore those who still have a little spiritual life in them should cry out to the Lord, begging Him to have mercy on us and stop this downward slide.

I cannot understand those Christians who remain content with the current situation. Look around you! Isn't it possible to be horrified by what you see and hear now! Only God knows what else the future may bring. That is why there is now only one salvation left for us – true, spiritual revival, which is in full agreement with the Bible and which the Lord gives through His Holy Spirit. If we do not experience the true one, then we will fall under another influence and be carried away by a false current. There is simply no other way out!

That is why every believer must be a burning Christian, with a heart on fire for the Lord. But anyone who is barely burning is a traitor to the kingdom of heaven! Therefore, if such children of God lose their assurance of salvation, we can only rejoice, and the sooner it happens, the better! My prayer to God is precisely that such Christians will awaken from their spiritual slumber as soon as possible. I am far from the idea of comforting and consoling a believer who is far from the scale that the Lord expects of him.

If someone tells me that the revival we have in South Africa is something untrue and there is something unbiblical and impure about it, then I reply to him, "Brother, if you know something better, then show me that better, rather than

coming with empty words and a pretence of godliness while denying the power from above.” The Gospel and the Word of the Cross must be the power of God to overturn and bring today’s formal Christianity to its feet, accomplishing with it what once happened in Jerusalem!

Every Christian should be a burning witness for Jesus Christ! Every one, without exception, young or old, male or female, single or married! We can no longer tolerate in our midst those whose hearts do not beat for the Lord day and night, and for whom the work of God does not come first! We who call ourselves Christians and followers of Jesus Christ must live in such a way that He is our first and last, our life and our daily bread!

The time has come when no one should be ashamed of the name of the Lord, and when everyone’s Christianity should be made manifest to all! The world is doing all it can for the triumph of the devil but when will we Christians finally begin to do it for our Saviour! The world is fighting for Satan’s power, and the servants of the devil are doing everything for his glory and his dominion over human souls! So, how much more should we Christians do this for our Heavenly King and Master!

We must not forget that there is very little time left because everything is coming to its end. We are living in exactly the kind of time that is written about, “You should know this, Timothy, that in the last days there will be very difficult times. For people ... They will act religious, but they will reject the power that could make them godly!” (2 Timothy 3:1-2,5). It is of them that the apostle Paul wrote, “Stay away from them.” Therefore, avoid every so-called Christian who has only the appearance of godliness, but denies the power of God! Furthermore, examine yourselves also, and see if you are not such?

Take a deeper look at these words, friends, and consider whether it is time for us to start taking God’s Word seriously. How long do we have to limp on both knees?! Has the time not come for us to truly honour our God, and for our lives to be a faithful testimony that He alone is the Truth, and that

the Bible is our guide to Him? The hour must finally come when the Lord will be our final and decisive word!

When God acts, He does it the way He wants to, and I don't know why, but it is through us humans that He acts. God needs human vessels, and so the question becomes, how do we become a vessel fit for use in His holy hands? This is a question we have to face everywhere. Christians often ask, "What can we do so that God may grant us spiritual revival? What is necessary for this? How can we become a vessel acceptable to the heavenly Master?"

In the Second Timothy, chapter two, verses nineteen to twenty-one, it says this, "But God's truth stands firm like a foundation stone with this inscription: 'The LORD knows those who are his,' and 'All who belong to the LORD must turn away from evil.' In a wealthy home some utensils are made of gold and silver, and some are made of wood and clay. The expensive utensils are used for special occasions, and the cheap ones are for everyday use. If you keep yourself pure, you will be a special utensil for honorable use. Your life will be clean, and you will be ready for the Master to use you for every good work."

Here the Word of God tells us what vessels exist in the house of God, and what their use is. But the most remarkable thing about this passage of Scripture is that it does not end the thought of the Holy Spirit, who then brings us to the most important point, "If you keep yourself pure, you will be a special utensil for honorable use. Your life will be clean, and you will be ready for the Master to use you for every good work."

Well, friends, this is the answer to all the questions we have asked. Here, in the words of the Apostle Paul, the Lord tells us how important it is to cleanse ourselves from all the filth of our spirit and our flesh, and that this process of cleansing and sanctification is a necessary and absolutely essential condition for God to take us into His inheritance. Without it we cannot be an instrument in His hands, nor are we capable of becoming the kind of vessel that He would use for His glory.

There are people who say, "What can I do if I was born this way! That's my character. My parents were like that too. Apparently, I am just an earthen vessel that cannot be used for God's glory and, unfortunately, that cannot be changed!" But thanks be to God that this is not the case and that it doesn't have to stay that way at all! Even if you are an earthen vessel of no honour and your former life was only to the dishonour of God, even then this can change. Not by starting to study theology or going to Bible school (*although I don't mean to say that this is wrong*). Only, none of that will help us if we don't purify our lives. After all, according to God's Word, it is purification that comes first.

Over the years we have been able to convince ourselves again and again that God has no hypocrisy and that He does not look at faces. Whether man or woman, young or old, every soul that purifies itself and does good is acceptable to the Lord and will sooner or later become a suitable vessel for Him. It does not matter whether the person is educated or illiterate, whether he is a man or a woman, whether he is a minister in the church or a simple, ordinary member. The main thing is to have a clean heart and a decent life, because only then can the Spirit of God work. If sin enters into the life of such a person, the Holy Spirit is grieved and His work ceases, and this continues until everything is cleansed and put in order.

In the text we read there are also these words, "But God's truth stands firm like a foundation stone with this inscription: 'The LORD knows those who are his,' and 'All who belong to the LORD must turn away from evil.'"

Do you see, friends, that in the eyes of the Lord, what is the foundation upon which we must build? We cannot build on something else, because then we would be building on sand. We cannot build on good preaching, nor can we build on our own experience and human wisdom. Nor must we be established on a certain doctrine, but only on God's one foundation, which is indicated to us by the Word of God, "...All who belong to the LORD must turn away from evil." God is holy, so He cannot tolerate any unrighteousness. This

does not mean lying in the lives of others, but unrighteousness in my own life. It is not the sin of my neighbours, but my own sin that grieves the Holy Spirit who lives in me.

In confirmation of what I have said, I would like to give just one example from the lives of God's children. There are so many of them, those whom the Lord uses in His kingdom and about whom we could tell for many days. But now I have it on my heart to tell the story of an African sister to show, in what great power God can work through the simplest woman. For He can do all things. He can speak how He wants and through whom He wants. There is even an example in the Bible of God speaking through a donkey because the prophet was blind at the time. When we look back at this story, we can only regret to say that it happens again and again. And now, in our twentieth century, it often happens that the prophet is blind, not seeing what he should have seen. Then the "donkey" has to speak to save his life.

The woman I want to talk about now lived in such a place, in such a family and in such a house, where it was really very, very hard. Already in the first week after her marriage, she received her first blows on the head with a stick. Her husband was a terribly angry man, quick to anger. He was an alcoholic and could swear and swear. Having a job, he did not care about the maintenance of his family at all, as a result of which three of his children died of hunger. The husband not only drank everything he earned, but also used a whip or a stick every day. This woman's body is still covered with scars from the beatings. In the same way, almost all of her children have the same terrible marks on their bodies. For this reason, the wife and children often had to sleep outside. It was a truly horrible life. *(Interestingly, the Lord often works precisely where circumstances are the worst, which is why the words of this hymn are so true, "The darker the night, the brighter the stars..." It is in the deep darkness that the light appears especially bright. If you light a candle on a clear day, its light will be almost imperceptible, but if you light the same candle deep in the night, its light will be especially bright).*

Zulu families always live together, and so daughters-in-law live with their mothers-in-law. But in the case I am describing, life together was a living hell, because on top of that the mother-in-law was also a very evil woman. So, it is not surprising that there were many quarrels and fights in this family. The children said that when they grew up, the first thing they would do when they grew up was to kill their hated father, wishing him nothing but death.

That was the situation, and it continued until this woman repented. That was in 1963, but to this day I cannot forget her repentance. I remember that one day after a meeting she came to me to share her grief. What do you think she said? Not to make a mystery of it, I will say that she did it just as, sadly, many women do, “Oh!” she complained, “I have such a hard time with my husband! He is so cruel to me! He is an unbeliever and a terrible drunkard. He lives with another woman. He swears and swears terribly.” After telling everything about him, she switched to her mother-in-law, describing her in the most unflattering words.

After she finished, I asked her, “Please tell me, what does the matter look like for you personally, in your spiritual life?” (*She was a so-called Christian and was even a youth leader in her local church*). Not understanding why I was talking to her about this, she said indignantly.

“Why are you talking about me?! I’m not the problem, it’s my husband! He is the cause of all our family problems, not me!”

“Okay. But let’s see what the Bible says about it. Think about it, maybe this is your mission field! Isn’t it to your advantage that you are in a place where darkness prevails? For it is under such conditions that your Christian fire can burn and shine especially brightly!” I replied.

“Oh, it’s a bitter pill for me!” said the distressed woman.

“Yes, the medicine is often bitter, but that’s not so important if it helps.”

As we have said, friends, when it comes to revival, we must not forget that it begins with you personally not with

your husband. It begins with you, dear husband, not with your wife, and with you, daughter and son, not with your parents. The Lord begins His work precisely with the one who prays and asks for the work of God. For this reason the Christian woman was told, "Forget your husband now, forget your evil, hateful mother-in-law, and think about your own life. Is it in order? Have you cleansed it before the Lord?"

So, the Spirit of God began His work in the woman's heart. Then she realised that she too had already sinned, that not only her husband, but also she had been guilty of many things, and that not only her mother-in-law was wicked, but she herself had such bitterness in her heart that she was unable to forgive. At the moment when all this was revealed to her inner spiritual eyes, she cried out fearfully,

"What am I going to do now?!"

"Cleanse your own life! Put it in order and overcome evil with good."

After the Holy Spirit began His work of cleansing in her life, this woman began to change gradually into the kind of vessel the Lord needed for His use. She began by going to her husband by herself and saying to him, "Dear husband, forgive me!" She did not tell him that he had fornicated with another woman while cheating on her. No, she recognised her own sin, "I have not been the kind of wife the Bible teaches!" she said. "I did not obey you, nor did I have a loving heart toward you. I was angry with you because I couldn't stand it when someone was drinking or swearing! Oh, how little patience I had in this! Forgive me for that, my husband! Please forgive me!" Then she went to her mother-in-law and put her relationship with her in order. The next day, on her way home from work, she went to the shop and with all her pennies she bought her a loaf of bread.

In this way, by doing good deeds, she gathered burning coals on the heads of these people. And soon afterwards the Holy Spirit began to work through her in great power. First her first child turned to God, then her second. Then her mother-in-law repented and believed. A short time later, her

sisters-in-law and a nearby neighbour were won over by her love. It was like a chain reaction and continued until all the people in the area gave themselves to the Lord. They repented one by one, not through preaching, but through the living testimony of this woman's life. If a person's life is in line with Scripture, then their words have power and are not the kind of idle chatter that one doesn't really pay attention to.

Dear friends, I would like to emphasise that we have already seen many times that as soon as a person begins to purify and put in order his life and his relations with God and people, the Holy Spirit immediately begins to work, thus confirming that this soul is on the right path. Such souls quickly become powerful instruments in the hands of God and vessels fit for the Lord to use. However, if these Christians, having become vessels for His use, allow sin to re-enter their lives, they again become unfit for the Lord, and the Holy Spirit stops working through them.

Each of us has the privilege of becoming a vessel for the Lord after we have purified our lives and begun to serve the Lord faithfully. To serve by remaining faithful in the smallest and most insignificant things, and to live a life that can truly be called life in the Lord. In the Zulu language we say this, "The Lord gives revival, the Lord blesses and works through the fact that man lives the life that He expects of him." And it is very important that we live this life not in periods or on an ad hoc basis, but constantly, day in and day out, because only then does God apply His blessing.

That was the case with this African woman. It was only when she agreed to go that way that the Lord blessed her. He is still using her as His precious vessel today, and more so than ever before. However, it must be said that she has had a lot to learn over the years. Whenever she walked in the Spirit, God was with her, but as soon as she began to act according to the flesh, the Lord withdrew and the Holy Spirit was no longer on her side. If she was faithful to the Lord in humility, her husband allowed her to attend the meeting, but as soon as she began to act according to the flesh, to become

angry and indignant, if she responded to his scolding and accusations with contradiction, the devil was again empowered, and her husband again forbade her to attend the services. When that happened, would come to us and say,

“I can’t be with you. My husband has forbidden me to go to meetings again.”

“He did?! But why?! What happened?!” I asked.

“Ah, I couldn’t take it anymore! So, I said something to him too!”

“Do you think it was of God’s spirit or of the flesh?”

“Yes, it was not of the will of God, because I did not speak in love or in the Christian spirit of humility.”

“Then go and put it in order!”

“But that, after all, is beneath my dignity! I can’t go to my husband with this to ask for his forgiveness again!...”
(Unfortunately, this is really true for many women. It is easier for them to ask for forgiveness from another man than from their own husband).

But the Lord gave this woman no rest, and having no other way out, she humbled herself, went to her husband and said, “Forgive me! I did wrong in this. The Lord does not tolerate such things.” Only after she did this did God open the door for her again, and the next time she was in the meeting again.

What happened to her was also a lecture and an important lesson for all of us, from which we also learnt to act not according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. Anger, resentment, irritability, nervousness – these are nothing but works of the flesh, from which we must be cleansed, and become humble, so, that the Holy Spirit may work, and that nothing devilish in us may quench Him.

Some time passed, and the husband of this woman repented, after which he himself led many people to Christ, about which we could also tell many stories. However, I do not know why, but I feel compelled to speak about this woman. Perhaps, because there are also wives among you whom the Lord would like to use and teach and prepare for it by the example of this woman.

Dear sisters! I want to draw your attention to the fact that this woman's husband began to change only when she said in her heart, "Lord! I am ready to humble myself and follow Your way, doing only what You want me to do! If it is Your will for me to have such a husband for the rest of my life, then I accept it with joy. Only grant me the grace to remain faithful to You always!" It was through this that the Lord touched her husband's heart. Unable to understand the change in her, he said, "Look, I know you! I know how stubborn you are, and how hard it is for you to humble yourself! What's happened to you now? You've become unrecognisably different..."

So, this simple African woman became the light that guided souls to Christ. And then the words of Jesus were fulfilled in her life in the Gospel of John 7:38, "Whoever believes in Me **as the Scripture says**, rivers of living water will flow from his womb." (*literal translation of this verse in the Zulu Bible*). It would take a long time to recount in detail all that the Lord did for her and how blessed she was by the repentance of all their other children and her aged parents. By humbling herself before God, she had purchased them all for Him. As time passed, the children grew up and all without exception became labourers in the mission field. Then came the grandchildren who also followed the Lord. One of them, little Kwazi, at the age of four, could tell people about God in such a way that the adults began to weep and repent.

You see, dear friends, this woman became a useful vessel because she agreed to cleanse and put her life in order. I would like this simple life example to serve as an impetus for you to decide to do the same. I believe that this step of yours can be the beginning of something you don't even realise. Who knows, maybe the salvation of the souls of your loved ones, family, friends and acquaintances depends on you agreeing to clean up your life like this African woman did.

But God's plan of salvation is not limited to those you know and love. The whole world lies before us, and the Lord says to us, "Go and preach the gospel to the whole creation,"

which means thousands and millions of people. There have never been so many pagans in the history of mankind as there are today! What will happen if God asks us one day for the loss of these souls?! That is why every Christian must open the door of his heart to the Lord, giving Him the opportunity to do in it what He has long wanted to do. **Only after our heart and life have been purified can we become vessels fit for the Lord to use.** Then He will be able to work through us as He alone can.

I hope you have not yet forgotten my story of how one day at the beginning of revival, feeling a great heaviness on my soul, I wanted to spend the day in fasting and prayer and sought fellowship with people who in my eyes were most spiritual. You also remember, of course, how I was welcomed by the Christians to whom I came, and how through this meeting with them I came to know the Lord in a way I had not known before, and experienced a particularly close fellowship with Him. These Christians were this African woman with her husband and their children. When this little church knelt down and began to pray, within a couple of minutes the heavens opened and the place shook. What do you think was their secret, and why do you think the Lord heard their prayer so quickly and answered us? It was because these people had purified their lives and therefore their prayers came from a pure heart.

My friends! That's the whole secret! Let us purify ourselves! Let us expel from our hearts and from our lives all sin, all uncleanness and all filthiness! Let us ask the Lord to reveal and show everything that is not pleasing to Him in us. It is the work of the Holy Spirit to point out our sins, but we must give Him the opportunity and ask God for the strength to clean up the things that will be pointed out to us.

I would also like to say that we do not need to be oppressed and depressed when the Lord begins to do His work by revealing what grieves the Holy Spirit. On the contrary, we should be joyful and thankful to Him for this grace.

Let us also use the Word of God as a mirror for ourselves. It is so important that everything in our lives be in

accordance with the Scriptures, and that we have them not only on paper, but also in our hearts, in our thoughts, in our actions and deeds! Let us reach the point where, looking at our lives, others can read the Bible in them! Only then will we become vessels fit for the Lord to use, and only then will the Holy Spirit use us as He desires.

Oh, how thankful I am to the Lord that He does not look at faces! And may He be gracious to find hearts here in this place that are willing to be convenient vessels for Him! Just remember, friends, that God needs you right where you are. You don't have to go to Japan, China, Korea, or South Africa! Live for the Lord where you are, because that is where God's work must begin! If we are not good where we are, we will be of no use elsewhere! It was not by chance that Jesus commanded his disciples to remain in Jerusalem. That is where it all began, and that is where the gospel spread to the whole world!

Therefore, whoever is cleansed from his sins will become a vessel of honour, a vessel for the glory of God! The Lord will surely use such a vessel as He sees fit. What the world needs today is not so much evangelists and preachers, but that each one of us becomes a vessel fit for the Lord to use. If we are able to be a blessing to other souls, God will surely take us in and begin to do His work where we are. I don't see any other way. This is the only salvation for us, our families, our relatives, acquaintances, and all our nation in these end times! Oh, may the Lord grant that there will be people here among you who will accept this with all their hearts!

Chapter 13

The way that is the way of the holy one

Dear friends, now I want to read a whole chapter of Scripture and I hope that you will not be bored. Now, the Book of Isaiah, chapter thirty-five, “Even the wilderness and desert will be glad in those days. The wasteland will rejoice and blossom with spring crocuses. Yes, there will be an abundance of flowers and singing and joy! The deserts will become as green as the mountains of Lebanon, as lovely as Mount Carmel or the plain of Sharon. There the LORD will display his glory, the splendor of our God. With this news, strengthen those who have tired hands, and encourage those who have weak knees. Say to those with fearful hearts, ‘Be strong, and do not fear, for your God is coming to destroy your enemies. He is coming to save you.’ And when he comes, he will open the eyes of the blind and unplug the ears of the deaf. The lame will leap like a deer, and those who cannot speak will sing for joy! Springs will gush forth in the wilderness, and streams will water the wasteland. The parched ground will become a pool, and springs of water will satisfy the thirsty land. Marsh grass and reeds and rushes will flourish where desert jackals once lived. And a great road will go through that once deserted land. It will be named the Highway of Holiness. Evil-minded people will never travel on it. It will be only for those who walk in God’s ways; fools will never walk there. Lions will not lurk along its course, nor any other ferocious beasts. There will be no other dangers. Only the redeemed will walk on it. Those who have been ransomed by the LORD will return. They will enter Jerusalem singing, crowned with everlasting joy. Sorrow and mourning will disappear, and they will be filled with joy and gladness.” (Isaiah 35:1-10).

This passage describes the glorious state of God’s people and tells us how wonderful it will be one day in Israel when God turns the wilderness there into a garden. Then those who have been delivered by the Lord will return with

triumph and rejoicing to Zion. But this Word does not only have this meaning for us, because if the Lord speaks about something, He always, without exception, means first of all spiritual things. For example, take the question of healing. When speaking of the blind or deaf, do not think first of fleshly eyes, fleshly ears, or fleshly mouths. The fleshly things are flesh that will one day be eaten away by worms, despite being the temple of the Holy Spirit. It is important that everything in our understanding be in the right order. It is a thousand times better to be Lazarus, sick from head to toe but spiritually healthy, than to have good health but be spiritually crippled. It is ten thousand times better to be blind in the flesh, but have spiritual eyes open, than to have excellent eyesight, but remain spiritually blind all your life.

One day a blind man was brought to our mission station.

“Erlo, he wants to see you personally!” said one of the staff, coming to me.

“I am very busy right now!” replied I. “Please, you talk to him.” However, the messenger came back to me again with the words,

“No, it is you that this blind man wants to speak to.”

“Tell him that I have much to do and cannot meet him at the moment. Let him calmly tell you whatever is in his heart.”

But the blind man didn’t listen. After all, there are people who just don’t want to listen and it’s useless to explain anything to them.

“All right,” I decided. “What’s the use if I’m the same way. Then I’ll put up with it. It won’t hurt me.” (*Of course, for some people it can be very hard to do that. They would rather break than bow down. That’s how stubborn people can be in this world*).

So, leaving everything behind, I came to this blind man and asked him what he desired.

“You see, I am blind. Pray for me to see.”

“What a joke!” I was surprised. “I will not do it at all.”

In reply to this he became terribly indignant.

“Are you not Erlo Stegen?” he asked me angrily.

“Yes, I am.”

“In the place where I came from, there are three blind people who received their sight after you prayed for them. So, why don’t you want to pray for me?!”

“I just can’t do it! I couldn’t do it even if I wanted to! You tied my hands and feet!”

“How could I?!” the blind man was amazed.

“It all starts with the spiritual,” I explained.

“James 5:16 says, ‘Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results.’ “

Notice, friends, how the Bible teaches us to deal with such cases. First confess and repent of our sins, and then pray for healing. Unfortunately, we do just the opposite. We forget the first part of this instruction and start right away with prayer, which usually does not produce the desired result.

I do not want to waste time on a prayer that will not be heard by God. Therefore, if a person comes to me with a request to pray for his healing, the first thing I ask is, “Tell me, what is the state of your spiritual life? Have you cleaned it up and put it in order?” If he answers in the negative, I suggest that he do it first and only then come to me again. The main thing must remain the main thing. First the spiritual, then the bodily. There is no point in praying for the healing of a person whose heart is afflicted with the leprosy of sin. Believe me, the most serious cancer is not as dangerous as the smallest sin, because cancer only kills the body, but sin destroys the soul forever.

I cannot understand those people who say that they have the gift of healing and pray for the sick without caring about their spiritual illnesses. Because we have more than enough of them! Bitterness, hatred, envy, backbiting, grudges, impatience, irritation, anger, suspicion, impure thoughts, greed, covetousness and fornication, this is not a complete list of what is in the heart of a Christian and what comes straight from hell. And with such things we come

before the Holy Face of God, comforting ourselves with the thought that we are going to heaven! But how can this be possible, when the Word of God clearly tells us that nothing unclean will enter the kingdom of heaven! Many people are sure that they are on the way to heaven, but how they can enter it I do not know. If the Lord lets them into heaven, the heavenly abodes will be stained and become hell.

“Ah!” some will probably say, “We are all sinners, and every one of us is unclean!” Yes, that is true. But that is why the Cross of Jesus Christ was placed in the world, from which flows a spring that can wash away and cleanse our sins, making us whiter than snow! This happens through the power of Jesus’ resurrection and therefore, as He abides in new life, so, we must be renewed. The old things have passed away! Through the power of Christ, the power of His Cross and His ascension, we can now go forward from victory to victory, overcoming sin!

So, I inviting the blind man to come to me,

“Tell me, have you seen God yet?” I asked.

“No! It is impossible to see God.” he replied.

“Have you seen Jesus crucified on the Cross? Did you realise that it was also your fault?”

“No!” Zulu started laughing. “Because it was not we African people, but you white people who crucified him!”

“Have you realised that the Lord is a holy God? Have you recognised His holiness?”

“No...”

“Have you realised that Christ was crucified for you? That He was nailed to the Cross for your sins...?”

As the blind man listened attentively to my words, his spiritual eyes suddenly opened and he exclaimed, “Oh, now I think I understand what you are trying to tell me...!” And with these words, before I could say anything else, he opened his heart, confessing his sins since childhood. Without stopping, he brought to light one sin after another, while repeating, “Oh, God, what a terrible sinner I am!”

And do you know what happened? Just at the time when the blind man, listing one thing after another, was

unloading all his iniquities, he suddenly jumped to his feet and shouted, “Oh, my eyes have been opened! I see now!!! I see!!!” Thus his fleshly eyes were given sight. I did not even pray for him or lay hands on him. The Lord healed him without any of that when he came to Him in repentance for his sins.

Do you see what it takes for us to be heard? Often we don’t even realise how much our sins can separate us from the Living God. Oh, how terrible is this dividing wall of sin! Some Christians in Europe have told me what a difficult feeling it is when you pray and your prayer does not get through to God. It feels as if a heavy, cast-iron blanket is over you. When Billy Graham was evangelising in West Berlin one day, one of his staff members told him, “I had a feeling that revival was about to begin, but there was always a barrier like a strong wall. What do you think that wall was and what was that cast-iron blanket? Nothing less than sin. It is not material prosperity or wealth, which of course can also be sin. However, it is not what separates us from God in the first place. In South Africa we are constantly telling people that if someone comes to God with a need, whether it is fleshly or spiritual, they should first make sure that that prayer is heard.

In other words, everything that could be a barrier to the Lord must be removed from the way. If we gather to pray, no matter how many of us there are, even if it is just two, we should ask each other if there is anything that would be a dividing wall between us and God. And if there is, we must first put it in order and only then begin to pray.

If our relationship with God and our neighbours is not in a proper state, prayers have no meaning. Nor should you claim to have a closeness with God if you do not have closeness with your brother or sister. The Bible tells us uncompromisingly that if someone says that he loves God but does not love his brother, he is a liar. Love for our neighbour is a commandment of God, and without its fulfilment it is impossible to have closeness with the Lord. The Gospel of Matthew says, “...when you did it to one of the least of

these my brothers and sisters, you were doing it to me!” (Matthew 25:40). There is a law in our spiritual life: the closer we get to God, the closer we get to our neighbour.

I have met people who say that it is necessary to strive for universal peace, in which all the faiths that exist today will be united and there will be a unification of Christians, Muslims, Buddhists, and so on. But no, that is not the kind of peace that Christ once spoke of, “I am leaving you with a gift – peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give is a gift the world cannot give...” (John 14:27).

A young man came up to me one day and asked me what I thought about this “universal peace”.

“Oh!” I answered briefly. “All this is diabolical!”

“What do you mean?” he marvelled. “It is a very good thing to have universal peace!”

“But what good is this universal peace if there is no peace in your own heart?! Get your life in order! Confess your sins by coming to the Cross, and only then you will receive peace! If sin remains in your heart, the devil lives there! Such a state cannot be peace, but only a counterfeit of peace.”

So, the main thing must come first. In any case, the spiritual comes first, and then the bodily. And even if a person is not healed in the flesh, but he is healed spiritually, he acquires a full inner life, a life of abundance. He has joy, peace and love in his heart. In this way sickness can be a blessing to a person, bringing him closer to the Lord and keeping him close to Him. It is not for nothing that God’s Word tells us that, “...if you have suffered physically for Christ, you have finished with sin.” (1 Peter 4:1).

In the opposite case, if a person is healed in the flesh, but remains spiritually sick, the sin that lives in his heart is given the opportunity to act and manifest itself in practice. For example, a formerly lame or paralysed person who starts to walk normally will become addicted to dancing, fornication, and lead a horrible life that will end in eternal destruction. Thus, the healing received will become a curse for him. That is why we must not forget this when we pray for the

sick. God alone knows what is better for our souls, whether it is the health of our flesh or its sickness. And it is not for us humans to determine this, humbly accepting what His will is.

There are many “healers” and “miracle workers” but we must test everything and especially in these end times. It is not by chance that the Apostle John said, “Dear friends, do not believe everyone who claims to speak by the Spirit. You must test them to see if the spirit they have comes from God. For there are many false prophets in the world. This is how we know if they have the Spirit of God: If a person claiming to be a prophet acknowledges that Jesus Christ came in a real body, that person has the Spirit of God. But if someone claims to be a prophet and does not acknowledge the truth about Jesus, that person is not from God. Such a person has the spirit of the Antichrist, which you heard is coming into the world and indeed is already here.” (1 John 4:1-3).

Dear friends, these words of Scripture have a deeper meaning than we sometimes realise. This does not mean that we should ask the demon-possessed person if they believe that Jesus came in the flesh. Of course, there are demons who will foolishly answer, “No, I don’t believe it,” but for the most part demons believe it too. James 2:19 tells us that, “...even the demons believe this, and they tremble in terror.” So, what does it still mean that Jesus came in the flesh and that the Spirit who confesses this is a Spirit from God?

In the Epistle to the Romans, in chapter eight, verse three we get the answer, “The law of Moses was unable to save us because of the weakness of our sinful nature. So God did what the law could not do. He sent his own Son in a body like the bodies we sinners have. And in that body God declared an end to sin’s control over us by giving his Son as a sacrifice for our sins.” Thus, what the law could not do, God did through His Son, sending Him into the world in the form of a man. For example, the law says, “Thou shalt not steal, thou shalt not fornicate, do not commit adultery, do not lie, do not be proud, etc.” However, just knowing this law does

not help. In spite of it, sin reigns over us. That is why God sent Jesus to us in the flesh to condemn sin and what the law could not do of us, the Son of God did.

So, that Spirit who confesses that Jesus can save us from our sins and that sin in our lives will be judged is the Spirit from God. It is the Spirit who confesses healing and salvation from sins! Think about this, for it is very necessary and important. In these end times we need especially the gift of wisdom and the gift of discernment, because if we do not learn to discern spirits, we will be carried away by false teachings that are spreading more and more.

We will continue this subject a little later, but for now let us return to the prophet Isaiah, “And when he comes, he will open the eyes of the blind and unplug the ears of the deaf. The lame will leap like a deer, and those who cannot speak will sing for joy! Springs will gush forth in the wilderness, and streams will water the wasteland. The parched ground will become a pool, and springs of water will satisfy the thirsty land. Marsh grass and reeds and rushes will flourish where desert jackals once lived. And a great road will go through that once deserted land. It will be named the **Highway of Holiness**. Evil-minded people will never travel on it. It will be only for those who walk in God’s ways; fools will never walk there.” (Isaiah 35:5-8).

This chapter shows us exactly what happens when spiritual revival begins, down to the smallest detail. In doing so, the words are literally fulfilled, “...The parched ground will become a pool, and springs of water will satisfy the thirsty land.” Where once there was dryness and emptiness, the Lord sends the abundant rain of His spiritual and earthly blessings. In confirmation of this, I want to tell you briefly, how this chapter was literally fulfilled in a place in South Africa. I say “one of the places” because there are now many places in our country where the fulfilment of these words is clearly seen.

So, one area called Tugela Feri was very dry. It was an arid, desolate area where very little rain fell, and spiritually it looked even worse. For a hundred years missionaries had tried to preach the Good News there, but they had not

succeeded because the people did not want to hear or know anything about the Gospel. This continued until the Lord in His great mercy sent revival there. And then hundreds and thousands of people, turning to God, moved to the crossed. After great spiritual streams began to pour out there, He also opened His heaven over them, so that now it rains abundantly there for years, and the people say with rejoicing, "Since the Living God began to work among us, we are receiving rain on our land as well!"

So the Lord sent an earthly blessing along with the spiritual blessing. Such is our God! There is no end to His mercies! In healing the land, He also healed the people who lived there. Those who were sick in the flesh not only came to know their Saviour and began to believe in Him, and were spiritually regenerated, but also received bodily healings: the blind began to see, the lame began to walk, the mute began to shout and sing in great joy! What the prophet had foretold was fulfilled in real life. Now I want to tell you more about how it happened.

Suddenly there was a great hunger to hear the Word of God, and people began to flock from all directions. They gathered by the hundreds to the place where the gospel was preached, and after the sermon many of them stayed to cleanse and put their lives in order. At that time I was no longer calling anyone to repent and be converted. But the Word of God, which had become alive and active, was penetrating the hearts of people and doing what it was called to do.

We did not tell people that they must confess their sins personally, nor did we teach them how to do it. But the Holy Spirit Himself encouraged them to do so, laying it on their hearts to tell them what to say and how to say it. As they approached us, they tearfully asked, "Please give us the opportunity to tell everything. We cannot go home as we are. We will not leave here before we cleanse our lives before the Lord."

They spent many hours alone with the man in whose presence they had confessed their sins to God, bringing to

light the impurities of their lives and calling everything by its proper name. How oppressed and depressed they looked as they sat for hours waiting for this opportunity, but how childishly happy they were when they could do it at last! Oh, how their faces shone then, and how their weeping eyes glowed with happiness! This is how God accomplished His work in bringing the saved into the Church!

On one occasion there were three evening meetings scheduled for Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Although on such occasions our meetings are usually held in the open air, on that occasion we had a large tent, which proved to be too small to accommodate all who wished to attend. On Friday night, as we were having a meeting, I saw a young girl lying on the ground right in front of us. There were people everywhere, crowds crowded around the tent, but this girl was lying immovable. After the meeting I felt very tired and, turning to the staff, I told them I had to leave to get some rest. At the same time I asked them to continue talking to the people who were coming in a steady stream to confession.

A few hours later the ministers came to me, asking me to go with them. They said they had already received several hundred people who wanted to cleanse their lives. We usually have up to fifty staff members at these meetings who are busy with people making confessions. But even this number is often insufficient, so that they are forced to stay in their ministry for long hours continuously, sitting up all night long without rest, so that their eyes become red and swollen. It has often happened that people have had to wait in a queue for three or even five days before they are able to go to confession and have a personal conversation with one of the counsellors. They did not want to leave, even if we asked them to. "What good is it to a man," they answered us in the words of the Holy Scriptures, "if he gains the whole world but harms his own soul? No, we cannot leave here until we have put our lives in order. We must make peace with God."

So, being called by my friends, I came to the meeting place where there were at least two hundred people who

were sick and had problems in the body. They had already cleansed their lives in confession and now wanted prayer for healing to be offered on their behalf. On such occasions, when a large number of people who are sick in the flesh are gathered, we pray with the laying on of hands with only one or two and at most five per cent of them. For the others, we pray in groups of ten to twenty, sometimes even a hundred patients, asking that the Lord Himself touch each of them. Then it happens without the laying on of our hands. Many are healed by listening to the sermon. Many more are healed by the Lord while they are putting their lives in order. In doing so, He touches not only their souls, giving spiritual healing, but also their flesh. This happens without anyone having the gift of healing. For this is what God does, who says, "I am the Lord your doctor," and these words are still valid in our age.

That evening the staff told me that among this crowd of two hundred sick people were ten blind people, for whom they asked me to pray a special prayer, with the laying on of hands, followed by a general prayer for all the others. And do you know what happened? That evening the Lord was among us in such might and in such great power that each one of those ten blind men received his sight, many of them even without laying on of hands.

As soon as they entered the room to be prayed over, their eyes were immediately opened and they could see. Of course, this could only happen to them after they had put their lives in order through confession.

But even more remarkable was the next event. On Friday, one of our staff members was driving a lorry full of people who also wanted to attend these services. Zulu don't realise that the truck can be overloaded. Even if there is only a tiny nickel left on the back of the truck, even then they say that there is still space in the truck. And so, when they were on their way, the car was stopped by a blind woman who was standing right by the roadside with a little girl. After getting out of the car, the officer approached and asked her what she wanted.

“I heard, that you are going to a service forty kilometres from here! Can I go there with you?” said the blind woman.

“Can I go with her?” the guide girl who was accompanying her also asked.

“Unfortunately, that is not possible, the car is already very overloaded.” our brother replied. *(When she heard these words, the woman wept bitterly).*

“Believe me! I really don’t have a way to take you! The only option is if someone on the lorry agrees to get off and give you their seat.” However, everyone on the lorry said that they could not do that because they were travelling from far away and were not familiar with the area. Besides, they had no relatives to stay with. So, they had to go on their way, leaving this crying blind woman on the road.

All this happened on Friday afternoon, and on Saturday around midnight the Lord in His mercy touched the eyes of ten blind men and gave them sight. When all these people were returning home on Sunday afternoon in a lorry, they found the same woman rejoicing and rejoicing at the same place by the roadside.

“I’ve had my sight! Now I am also a disciple of Christ.” she exclaimed.

“But how did this happen to you?” they asked her in wonder.

“On Saturday night my eyes were opened and I could see!”

When they compared the time, it was exactly the same time. The moment God touched those ten blind men, He took pity on this woman and touched her eyes, giving them sight. So, great is our Lord! So boundless is His mercy and His power! There is none like Him!

That Saturday night, the same immobile young girl was still lying in front of us. After we had prayed over all two hundred sick people, the staff said to me,

“Well, now there’s only this paralysed girl left. She’s lying in the hut and we need to pray for her too.”

“What?! But how can we do that?! She can’t even talk!” I said in wonder.

This girl had been lying for the last year and a half, completely paralysed from head to toe. She could not even open her eyes. Only her eyelids moved slightly and one finger on her right hand barely moved. It was a living corpse. The girl's parents tried everything possible. She was taken to five different hospitals and when the doctors could not help her, she was carried from one witch doctor to another. One of them even fried frogs and put them on her head, so that the hair and skin on her head were immediately burnt off. But of course this "horse cure" was also unsuccessful. Then the girl's sister, who was a teacher, brought her to our meeting and laid her on the ground right in front of the preacher.

"You say we should pray for her! But has she already purified her life?" I continued in amazement, turning to the staff.

"Yes, she has!" they calmly replied.

"But that's impossible!" I exclaimed. "How did you manage it! She can't speak at all! How was she able to reveal her sins?!"

"We did it this way: getting close to her ear we asked, 'Have you ever been disobedient to your parents?'"

The Scriptures say, "Honor your father and mother. Then you will live a long, full life..." (Exodus 20:12), and if you don't do it, you are sinning. It is impossible for a person who is obedient to God to be disobedient to his parents. And obedience to parents should be not only until the age of 18 or 20, but all the time they are alive. To honour father and mother is to fulfil the commandment of the Lord, to which the promise is attached, "...things will go well for you, and you will have a long life on the earth." (Ephesians 6:3). A child who does not obey and honour his father and mother is worse than a pagan, even if he is called a Christian! He does not live for the glory of God, but for the glorification of the devil and his satanic kingdom. Such a child must repent and put his relationship with his parents in order, asking forgiveness from both of them. Otherwise he will not be able to receive the blessing of the Lord.

That is why the first question to this paralysed girl was precisely the question of obedience,

“Have you been disobedient to your father or mother before? Did they say something to you but you did not listen?”

The girl moved the eyelids of her eyes slightly in response, and by that movement, you could tell if it was “yes” or “no”.

“Have you been disobedient to teachers at school before? Have you ever cheated on anyone?”

Again, a subtle movement of the eyelids – “yes”.

“Have you ever been with guys before?”...

Sadly, today looks far from comforting in this matter. Often girls marry while they are already unclean. It is a sad picture! Do you know, friends, that in some areas the pagans examine their unmarried girls. And if a young girl is no longer a virgin, she is cast out. That’s what the people to whom our ancestors preached the gospel do! What does it look like for us now? I have heard many times from pure white girls who keep their purity that they are ridiculed for it. Isn’t that awful?!

You know, while we are on the topic, I want to say one more thing about it. During the past twenty years of revival, we have been convinced many times that if a young girl had boys in her mind and a young man was thinking about girls, then they could not be vessels fit for the Lord to use. We have also witnessed many times that God has used some of the young ones in such great power that hundreds and thousands of souls have repented and turned to the Lord through them. However, as soon as thoughts of a boy appeared in the mind of such a girl, the Spirit of God immediately ceased to work. It was the same with young men.

The only exception is when it is from God and when God Himself has ordained them for each other. But then all this takes place in complete purity and chastity. Young people whose union is ordained by God not only do not kiss, but they do not even take each other’s hands. They do not touch each other, and do not have so-called love dates. In

doing so, they say, “On the day we stand before the Altar of God, we will put on a white garment that is truly clean and unstained. We don’t want to be hypocrites, standing soiled in the white wedding garment.” This is how Christians get married here and this is the only way the Lord can bless a couple.

I once touched on this subject in a sermon at a meeting in Germany, and the youth choir went on strike. They declared that they would never sing again if I ever preached again. Oh, how glad I was at that! After all, they are no help to me as a preacher. Such only hinder the Word of God! The choir should be clean too! What work can be done for the Lord with a choir of prostitutes and harlots! What labour can be done with people who do not live pure and holy lives!!! None! They are just an unclean assembly that the Lord cannot use for His work!

Modesty, chastity and purity are needed by the Lord even in our end times! So, let’s go back to the biblical standard! Look in the Scriptures and you will see that when the Lord wants to tell us how pure and chaste His church should be, He gives the example of a young bride a pure virgin. The Apostle Paul, that spiritual giant, a man filled with the wisdom and knowledge of God, speaking to Christians, said, “For I am jealous for you with the jealousy of God himself. I promised you as a pure bride to one husband – Christ.” (2 Corinthians 11:2).

Do you see how we should be spiritually? Like a young unmarried girl who is chaste and pure in the flesh. This is the spiritual standard for us and this is the ABC’s of our spiritual life.

Often when I speak to wives, I say, “Show me by your life and your attitude toward your husband what our attitude as Christians should be toward Jesus, because it is written, “As the church submits to Christ, so you wives should submit to your husbands in everything.” (Ephesians 5:24). Of course, in our modern times this is far from being the case. The wives of our day believe that submission and obedience to their husbands is an infringement of their human rights

and dignity. Well, if we think that way, then we don't need the Bible anymore as It speaks nonsense!

But I will tell you that the only woman who can be truly free and happy is the woman who submits to her husband and lives as the Word of God teaches, not the woman who rules in her own house. If you, wife, want to "wear your husband's trousers" in your family matters, then you can safely give him your skirt. Let him wear it instead of you!

In saying this, I do not mean to take responsibility away from husbands. A husband must be a husband in the true biblical sense of the word, a husband who gives himself to his wife as Jesus gave himself to the church to sanctify it. Read Ephesians chapter five. It is to us husbands that these words apply, "For husbands, this means love your wives, just as Christ loved the church. He gave up his life for her to make her holy and clean, washed by the cleansing of God's word." (Ephesians 5:25-26). What does it look like in our reality?! Where are the husbands who sanctify their wives?! Where are the husbands who set a good example for their wives?! Where are the husbands who show their wives and children by their lives that they are truly walking before the Lord?!

Yes... The world really is a mess now. But just know, friends, that we cannot experience revival before everything is in order. First all things must be put in proper order, so that what the Scripture says can truly be our life.

Now I'm going to go back to the story of the eighteen-year-old paralysed girl. The staff said to me, "Now, she had already revealed her sins, but Jesus says that if we confess our sins and forsake them, He, being faithful and just in His promises, will forgive us and cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

And believe it or not, when the Christians began to pray together for this girl lying motionless on the bed, the power of God came upon her in such a powerful way that all the bones of her body shook and trembled like leaves on a tree in a gust of strong wind. She was lifted out of bed by inhuman hands and, rising to her feet, ran. She could not keep

her balance, and staggered like a reed and fell on her left side. A few people standing there picked her up and lifted her up and put her back on her feet. Then she fell again on the opposite side and was again lifted up. Then her balance returned to her, and she walked round in a circle, rejoicing and praising the Lord.

The time was about midnight. Suddenly, as if on cue, a huge crowd of people gathered around us. No one knows where they came from or how they came at that moment. It is unexplainable, but during revival it is as if the very air is permeated and saturated with the presence of God. I am not fantasising, because totally unbelieving people gather in the place where God is working, and the Holy Spirit opens their eyes to their sins, so that they immediately repent and turn to the Lord. In this case, people are so enveloped that they feel the presence of God in their flesh. Those who have never experienced this will probably say that it is only a fantasy and a game of imagination. Well, let everyone think what he wants about it. But we are sober in our judgement, and everything is according to God's plan. And if you don't believe me, then come and see for yourself.

In the midst of this crowd were three totally unbelieving men who worked in the office of the burgomaster of that area. They came to us and asked, "Where is this healed girl? Where is Anagretta?" he asked nonchalantly. "There she is," we pointed to her. Then they said, "We want to be alone with her, without the preacher and all the other Christians. We need to question her alone, so that no one else is present."

These people could not believe what had happened. For there are many more on earth who are like Thomas who said, "I will not believe before I see with my eyes and touch with my hands." So, the four of them went into a separate room. When they came out again after a long time, they said, addressing the healed Anagretta in public, "Young woman! The God who healed you can truly raise the dead and destroy the living! Be faithful to Him until death!" Such was their conclusion. (*Today this girl is married and the mother of two children.*)

The next morning some of the staff wanted to go with Anagretta to visit her father, who was working in another city as a guard at the prison gate. After getting approval, they went there with her, who was perfectly normal and healthy, now a liberated and happy child of God. As they approached the prison, they went to the door and knocked. Anagretta's father came out to see what they needed, and at the same moment he saw his daughter. "Oh!!!" he cried out. "Is it your spirit, or is it yourself, Anagretta?"

"It's me, Daddy!" she replied.

Then he rushed towards her, leaving the prison door open, so our staff had to remind him to close it as soon as possible before all the prisoners escaped.

"But how is that possible?!" The shocked father repeated incessantly. "How is it possible?!"

"Jesus has forgiven my sins!" His daughter answered him, shining with joy. "He has saved my soul and healed my body!"

Hearing these words, the man bowed low and said, "Truly this is the Living God! There is no other like Him!"

This is how the name of our Lord Jesus Christ was magnified and glorified, and how it is still glorified among the people of South Africa! Oh, how true it is that the last will be first and the first last! It is impossible to comprehend this with the mind of man! It is not just that the spiritually blind will see, the spiritually dumb will speak, and the spiritually lame will run. These prophetic words of Isaiah are also fulfilled in the most direct, literal sense – in the flesh, to which we are living witnesses.

But all this being so, the main thing still remains, of which the prophet spoke as follows, "And a great road will go through that once deserted land. It will be named the Highway of Holiness. Evil-minded people will never travel on it..." (Isaiah 35:8).

The souls who have taken this holy path experience a complete and perfect conversion, beginning to live a completely different, new life. But woe to the person who, having once learnt the truth, goes back to sin.

Once an old witch doctor repented in Tugela Feri. He was blind, but after he repented and believed in the Lord, his eyes were opened and he saw. It was only a few months after his healing that he was drawn back to his old life. So, deciding to take up the satanic arts again, he went to a high mountain to gather herbs and dig roots that he had used for his sorcery before. The moment he found the right roots and started digging them up, the light in his eyes faded and he became blind again. Unable to climb down the mountain on his own, he started screaming loudly and calling for help. When people heard his cries, they came and took him home. From that time until today he has remained blind.

It was not for nothing that when Jesus addressed the man He had once healed, He said, “But afterward Jesus found him in the Temple and told him, ‘Now you are well; so stop sinning, or something even worse may happen to you.’ “ (John 5:14). That is exactly what happened in this case. As soon as the former sorcerer returned to his former life and began to sin, he became blind again.

Another Zulu, who was already ninety years old, was paralysed and could only drag his body on his knees on the ground with great difficulty. It happened that this hardened pagan heard the saving message of the Gospel and believed in Jesus. The Lord had mercy on his soul and miraculously healed his body, after he was able to walk normally. After staying among us for two or three days, he returned to his home. When he entered his hut, his grown-up sons, shocked by the change that had taken place in him,

“Father, what has happened to you?!” He exclaimed.

“Jesus healed me!” replied the father joyfully.

“Jesus?! Good... But we must also give thanks to the spirits of our dead ancestors.”

When they said this, they immediately slaughtered the cow, intending to sacrifice it. Unfortunately, the healed father did not oppose this and did not stop them. At the moment when this was being done, when the blood of the sacrificial animal was flowing, the old man changed back into

his old cripple before the eyes of all, and soon afterwards he died and so passed into eternity.

So, a great truth was once spoken by a prophet! This way is indeed a **holy** way!

Dear friends, I have heard the following from many people in Europe, “Ah, Erlo! So you can preach in Africa! There you are still living an innocent life! Talk about it there, but not here in Europe! Here we have sex shops and lewd television! Here we get pornography and constantly see pictures of naked women and girls that literally fill the world around us! We hear the world’s music every day! We are forced to listen to it! We are saturated with all this poison! So, you should not expect us here in modern Europe to live as you preach! You can tell it to your people, but not to us...!”

What shall I say to this? Truly, just as leaven leavens all dough, so some Christians are leavened by sin! Well, be further confirmed in this! But just know that only the spirit that confesses that Christ came in the flesh to overcome sin is a spirit from God. Any other spirit is a spirit coming from hell. So, test and examine for yourself the spirit that lives in you.

Jesus also wants to see a Church in the modern, civilised, free world that is pure and clean. When Christians become like this, then spiritual revival will begin, which is the result of a holy, purified life. In order for the Holy Spirit to work as He wants, He must have a free way for Himself in our lives. It is impossible without it. The Spirit of God is called the **Holy** Spirit because He does not tolerate anything unclean! And when this Spirit is able to work through us, then the glory of God will appear. Only then will the desert become a blooming garden, Christianity will blossom like a daffodil, and the world will know that the Lord is God, and is the same living God in our end time!

The world is in the hands of Christians! The Creator of the Universe says for a reason, “Then if my people who are called by my name will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will

hear from heaven and will forgive their sins and restore their land.” (2 Chronicles 7:14).

Dear friends! Perhaps you know this verse by heart but have you ever given it serious thought? Have you really paid attention to these words? Have you noticed the condition that the Lord places on us, wanting to forgive us and heal our land? For the Lord here says so clearly to you and me, “...If my people who are called by my name will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, **then** I will hear...” Revival does not begin with other people! It doesn’t start with external people! It begins with us and in us, in the Church of Christ! Therefore, our task is to prepare the way for the Holy Spirit to start working. No one unclean can enter this path, which is called the **holy way**. And this path is the only path for every Christian. It is where God wants us to be. Oh, how wonderful it would be if the church of Jesus Christ lived today in such a way that the glory of our Saviour could be seen in it!

Chapter 14

The great thing has a small beginning

Chapter 6 of Mark's Gospel tells an interesting story about Jesus feeding the five thousand. Let's read it. "So, they left by boat for a quiet place, where they could be alone. But many people recognized them and saw them leaving, and people from many towns ran ahead along the shore and got there ahead of them. Jesus saw the huge crowd as he stepped from the boat, and he had compassion on them because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So, he began teaching them many things. Late in the afternoon his disciples came to him and said, "This is a remote place, and it's already getting late. Send the crowds away so they can go to the nearby farms and villages and buy something to eat." But Jesus said, "You feed them." "With what?" they asked. "We'd have to work for months to earn enough money to buy food for all these people!" "How much bread do you have?" he asked. "Go and find out." They came back and reported, "We have five loaves of bread and two fish." Then Jesus told the disciples to have the people sit down in groups on the green grass. So they sat down in groups of fifty or a hundred. Jesus took the five loaves and two fish, looked up toward heaven, and blessed them. Then, breaking the loaves into pieces, he kept giving the bread to the disciples so they could distribute it to the people. He also divided the fish for everyone to share. They all ate as much as they wanted, and afterward, the disciples picked up twelve baskets of leftover bread and fish. A total of 5,000 men and their families were fed." (Mark 6:32-44).

So, while in a deserted place, Jesus was preaching and teaching the people. It was late in the day and, concerned that the people were hungry, the disciples came to Him asking what they should do. Apparently they intended to send everyone to the neighbouring villages so that everyone could buy something to eat. However, in response to this, Jesus said, "You give them something to eat." So, He gave

the disciples the task of feeding the multitudes. It was to them that the Lord had given this responsibility. One can imagine their predicament when they heard their Master's command. A great multitude of people had gathered to hear Jesus. As the Scriptures tell us, there were about five thousand men alone, not counting women and children.

After calculating in their minds how much money they would need to feed all those present, the disciples said to Jesus, "Lord, we do not have enough for two hundred denarii so that everyone will receive at least a little." This message, however, did not deter their Master, who warned them that they should not let the people go without feeding them.

Dear friends, these words "you give them something to eat" still ring true for Christ's disciples today. After all, you know that the Lord is also saying to us, "...Go into all the world and preach the Good News to everyone." (Mark 16:15). And if you call yourself followers of Jesus, then that is also your mission. It is not written in vain that the blood of unbelievers will be exacted from our hands. Our task is to bring the message of salvation to the world by preaching Christ to the world, not so much with our lips, but with our lives and our walk before God. Our lives are the gospel we preach to people. A holy life, not "holy words" win other souls. This is what the Lord wants His disciples to be, who are supposed to be His living witnesses.

"Ah, no! It's not for me! It's not something I can do! I'm just not capable of it! I can't do it anyway!" Such words are often heard today. But even in the case described above, the Lord demanded the seemingly impossible from His disciples, saying, "You give them something to eat," while they had nothing. Not one of them had a piece of bread at that moment! Not one of them! So, they were in a desperate situation. Some of them were wondering where they could go to buy so much bread, others were calculating how much it would cost them. It's a familiar human reaction, isn't it?

So, we have something similar in our minds when the Lord makes it our task to purchase the whole world for Him. Then we think and consider what it will take for us to do

this. And now it is suggested that we begin praying for revival, for God to act and for fire to come down from heaven to shake Satan's strongholds. So we pray and pray, asking the Lord to do great things, so that people repent by the thousands and the sinful world comes to know its Saviour. But months and years pass, we grow old, our head turns grey, and maybe one foot is already in the coffin, but there is no revival. Moreover, things are getting worse and worse spiritually. We fast and beg for the Lord to act sooner rather than later, so that we even lose weight in the process. Who knows if we would not have progressed further in our efforts if we had eaten with thanksgiving and been healthier in the flesh. So, all our efforts are in vain. God is not answering our prayers. Why do you think that is?

The solution to this problem for the disciples of Christ was not for them to go to the neighbouring villages and buy bread. In commissioning them to feed the people, Jesus was asking them to give them what they already had. Yes, but in this case they really had nothing! What were they to do?

And just at that moment, when they were perhaps looking at each other in confusion, one of the disciples, the Apostle Andrew, came and turned to Jesus and said that there was a boy among the people who had five small barley breads and two fish. (John 6:9).

Think of it, just five little breads and two fish! That's something very small! That's just the amount of food that this little fellow could eat! It was probably what his caring mother had prepared and given him to take on his journey. But it was with this little something that His disciple came to Christ. With what this little boy had brought and given him. This child was not a disciple of Christ, nor was he a theologian like the real disciples of Christ, who, in modern terms, might be called such. Yet while they had nothing to give to the people-this boy had something. Though what he had was insignificantly small, Jesus used that smallness to feed thousands.

You see, friends, very often we make the big mistake of thinking that the Lord does the same things that we humans

do. If a person takes on something, he always starts with a big one, and as big as possible. But for some reason this big thing usually becomes smaller and smaller until it disappears completely. The Lord's approach is completely different. If He wants to do something, He always starts with something small. And then that small thing grows and multiplies into a great thing. This is the difference between the work of God and the work of man.

Of course, I believe that on the heart of many Christians is the desire that many ungodly people will repent and come to know the Lord. I also believe that thousands of God's children are praying for spiritual revival and the powerful work of the Holy Spirit. Only, frankly, I find it hard to imagine what it would look like here with you if God immediately began to work in great power. But let us not stretch our imagination, for He never works as we wish and imagine. God does not start with something big. So, in this case He started with a little boy, and how thankful I am that when the disciples of Christ saw this little boy, they did not put him aside and say, "Oh, what have you brought us here! What you have is so small that it can't possibly matter!" No, they were willing to take the little and so they received the great.

So, friends, if you want to serve the Lord and be vessels fit for His use, then you too must learn to appreciate the smallest things. He who neglects the small things is not worthy of the big things! If we want the Holy Spirit to work through us, then we must be faithful to God in the smallest things. I say this only because this is where we Christians make a big mistake and lose our blessings. We pray and ask the Lord to take a matter into His hands, expecting Him to act in the way we imagine. In doing so, we forget the Word of God, which says that His ways are not our ways and His thoughts are not our thoughts. (Isaiah 55:8). That is why it is very important for us to have wisdom in this matter.

I think you can see now why in South Africa we always say that every believer must be a living Christian from whose womb rivers of living water flow. Everyone, without

exception, can and should be one, whether they are an adult or a young child. Everyone must bring to the Lord what he has.

We can only wonder at the boy's behaviour. He could have said, "No, no! I can't give away my food! It's for me! I don't want to starve!" But this boy was ready to give everything he had to others, and through it not only himself, but also more than five thousand other people were fed. This small thing was the beginning of a great miracle of God!

Now let's observe Jesus' behaviour. When He took pieces of bread and two fish from the boy, He lifted His eyes to heaven and gave thanks to His heavenly Father. Oh, how many Christians sin that instead of thanking the Lord for the little they already have, they murmur and complain, saying, "Oh, this is so insignificant!" My friends, by such neglect a great sin is committed! We should thank God for the smallest things, and be faithful to Him even in the smallest things!

There is a story from the life of worldly people, which tells how a guy went for a walk to the park with his girlfriend. When he got there, he sat down on a bench and spoke, addressing her: "Oh, if I had a thousand arms to embrace you...!" Then the silly girl said to him, "Why don't you use the two hands you have?"

Of course, as Christians, we don't do that. That's what the world does. But you will agree that this young girl illuminated one spiritual truth with her answer. "Oh, if with a thousand lips I could praise You, Lord!" – we sing in one spiritual hymn, but the mouths we have, we do not use. How often we can hear, "Oh, if I could preach! Oh, if I had the gift of healing! Oh, if I had been given power, what I would have done then!" I knew a woman who was fond of saying, "If I were a man, then you'd all experience something!" However, she did not use what she had.

Oh, how foolish we can be. There are probably no people more unintelligent than we Christians. It is not for nothing that the Word of God says that the children of this

world are more intelligent than the sons of light. And this, unfortunately, is indeed true! They are often much smarter than we are! What do the children of the king of this world do to attract the souls of men! They do not ignore difficulties and do not stop at obstacles to achieve their goals. They even have the courage to enter into the assemblies of the people of God to carry out their destructive work. This is how they serve their king! What are we Christians doing for the Lord? This world should be lying at the feet of Christ! What are we doing? We run away from difficulties, because, you see, it is too hard for us! The temptations are too great for us, and we want to run away to a place where there is no devil. But there's no place where the devil does not exist.

The Old Testament tells us about an old man whom you probably know about. He was eighty-five years old, but when the Promised Land was divided into twelve tribes, he asked for the hardest place to live – a mountain where the giant men lived. He was not daunted by the words of the scouts sent there, who said, “We are like ants compared to them.” This eighty-five-year-old wanted to go there, confident that even there the Lord would be with him and give him victory. (Joshua, chapter 14). Oh, how different it looks with this now with us! We, who should be spiritual people, are in fact like weak!

But let's go back to our text. Jesus says to his disciples, “You give them something to eat.” And they have no bread. “So, seek it among you!” Christ continues. “Have you really nothing?” And so, after searching, the disciples found this boy with what he had and brought it to their Master. When they asked the Lord whether they should not send people to the villages so that each one could take care of himself, or whether they should take money to buy food for all, He replied, “No, I want what you have. Find what you already have among you and use it.”

Let's take a closer look at these words. We humans tend to overlook what we already have, looking for something more. God does not work that way. If He gives us something, He wants it to be used. We must not repeat the mistake

made by one man who was later labelled as a wicked and lazy slave. After all, you remember this parable that Jesus once told. It says that one slave was given five talents by his master, another slave was given two talents, and the third slave was given only one talent. The first and the second used what they had been given, but the one who had only one talent went and buried it. When the master returned and found out about it, he condemned the lazy slave and took away the only talent given to him and said, "To those who use well what they are given, even more will be given, and they will have an abundance. But from those who do nothing, even what little they have will be taken away." (Matthew 25:29).

You see, dear friends, how dangerous it is to neglect the small things and not put them into use. The same thing can happen to us. God can take away the little we have, so use it and be thankful to Him for it! Don't seek more, but ask the Lord for the grace to be found faithful in what you have already been given.

Before revival began, when God began to do His work on me, He began with something that was nothing in my eyes. I had previously held large meetings, trying to get as many people as possible to attend. I had printed invitations by the hundreds, handed them out to people, and when they came, persuaded them to accept Jesus and put themselves in His hands. When, at the beginning of revival, the Holy Spirit began to work in my life, the first thing He did was to point out to me those sins that were in my mind at the time, small things that I did not want to pay attention to. However, these "little things" were the little foxes (as the Word of God calls them) that were spoiling my vineyard (Song of Songs 2:15).

And then the Lord said to me, "Erlo, what good is it for you to preach to others if your own life is not in order? For your attitude toward the least of those who believe in me is far from what it should be according to the Scriptures." It was to me tantamount to a blow with a shoe. "Ah," I reasoned, "what do I care for the least! Great men, rulers,

kings – that is for sure! But as for the least, the silly, the insignificant, what do I care about them!” God, however, looked at it differently. He made it clear to me that even in the smallest things we must be faithful.

The Word of God says that a man who cannot govern his house cannot govern his church. If he cannot live right with his wife and children, then how can he govern others! Sadly, in spite of this direct command of the Bible, it is not uncommon for us Christians to allow this to happen. Scripture is no longer of any importance to us in this matter. The way things are in our family and in our own home are trivial matters that have nothing to do with spiritual ministry. And by neglecting these so-called “little things,” we stand up in the pulpit and make a beautiful preaching, without noticing that it is then that we are losing our blessing.

In instructing the people, Jesus went so far as to state directly and quite unequivocally, “And if you are untrustworthy about worldly wealth, who will trust you with the true riches of heaven?” (Luke 16:11). Therefore, if you have not been faithful in the matter of money and financial matters, the Lord cannot bless you spiritually either. Do you see where it all starts?! The same is true in earthly life. If we are not conscientious and faithful in our workplace, God cannot trust us to labour in His vineyard.

Perhaps someone will say to this, “Oh, what does all this have to do with spiritual matters and my ministry in the church? I am very good at what I have been assigned to do! I can preach, sing, and testify to God. So, I have no doubt that I am saved! Does it really matter that I have been unfaithful in my work?! So, what if I’ve been wrong about money?! Big deal! Is that what matters to God?!”

Dear friends, we can understand and interpret this however we want. Just know that God in heaven says one thing, “You have been unfaithful, therefore I cannot bless you!” If you, the wife, living with your husband, are not doing what the Bible teaches you to do, then you too are unfaithful to God and your husband. Take the Word of God in your hands and read carefully what it says about the wife and how she

should relate to her husband. Don't justify yourself by saying that those days are long gone and we live in a different time. Don't you know that the Bible is written for all centuries and its words are still valid today? Examine yourself and say before the Lord, are you being the kind of wife you are supposed to be according to the Scriptures? Does your life and your behaviour in the home conform to what you have read? If not, then there is no point in praying for the work of God, for you are a hindrance to the work of the Holy Spirit.

In the same way, husband, check your attitude toward your wife again and again! Do you love her as the Bible teaches you to love her? Do you love her as your own flesh? Do you honour her as a co-heir of the graceful life? Do you recognise that she is weaker in the flesh than you, and therefore needs you to help her? Do you live in such a way that her submission to you is a joy to her? Are you patient with her, as Christ was with His church, or are you harsh, rude, and demanding? If your attitude towards your wife is not in accordance with the Holy Scriptures, then your prayers cannot be answered because of the obstacle you yourself have put in your way.

Parents! Are you raising your children in the fear of the Lord? Do they see you as a light? Do you live in such a way that they want to imitate you? Children, are you a joy and comfort to your parents? Can they bless your deeds and actions? Can your obedience be an example to them of what their obedience to God should be?

Do not say, friend, that you cannot be what you should be according to the Word of God because your husband or your wife, your children or your parents are not living worthy lives. The Lord is asking you personally today, are you in your proper place before Him? He wants to begin with you, and speak through your changed life to the souls of your relatives and many others.

My dear ones, probably many of you would like to experience a special blessing and meeting with the Lord. Just tell me, please, how do you imagine it? Think of one

example left to us in the pages of the Holy Scriptures. When the prophet Elijah was in the cave, God spoke to him and told him to come out and go up the mountain to meet Him. And when Elijah did so, the Lord appeared to him, but how? In what form? First, a mighty wind blew, so, that mountains shook and rocks crumbled. It was a great phenomenon, wasn't it? If such a thing were to happen today, the whole world would know about it in a few hours, and Christians would surely say that it was surely a manifestation of the power of God. The mountains would be shaken, and everything would be thrown to dust and ashes. But the Scripture says that the Lord was not in this mighty wind. Then there was a great earthquake! But the Lord was not in it either. After the earthquake, fire fell from heaven. But the Lord was not in it either. It was a strange fire. Though it burned and blazed, God was not in it. Only after all this had passed did a calm wind blow, and only then did the prophet cover his face (1 Kings 19).

Do you understand this lesson, friends? We expect great things and look for big things, not even realising that we are passing by the quiet breeze in which the Master of the universe reveals Himself. Oh, how often we are disobedient to the Spirit of God in our hearts! How often we are in a hurry to tell others about the Holy Spirit, even though we do not see the fruits of the Spirit in ourselves! How persistent we can be in demanding from the Lord the great things we desire, resembling the prodigal son who said, "Give me, Father, the portion of your possessions that belong to me! Give me mine! I have a right to it and I want it now! Give it to me!..." His father did not argue with him and gave him what he asked for. But what happened then...?

Isn't that what happens to us? We persistently ask Heavenly Father for something, and when we receive it, we often do not know what to do with it. Years pass by and we lose it, become empty, poor...! And it may even happen that once we have received a lot, we will find ourselves spiritually at the trough with pig's horns. Yes, many things can happen to us if we do not take care of the purity of our heart

and our life. Not only that, but in such an unclean state a man may receive an answer from hell, so that the devil will light his strange fire on his tongue and in his heart, a fire in which there is no God.

So, my dears, what does it look like for you? If you want revival, if you want to experience something great, then arm yourself with the idea that it starts small. If you are a husband and father, then you need to put your relationship with your wife and children in order, then become a true, good husband and father. If you work, then show faithfulness in your workplace and be a true Christian there. Let us close our mouths, for we have talked too much and have done much harm through it! It is time for our lives, not our words, to become a necessary testimony and a true sermon for others!

As I have already said, it has become common and easy in South Africa for an unbelieving husband to be purchased for the Lord by his believing wife, unbelieving parents by their repentant children, and neighbours by their believing neighbours. In this case Christians do not say much, as was in one of these cases.

The father of an African youth, speaking to his children, once said, "If any of you become Christians, I will drive a spear through his heart with my own hand. And if a Zulu man said something, you could be sure that he would fulfil his word, no matter how heinous the act. It happened that one of his sons repented and turned to the Lord. After that, of course, he did not announce to his father that he had become a Christian, but came to him and said, "Father, I have sinned against you. I have been disobedient to you. You are my father, and as a son I must honour you and live in obedience to you."

His father was a priest of demons and evil spirits. His job was to sing and praise in his songs to the unclean forces, doing so on behalf of their whole tribe. And so, when his son came repenting, asking forgiveness for all that had been wrong in his son's attitude towards him, he was so shocked that in great joy he began to thank the spirits of the dead for

having changed his son in such a way. He had no idea at the time what kind of Spirit had actually brought about this wonderful change. The changed life of this young African man became such a light to the whole family that all the other children repented, and soon the father himself believed in the Lord.

His house used to be filled with various items of witchcraft, which was the meaning and purpose of his life. Using magic and spiritualism, he was able to divine and foretell the future to people using various witchcraft objects. After his repentance, all these unclean things were brought by him to the mission station and publicly consigned to the flames. A little later he and all his children became ministers and preachers of the gospel. They were the first Christians in their tribe where darkness reigned. But their lives, which became a true light, without words, converted other souls, winning and winning them to the Lord.

When we read the Bible, we find there the description of such cases, when Jesus, addressing the people he healed himself, said, "Don't tell anyone about this". We can also learn what happened when those who were disobedient and went about telling others about it. Often these were not only a help, but also a hindrance, for Christ could not then enter some villages. The consequence of such unnecessary testimonies was that Jesus had to leave the village where He was doing something and stay in desolate places. (Matthew 9:30-31 and Mark 1:44-45, 7:36).

Do you see the cost of our testimony?! We are so often in a hurry to tell of what God has done to us, and by our lack of restraint we only damage the work of God.

I would also like to say that people are very prone to get involved in something that others have experienced, thinking that it must be the same for them. In this way of thinking, one can get involved and easily get lost. I know a man who heard a beautiful testimony from another Christian who told how he was cleansed by the Holy Blood of Christ, how everything in his life became new afterwards, and how he sensed and felt everything deeply... After hearing such an

inspired story, the young man became very upset and said, "Then I am still unrepentant, because I did not experience anything like this when I turned to God! After all, I should have felt and experienced such things too!"

So, sometimes we are like unwise sheep. God works as He wills. One way with one and another way with another. But there is something that there is no exception. And that is that He starts small, thus preparing us for what may yet come. It is often the case with us that today we turn to the Lord, and tomorrow we expect something great from Him. What would you say about a young man who joined a bank and immediately wanted to become its director in the first few days? You would probably think he was crazy and say he should see a psychiatrist. Think about it! How can this young man become a bank manager right after he started working in a bank?! It's just stupid to think that way! He has to start from the bottom!

But tell me, isn't it the same for us Christians? We always want to start at the top. I don't know why, but unfortunately we do. But we forget that there is only one case when you start from the top. And you know when that happens? When you dig your own grave. That's when you really start at the top. And, unfortunately, how often this happens in the spiritual life of us Christians.

My friends! It doesn't start at the top. It begins at the bottom – with shining shoes, mopping floors and washing dishes. That's where it all begins, and that's where we must be faithful. Do not forget that at this time our Heavenly Father is watching us carefully, and if we are not faithful in the small things, He will not entrust us with the bigger things, because He knows that we will be as unfaithful in the big things as we are in the small things. You are asking for people to repent and turn to the Lord. But if the Lord gives you revival one day, what will you do with it? Tell me, have you thought about it? Can you imagine what might happen to yourself if revival begins?

I will tell you about a blessed husband of God who, together with his wife, prayed for a long time that the Lord

would send revival to the area where they lived. “Lord!” they asked. “Grant revival! Break people’s hearts and bring them here! Send souls hungry and thirsty to hear Your Word!” However, in spite of their prayers, everything remained as hard as stone. It was not easy, but they kept on begging the Lord, believing that He would answer them one day. Finally the day came when God began His work for them. He began to work as He always does, not with the ungodly, for whom they had been praying for so long, but with themselves, and with the so-called “little things” that they had not noticed or did not want to notice. So, they had to put their own lives in order first.

Oh, how glad they were when the first man repented and turned to God! The wife cooked the most delicious soup and prepared a sumptuous meal for their guest, like a king. They rejoiced, praised, and thanked God for this first soul. Then a second person came, followed by a third, then more and more. This went on for three months. The church was continually growing and multiplying. Day by day new souls repented and turned to Christ.

After three months this grew to such proportions that the wife could not stand it. One day the husband came home, leading more than ten people whom he had brought to the Lord. At that moment the wife went to the window and through the tulle curtain saw her husband leading all these people to their house. “Ah!” she thought in her heart. “Why does he bring such a large number at once! No, I can’t go on like this! I’m just tired of taking them all in all the time! I’m tired of cooking, feeding and cleaning all the time! It’s too much for me!...” And when her husband entered the house, she, unable to contain herself any longer, said in an angry whisper, “This is too much for me! Realise at last that I’m just tired!” Looking at her, he said calmly, “Okay. Let’s go into our bedroom.” When he entered, he invited her to kneel down and prayed, “Lord Jesus, forgive us for praying for revival! Forgive us for praying for revival! Please stop acting out, because this is giving my wife too much trouble...!”

But thank God that upon hearing these words, the wife's spiritual eyes were opened and she repented. Touching her husband's shoulder, she asked, "My dear husband! Please stop! Don't pray like that anymore!" And when he was silent, she continued, addressing God, "Lord, forgive me! I beg You, forgive me..." Thus, in the deep brokenness of her heart, she asked God and her husband for forgiveness. After this repentance, the Lord continued to work further through these two vessels, saving many more souls. One day I had to visit them and saw for myself how quiet and friendly like an angel this woman was, and with what patience and meekness she fulfilled the ministry entrusted to her.

Dear friends, very often God does not heed our prayers for revival, because He knows that they are nothing but an empty game of pious words. He foresees that we will be unable to go through all that is involved, and that very soon revival will become too difficult for us and we will begin to groan. That is why when we start praying for spiritual revival, we must not forget that it will cost us something.

Yes... It's really going to cost us something... Come and visit us in Kwasizabantu! Come to my house and see how often I sleep in my bedroom. See what our family life looks like. How much time I have for my wife! Go to her and ask her how often she can be with me? You can also ask my children what they have of me as their father! Of course, just like you, I could also be at home with my wife and my family! Only I wouldn't want to swap my life with yours! No way! I'd rather die! And no one can steal that from me!

So, if you pray and ask for something, consider first what it will cost you and whether you will be able to go through life with it. Besides, you should not forget that the Lord is already watching you, checking whether you have been faithful to Him in this and that... After all, He is not "foolish" enough to entrust you with something big, knowing that at the first steps you will change the work entrusted to you and leave it. Then all will be lost! God knows very well who is capable of what and what can be expected of whom!

Yes, the most important thing is that we be faithful. God does not take the easy way out, wanting to make us faithful right where we are. So, you don't need to think about whether to go to South Africa or not. You better stay where you are, because if you are not a blessing in your place, then you will be a burden to us too! I hope I have not offended you and your feelings with these words of mine. Of course, like everyone else, you are cordially invited to visit our mission station, but I want you to understand what I mean by this.

Be a blessing to others, and if you haven't had that, then start today, now! You know best what is not yet right in your life. If you, friend, still have a mother alive, then go and ask her for forgiveness for all the pain you have caused her and all the heartaches you have caused her. If you have a living father, then go and put your relationship with him in order! Wife, do the same to your husband! And you, husband, do the same to your wife! By this I do not mean that you should turn your husband or wife into someone to whom you will confess all your sins. A wife is a wife, and you, husband, must be one flesh with her, living soul to soul. As for the matter of confessing your sins, be wise and prudent. Some husbands make the serious mistake of confessing all their sins to their wives. In this case (*as practice has shown us*) wives are unable to bear such a blow and almost go mad at the realisation that their husbands were capable of doing such a thing.

Something like this happened to us once in the city of Durban. A man turned to God. He had such a deep realisation of his sinfulness (which is the natural result of the work of the true Holy Spirit) that he immediately went to his wife and in sincere confession opened his heart to her. "Please forgive me, wife!" he said to her. "I have sinned with that woman and I have sinned with that woman too...!"

His wife did not expect such a thing from her husband and was completely broken. However, through this she realised her own sins and thought that if her husband had opened his heart to her, she should do the same. "Dear husband!"

She said. "I also want to confess to you my unfaithfulness. Once, when you hurt and humiliated me very much, I sinned with your close friend..." And when she told him all this, he was so furious that he said to her in anger, "No! I will never forgive you for this!!!" So, not knowing what to do next, he came to us. After listening, I told him, "Think to yourself! You expect her to forgive you for several infidelities, while you don't want to forgive her for one incident of infidelity!"

After him, his wife came with her need, seeking advice and help. I told her that she should not have told her husband all this. "But how could I?!" she could not understand. "After all, he had revealed it all to me! I thought that if he had, I should be as truthful and sincere with him. That's why I told him of my transgression!" Then I told her, "No, you shouldn't have done that, you should have gone to a counsellor or some other minister of God who is able to hear your confession and bring it in prayer to the feet of the Lord."

In giving this example, I would like to warn you, friends, against making the same foolish mistake, because such "confessions" often do more harm than good. If this woman's husband had been spiritually strong enough to bear what he had heard, it would have been possible to open his heart. But, as we can see, he did not have that spiritual level. The same can be said of the wife. Neither was she able to bear what her husband had told her. Certainly there are cases where a wife or husband has spiritual strength from the Lord so that they can bear the burdens of others. In this case, however, both spouses were incapable of doing so.

The Lord knows very well how much a particular person can bear, so, it was not for nothing that He once told His disciples, "There is so much more I want to tell you, but you can't bear it now." (John 16:12). God does not put more on our spiritual shoulders than we can carry. So, remember this example and be prudent from now on. You need to be good husband to your wife as God's Word teaches you, but everything must be in its proper place.

To that woman I said then, "You should respect your husband for coming to you and telling you sincerely about

his sins. For the rest of your life you should appreciate him for this, because for a man such a step is very difficult. Such a thing cannot be done lightly.” In Europe, however, such things are viewed differently, because it has become not uncommon for men and women to change their partners constantly. The husband sends his wife to other men, and the wife allows her husband to go to other women.

They believe that it is too boring to have the same person as their partner all the time and are convinced that it is necessary to make their life more diverse and interesting. What can I say? Incredible and terrible things are happening in the world today! I don’t know if there has been anything like this in the history of mankind! Unless it was in the days of Sodom and Gomorrah!

To complete the thought of this kind of confession, I want to add that if the husband knows of the sin of adultery in his wife’s life, then she not only can, but must tell him that the Lord has shown her what an abominable sin it is, and then bring it up with him. If the husband does not know of such a sin in his wife’s life, then it is better for her not to tell him about it, but to reveal it in personal confession with the minister appointed by God for this ministry, although there are certainly some things that you, the wife, should put in order personally with your husband.

You know exactly what was wrong in your life and your attitude towards him. And you, the husband, must do the same. You know what was wrong in your attitude toward your wife and children, too, according to the Scriptures. Everyone must cleanse sin and unrighteousness from his own life and then be faithful where he is.

Let us now return to our interrupted subject. The Lord wants to do His work in and through everyone, regardless of their faces. You do not have to be a preacher to do this. You may be spiritually like the little boy in the gospel story, and the little you have may be used by God to be the spark that ignites the fire of revival in your area, or even in the whole country! Imagine what it would look like if one day you stood before God and He said to you, “You, husband,

and you, wife! You, girl, and you, boy! With the little you had, with your ‘two fish and five barley breads’ I could have given the world revival and lit a spiritual fire in it, but you kept it to yourself! You were unfaithful in the little, because you did not want to give to others what you had and what was given to you...!”

Dear friends, do not pray for more, but ask for God’s grace to be faithful in what you already have. Then the Lord will give you more without you having to ask for it. Never forget that great things begin with small things! That is the only way we receive blessing! Believe me, brother and sister, that you will not receive it if you only ask for it all the time, “Lord, bless me! Show Your mercy to me! Do unto me what You have seen fit to do, and grant me spiritual revival...!” Leave it out, friend, because it’s all just words! Be faithful to what your heavenly Father has given you, and to what you already have, however small and insignificant it may seem to you. It is this small thing that will be a blessing to you! The Christians of the Zulu tribe put it this way, “The blessing is not in standing before the crowds preaching the truth to them, but in showing faithfulness in the work entrusted to you by God, whether it be small or great.”

Today I am thinking back to how things looked when I first came to Europe from South Africa. That was in 1974. Our ancestors left Europe for Africa in 1869-1880, and 100 years later we visited Europe again. At the first meeting I had only two people and to these two I preached. The next service three more people joined them – two adults and one child. When I saw these five people in front of me, I thought, “Oh, that’s a lot!” How my heart rejoiced that the Lord had already begun to work! I left thousands in Africa and came to Europe to preach the gospel to two and five! If you judge humanly, isn’t that foolish?! But at that time I took those few souls in my arms in prayer, and lifted my eyes to heaven and thanked God for them! This is what the Lord taught us in South Africa, and this is what He teaches me all the time – to be thankful for the smallest things.

By doing this, we witness the miracle that God multiplies the small into the great.

This we experienced not only in spiritual matters, but also in material matters and food. One day three thousand people came to our mission station and there was very little food, only a few cauldrons. Then the African women stood around these cauldrons of food and offered a prayer of thanksgiving, saying, "Lord! We thank You for this food You have given us. We give thanks that we can draw from these cauldrons. We ask You, Heavenly Father, to bless what we have here!" After that, they began to distribute it to the people. It was as if the food was not diminishing. All three thousand people were fed, and what was left over was enough for the next day.

You see, they thanked God for what they had. And we intend to always continue to walk in this path of God. This way, friends, is the most glorious way! It is the way of power, and it begins at the feet of Jesus. On this path, faithfulness must be shown not only in the small things, but also in the smallest things.

In times of revival, the Lord often performs miracles that are still unknown to the world today. There are many things that we don't even talk about. Sometimes people who come here say, "How can you keep silent about this! Such a miracle can shake and overcome the whole world! Tell it to everyone...!"

African Christians, however, argue differently. They say, "No, we will not do that because that is not our purpose. Now, after everything has been accomplished, we will go into seclusion and abide in prayer. We will go back to the Lord to thank Him for what He has done. The Lord Jesus should be far more important to us than the miracle that took place or the victory over the world. He is the most important, the only one and everything for us, so intimate fellowship with Him is more precious than anything else and more valuable than even the preaching of the Gospel. For the apostle Paul, personal fellowship with the Lord was more important than his preaching ministry, otherwise he would

have been sad when he was bound in prison. He could sing and praise the Lord in such a way that the earth shook and the iron doors of the prison opened. The presence of Jesus was more precious to him than anything else. This is exactly what we want to do. Then we can go from victory to victory, and then the Lord Jesus will be glorified in us, His name will be hallowed, and His will will be done here among us on earth as it is in heaven!”

Chapter 15

A place where people are helped

Dear friends! If I speak of revival, I do so with a fervent prayer and a sincere request to the Lord that I not only tell you about it and you not only listen to me, but that the spiritual change you need so much in your own lives and hearts may begin. Revival is not something that people can organise like modern evangelism. Just as salvation and sanctification are always from God, so spiritual revival is only from God. If man may be in the foreground in evangelism, in revival the Lord Himself is in the foreground, and men are in the background. In revival, which comes from the Holy Spirit, it does not revolve around revival as such, but around Jesus as a person, and therefore everything is done for Him and for His sake.

We can only speak of revival when people who have been taken in by the Lord, filled with the Holy Spirit and power from on high, have a burning heart in the service of His God. Spiritual revival manifests itself first of all when a person forsakes his sin and lives a life that is in accordance with the Holy Scriptures and therefore pleases the Lord. Everything else is just theatre and has no great significance.

I will not go back to the events that took place in South Africa before the revival began, but one thing I want to remind you again is that it began in an old barn that was filled with dung. In order to turn this barn into a house of prayer and meeting, I had to go to the prison and get some prisoners to help me shovel out the filth. There was a great spiritual significance in this preparation that the Lord had placed in it that I did not immediately realise at the time. If we are to experience revival, we must first shovel the dung out of our own lives and our unclean hearts. After all, God cannot live in a pigsty. There were many snakes, mice and other disgusting animals and insects in that barn, so we had to work hard to clean and throw them out. After that we had

to scrape out the floor thoroughly, and clean and whitewash the walls.

All this can be a typical pattern of what must precede revival, and if we are not prepared for such work in our spiritual home, we may live to be grey-haired and never see the desired change. We can spend our whole lives praying for revival and then die without getting it, and if it does come, it will not come to us, but to others and through others.

Spiritual revival is the work of the risen Lord Jesus Christ through His **true** Holy Spirit, and it is on this point that we shall now dwell in more detail.

We are living in a time when there is a lot of talk about the third person of the Living God, the Holy Spirit. I don't know if there has ever been a time in the history of the Church when so much has been said about Him. Everywhere and more and more people are inquiring and asking about the Holy Spirit. And yet there has never been a time when people have had such a poor understanding of what the Holy Spirit is and what it is all about. It is a rather sad state of affairs, though it ought not to be. We can only wonder why we so often walk in darkness when it comes to understanding the Holy Spirit, even though we have the Bible in our hands as a source of light for us to follow the Lord.

It is difficult to understand why there is so much misunderstanding and ignorance in Christianity on the subject of the manifestations of the Holy Spirit's work, if the words of the Lord Jesus Himself are left for us in the pages of Holy Scripture, who says that when the Holy Spirit, the Comforter Spirit comes, the first thing He does is to convict the world of its sins, and to point out the truth of God and His judgement (John 16:8). Based on and guided by this explanation of the Saviour, spirits can be tested and examined, and if revival is involved, it is quick and easy to discern whether it comes from above or below, from God or from Satan. For revival can also come from hell.

The Lord once said through the prophet Joel that He would pour out His Spirit on all flesh, and if He chooses to pour out His Holy Spirit, the devil cannot prevent it. Satan,

however, does not remain in peace, but begins to act. At first he is in opposition and wages war against the work of God, trying to destroy it. And if it fails, he immediately changes his tactics and begins to walk in parallel, adjusting to the truth. It is in such cases that he comes in the form of an angel of light. This is why we have reason to expect many manifestations that are untrue, perverse and counterfeit.

If the true Holy Spirit is at work, the first sign by which he can be identified **is that he opens people's eyes to their sins, reveals to them the holiness and righteousness of God, and reminds them of the coming judgement.** It is not a question of returning sight to the fleshly eyes of the blind, nor of performing other miracles to which we are inclined to attach special importance. No, this is not the Lord's first and foremost priority, because Satan is also capable of doing this. It is not for nothing that it is written that the Anti-christ, when he comes, will also perform miracles and signs, which will entice and seduce many.

The Word of God also says that a day will come when many will come and say, "... 'Lord! Lord! We prophesied in your name and cast out demons in your name and performed many miracles in your name.' But I will reply, 'I never knew you. Get away from me, you who break God's laws.' " (Matthew 7:22-23). It is clear from these words that God looks at miracles and signs with different eyes than we humans do. Those who commit sin and act lawlessly will inherit eternal destruction, even though they were once prophets, healers, and miracle workers on earth! In this the Word of God is uncompromising!

We now live in a world that longs for miracles and strives for them! Of course, if Almighty God is in our midst, it is impossible to live without miracles! The Christian life itself is a miracle! But if God truly works, He works in a complete and perfect order. Without exception, the spiritual always comes first, and only then the bodily or mental.

When Jesus comes, He first of all opens spiritual eyes, and then the greatest miracle happens – a person is healed spiritually. This is the beginning of the fulfilment of the

words of Scripture that tell us that “by His wounds we are healed”. Healed from our sins that is from that spiritual leprosy, which is more dangerous and terrible than the most severe bodily suffering, because it leads the soul to eternal perdition.

Dear friends, When I speak of revival, I am meaning a situation in which the Lord has complete and undivided dominion in man, ruling over his whole being. Then we speak of a life filled with the Holy Spirit. I do not mean that a person has a gift that confirms that he is filled with the Holy Spirit. He who is truly filled with the Holy Spirit is himself a reflection of Christ’s being and life. If we use this criterion, then mere words spoken in an unfamiliar language are not a sign that a person is filled with the Holy Spirit. If the Holy Spirit truly fills us, then He touches not only our tongue, but also our thoughts, our eyes, our heart, and our whole being. In doing so, our body becomes truly the temple of God, as the Scriptures say, and our life becomes a life in which Christ is displayed. If the Holy Spirit truly lives in us, His presence can be seen, felt and sensed.

You may ask, what does this look like in practice and how is it experienced in practice? To find the answer to this question, let us turn again to Scripture, which teaches us to recognise the good and the bad by their fruit. Just as a tree is recognised by its fruit, so our Christianity and we as Christians are not recognised by the gifts of the Holy Spirit, but by His fruit. And then a new question arises – what are the fruits of the Holy Spirit?

The first fruit we read about in Galatians 5:22 is love. Do you know what it means to have true love that is given to us from above? The kind of love that does not boast, is not proud, is not irritated, is not envious, and remembers no evil (Galatians 5:22). Read also the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians and it will tell you what true love is, which shows itself first of all by seeking not its own, but that which is useful to another.

It does not slander, does not wish its neighbour harm, is longsuffering, believes all things, hopes all things, forgives

all things, endures all things, does not grow weary and never fades away. Everything else has an end, but love is infinite. Even if all earthly things pass and disappear, love remains. Tell me, friend, do you have such love?

The second fruit of the Holy Spirit is joy. As you can see, joy is also the fruit by which we Christians are often recognised. Do you have joy in you, friends? God's Word tells us to "rejoice always". Do we? Are we able to rejoice when things are difficult, or do we forget this fruit of the Holy Spirit?

Besides these two, the Word of God lists other fruits, peace, mercy, kindness, goodness, longsuffering, faith, gentleness, self-control, which implies purity and chastity. All these fruits of the Holy Spirit can be seen only there and only among those where God truly abides and reigns. If these fruits are not present in our lives, how can we claim to have the Holy Spirit!

I must say that as revival began, the word "Christian" took on a whole new meaning for me, and the Bible became a completely different book. In times of revival, the Scriptures become the most precious and irreplaceable guide to faith for Christians. Day and night they are engaged in reading it. No newspapers, magazines, books, pamphlets, and especially no pornography attracts a Christian like the Bible. We can say that he is saturated and permeated with the Word of God, which is sweeter than honey to him. Therefore, it is not surprising that Jesus Christ, Who is the Word Himself, becomes the first and greatest love for such a person. Nothing else and no one else, neither father, mother, wife, nor children, is as precious, valuable, and beloved to him as Jesus Christ!

The apostle Paul speaks of himself this way, "For to me, living means living for Christ, and dying is even better." (Philippians 1:21). It is evident from these words that for him Christ was not something that existed for the Saturday or Sunday, or that he remembered when he awoke from sleep and went to bed (*as is sadly often the case with us*). Christ for the apostle Paul was not someone who was in his

head and mind! No! For him Christ was the centre, meaning and essence of his life. Everything else was incidental, secondary, and not of great importance.

This is what we experienced in South Africa **twenty years ago** (*this figure was given by Erlo Stegen during a sermon in 1986, and the revival began in 1966. – Author's note*), and since then this living stream pouring out of heaven, drawing hundreds and thousands of new souls, has become stronger, wider and deeper. Christ fills the lives of young and old, men, women and children with Himself completely. In doing so, what is written is fulfilled, "And as Moses lifted up the bronze snake on a pole in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up," ... "And when I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw everyone to myself." (John 3:14 and 12:32).

When Christ is truly the purpose and meaning of believers' lives, it becomes such a great attraction that people come and go from everywhere, without regard to anything. As revival begins, we have a never ending problem with space. We are constantly in need of space to accommodate those who want to come to the place of revival because the number of people is constantly growing. Sometimes we even have to beg them, "Please don't come and visit now. Maybe later you will still have the opportunity!" Such a request is due to the fact that we simply do not know what to do with all these thousands of people coming and, in fact, we do not know how to accommodate them. If we start building new living quarters, hoping that there will be enough space, by the end of the construction it turns out that even that is too little.

It is the same problem with the meeting building. The eight hundred-seat auditorium we have now has again become too small for us. When we have thousands of people coming to our mission station, we put up a huge tent with a seating capacity of about three thousand people. A few years ago we hoped to build a hall for five thousand people, but after a short time we realised that it would be too small. Then we started planning for seven thousand, but even that was

not enough. Now we are building a huge hall that can accommodate more than ten thousand people.

We don't have enough places to sleep at the mission either. We have only a thousand beds, while often two or three thousand visitors come in one day. We have to put up large tents to accommodate the rest. It happened that people slept in tents that could not withstand the pressure of heavy rain and got soaked through. At the same time, they had to literally stand in the water, because the heavy thunderstorm that lasted all night long flooded everything around them. However, in spite of this, people are not embarrassed, indignant or disappointed. This is in addition to the fact that they have to travel to our services in the open backs of large lorries, where they stand on their feet and huddle together for the whole journey. Their journey usually lasts from five to twenty hours under the scorching African sun.

Can you imagine what it means when two or three hundred, and sometimes even four hundred people on one lorry stand in unspeakable cramped and stuffy conditions for twenty hours! However, as they get off such lorries or climb on them again, they do not complain or grumble. Their only question is, "When is the next meeting? When can we come to you again?"

Some walk so far that their feet swell. Others travel for days by train to get to us. From some countries and continents people come by aeroplane, travelling for ten to sixteen hours or more. For the revival has long gone beyond the Zulu tribe to include not only the other African tribes and peoples of South Africa, but also our neighbouring African states and people living in other parts of the world.

We are visited by groups and individual guests from Switzerland, Germany, France, Austria, Holland, England, Australia, North and South America. There are also people from remote, rugged jungles and desert dwellers, the Bushmen, who do not know what it means to live in a house, spending their entire lives in the open air. They also have no idea what work is. One such group of Bushmen stayed with

us on Kwasizabantu for six weeks. They had to travel at least one thousand two hundred kilometres to reach us and their only desire was to know and hear about Jesus.

So, people come from everywhere because they have a great hunger and thirst for the Living Gospel and true life in Christ.

What the world does and offers for pleasure and enjoyment! Some people travel all over the world. Others seek to see Jesus in nature and go into the woods or up high into the mountains. To such seekers I would say, "If you really want to meet Jesus, then go to a living, true church! There you will see the power of God at work! Look at true Christians, and you will see in them the Glory of the Great and Living God!"

We are attended by people of many different races and nationalities. If you count the number of peoples and nations present at an ordinary meeting, the number would reach twelve or fourteen. Can you imagine that?! Fourteen nations gathered together, united in love for Christ! As the service progresses, the sermons are usually translated into four different languages. At Kwasizabantu we have an average of two meetings each day, and sometimes even three or four.

But people come and come, and their only desire is to experience a true encounter with the Lord. After all, the Church should be light and salt for the whole world. Recently we had two bishops and a representative from the Methodist Church of South Africa, as well as well-known religious leaders from Mozambique, Rhodesia, Namibia, Botswana and the Republic of Swaziland. Leading people, political leaders, and other government officials come to our mission station and say, "We want Jesus! We want to make peace with God! We want to be vessels for His glory, vessels fit for His use! We want to live holy lives through which His Holy Name is glorified!"

This is the case in all our churches. The Kwasizabantu Mission Station is only an revival centre. Apart from it we have about one hundred and forty other branches. They are

churches scattered throughout South Africa with which we are closely associated and spiritually care for. In addition, there are many other churches that often invite us to join them, because the fire of revival is spreading throughout the country, to schools, universities and other institutions of higher and secondary education, up and down the country, reaching the rulers of the country.

Since 1978, we have been making regular group trips to Europe. Over the years, mission workers have conducted various kinds of spiritual ministries in West Germany, France, Belgium, Holland, and Switzerland. These include services in various churches in the cities of these countries, annual gospel weeks, and special children's services during the summer holidays. Our choir has travelled to Europe three times.

In addition to the ever-growing and strengthening connection with some of the churches and fellowships in these countries, in the last few years we have received invitations from England, America, Australia and even Israel. In this way, for example, a group of six of our staff travelled to Australia at the end of 1988. They were often asked to hold four meetings a day there. The time spent on this remote continent brought much joy and abundant spiritual blessings, after which we received many new invitations for next year. Everywhere we go there is a great thirst for the Word of God, so, we are very happy to be able to lead these thirsty souls to the Living Source.

Of course, we are ready to use every opportunity to spread the light of the Gospel wherever the Lord sends us and wherever doors are opened to us, but it is still our primary focus where we are, because the revival that the Lord has given us in South Africa is taking on greater and greater proportions. People are coming in their need and seeking help. The name of our mission, Kwasizabantu, literally means "A place where people are helped." The symbol of the mission is a branching tree that gives thick shade (*see the cover of this book. – Author's note*). This is the symbolic picture the Lord showed us at the beginning of

revival. In South Africa, where people often have to endure the scorching heat, the shade of a tree is a great shelter and resting place.

Kwasizabantu is spiritually likened to a tree, under whose shade tired travellers can rest and, having gained new strength, continue their journey. The Gospel of Jesus Christ is the solution to all problems. It frees man from the torment and furnace of mental hell, and brings peace and desired rest to his heart. All this cannot be described in words. I can only say to each one of you, "Come and see for yourself!"

When people come to us, we take them into Christian families and invite them to see with their own eyes the relationships between children and parents, wives and husbands. Those who come can see for themselves what family life looks like, what relationships between Christians are like, and how the spiritual atmosphere in the mission affects the souls of those who come there. It is marvellous to see how the Gospel, victorious, permeates people's lives.

Those who come to us feel as one with us. We never ask whether a person is Lutheran, Catholic, Baptist, Pentecostal or Methodist, nor do we ask whether they are Hindu, Muslim or Buddhist. We simply preach about people getting their lives in order and their relationship with God and their neighbours. We are only interested in that.

We have good relationships with various other churches. Of course, at the beginning of revival things looked different. People were very sceptical, and it was only after seven years that the first church opened its doors to us, and three years after that many other churches did the same. However, this was a good thing at the time, because if a lot of people had come to us at once, it would not have been possible for us at first.

During one of our missionary trips to Europe, one person asked me what is the meaning of our ministry and what do we really want here in the West? To answer this, I would like to say that we go to all countries. It is not for nothing that the Lord said, "...Go into all the world and preach the Good News to everyone." (Mark 16:15).

Secondly – our prayer and our desire is that this ministry will become an impetus for the whole of Christianity, and that others will receive through it blessing and new strength for their vocation.

Thirdly – our motto is, “Everyone go back to where they came from”. Not everyone likes this approach. Some people, surprised or even indignant, ask us why we do this, because many people come from different sects and currents with obvious deviation from the truth, so, what is the point of going back there? We answer that we cannot prescribe what people should do. We never do what some others do, advising people who come to them to leave their churches and congregations to join them. We believe that the most important thing is for the Christian to be a light to others where he is. I am not set on prescribing what people should do. Everyone is to be governed by the Lord alone. As for us personally, we do not approve of believers who move from one church to another like a butterfly flitting from flower to flower.

We believe that every man should have his own ministry and that everyone is called of the Lord for some work in which he must be faithful. Of course, if someone tells me that God Himself told him to do what he does, I can’t say anything about it, because I am not God. However, we observe the fruit he bears to see if God really led him to do this or if it was his own decision. On many occasions we have seen revival begin in the heart of a Christian who visited us and bear good fruit in the church where he was.

Often preachers come with groups of members from their churches. We have also had over sixty pastors visit us in one week, and there was no special conference or meeting for them. It was just an ordinary week in the mission.

Preachers, elders and other church leaders from all over South Africa would come to us and bring their churches with them. They wanted to spend Saturday and Sunday or even a whole week with us. We always enjoy these visits because it is so much better to see with one’s own eyes what the Lord is doing with the lives of people who are truly living for

Him. However, the greatest joy for us is that when such churches return home, they begin to have great changes.

The problems between Africans and whites disappear, Germans and Englishmen come together, enmity ceases and people of different tribes come together. This is how the Cross of Jesus Christ brings peace and unity. The walls of apartheid among people of different nationalities, races and colours come down. But more importantly, apartheid between churches, which is worse than national and racial enmity is stopped.

We have approximately one hundred employees in the mission. From the beginning of revival until today, people have been coming day and night, coming by the hundreds and thousands, no matter what time it is. Therefore, we must always be ready for our ministry. Some of the staff are busy during the day and others are busy at night.

Each of my four siblings is also an active worker in the field of the Lord. Their own work and personal pursuits have become secondary and peripheral, while the gospel is the main thing, not only for them, but also for their children. Four of my oldest brother Friedel's children are employees at the mission station. The next oldest brother, Heino, goes into the neighbouring villages every other week, holding two or three meetings daily, even though he is a farmer. As he watched his seven children grow up, he rejoiced and said, "Oh, how good it will be when the children grow up and become my helpers on the farm! Then I can preach the gospel every day and tell people about the Lord!" When the first child grew up, he came to his father saying, "Daddy, the Lord is calling me to serve in the mission field." Then the second one grew up and also said, "Dad, the Lord has called me to labour in Kwasizabantu." The third, having finished school, also appealed to his father, "Daddy, the Lord is calling me to labour for His kingdom."

Finally their father came to me and jokingly said, "Erlo! It is your 'fault' that my children are going to the mission field! After all, I had hoped they would stay on the farm, so that I would be free to preach the gospel!" To

which I objected, “No, dear brother, it is your own ‘fault’ with your own ‘dedicated’ example! The children are just like you, therefore they follow you!”

This is what it looks like... And it’s wonderful! And if the grandchildren also do the same, it is only a consequence of the good sowing in their hearts. Then no one is too young or too old. Everyone becomes a true witness to Jesus, and acquires new souls for Him. And it is not only preachers who do this. We have many farmers, business owners and bosses, secretaries, doctors, teachers and other workers and employees who bring more people to Christ than many pastors and preachers. Little children, girls and boys become instruments in God’s hands through which He glorifies His great and holy name.

I want to tell you a little more about another aspect of our life. Twenty years ago, about three years after revival began, we moved from Mapumulo to the place where our mission station now stands. At that time, the question of accommodating people who were sick in the flesh and who came to us on their own or were brought by others immediately arose. So, the first house we built then in Kwasizabantu was a hospital building. This hospital is different from other hospitals in that there are no doctors or other medical staff. The simple nursing of the sick is done by a few Christians living in our mission, while the treatment of the soul and body is done by the Lord our Heavenly Physician and Healer. We are not against medical care and thank God for the doctors to whom He gives wisdom and knowledge to help people in their infirmities and diseases of the flesh. I myself have a doctor and his family living in my house, but by profession he works in an ordinary hospital in a nearby town. The hospital belonging to our mission has a somewhat different purpose. The sick people just like all others who come to us, need first of all spiritual healing. They listen to the Word of God, which speaks to their hearts, encouraging them to cleanse themselves from sin and to put their lives and relationships with God and people in order. The Lord then touches the flesh of those He wants to heal.

For some this happens suddenly and completely, while for others it takes place as a process leading to improvement or complete recovery. In this we cannot tell the Lord how to act. After all, He acts as He wills.

We also have our own public school with approximately four hundred students. These are the children of mission workers and other Christians. All the teachers in this school are sincere, zealous Christians. We see God's great mercy in this work as well. Education includes not only the general school programme, but also in-depth spiritual education of children. Our school is visited periodically and during examinations by representatives of the highest educational and schooling authorities of our republic, who give the highest praise to the work of teachers and students.

Our mission station also has a large auxiliary farm. We grow corn, potatoes, various vegetables and some fruit. We have our own livestock which gives us meat and milk for mission needs. We also raise chickens, producing eggs and chickens. The Mission owns a small shop where you can buy our produce, essentials and other small items. It is used by the African population of the neighbouring settlements and anyone else who wishes to use it. There is also a small knitting workshop and laundry, a large equipped kitchen with an adjoining refrigerated room. There is a garage for mission cars and buses. All this is necessary so that we can better provide not only for ourselves, but also for the people who come to us from all over the world. For the Apostle Paul teaches us in his epistles, "We live in such a way that no one will stumble because of us, and no one will find fault with our ministry." (2 Corinthians 6:3). That is why we also work in our mission, working with our own hands, so that we have something to give to those in need. We do not want to be a burden to others and never ask for material help from anyone. If we are in need of something, we simply go to our Heavenly Father like children, laying it at His feet, and He miraculously solves all our problems. This is what He taught us at the beginning of revival, and this is what we want to do always.

Dear friends, I cannot tell you everything and describe everything. If the Lord gives you the opportunity, come to us to see for yourself what the Lord is doing. Then you will be able to see for yourself the truth of the words of the prophet Isaiah that the wilderness will be transformed into a garden, where jackals and foxes lived, the glory of God will come, and where was desolation and dryness, springs of water will open up.

The gospel of the Lord Jesus is truly the greatest power on earth. It was not for nothing that when Jesus sent out His disciples, He said to them, "I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. Go into all the world and preach the Good News to everyone." (Matthew 28:18, Mark 16:15). There is nothing like the gospel of Jesus Christ in the world, unless He truly becomes our life. I am often asked if I believe that a spiritual revival can begin in Europe as well. In response to such a question, I asked a man in West Germany,

"Tell me, don't you have God's promises in your Bible?"

"Yes, there are, of course." they reply.

"Then why do you ask me if there can be revival in Europe? After all, as I understand it, you are praying for it? And if the Lord does not hear your prayers, then perhaps there is something wrong in your life."

Speaking of this, I am reminded of a man of God who lived in America. He was Charles Finney, who was a lawyer and laughed at God, wanting nothing to do with the gospel. It happened that one day he was in a house of prayer where those gathered were praying for revival and other things. The following week, the same prayer meeting was held again, and this ungodly man came again. At this meeting, the same thing happened again, people continued to pray for revival. After the third such service, the pastor of the church asked Charles Finney if he would like them to pray for him.

"No! I do not wish it!" said Finney, resolutely rejecting the suggestion.

“Only the very last godless man could so boldly reject such an offer! To think he doesn’t want at least to be prayed for!” thought everyone about him after his reply.

But then they heard something else from him, “I don’t want you to pray for me! Three times I have attended your prayer meetings, and each time you have prayed for revival that has not yet happened! So, what benefit will it be to me if you pray for me?!”

After a while this unbelieving lawyer turned to the Lord, and within ten years two hundred thousand people repented and believed through him! This was a man who took the Word of God literally as it was, and took it seriously. He was not willing to turn Christianity into a theatrical performance or a pious game, and he practiced the Word as it was written. This man began by cleaning up and putting his life in order, after which God gave him a deep repentance. As a result, he went throughout the country, calling people to reconcile with the Lord and to remove everything from their lives that stood as an obstacle between Him and them.

Dear friends, Think of what it would be like if one day we had to stand before the Great God who would say, “Look, My children, this and that is what I wanted to do through you, but because of the uncleanness and sins in your lives, My Holy Spirit could not work!” The Bible says, “Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, nor quench Him.” Therefore, there is such a danger! And if we desire revival, if we want the Holy Spirit to be able to work through us, then our lives must be purified!

What does this look like for you? When was the last time you cleaned your life? Imagine what your flat or your home would look like if you didn’t constantly wash, clean, and sweep it! What does your spiritual home look like? The one that is supposed to be the Temple of God! Some people take years to clean it out! There are grudges, suspicions, unforgiveness, evil, hatred, envy, quarrels, enmity, and much more! And it is all in our heart, where only the Lord should be! So, when will we realise that with all these abominations we grieve the Holy Spirit and extinguish Him? It is not the

sins of my brother, nor the sins of my neighbour, nor the sins of the world, nor the sins of unbelievers, but my own sins that offend and crowd out the Holy Spirit and prevent Him from working!

I was also once convinced of this! And I had once prayed for revival! But could the Lord answer my prayer when there were so many satanic things in my own life that grieved the Holy Spirit of God! It was only when I recognised this, repented and purified my life that God opened Heaven and came down to us, which was the beginning of spiritual revival! The American evangelist Dwight Moody once said, "There is nothing that can become solid and inaccessible ground for the Lord if your own life is in order."

Having experienced this, I deeply believe that if God could bring revival to us in South Africa, then He can do the same everywhere, anywhere in the world! If God has done it in a nation steeped in spiritualism and witchcraft, in a nation with a callous and cruel heart, worshipping strange gods, then I have no doubt that He can do it in you! On the first day after the outpouring of the Holy Spirit with us, I said, "Now I believe that a great spiritual revival can begin in Russia too! For the Spirit of God there is nothing impossible! For Him there are no walls or boundaries!"

Dear friends! This is the end of it. I do not know whether we will ever meet each other or not. What is certain is that we will see each other one day before the throne of God, and who knows, maybe that day will be a day of judgement for us. Then it will be revealed how our lives have gone. Then it will become clear how our youth passed, how the single and married lived, how widows, young and old, walked before God. Then the books will be opened! Then we may read about you too, dear friend! On that day the Lord will open your life before heaven and earth! Will you be ashamed or will this day be a day of great joy for you?!

In the twelfth chapter of Luke, Jesus says? "The time is coming when everything that is covered up will be revealed, and all that is secret will be made known to all. Whatever you have said in the dark will be heard in the light,

and what you have whispered behind closed doors will be shouted from the housetops for all to hear!” (Luke 12:2-3). May the Lord grant us His mercy, so that when we meet Him face to face one day, we may see His hand stretched out to us and hear His unspeakable words, “...Well done, my good and faithful servant. You have been faithful in handling this small amount, so now I will give you many more responsibilities. Let’s celebrate together!” (Matthew 25:21).

Let’s pray!

Jesus Lord! You have the Words of Eternal Life! To whom will we go if we turn away from You?! In Your great mercy, grant that each one of us may take this to heart and take it seriously. Help each one to put his or her relationship with You in order, O Lord. Work through Your Holy Spirit to illuminate our thoughts and deeds. Reveal all that is hidden! Examine and test us! Point out what is not yet right in our lives! Show mercy that this undesirable and unclean thing may be removed from our hearts, and that Your precious blood may wash everything away. That Your Holy Spirit may work beyond our understanding at this time and place. That the Cross of Jesus Christ would again triumph over the earth, and that You, Lord, would again be the Victor. Amen.