



*God*

STILL LIVES

...EVEN WHEN YOU WONDER

DON MACLAFFERTY

*God*  
STILL LIVES

...EVEN WHEN YOU WONDER

DON MACLAFFERTY

Copyright 2023  
In Discipleship  
All Rights Reserved

Printed by  
College Press  
Collegedale, Tennessee

Cover design by Megan Marquez  
Cover photo by Kevin Carden, Lightstock Media

All scriptures are taken from the New American Standard Bible (NASB) unless otherwise noted. Scriptures from New King James Version (NKJV) used when noted.

## A Note of Thanks **To God be the Glory!**

### **Special thanks to the following:**

God. These are His stories of His power and providence in my life. He gave me urgency to write this book in seven days. He provided me with both the energy and the team to accomplish what man would say is impossible.

My wife April and daughter Julie who supported me with prayer and honest feedback.

Cynthia Spears and the prayer partners of In Discipleship ministry who bathed the writing and editing of this book with prayer.

Melody Mason for her faith and creativity in leading Lynne Macias, Clarissa Fiedler, Susan Peña, Barbara Wear, and Evie Van Scheik as an editing team who all sacrificed much to meet our one-week deadline.

Megan Marquez for her beautiful layout of this book along with the entire team at College Press who worked tirelessly to meet impossible deadlines.

“The LORD’S acts of mercy indeed do not end, for His compassions do not fail. They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness.” Lam. 3:22-23

# Table of Contents

<b>A Note of Thanks</b>	1
<b>A Note to the Reader</b> – God Still Lives Today	3
<b>Chapter 1</b> - The Skeleton Key	6
<b>Chapter 2</b> - Schools in the Bush	14
<b>Chapter 3</b> – The Wrong Bus	23
<b>Chapter 4</b> - Who Will Pray for Me?	32
<b>Chapter 5</b> - The Iron Gate	41
<b>Chapter 6</b> - Hunted and Hidden	48
<b>Chapter 7</b> - He’s My Daddy	57
<b>Chapter 8</b> - Engraved on My Heart	69
<b>Chapter 9</b> - Never Met One Before	81
<b>Chapter 10</b> – Every Moment Matters	85
<b>Chapter 11</b> – Dangerous Guest	90
<b>Chapter 12</b> – Gather My People	104
<b>Chapter 13</b> – Hidden School	116
<b>Chapter 14</b> – But I Just Got Home!	123
<b>Chapter 15</b> – Forgiving the Unforgivable	136
<b>Chapter 16</b> – Unbreakable Peace	148
<b>Additional Resources</b>	157

## A Note to the Reader

# **God Still Lives Today!**

“As the LORD, the God of Israel lives,  
before whom I stand...” 1 Kings 17:1

Dear Reader,

God is more than a story in a dusty book. He is much more than a religious building, a doctrine that seeks to explain Him, a painting hoping to capture Him, or a well-rehearsed choir whose songs of Him inspire audiences around the globe. God is alive!

I wrote *God Still Lives* with prayer that the true stories and testimonies I share here will encourage you to trust God completely. God has never failed me. God will never fail you. I am constantly learning that He is present when I can't see Him, and that He provides in His perfect timing...always.

Many know that it has been said that God did mighty things in days long ago. The world is filled with many books of such miracles, divine providences, and the direct leading of God in the past. But God still lives NOW in the present! I am praying that God uses this book to inspire you to live by faith, and not by sight.

As you read this book, you will notice that while some actual names are used, oftentimes the names of locations or places I've visited have been purposefully left out. I have also changed the names of some of the individuals referred to in my stories. These changes are made to protect the privacy of the individuals involved and to protect the believers in

the areas where I've traveled. However, once again, every story and testimony shared here is true. This book of stories from my short life are meant to testify that truly *God Still Lives*.

As you read the stories, you may also wonder how I hear God speaking to me. Do I hear an audible voice? How do I know it is God speaking and not just my own thoughts?

Learning to recognize when God is speaking to me or when it's just my own thoughts or impressions has been a lifelong journey of growth. And I'm still learning. God does not speak to me audibly but inaudibly to my mind and heart.

Here are three principles that form the foundation on how I listen for and hear:

**#1: God's written Word, the Bible, has the highest authority.** The written Word of God is the highest revelation of who the real Jesus Christ is (John 5:39). God's Word tests our impressions, life experiences, and what we hear from God in prayer, as well as the teachings of others (Isaiah 8:20; Psalm 119:105).

**#2: God still speaks to His people today.** God's Word says, "Thus says the Lord who made the earth, the Lord who formed it to establish it, the Lord is His name, Call to Me and I will answer you, and I will tell you great and mighty things, which you do not know" (Jeremiah 33:2-3).

God wants to speak to us. He intends for prayer to be a two-way dialogue between us and Him. We pray, we read His Word, we listen, and we read His Word and

pray some more. His written Word is the anchor and foundation for how we talk to and hear from God. If we long to hear God more, then we must wait on Him and listen more after we have read His Word (See Psalm 25:5; 46:10). Every time we obey Him according to His written Word, we are better prepared to hear His voice more distinctly in the future.

**#3: God wants us to come to Him in prayer with eager expectation.** God's Word says, "In the morning, O Lord, You will hear my voice; in the morning I will order my prayer to You and eagerly watch" (Psalm 5:3).

Through my journey of growing in my friendship with God, I can tell you that I have come to understand that this God who still speaks loves me more than I think He does. I am also just as sure that God loves YOU more than you think He does, much more! Notice what He says in His Word to you:

"But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8).

"For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:38, 39).

I invite you to read these stories and test them by the written Word of God. Most of all, I pray that you may know personally that *God Still Lives!*



## Chapter 1

# The Skeleton Key

“Call to Me and I will answer you, and I will tell you great and mighty things, which you do not know.”

Jeremiah 33:3

**E**xhausted from many days of training leaders to disciple parents and their children to Jesus, I asked my Zimbabwean hosts where I was supposed to spend the night. I had just preached that night to over seven hundred students on a high school campus in Zimbabwe, and it was already well past sunset.

My hosts led me to a dormitory on the edge of a university campus nearby, not far from a high fence which was meant to keep the leopards out. Once we got to my room, they handed me a long, narrow skeleton key. I stuck the key in the lock, and the door popped open. With gratitude, I said goodnight to my hosts.

After preparing for bed, I knelt by my bed to pray. “God, I am leaving for home the day after tomorrow. What is on Your heart?”

Instantly, the quiet voice of God whispered softly to my heart and mind. “Come out under the stars, Don. There is something I want to tell you.”

Hopping up, I pulled on some warmer clothes and laced up my hiking shoes. Grabbing the key, I stepped out of my room, locked the door, and walked out into the night.

I headed down a dirt path, and then knelt in some tall grasses. Looking up at the sky, I gazed with awe at the stars. With no artificial light for many miles, the sky was a brilliant canopy of twinkling galaxies. It was simply breathtaking.

“God, I am here!” I greeted Him. “What is on Your heart? What do You want to tell me?”

Again, He spoke inaudibly to my heart and mind, “Ask Me to do much more for Africa!”

Now I felt that this was a strange thing for God to tell me. Why did He want me to ask Him to do much more for Africa? He could answer His own prayer by doing anything He wanted for the continent. However, I knew it was His voice speaking, and He was clear in what He wanted me to do. In obedience, I stretched up my hands in the darkness to God and prayed out loud, “God, please do much more for Africa!” My short prayer was spoken in faith.

I waited. Would God have anything else to say? The only sound was the soft breezes blowing through

the tall grass. I heard nothing more, but His peace was with me.

Standing to my feet, I turned and walked back to the dormitory. Eagerly I pulled out my skeleton key as I neared my room. I was ready to sleep, very ready to sleep. I stuck the key into the lock and turned it once. The door would not open. I tried it again. It still would not open. I tried it again, five times, ten times, fifteen times. The door simply would not open.

“How could this be happening to me?” I grumbled to myself. “The key just worked a few minutes ago. Why isn’t it working now?”

Immediately the still, small voice of God told me, “You are not getting into your room because there is someone you are supposed to meet.”

“Lord, I don’t know anyone here in this dormitory. Besides, the lights are all out, so that means everyone is asleep.”

But God had spoken. There was someone I was supposed to meet.

Not sure where to go, I started walking down the long, dark hallway. “This is crazy!” I muttered again to myself. “No one is awake.”

“Lord, show me—who am I supposed to meet?”

I walked past room after room. Every door was

closed. Every light was out. Peering through the darkness I saw one door, the only door in the long hallway with light streaming out from under it. I timidly tapped on the door.

The door swung open, and a man stuck his face out into the dark hallway. Seeing my white face staring back at him, he stepped back, slightly startled. "Who are you?" he challenged me.

Quickly, I told him that there was no reason to be afraid. Then I introduced myself and told him briefly about the discipling work I had been doing for leaders there in Zimbabwe.

"I am Pastor Willard Sichilima from North Zambia. How can I help you?" he asked warmly.

I held up my key, "I am embarrassed to tell you, but I cannot open my room with this key. It worked before. I am not sure what to do or who to ask for help."

"No problem!" he exclaimed. "I have been coming here each summer to work on my master's degree and have stayed in many rooms in this dormitory. Lead me to your room, and I will open it for you."

As we got near my room, I handed him the key. He confidently slipped the key into the lock and turned the key, and guess what happened? Nothing. He tried again and again, but the key would not open the door.

Baffled, Pastor Willard went and found the night

watchman on duty, a strong, young man who towered over me in height and looked like he could have been a wrestler. However, his face was friendly as he gave me a joyful smile. “Please give me the key, sir. I can open any door here for you!”

I was delighted to hear this and handed him the key. He tried to open the door, but it would not budge. He then turned the key with all his might. He pushed and shoved and strained as sweat began trickling down his face. I wondered if the key would break. Still the key would not work.

“Don’t worry! I will get the men’s dean to help us,” the young night watchman promised. In a few minutes, the dean came with a basketful of keys, including many duplicates for my room.

“We will have you in your room in no time!” The dean told me. He took a copy of my key and popped it in the lock and turned. It would not open. Every duplicate key to my room would not open the door!

*Why is this happening to me?* I silently complained.

God’s voice spoke to my heart in response: “Ask Pastor Willard, ‘What do you need? How may I help you?’”

“Now Lord,” I reasoned, “I only have one hundred US dollars in my wallet for emergency money. What if this pastor from Zambia asks me to help him pay the tuition for one of his children? I don’t have that much! What if he asks me to help him pay for the tuition of all his children? What would I do?” But

God was not impressed with my arguments. As I hesitated, God prompted me again to ask Pastor Willard the questions. I thought of the possibilities as I fingered my wallet in my pocket. I was genuinely afraid that Pastor Willard would ask me for something beyond what I had in my hand. I did not ask the questions but watched as the dean continued struggling to open my door.

God prompted me the third time with urgency! I sighed.

“Pastor Willard,” I finally spoke up. “God is impressing me to ask you, ‘What do you need? How may I help you?’”

Pastor Willard’s face exploded into a big smile. His smile was much too big for my comfort. “That is exactly why I didn’t want to ask him, God!” I cried inwardly. But my mind was jolted back to the moment, as Pastor Willard was already speaking in response.

“That is a wonderful question!” he told me enthusiastically. He then bent over and asked the dean, who was still looking for a working key for my door, “Would you please give me Don’s original key?”

The dean straightened up, looked at Pastor Willard with a puzzled expression, shrugged his shoulders, and handed him the key. Pastor Willard took the key, stuck it in the lock, turned it, and the door opened! We all stood silently around the opened door for a moment, staring in awe.

After thanking the dean and the night watchman for their valiant efforts, I invited Pastor Willard into my room. “God obviously wanted me to meet you, but before you tell me anything, we need to pray.” We knelt down together, and I prayed first.

“Please Lord, help Pastor Willard to tell me only what You want him to share as the need.”

Pastor Willard then prayed, “Lord, please help Pastor Don to hear what You want him to hear.”

We got back up, and I looked at Pastor Willard with expectation. “So, what do you need?”

He followed my question with his own question. “Well, what do you do?”

“I offer training to help parents and other mentors disciple their children to Jesus Christ,” I told him.

“Wonderful!” he responded enthusiastically. “Why don’t you come to North Zambia and train us?”

Instantly I felt relieved. I thought to myself, *He is asking me to do something I know how to do. I can do this!* I smiled. But immediately God spoke to my heart again, “Don, offering them the training is good, but ask him what he *really needs* now.”

“Pastor Willard, God is impressing me to ask you, ‘What do you really need now?’”

Pastor Willard paused briefly with his head bowed.

Then he looked up with tears in his eyes. “We need a school in North Zambia!”

“Oh,” I spoke nervously. “You mean like a one-room school?” I was trying desperately to keep the request *small enough* that I might be able to consider it.

“Oh no, Pastor Don, we need a full secondary school campus that is a boarding school for hundreds and hundreds of students.” Now I began to squirm inwardly.

“Actually,” he continued, “We need two secondary school campuses complete with boys’ and girls’ dormitories, classrooms, kitchen, toilets, showers.” He went on listing the needs of both campuses. By now, I was completely stressed and overwhelmed.

“Well, thank you for sharing this with me,” I said weakly, with little enthusiasm. “I’ll pray about what you’ve shared,” I promised. We stood up, shook hands, said good night, and parted.

I knelt and prayed at my bedside once more. God spoke: “This is the man I wanted you to meet, and *that request was from Me!*”

Crawling into bed, I pulled the covers up across my chest as I tried to sleep. *How was I ever going to build two secondary school campuses in Zambia?* I wondered to myself as I drifted off to sleep.



## Chapter 2

# Schools in the Bush

“With people it is impossible, but not with God; for all things are possible with God.” Mark 10:27

**T**he very next morning I awoke with great anticipation. What would God do? I had no idea how to build two schools out of the bush in northern Zambia, but I knew that God was ready to move and calling me to be a part of His plan.

That morning, I spent time in the Word and in prayer as usual, and again cried out to God. “Show me what to do. Show me how to do it. I am Yours. I am ready.”

I went off that morning to speak and pray with the teachers at a local high school, doing my best to encourage them. As I was talking with them outside, I noticed a building just beyond them, built up to about 6 feet (2 meters) off the ground. I thought, *That’s odd. I wonder why they never finished that building.* But I didn’t want to be too curious about this uncompleted project. God had just told me the night before that He wanted me to build two secondary schools out in the bush. Did I really want to hear about any other building projects? However,

eventually my curiosity got the best of me. After I finished speaking, I asked the teachers, “What is that building over there?”

With their eyes dancing with joy, they told me, “Follow us. We’ll show you.” With a bit of apprehension, I followed them over to the building. We walked through the large expanse of the building. “This is to be a church for our students,” they told me.

“What happened?” I cautiously asked.

“We stopped building,” they replied. “We got so discouraged because no money was coming in. We couldn’t raise any more funds. That’s why we’ve never put a roof on this church or completed it.”

I nodded with understanding as they continued.

“When families come to visit their children during rainy season, they must stand out in the rain. There’s just not enough room for all the students, faculty, and staff to worship in one place, let alone any families that come to visit. As you can see, we really need a church.”

“Well,” I said, “Thanks for showing me.” As we walked away, the Spirit of God spoke to my heart. “Help them put a roof on this church!”

The next day, I left Zimbabwe and traveled back to the United States. Immediately upon reaching home, I gathered the elders in my California church and told them the story about the skeleton key. I

also told them about the church in need of a roof. I told them that God was eager to do great and mighty things, beginning with a roof for this church.

The elders looked at me with concern. “How much will this roof cost?”

I stated a sum and they looked at me with more concern. “Let’s just pray and see what we can do,” I told them. So we prayed and sought the Lord for His blessing and provision.

God moved on our church members, and not too long after that, we sent a generous check back to Zimbabwe to help put a roof on that church. Of course, it wasn’t near enough for what they needed, but as in the story of Nehemiah, the hands of the people were strengthened. With those funds as seed money, they went back to work. The people also sacrificed their own money to multiply our donation. Then they appealed to others to come and join them in completing the church, so the students could worship God along with their families. Swiftly they put a roof on the church.

God was strategic in all this, as He always is. He wanted me to be encouraged with this small project so that I wouldn’t be so intimidated by the larger project of building two schools in the bush.

Going back again to my church and elders, I encouraged them. “God has blessed us to help put a roof on this church in Zimbabwe. Now let’s build these two schools out in the bush.”

They responded again with concern. “It is a difficult time! Many of us are out of work. There are people struggling just to keep food on their tables and their kids cared for. How are we going to do such a thing?”

Despite their objections, we prayed seeking the Lord for wisdom. Again, God moved the hearts of the elders and leaders in my church. They told me, “We honestly have no idea how we’re going to do such a thing, but let’s sacrifice what we have.”

And so, we all began going through our homes and coming up with things that we didn’t need. We had sale after sale, selling off unneeded items. After many, many months, we only had a few thousand dollars saved up. It was a little discouraging because I knew we needed hundreds of thousands of dollars.

“How is this small amount going to help?” we all wondered. But we offered what we had to God, and we continued to sacrifice the little that we had, and God heard our prayers.

One day, as I boarded a plane on my way back home to California, I recognized a businessman that I had known from my childhood. Oddly enough, even though he was sitting in first class and I in coach class, he got up and came back and sat down beside me. Silently I prayed, “Oh God, this must be my answer to prayer. You’re bringing me someone who could easily help finance this first school out in the bush!”

As the rest of the passengers continued boarding the airplane, this man and I began to talk. Soon the passenger who was booked to sit beside me came. Immediately the businessman told him, "If you don't mind, please take my first-class seat. I need to sit beside this gentleman." Of course, the passenger didn't mind the free upgrade, and my friend and I continued talking.

During my entire flight home to California that day, this man sat beside me. Oh, how I wanted to tell him about how we were building two schools in northern Zambia. But the Spirit of God held me in check. "Don, just listen and care for him, and only say something about Zambia if he asks about what's going on in your life."

The entire flight, he talked, and I listened. When he asked questions, I answered by opening my Bible and sharing timely wisdom. My entire focus was on caring for what was on his heart.

Just five minutes before we were to land, he finally asked, "Is there anything exciting going on in your life?" Oh, this was my open door! Immediately I responded with enthusiasm, "Well, actually, there is!"

Then I told him the story of the skeleton key and how God had called me to build two secondary schools right out of the bush in northern Zambia. I shared my testimony with joy. But he didn't seem too impressed and listened quietly.

Just as we were landing, I finished sharing. He

looked at me and then told me matter-of-factly, “Don, you have no business doing such a project! You have no experience in gathering and managing large amounts of funds. You certainly are not a builder and have never done any building projects. You should just focus on your ministry of helping parents disciple their children.”

When we got to our gate to disembark, he got up and walked off the plane.

“God, what was that all about?” I asked in stunned silence. “I know You must have brought me and this businessman together on the same plane. I believe this was a divine appointment. What happened?”

The still small voice of God spoke to my heart. “Don, did you do what I called you to do? Did you listen when I told you only to talk about Zambia if he asks about what’s going on in your life?”

I responded, “Yes, Lord, I did.”

“Then let it rest with Me. I am still working when you’re not working,” God quieted my soul.

For months I heard nothing back from that businessman until one morning when I got a text from him. The same businessman who had told me I had no business building those two schools told me, “I will match what you need on your Zambia school project dollar for dollar up to \$200,000.”

Instantly I responded, “Oh, praise the Lord!” I was so

excited. I couldn't stop praising God. "God, the way You work is amazing!" I prayed with joyful gratitude. So, little by little, God began to work His miracles. He added and multiplied until we had enough to build the first disciple-making school, named Gibeon Secondary School, out in the bush in northern Zambia.

Time went on. We set our eyes on the second disciple-making school, to be built on land donated by a great chief from the Muchinga Province. I went to Zambia to visit the location and walk through the property. An old headman took me and some elders from a local church through the tall grass around the property. It was rugged but beautiful. The property was bordered by three streams that ran year-round. It was well watered and many hectares in size.

As we walked over the property, I prayed, "Lord, how are we going to build this second school? Now You have called me to be a full-time volunteer missionary. I am not the leader of a church anymore. How are You going to help me fund this specific project?"

The building of this second school was much more difficult. April and I gave our little amounts again and again and kept praying and crying out to God. While we couldn't give much, God took our precious dollars and little offerings and multiplied them again and again and again.

My friends, God does mighty things when His

people are willing to sacrifice! It's so important that we give God what we have, even if it's the size of the widow's mite. When we give the little, He multiplies it many times.

Again, God did what seemed impossible by human standards. I knew I couldn't do it; even our local church couldn't do it. But God carved the second school, Elim Secondary School, right out of the bush.

I praise God for both school campuses, which are now disciple-making schools for Northern Zambia. Hundreds of students go through these schools every year. These students aren't just getting a regular education; they are also being intentionally disciplined to follow Jesus Christ and taught how to make disciples. These schools regularly send out students into the communities to teach others about Jesus.

As God blessed the discipleship training in these schools, others noticed. The government schoolteachers in the area surrounding Gibeon and Elim schools were so touched by what they saw happening on our campuses that they asked our teachers to train them how to be disciples of Jesus and how to make their students disciples for Christ.

In response to the request, both Gibeon and Elim campuses sent a teacher, along with two students, to offer Schools-in-Discipleship training for these government schoolteachers. At first, the public-school teachers were very disappointed when the students stood up to teach them how



to be disciple makers of their own students. They whispered among themselves, “We thought that the teachers from Gibeon and Elim schools would be teaching us, not just mere students. How can these teenagers have anything worthwhile to teach us? What can we learn from students?”

However, as the students stood up and testified about Jesus Christ and how He transformed their lives and how He was sending them out to be teachers even while they themselves were still students, God moved on the hearts of the government schoolteachers. They recognized that the Spirit of God was speaking through these young students, and they exclaimed, “Teach us more!”

Oh, my friends, how my heart thrills in awe of my Creator God, when I remember how He has funded and built two secondary school campuses and then turned them into disciple-making schools for His Son Jesus. The things which are impossible with men are surely possible with God!

## Chapter 3

# The Wrong Bus

**“I will bring the blind by a way they did not know; I will lead them in paths they have not known. I will make darkness light before them, and crooked places straight. These things I will do for them, and not forsake them.” Isaiah 42:16 NKJV**

It wasn't long until Zambia's Ministry of Education began to hear reports that there were two disciple-making schools for Jesus in northern Zambia. They were so pleased by what they heard about the Gibeon and Elim secondary schools that they asked us, “How can we have this Schools-in-Discipleship training available for all our government schoolteachers? How can we get this training across the entire nation for our early childhood teachers?”

The Ministry of Education decided that the best way to start would be to bring twenty of the top early childhood teachers from every one of their ten provinces. They would gather these two hundred teachers together in the city of Lusaka, where the government of Zambia is headquartered, and have me come and train them.

I was very excited and amazed at what God was doing, but I had no idea how I was going to train all these government schoolteachers. I was overwhelmed. Our *In Discipleship* ministry did not have funds for such a thing, nor did I personally.

My wife and I prayed about this new opportunity, and we found a few dollars. Then God worked a miracle to provide a flight over to Zambia and back. But what would I do when I got there? I had no idea. As I prayed for direction, God impressed me to go by faith anyway.

With only a few dollars in my pocket, I decided to go spend a week, searching all over Zambia for men and women whom I could train to be disciple makers to assist me in discipling the government schoolteachers of Zambia.

I landed in Lusaka and a new friend of mine picked me up at the airport. I silently prayed, "God, these few dollars I have in my pocket must last me over a week, and I have nothing for hotels or food or anything. Help these funds to stretch!"

My new friend drove me to an inexpensive hotel for that first night. The next morning, my friend picked me up and took me to a bus depot to catch a bus to the far north.

Worriedly he asked me, "Are you sure you're comfortable going by yourself all the way up to northern Zambia in a public bus?"

“I don’t know of any other way to get there,” I told him. “I’m praying and looking for people that will help me disciple all the government schoolteachers of Zambia.”

He prayed with me and then told me, “Here’s my advice. Whatever you do, stay on the bus.”

“Is there a toilet on the bus?” I asked.

“There’s no toilet on the bus,” he told me. “It could be nine or 10 hours to get to Kasama.”

“How can I stay on the bus for that long? How can I stay on there without a toilet?” I asked.

“They may stop halfway,” my friend encouraged me. “However, when you get off the bus, just remember where they park. I’m concerned about you and your safety and well-being. Whatever you do, *don’t lose this bus!*”

“I’ve got it,” I promised. “I will stay with this bus! No problem.” We stowed the luggage, waved goodbye, and I climbed on the bus to begin my long ride to Kasama.

The bus was quite full. I went all the way to the very back, sat down and prayed. “God, I don’t know who’s on this bus, but I am praying that You will give me divine appointments on this trip.”

The bus lurched forward, and we were off on our long trek to northern Zambia. Kilometer after

kilometer, we went chugging along. I saw city shops and then hours of vast grasslands and forests, punctuated by small villages with many huts with grass-thatched roofs.

I asked God whom I should pray with on the bus. The Holy Spirit led me to pray with a young mother in the seat ahead of me whose little daughter was shyly staring at me. This mother and daughter led me to another mother, and I prayed with her. And that mother led me to another. And so it went that I prayed and prayed and prayed. And then finally, one of them asked, "Would you study the Word with me? I have questions." I ended up having prayer meetings and Bible studies on that bus. That bus was a walk-in, disciple-making clinic hour after hour.

Oh, how I looked forward to the stop that was to mark the halfway point! There was no toilet on that bus. I waited and I prayed, and finally we stopped. I remembered the advice of my friend, "Whatever you do, don't lose your bus!"

Quickly I got off the bus and pressed my way through the crowd of people eager to sell me their cucumbers, tomatoes, cabbage, and other assorted vegetables. I found a toilet and then raced back as fast as I could through the crowd. However, it took me a little time because everybody wanted to sell me something.

Finally, I found my bus and clambered up the steps. However, the bus driver looked at me strangely, too strangely. "Sir, what are you doing on this bus?" he asked me.

“This is my bus,” I told him.

“No, this is not your bus,” he responded.

I politely, but firmly insisted, “Yes, this is my bus. I was just here, and I came back right to the same place.”

“No, you didn’t. Your bus just left about a minute or less ago. And I’m the bus that pulled up right beside it.”

My heart sank to my toes. Now the bus driver was worried. “Where are you going?” he asked me.

“To Kasama,” I responded.

“That’s where I’m going too. You can go on this bus.”

“What about all my luggage?” I asked.

“Maybe we can catch up with your bus and find your luggage,” he told me.

As the new bus took off down the bumpy road, I walked my way through the crowded aisles looking for a seat. I didn’t have a place to be anymore. Where should I sit?

*God, why am I on this wrong bus? I thought. Is there a holy reason? Is there a special divine appointment waiting for me?*

As I went down the aisle, everybody stared at me.

Everybody must have been thinking, *What is this strange guy from America doing on this bus? How did he get on the wrong bus?*

Finally, I noticed two, well-dressed gentlemen sitting on my left. The Holy Spirit impressed me to sit close behind them across the aisle. There was a seat open, so I sat down and introduced myself.

“I am here in Zambia praying that God will help me have divine appointments with anybody whom I can recruit and train to help me disciple government schoolteachers across Zambia,” I told them.

The two men prayed with me, thought about what I had told them, and prayed some more. Finally, they quietly handed me a little piece of paper. “Here is the name of one of the bishops in our denomination,” they said, “and he has a great love for young people. I think that he will assist you.”

“Oh, thank you,” I told them gratefully. My heart was moved.

We finally arrived in Kasama and as it turned out, on the way there, we had passed my original bus. However, my original bus caught up with us not long after we arrived. The driver stopped long enough for me to retrieve my luggage--God had protected it!

While I thought in the beginning that I had made a horrible mistake by losing my bus, it was very clear to me that God had led me to the second bus. I thought about how agitated I had been about

getting on the wrong bus and losing my luggage. Yet God was guiding my footsteps, and He was leading me to many divine appointments.

After retrieving my luggage, I looked around. “Now what do I do, God? I have no money for a hotel and no money for food. What shall I do?”

You know, my friends, God is good, and He knows how to take care of His children. Soon after I prayed, God provided a place to stay. He also gave me more divine appointments as well as volunteers to assist me in discipling teachers to disciple the new generations of Zambia.

I found a ride to take me to the bishop whose contact information I had received. I had no idea what to expect, so as I walked up to the large, busy church, I thought to myself, *How unusual to see so many people here in the middle of the week during the middle of the day! Why are they all here?*

I walked in the door and a room full of faces turned and looked at me. They were obviously in the middle of a very serious meeting and were surprised that I, a foreigner, would walk in unannounced.

As I looked at the sea of faces, I was startled to see the two church leaders I had met on the bus the previous day. They were presiding over a major business meeting for the many churches in their denomination across northern Zambia. They looked up, and recognizing me, they nodded.



The two leaders interrupted their meeting to tell the people about how I had lost my bus and ended up meeting and praying with them on their bus the day before. “We believe that God arranged this as a divine appointment,” one of the leaders testified. “And this man has something to say to all of you as leaders.” They then invited me to take five minutes and speak to all those assembled.

“Could we bow our heads in prayer?” I asked, as they turned the time over to me.

Everyone bowed their heads, and we prayed earnestly. And then I told them, “I am looking and praying across Zambia for God to raise up men and women who have a heart for discipling government schoolteachers to disciple the new generations to Jesus. Would you please pray with me on this search over the next week, that God will help me find such a team?”

The people nodded their heads solemnly. A few minutes later, as I left the meeting, two young pastors ran after me.

“The Spirit of God has moved our hearts,” they told me. “We want to assist you in this work of discipling government schoolteachers to disciple their children.”

Oh, my friends, remember, God always has a way.

What an adventure it was traveling for a week across Zambia with just a few dollars in my pocket!

From place to place, I would go with no promise of accommodations or food. And every place I went, God had already gone ahead of me and arranged a home for me to stay with enough food to eat. What a testimony of how God could take my few dollars and stretch them very far by the kindness and love of God's people.

You know, this happened to me again and again until God raised up a whole team of fine Zambian men and women who love the Lord Jesus and who long to disciple the new generations.

Now, whenever something strange happens in my travel schedule, whether I don't make my flight, or I end up at what seems like the wrong place at the wrong time, I've found it's always good to ask, "Lord, could it be that You have a holy purpose for me in this place?"

His answer is always, "Yes!"

## Chapter 4

# Who Will Pray for Me?

“Again I say to you, that if two of you agree on earth about anything that they may ask, it shall be done for them by My Father who is in heaven. For where two or three have gathered together in My name, I am there in their midst.” Matt. 18:19-20

**I**n answer to many prayers, God provided a team of volunteers from across Zambia, and even from other parts of the world, to come disciple the government schoolteachers. The way God worked out all the details was amazing to me. God marshalled together a special team, and we were able to train them as a group at the beautiful Riverside Farm Institute.

After this team training, we went to David Kaunda National Technical Secondary School in Lusaka, Zambia, the location where we would offer Schools in Discipleship to over two hundred of the finest teachers from across Zambia. I remember waiting with expectancy as the teams arrived from every province across the nation. There were

roughly twenty early childhood instructors and administrators from every province, all coming together at the invitation of the Ministry of Education.

I sat in front of the grand assembly of educators that first day and watched and prayed as they all filed into the meeting hall. When I was introduced, after praying, my first order of business was to call for revival. I wanted to train these leaders to be disciple makers for Jesus, but how can any teacher, parent, grandparent, or believer anywhere disciple the new generations without *first themselves* being called to revival with Jesus?

“We have three agenda items here during our days together,” I told the group that first morning. “Number one is for each of us to experience a revival with Jesus Christ. Number two is to learn how to live daily as a disciple of Jesus. Number three is to grow as a disciple maker of each of your students.”

The top teachers and administrators from across Zambia all looked at me in cold silence. Many of them had their arms crossed. I’m sure that they were all in shock. They weren’t used to such a strange agenda. They were used to coming together to discuss curriculum and discipline strategies in the classroom. There were all kinds of other issues that would be normal for government schoolteachers to consider, but this revival agenda was quite foreign to them. No one smiled. I prayed earnestly, “God, we need breakthroughs here!”

I opened my Bible to Revelation chapter three and shared from Jesus' Last Love Letter, His message to Laodicea. Still there were not too many smiles, and the room was dreadfully silent. After sharing a full message from the Word, and giving them a challenge, we sent all the teams into ten different classrooms, each classroom representing a different province. We kept praying. We prayed for the people by name. We prayed for those whom God had called. And the Holy Spirit began to do what was impossible with man.

As you can imagine, there was great diversity in that crowd. Of course, there were believers from all different kinds of denominations, but there were also unbelievers there. There were people who held to the traditional religions and thoughts. But despite all these differences and influences, God began to move mightily. How do we know?

Some hours later, I got a report from one of our teams in one of the classrooms. One of the renowned educators had stood up and with tears in her eyes asked the group, "Who will pray for me? I'm under conviction, as I heard the Word earlier this morning. I'm under conviction that I need to repent. I need to turn around and make things right in my life."

No one moved in the room. Then she blurted out in front of everyone, "My best friend stole my husband. And I have been so angry, so full of hatred towards her that I wanted to destroy her. I tried to do all kinds of things to hurt her. I even

tried to take her life. Today I am repenting. I want to make things right with her. Who will pray for me?"

Everyone was shocked. Some of them were thinking, *What's gone wrong in this training? This is not the kind of meetings we have for government schoolteachers.*

Despite her pleas for prayer, no one moved. The precious educator, who had just testified, then got down on her knees in front of her colleagues as she lifted her hands up to heaven. "Who will pray for me?" she begged again, as she started sobbing before the Lord.

Shyly one teacher came up and prayed awkwardly that God would bless her. And then another one, and yet another one. And then finally the educator stood up and she said boldly, "I know what I must do. I must call the woman who stole my husband right now!" Her colleagues tried to calm her, telling her she could wait. "Oh, no, I'm under conviction. I must do this *right now!*" she insisted. She ran out of the room and called the woman who had stolen her husband.

When the woman answered the phone, she was terrified. "Why are you calling me?" the shocked woman asked suspiciously.

The educator answered, "Because I have met Jesus Christ in the written Word of God today. I am under conviction that I must make things right with you. Please, please, will you forgive me for how I have

harbored bitter hatred towards you all these years since you took my husband?"

"Is this a trick? Are you trying to get me to drop my guard when I'm around you, and you'll try to hurt me still?" the young woman asked.

"No," the educator responded. "Jesus Christ has given me a new heart, and He's put a new Spirit in me, and I am asking for your forgiveness. Will you please forgive me for how I have treated you?"

The young woman who used to be her best friend started crying on the other end of the line. Now her heart was moved. "Will you forgive me for wrecking your home and your family?" she begged.

"Yes, I will," replied the educator.

Some days after that phone call, there was a knock at the educator's home door, and her little girl ran out to see who had come to visit. Seeing the young woman at the door who had stolen her daddy from her mother, and knowing that her mother hated this young woman, the little girl was terrified. Afraid that there would be a horrible fight in their home, the little girl ran inside her bedroom, closed the door, and hid under some pillows and blankets.

As she waited to see what would happen, she heard the front door open and her mother's calm voice, inviting the young woman inside. Then there was silence.

“Oh no! What terrible thing must have happened!” she wondered fearfully.

The little girl came out from hiding and ran out to see if there had been a terrible fight, or if someone had died. She was so scared. But much to her shock, she found her mother--the educator--sitting down, smiling, and quietly laughing as she and her former friend, the young woman, were talking together. The little girl spoke up, “Mommy, Mommy, how can you be so happy to see this lady who stole Daddy? How can you laugh with her? How can you talk with her? How can you smile at her?”

With tears in her eyes, the educator softly responded to her daughter. “Baby, Jesus has given me a new heart, and He has given me the love to forgive my friend and to ask her to forgive me for hating her.”

This miracle was so special and so dramatic that when the teachers at the training heard the story of the educator forgiving her enemy, the Holy Spirit convicted many more souls.

It wasn't long that in another classroom, something similar happened with a renowned educator from another province. This time it was a man. He stood up and asked, “Who will pray for me? I'm a bitter, bitter man. I have pushed my son away from me for many years. He has greatly wronged me and hurt my family name. He disrespected me. Because of all he did, I did what all fathers are expected to do. I pushed him away and told him I never wanted to see or talk to him again. But as I listen to the Word of



God, I'm called to have the heart surgery promised in Ezekiel 36. I have asked God to do that heart surgery and to cut out my bitterness. Who will pray for me? I want this to be a completed work, and I want God to help me know what to do for my son."

He got down on his knees. Again, everyone was stunned in the room. They didn't know what to do with this man's request. They were not used to receiving prayer requests at their teachers' training meetings.

Finally, some got up and prayed for him. This man then got up from his knees, and immediately, as the Spirit of God convicted him, went out of the room, and called his son on the phone. His son answered the call and heard the voice of his father for the first time in many years.

"Dad...Dad, is that you?" the son asked with surprise.

"Yes, my son," the father answered.

"Why are you calling me? This is not according to tradition!" the son said incredulously. "Why are you calling me? I'm the one who has wronged you."

The father began to weep on the phone. "Son, it is I who have wronged you. I have not forgiven you. I have chosen to resent you. I pushed you away. I refused to talk with you. You and your wife have given birth to my grandson, and I've never even met him. Will you forgive me for pushing you away? Will you forgive me for not forgiving you?"

“Dad, are you for real?” the son asked again. He was quite shocked, and unbelieving.

“Yes son. Will you forgive me?”

Then it was the son’s turn to weep. “Father, yes, I forgive you. Will you forgive me too for how I treated you?”

That night the father and son began a new chapter of life.

“Come here to the school in Lusaka where we’re having Schools in Discipleship,” the father invited. “Come. I want to see you again right away. I don’t want to wait until after this training to see you. I don’t want to wait any longer to see my grandson for the first time.”

Within 24 hours, three generations were reunited because the Spirit of God had healed what was terribly broken.

My friend, that is what the Spirit of God is longing to do for each and every one of us. He wants to call the parents back to the children and the children back to the parents, and He will do this if we humble ourselves before Him. God promises in His Word:

“Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the LORD. He will turn the hearts of the fathers back to their children and the hearts of the children to

their fathers, so that I will not come and strike the land with complete destruction” (Malachi 4:5,6).

Well, the stories don't stop here. God's Spirit continued to be poured out on those training sessions with the top educators from across the provinces of Zambia. Miracle after miracle took place. It didn't take long for the leadership in the Ministry of Education to hear the amazing revival stories taking place. As a result, they came to meet me and called me into a room there at the school where we were training. "We have never seen a meeting like this before," they told me. "We want to see God do this work of revival and discipling with all our teachers in every province of Zambia!"

## Chapter 5

# The Iron Gate

**“I will go before you and make the crooked places straight; I will break in pieces the gates of bronze and cut the bars of iron.” Isaiah 45:2 NKJV**

**A** few years ago, God sent my wife April and me to live in a small mountain town. The place where I was working at the time was far away in the valley, and I had a long commute. We often wondered why God would lead us to live so far away from where I worked.

Then one day, we were fascinated to hear that just a mile or so away from our little cottage lived a wealthy couple who had not been in church for over forty years. We were told that they lived on a big piece of property, with a big iron gate guarding the entrance.

The iron gate made a statement about the man's desire to keep his distance from his neighbors. He was known as wanting his privacy. No one ever saw him much. He had everything he wanted delivered to him. Plus, he didn't like church or people who worked with the church. He just kept to

himself. I began praying that I would have a divine appointment with the man who seemed impossible to reach.

One beautiful Sabbath day, God awakened me early in the morning, and I went walking on the road that led up to the mountain. I was praying as I walked. Although I didn't know exactly where he lived or what he looked like, I prayed for the man behind the iron gate.

As I walked and prayed, I saw my neighbor talking to someone beside a well-manicured entry to a beautiful estate. My neighbor called out to me, "Hey Don, come over and meet your neighbor, Tom."

Walking up the driveway, I realized that my neighbor was talking to a man beside a large iron gate. I couldn't believe it! I was walking past the property of the man for whom I'd just been praying. God led me to walk by at the exact moment that he happened to be standing outside talking with my neighbor. What a rare moment!

Now, the Spirit of God told me to do something very bold. Walking up to the man, I introduced myself and then said, "Tom, may I ask you a question?" The man was a little surprised.

"What's your question?" he responded cautiously.

"Are you ready for Jesus to come?" I asked. It was abrupt, and I could tell he was shocked by my boldness.

“That’s a good question,” Tom responded with furrowed brow. “I hope to be ready for Jesus to come. I would like my wife to be ready for Jesus to come also.”

I then asked Tom if I could pray that God would help them both be ready for Jesus to come. It was an awkward moment, but Tom shrugged and said, “Sure.”

I prayed with Tom and my neighbor, then waved goodbye as I needed to get down the mountain and join my family of faith. I wasn’t sure that it was the best beginning for a friendship with Tom, but I knew it was what God had told me to say.

Later, I found out that after I had left, he asked my neighbor what I was doing out on the road so early in the morning. When my neighbor shared that I was looking for a place to pray, Tom told my neighbor, “Tell Don that if he wants a quiet place to pray, my property is open to him. Here is the combination for my iron gate so that he can come in any time and have a quiet place to pray and read the Word. I have lots of property, and he won’t be bothered by cars or traffic.”

When I heard this news, I was delighted! God had just given me the combination to the iron gate of the man whom I’d been praying I would be able to reach with the love of Jesus Christ.

From then on, each morning, whenever I was in town, I would go to Tom’s property to pray. I would

sit on a pile of rocks overlooking his long driveway that went winding in and out of his property down to the river. Although I couldn't see where he lived, I assumed that at the end of the long driveway was his home.

I did not see Tom again for many days. However, occasionally, in the early morning, I would see his car go by on the driveway down below me.

One morning, as I was praying at my favorite spot, his car went by in the early morning mist. The Spirit of God impressed me, "Run after that car, and make this man a very special offer."

I got up from my perch on the rocks and ran after him as fast as I could go. He pulled his car up to the big iron gate and stepped out to inspect something just as I came running up. He whirled around in the early morning mist, alarmed that someone was on his property. Recognizing me, his worried face relaxed. "Oh, it's you," he said.

"Yes!" I responded joyfully. "I'm here because you told me that I could come here anytime to pray in the early morning."

"That's fine," he responded.

"You know, I saw your car going by and I was in prayer, and God impressed me to make you an offer," I told him.

"What would that be?" he asked as he looked me

up and down. I was wearing an old pair of jeans, an old pair of boots and an old T-shirt. He seemed to be thinking, *What can this man possibly offer that I would have any interest in?*

I drew a deep breath and began to share. "I am someone who wants to grow as a disciple of Jesus Christ. And I want to know if you would meet me at 6:00 a.m. every morning for the next twelve mornings, and we will discover together more about what it means to be a disciple of Jesus."

He looked at me and half grunted, as he said, "Six a.m. for the next twelve mornings? No one has ever said such a thing to me. I don't need to wake up at 6:00 a.m. I can't imagine why I would want to get up at 6:00 a.m. I can do whatever I want to at any time of day!"

"Would you be willing to pray with me about this?" I asked.

Tom laughed. "I'll tell you what, if God tells me while you are praying to meet with you at 6:00 a.m. for the next twelve mornings, then I will do it. But otherwise, no! That's the last thing I would do."

I immediately knelt right there on his asphalt drive. To my surprise, he knelt beside me. I then began to pray and poured my heart out, asking that God would be with Tom and that He would open the way for us to study His Word together.

When I finished praying, I was getting ready to stand



up, but then Tom began to pray. At the end of his prayer, before I could say anything more, he said, "I'll see you in the morning at 6:00 a.m." With that he jumped into his car and sped off down the road.

For the next twelve mornings, we met morning after morning. We would pray and then read the written Word of God together and discover what it meant to be a disciple of Jesus. Each morning, it was simple: pray, study, and apply. I was excited to see if, at the end of our time together, this man would have a new experience with Jesus. However, as we concluded our twelve days, Tom told me simply, "Okay, well, it was good to meet with you." And that was it. He went back to his life, and I continued with mine. I kept praying, but there seemed to be no more interest any time I reached out to him.

Months went by, and nothing more happened, and then out of the blue one morning, I got a phone call from Tom. He sounded very troubled. "Don, can you drive me to the hospital right now?" he asked. "My wife is just being transferred from one hospital to the next hospital. I think she is dying. Would you please come? I can't think of anybody else I can call. But I remembered you. Would you drive me?"

"Absolutely!" I responded. Immediately, I jumped in my car and went to drive him to the hospital. As we arrived at the hospital, he asked, "Would you come in and pray with my wife?"

We went into the hospital together, and I prayed over that precious wife of his in her hospital bed. I

knew from the diagnosis that it was a very serious situation, and the likelihood of her living was not high. As we prayed together, I cried out to God that He would do for her what I could never do for her and that if it would bring Him glory, that she would be restored and healed. Then I left.

God is good. God chose in this circumstance to heal this woman as a testimony to Tom of His great love and power. Tom's wife was restored to good health.

Some days later, Tom contacted me. "You know," he said. "My wife is asking questions about the Bible. Would you come and study the Word of God with us both?"

And so, we began to study together. Sometime later, they were both baptized like Jesus was, fully immersed in water, as a testimony to all that they were giving their lives fully to Jesus Christ as Lord. They came up out of the water and began a fresh experience with Jesus that has lasted to this day.

Although April and I don't live in that small mountain town anymore, I often think of this precious couple. People had told me it was nearly impossible to ever see this couple outside their property. When I met Tom, he appeared at first to be someone who needed nothing. He seemed beyond reach. However, while man builds iron gates, the Holy Spirit knows how to open those gates, for He knows the combination to reach every heart.

## Chapter 6

# Hunted and Hidden

“The angel of the LORD encamps around all those who fear Him and rescues them.” Psalm 34:7

**P**raying and hoping to see a friendly face, I walked out into the airport terminal, where passengers meet and greet their waiting family members. I had just landed in a country that is still closed to the gospel.

As I looked around, my heart sank as I realized that my contact person was not there to meet me. I had been warned not to travel with anyone but him. And so, I prayed and watched, watched and prayed, and prayed and watched. The moments ticked by, but still my contact person did not show up.

I noticed that the police in the airport were starting to eye me suspiciously as people came and went, but I was not going anywhere. The police watched me from afar, then one of them, who looked like the chief of police, came a little closer and a little closer.

“God, what do I do?” I prayed. “My contact person has not shown up. I’m in a country closed to the good news about You. What do I do? You sent me here.”

Then the Spirit of God told me, “Go right up to the chief of police and make a special request.”

Immediately, I marched right up to the policeman, the man who was eyeing me suspiciously, and I said, “Good sir, I have a question for you. I am so happy to be in your beautiful country, and I’m hoping to be able to find some postcards to send my wife and my children from your country, but I don’t know where to find postcards in your airport. Could you help me?” The man held up his hand and gave a signal. Immediately, I was surrounded by his whole team of police.

The chief of police smiled at me and at his team, and then he barked out orders. He then told me in perfect English, “I’ve just ordered my men to go and help you find the best that we can offer you in postcards across the airport. Do not worry. We will all help you find postcards to send to your family!”

Oh, I had to chuckle to myself. Here I was almost in trouble with the policeman who had been eyeing me suspiciously, but now God was using him to help me find postcards for my family. God is good! After we searched together for some time, we found some postcards. Just then, the contact person who I was supposed to ride with arrived. I thanked all my police helpers enthusiastically for their assistance

and then watched for a cue from the believer so I would know what to do. He just quietly motioned to his left, and I could tell he wanted me to follow him. I followed him out of the airport and hopped into a car.

As we traveled down the road, he confided, “You know, things have changed a lot since you were here last. You must be extra careful this time. When we arrive at the church where God’s people are meeting, the place where you’ll be doing the training, you must never look behind you at the main gate.”

“Why is that?” I asked.

He responded, “There is a very large video camera that the government has set up to take note of everyone who comes into our church and who goes out of it. We must be very careful. So, when we drop you off in front of the church, make sure you get your luggage, but always keep your back to the camera.”

Well, my heart started thumping as we came up to the main gate of the church. I was curious. I wanted to look behind me and see how big that camera was and exactly what it looked like, but I didn’t. He pulled right up to the curb outside of the church. I stepped out, always keeping my back to the camera. The sun was just setting. I was grateful for the gathering night shadows as I slipped into the church. How thrilled I was to arrive there safely!

I had a good night's sleep. Early the next morning, the believers gathered to be equipped and trained on how to be disciples and disciple makers for Jesus.

Day after day, everything went beautifully and as planned. The people were hungry to be equipped. They were hungry for more of the Holy Spirit. They were hungry for the Word of God. They were just hungry for everything of God. But the devil was angry.

One morning, everything changed. Right in the middle of training, all of a sudden, a man burst into our room, yelling and waving his arms, and trying to get everybody's attention. He was talking in his own language, and I did not know what he was saying. Finally, I found someone who could translate for me.

“What's the matter? What's the matter?” I asked.

I noticed that the young people were listening with much interest as the man continued to share with animation and excitement. As the young people listened, they began to look bewildered. The older people in the room immediately got on their knees. Some of them were weeping as they began to pray. All of them were praying fervently. Then I knew I was about to experience something that I had never, ever experienced in my own country where we still have religious freedom.

My translator began to whisper to me. “Right now, below us in the kitchen on the main level are two secret police! They are asking why we have so many

mounds of food. They have just sent word that they know there is someone here training and teaching who is not authorized to be here. Don, they know you are here! Someone turned you in to the secret police! The police said that because we live in a very generous country, they are allowing our church several days to take care of this problem. Don, you are this problem. They promised to be back to look for this person in a few days!”

“Well,” I said, “What should we do?” No one answered.

A few minutes passed. “The police are gone now,” they finally told me.

The people gathered close around me, and I questioned the precious believers again, “Are you asking me to stop equipping you to disciple your children? Do you want me to leave?”

“Oh, no!” they responded. “We have traveled at great sacrifice to come here. We are hungry for more. But here is the challenge that we face. If we are caught with you unlawfully training us, then we are in trouble, and you’re in trouble. You can get thrown in prison as they are waiting to send you back to America. And what happens to you in the meantime? Who knows?”

“So, what do you want me to do?” I asked again.

“We want you to train us with all your heart and all your strength, and we will pray that God will

strengthen you. From now on, we want you to train beginning in the early morning, all afternoon, and all evening as long as you can. And then we will all sleep. We'll spend time with Jesus and pray, pray, pray. Then we'll start again in the morning at 6:00 a.m., praying for the Holy Spirit. Train as much as you can, as many hours a day as you can, because we don't know when the police are coming back, and we may never have this opportunity again!"

So, that's what we did. We trained that way all day Friday, Sabbath, and Sunday, and God blessed. And the police did not come back.

On Monday morning, the believers told me, "We think that when they open their offices this morning, they will probably come here to search for you to see if we are compliant. They will want to know if we got rid of you."

As I thought about what they had just shared, I asked, "Does this mean that you don't want me to meet with you this morning at 6:00 a.m. to lead you in praying for the Holy Spirit?"

"No!" they responded with urgency. "We must pray even more! Let's pray for the Holy Spirit, but we'll also pray that God will show us when you should leave."

And so we prayed for the Holy Spirit. And I taught about the Holy Spirit from the Word of God. And our hearts cried out after God, and God moved in the meeting.



A couple hours later, the believers suddenly stopped the training. “Now, you must go!”

There was no fear in their faces, but they were very firm, and they showed genuine concern. They did not want me to get caught. I could tell that they were more concerned about me than about themselves.

“We know it’s time,” they told me. I grabbed my Bible and things, and instantly the whole room was changed into a totally different look, like the government officials would expect it to look in that country. In just moments, the room was prepared for a traditional presentation for the government. I started walking out of the room, but there were glass windows in the hallway right outside the door. The believers pushed me down as they whispered, “Please crawl across this hallway. You’re tall. We don’t want anybody to see you.”

I got down low on the floor and crawled my way across the hallway. Once I got past the windows, I got up, and they said, “Follow us.”

We went up in a big, old building to the top floor. They came in with me into a little room. Then they closed and locked the door.

“We will stay with you,” they told me. “We will pray with you until the other believers come and tell us it’s safe. Whatever you do, do not open the door!” So, we waited, and we prayed, and we prayed, and we waited. Then, suddenly, there were footsteps and a gentle tapping on the door. I was so excited

to get out of that little room, I forgot the advice. I immediately started towards the door, and they whispered, “No, you must not answer the door.

Come here!”

On the side of the room was a very tiny room—much smaller than the room we had been in. It was a little closet about half of my height, low to the floor. Quickly they stuffed me in that little storage closet, and they closed and locked the door.

Now I was uncomfortably hunched over in that tiny room waiting, but I was more concerned about what might be going on outside. As I waited silently, I wondered what would happen to me and the believers if we were caught.

I heard knocking at the door, more footsteps, and many voices. I wondered if the next thing I would feel would be the hand of the police grabbing the back of my neck and pulling me out of my hiding place. Would voices say to me with a translator, “You must come with us!” Would I be marched down to the city prison where I would be held until they could figure out how to send me back to America?

Many thoughts raced through my mind as I cried out to God in prayer. “God, make me ready for whatever might come my way. I’m here at Your command and call. Help me to be faithful to You no matter what happens.”

Then I heard footsteps come right to my little door.

The door was unlocked and opened, and a voice said in English, “Don, come out!”

I came out, and the believers smiled at me. “Come with us. It’s safe now,” they told me.

As we traveled back down the stairs to the main room, I asked, “What happened?”

When we came into the main room, we found the young people laughing nervously. They were so excited. They were laughing and laughing, and the elderly people had tears of joy in their eyes. They had been praying the whole time and crying out to God that the meetings would not be stopped, and that I would be safe.

“What happened?” I asked again.

With breathless excitement, they told me, “Shortly after you left, two police marched into our training room with great confidence and authority. They came in, scanned the room, and slowly looked through our crowd. They were looking for you. Then as they looked at the back of the room, suddenly great fear came across their faces. They backed up without a word, turned around, and fled out of the room and off the property. We know that God sent His angels here to protect us and to protect you!”

We thanked and praise God and His glorious name together. Then immediately, we continued in the Word and in training. And the police never returned while I was there.

## Chapter 7

# He's My Daddy

**“Your ears will hear a word behind you, saying, ‘This is the way, walk in it,’ whenever you turn to the right or to the left.” Isaiah 30:21**

I was flying into a highly populated city in a country far away from my home. I would be there only one night. As the plane neared its destination, I had the strong conviction that there was somebody in that city with whom I was supposed to meet and pray. “Who is that person, God?” I wondered.

After I arrived in that city, I took a short tour. Although I was in a different culture, that held many different religious beliefs and views from my own, I was treated with such kindness and respect. I remember going into one shop, and I was very thirsty. I asked the shopkeeper, “Do you have any water? I want to find some water to drink!”

“No, not here, but give us one moment,” they said. Two of the shopkeepers ran down the street and came back a few moments later with a bottle of water.

“Here, sir, this is our gift to you,” they told me as they handed me the water.

“How much does it cost?” I asked.

“It’s our gift to you,” they said again with a smile.

Again and again, I saw the kindness of the precious people of that city.

Right before I went back to my hotel that night, I passed by a large, beautiful worship center, specially designed for daily worship in that region of the world. I wondered about the man who was inside that worship center, the man who called the people to pray throughout the day and night.

As I settled in for the night back at my hotel and before crawling into bed, I knelt and asked God to wake me up anytime in the night to pray and be in His Word. I did not have an alarm clock, nor was one provided by the hotel, so I was depending on God to wake me up to be on time to catch another flight the next day.

In the early hours, I was awakened by God. I felt so rested. *I hope I haven’t missed my flight!* I thought. I called down to the front desk and found out it was only 1:00 a.m. Then God reminded me that He had told me He had somebody in the city He wanted me to pray with. I got on my knees. “God, don’t let me miss the one You want me to pray with in this city before I leave.”

As I prayed, the Holy Spirit impressed me very strongly that He wanted me to find the leader of the large, beautiful worship center that I had seen the night before, the man that routinely called the people to pray.

I prayed again, wanting assurance that I was indeed hearing from God.

“God, if I’m hearing You correctly, please give me promises in the Word that would prepare me for such a visit. And if this is not You, then give me counsel in the Word that will lead me not to go. Just lead me by your Holy Spirit.”

In answer to my prayer, the Holy Spirit began to lead me to promise after promise in His Word that showed me that He was with me, and that He would give me the words to say like He promised Moses at the burning bush.

After much time in prayer and in the Word, I put on my street clothes and went downstairs. The lobby was completely empty. It was still a very early hour.

“I need a taxi, please,” I said to the person at the front desk.

“Sir, step outside. One is waiting for you,” the attendant told me.

“But I didn’t call yet for a taxi,” I said with surprise.

“Just step outside. One is waiting for you,” he told me again.

There was no activity in the hotel, and it was still very early in the morning. I couldn’t believe that God had already prepared a taxi for me. I went out to the taxi, and sure enough, the driver was standing there waiting for me.

“Please take me to such and such worship center,” I said to the driver, naming the place that I had seen the night before.

He replied, “This is very early in the morning. Are you of our faith?” he asked, as he named the prominent faith group of that country.

“No, I am not,” I told him.

“Why do you want to go? This is not the hour for people who are not of our faith to worship.”

“I must see the man who gives the call to prayer,” I told him.

The driver looked at me with confusion. “Do you have an appointment to see him?”

“No, not from him,” I responded.

“If you don’t have an appointment, there’s no way you’ll see him,” he told me very confidently. “I am of this faith and even if I were to try to get an appointment with him, it would take a long, long time

to get an appointment with such an important man.”

“I understand,” I responded resolutely. “However, in prayer this morning, God told me to go and see that man.”

The driver studied my face intently. “You’ll never see him, but I’ll take you there.”

And so, in the early hours of the morning, I got into his taxi. It was still pitch-black outside. He took me to the large, beautiful center where many people come to pray and worship. As we got closer and closer, I could see the worship center shimmering in the night. The lights were all on. What an impressive sight!

“What’s the best way for me to enter the building?” I asked my taxi driver.

“I’ll drop you off in the back. You have two options,” he told me. “You can either go up to those three huge wooden doors, and you can enter there. If the doors are open, you will go immediately into the center where everyone is praying. Your other option is to go down below the worship center. There is a narrow corridor; you can go down below, and then you will come up inside. So, which do you want to do?”

I looked toward the narrow corridor that he had pointed out. It was all dark. I couldn’t see my way. I looked at the huge, massive doors and silently prayed. “I will go through the great doors,” I told him.



He dropped me off by the three doors. I had hoped that he would wait to see if I could enter, but before I could say anything, he drove away, leaving me standing in the dark at the back of the huge worship center. I took off my shoes and went up to the first huge door and tried to open it. It was locked firmly. I prayed, "God, at least You know I tried." And then I thought to myself, *I should try the second door.*

I went up to the second door and tried to get in, and it was locked as well. Again, I prayed, "God, at least You know I tried to go where You wanted me to go. This isn't even the hour for foreigners like me to come who are not of this faith."

I tried the third door, and it opened. I walked in through the door. Many men were kneeling in prayer, a lot of them with their faces to the ground. I knelt down, not far away from the great door I had entered. I prayed, and I waited. I prayed silently, "God, how am I going to find the man who leads the daily call to prayer?"

Finally, after some time, God impressed me to open my eyes. I noticed a young man who was in prayer a few meters away from me. I walked up to him, and when he noticed me, I said, "I am so sorry for interrupting you, but can you lead me to the man who makes the call to prayer?"

He responded with a smile, "Soon he will make his call for prayer, and then you can meet him."

So, I prayed and waited. And soon the man whom I was praying to meet came in and gave his call to prayer. I could hear the swish, swish of the huge door behind me, opening and closing, as many more men came in for the call to prayer. What a spectacle I must have been on my knees in my western clothes. I was the only one who looked like me, and I was the only one there not of their faith.

At the end of the prayer, I heard a deep voice, "Are you looking for the leader who calls for prayer?" I looked up and I saw two big men staring at me.

"Yes, sir. Can you take me to him?"

One of the tall men replied, "The leader is here beside you right now!" And he pointed to a little man who looked very, very wise.

The big, tall men looked like bodyguards. They both looked at me closely with caution and suspicion. I smiled and said, "I would love to speak with your leader."

One of the tall men then said something quietly to the leader whom I had come to see. The leader said something back to the tall man, who then informed me that he would like to speak with me off to the side. The three men led me over to the side of the room. The leader sat down on the floor with the two men close beside him, one on each side.

"Why have you come?" they asked.

“While in prayer early this morning, God told me to come here and see you,” I said, looking directly at the leader.

That was the beginning of a great conversation about the times we live in and our mutual conviction that parents are called by God to mentor their own children spiritually. Eventually, the religious leader began speaking in English, talking with me directly instead of through the men beside him. We had a profound conversation about the need of passing values down to the newer generations. Nearly thirty minutes flew by, and then the leader said he needed to go. However, the Holy Spirit had told me that I needed to pray with him.

“Can I pray for you and your family before you go?” I asked. He assured me that I could. I prayed for him and his family and for God to bless him and lead him as he led those in the large worship center of that city. He was visibly moved by the prayer and leaned forward. “If you are ever in this city again, please come and see me,” he whispered. I assured him that I would be most happy to come see him again.

When I asked where I could find a taxi to go to the airport, one of the men who had been his bodyguard offered, “Come with me. I will take you to the airport.”

The bodyguard drove me across the city and to the airport and refused my offers to pay him for his gas. As I waved goodbye, I invited my driver to come

with his family and visit me in America. I wondered when God would lead me back. Would there be a sequel to the story?

Several years went by, and I kept thinking about the invitation of that leader to come back to see him there at the large, beautiful worship center. I thought about how God had given me urgency to pray with that man.

The next time I was flying into that city, I prayed, "God, if it would be for your glory, help me to find that man again."

The next morning after my arrival back in that city, God awakened me very early. I had another flight out that very day, but before my flight, God impressed me to go back to that same big worship center. I went and found the place and entered. I asked for the leader whom I had met previously. It was past the time for the call to prayer. The few men who were still there watched me with great curiosity.

"Our leader is not here. You can find him at his home," they said.

"Where's his home?" I asked. They pointed to an apartment across the campus.

I walked over to the apartment, and I rang the doorbell. No one answered. I rang again, and no one answered. People were walking by on the street, looking at me. I was a westerner, and I could tell that they were puzzled why I was at the door

of their religious leader. Again and again, I rang the doorbell. I felt foolish but was impressed not to give up. Finally, I heard a door open on the upper level and the sound of little feet coming down the stone steps.

A little boy came and looked at me with a puzzled expression. He greeted me in his language. I asked him if I could see the leader who called for prayer, and he scampered back up the steps. I heard the voice of the little boy and the voice of a woman as they discussed something. Then the little boy came running down the steps as fast as his legs could carry him. He ran right up to me, looked up, and commanded confidently, "Follow me." And he immediately started walking back across the campus.

"Where are we going?" I asked him.

"To the worship center," he said.

"I have already looked for the leader there," I told him.

"No, he is there!" The little boy said emphatically.

"How do you know?" I asked, unconvinced.

The little boy grinned, "He is my daddy. Follow me!"

I followed the boy back into the worship center and directly across the main place of prayer. Those gathered there to pray stared as this little boy confidently led me, a westerner, through the prayer hall down a hallway and into what appeared to be

a special, private chamber. He walked very quietly up to a man lying face down with his head covered. "There's my daddy," he whispered. His daddy was sound asleep!

*Oh, this isn't a good situation!* I thought to myself. *He won't be happy to have me wake him. Should I wake him up?* Then I remembered how this leader had invited me three years before to come back and see him. I tried to assure myself that when he woke up and saw my face, he would remember our great conversation.

The little boy was waiting to see what I would do. So, I whispered, "Please wake up your father." I was standing a few feet away. I was so excited to see this man again.

The little boy began tugging the sleeve of his father, but the man appeared to be in deep, deep sleep. His son tugged at him again and began to shake him. "Daddy, Daddy, wake up!"

The man turned over and slowly sat up, rubbing his sleepy eyes. His son tugged at his arm jabbering something and pointing with much excitement at me. But when the man took his hands off his face, I was shocked! The man looking up at me was not the same leader who had invited me back. This man looked at me blankly, and then stood up without a smile. He was *not* happy to see me standing there.

It was an awkward moment, but the Spirit of God was there. I introduced myself to him, and he

understood enough of my English to carry on a conversation. I told him about meeting the other leader several years previous. He asked, “Are you of our faith?”

“No. I am a follower of Jesus,” I responded. We had a good conversation. Then the Spirit of God whispered to my mind, “Give him a book.” I asked him if I could give him a book that I had written. He nodded his approval. I gave him one of my books that shares about how God has called our homes to be disciple-making places for Jesus.

Then the Spirit of God said, “Ask him if you can pray with him.” I asked him if I could pray with him, and he cautiously agreed. I prayed with him, and then I left as it was almost time to catch my plane.

As I rode in a taxi back to the airport, I silently praised God for His perfect timing in arranging for my visit three years before and now for my return visit that morning. I had not seen who I had intended to see, but instead was led by God back to the worship center to a spiritual leader who was even more open to what I had to share as a follower of Jesus.

Oh, my friend, remember that the Spirit of God has people for you to see in every city and on every continent, even in the city or town where you live. And when you go, if you keep your heart and mind in tune with Him, He always has an agenda. Just pray and prepare for amazing divine appointments!

## Chapter 8

# Engraved on My Heart

“I have treasured Your Word in my heart, so that I may not sin against You. I will also speak of Your testimonies before kings and shall not be ashamed. Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.” Psalm 119:11, 46, 105

**M**emorizing Scripture is not my greatest strength. I love the written Word of God. I love to read it. I love to study it. I love to pray the Word of God back to Him, but often I struggle with memorizing it. I have often wondered what I would do if I were ever sent to a place without my Bible. Well, one day, not too long ago, I got the chance to find out!

I was preparing for a trip to Cambodia and arranging for all my flights when I was impressed to stop and pray about God’s agenda for my return flight home. As I prayed, the Holy Spirit impressed me that I should detour far out of my way to stop and visit a specific, closed country. He impressed



me that if I would go to this closed country, He would show me what I must do.

April and I thought and prayed about this. Although it was very unusual to book a flight so far out of the way for my return flight, we agreed that it was God's agenda. So that's what I did.

I finished my work in Cambodia and headed home via this closed country. Providentially, I had previously met a couple from the closed country, followers of Jesus, whom I was planning to visit.

When I arrived, we met at a hotel. Before we even began to talk, I shared that the Holy Spirit had told me to go on this long, "out-of-the-way" route home so I could visit their country. I knew He had a specific purpose in bringing me there. We then prayed earnestly together that the Holy Spirit would lead in our conversation and that we would not miss anything that was on His heart. After our season of prayer, I asked the couple, "So, what's on your heart?"

The man began to tell me about opportunities to serve that sounded very comfortable to me, ways I could resource believers in their country that would not ask any risk of me. I found myself breathing a sigh of relief and relaxing. However, as I listened, I prayed, "God help me to hear Your agenda while I am here!"

Then abruptly, the man paused. With a faraway look in his eyes, he began to share the concern God had given him for believers in a nearby country to

theirs, a country that was even more difficult, as the authorities had banned the written Word of God and any Christian gatherings. He went on to share how it was forbidden for a believer to even own a hard copy of the Bible and that it was extremely dangerous for believers to gather for worship. The country was completely closed to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

He told me about the danger believers had in sharing their faith and how desperately they needed to be encouraged in the Word, called to revival, and equipped to disciple their children. The more he talked, the stronger the Holy Spirit impressed me that God wanted me to go to that closed country. God had led me to meet with this couple on my way home so that I would hear of this great need.

“I believe that God is calling me to go there and to call the believers to a revival with Jesus,” I told the couple, as conviction overwhelmed me. “I believe God wants me to disciple them to be disciple makers of their children and their youth, and to equip them to call others for revival.”

“I would never ask you to go to such a place,” the man responded soberly. “It’s a very difficult place, a very dangerous place. You are a married man with a family. I would not ask you to take that risk. But if God does call you, tell me!”

After our conversation, I continued my journey back home to the safe country where I live. Once I got

home, my wife and I prayed earnestly about this unique opportunity. As we prayed together, God impressed us together that He was indeed calling me to go to this closed country. As you can imagine, my wife and I were concerned about how I should prepare for this trip.

I asked God what I should do about the ban on Bibles. Everywhere I go on this planet I take the written Word of God with me in hard copy form. This is my mode of operation and main source of all my preaching and teaching globally. It is also my source of strength and courage. I felt like I would be going on this trip naked without God's Word. So, I prayed about my predicament.

"God, You have all power and authority," I told Him. "You have power to put Your hand over my Bible so that the authorities will not see it when I enter this closed country to the Gospel. I've heard other stories of this. I know You could do that for me if You wanted."

However, as I waited and prayed and sought God on this matter, I was impressed that I should not bring a copy of the Bible with me into the country.

I then asked God, "How am I going to preach and teach Your Word for two weeks in this country without a copy of Your written Word?"

That still, small voice of the Holy Spirit spoke to my heart, "I will engrave the Word of God on your mind and on your heart."

“How will You do that?” I asked. I knew I had only thirty days left before my flight to this country. I needed a plan to internalize God’s Word.

The Holy Spirit impressed me with a thirty-day plan in the Word. He spoke to my mind, “I want you to read the entire New Testament in the next 30 days. Take the following steps: Every morning kneel down and pray that the Holy Spirit will bless the Word and engrave what you read on your mind and your heart. And as you read, look for anything you can learn about Jesus Christ. When you are finished reading your portion of the New Testament for that day, then set the Bible aside and from memory, write out whatever you learned about Jesus—who He is, what He does, and what He will do for you. In this way, I will engrave the Word on your mind and on your heart.”

So, my friend, that’s what I did for the next thirty days. I read a portion of the New Testament each day after praying for the Holy Spirit’s help, and I searched for Jesus as if I had not met Him before. Then I set the Bible aside and wrote out, as fast, clearly, and comprehensively as I could, everything I remembered about what I had just learned about Jesus from the Word of God.

But then another complication arose. I had turned in my request for a visa to the embassy of that country but hadn’t heard anything back until just ten days before departure. My visa did finally arrive; however, my name was spelled completely wrong and was almost unrecognizable. I was very

disappointed and alarmed. I thought about going back to the embassy in person to ask them to redo it, but there wasn't enough time.

I went out into the forest to pray. "God, I can't even enter my own country where I'm a citizen with paperwork that misspells my name, much less a country closed to the gospel that may or may not be so happy to have me come as an American. How am I going to enter this country with a visa that doesn't even match the name on my passport?"

But God wasn't very worried. Again, His still, small voice spoke to my heart. "Do not think that your visa is going to get you into the country. I, the Lord God alone, am the One who will get you into that country!"

Oh, how my heart soared! I was excited and so happy. As I got ready to go, I put that visa in with my passport, and I told the Lord that I didn't know how He was going to do it, but that I was excited to see what He would do.

The day came for me to go. I hugged and kissed my wife and held her tight for a long time, knowing that if I made a false step, if I were caught sharing the gospel in this country, I might not return. I said goodbye to our children at home and held them close. Then off I went on this long faith journey to the other side of the planet.

I remember how my heart was pounding as I flew into that city. I knew that within moments, they would

see the disparity between my passport and visa, and they could easily take issue with this. They would have good reason to be suspicious of me. They would wonder who I really was. I could be taken to a side room and questioned and interrogated or worse, and they could find out that I am a passionate follower of Jesus Christ, who loves to teach of Him and preach of Him everywhere I go. I knew that without God's intervention, I was in trouble.

With much prayer, I came to the man behind the desk at passport control. Sure enough, the man said, "Passport, please. Visa, please." I gave them to him. He held the passport up to the left of my face and the visa to the right of my face. And he looked at the three, those two documents with my face in between. I could see he was comparing. He saw that my face matched, but did he notice that my names did not match at all? He paused and searched my face deeply. I prayed and waited. Then with a big grin on his face, he said, "Welcome to our country. I hope you have a wonderful time."

"I'm sure I will," I responded, as I walked into the adventure of my lifetime.

I waited for my contact person near baggage claim, but he did not come. It got later and later in the night, and still my contact person didn't come. I had been expressly warned that if I were to catch a ride with a wrong taxi, and they were to find out that I was a follower of Jesus, I could be found many days later with my throat slit and dropped off along the road somewhere. I did not want to ride

with anybody except for my contact person, who was a follower of Jesus, he never showed up.

Crying out to God, I asked, “What should I do? I need to get to my hotel where I’m supposed to meet with and equip these followers of Jesus.” God brought a promise back to my mind that He had engraved on my memory: “But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him” (James 1:5). I then asked God again for this wisdom and trusted that He would lead me.

That still, small voice of God instructed me that I was supposed to go to a certain kiosk and there I was to get a ride. I went to that kiosk, gave them the address of my hotel, and asked them if they could take me there. They were happy to oblige. Less than an hour later, I was at my hotel.

Upon entering the lobby of my hotel, I went up to the front desk and gave the man behind the desk a big smile. “My name is Don MacLafferty, and I have a reservation.”

He grumpily asked, “Did you already pay for the room?”

“Yes, sir, I did. I paid online,” I answered.

He looked and said, “I can see that you booked a room, but the payment did not go through.” Now, I only had a small amount of cash with me, and I was concerned about using my credit card for that

hotel, but I didn't want to use up my little bit of cash either. So, I pulled out my credit card to use it, and he swiped it through.

"This card does not work," he told me. He was quite unhappy.

"I am so sorry," I responded, "Please try it again."

"I've already tried it. It does not work," he said with irritation.

"Please try it," I asked. He tried it the second time, and with even greater disgust, he said, "See? It does not work!" I was silently pleading with God to intervene. He told me what to do.

"Please, sir, try it one more time." I was praying because I knew that if that card didn't work, then I had no other way to pay for my lodging. The two weeks that God had set aside for me to be in this country would be in jeopardy.

"I don't need to run your card again. I've already done it two times," he told me. It was obvious that he wanted me out the door.

"Sir, I am asking you one last time, would you please try it one more time?"

He tried my card the third time, and my card went through. I was so happy. I could have hugged the man, except I knew that he would not appreciate that at all.



I was so excited to have a room, so excited to have made it safely into this country, so excited that they did not turn me back when they saw my visa with the wrong name on it. Once I got to my room I knelt down and thanked God for getting me there safely.

Joyfully I got up and left my room to explore the hotel. As I walked down the hotel halls, I started thinking that if I were super careful only to pray with believers and to disciple and equip them, I could serve God well and actually get back home safely to be with my wife and family.

As those thoughts were going in my mind, the Spirit of God gave me urgent instructions, “Don, go back to your room immediately!” There was such an urgency in His message. I headed back to my room, closed the door, got on my knees, and I said, “Lord, what is it?”

The Spirit of God then rebuked me. He told me firmly, “I did not call you to this country to *be safe*. I have called you to resource believers in Christ on how to call believers to revival and how to disciple the new generations to Christ. But I also called you here to pray with anybody I call you to pray with, not just believers in Christ.”

“But, Lord,” I said, “For Christians to pray with the people of other faiths in this country is against the law. A follower of Jesus is not ever to pray with the faith group of the people who live here.”

God challenged me deeper. “I did not call you here to be safe. I called you here to be faithful to Me.

And whoever I impress you to pray with, you must pray with. You are here to be a light in the night.”

I confessed my sin before God. I confessed my desire to be safe. And instead, I pleaded with God to help me to be faithful, not just safe. I headed back down into the lobby. Moments later, I met the manager of the hotel. And the Spirit of God told me, “Go pray with that manager.”

“Already, Lord?” I asked. “I haven’t even met the believers yet.” Then, I paused. “Yes, Lord. I will pray with him. Just go with me.”

I walked up to the manager and complimented him on his staff and the cleanliness of the hotel. I told him I loved to pray with people around the world and then I asked if I could pray with him. He looked at me sharply. Narrowing his eyes, he asked, “Are you of our faith?”

“No sir, I am not. I am a follower of Jesus.”

He did not waste a second. His answer was immediate. “Follow me!” he said crisply, and he walked straight into the middle of the spacious lobby. I followed. He sat down in a plush chair and motioned for me to sit near him. We were surrounded with businesspeople doing business or having some refreshments. “Go ahead. You can pray for me.”

My eyes widened. “Right here?” I questioned him. He nodded. I knew that the businesspeople surrounding

us were of another faith, not friendly to Christianity. I could easily be in trouble. I wondered if this was a trap, but God told me to pray for him.

So, I bowed my head and prayed for this manager, for his family, and for his leadership to be blessed in the hotel. When I finished, I could tell that the manager was very touched and encouraged by the prayer. He quietly thanked me and quickly left the area.

I met with twelve believers that evening and found that the Holy Spirit gave me every portion of the Word that I needed for the revival that night. Again and again throughout the following two weeks the Holy Spirit gave me what I needed in the Word, exactly when I needed it. I found myself being in awe of the Holy Spirit and the written Word of God in a fresh new way, for He had engraved it on my heart and mind as He never had before. While I didn't have my Bible with me, I had Jesus, the Living Word, and that was enough.

God's promises and His Word also continued to give me the courage to seek faithfulness over safety. That hotel manager whom I prayed with the first day came up to me again the next day and quietly confided, "Yesterday after you prayed with me, I had the best day I have had in a long time! Would you pray with me again?"

"Oh yes!" I smiled. We prayed together, again and again over those two unforgettable weeks.

## Chapter 9

# Never Met One Before

“Go, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to follow all that I commanded you; and behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” Matthew 28:19, 20

**T**he days equipping the twelve believers in the closed country flew by like leaves in the autumn wind. Toward the end of that week, some of the believers gathered around me with much excitement.

“We have been praying about your coming to visit our church in the capital city next week. Will you come?” they asked.

“Let me pray about that,” I told them.

My heart started thumping as I thought about how active the police would be, looking for underground churches, even more so than where I was now. I prayed and asked God what would give Him glory. His answer was simple: “Go!”

He reminded me that He had divine appointments lined up for me on the flight to and from the capital as well as when I would be with the believers. I began to pray about who I would meet.

The day for my flight to the capital city arrived. The believers had sacrificed to pay my flights there and back. I got a taxi to take me to the airport and discovered that there were few signs I could read. I prayed for help to even find my gate. There was almost nothing in English in the entire airport. As I walked along, I again realized how I stood out in the crowd. No one in the entire busy airport looked like me.

I knew that people like me, followers of Jesus, were rare in this part of the world. Finally, I came to what I thought was my gate. I sat down and prayed that God would show me in some way if I was in the right place. A tall businessman carrying a briefcase sat down beside me. I asked him if this was the right gate to the flight that was going to the capital city. He spoke in crisp English, "Absolutely. You're in the right place."

We struck up a conversation, and then over the intercom they made a call only in their language. My new friend stood up. "Let's join the line to board the plane," he told me.

As we were in the line and boarding the plane, he asked, "What's your seat number?" I showed him my seat number. "That's quite a coincidence. You're sitting right next to me!" he said cheerfully.

We walked into the plane and sat down. As the plane took off, he asked me, "So I'm curious, why are you going to our capital city?"

"I am hoping to make new friends and learn more about your country's past and present," I responded.

We talked back and forth very carefully. And then finally, he leaned over and whispered, "Are you of our faith?"

"No, I am not," I responded.

Now, I was very aware that the plane was packed with people, and some seemed to be listening while others, of course, could not understand a word we said. But I didn't always know who was who. However, he was very curious about my identity.

"So, what are you?" he asked.

"Are you asking about my faith?" I responded. He nodded very seriously, and I thought, *This will be an interesting moment. What is he going to do when he finds out who I am? I don't want to lie. I want to tell the truth, and I want to give God glory.* So, I whispered a prayer to heaven, and the Holy Spirit showed me what to do.

"I am a follower of Jesus," I quietly told him.

"Oh!" he said, with much fascination and curiosity. "I have never met one of those before. I have never had a conversation with a follower of Jesus."

The rest of the flight was very interesting. As we compared notes, he said that he was a man of prayer. I said, "So am I." He said he practiced fasting so that he could have a clear mind when he was praying. I said, "I fast also." He said he practiced giving to the poor. And I said, "That's good. I practice that too." He said, "I believe that there is a coming judgment day when all will be taken into account." I said, "I believe that also."

"You might be fascinated to know," I told him, "that I don't drink alcohol, and I don't eat pork. I believe that God cares about what goes into my body."

He looked at me with surprise. "Are you sure you are not one of us?" he asked.

I chuckled, "I've told you who I am. I believe that God has many, many children."

We had an amazing flight, and he asked me all kinds of questions that he had never had a chance to ask a follower of Jesus. As the plane was landing, he thanked me for the conversation. I wondered to myself how long my new friend would have had to wait to meet a follower of Jesus if I had decided that the risks were too high to travel to the capital.

My friend, there are many more just like him all around the world. I wonder how long those many more *someones*, who have never met Jesus or one of His followers, will be waiting until you or I are willing to step out of our comfort zone to go and sit beside them.

## Chapter 10

# Every Moment Matters

“Walk in wisdom toward those who are outside, redeeming the time. Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one.” Col. 4:5,6 NKJV

**O**ver and over again, I’ve seen how God can make ordinary moments turn into a single moment that really matters in someone’s life. This story is another one of those testimonies of how God led and blessed in a powerful way.

It had been another long flight back across the ocean headed home. The hours ticked by slowly for me in my cramped row of seats.

“God,” I repeatedly prayed, “Who on this plane do You want me to encourage or pray with?”

Over the course of the flight, He had shown me many people who were hungry to know the Lord. God had even arranged divine appointments with flight attendants who had been so kind and helpful. I remember going to the back of the plane and



telling them how much I appreciated their work and what a difference their service was making in my long flight. God used that conversation to open the way for me to pray with a couple of those flight attendants. I gave them one of my books. A little bit later, one of those same flight attendants came to my seat and asked, "We have more of our colleagues who want to know if they can have a book too. Could they have a book?" I was delighted.

I went back again to the area where the flight attendants all worked and asked them to gather as many flight attendants as they could for a brief moment. I gave them my books, signed them, and then asked them if I could have a prayer of blessing for them. They all agreed! It was wonderful to have a prayer meeting on the long flight.

This kind of adventure happened again and again on that flight. As I waited in line for the restroom, God would also repeatedly arrange for me to meet people hungry for more of Him. I was in awe of His perfect timing.

Finally, the plane started its descent. I went back to my seat as I heard the message over the loudspeaker, "We need all passengers to please take their seats. We are beginning our final descent into our destination."

"God," I prayed again, "You are impressing me to ask You one more time, 'Is there one more person that You want me to pray with on this flight?'"

Just as I prayed that prayer, one of the young, male flight attendants, walked past my row of seats. He had not been particularly friendly during the whole flight, although he was doing his job in a very professional and efficient way. He seemed to have a lot on his mind.

“Go tell that young man how much I love him and ask him if you can pray with him,” God instructed me.

“But God,” I argued, “the message has already come over the loudspeaker that we are making our final descent, and we are to stay in our seats.”

Just as I was having that conversation with God, another message came over the loudspeaker, “Please make sure all your seat belts are buckled. We will soon be landing.”

Stronger the Holy Spirit spoke again, “Don, go and pray with that young man now.”

Again, I argued. “But God,” I said, “Everybody is already in their seats on this whole huge flight. We are going down.”

Now I noticed that this young flight attendant had gone to the front of the plane and pulled the curtain around his workstation. It was obvious that he did not want to be disturbed. He was taking the final few minutes to put everything in order. I shared these observations with God. God was not impressed with my logic.

“Don, go *immediately!*” He told me one last time.

Knowing that I was about to make a spectacle of myself, I got up, and I started walking down the long aisle to where this flight attendant was busy doing his final work. People were looking at me. Some of them were motioning for me to go back and sit down. It was embarrassing, and that’s why I had been avoiding going in the first place.

Finally, I got up to where the curtain was drawn, and pulled it aside. The young flight attendant looked up at me with surprise. “Sir, you should be sitting down,” he told me.

“Just one more thing,” I said, but he interrupted me firmly, “It’s time to sit down!”

I took a deep breath, gathered my courage, and looked him in the face as I declared, “I just want to tell you that God loves you very, very much. And I’m impressed by God to ask you, may I pray with you?”

The man’s face went white, and he stepped back. He was in shock.

“Oh my! This is amazing!” he told me. “I was just telling God, ‘God, if there is a God, if You’re really there, would You please do something--do something to show me that You care about me, something to show me that You’re really there?’”

He continued, “I’ve been so discouraged with God, and I’ve given up that He even cares, that He even

exists. I'm not happy with my life and where I'm going. And just moments ago, I was pleading with God, 'If You're there, show me something. Show me something that lets me know You see me, and that You hear my cry.' And just now you came in to tell me that God loves me. You came in and said, 'May I pray for you?'" He paused as he fought to keep his emotions in control.

"Yes, you may pray for me!" he told me.

And so, I prayed. I really prayed. The young man had tears in his eyes when I finished. "God really did hear me," he whispered in amazement. "Now, you really do need to go back to your seat," he said with a smile.

I walked back to my seat, past rows of people staring at me, some with puzzled expressions, some with solid disapproval. But what they all thought about me did not matter anymore. I sat down and put my seat belt back on. A few moments later, the plane landed. I closed my eyes and grinned, "God, thank You. You are the God of every moment. Every moment matters!"

## Chapter 11

# Dangerous Guest

“For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind. Therefore, do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord.”

2 Tim. 1:7-8 NKJV

**G**od is always at work, even in the most unlikely and dangerous places.

A while back I received an invitation to equip believers in another country very closed to the gospel. As I prayed about this request, the Spirit of God moved my heart to invite our two oldest children to go with me. “Now, why would He want them to go?” I wondered. “Why should they go to a place where we must take such great care in every word we choose?” However, as I prayed, the conviction grew.

I shared what God was laying on my heart with my wife. “Are you sure you want to take our children to this place?” she asked skeptically. “What if they accidentally say something that would arouse suspicion and get all three of you into trouble?”

“Let’s pray and seek God on this together,” I responded. So, we prayed together, and we prayed apart. We prayed together and prayed apart, until God brought conviction to both of us that Jason and Julie should go with me on this mission. We then invited Jason and Julie to go, and we asked them to pray and see if God convicted them to go with me. They prayed earnestly for several days, and both also came under conviction that God was calling them.

The day came for us to leave. We hugged the rest of the family goodbye and prayed together one last time. We wondered if we would be reunited again soon. Then we began our lengthy journey around the world. We had quiet times to talk while on layovers as we purposefully sat away from the crowds in busy airports.

“This is a special trip for Jesus,” I told my two teenage children. “God has called us to go to this country to call for revival and to equip God’s people to disciple their children for Jesus Christ. When we go into this country, the border officers may separate the three of us for questioning if we arouse their suspicion.”

“If they should separate us and question us, you must rely on the Holy Spirit to teach you what to say,” I instructed them.

“Dad, what kinds of questions would they ask us?” Jason and Julie asked.

“I don’t know all the things that they might ask you,” I answered truthfully, “but if that happens, let’s agree that we will only say what the Holy Spirit tells us to say, and we’ll be silent if He tells us to be silent.”

We claimed Matthew 10:19-20, which says, “But when they hand you over, do not worry about how or what you are to say; for it will be given you in that hour what you are to say. For it is not you who speak, but it is the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you.”

“Yes, Dad, by God’s grace, that’s what we’ll do.” Jason and Julie’s eyes were somber, and their hearts convicted. “We will be very careful and will say only what God tells us to say,” they both promised.

The plane landed, and we joined the long line up at passport control. Again, I whispered to them, “Remember what we talked about. They may have questions about why we are coming into this country. See that line ahead? When we walk across that line, we are leaving our freedom, and we’re going into this precious country closed to the gospel.”

“Yes, Dad. We remember,” my teenagers responded. We strode up to the passport control counter, and the officer barked, “Passports, please!” I handed them all three passports, and they said, “Oh, you are a dad, and these are your children?” With a grin, I said, “Yes, sir!”

They gave us a great big smile, and they said, “We love families to come and tour our country. Welcome to our country and have a wonderful time!”

We gave the passport agent our biggest smiles as we chorused, “Thank you! We are looking forward to it!” Then we turned and walked into the most exciting adventure the three of us had ever had together. God knew we needed to enter this country as a family.

The believers whisked us away to where we would be going. When we got to the location, my children’s eyes were big. Everything was new to them: the language, what we ate, where we slept, how we greeted each other, and how we shopped. My teenagers also found the toilets to be a cultural adjustment in themselves. But they loved the wonder of it all, and I did too!

The next morning, we went downstairs for breakfast. As we entered the dining hall many faces looked up at us and stared. We quickly got our breakfast on trays. Jason and Julie mouthed the words, “Where should we sit?”

“Maybe there’s somebody who knows English that we can sit with,” I said hopefully. They shook their heads, “Dad, we don’t think anybody here speaks English.”

God impressed me to sit with a well-dressed woman with a kind face. “May my children and I join you for breakfast?” I asked.



“That would be fine,” she said in beautiful English. “You may sit here.”

We had a lovely breakfast together. She told us about her work and where she lived and shared her deep interest in the discipleship training that she was getting ready to attend with us.

“What does your husband do?” I asked. Her head jerked up, and she looked at me sharply and then paused as if deciding how much to say. She then proceeded to share that her husband was in a very prestigious place high up in government.

“That’s very interesting,” I responded. Immediately my heart started pounding because I thought to myself, *If her husband is high up in this government, and this government is closed to the gospel, this could be a dangerous conversation with this woman.* But as I continued to eat breakfast, the Spirit of God told me what to do. And I obeyed.

“My sister, I must ask,” I began, “would you like to invite your husband to come to this training that we are about to start?”

She stopped eating and looked at me, her mouth wide open, “Are you sure you want me to invite my husband to this training?” Her face was very worried and showed great concern.

*Was that a crazy thing to do?* I thought to myself. *Did I really hear the Holy Spirit right?* But I knew He

had told me to give her that invitation. However, my human doubts started to get in the way.

“Pray on it,” I continued with a little less enthusiasm, “And if God confirms it, then yes, invite your husband to come. We would love to have him be a part of this training.”

“I will pray about it,” she said very quietly.

“Great!” I said. “Let me know how God impresses you, and then we can make the decision.”

The first day of training went very well and God blessed. Then the next morning at breakfast, my children and I sat with that same woman again.

“I prayed about what you asked and talked with my husband,” she told us. “He is on the way.”

“Your husband is on the way?” I stammered with concern. “I thought we were going to talk about it.”

“Oh, no, he’s on the way, and he will be here shortly in the next few hours.”

Now my heart started thumping again. Somehow, I thought this was going to be something we were going to pray and talk about. But she had prayed, and she moved on it with urgency to invite her husband to come.

“Please introduce me when your husband comes,” I told her.

“You will know when he comes,” she told me.

We started the training for that day. Several hours went by, and then the door quietly opened, and a man came in, dressed very smartly in a very nice suit. There was some kind of insignia on his lapel. Some of the believers gasped when they saw this man come in through the door. They were shocked to see this high-up official coming in the room because everyone knew that our training was forbidden. Everyone knew that this high official could throw us in jail. We were in trouble.

As I began the training, I noticed that the official took out a very nice satchel. Out of the satchel, he took out a black binder, and he began to write. As I shared about how to be a disciple of Jesus, I noticed that he started taking lots and lots of notes.

*That's not good!* I thought to myself, *He's gathering evidence against me.*

I breathed a silent prayer, “Lord, what should I say?”

The Holy Spirit coached me, “Make sure that you lift up Jesus in a way not just for the believers, but for this high official to be able to understand.”

So, I lifted up Jesus from the written Word, and I shared about who He is and what He has done for everyone in the room, how He died for us, how He rose again for us, how He's built a place in heaven for us, and how each of us can be His disciple.

After several hours the official abruptly closed his binder, put it in the satchel, and left. He walked out right in front of me and all the people. As he left, he quietly closed the door behind him.

*I'm in trouble*, I thought to myself. *He is going to turn me in right now. What should I do?* But the Spirit of God said, "Keep on teaching."

Hours went by. I kept looking at the clock. The man didn't come back. Then finally, when it was time to break for the end of the day, as I got my notes together and got ready to go out the door, I saw the man waiting for me. He motioned me and my children over to him. "I have brought a gift for you and your children," he declared.

In his hands there was a large, brown box. He handed it to me and stepped back.

*What's in this box?* I wondered with concern. *Is there something in this box that is about to explode? Is there something that's going to blow up in my face? What is this man about to do to me and my children?*

My children crowded around the box, curious to see what was inside, but I wanted them to take a step back, worried that whatever was in there could hurt them. "Thank you so much," I said weakly, but my heart was racing. "It was so thoughtful of you to give me a gift." However, internally I was thinking, *I will see if I can open it outside or maybe with my children further away.*

“Open the box. Open the box,” he commanded.

I opened the box, and there in the box was some lovely fruit, something famous from that country.

“That’s so thoughtful of you,” I said, thanking him profusely. But in my mind, I was still expecting the worst and asking myself, *Has he poisoned the fruit?* The official smiled, “I hope you enjoy it with your family.”

After we went up to our room that night, I kept wondering what we should do.

“This fruit looks wonderful! We haven’t had enough fruit. Can we eat it now, Dad?” my children begged. “Let’s eat it now!”

I prayed. I thought about how God had said in Mark 16:18 that if you take any poison that God will keep it from harming you. So, we bowed our heads, and I prayed over that fruit like I had never before prayed over fruit. I prayed if there was any danger in it, if there was anything bad in it, anything poisonous in it, that God would put His hand over it and take it away.

“Let me try some of the fruit first,” I said after I finished the prayer. I ate some of the delicious fruit. “It is good,” I told my children. “Let’s eat it with joy.”

We ate it, and we watched to see if any of us would get sick. But we didn’t. The next day, we went for training, and the high official was there. And again, as we began the presentations, he took out

his notebook, and he furiously wrote notes. After several hours, he walked across the room right in the middle of everybody and out through the door, and he was gone for the next few hours.

*What's he doing?* I thought. *This is so strange.*

Finally, at the end of the day, he came back. He waited for me and the kids. "I brought you and your children another gift," he told me.

"What did you bring this time?" I asked.

"Open it!" he told me. I opened it and there was another kind of fruit.

"I hope you enjoy it," he told us.

There was so much fruit. *How can we ever eat this much fruit in the last little bit of time we have here in this country?* I wondered. Then Spirit of God told me, "Invite him and his wife up to your room to eat with you and the children."

"God, is that safe?" I asked.

"I'm calling you," the Spirit of God told me. "Invite him and his wife to join you and the kids up in your room to eat the fruit."

"My friend," I said with a warm smile. "I invite you and your wife to join us to eat this fruit this evening."

"No, don't trouble yourself. It's just for you," he told me.

“Please come at 7:00 p.m. this evening,” I insisted.

Right at 7:00 p.m. sharp, there was a knock at the door, and here came the high official and his wife. His wife looked extremely nervous, and very uncomfortable. My daughter Julie had prepared the table. All we had was some simple napkins and then all the fruit.

“Let’s eat together,” I told them. I then thanked God for the official’s kindness in bringing us the fruit and asked God to bless it. I could not read the expression on the face of the high official. We ate the fruit and enjoyed it.

His wife translated for us. As we finished the fruit, the Spirit of God told me to ask this official a very important question. In my mind I prayed, “God, that would be a dangerous question for me to ask!” But then stronger the Spirit of God told me, “Ask this official the question.”

Taking a deep breath, I said, “Sir, I have a question for you. I noticed that you have been taking many notes and been listening as I’ve been talking about Jesus. You heard over these two days who Jesus is, how He died for you and rose again, how He has a place in heaven for you, and how He’s going to come back soon to take you to heaven.”

The official listened intently as his wife translated. I continued, “My question for you is, ‘Do you believe in Jesus Christ?’”

His wife paused before translating. Her face looked very white. Her hands trembled. Then she translated my question. I could tell she did not want to ask him that question. She wouldn't even meet his eyes as she quietly translated. She pressed her hands together nervously and was clenching her jaw. It was a very tense moment.

The man looked up at me, his forehead furrowed, "That is a very difficult question to answer," he said. "Of course, in my position, it is not lawful for me to believe in Jesus."

There was a long pause. "However," he finally continued, "I have studied much about Him."

His wife looked at him out of the corner of her eye, and she was quiet, trembling. He continued, "I have studied much about this Jesus." And then he leaned forward with much delight and a big smile on his face. He whispered, "My answer is yes! I do believe in this Jesus Christ. It is a difficult thing to believe in Him, but I do believe."

With wonder and tears in her eyes, his wife looked up at her husband. She had lived out her faith before him for many years but had known better than to ever speak of it to him. Never had she ever guessed that he was a believer. She knew that it was a very dangerous thing for her husband to believe. She knew it was a dangerous thing to talk about Jesus in their home. And now her husband was admitting that he believed in Christ!



I told him how happy I was that he believed in Jesus Christ, the Son of God. His wife's face was flooded with unspeakable joy. The Spirit of God then prompted me, "Ask him to pray."

"My friend," I said. "Would you like to have prayer with us tonight?"

Again, his wife just looked up with shock. She looked up at me and slightly shook her head. She was quite sure he did not pray or know how to pray. But she translated my question.

"Yes, I would like to pray with you," he responded. My children prayed, his wife prayed and then I asked, "Sir, would you like to pray?" He bowed his head and prayed a simple, profound prayer to the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords. He reverently cried out to Jesus as his Savior and Lord.

I could barely pray after hearing this official prayer such a prayer. I prayed a prayer of grateful wonder to our gracious God who called us all with His love to know Christ personally and eternally.

As we finished, I said, "My friend, it would be such a joy to come to your home someday and pray with you in your home." He listened attentively.

"Do you have friends high up in the government?" I asked.

"Yes, many," he replied.

“Do they know Jesus?” I asked.

“Oh, no, they don’t know Jesus.” He answered matter-of-factly.

“How are their families?” I asked.

The official pursed his lips and then answered sadly, “Many troubles, troubled marriages, poor relationships with their children, many, many troubles.”

“My friend, if the Spirit of God ever impresses you and your wife to invite those friends to your home, invite me to come. I would love to do a seminar for families of officials in your government. Please pray about hosting such a meeting in your home. We will look for an opportunity to share how Jesus brings love and peace to every marriage, as well as love and healing to every family.”

“That, my friend, would be a very difficult and dangerous thing to do in my home or anywhere with these officials,” he told me. He paused, then earnestly promised, “But I will pray for that opportunity.”

“We will pray for this opportunity,” his wife chimed in. Her face was beaming like a candle in the darkest of nights. Jason, Julie, and I nodded, “We will pray for this too!”

## Chapter 12

# Gather My People

“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 sin and heal their land.” 2 Chronicles 7:14 NKJV

**N**ot too long ago, a small Christian school in the United States asked me to come and call for revival on their campus. It was a rural school that had a definite calling to send their students out to make a difference in the world for Christ. However, they needed revival. They needed to be reminded of their first love, which is Jesus.

My wife April and I found such precious people on that campus. The faculty and staff were dedicated and hardworking. There were also students who had come from all over the world to get a good Christian education and to learn about their Savior, Jesus Christ.

Day after day, for nearly a week, we called the students, staff, and faculty on that campus to a revival with Jesus. In response, we saw many staff

and students opening God's Word with eagerness and a great hunger for more of Him. However, there were others who were still quite reserved. We didn't know what God was doing in their hearts, but we prayed that His Word would accomplish its holy purpose.

Each day, we disciplined the students to Jesus, taking their questions, teaching them how to walk and talk with Jesus and trust Him. We also taught them how to share Jesus with Holy Spirit power.

Finally, the week was coming to an end, and it came down to the very last day. After my last message that day, the leadership told me that they wanted to end the revival week with a special evening with all the faculty, staff, and students. They wanted me to share stories from around the world of the greatness of God.

Everyone loves to hear stories, and I love telling stories, especially about the God who still lives today. So, as the final evening of my time on that campus approached, I decided to make it a special evening of stories and testimonies.

That Saturday night, they built a big bonfire out behind their school. The students came together. I noticed that most of the faculty and staff were not present, although a few came.

The flames danced around the fire and leaped up into the night sky. While there were no stars, as the sky was overcast from an afternoon rainstorm, the

evening was still beautiful, and we enjoyed singing songs of praise to God.

Then the worship leader told me, “After this song, you’re next! We can’t wait to hear some great stories tonight!”

“Wonderful,” I responded with a smile. But then as I was praying about which story to share, God stopped me in my tracks.

“You are not to tell them a story tonight, Don! Instead, you are to ask them this question.” And He gave me a very pointed and specific question.

“God, you want me to ask these students and staff *that* question?” I prayed inwardly as I thought of what He was asking me to do. “That is so abrupt! That will ruin the night. Everybody has had a great week. How can you tell me to ask *that* question?”

I was uncomfortable with the thought. But the conviction from the Holy Spirit grew stronger and stronger. Finally, the last song finished, and all the eyes of the students were turned toward me with great expectation. They were ready for an inspiring, miracle story on the greatness of God.

“Tonight,” I began, “The Spirit of God is impressing me that instead of telling you all stories, He wants me to ask you a specific question.”

From across the crowd of students, I could hear many disappointed sighs, but I continued boldly.

“The question is, is there a need for forgiveness on this campus?” I asked.

Everyone was totally silent, dead silent. You would have thought that I had dropped a bomb on the campus.

“Did you hear my question?” I asked. “My question is, is there a need for forgiveness on this campus?”

No one said a word. No one stirred. The few faculty and staff present looked down at the grass, not willing to meet my eyes. The students looked at their teachers and saw that they were not answering. The students were also fidgeting and looking everywhere but at me.

Finally, one shy little girl raised her hand. “There is a great need for forgiveness on this campus,” she said simply. “Oh, how we need God to help us forgive each other.”

No one else said a word. No one responded, except for that one little girl who dared to be honest. I breathed a prayer to heaven. “God, what should I do next?” Instantly, I heard the Holy Spirit telling me what to do.

“Faculty, staff, and students, see that little space over there across the wet grass? I know the ground is still very wet from the rain, but I’m going to leave the warmth of this fire. I’m going to go kneel down over there in that wet grass and pray. I’m going to pray that whoever needs to have help from God, to

forgive somebody on this campus, would come and join me in prayer.”

I turned and left the fire, walked over to the little place I had pointed out, and knelt down in the wet grass to pray. Nothing happened. No one moved. No one wanted to leave that beautiful warm fire to come and kneel with me in the wet grass. No one moved, not even an inch. And so, I continued praying and waiting. I could tell they were all watching me. I felt like a fool.

“God, why would You have me do such a thing?” I asked in prayer. “This is not the way to end this revival. No one is responding. They must not see this as a need. Please help!”

I kept praying and waiting, waiting, and praying. After an uncomfortable amount of time, one little girl came and knelt beside me in the tall, wet grass. And then a boy came, and another girl and then a boy and a girl. Pretty soon I was surrounded by students. Many of the students, maybe even most of them, left the warmth and comfort of that fire and came to kneel beside me with earnest pleas to the God of heaven to give them the power to forgive.

Finally, I stood up. “Now my friends,” I began. “Now is a moment to make things right with each other. If the Spirit of God is calling you to make things right with somebody else, please stand up and go and have that conversation with somebody. Maybe someone needs your hug. Maybe someone needs

your prayers. Maybe you need to ask someone to forgive you, or you need to give someone your forgiveness. Now is the time that God has given us to make things right.”

With that simple invitation, the group stood up and started to mingle with each other, having many precious conversations. Some were in tears, some were hugging each other tightly, others were having quiet whispered conversations. But the Spirit of God was moving powerfully.

By the time all the wrongs had been confessed and the sweet conversations were over, there was no more time for a story that night. But God did an incredible work, starting with the question He gave me to ask, and I could tell that there was great peace among those present.

“Oh, what a joy it’s been to meet with you,” I told the staff and students. “God bless you and keep you and remember that God is alive.”

I then said my goodbyes and headed back to the room where April and I were staying. We decided to leave early in the morning because we had a long drive back home, and we had much to do. That night, I went to sleep praying, as always, that God would wake me up whenever He wanted to wake me up and spend time with Him.

Next morning, God woke me up early. I had precious time with Him in the Word and in prayer. Then I got ready to run out the door to get a



breakfast box from the cafeteria, which April and I could take on our long drive home. As I was putting on my shoes and getting ready to go, that still, small voice of the Holy Spirit once again stopped me. “Don, aren’t you forgetting something?”

“What, Lord?” I asked.

“Every morning, you always ask Me, what’s on My heart, what’s on My agenda for this day. You haven’t asked Me yet,” He told me.

Right then and there, I got down on my knees as I lifted my hands up to God. “I am so sorry, God,” I prayed. “I know the revival is over, and I know we have a long drive to get home, but is there anything else on Your heart for this day and for this campus before I leave?”

“Gather my people,” that still small voice of God instructed. “Gather all the students, gather the faculty, the staff, everyone on this campus. Gather them in the little chapel and call the students to be Elijahs.”

I looked at my watch. It was early Sunday morning. It was the one morning out of the week that the students and staff and faculty got to sleep in just a tiny bit. “God, this is early Sunday morning,” I reminded Him. “No one wants to wake up early on a Sunday morning and have a meeting.” But the Spirit of God continued speaking to my heart.

“Call the principal of the school right now and have him gather My people.”

After arguing a bit longer with God, I gave in. I surrendered, and I called the principal of the school on the phone.

“Good morning, sir,” I said cheerfully when he answered the phone. I’m sure he wasn’t used to getting such early phone calls unless there was an emergency on campus, so he was probably wondering who in the world was calling him so early in the morning. I quickly shared with him what God had laid on my heart.

“I’ve been in prayer this morning, and God has given me a great challenge. He said, ‘Gather my people.’ Good friend,” I continued, “would you please gather all the faculty and the staff and the students and meet me in the chapel as soon as you can?”

There was a long silence on the other end of the phone. Too long. And then he quietly said, “This is very early in the morning.” There was another long pause. Then he said, “But I’ll call everyone.”

A little time passed, and I continued to pray. Then he called me back. It was still early in the morning. “We will meet you in the chapel in 15 minutes, and we’ll all be there,” he told me.

Sure enough, 15 minutes later into the chapel came sleepy-eyed students rubbing their eyes. Into the chapel came faculty and staff. No one smiled at me. No one waved. No one said good morning, and no one looked happy. It was still very early Sunday morning.

I greeted them with a smile anyway. “God has given me a message to share with you this morning, but I think we better pray before I share it.”

We all got on our knees in that chapel, and we prayed for the Spirit of God to bless. I opened the Word of God to the story of Elijah in 1 Kings 17. I then briefly shared the story of Elijah, how he called the people to repentance, to put away their false gods and idols, and to take a stand for the One True God. Then I asked, “Who among you students will be an Elijah? The Holy Spirit has challenged me to call you into this chapel as faculty, staff, and students and ask you students: Who will be an Elijah?”

God was asking them to take a decided stand for Jesus Christ on their campus. And He’d asked me to make this appeal.

“Even if you’re the only one who is willing to be an Elijah, even if everyone else in your class or everyone else at your workstation is going the wrong way and you’re the only voice for Christ, who would be willing to stand up today and be an Elijah?”

No one moved. But then finally one young student took her stand, and then another and then another until almost the entire student body had stood to their feet. I was moved in my heart that this was God’s hour to raise up Elijahs on that campus. “If any of you are impressed that you need the Spirit of God to help you be a leader for Christ on

this campus, please follow me to the middle of this chapel. And I'm going to ask the faculty and the staff to surround you, lay their hands on your shoulders, and to pray for you."

The students followed me and got down on their knees.

Now I addressed the faculty and staff. "Who will come and pray for these students to be leaders for Christ?" I asked. The faculty and staff moved slowly, very slowly. But one by one they came forward and laid their hands on the shoulders of the students who were already kneeling.

While I had been praying all week that the Holy Spirit would break out, I did not realize how eager the Holy Spirit was to do a great and mighty work, mightier than I could have imagined. I thought the revival had finished the night before, but it had only just begun.

"Let's bow our heads and pray," I told everyone; then I nodded to the adults surrounding the students.

The first faculty woman placed her hands on the shoulder of a young female student in front of her as she began to pray. "Oh, God, I pray that this girl will become a mighty Elijah on this campus, a girl who will be fearless and faithful before Your throne." But then the woman paused. The pause was too long and uncomfortable. And then as tears began to course down her cheeks, she began to

sob and to weep before God. “But God,” she finally continued, “How can I pray for this girl to be an Elijah for You when I’m not living as an Elijah for You myself? I’m asking You, God, to make her stand faithfully before Your throne, but I am not standing faithfully for You. Oh God, forgive me, and help me to be an Elijah also.”

Then I heard the voice of another faculty member. And this faculty member also prayed for a student. “Oh, God, bless this young man, this young student on whose shoulders I’m placing my hands. Bless this student to be faithful to You, to be true to You. He is one of Your disciples. Make him an Elijah, Lord.” But then there was another long pause, and this staff member also began to cry. “God, forgive me,” the staff member prayed, choking back tears. “Forgive me because I have not treated this student with kindness and respect, nor have I treated the rest of the students with Your love.”

One by one, the teachers and staff prayed for the students, often with tears mixed with public confession. Finally, there was a pause in the room.

“The Spirit of God is in this place,” I cried out. “He is doing a work in us that we cannot do ourselves. Let Him lead you now to anyone in this room whom you have wronged or who has wronged you.”

I barely finished the appeal, and the whole chapel came alive as students and faculty began to make things right with each other. Young and old humbled themselves to each other, to forgive and be forgiven.

I quietly slipped away. It was God's work, not mine. The Holy Spirit was moving, and the work He started, He would finish.

Oh, my friend, this is what Jesus longs for as He gathers His people everywhere. He wants us to put away everything that separates us from each other and most importantly, from Him. God calls us first to make things right with Him and each other and then frees us to stand up and be an Elijah in these last days.

## Chapter 13

# The Hidden School

“Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.” Matthew 18:3-4  
NKJV

I was deep inside yet another country closed to the gospel when a man came up to me, a teacher, and he asked, “Would you like to come see our school?”

“I thought there were no Christian schools in this country,” I responded.

“There are not. Christian schools are not allowed to operate. That is true,” he told me. And then quietly, he whispered again, “But would you like to visit my school?”

“Yes,” I said. “I would like to visit the school. But where is it?”

“Oh, I can’t tell you. But if you get in the car with

me tomorrow, I'll take you to my school," he promised.

The next day, I got into the teacher's car, and we drove deep down into the heart of the city. He whispered to me, "We are getting close." The city grew darker and dingier and smokier as we arrived in the industrial part of the city. He stopped the car in a small parking lot surrounded by high industrial buildings with very dirty windowpanes.

"Step out of the car," he told me. I stepped out. There was not a soul I could see in that parking lot. All around us were high buildings, great buildings. And the air quality was terrible. There was a lot of smoke in the air belching out of the smokestacks, and I couldn't see in any window. As I stood there looking around, he told me, "You are standing in one spot too long! Follow me into the school."

"Where is the school?" I asked.

"Follow me," he replied. "If you look closely, you will see some people peering out of the windows in the industrial buildings around us. They are cleaning the windows to see who's standing outside. You don't look like them, so you better come into our school quickly."

I followed him into a nondescript looking building. Certainly, there was no sign saying that this was a Christian school. We walked in through the door, then closed the door behind us. I looked up the staircase to see many young faces, faces



of teenagers and a few young adults. They were looking at me with great curiosity and much excitement.

“Who are you?” the students asked through the teacher translator. I introduced myself. And the teacher then asked, “Would you like to see their rooms?”

“Oh, yes, I would be happy to see their rooms,” I said. So the teacher and students proudly led me down a hallway. I remember the first young man’s invitation.

“Come step into my room. See my room,” the young student invited. There he proudly showed me a small cot with a thin blanket on it and no pillow. There were a few personal things beside his bed. The walls were bare—no pictures, and no windows. The concrete floor was bare. There were no rugs, and nothing to make that room feel remotely like home.

“I am so happy that you have come to visit my room,” the young student told me through the teacher. Then the teacher told me, “He would like you to pray blessings over him and his room.” So, I paused and prayed the blessings of God over that young man and his room.

Then several girls said, “Please come see our room.”

The teacher led me next to the girls’ room. They also proudly showed me their little place. There

was a bunk bed and several simple cots covered in a thin blanket with no pillows. They had just a few personal items, and a little tiny box at the foot of their beds. The concrete, dark walls and floor were bare. Again, the girls said with delight, “Thank you for coming and seeing us. Would you pray for God to bless us and our room also?”

So I prayed, room by room. I was amazed at the joy of the students. I was amazed at how proud they were of such stark living conditions. “Would I want to live there for even one day or a night?” I asked myself. But despite the shabbiness of the environment, there was a special light about the place, a joy that is rare to see.

Then a student asked, “Do you want to see where we have our classes?”

“Oh yes, I do!” I responded. And so, we trudged up many flights of stairs to one of the top floors. And there I met all the students.

“Would you like to hear more about the students before you teach?” the teacher asked me.

“Oh, I am teaching?” I asked.

“Yes, we want you to teach our students how to be disciples of Jesus and disciple makers.”

“Well then, yes, I would love to talk with the students first,” I responded. So, with a translator beside me, I started interviewing the students.

The first student was a teenager, and he told me that he came from a very wealthy home. He then told me that he had left all to come attend this school. "I'm so happy that God led me here," he said joyfully.

"Why are you here?" I asked him.

"Well, you might wonder when you saw my room because I have left a very beautiful and comfortable home. It's like a palace compared with this. But I'm here because God led me here. I want to be a missionary for God. I want to help the people of my entire country find Jesus. So, I am going to spend several years here and learn everything I can about how to walk and how to talk with Jesus, how to know the written Word of God, and how to share Jesus Christ with power."

I was amazed.

I then started talking with the next student, a teenage girl. She also shared about how she left her home, her parents, brother, school, and friends. She shared how it was a joy to sacrifice all so that she could also be used of God to help her entire nation find Jesus.

And so I went around the circle listening to testimony after testimony. Some students were in their teen years; some were in their early twenties. But again, and again, their stories were similar. Most of them came from well-to-do families, some of them from poor families. But they were all *called young people*, called to sacrifice all, to give everything up for Jesus.

They were dedicating themselves to training for a life of service in a country where it was illegal to make disciples for Jesus. I was amazed and in awe of what God was doing.

I took time to teach these students what God's Word defines as a disciple of Jesus. I also taught them some basics of being a disciple-maker for Jesus. Our time together was ending.

"Will you eat supper with us before you go?" the students begged. "Will you come?" With great excitement, they took me downstairs to the very first floor where the kitchen was. I could smell the good smell of food cooking on the fire.

"Will you sit with us? Will you eat with us?" they asked. How could I say no?

"For sure," I said. "I will eat with you."

We sat down, and they brought us steel bowls full of soup, consisting mainly of water with a couple pieces of vegetables floating on the top, accompanied by a small piece of bread for each person. The school was obviously very poor with few resources.

"Will you pray for the food?" they asked with much excitement. And so, I blessed the food. And I prayed that God would nourish our bodies with the soup. Then we ate the soup with much joy.

They chattered away as if they were eating at a great restaurant. They served each other happily.

Then they asked me, “Would you like more of our soup?” I hated to have any more, knowing that I was taking away from them. But they insisted, and joyfully, several of them leapt to their feet and ran into the kitchen and very carefully brought me another full bowl of soup.

We talked and shared a lot together. They shared their life with me. They fellowshiped with me. They laughed and asked me questions and told me how much they loved Jesus. It was such a precious experience. Then it was finally time to go.

As I said goodbye to the children, they all waved. I walked out the door and turned and looked back to see all their young faces pressing up against the dirty windowpanes, peering out into the smog and the smoke. I could see the joy of the Lord on their faces. These precious children may have been poor in worldly goods, but they were actually very rich, richer than many children who live today. Why? Because they knew Jesus, their purpose and calling. They were at a hidden school called by God, and their calling was a holy one.

## Chapter 14

# But I Just Got Home!

“Then I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, ‘Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?’ Then I said, ‘Here am I. Send me!’” Isaiah 6:8

I love my traveling adventures with Jesus around the globe, but my favorite place in all the world is with my wife and family. I’m always so happy to come home.

I had just returned from another long trip in a difficult part of the world where religious freedom is quickly dying away day by day. God had blessed me to preach and teach the Word freely with Holy Spirit power. As a result, my heart was filled with so much gratitude.

However, when I arrived home from my trip, my dear wife asked me, as she often does, “So how long will you be home this time?”

“I think I’ll be home for about a month before my next mission trip,” I told her.

“Oh good,” she told me joyfully.

I was glad too, and I held her close as we rejoiced in the time that we would have together as a family.

That night before I went to sleep, I prayed, as I always do, asking God: “Wake me up, Lord, whenever You need to wake me up!”

I was exhausted and quickly fell into a deep sleep. Shortly after midnight, I was awakened by the voice of the Lord to my mind and to my heart. He called me by name. I quickly threw on my warm clothes and went out into the cold mountain air. The stars were out, and it was beautiful.

“God, what’s on Your heart?” I asked as I looked up to the heavens. I heard nothing. I was so tired from just coming back from my long overseas trip, but I prayed again.

“God, I know You called me, what’s on Your heart?” Still, I heard nothing. So, I prayed, and I waited.

“God, search my heart, and take out anything that is not pleasing to You,” I pleaded. “Please speak to me but cleanse my heart first.” Still, I heard nothing. After some time, I had peace in my heart that there was nothing standing between me and God.

Again, I prayed. “God, what’s on Your heart?” Then the still, small voice of God told me, “Go to Revelation twelve,” and He led me to start reading at verse ten. I started reading.

Then I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, Now the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brothers and sisters has been thrown down, the one who accuses them before our God day and night. And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even when faced with death. For this reason, rejoice, you heavens and you who dwell in them. Woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has come down to you with great wrath, knowing that he has only a short time. (Rev. 12:10-12).

“Amen, Lord Jesus,” I prayed. “That’s a powerful Bible text. I notice that it says here that You, Jesus, have all authority.”

Then the still, small voice of Jesus responded, “Do you surrender fully to My authority?”

“Yes, Lord. Yes, I do!” I answered.

“Would you do anything that would give glory to Christ?”

“Yes, I will, by Your grace,” I answered again. “So, what is on Your heart?”

“I am coming soon!” He told me. “Go back swiftly. As soon as you can, get tickets. Please return to the very country that you just came home from. I have another assignment for you there.”



“Lord Jesus,” I questioned. “I just got out of that country. It is true that my visa would allow me to go back, but that would cause great suspicion for me to travel back into this difficult country so soon. The authorities will ask, ‘Why did you come back so quickly? You were just here.’ That doesn’t make sense, God.”

But the conviction was stronger. “Go back to such and such a place, to such and such a school. There’s a Christian school there, and you need to call the people there to revival.”

“But God. But God...” And I began to give Him all my excuses about why I couldn’t travel back again so soon.

Then that still, small voice asked, “Are you under the authority of Jesus?”

“Yes, Lord, I am,” I replied.

“Then go!”

The next morning, when my wife woke up, she came and gave me a big hug and kiss as she said with a smile, “I am so happy you’re home for a while.”

“I’m happy to be home too,” I said as I held her tightly. There was a long pause. “But there’s something we need to talk about.”

“What do you mean?” she asked.

“Last night God awakened me, and He called me out under the stars...” And I began to tell April the story of what had happened.

“And so,” I concluded, “God is calling me to return to the very country I just came back from, as soon as I can get a ticket and make arrangements.”

“Oh,” she said a bit sadly. “I have been looking forward to having you home this month.”

“I have been looking forward to it as well!” I told her. We held each other close for a while. Then we got down on our knees and both surrendered what we wanted to God’s will. When we got up from our knees, we were united as a couple.

Once again, I made plans, purchased my tickets, and just a couple of days later was able to fly all the way back across the ocean to the country I had just left.

I got to the campus of the school that God had told me to visit, and the principal of that campus came up to me and told me joyfully, “I have been crying out to God in private, asking Him to bring revival to this campus. But I don’t know how to call for revival. I’ve been pleading with God: would you please send someone that would call this campus to revival now?”

The principal and I compared notes and discovered that the time of his prayer to God for revival and the time of God’s call to me, asking me to come,

were very close together. Isn't God amazing?

"God has called me to this campus to call for revival," I told him. "So, let's begin!"

Since the meetings began right away, there was no time to publicize them. The news went out by word of mouth across the campus and in the community. Each night, I was calling people to revival; the Word of God was preached, and the Spirit of God was calling people to conviction and repentance. But as God moved, we realized that there were also barriers to the gospel. We were surrounded by a community which had much resistance to the gospel.

"We need to pray more!" I told the people. "When is there another time we can pray and be in the Word?"

The people were hungry for more, but they were also a hardworking people. The only other time we could think of to meet and pray was 6:00 a.m. So, we met every morning at 6:00, praying and crying out to God to do a mighty work. Each morning we prayed for revival, and each evening, we called for revival.

One day, a Christian teacher from the community asked me, "Do you want to come to my government school?"

"What would I do there?" I asked.

“Well, I want you to meet the teachers and students. I want Jesus in my government school.”

“Is that allowed?” I asked.

She gave me a strange smile. “It is absolutely forbidden,” she told me. “The name of Jesus can never be spoken in a government school here, and no Bible stories or texts can ever be shared.”

“I have no idea how to do that, but I’ll pray about it,” I told her. The next morning, I saw her again, and I told her, “I have prayed, and God impressed me to come. However, I wanted to ask, have you at least asked your principal for permission for me to come?” I questioned.

“Oh, no, I haven’t asked the principal. The principal is not there right now. She’s away in meetings. But please come!” she entreated me.

“There is one more thing,” she confided, “that I need to tell you. There is a priest that comes to our school, and he is very much against anyone coming that is a Bible-believing Christian. And if he meets you, he’ll be very angry and want to report you to the authorities.”

“Thank you for the information,” I told her. “But God told me to go, so let’s go.”

She found someone to be my translator, and we prayed earnestly together that God would move and work in a mighty way.

When I arrived at the government school, we slipped in through the front door. “Is the principal back yet?” I asked.

“No,” she whispered, “but I don’t know when she’s coming back. She’s a very authoritarian woman, a very powerful leader, and she probably will be very upset when she sees I’ve invited you.”

“Okay, let’s go in and do a quick lesson with the students,” I responded. I intended to keep my time there very brief.

“Just remember what I told you,” she reminded me. “The rules: Never mention Jesus or the Bible in any way.”

“Yes, ma’am!” I replied.

We went up to the top floor of this country government school, and the teacher gathered all the students that she could gather and all the teachers she could gather into one room. I prayed silently. “God, let me be an influence for You without mentioning Your name.”

I began to tell stories to the students about how we can make a difference in this world and how we are made to be kind and true and respectful. As I told the stories, the teachers were very happy.

After I was done with the lesson, the Christian teacher took me around to meet each teacher in their classroom. I was in a hurry, trying to get

out of the school before the principal came back. However, the Christian teacher took her time. She wanted me to build connections, and so she took me to classroom after classroom. Finally, she told me that she had one last thing she wanted to show me. It was the school's fine gymnasium.

While we were downstairs in the gymnasium, she showed me all the equipment. However, as she was giving me a tour of their beautiful gymnasium, suddenly the big doors of the gymnasium opened, and in came the principal.

"We are in trouble now," the Christian teacher said under her breath.

The principal looked at me, her eyes widened. She obviously didn't recognize me. I was not on her list of approved guests for their school. Like a military commander, she marched across the gymnasium right up to me and talked very directly in her own language to the Christian teacher, questioning her about who I was. Then she looked at me.

"Follow me!" she said in her own language. She was not smiling. I followed her.

"Come to my office," she said as she opened her office door. She went into the office, and then she said, "Excuse me for one moment."

*Oh no!* I thought to myself, as she left. *She is going to call the authorities on me.* However, she came back carrying something. I dared not look at what

was in her hands. I just looked at her eyes, trying to guess what was going to happen next. And then she said, "Here is a gift for you." I looked down, and it was a box of chocolates. Oh, I was so surprised!

"Thank you for coming to our school," she said with a great big smile. "Anytime you come back to this country come back to my school."

Over a year went by, and I came back to that country and to the Christian school to follow through with the revival that God had started. I discovered that that Christian campus had continued meeting at 6:00 every single morning to pray for revival and ask to receive a revival of the Holy Spirit.

Again, the Christian teacher that worked in that rural government school saw me. "You must come back to my school. Remember the principal invited you back," she told me.

I prayed, and the Spirit of God said, "Go." And so, I returned to that rural government school. This time the principal was waiting for me and was delighted to have me come.

"Come and speak to our students again," she said warmly. However, the Christian teacher once again reminded me, "Neither mention the name of God nor the Bible in any way!"

So, with many silent prayers for wisdom, I told more stories, and it was received very well by students

and teachers. Everyone was happy. Then they said goodbye as they left the large meeting room.

After all the faculty and the staff and the students had left the room, I was left alone with the Christian teacher, my translator, and of course, the principal. The Spirit of God told me, "Ask the principal if you can have a prayer of blessing for her life."

"Oh, that's dangerous," I thought. "You're not supposed to do that in a government school. You're not ever to pray within the walls of a government school here in this country."

I asked the principal very softly, "May I pray with you?" She was startled. Her face was like stone.

"Follow me," she said. All four of us went downstairs into her office. She closed the door. "Now you may pray," she told me. I prayed that God would bless her and her family and that God, the true God of heaven and earth, would help her to be the principal that she should be.

After I finished praying, she gave me a great big smile. She thanked me for praying for her and her family and her leadership.

Then the Spirit of God told me, "Give her a book!"

Once again, I argued. "But God, it's illegal to give a printed book that's not approved by the government." More strongly, the Spirit of God told



me, "Give her your book." I gave her one of my books, translated in her own language.

"Here is a gift from my family to you. It will show you the value of having Jesus Christ not only in your heart, but in your home for your entire family." She received the book and thanked me. Then she said again, "Follow me."

I had all kinds of wild thoughts going through my mind. *I must be in trouble for sure now. Now she has evidence; she can turn me in and show my book in her own language that I gave her, which is against the law!*

"Here, sit in this classroom," she instructed. So, I sat in the classroom and prayed and prayed that the Spirit of God would give me influence for the kingdom of God, no matter what I might face.

Then through the door came the principal again. She brought several students with their instruments. And she brought her instrument too. They began to play their instruments, and she played beautiful songs from her country. After the special music was finished, she told me, "Thank you for coming to this school, and thank you for your gift and thank you for your blessing. These songs of my people are my gift back to you!"

Nearly eight years have come and gone since I went on that spur-of-the-moment trip to call that Christian school to a revival. I remember as if it were yesterday how young and old pressed

together on those cold, early mornings at 6:00 to pray for revival. What joy I have in my heart to know that young and old still gather together each morning to pray for the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

I can't remember that precious experience without also thinking of the Christian teacher who was willing to risk her job to bring me to her government school to help influence her school for Christ. I also pray that the mighty principal with a heart of gold who runs her school like a military base will one day soon lead every student to be a soldier for the cause of Christ.

## Chapter 15

# Forgiving the Unforgivable

**“Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.” Ezekiel 36:26**

**W**hen I was a little boy, I was blessed to have wonderful grandparents on both sides of my family. Both my mother’s parents, Grandpa and Grandma Emde, and my father’s parents, Grandpa and Grandma MacLafferty, made me feel so special, loved, and valued. I am forever grateful to God for all four of them.

Grandma Mac, as I liked to call her, was used of God in a powerful way to strengthen my friendship with Jesus. She was a ball of fire. She was so much fun! As a little kid I got so excited whenever Grandma Mac would come for a visit. She was a great storyteller. When she told stories from around the world, I could almost feel the African lion breathing down the back of my neck, taste the watermelons

out in the fields in the hot South, and smell the brakes on the missionary's old Model T going down a distant mountain road. Whatever story she shared, she told it in such a way that I felt like I was right there living inside the story.

We loved picking berries together, watching out for snakes, and making berry pies together back in her kitchen. She was such a fun person to cook with. I made awful messes in the kitchen, but my messes didn't seem to frighten her one bit.

In all our fun adventures together, she always found simple ways to encourage me in my walk with Jesus, to challenge the way I talked with Jesus, to invite me to reach for more and still more with Jesus. She had a great love for the written Word of God, and she encouraged me to love God's Word and the stories it contained.

When I was a child, I had no idea that my sweet Grandma Mac had come from a family with an abusive father. I didn't know the sorrows she had experienced in her own childhood. I just knew her as someone who loved Jesus, walked joyfully with Him, and taught me to do the same.

I remember going to visit my Grandpa and Grandma Mac at their home in the country. They had carved their home right out of a piece of wilderness in the deep woods of the South. They loved that home dearly. They built it with their own hands. They even cleared the trees for a large garden. However, in that beautiful place, crafted by love, tragedy struck.

My grandparents had helped the people from the nearby hills to build a little church. The people who lived in those hills had very little money and struggled to feed their own families. But my grandparents wanted them to have a church, so they formed brick blocks with their own hands and then dried those blocks out in the sun to build that country church. My grandma also painted a beautiful mural for the baptistry. They loved the people of those mountains and did all they could to help them. My grandfather especially poured his life into loving the members of that church.

Unfortunately, the love didn't always go both ways. My grandpa had a little more education than many in those country hills. He didn't talk the same way or always know their ways and customs. So, the people didn't always appreciate my grandfather, and they would often speak poorly about him and would criticize his work and his service. This slowly tore my grandfather's heart apart. As time went on, he became more and more burdened and weary.

One night, he came in from a long day of serving and visiting the people in the local area. His heart was so heavy. "Would you please get me a glass of water? I'm going to sit in my favorite chair," he said to my grandma. When she came back with his water, he was dead.

"Donnie, grandpa died of a broken heart," she confided to me one day, not long after the tragedy.

“Why was his heart broken, Grandma?” I asked innocently.

“He loved these people very much, but they didn’t love him or treat him nicely,” she told me sadly.

“Donnie,” she continued. “I need you to pray for me. I need to forgive the people here in the hills and mountains whom we have loved and served. It’s hard for me to forgive them because of how they treated your grandfather. I need you to pray that I can forgive them.” This was the first time in my childhood that my grandma had opened her heart to me and asked for my prayers.

My grandmother wrestled with God in the days and weeks following my grandfather’s death. What was she going to do now? She lived out in the middle of nowhere in the woods. It wasn’t safe for her to live out there alone as there had been thieving in the area.

Eventually, she was forced to sell that beautiful property for almost nothing and leave the area. As time went on, she felt more and more resentment in her heart over what had happened. She felt the bitterness starting to creep in. Again, she asked me, “Donnie, would you please pray with your grandma? Would you pray that I can forgive all those people?”

So, I prayed with Grandma. I took her hands in my little hands, and I cried out to God, “Jesus, would you please help my grandma forgive the people who have hurt her and grandpa so very much? In Jesus’ name, amen.”

Time passed, and the next time Grandma talked with me, she smiled as she pulled me aside. “You know what?” she told me, “God heard my prayers, and He heard your prayers, and He’s helped me to forgive all the people that hurt your grandpa. I’m at peace now, and my heart is happy again.” I hugged her tightly. I was so happy!

Several months passed, and she had another big challenge. She went out to the West Coast and was visiting some of her relatives. During her visit, several of her relatives suggested that they go on a ride. They all hopped in the car, and down the road they went. Then the relative who was driving said boldly, “See that train coming? I can beat that train. I’m going to race it and get over the train tracks before it comes around the corner.”

My grandma pleaded. “Please don’t try to race the train! That is not necessary. We are old already. Let’s just wait and let the train go by. This is foolishness.”

“Don’t tell me what to do,” her relative responded arrogantly. “I can get across the road ahead of that train.”

He then stepped on the gas pedal and the car lurched forward, driving in between the railroad safety arms that were already blocking the tracks from the road. However, right when they got on top of the train tracks, the car engine stalled. The two relatives that she was riding with quickly got their seat belts off, opened the car doors and escaped. But my little grandma, less than 100 pounds, was

frantically trying to get her seat belt off. She was still in the process of getting it off and opening the door when the train, which was trying to slow down, slammed into that little car.

While my grandmother miraculously lived through the train accident, her legs were terribly broken, and she had to stay in the hospital for over a month with a full cast across one of her legs. She also lost one of her toes. Afterwards, whenever she walked, she had pain. That accident changed the rest of her life.

The next time I saw her, she hobbled up to meet me. "Donnie, I need you to pray with me again. I'm having a hard time forgiving my relative. I told him not to do it, and he did it anyway. Now I live in pain. Will you pray that I will give my bitterness to God, and that I will have freedom and be able to forgive?"

I once again took her hands in mine and cried out to God as only a little boy can do.

Time brings healing if we're willing. God did heal her heart towards that relative, and she was able to forgive and to keep on going.

She moved to Brazil and served the Lord there for many years as a missionary with my Uncle Harry and Aunt Marilyn and their family. She taught, and she cared, and she loved on people, and time flew by. But her greatest test of forgiveness was still to come.



When she was 84 years old, she was back from Brazil and now living on the West Coast. One day, she went out on an early morning walk. She had a box of children's materials that she wanted to put together down at the local church for children in Bangladesh. So, she left her house and walked down to the church. She did not know that someone was watching her and following her with an evil intent.

She walked up to the church and reached out her hand to unlock the front door. Suddenly, a large man grabbed her from behind. He roughly dragged and carried her back into the courtyard behind the church where no one could see.

"Forgive him Father, forgive him," she started crying out, as he was carrying her away from the street. "I know You love him as much as You love me. Help him get ready for heaven." But the man didn't care about her prayer. He threw her on the ground roughly and did things that are unthinkable for a man to do. After he finished his brutal business, he tried to kill her in multiple ways.

"Dear God, send Your holy angels to save me!" she cried out.

Suddenly, she heard sweet voices of children from the nearby church school. Her attacker fled. Little children that knew her as a storyteller in their Sabbath School class came running from nearby. They looked at her battered and bleeding body lying on the courtyard pavement.

“Mrs. Mac, is that you?” the children asked fearfully.

She could barely whisper. “Yes, it’s me. Go call 911!”

The children called 911. A few minutes later, the ambulance and emergency workers arrived. They rushed my grandmother to the hospital, and by God’s mercies, they were able to save her life. However, the following days, weeks, and months were a struggle for my grandmother to recover from the horror of that brutal attack.

As Grandma struggled to get on her feet and to trust again, I had my own struggles dealing with feelings I had never experienced before. I was horrified that anyone on this planet would treat my precious grandma so cruelly. I was a young man in my mid-twenties at the time. And I found myself wanting to hurt that man who had hurt my grandma. My anger and hateful thoughts towards him scared me. I did not know what to do. But my parents and my grandma had always taught me to come to Jesus as I am, no matter how I felt.

So, I came to Jesus in prayer, an angry, bitter young man: angry with the man who attacked my grandma and angry with God for not stopping him. And I found that the living God took me with all my questions. He listened and cared and stayed with me through my pain.

I had no personal power to give up my hateful feelings, but I discovered powerful promises in God’s Word that taught me how to surrender those

feelings and how to forgive what seemed like to me was forever unforgivable. One of the promises God helped me to discover in His Word would soon not only bring me healing but would also be timely for my grandma as well.

One day, she called me on the phone. "I have a problem," she told me simply.

"What is it, Grandma?" I asked.

She sighed, "I need you to pray for me again. Over my lifetime God has given me the power to forgive again and again and again. But this time I can't seem to forgive. I hate the man who did those horrible things to me. I hate the man who tried to kill me. Every night now I have bad dreams about him coming after me. I know I should forgive him, but I don't know how. I've pleaded again and again, God help me forgive, but I don't feel like forgiving him. But I know I must."

"Grandma," I said quietly, "I have had a very difficult time forgiving this man too. I have hated him too. May I share some good news with you from the best Book in the world?"

I knew my grandma loved the Word of God with all her heart. "Yes, please share it," she told me.

I opened my Bible to Ezekiel 36:26-27. "Grandma, the Word of God says this: 'Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; And I'll remove the heart of stone from your flesh and

give you a heart of flesh. I'll put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes and you'll be careful to observe My ordinances."

"Grandma," I said with tears in my eyes, "God gave me this heart surgery He promised in Ezekiel 36. This surgery is for real! I asked God to give me this heart surgery, and He cut out my anger and hate and gave me a new heart. He gave me peace. Is God impressing you that you need a heart surgery too?"

"Yes," she responded. "I need heart surgery from heaven."

"Do you know that God has the power to cut out your bitterness and to cut out your hate towards your attacker?"

"Yes," she said.

"Do you know He has the power not only to take out what is resentful and hateful but also to heal your heart and to give you power to forgive?" I asked.

"I need that," she told me. And so, once again I prayed with my precious grandma that God would give her heart surgery and that God would cut out from her heart all the bitterness and all the hate and all the rage she had for this man who had hurt her so deeply.

God saw and heard my grandma's cry, asking for His heart surgery, and He healed her heart.

Not long after she received God's heart surgery, the police caught her attacker. My grandma was asked to face her attacker in court, to testify against him. She agreed to come into the court room on one condition—that she could say briefly what she had to say and leave.

The day came. She went into that courtroom as everyone watched to see what she would say. Bravely she looked across the room straight into the eyes of the man who had tried to kill her. He stood scowling defiantly from his position between two guards. Whispering a prayer to God for grace, she mustered all her strength as she declared, "God loves you! I forgive you." With that simple message, she turned and walked out of the courtroom.

God gave Grandma nine more years of life after that tragic experience. During the remaining years of her life, she walked in freedom and the sweet peace of forgiveness.

Nearly twenty-seven years passed after that horrible event. My grandma had long since gone to sleep in Jesus, and I had already been traveling the world, seeing God work many miracles in the hearts of His people. Then, just five years ago, I heard that the man who did that horrible deed to my grandmother was desperately trying to make a case to get out of prison early on parole.

When I heard the news, it was like fresh ice water hitting my face. But immediately, I started praying, "God, if this man needs to be released from prison

so he can find You, then set him free. However, if he needs to stay in prison to find You and to keep other women safe, then keep him in prison.”

The man stayed in prison. However, as I prayed for him once again, I recognized afresh the amazing miracle that God had worked in my own heart and in my grandma’s heart all those years ago. I was still truly free, just like my grandma had been, free from all bitterness and truly at peace in Jesus.

My friend, we serve a mighty living God who gives power to forgive even the unforgivable. He worked an amazing miracle in our hearts. Do you need Him to work such a miracle in your heart too?

## Chapter 16

# Unbreakable Peace

“And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.” Philippians 4:7

**M**y dear friend, throughout this book I have shared story after story, testifying of why I know personally that *God still lives*. I’ve shared many testimonies of how God has worked in my own life, how He has orchestrated divine appointments in difficult moments and in dark places. I’ve shared how God has opened doors, closed doors, directed my footsteps, and given me just the right words to say.

I know God still lives, for He has been with me for many years now in both good and bad times, in both dull times and in very dangerous times. I can also testify that God still lives when I have failed Him and even when I have wondered if He had failed me. The miracle stories I have shared here are only a small glimpse of His goodness and the beautiful ways He has led in my life over the years. There are many more miracle stories that I could

share, and maybe someday they will be shared, in another volume.

For now, I want to close this book by sharing one more personal testimony. It is a very fresh and difficult story and yet one of my most precious testimonies of why I know God still lives today. It's a story about my wife April and me facing the unexpected and the unknown and discovering afresh God's peace that will hold us throughout eternity.

My beautiful bride, April, and I celebrated our 35th Wedding Anniversary on May 2, 2023.

Over the years, we've had many wonderful faith ventures together. God has also blessed us with three wonderful children whom we love dearly.

April and I love to walk together. We have walked hand in hand literally thousands of miles together. We've enjoyed mountain trails, forest paths, city sidewalks, and sandy beaches. April and I are each other's best friend on earth, second only to our personal friendship with our Lord Jesus Christ.

God has helped us to navigate many unexpected blessings throughout our life together, as well as many losses and challenges. But we were not expecting the news that we faced as a couple in February of 2022.

For some time, April had been struggling with an irritated wound on her forehead that simply would



not heal. I accompanied her to the dermatologist for an appointment. When she had completed her visit with the doctor and returned to the waiting room, I knew by looking at her face that something was wrong. I felt her heavy burden as we walked to the car in silence.

“Do you want to talk about what happened?” I asked her gently as we drove home.

“We can talk when we get home,” she answered firmly. I knew we were facing bad news.

Once home, she quietly shared that her doctor had taken one look at her forehead and said that he was quite sure she had a cancerous tumor. We knew we could wait for the biopsy report to return, but we were both convicted to set aside the next day, which was a Friday, to fast and pray and see what God wanted us to ask of Him.

In the book of James, God’s Word instructs us on what to do when someone is sick. We are to call the elders together and anoint the person with oil (James 5:14-16). The oil is a symbol of the Holy Spirit’s power to heal and to restore that person.

That Friday we prayed and fasted, praying together and apart repeatedly throughout the whole day. As we asked the Holy Spirit to lead us in God’s Word, He led us to Jesus’ prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane where Jesus prayed the following prayer: “My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me, yet not as I will, but as You will” (Matthew 26:39).

As we prayed, the Spirit of God convicted us of two specific things:

- First, we were to call the elders together to pray and to anoint my wife as called for in James 5:14-16.
- Second, we were not to focus on begging God to heal April but rather on surrendering ourselves fully to God. We were to surrender what we wanted in this situation as well as our desires for God to heal her. Our prayer was to be, above all, that whether God healed April or not, that God would use our testimony as a couple walking through this cancer journey to bring many believers and unbelievers to Christ through our story.

That following Sunday, two days later, we gathered for a special anointing service with the elders and a few friends. I'll never forget watching as my beautiful wife lifted her hands up to heaven in full submission to God. She told God that she wanted to live. She told God she wanted to continue to be my wife. She told God she wanted to continue to be the mother of our three children. But then she cried out to God with tears of surrender in her eyes. "More than all this, God, I give my life to You. I surrender my life to You. God, please do what's right in Your eyes. Do what would give the most glory to Jesus Christ. Do in my life what would bring the most people to You."

After April finished praying, I prayed, also choking back tears.

“God, I want April to live,” I prayed. “I want to continue to serve You together. But God, I give You my desire to have my wife live. God, heal her if it would bring You glory. But whether You heal her or not, I am asking that You would bring the highest praise to Jesus through our testimony. I’m asking that You bring believers and unbelievers to Christ through how we live our lives going forward with this new reality.”

Oh, my friend, April and I know the God who still lives, because we’ve experienced the reality of God’s promises firsthand, in the middle of very difficult circumstances. We asked for peace, a peace that could not be stolen from us, and He has given us this peace.

In Philippians 4:6-7, the Word of God says, “Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and pleading with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.”

Of course, it would be a nice miracle story if I could share that April was instantly healed and healthy again after that anointing service. However, God had a bigger miracle in mind, as He wanted to give us His peace in the middle of our storm.

In the days and weeks that followed, our peace of

God was tested time and time again.

On February 14, 2022, April was at the grocery store checkout counter when the doctor's office called with the lab results. Her tumor was cancerous. Not only was it cancerous, but she had Aggressive Large B Cell Lymphoma.

A week later, she had a PET scan and discovered she had Follicular Lymphoma all through her intestinal track and across her torso. A week later, she found out that she had cancer in her bones. Her doctor then told her she had Stage 4 Lymphoma. We were in shock to hear all these things so quickly!

We prayed earnestly about what to do. People from around the world began to give us hundreds of recommendations of all kinds of remedies to use to address the cancer. Some said we should do Chemotherapy immediately. Some said that if we had faith, we would never do chemo.

As we prayed for wisdom, we continued to practice full surrender of our own desires and what we wanted to the complete Lordship of Jesus Christ. With so many challenges in front of us, we realized afresh that we needed to place our full trust in God, whatever treatment plan we chose. Our trust could not be in Chemotherapy, not in natural remedies, or in any other treatment plan. Our full trust had to be in God.

After we did our own research on treatment options,

and surrendered all those options to God in prayer, we chose to do a blend of chemo and natural remedies to strengthen April's immune system. Some supported our decisions, some opposed.

Friend, our choices and convictions shouldn't necessarily dictate other's choices or convictions. We each have our own unique situations, and in each we must personally and individually ask God for His wisdom in what He wants us to do. His answer is as unique as each person is a distinctive individual. So, I am simply sharing how our amazing God led us. God will lead you as well, in your own unique journey of faith, as you seek His wisdom and rely on His strength.

The way forward over those next few months was rigorous. It was difficult to watch my healthy, energetic wife go through the battles of chemo, but she did so with the grace of God. Throughout those tough months of treatment, I watched her have an unbreakable peace from God, and that was a true miracle. Some weeks she would receive good news, some weeks bad. But her peace from God was unbroken.

No matter what she faced each day, I witnessed the God who still lives, time and time again, wrap her up in a blanket of peace from heaven and tenderly guard her heart.

*Wow, God! You are great!* I thought again and again, as I witnessed how He took such good care of my wife.

Those months of chemo were not easy, and the months since have not always been easy. But God has been with us each step of the way. And it's been my sacred joy and honor to hold my wife April through the ups and downs of her journey with cancer.

Currently she's in remission! We praise the Lord, and we celebrate every day together. We love each other more deeply now than we even did before, and our hearts are full of gratitude for each new day, and the great God we serve.

However, we are not in denial. We also know that this Aggressive Large B Cell Lymphoma can come back at any time. Relapse is a very real possibility. But April is in God's hands. We as a couple are also in God's hands. So, we rest in Him, we trust in Him. We trust Him not just with our *today*, but we also trust Him with whatever tomorrow may bring.

We've also realized afresh that we are not invincible as human beings. As a couple who has a global ministry, we've had the joy of many active mission adventures in numerous places around the globe. We believe Jesus is coming soon, and He's called us to share the good news of His soon coming far and wide. But we've also often thought that if Jesus does not return as soon as we think, we will have the joy of growing old together as a couple. But once again, this life is temporary, and we are not invincible.

We've had to face death in the eye, but we've found strength in Jesus' powerful declaration in

the Gospel of John 11:25 where He said, “I am the resurrection and the life.”

After Jesus’ friend Lazarus died, He told His disciples that Lazarus was asleep (John 11:11). April and I love the story of Jesus standing in front of Lazarus’ tomb, crying out, “Lazarus, come forth!” (John 11:43). Just as Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, we know that if either of us dies before Jesus returns, it will be a temporary sleep in the grave. When Jesus comes, He will awaken us from this sleep never to die again. Our hope is in God’s promise found in I Thessalonians 4:

“For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who remain, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. Therefore, comfort one another with these words” (1 Thessalonians 4:16-18).

Dear friend, discover Jesus every day in His written Word. Surrender your life with all its wins and losses to Jesus as Lord and live in His unbreakable peace. You will become a walking testimony that *God Still Lives*.

## Additional Resources

Go to [indiscipleship.org](http://indiscipleship.org) for the following free downloadable books and resources by Don MacLafferty. All these resources may be used for personal growth and/or for small groups.

- **Footprints for Parents and Mentors** – Small group studies to help parents and other mentors grow as disciples and disciple makers of their children for Christ.
- **Footprints for Kids** – Small group studies for parents, mentors, and children to experience together to build your relationship with Jesus, know the truth of Jesus, and to share Jesus with others.
- **Follow** – Step-by-step Bible studies in learning to be a disciple of Jesus Christ. May be used one on one or in small groups.
- **Inside Out** – Calling busy families to invest in God and to disciple their children.
- **Come Home** – Small-group studies to call individuals and couples back to worship to live God’s vision for the home in preparation for Christ’s soon return.
- **The Way** – Teacher’s notes on how to live daily as a disciple of Jesus.
- **The Way Back to the Altar** – Comprehensive seven-part Bible study on how to live daily as a disciple of Jesus. Intended for both personal use and small groups, complete with teacher’s guide.



- ***Meet Jesus Outside: Bible Prayer Walks*** – Twenty outdoor adventures for children, youth, and adults to experience the Creator in His Word, His book of nature, prayer, and action.
- ***Jesus' Last Love Letter: A Revival for Children, Youth, and Adults*** – Teacher's notes to seven interactive, intergenerational meetings to call all to Jesus as Friend, Savior, and Lord.
- ***Discipling the New Generations*** – Small-group studies for parents/mentors/students to grow disciples of Jesus who know and live these life-transforming truths by the Holy Spirit's power.
- ***Live Like Elijah*** – More life-changing stories from the MacLafferty family's personal journey of living by faith. Also included are lessons to help you discover purpose and how to live each day with fearless faithfulness, resting in the providence of God.
- ***Schools in Discipleship: A Field Manual*** – Provides practical tools to equip teachers to intentionally partner with parents and pastors to disciple students to Christ.

Do you ever wonder if Someone is out there somewhere caring about you? Find encouragement in stories from Don's life adventures from around the world. Puzzling circumstances, dangerous opportunities, and heart touching moments all point to the truth - God Still Lives.



Don and his bride April live in Apison, Tennessee. On May 2, 1988 their two lives became one in purpose. They enjoy hiking together in the mountains, the woods, and by the sea. They are blessed with three children. Every day they love to meet with the Creator and invite young and old to do the same.