

VISION

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Knock, Knock, Knock....

This is not a dramatic story. No breathtaking account with ambulances or rescues. Simply an account of a bloke's relationship with God. A reminder that even though God will not force himself on anyone, he will knock and keep knocking....

I was raised in an Australian suburban home in Sydney's south western suburbs by Christian parents. We attended the local Baptist Church and Sunday School. I think it was around the age of 4 or 5 that I first "asked God into my life". I attended the local primary school, a Christian High School and was a regular in the church "Young Peoples" group. I was baptised at around 16 years of age.

I started drifting away from God in my later teens, starting to drink with the mates I did the milk delivery run with. I left school and began work. By the time I was in my early 20's I was at the pub most nights after work and looked forward to the "big" nights on a Thursday, Friday & Saturday nights when we would do the rounds of the "discos" (yep, I'm that old!) and night clubs. I also began working a second job at an "RSL" club.

My first son was born during this time. I was so selfish and out of touch that once his mother and I broke up I didn't see him for nearly five years.



It was no sudden turning my back on God, it was a gradual process. First a drink with mates. Then stepping into a pub for the first time. Eventually life became heavy drinking, poker machines and internet porn. But the whole time I knew inside

that what I was doing was wrong. The thing is, if I stayed drunk or hung over enough, I didn't hear that knocking so much, but He was still there knocking...

Many years later, friends of mine that I had grown up with "encouraged" me (dragged, really) to attend the church they belonged to. Through the friendships I made and hearing about God again I started to change and I was hearing those knocks quite a bit louder now. A certain young lady also got my attention and she attended a bible study at these friend's home. She however, had the sense to steer clear of me for the

time being.

One of those bible study nights we watched the old movie "A Thief in the Night." I realised that if Jesus had come back like he said he would, I was living my life with my back turned to Him, and I would spend eternity apart from Him. Driving home that night I opened the door to the knocking. I remember the relief inside me! As Jesus Himself said "Come to me all of you who are weary and

carry heavy burdens and I will give you rest” and he gave me that rest!

How did life change? Did work all of a sudden become easier and accepting of me now I was publicly calling myself “Christian” - nope, it was tougher. People that had known me for most of my life called me a hypocrite and worse.

But I had put myself in God’s hands and He gave me the strength and peace to help me work through the relationships I’d messed up. He matched me up with an amazing wife, the “certain young lady” from the bible study. He led us to move to Rotorua and we now have two wonderful kiwi boys that bring us so much joy!



Craig with his staff at Hume Pine in Rotorua

God has given me a job that I enjoy and where He can use me.

Despite all the times I walked away and ignored God, He never stopped knocking. He always came looking for me and welcomed me back.

He’s also been working on the areas where I’ve been resisting Him. The Holy Spirit is working in me and changing me each day to me more like Him.

If you are looking for the rest that only Jesus can give, listen for the knocking and open the door!

Craig Peters is President of the Ngongotaha Chapter.

Masterton Convention 2021

Over Queen’s Birthday Weekend (4-7 June) we will be gathering in Masterton for our 2021 convention. Mark it in your diary and start saving. The National Board believe that this is going to be a pivotal convention for the fellowship. Several prophetic words have indicated that God is going to do something significant amongst us during the

weekend and we would encourage as many members as possible to attend.

Registration information will be coming out in February.

Speakers for the convention include; Greg Simnor, Geoff Wiklund and Jeanette Ward.

We hope to see you at Masterton in June.



The Elephant In The Room

Recently I shared my testimony at the Te Awamutu chapter. The next morning as Rod Bent, my host and chapter President, drove me to the airport, we were discussing FGBMFI stuff. **'The Elephant In The Room' came up. Why have we stopped inviting people to our meetings?**

Rod chaired a good meeting, using the local RSA, where people ordered their own meals. Good fellowship over a meal was followed by a short testimony and then I shared my story. God the Holy Spirit was gracious and had given me words of knowledge for several of the attendees. These were responded to and good ministry followed. We did have two guests, long term friends of mine from Hamilton.

Back to our discussion, why have we stopped being invitational. There may be more than one elephant in the room, however, we were just discussing inviting people to our meetings. Rod suggested I write an article for the Vision newsletter on this important subject.

We all are aware of Christ's instructions to be His witnesses and for FGBMFI that means being invitational. I am no expert, however over the years God has blessed my endeavours and desire to share my faith and to invite people to our Outreach meetings.

Here are some of my own observations and I hope they are Holy Spirit inspired. **We all have a mixture of different gifts endowed to us by God at birth**, so some men and women will be better equipped at inviting and bringing people to our meetings. However, you cannot beat being passionate and enthusiastic about a worthy cause. Have we lost our passion?

The most important attitude to have I believe is **you must want to**. Without the **desire to want to**, it is never going to happen. Please hear my heart here, we need to be very honest on this matter. When I began to invite people, I was terrified to ask, but God knew the desire of my heart and I believe it is a high priority for Jesus. We know it is His desire that none be lost, but for all to come to the knowledge of him as Lord and Saviour. As I bumbled along God began to bless my pretty poor attempts. Even with my long-term Hamilton guests at Te Awamutu, it was a battle to get through the thoughts of being rejected by them.

Looking back was there an easier and better way!!!!

Another observation, as we stopped inviting non-believers, backsliders, and traditional believers to our meetings it seemed the gifts of the Holy Spirit began to dry up at our meetings, and in our own personal faith walk. **Therefore, we began moving more in our own strength.**

The Holy Spirit has been speaking a lot more lately to me about binding and loosing, **especially loosing things back to God**. Have we taken ownership of something that belongs to God? Two key scriptures.

"I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven and whatever **you loose** on earth will be **loosed** in heaven. Mat 16:19 NKJV

Assuredly, (truly) I say to you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven and whatever you **loose** on earth will be **loosed** in heaven. Mat 18:18 NKJV

Is there a better way as mentioned earlier? Yes, I believe with all my heart, if you like me have been struggling to invite people to our outreach meetings, we can with God's help fix it.

You must want to invite people, so the priority I suggest is to speak this out to God, then **loose it** (release, give it back) **to God**. Even ask for His help, if it is a struggle to really want to be invitational, to give you a new passion.

Next, is to **loose back to him, moving in our own strength**. Ask the Holy Spirit to assist you for Hebrew 11:6 NIV says "And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to Him must believe he exists and that he **rewards** those who earnestly seek him."

Will it happen overnight, maybe; however, I believe the Holy Spirit will bring people across our paths with real needs, people he is drawing to Himself and he wants us to partner with him as we take a risk to reach out in love and the gifts of the Holy Spirit. For it must be in His power and strength and the glory is His.

I believe He would say, **test me on this, for it is my desire to use you, trust me**.

As we loose FGBMFI and ourselves back to Him I believe we will see new people coming to our meetings and the Holy Spirit moving powerfully with signs and wonders taking place.

Let me close with two quotes from The Happiest People On Earth, Demos Shakarian's book.

“Demos, power is the birthright of every Christian. Accept power Demos.” I replaced Demos’s name with my name.

“Let this Fellowship grow in Your strength alone”
Oral Robert’s prayer at their first ever meeting.

Praise God, come Lord Jesus.

Mike Bunt

National Director

A Year of Tragic Events

This year feels like it has been the most traumatic year of my entire life.

The year started with seeing the sudden and unforgiving effect that cancer had on my older sister. It’s aggressive and merciless toll was terminal. The emotional toll was like being smashed by a giant tidal wave of grief, despair, sorrow, anger, frustration and helplessness all at once. That Aroha passed away under Covid-19 level 4 lockdown added a tsunami of extreme frustration to the heart-breaking loss.

This was followed by another tragedy of sibling rivalry and fighting before any of us even had a chance to mourn the traumatic loss of our sister. Then completely unexpected, out of the blue, I was made redundant due to the effects of Covid.

Through this our marriage struggled. Jane found out I had turned back to a long past habit as a coping mechanism to deal with my emotional stress and trauma. This almost broke us as I had now developed an addiction and broken one of our greatest strengths. “OUR TRUST”

Then as if things couldn’t get any worse, all of a sudden bang, I was taken out on my Harley by a car that failed to give way. This was followed by a series of mishaps in my care and recovery, further worsening my condition. By this point I was totally broken, brought to my knees in grief, pain, sorrow and despair.



But I held on to my Faith, to hope and to love. I cried out to God, for he is my only refuge and strength. For God is love and love is God There is NOTHING greater or more powerful than LOVE.

About two weeks ago I heard God say I must surrender ALL. Everything from my marriage, my job, my siblings, my motorbike, my addictions, my grief, my sorrow, my pain, my anger, even my leg. Hand it ALL over to HIM. TOTAL SURRENDER OF SELF.

So I did. Or I thought I had.

My beloved Harley Davidson was written off in the accident, I loved that bike so much. I wanted to buy it back from the insurance write off and rebuild it myself. But then I heard God say to me again, ‘I want ALL. But you are holding on to your broken bike like you are holding on to brokenness, you

must surrender ALL. Let go of all the brokenness in your LIFE.’

So I did. The sudden peace that came was overwhelming. I had the best sleep I’ve had in a long time. Things just started falling into place. The sudden flood of understanding of the year of tragic events with divine wisdom, insight, and revelation. The sudden restoration of our marriage had both Jane and I feeling incredible joy and happiness and feeling stronger together than we have ever felt before.

Yesterday good friends of ours told Jane about a Momentum series on healing at the church they attend and sent me a link to watch the

live stream on line.

So I linked in. I was slightly apprehensive at first as I could see Santa hats been worn and I’m a bit of a

Christmas Grinch, especially in church, as I can't find Santa Claus in the bible. Anyway, I continued to watch and began to pay more attention as the message was speaking into my life and circumstances. I got myself more comfortable on the couch with my leg elevated. Towards the end of the sermon the pastor said he could feel there were some people at home watching the live stream that God wanted him to pray for. He began to pray healing for a woman that God told him had had a miscarriage. As he was praying I had one hand resting on my wound and I raised my other hand towards my computer screen at the pastor praying and said "Well come on then! What about my leg too?"

Then in that very moment he said there is also someone watching at home with a leg injury, it's a lower leg and its somewhere down here by the calf muscle. He reached down touching his leg in the exact spot where my hand was resting on my leg and said the injury was so severe it was like the muscle was torn away from the bone.

He began to pray for healing. I was oblivious to the words he said as I was completely overwhelmed with awe and praying thanks and healing with

tears of joy running down my face and feeling overwhelming LOVE.

I immediately messaged our friends in church and said did you just hear that. And the bro Alex Scott replied back. Yeah bro that was all you brother and Gods got you in this. Then I was like, bro did you talk to the pastor at all before the service? He replied na bro, but I have been praying all morning for you. Like bro "that's Hearty."

Anyway take what you want from that, but those are the facts.

Even though Jane and I are going to have our disagreements and disappointments to face, it's the overwhelming joy and happiness that comes from FAITH. Of not being able to deny the hand of God in our lives and the strength and restoration he has brought between us.

But those who trust in the LORD will find new strength. They will soar high on wings like eagles. They will run and not grow weary. They will walk and not faint. Isaiah 40:31

Kiwa Bentson