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The CORNERSTONE

The bi-monthly newsletter of
New Kapporet & Christian Helpline UK
for our Listeners, Prayer Partners and Supporters

“So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.” (Ephesians 2: 19-22)

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All contributors are identified by their New Kapporet names and numbers.

WELCOME

“My son (daughter), if you accept my words and store up my commands with you, turning your ear to wisdom, and applying your heart to understanding, and if you call out for insight and cry aloud for understanding, and if you look for it as for silver and search for it as for hidden treasure, then you will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God.” (Proverbs 2: 1-5)

This edition of ‘The Cornerstone’ focusses on ‘**Listening to the Lord.**’ Ours is a Ministry of listening and prayer, but we tend to focus on listening to our callers. Knowing how to respond to their concerns and their suffering in a way that represents the love and compassion of Jesus depends upon our ability first to listen to the Lord.

One of our regular callers is angry with God because, when he cries out to Him in his pain and frustration, he doesn't hear God's voice. He demands some great and dramatic action that will bear testimony to God's existence and convince him of God's care for him. He will accept nothing less. But we learn from 1 Kings (19: 10-13) that when Elijah encountered God, the Lord was not in the great and powerful wind that tore the mountain apart and shattered the rocks; Nor was He in the earthquake or the fire. After all these had passed, there came "a gentle whisper."

"When Elijah heard it, he pulled his cloak over his face, and went out and stood at the mouth of the cave."

It was only then that he heard the voice of the Lord.

Message from the Editor

A huge 'thank-you' to all those who have contributed to this edition of *The Cornerstone*. Our newsletter is now bi-monthly, so that we have a little more time to breathe between editions. The other innovation this month is that I proposed a theme for the newsletter – 'Listening to the Lord'. This was clearly a stroke of genius (if I say so myself) because it called forth an abundance of spirit-filled creativity and insight from our volunteers, as you will read on the pages that follow.

God bless us all!

What then must we do as we seek to hear the voice of the Lord during our times on watch with Him?

We must take courage and step out of the cave where we are hiding. We must pull a cloak over our own face, so that we lose ourselves in this sacred moment. We must be still and fully present to the Lord. And in the ensuing silence, if we listen carefully, we will hear the gentle whisper of God.

For as Jesus reassures us, "*He who belongs to God hears what God says.*" (John 8: 47) And who could doubt that, in New Kapporet, we all belong to Him.

*"Show me your ways, O Lord,
teach me your paths;
Guide me in your truth and teach me
for you are God my Saviour,
and my hope is in you all (WATCH) long."
(Psalm 25: 4-5)*



Monthly News by Tim 2001

The good news is that we survived the summer months, when many of our listening volunteers might have been expected to be away, without closing a single watch. This was helped, of course, by the awful weather, but also by those willing souls who often volunteered at the last moment to stand watch, when no-one else was available.

Over the three summer months, we received just over 4250 calls and were able to respond to around 1800 (c. 43%). Our primary constraint remains the number of listeners available to support the watch. We now have around 50 active Listeners. Many more have been trained but some have felt unable to stay the course; some have been overtaken by difficulties or concerns in their own lives, and others have found the listening role simply too difficult.

We recognise that listening to the problems that overwhelm many of our brothers and sisters in Christ, and then praying with or for them, is no easy task. However, we know that this is the work that we have been commissioned by the Lord to do and we accept it joyfully because we know that He is in it with us.

Over the past two months, we have also focussed greater attention on our team of Prayer Partners. We acknowledge, and are extremely grateful for, the enormous contribution that the team makes to our Ministry, praying weekly (often daily) in thanksgiving and intercession for our callers, our listeners and the overall Ministry. We have recently updated the role description of a Prayer Partner to emphasise the importance of relaying to all

members of the Ministry any insights or wisdom that they receive from the Lord. This is important for what they receive from Him is intended to enlighten our understanding of His intent for the Ministry. In October, we plan to begin a recruitment campaign to enlist a new stream of volunteers to grow our existing Prayer Partner Team.

We have also recently improved the support which we offer to callers of particular concern. Our new 'Caller Support Policy' allows for immediate call-backs to callers, who are in danger of serious harm, and later follow-up calls, where these are seen as critical to ensuring caller safety or protection. The new policy works alongside our 'Safeguarding Policy' to ensure that children and adults at risk, in particular, are protected and cared for. One major concern is to ensure that callers do not build a dependency on the service and, especially, on particular Listeners but are, rather, signposted to agencies that can give them the specialist or practical help that they need.

Our new Chaplaincy team continues to do great work in helping those expressing interest in Christianity to take their first steps towards handing their lives over to Christ. Again, we cannot aim to support these new Christians throughout their life's journey, but we can help them to identify how to link up with a church that will give them the support and fellowship that they will need for the longer term.

So, we continue to learn and develop, face new challenges and overcome them; all with the help and leadership of Jesus, our Lord.

Listening for God

By Teresa 2126

This is my story of how listening to God led me to use my voice for His purposes.

After becoming a born-again Christian, I wanted to do something to serve God. However, I had several obstacles to doing this: my job, my home life, my health, and my mental health. I tried street ministry, but after ten minutes, I found I was too scared to approach strangers to ask them to talk to me. I walked home from city centre crying the entire way. I'm not built for walking, and I got lost, so you can imagine how traumatic this was for me.

I tried different church teams and groups, but I always felt uncomfortable being with people who knew everyone else and what to do and I didn't. I felt like an outsider. I considered welcoming people into my home, but my husband is not a Christian and he doesn't like it when strangers come into our home, so that just caused a lot of arguments. But I still wanted to find something to do to serve God and I kept praying he had something for me to do for Him.

When I retired, I thought I would be able to handle being really involved in charity work because I would no longer have pressure from my job. So, great, I thought I'll start looking. Surely, God will tell me something I can do for Him.

Then, the pandemic hit and there weren't any places I could volunteer, as many places weren't taking on new people, or they were closed. During this time, God reminded me that I can't

serve all day in a soup kitchen anyway because my back and feet hurt after 15 minutes standing up to sing songs at church. God also reminded me of my very many failed attempts to join groups and participate in activities involving people I don't know. I don't have natural social skills and my anxiety usually takes over. I just can't run around doing things for other people as much as my heart wants. But I wanted to do something, so I kept praying to God to tell me what I could do to honour Him.

I did as much as I could for our church, like wrap presents at Christmas, be involved in the women's book group and bible studies, and make meals for new mums, but my heart yearned for more.

God finally spoke to me: through Facebook. Usually, I do not trust ads on Facebook because I've heard too many stories about people getting ripped off or hacked by accessing these ads. One day on Facebook, an ad jumped out at me to volunteer to be a Christian Listener. The word Christian attracted me, of course. So, I followed God to the website to see if it was legitimate. It was. God had introduced me to New Kapporet.

Because it was a telephone ministry, I was a little apprehensive. I sometimes get panic attacks when taking or making phone calls. So, I prayed about being a Christian Listener – on the phone - at each stage of the training, continually touching base with God that this was what he wanted me to do. He just kept encouraging me to continue, even when

I felt like I would fail or not do the work properly.

The hardest thing for me in the training was learning to listen without giving advice or direction, even when asked by a caller. I have to put aside all of my own views and experiences and, most importantly, not offer my opinion. That is quite difficult for me because, at my age, I've got an opinion about pretty much everything. But God kept telling me to keep going.

I never wanted to be a big evangelist. I just wanted to serve God. In the book, *'Learning Evangelism from Jesus'* by Jerram Barrs, the author reminds us

that sometimes, we're not the sunshine, or the water or the fertilizer to make the seed of Christianity grow in someone. Sometimes, we're the dirt. I hope that's me. All I need to do is listen to Jesus to get the right words in the right moment to say what is right for God's glory.

I love this calling and I am so thankful God has put me in the perfect place to use my voice for Him to listen in the presence of Jesus. Answers to prayers can take a while sometimes, as we all know. But keep listening: the answer may come in the most unexpected place, like Facebook for me.



Shalom

By Yvonne 2107

I wrote this little poem a long time back, but it has seen me through many a difficult time since.

I had been quite ill and so weak I was unable to go out at all and certainly not alone. I was invited to a garden retreat day but didn't know how to get there. I booked it in faith and waited, not knowing if anyone was going from my area. Someone I knew called me, and he asked if I was interested in going.

The day arrived and, with God's help, I was able to dress and be ready that morning. My lift arrived promptly, the weather was cool but dry, so we could use the garden. The host provided lunch for us which was a great blessing.

The day began with a coffee, an explanation of the day and prayer. We then dispersed, going to our own chosen place to do whatever we wanted to do. I went to the garden, which was once a beautifully planned garden but now neglected. I found it pleasant and natural sitting on a log with my pen and pad ready to write whatever came to mind. I began to write. The beginnings of the following short poem came easily. I don't claim that I wrote it, but I penned it with the Lord.

During the weeks that followed I didn't appear to get any better. In fact, a lot of situations became almost unbearable. I became weaker and felt terrible. I got through that time by reciting the poem slowly many times over, allowing each individual word to minister to me. I really don't know what I would have done without it.

Although I recovered during the weeks and months that followed, I continued to go through many years of struggling, many situations felt impossible. The poem would come to mind, and I'd feed on it once again.

My life has changed completely now. The poem still blesses me, but I can enjoy it, rather than need it. It also serves to remind me of God's faithfulness and how he pulled me out of the pit in ways that were impossible without Him

"I would have lost heart, unless I had believed that I would see the goodness of the LORD In the land of the living.¹⁴ Wait^[a] on the LORD; Be of good courage, And He shall strengthen your heart; Wait, I say, on the LORD!"
(Ps 27:13-14)

Shalom

Silently take from me each stress and strain,

Hold me and help me relax once again,

Always remind me to give you my day,

Love me divinely forever I pray,

Onwardly lead me to your tender care,

Mellow my heart from all hate and despair.

Shalom

Even in the Quietest Moments

By Fred 2106

I'm a fidget, I can't sit still for 5 minutes let alone half an hour! So, listening to God has never been a strong point for me. I have had my moments though, so I thought I might share one of them from earlier this week.

I rode my motorbike from our home in Hereford to Hay Bluff, a large hill just outside Hay on Wye. I wanted to ascend it in order to take a decent photo of the view, but also to spend some time with God. I am no loner, but over the years I have found the odd moment of quiet contemplation and meditation to be quite beneficial. As I ascended the hill, whose summit appeared to be getting further away the more I tired, I noticed three red kites who seemed to be hunting together. It's not often you see three together like that, and even less so to be at their height and be able to observe them from a different angle. Their wings were softly undulating in the wind as they calmly glided around on the thermals. You can see where they get their name from as

their bodies seemed to move in unison with wind, just like a child's kite. They appeared so delicate yet so strong. It was here, in the beauty of these magnificent birds of prey, that I first heard from God. No voice boomed down from the heavens, just that small gentle reminder that this earth and everything in it was made just for us all to enjoy.

Once I reached the top I fervently searched around for some heather still in bloom, to capture a great photograph, but alas most of it had gone over. That disappointment didn't stop me though, from wondering at the awesome nature of the delicate, yet hardy design of our most prevalent of heathers, ling. I got my second reminder that God is still talking to me about the small things.

A short while later I sat down on a rocky crevice for some cheese oatcakes and coffee for breakfast. The kites had very kindly followed me round and they were soon joined by a hen harrier going in the other direction who had no time for any of us, as it busily flew around the corner, never to return. A few swallows flew quite



The Golden Valley from Hay Bluff

Close, so as to let me know that I had robbed them of their resting place for a few minutes, and that they weren't too happy about it.

My hunger and thirst satiated, I took out my Gideons NT with Psalms, and read Psalm 121.

I lift up my eyes to the mountains. where does my help come from?

My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth.

He will not let your foot slip. He who watches over you will not slumber; Indeed, he who watches over Israel will neither slumber nor sleep.

The Lord watches over you. The Lord is your shade at your right hand; the sun will not harm you by day, nor the moon by night.

The Lord will keep you from all harm, He will watch over your life; the Lord will watch over your coming and going, both now and forevermore.



This last year has been tough for all of us. I'd lost my job, my home, I had to leave the

town I grew up in and where I had lived for the last 60 years. I lost regular contact with my best friends. Yet, in this psalm, God is assuring us of His enduring love, even now in the darkest of our days. Listening to God speak through his word as my eyes surveyed the wonders of this Welsh valley, was a great place to hear from Him as I sat in quiet contemplation on the side of the hill in total isolation.

Well, before I knew it, my five minutes was up, and it was time to descend. As I did so an elderly couple sat down for their lofty picnic and we exchanged a few pleasantries and I was reminded of the kindness of other people who can often display the love of God through their loving and thoughtful conversation.

Listening to God for me is to be aware that He can use anything and anyone to remind us of His provenance. As indeed can someone else whose aims are not quite so honourable. It was during a time of reflection during a church service that C S Lewis first had the idea for a book about a senior devil writing to a junior devil about how to best go about bringing this newly converted Christian down. If you haven't read it and like a bit of satire, then do pick up a copy of '*The Screwtape Letters*' and be prepared to laugh, and yet be challenged and inspired by its remarkable insight into the spiritual warfare that rages beyond our ability to see with our human eyes.

Happy listening.

Listening Experiences

By Fio 2114

One of my first listening experiences was with my very deaf and very tall Grandfather. He was 6ft 4ins, 88yrs of age and very, very deaf. I was about 3 years of age and probably came up to his mid-calf.

Every day he and I would go for a walk across Wanstead Flats (It had been a part of Epping Forest at one time. Common ground on which Hitchman's Dairy allowed their cows to roam and they often stopped the traffic much to my glee!)

My Grandfather always immaculately turned out, in his Homburg hat and long Navy coat, me a dumpy little curly-headed redhead in my blue duffel coat and boots. We must have been an amusing if touching sight.

To speak to him, I had to tap his arm, beckon to him to bend down to my level and then I could bellow in his ear! He would respond, and then pull himself back to full height and off we would go again.

He had one of those beige NHS hearing aids with the box that forever fell out of his ear and whistled. He hated it and often refused to wear it. It must have been sad for a man, who had had a career as a trade union representative and local politician, to lose the ability to hear debates or even conversation. Sadly, I didn't really get to know him before he died as I was just too young. However, even I was aware that he missed out on conversations because of his deafness. He tried to listen but couldn't. I used to try and tell him what folk were

saying but it was exhausting! So, he missed out.

I remember as a child being given the story of Samuel and Eli in the Temple (A Ladybird Book!). God calls to Samuel, but he thinks its Eli. Eventually, Eli realises that Samuel is hearing God and tells him to listen. I loved the story and wondered what God would say to me.

As I grew older, God spoke to me through Church music as I sang in the choir. He spoke to me through Bible passages, through the words of the preacher and, of course, through the actions and words of others. Did I always hear? Probably not.

Sometimes, I actively deafened my ears to God. When I first felt the calling into ordained ministry, I didn't want to listen... but God persisted. I bargained with him and became a (lay) reader in the Church of England, but I knew he wanted more. The words persisted and finally I gave in and went to be assessed for training as an ordinand. It wasn't an easy time and frankly with the whole 'Women Priests' debate at the time, it was a very uncomfortable and hostile environment to be in. I really wasn't happy with God for landing me in this situation.

Some of the interviews would now have had the clergy involved in court for blatant sexual discrimination and abuse! One of the least offensive questions was "Why are you fat?" So maybe you can imagine the rest. No, perhaps you can't, because it makes me shudder to this day and certainly had no place in an interview about Christian ministry and calling.

God won out though and I was accepted for training. Unfortunately, due to a family bereavement, I had to put it all on hold. It would be another 10 years, during which time I cared for my grandmother, before I was able to "listen" to that calling....and I became a Congregational minister. God was right, of course: It was my calling.

During my Ministry I also worked as a Hospice Chaplain and was honoured to be there alongside folk in their final days, listening to their feelings about the cruel disease bringing their life rapidly to a close. I often met a hostile response in my visits but every day I would just pop my head round the door and say, "Good Morning," and eventually he or she would open up to me.

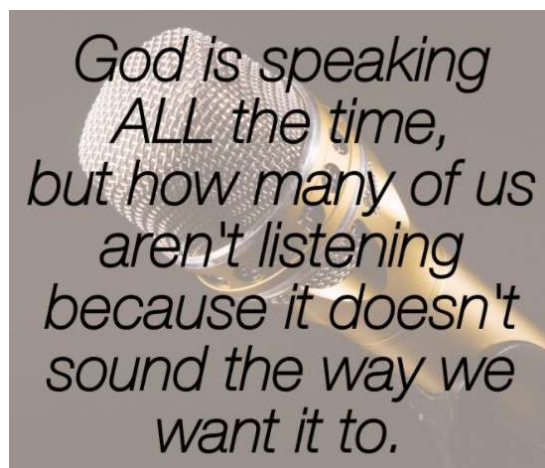
Spiritual pain manifests in many ways, and often the pain or guilt someone had been carrying around with them for years would affect their treatment. The Spiritual pain blocked the ability for the drugs and treatments to do their work. They needed someone to listen to them and help them release that block. That was where God had put me - to be that listener.

I remember one young girl, who had come into the hospice, got into bed and turned her face to the wall. She would not communicate with the doctors, nurses or her family. Everyone was desperate. I went into her room, explained who I was and just sat in the chair beside her bed. I didn't say anything, neither did she. After about an hour, I got up, said it has been good talking to her and I would see her again tomorrow; maybe we could continue our chat. I could see the puzzled expression on her face but still she didn't speak.

The next day I repeated my greeting, sat down, and said nothing. After about ten minutes, I said "I heard your pain in the silence yesterday. Would you like to tell me about it? Not the pain caused by your cancer but the emotional and spiritual pain you feel?" Silence.

Then a sob; then the floodgates opened, and she cried out all the hurt, the pain, all the emotions she was feeling; all the things she was missing out on. No-one had ever asked her how she felt, only what symptoms she had. I listened for two hours. At the end she was smiling, sitting up and asking for something to eat. Just opening a space for her to say what she needed to say had unlocked her prison. From then on, the medics could do their jobs and she was able to go home in a much better state. She subsequently went into remission. The spiritual pain was killing her much quicker than the cancer. All she needed was someone to listen.

It is what we do on the helpline every day... give people that space to say what they feel, to let out that pain. It is a God given Ministry. Let us praise God for allowing us to be a part of it, and for using us in this way.



Listening and Believing in the Promises of God

By Liz 2102

I have read that there are 8,810 promises in the Bible, 7,487 of them being promises made specifically to mankind. Romans 4, speaks of Abraham, who

“ ... did not waver in unbelief about the promise of God but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God. He was fully convinced that what God promised he was also able to do.”

One such promise to us all, is found in Deut.31:8:

“The LORD himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged.”

If we can only encourage those who call into New Kapporet to believe in the promises of God, of who He is and how He loves, if we can only encourage them into God's presence to hear His voice for themselves, they will find there the best Listener of all, and one who will never fail them.

The following is an extract from Taylor Caldwell's foreword to her novel, 'The Listener' (1960) which struck me as pertinent to our times on watch, where we join God and stand as Listeners ourselves:

“The most desperate need of men today is not a new vaccine for any disease or a new religion, or a new “way of life.” Man does not need to go to the moon or other solar systems. He does not require bigger and better bombs and missiles. He will not die if he does not get “better housing” or more vitamins. He will not expire of frustration if

he is unable to buy the brightest and newest gadgets, or if all his children cannot go to college. His basic needs are few, and it takes little to acquire them, in spite of the advertisers. He can survive on a small amount of bread and in the meanest shelter. He always did.

His real need, his most terrible need, is for someone to listen to him, not as a “patient”, but as a human soul. He needs to tell someone of what he thinks, of the bewilderment he encounters when he tries to discover why he was born, how he must live, and where his destiny lies. The questions he asks of psychiatrists are not the questions in his heart, and the answers he receives are not the answers he needs. He is a sealed vessel, even when under drugs or while heavily drinking. His semantics are not the semantics of anyone else, not even the semantics of a psychiatrist.

... let us remember that there *is* someone who listens. He is available to all of us, all of the time, all of our lives.

We have only to talk to him. Now. Today. Tonight. He understands our language, our semantics, our terrors, our secrets, our sins, our crimes, our sorrow. He will not consider you sentimental if you speak fondly of the past, if you are old. He will not turn you away if you are a liar, a thief, a murderer, a hypocrite, a betrayer. He will listen to you. He will not be impatient if you become maudlin, or cry in self-pity, or if you are a coward or a fool. He has listened to people like this all his life. He will continue to listen.

While he listens, you will find your own problems solved. Will he speak to you, also? Who knows? Perhaps. Surely, if you ask him. If you listen, too. “

The Lord's Prayer

Editor: Fio 2114 recently sent me this piece and I can't resist including it in this edition of 'The Cornerstone'. It is a wonderful reflection on how we sometimes pray without listening.

A Conversation with God

The conversation is in two parts, the person praying in plain type and GOD's response in bold type.

Our Father who art in heaven.

Yes?

Don't interrupt me. I'm praying.

But -- you called ME!

Called you? No, I didn't call you. I'm praying. Our Father who art in Heaven.

There -- you did it again!

Did what?

Called ME. You said, 'Our Father who art in Heaven.' Well, here I am. What's on your mind?

But I didn't mean anything by it. I was, you know, just saying my prayers for the day. I always say the Lord's Prayer. It makes me feel good, kind of like fulfilling a duty.

Well, all right. Go on.

Okay, Hallowed be thy name.

Hold it right there. What do you mean by that?

By what?

By "Hallowed be thy name"?

It means, it means... good grief, I don't know what it means. How in the world should I know? It's just a part of the prayer. By the way, what does it mean?

It means Honoured, Holy, Wonderful.

Hey, that makes sense. I never thought about what 'hallowed' meant before. Thanks. Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven.

Do you really mean that?

Sure, why not?

What are you doing about it?

Doing? Why, nothing, I guess. I just think it would be kind of neat if you got control of everything down here, like you have up there. We're in a mess down here you know.

Yes, I know; but have I got control of you?

Well, I go to church.

That isn't what I asked you. What about your bad temper? You've really got a problem there, you know. And then there's the way you spend your money -- all on yourself. And what about the kind of books you read?

Now hold on just a minute! Stop picking on me! I'm just as good as some of the rest of those people at church!

Excuse ME. I thought you were praying for my will to be done. If that is to happen, it will have to start with the ones who are praying for it. Like you, for example.

Oh, all right. I guess I do have some hang-ups. Now that you mention it, I could probably name some others.

So could I.

I haven't thought about it very much until now, but I really would like to cut out some of those things. I would like to, you know, be really free.

Good. Now we're getting somewhere. We'll work together -- You and ME. I'm proud of You.

Look, Lord, if you don't mind, I need to finish up here. This is taking a lot longer than it usually does. Give us this day, our daily bread.

You need to cut out the bread. You're overweight as it is.

Hey, wait a minute! What is this? Here I was doing my religious duty, and all of a sudden you break in and remind me of all my hang-ups.

Praying is a dangerous thing. You just might get what you ask for. Remember, you called ME -- and here I am. It's too late to stop now. Keep praying. (pause) Well, go on.

I'm scared to.

Scared? Of what?

I know what you'll say.

Try ME.

Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us.

What about Ann?

See? I knew it! I knew you would bring her up! Why, Lord, she told lies about me, spread stories. She never paid back the money she owes me. I've sworn to get even with her!

But -- your prayer -- What about your prayer?

I didn't -- mean it.

Well, at least you're honest. But, it's quite a load carrying around all that bitterness and resentment isn't it?

Yes, but I'll feel better as soon as I get even with her. Boy, have I got some plans for her. She'll wish she had never been born.

No, you won't feel any better. You'll feel worse. Revenge isn't sweet. You know how unhappy you are. Well, I can change that.

You can? How?

Forgive Ann. Then, I'll forgive you; And the hate and the sin will be Ann's problem -- not yours. You will have settled the problem as far as you are concerned.

Oh, you know, you're right. You always are. And more than I want revenge, I want to be right with You (*sigh*). All right, all right. I forgive her.

There now! Wonderful! How do you feel?

Hmmm. Well, not bad. Not bad at all! In fact, I feel pretty great! You know, I don't think I'll go to bed uptight tonight. I haven't been getting much rest, you know.

Yeah, I know. But you're not through with your prayer are you? Go on.

Oh, all right. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

Good! Good! I'll do that. Just don't put yourself in a place where you can be tempted.

What do you mean by that?

You know what I mean.

Yeah. I know. Okay.

Go ahead. Finish your prayer.

For Thine is the kingdom, and the power,
and the glory forever. Amen.

**Do you know what would bring me glory -
- What would really make me happy?**

No, but I'd like to know. I want to please you now. I've really made a mess of things. I want to truly follow you. I can see now how great that would be. So, tell me... How do I make you happy?

YOU just did.

From:

http://www.raesmith.com/the_lords_prayer_conversation_with_god.ht

Testudo Formation

By Lynn 2022

I was at the first of the New Kapporet prayer meetings where I was sad to learn how much oppression and attack many of the New Kapporet family are suffering. After the meeting, I continued to pray for a while, and I had a picture of the testudo formation used by the Roman army when they came under attack. Testudo is the Latin word for tortoise and the formation made a virtually impenetrable shield around the army.

We all know Paul's words from Ephesians 6:10-17 regarding the armour of God. Verse 16 says 'Hold up the shield of faith to stop the fiery arrows of the devil.' and I felt that God was using the picture to remind us of those words.

I believe that God was saying that, if each member of the New Kapporet family holds up the shield of their faith, then we will be protecting each other and will come under a huge testudo formation.

In the Roman formation the soldiers were all standing together and there was no

space inside for anyone else, but the picture that I had was slightly different than that. Our shields were held up and formed a huge shelter shaped like a shell but with space in the middle. I believe that God was showing us that the whole of the New Kapporet family is protected and there is room for the callers too.

So, I would like to encourage everyone to hold up their shield of faith and to picture everyone else doing the same. God has told us that the devil will take pot shots at us, but He has also said that if we rebuke the devil he will flee. Where better to stand and rebuke the devil than alongside our family under the impenetrable shield of faith!

God bless you and help each of us to remember that *'You dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.'*
(1 John 4:4)

Encouragement for you

By Stephanie 2056

"I know what it means to lack, and I know what it means to experience overwhelming abundance. For I am trained in the secret of overcoming all things, whether in fullness or in hunger. And I find that the strength of Christ's explosive power infuses me to conquer every difficulty." (Philippians 4:12-13)

The beautiful Lord of holiness says

I am strength

I am hope

I am light

I am increase

I am abundance

I am in control

I am the good shepherd

I see you my child I see you

And I know your heart

I am breakthrough

I am healer

I am shelter

I am peace

Jesus

I am comfort

I make a way

I am the God of anything possible

And I think YOU are amazing

I think about you all the time

You are so precious to me

The apple of my eye

My beloved son

My beloved daughter

Come closer, come closer

my arms are longing to embrace you

Come soak in my holy presence

Let me infuse you with my love

Let me breathe into your lungs life

Let me soak you, empower you

Dry bones come alive in you

Encourage and bless you today

Run to me child, run

I am answering you

Says the beautiful Lord-of holiness

Amen



Psalm 46: A Safe Stronghold

By Trevor 2013

As we minister to all who call or email New Kapporet, we need to know, and we need our callers to know, that in Jesus we do have a safe stronghold, whatever circumstances life may have thrown their way.

Psalm 46 is one of my favourites. The psalm opens with a note of certainty and hope and praise: *“God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble”*.

Can you think of a better verse to begin each watch, each conversation?

God is our refuge. Whatever the dangers or difficulties, we have a stronghold to which we can flee; a stronghold far greater than any stone structure we can imagine!

The psalm starts with this reassurance but then follows it up with a list of the dangers from which God will protect us.

Have you ever felt that the problems you face are too great and the refuge and comfort too small? That is because we put the problem first and it takes over our thinking. Here the Psalmist puts the answer first. Look, he says, God is your refuge and your strength. Get that foremost in your mind, let that govern your thinking, and then whatever problems come will seem much smaller, because we know that God is the answer to them all.

So, REJOICE, God is your refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.

And because of that confidence we can read in verse 2 – *“Therefore, we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea;*

although its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging”.

The psalm was written in a country that was prone to earthquakes and the psalmist uses pictures that his readers could understand. You can put into that verse any personal calamity that you can imagine, however dreadful and say...and know... *“Therefore, we will not fear because **God** is our refuge and strength”*. Many of our callers may be very fearful of what the future holds for them. We can encourage them that God can be their refuge.

Verse 4 contains words that seem to flow gently in contrast to the preceding ones in verse 3 of roaring and foaming and surging. It is almost like a peaceful river valley scene; like the final movement of Beethoven’s Pastoral Symphony (if you are familiar with it), entitled “after the storm”: *“There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy place where the Most High dwells.”*

The psalm goes on in verse 6 to remind us that nations are in uproar; kingdoms are falling (Don’t we know it.) but when God lifts His voice the earth melts. In verse 10 comes one of the most famous phrases of scripture; one that can bring comfort to the most troubled and oppressed, the fearful and fearing, whoever you are and whatever your needs – *“Be still, and know that I am God”*.

The Christ who calmed the raging sea with a word; the God who came to Elijah in a still small voice, will come to you as he brings stillness. And the same Christ is ready, able and willing to bring a sense of stillness to all who call on Him, through us in New Kapporet.

And so we come to the end of the psalm. It is a song, a hymn. And, like many of the older hymns that we sing, it has a chorus! In fact, Psalm 46 has two – in verses 7 and 11. Interspersing the troubles, underlining God's closeness to his people through all those troubles, just in case we are left in any doubt, we twice have the

refrain - "*The Lord Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress.*"

And the same God is with you and with me, and with all those who come into contact with God through New Kapporet.

And it's the best thing of all!

THE PRAYER OF ST FRANCIS

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace:

where there is hatred, let me sow love:

where there is injury, pardon:

where there is doubt, faith:

where there is darkness, light:

where there is despair, hope:

where there is darkness, joy.

Divine Master; grant that I may not so much seek

to be consoled, as to console,

to be understood, as to understand,

to be loved, as to love.

For it is in giving that we receive,

it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,

and in dying that we are born to eternal life.

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