

A Lamp for our feet

By Kathy Hansen

Lately, I feel like I'm fumbling, that I'm not doing enough as a Christian.

I try to ring people but I'm an introvert. My prayers aren't articulate. I offered to help someone, who hasn't responded. I started reading 2 Corinthians; it didn't make sense to me. What kind of Christian am I, if I can't understand the bible when I need encouragement?

I've started building a trainset. I have a vision of how my trainset will ultimately look, but the

details are vague. There's lots of steps. Each step, a new skill needs to be learnt. Each step leads to more steps, within the step. I focus on my vision and trust the process.

Life is like this. We have a vague (glorious!) vision of what the destination will be like. God is the light we are focusing on, way up ahead. Between here and there it's dark. The only thing lighting our next step is the lamp at our feet, God's word. We trust God for the next step.



Right now, COVID-19, is the next step. To get through that step, there's lots of little steps each day. That's where it gets hard. Some days I'm listless, my thoughts drift into gloom; I'm not the kind of Christian I want to be right now. I feel guilty.

But this isn't the trainset I'm laying out for myself. This the trainset God is laying out for me. I can see the ultimate destination – the light way up ahead, but it's the lamp at my feet guiding my next step. In between the lamp and light is darkness. That's where I trust God.

The other night, I listened to Dave read Psalm 1. The simple words were just what I needed. "Blessed is the one...whose delight is in the law of the Lord...for the Lord watches over the way of the righteous". I don't need to be a super Christian; I need to focus on God, and trust him for the next step. He won't let me go, He is watching over me. He knows the steps I need to take, how fast or slow; and the route he is taking me.

If you feel like you're fumbling, God won't let you fall. He has you tight in his grip, leading you through the darkness to your final destination. I'll see you there.

Jesus Trial Find-A-Word

Atonement	Guards	Obfuscation	Sanhedrin
Blindness	High Priest	Peter	Substitution
Caesar	Jesus	Pilate	Thorns
Caiaphas	Judgement	Pontius	Trial
Cross	Justice	Postmodern	Truth
Epistemology	Justification	Relative	
Falsehood	Lies	Roman	

J	N	O	I	T	A	C	S	U	F	B	O	X	E	U
N	E	J	D	R	L	G	A	U	J	R	T	V	P	U
C	O	S	U	G	S	J	F	U	H	E	R	S	I	N
Y	N	I	U	S	H	E	D	T	X	T	U	S	S	I
W	R	R	T	S	T	G	G	H	B	E	T	E	T	R
E	E	Z	Q	U	E	I	E	E	U	P	H	N	E	D
V	D	W	L	M	T	T	F	E	E	I	Y	D	M	E
I	O	F	E	R	A	I	C	I	G	Z	C	N	O	H
T	M	N	C	L	O	I	T	H	C	A	M	I	L	N
A	T	S	I	A	T	M	P	S	I	A	K	L	O	A
L	S	P	S	S	E	R	A	A	B	I	T	B	G	S
E	O	A	U	O	I	S	P	N	F	U	P	I	Y	W
R	P	J	W	E	R	H	A	L	L	R	S	S	O	M
D	P	C	S	P	A	C	V	R	G	Q	U	E	W	N
K	X	T	W	S	D	O	O	H	E	S	L	A	F	V

In the Barn!

Barney's Newsletter



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Rejoice Always

Rejoice in the Lord always, I say it again, Rejoice! Let your graciousness be evident to all, the Lord is near. (Philippians 4:4-6)

This week I read the book of Ruth, which has been very encouraging. It is a book set in the time of the book of Judges, which describes the anarchy taking place in Israelite society before the time of the kings. Ruth the Moabite travels back to Israel with her mother-in-law Naomi after all the men in their lives die. When all this takes place, Naomi renames herself Mara, meaning bitter, because life's circumstances have beat her down. So these two women leave the land of Moab to return to Israel.

Ruth's encouragement as a book comes from its unique perspective. Judges deals with massive wars, oppression and God's multiple salvations resulting from Israel's continual cycle of sinfulness and repentance. While this takes place, Ruth recounts the story of an unknown servant girl from a foreign nation who remains faithful to God. She represents the very antithesis of Israel's faithlessness, whilst being a relative no-

body. Yet whilst being a no-body – God notices and cares for her. Ruth in quiet and gracious faithfulness is seen by God and brought into the very family line of David, and hence becomes an important figure in God's salvation of the world through Jesus.

We can sometimes wonder whether what we do is important, whether we are making a difference. Big decisions are being made around us that affect the course of nations, that will turn and shape economies across the globe – how can my prayers and simple faith in God matter? Ruth reminds us that it does! That God sees our faithfulness, that His people matter to Him, no matter how insignificant we may feel. That is why Paul's encouragement to rejoice always In Lord, though at times hard, is a great reminder not to focus on our circumstances, but to keep our gaze laser focused on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith.

In Christ, Adam.

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Suffer

IN THE WORLD



Many people think that the God of the Bible (if he even exists) is an impersonal being who has the power to end suffering but doesn't. However, the biblical narrative does not ignore or minimise suffering; it unapologetically addresses the

cruel reality of our world, in which suffering is an unavoidable problem, inherent to life on this earth. It explains suffering's origin: human sin and the resulting brokenness of our world; and it provides the solution: Jesus Christ.

- Our Problem, God's Solution.

Part 1- By Elise Brake

In Jesus, God became fully human – facing all the pain and temptation we face daily, in total obedience to God. He chose to enter into our weakness, so that He could minister to our brokenness. Jesus was mocked, whipped, crowned with thorns and ultimately crucified on a Roman cross – taking all our sin upon Himself and experiencing the agony of our separation from God. He rose to life, conquering death and bringing, through His resurrection, the hope of a new creation. He did this all for us – so that we could have life and the hope of ultimately being freed from our sin and the pain and suffering of this world.

John Stott once wrote: 'I could never myself believe in God if it were not for the cross. In the real world of pain, how could one worship a God who was immune to it?'¹ No other worldview or religion provides a solution to suffering that involves a loving, relational God humbling Himself by becoming human and suffer on our behalf. In this, the God of the Bible is unique, and He is a God we can relate to personally. He understands our pain, and He does something about it.

In the midst of suffering, our world questions how a good God can allow it to continue – while refusing to acknowledge that He's already worked, through Jesus, to bring it to an end. Revelation 21:4 says: '...and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death;

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our world questions how
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worked, through Jesus

there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away.' God has promised a new creation free from suffering and sin, and though our present pain is very real, we can look forward to the day when it will be a distant echo of reality.