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Weekly Encourager – 13 June 2010

(from James Stacey: scriptural advice and insight on how to be set free from schizophrenia)

HOW GOD CAN USE THE AFFLICTION OF SCHIZOPHRENIA TO BRING HOPE TO OTHERS

THIS WEEK'S SELECTED BIBLE READING IS GENESIS CHAPTER 41: Key verses 46-52: Joseph was thirty years old when he entered the service of Pharaoh king of Egypt. And Joseph went out from Pharaoh's presence and travelled throughout Egypt. During the seven years of abundance the land produced plentifully. Joseph collected all the food produced in those seven years of abundance in Egypt and stored it in the cities. In each city he put the food grown in the fields surrounding it. Joseph stored up huge quantities of grain, like the sand of the sea; it was so much that he stopped keeping records because it was beyond measure. Before the years of famine came, two sons were born to Joseph by Asenath daughter of Potiphera, priest of On. Joseph named his firstborn Manasseh and said, "It is because God has made me forget all my trouble and all my father's household." The second son he named Ephraim and said, "It is because God has made me fruitful in the land of my suffering."

How does God go about dispensing hope to thousands of people living in a hopeless condition? It is a question you can turn over in your mind following the reading of our Scripture passage for this week. Well, to start with, we must acknowledge that His ways are not our ways and as such He acts altogether differently to achieve his ends.

Reading about the long imprisonment and wilderness experience Joseph endured before being eventually freed caused me to remember the question I raised some years ago: Why did it take so long before God delivered and healed me? Why did the bondage have to last 26 years - more than a third of a lifetime - before He eventually brought me out? These questions no longer unsettle me since I believe that the length of my schizophrenic imprisonment was determined by God who had a divine purpose behind it all. Without the suffering I went through, He would have been unable to bring into my life the tender compassion for other sufferers which found birth in my soul.

I could never have imagined the present day freedom in which I am now living. God has, and is still restoring the years which "the locusts have eaten." Not only were there many years when securing freedom was hard to envisage, but never in my mind came the thought that one day, God would be able to be glorified through the affliction. He is now able to use it for his glory and show his faithfulness and power to set free that many other schizophrenic sufferers will thereby be filled with hopefulness too.

I somehow thought around my early twenties when schizophrenia disrupted my life that I had lost God's plan for the future. All thought about serving God in the ministry ran into a permanent cul-de-sac since the time spiritual darkness hit my life. Because I perceived that serving God only had to do with preaching and witnessing, it never crossed my mind that God had other ways in which to speak through people...through the path of suffering. Many preachers have preached their greatest sermon in affliction and suffering.

The intensity of years of suffering were both forgotten and gave way to fruitfulness most significantly on our recent trip to Colombia where the highlight of my life so far in infusing other sufferers with hope, was realised. Not only that, but I tasted personal enrichment of love, patience, compassion, tenderness and a thousand other flowers and fruits of the blessed Spirit which I experienced inside the furnace of affliction with Jesus. I had to go to the people of another country to taste this richness.

May I offer today some encouragement to those of you who are struggling with schizophrenia and long to be free. Never ever give up hope!! The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ knows everything you are facing and passing through. Cultivate a prayer life and obtain strength through reading God's word. Get others to pray for you – I mean really pray. Ask them to pray for "the bars

or iron and the gates of brass” around your mind which Satanic powers have erected, to be blasted wide open by the power of God.

Keep faith and belief alive that looks to the day when you will be completely free in Jesus!! The reality of experiencing freedom seems out of sight at the moment. But looking to God and holding on to His promises, you will live to experience the freedom of Jesus. And though you may find it hard to accept, there will come a day when you too will be able to make use of your affliction and glorify God as you are able to help others who are still suffering with schizophrenia in the same way you did.

I am at present in correspondence with two Christian schizophrenics who are able to see and grasp what I am talking about. They are not free at the moment but have such faith in God to believe that freedom is going to come to their lives. It's faith-building to hear them talk about becoming free and how they expect Jesus to step in. When it happens they will both have a great heart to help others towards the same freedom.

On page 144 of Schizophrenia Defeated, I write: “Meditating on the words – “Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God”, (2 Corinthians, Chapter 1), I said to Maurice, aged 83 (Tina's father), who had just returned from a prayer meeting at church: “Do you know, I've just had another reason why our testimony is not our own, but the Lord's. For in telling others what Christ has done for us, we are saying He can do the same for them. If Christ has brought us through suffering, we can offer hope to others than Jesus can bring them through too.” He replied: “What a wonderful Saviour is Jesus my Lord.”

It is a privilege always to tell others of the saving grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. But what a divine commission to lift up to countless numbers of people the same Lord and say that He is well able not only able to deliver from the power of sin but to free of the bondage of schizophrenia. I feel it is a special task to reach such sufferers if only to give hope that the One who brought me out of such a prisonhouse of hell CAN also shatter the bars in your life. I so much want to continue to be “fruitful in the land of my affliction” to give encouragement.

A prayer: “Dear Heavenly Father, will you please cultivate in me the ability to hear your voice and grant a faith-inspired life in You. I see my need of possessing your power within my life in order to overcome the evil of schizophrenia. It's a hard discipline, but I am trusting you to help me overcome as I believe in You and Your Word. I offer my prayer in the Name of Your Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

We are continuing to insert at the bottom of the Weekly Encourager, some powerful Scriptures for you to learn and commit to memory and USE in your prayer battle against the demon of schizophrenia. By so doing your confidence in the Lord will grow because the words will impart “spirit and life” into your spirit, and so equip you in your fight to know the freedom of Jesus.

And he (Jesus) said unto them. “I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven. Behold, I give you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you. Luke 10: 18-19

The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth. Psalm 145:18

And God is able to make all grace abound toward you: that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work: 2 Corinthians 9: 8

The Weekly Encourager:

20th June: Persevering in faith, prayer and God's word equips you to drive out the demon of schizophrenia

27th June: Keeping hold of God in the difficult times

You maybe reading the Weekly Encourager for the first time as you've stumbled across our website in a desperate search to break free of schizophrenia. Or maybe, you've been looking at W.E. every week for encouragement and help to overcome this "monster" of mental illnesses and have been given REAL HOPE that the Lord Jesus is the One to open the prison door to freedom in your life once and for all time. We encourage you to keep logging into the site as often as you can for scriptural advice as we continue to point to Jesus who is well-trying and tested in the area of setting captives free from a bondage that no-one else can conquer.

Our website www.schizophreniadefeated.com seeks to magnify the dear Son of God who left the courts of heaven to come to our world and die for you and me on the Cross at a place called Calvary just outside Jerusalem over 2,000 years ago. In that sacrifice, he paid the punishment and penalty of your sin and mine and on the third day rose again as "The Resurrection and the Life". He releases TODAY the same victorious life that brought him back from the dead, in the person of the Holy Spirit, to everyone accepting his sacrifice. Why not invite him into your life right now? It's a life-transforming experience that you CAN REALLY KNOW – which is well able to defeat and conquer the hell of schizophrenia you struggle with, for good!!

James Stacey
Pray Until Schizophrenia Heals

"I will proclaim your mighty acts,
O sovereign Lord" Psalm 71: 16

