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Weekly Encourager – 23 and 30 May 2010

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

KNOWING GOD'S GRACE ENABLES THE CHRISTIAN SCHIZOPHRENIC TO BATTLE THROUGH TO FREEDOM IN JESUS

"For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich." 2 Corinthians 8, verse 8. "... how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ." Romans 5 part verse 17.

I was reminded a few months ago how strong and sufficient is the grace of the Lord Jesus on hearing the testimony of our dear friend, Frida Gashumba who forgave all the killers of her entire family in the 1994 genocide in Rwanda. How absolutely amazing to see in her the visible triumph of the grace of God. And yet the same grace is proffered to every born-again Christian, including the life of a schizophrenic, who more than most, I do believe, is cast on God's grace as the means of bringing him through to the freedom he so earnestly desires.

I am so grateful that before my 26 year long hell burst upon my life, I had already made the most meaningful decision of life itself – that of receiving Jesus Christ as my Lord and Saviour. Such a life-changing commitment as a 14-years-old brought the living presence of Jesus into my life without which, I now know, life would have been difficult to survive. So I'm grateful for coming to know the Lord Jesus and His grace..... and today I want to encourage you who already know Jesus by saying that there is available to you NOW and EVERY DAY until you become free, his strong, powerful grace to enable you to overcome.

You face a spiritual bondage and battle - a much stronger term than a mere mental illness - which is going to need the provision of God's grace on your life in order to overcome. Talk here is not the same as from the medical field who may have promised you some quality of life down the road if you come through schizophrenia. No, this is promised hope in a Saviour who has the ability to set you free and restore you to the quality of life you enjoyed before the bondage started. The power of the grace of God harnessed in your spirit can defeat schizophrenia as you are equipped to pray in overpowering strength.

Your experience of schizophrenia may have been for so long and the years so black that in your mind your problem of the bondage looms like some mighty Goliath standing over you. "I've lost all my fight to become free," you may say. "How on earth am I going to face, never mind defeat, this spiritual darkness that steps out into my life each day intent on taking my very life from me," you ask. Picture yourself as a faith-filled David, a young shepherd boy, who was not intimidated like the rest of the Israelites at the sight of the Philistine warrior. God's grace at work in you through faith can strengthen you in the fight to be free from the demon of schizophrenia. His grace is upon you through the victory of Jesus on the Cross.

Notice then - 1. the receiving of God's grace is yours because it is available. The best kind of Christian is not the one who has simply come to Christ for salvation from sin but you are now coming regularly to Christ to receive his grace - to live in him and to dwell in him. It is the one-and-the-same grace that enables you to become like Jesus that also equips you to be a warrior and fighter opposed to every work of Satan in your life. We fight only as powerfully as the grace of God and the word of God are living inside us at any given time. Receiving grace speaks about walking in the Spirit, living in the Spirit, and producing a life that is soldier-strong, fully awake to spiritual presences in one's own life and able to take authority over them. Claim the flow and experience of God's grace over your life now -and be ready to do exploits and contest the schizophrenic demon in your life.

2. this all-sufficient, wonderful grace of the Lord Jesus is not only available - you must require it earnestly. The desire to have the grace of God on your life must cause you to wake early in the morning to shine up your armour as a Christian. Each day there are temptations and situations in

which the devil would like to get an advantage over you. You have to be alive and alert!! Throwing the bed clothes back in the morning and rising to meet God early (see Psalm 63) will prove an immense advantage. In order to keep the freshness of God's grace on your life you will no doubt see the need to withdraw also at other times to meet the Lord and experience His ministry into your life. Become like St. Paul who said that his only wish was to know Christ and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death (Phil 3.10) You have a steadfast purpose in really getting to know Christ - that of being empowered by Him in order to fight for your own freedom.

I can remember many prayer battles over the years in which to continue knowing the grace of God in my life was so important in what were life or death struggles. Once, I found it necessary to lock myself in a toilet in the end carriage for the whole 90 minute train journey as the Spirit of God enabled me to wrestle off demonic powers that would have destroyed me that day if I had refused to yield. The worst scenario of all was on my knees contending in a prayer contest against an inner foe which unleashed such bombardment into my life that I thought I was fighting a battle to get out of hell - again with the Spirit of grace interceding with groanings that could not be uttered.

3. You can receive "grace succeeding grace". In John's gospel 1 verse 16 it reads: **"And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace."** (Authorised Version). I believe it means that you can have all the grace you need but in order to receive more grace you must use the present grace before you can use the grace which succeeds it. Grace is flowing like a river, you can have as much as you use but you must use the present proffered grace in order to have that which follows.

"So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed," said Jesus in John's Gospel 8 verse 36. Some people, Christians among them, are uneasy about the mention of the demonic to do with schizophrenia - and they carry on a debate about the bondage without any spiritual reference. For someone to argue with me about the truth of schizophrenia who has never had it - when I lost over 26 years to the condition - is almost like telling a man who has suffered cancer what cancer is all about without any first-hand experience of the disease. Isn't it sad when instead of rejoicing with someone who lost their freedom to schizophrenia and now has been delivered and healed by Jesus and got it back, the argument centres on how it all came about.

I often feel like the blind man in John 9. The Pharisees seemed to miss the great event for this man, who was born blind, now receiving his sight. So keen to investigate the matter and discredit Jesus who performed the miracle, the healing was less than a fringe issue. The man thought all their talk was a waste of time - he preferred to look around himself for the very first time and take "in the view". When no joy is expressed for me bursting out of a real, mental dungeon and now getting my life back by those more desirous of analysing the illness, I say Lord: "Give them, a fresh revelation of your grace, a gift of discernment and the wisdom to handle both."

Prayer: Dear Heavenly Father, I want to thank you that the grace of your dear Son, Jesus Christ, is available to me because I have given my life to Him and already know the power of my sins forgiven. Continue to pour your grace into my life and lead me into a fuller freedom as you break the bondage of schizophrenia in my life. In Jesus' Name. Amen

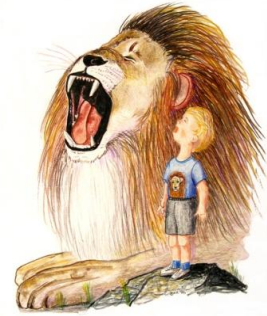
You too can know the help and strength that comes from knowing Jesus Christ as your personal Saviour. If you have already received him, then keep in touch with him every day through regular prayer and bible study. By so doing, you will begin to discern his voice a lot clearer, and as sharing your life with Christ grows there will come inner and silent strength to overcome every other voice that may trouble you.

If you have never received Jesus Christ into your life, then why not do it RIGHT NOW, as we guide you in a prayer: "Lord Jesus Christ I approach you knowing I am separated from you by sin. I know I have also sinned in my thoughts, words and actions. There are so many good things I have not done and there are so many sinful things I have done. I believe that you died on the Cross in my place that I might be brought back to God the Father and know forgiveness and the gift of eternal life. I now ask you to come into my life and cancel out the sin that separates from you. Come in and cleanse

me through the power of your blood. Come in as my Lord to control me. Come with the strength of your grace and the power of your Holy Spirit to defeat the evil of schizophrenia which troubles me and bring me right through into the glorious freedom of your kingdom. I ask this, giving you thanks, in your Name. Amen

You may be reading the Weekly Encourager for the very first time; perhaps you've stumbled across our website in a desperate search to break free of schizophrenia which has just dawned on your life; or maybe you've been looking at W.E. every week for encouragement to help you deal with this "monster" of mental illnesses and have already gained HOPE that the Lord Jesus Christ is the One to open the prison door of your life once and for all.

We encourage you to keep logging into the site as often as you can for scriptural advice and help as we continue to point to the One who is well-tried and tested in the area of setting captives free from a bondage that no one else can conquer. www.schizophreniadefeated.com seeks to magnify the dear Son of God who left the courts of heaven to come to our world to die for you and me on the Cross at a place called Calvary just outside Jerusalem 2,000 years. In that great sacrifice, He paid the punishment and penalty of your sin and mine by dying for us and on the third day rose from the dead as "The Resurrection and the Life". He released the power of the Holy Spirit into the life of every believer accepting his sacrifice. A life-transforming experience that you too can know!!



James Stacey
Pray Until Schizophrenia Heals

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