

Beholding and becoming

Greetings to everyone in the name of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. I know this sounds so official, even Bible language, however, recently I came to ponder again on the weight of these words and their specific and collective meaning.

Maybe I will start with a confession: Since we started writing newsletters, almost 2 years ago, Gijsbertha was the author and my function was to edit and translate. This time we switched functions ;)

Usually, like other newsletters, I would like to say that all is going well and we just have so many things to be thankful for. In a sense this is still true, but things are a bit different this time. It feels as if the past 8 weeks has been quite an emotional roller-coaster.

Since the beginning of July, we have been having Lydia (Gijsbertha's youngest sister) and Kate (an English friend of hers) over for a visit. Both of them have just finished school and look forward to go and study further. Kate went back to England at the beginning of August, and Lydia hope to go back to the Netherlands at the end of August. It is good for us to have some 'fresh air' inside our home - helps us not to become too comfortable and rusted ;).

Simultaneously we had Hendrieth, and a younger sister of hers, Lucy, in our home as we want to continue building our relationship with their parents, influence them in a good way and enable the girls to get their education on track again.

The 2 girls ended up staying with us for 3 weeks and then went back to stay with their parents. In retrospect - a humility and big learning exercise for us. Like most of our work, we are unable to clearly define the exact results were after their time with us. As a local recently exclaimed; we must continue to faithfully sow seeds and water; whilst leaving the growth into the Hand of the Faithful Gardener. We were glad to have the parents pop-in for a surprize visit earlier last week...will we dare to hope?

During and after this period 7 German educators were in and around Gobabis for the 4 week, Namibian leg of their educational tour, partnering with Namibians to get a closer look into the educational system of the other. Our role during this time was to organise and facilitate the programme. This proved a good exercise to get to know some of the cultures and personalities we are working with a bit better.

After they left, I had a 2-week flu, which was a bit more than the usual. Having been forced to be still on my bed for a big part of the time, I had some time to think on my bed. An exercise that I'm less experienced in and emotionally challenging, especially as I would like to do more, but grow in frustration as I seem not have the energy to go out into the community where the need is so great.

Some news that added to the difficulty this past 2 weeks were when we heard of little Phillip, who passed away after an 18 month battle with malnutrition, even after we tried to talk with his mother, give her training and assistance, or having to see a dear elderly colleague struggle with, what medics think to be kidney stones or liver problems, or hearing of the sudden death of a prayer partner who died of a heart attack...together all these seem to take the wind out of one's sails. Death is close and

we can do nothing once a person has breathed their last and also worries of the physical - what else can I do to obtain a greater bank balance.

Then it dawned on me – **My eyes are off Jesus**. I have stepped into the trap of selfishness.

May the Lord help us to be obedient to His leading when crossing paths with a specific individual and speak what and when we need to. May God forgive us for giving up on people when nothing seemed to change in their lives.

I am so aware of my own selfishness, even in the midst of the supposing community, missionary and charity work we're doing.

Messages of Hope in Scriptures from this time:

Matthew 5:3,8 Seek not wealth, nor that which appeals to the eye. Seek to see the Lord, from a pure heart.

Psalm 119:36-37 Ask God to incline your heart to his testimonies; not selfish gain. Trust God to help you look away from worthless things, as self and look only to Him.

John 12:24-26 God doesn't want us to be Christian, he wants us to be a people who follow in Jesus' footsteps, the road of death to self. Then and only then can you be used in God's hand. When we are nothing and He is everything.

Lastly, after 2 years we are extremely thankful for the opportunity to visit our family in the Netherlands from 13 September to 15 October. Really looking forward to spend some time with family, friends and even do a few presentations regarding the work we are busy with in Gobabis.