

How the
Comforter
changed my life



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with Danutasn Brown

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Introduction

When I was young, my grandfather told me a story that happened to him as a child. One day in school, his teacher walked into the classroom and heard the boys noisily talking about different weapons that they thought were the coolest. Unexpectedly, the teacher started his lesson with a simple question: 'What is the greatest weapon on earth?' The class became silent. Suddenly different answers were shouted out in excitement. 'BAZOOKA' one boy yelled. 'A TANK' another boy said. 'ATOMIC BOMB!' another boy shouted. But the teacher just simply said, 'No... No, not that one... Not that one either'. The class ran out of answers. The teacher held up his hand holding a pen and said, 'THIS is the greatest weapon on earth'.

This is the story of how the Comforter changed my life. It's about how my life took a turn with a miracle getting rid of my fear. I have come to understand that there is a God and He wants something from me in life, and that He also sent someone to me for my sake. I decided to get to know this person more. The first chapter is about God's deep love for man, how He made a personal impact on me during my travels in Australia, and what happened to me during five special days I was in the rainforest.

God's Deep Love for Man

Deep-Rooted Fear

Have you ever had some kind of fear in your life that has stuck with you? You might have tried to handle it in different ways, tried to get rid of it or tried to accept it. But it doesn't go away, and you feel like it will be with you the rest of your life. I did. My fear was sharks.

Originally, when I was 3 years old, I actually loved all kinds of sharks. I loved to paint them too. Their big sharp teeth, their long tails, their awesome shape, their fins on their back... I sometimes even played as if I was a shark myself. They became my favourite creature.

One day, there was a movie about a shark on television entitled *Jaws*. It was about a great white shark attacking people. Of course I wanted to see it. At first my dad didn't let me, but I insisted on watching it. In order to convince him I showed him all the paintings of sharks I had put up in my room. As my father saw the love for sharks in his boy's eyes, he just couldn't say no. So he finally agreed, but he would watch it with me. Thank God my dad didn't let me see it alone, even though he made the huge mistake of not realising what effect it would have on me. In this movie I saw the great white shark coming from under the surface, dragging people down and then devouring them. When I saw the red colour of blood my dad told me it was only ketchup, trying to calm me down.

After the movie, I went straight to my room and took down all my paintings of sharks and tore them to pieces. Suddenly I had become terrified of sharks. The dream to swim with one was ruined. My favourite creature was turned into a monster.

I didn't dare to swim in Swedish lakes anymore, and I even had problems in swimming pools. I would imagine sharks coming up from under the water and dragging me down to the bottom. When I became a bit older, I slowly learnt that swimming pools and even the lakes in Sweden weren't that bad. However, the fear of sharks was still with me everywhere. Often when I was swimming together with friends, I would keep myself a bit closer to them. They always thought I was a little annoying when I was swimming too close, and they told

me to move away. I thought to myself, if a shark comes, then I still have a chance to survive, because maybe the shark would take my buddy first so I could escape to the shore. So in this way, I actually felt safer when I swam closer to other people.

My father often thought to himself: What have I done? Is there any cure for this kind of fear? How could he make up for his mistake of showing this scary movie to his son?

Later on, when I was 21 years old, I was standing on the Eastern shore of Australia with a surfboard under my arm ready to learn how to surf. At that moment, the small boy who had grown up realised: "There are bloody sharks in this ocean!"

Before I tell you further how it went throwing myself out there where real sharks exist, I have to let you know how I got to Australia, and the people who helped me along the way.

A Denial

On my way to Australia I travelled with one of my best friends through India. While there, my friend and I decided to go to a yoga camp for a week in Bombay. India itself was an inspiration for us. When we came to the yoga camp, people there showed us what seemed to be rational about life. There were many things there that were great and healthy. One day we sat in a circle, talking about life, and the idea came up that "*you can't trust anyone else except yourself*". The way they reasoned sounded logical, but in that moment I wanted to stand up with my Christian background and say, "there is someone who we can trust more than ourselves, and that's Jesus!"

But the feeling of wanting to proclaim my Christian faith was accompanied by fear, even though the small thought crossed my mind that they needed to hear about Jesus. The people probably didn't believe in Christianity; they might think I'm crazy; who would say such a thing and why would they listen? So I kept silent. Instead, the more I listened, the more I started to agree with what they said, as I thought it sounded reasonable. But I couldn't stop feeling that it somehow went against my conscience, even though I pushed this feeling away.

We left the yoga camp and continued our travels. This small denial in my heart ate away at my conscience. I began to believe I somehow had denied Jesus. But I ignored it, and without paying attention to it I dragged this small burden all the way to Australia.

The Rainforest (Friday)

When I arrived in Australia, I had plans to learn how to surf. So I got a contact where I could visit a man who was good at surfing. I had plans to stay for five days. The first time I met him, I saw this man surfing on huge waves, it looked amazing! I remember the first introduction when he came out from the waves and walked towards me with his surfboard. He explained how massive and powerful these waves were. My first thought was 'ADVENTURE!' As we started to hang out, we had a connection like we had met before. Sometimes friendship clicks, and you recognize many similar interests and personality traits and having many things to learn from each other – it felt like God wanted us to meet.

What was surprising for me was that he knew so much from the Bible. Fred, as I call him, took me for a ride on the way to his place where he lived. On the way he started to talk from a book called *The Identity Wars*, written by Adrian Ebens. According to him the book discussed where we put our value, how we build our characters, and how there is a spiritual war in this world connected to the Bible. He said we were always trying to fit in the norms. The way we talk, the way we act, the way we are...are these defined by the world? Or are we letting ourselves be the way God created us? Where do we put our identity? And how is our relationship with Jesus today? That gave me further questions on my personal journey in life.

“The rainforest!?! You live in a tent with your wife in this huge jungle?” I must admit I was a bit surprised when we arrived, but I was also impressed by the way they lived. Everything they ate was natural and organic; their water was coming from rain stored in a huge tank; their house was a big tent. I was thinking that I was brought back to Abraham’s time. Still he had his great car (a Ute) and their iPad, so it was just a little more modern. Even their soap was organic. How happily Fred and his wife were living in their tent, and they talked

a lot about Jesus, having so much knowledge about God's creation and burning for Christ in their heart.

It was Friday night, what we call the start of Sabbath; it means rest with God, which according to the Bible is from sunset to sunset. His wife had made a beautiful vegan dinner. Fred told me that the next day we were going to something called "Home Church", which was new to me.

Home Church (Saturday)

I woke up and set off together with my new friends to the Home Church. There were several families and people of different ages. I was one of the youngest in this home church.

The people attending were unique in that they all seemed to really love Christ. They each had different stories about how Jesus came into their lives. I was a bit stunned with all the kinds of stories the people had, how Jesus came to rescue them in their distress. I started to hope and wonder if I would ever have a similarly unique story one day.

They only had vegan food on Sabbath, and wow, I didn't know people could make such good vegan food! It was an honour for me to meet them all. They had beautiful songs, great sermons, beautiful testimonies and a community for God. I had never been to a home church before, and I was really impressed.

Something else that I learned from them was how man and woman are in the image of God, somehow a reflection of the Father and the Son, which gave me further questions about the picture of God and of the Spirit. I realised, what was actually the Spirit, the Holy Spirit? As I started to wonder, I realized that this home church had a different understanding to mine about who God is. This made me more curious and I had more questions to ask.

The Ultimate Question (Sunday morning)

The next morning we went to Fred's sailboat to prepare for a trip. When we did I took my chance to get some answers to my questions I had about God. I checked out some Bible verses, and one of them that I found was Matthew

3:16-17. Prior to this I never truly understood what the Holy Spirit means. So I checked it out, what it meant in Greek... There it became clearer... at the baptism of Jesus, I got a huge impression of who God was, and that Jesus actually was God's only begotten Son, and the Spirit was a symbol of love as the breath (Greek word: pneuma) coming down from heaven where the clouds had just opened, and descended from the Father to circle around Jesus. At that moment, I believe it became clear to me where I saw who God was in this picture, THE FATHER, who was saying before everyone in heaven and on the earth that this is His beloved Son, and that we should listen to Jesus in whom God was pleased with...

From there I couldn't stop searching for other connections about the Spirit as the breath of God. I quickly went to the beginning of the Bible, and found verses Gen 2:7 compared with John 20:22 in the New Testament. I didn't know many Bible verses at that time, but it felt like someone wanted me to find it. It just became more and more clear to me. Then, I felt like I needed to pray, because it was like I could see who God was. These were the first words that came out of my mouth:

"Do you love me? ... If you do, then please, send me a sign of a dolphin as proof, swimming close to me. But if you don't, if this is just challenging you in a wrong way... Then throw me to the sharks instead. Because you know I have fear. I pray, in Jesus name, Amen."

The very words "Do you love me?" echoed in my ears, like that was the big question I might have been looking for – does God really, truly, love us? I actually don't know why I prayed for a dolphin, but my guess is that I was desperate for God's love, and wanted to know if it somehow existed.

Whales (Monday Morning)

We set sail, going from place to place. As we travelled, we discussed about God and I had many questions. The sailing trip was long and windy, so there was lots of time to talk. The discussion continued until sunset. The magical sky shined with stars, the moon was clear, and the lighthouse shed white light to brighten the horizon and keep us on track.

Early morning the following day we were pretty tired since we took turns to steer the sailboat during the night while one of us slept in the cabin. The wind had become more calm in the morning. Finally we could catch some rest. While we were having some good discussions Fred suddenly excitedly yells "WHALES!" with wide open eyes. We saw the whales about 100 meters distant, so we decided to go after them. We saw there were four humpback whales swimming next to each other. With the help of some wind and turning on the engines, we managed to come less than 10 meters behind them. The reality of that moment was better than any television show or book. "God's huge creation, man!" Fred said, as we stayed in their presence watching them swim and showing their huge tails in the air. Marvellous creatures! Sailing just behind them and next to them for about 10-15 minutes was incredible for both of us.

In the evening Fred's lovely wife was waiting for us at the harbour. We were exhausted from the boat swinging and swaying during the windy night. It felt like something was weighing down our heads; we knew we were going to have a good sleep. I was really having a great time. I would be going to take a flight to Sydney soon, and my trip here was almost over. What a pity...

Angels Everywhere (Tuesday)

It was Tuesday morning, and the sun was shining brightly on my last day in Australia; there were no clouds in the sky. Fred and I were standing on the beach in front of the mighty ocean that today had good waves for surfing. The waves were much smaller than the waves Fred was surfing on the first day I saw him. Suddenly, I couldn't stop thinking about sharks. In that moment, Fred went down on his knees and said "Let's pray". He seemed often to go on his knees before surfing, that God would protect him and help him to have a good surf, exploring the beauty of nature. So I joined him, we prayed a short prayer together right on the beach.

Then we ran to the ocean and swam out with our surfboards. I tried to focus on the waves instead of thinking of the sharks. Somehow it calmed me down when I realised how fun it was to play with the waves and challenge them. But then, unexpectedly, a big wave came over me; it smashed me, and I was pushed down and touched the bottom with my foot; at the same time I

imagined there was a shark there! I couldn't see anything and the rope that connected my ankle to the surfboard went around my neck; I felt it was choking me while the board was floating up. I was fighting to get back to the surface, but I wasn't getting anywhere. I started to panic. The wave that had pushed me down felt like it was too powerful, and the more I was struggling to swim up the more oxygen I was losing.

At that moment I thought, "this is it, I'm going to die." But then a memory came to me reminding me of my big brother telling me, "When you are out there surfing and you are under the big waves, you have to completely relax." So then I tried to relax. There I was, it was like being in the void and in the power of the ocean where I felt completely alone. Slowly but surely, my body started to float up towards the surface. I was just about to lose my breath when I finally broke the surface of the water. I took the biggest breath I ever had in my life, being so much more aware and thankful for my life than I had ever been before. I felt so alive! And without knowing it, it was going to get even better.

Fred came over and said, "There you are! I saw you, you really like to be smashed by the waves, don't you?" I thought I couldn't be happier to see his big smile on his face when he found me.

Then he said "Btw Niklas... A dolphin just swam under me. I know where they are, go over there," and he pointed at the direction where they were. First I couldn't believe my ears, so what I did was start paddling at the direction he pointed. After five to ten minutes of paddling, a dolphin showed up on the surface about 20 meters away from me to take a breath before quickly diving down again. I was just marvelling. A real dolphin had just appeared. I stopped paddling; I didn't know what to think.

Fred called from behind, "Niklas! Why did you stop? Keep going man!" I wasn't aware that I had stopped, so I resumed swimming towards the dolphin. After a few seconds the dolphin showed up again, this time about 15 meters away, blowing out its breath like glitter in the sunlight, and then it dived back down. I stopped again for the second time, feeling a bit panicked that it even came closer this time.

Fred called for the second time: "Niklas why did you stop!? I told you man to keep going!" I wondered if he couldn't see the dolphin. What do you do when a real wild dolphin is coming and you are out there in the ocean with it, having

no control? But I chose to paddle anyway. After only a few seconds the dolphin showed up even closer, less than 10 meters away. I stopped paddling; I didn't know what to do!

Fred called from behind for the third time, and I couldn't contain myself from shouting back, "I HEAR YOU BRO, I'M NOT DEAFF!" As I felt nervous about the dolphin. But alright, I kept paddling and I am glad that I did, because suddenly the dolphin appeared only 2 meters from me, and it dived and swam under me like it did to Fred. I had no words.

Being speechless after the moment the dolphin swam under me, I realised it was not alone. A few minutes later two more dolphins came swimming next to each other, then they were joined by four more dolphins. Suddenly a whole dolphin family was there!

Fred came from behind saying: "Oh it's heaps of them!" I asked him, "Yeah, are they dangerous?" And he said "No, they are your friends." It was an amazing moment with so many dolphins around. I could see a dolphin jump up high in the air from a wave and I yelled "EPIC!"

"There must be at least 10 dolphins here," Fred commented. Fred told me that they were not here to swim with us, but that they were here to surf. In my mind I thought they absolutely were here to swim with us! But I tried to surf with them, even though I was not that good. It didn't matter, I felt like swimming with the dolphins instead having failed a few times trying to surf with them.

After a few minutes, one dolphin came really close to me, closer than I thought it would. It was less than one meter from me and I started to wonder if I was dreaming. I could have touched it, but I didn't dare to. It swam close by for like 3-5 seconds looking at me, then went under water. How curious these animals seemed to be. A moment later it came up even closer, swimming very slowly next to me looking at me, and I felt like it was looking straight into my eyes. I felt so much happiness. I tried to communicate with it, saying: "I'm not dangerous, I'm a friend."

I could have touched it again, and I reached my hand to feel its skin. But somehow I still didn't dare do that. I had so much respect for it. I felt with my hand how the dolphin passed by through the wind and the water. Then it dived down again. For me it was like time stopped. Why didn't I touch it!? I

sometimes regret even today that I didn't, but it helps me to remember this fear compared to the different kind of fear that I had of sharks. You might panic if you saw a shark in the water when you were surfing and want to swim to the shore as fast as possible. But if you see a dolphin instead, you have a kind of respect because you don't know what it can do.

While I was swimming with the dolphins, I noticed one dolphin had been bitten on its fin; it looked like a shark bite. I wondered what the relationship between dolphins and sharks was like. I remembered an Australian man telling me a story when I was in India. He once was out and a shark was coming to attack him. He saw it was on its way to him and there was nothing that he could do. Suddenly a dolphin appeared and started to swim around him, protecting him. He told me that sharks are afraid of the dolphin's nose because it can break the shark's bones. Now imagine how nervous a shark would be seeing a whole dolphin family!

When these dolphins appeared to me I realized that the special kind of fear I had of them was somehow similar to the fear I had of God. And I'm telling you, I have never felt so much love, happiness and peace at the same time. I was so excited and felt so safe that I even wanted to stay in the ocean.

Fred and I sat there on our surfboards floating on the water, admiring the beautiful moment. A baby dolphin showed up, swimming next to its mother. Fred was marvelling and tried to swim after it. I thought he was crazy. "You are gonna get killed bro!" But how friendly they were! If we felt safe with them, I wonder how much safer they felt with us, when the mother allowed its baby to swim so close to us. Amazing!

Another dolphin came about 1-2 meters away from Fred. I saw the breath of the dolphin come up from its nostrils, and the wind blowing that breath in Fred's face. "NIKLAS!" Fred called me, and I replied: "I saw that!" Then he answered with a huge bearded smile on his face, "Now I know what the breath of a dolphin smells like, and it smells like bad fish!"

They swam around us for at least one to two hours, if not more. The sun was getting more orange; it was close to sunset and we realised we needed food, so we had to swim back to the beach. The whole dolphin family started to disappear as well. "Am I dreaming?" I asked Fred while we were walking on the beach. He replied, "I have never ever been in or heard of this kind of

experience before. I am over 30 years old, surfing all my life, hearing all kinds of amazing stories of what dolphins can do and what they have done for man. But this is new to me. This was a privilege for us! I wonder what God meant by this?" And I just replied "Soo many dolphins bro."

At the Airport (Wednesday)

Still in a state of amazement after our experience, Fred and I went to a nice restaurant, eating the soup of the day with some sourdough, a type of really good Australian bread. We had such a blessed day. In the evening Fred took me to the lighthouse of the bay; watching the sunset on the horizon under the heavens was magic. We talked with each other about the day, prayed, praised, sang and confessed our sins to God. Later that evening we sat around a bonfire outside of the tent in the rainforest. We decided to make a song from a tune by Elvis Presley about the amazing five days we had. We made a pretty good song that fit quite well to our experience.

In the morning when I sat on my flight, I just couldn't stop thinking of the dolphins. A man came by and sat next to me, and he noticed the happiness on my face. "What happened to you?" he asked. I couldn't be quiet and so I told him about the dolphins. It turned out that he was a Christian too. On the way to Sydney we had a blessed discussion and even a bible study. The hours went quick. When we landed at the airport, I shared the song we had written. Fred, his wife, and I wrote this together in the rainforest.

To the tune of 'In the Ghetto' by Elvis Presley -
"The Rainforest Song"

*As the wind blows
On a cold yet sunny winter's day
The crew and I prepare to play
On the ocean...*

*As the sky glows
We set sail in the evening light
The full moon rising to fill the night
On the ocean...*

(Refrain)

*I'm so tired, I miss my bed
Something is weighing down my head
I want to dream, to count the sheep
Down in my cabin being rocked to sleep
On the ocean...*

*In the morning
Humpback whales played as we sailed
And gave us a wave with their mighty tails
On the ocean...*

*On the mooring
In the harbour there is peace and calm
And his girl there waiting with open arms
On the harbour...*

(Refrain)

*I'm so tired, I miss my bed
something is weighing down my head
I want to dream, to count the sheep
At home in my tent drifting off to sleep
In the rainforest...*

*As the waves roll
Surfing all day, with dolphins we played
Riding the waves, towards the bay
And the rainforest...*

*And the moon rise
Like the love of our Father flowing through His Son
Shining in our hearts for everyone
Under Heaven...*

*Sabbath time, home church so nice
Know the way, truth and the life
I want to pray, do Your will today
Filled with Your Spirit, and living Your way
Of 'agape'*

The man who I sang to just said; “Wow man we have to pray before we split up!” And I just replied, “Yeah well, I don't normally pray with strangers... but sure why not this time.” So we prayed, and then we split up. As fast as he went away, a bible text came up in my head...

1 John 4:18. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.

This was one of my favourite Bible verses so I had remembered it. I decided to send in a text message to my friend Fred. He replied, “Then you don't have to be afraid of sharks anymore,” and I realised then that I really was not afraid of them anymore! In my head I saw the dolphins swimming around me and Fred. The dolphin was so close to me, less than one meter away; it was within my reach and I could have touched it, twice. The picture was so real in my head, I was remembering it so clearly. At that very moment at the airport, I believed I could feel God's love and His presence. Drops started to fall from my eyes, and I burst into tears. I told God:

“How is it that I came to doubt you so many times when you are so real thousands of times? I realise you are God, more than I can imagine; you are real, I see it clear now; I'm sorry for the times I have not trusted you my Lord”

Tears kept falling down my cheek while people were looking at me and wondering what had happened. I had to find a place to sit somewhere. But it was not over. God wanted to show me something more. When I was sitting on a chair trying to gather myself, another memory came to me. I was sitting as a little boy, listening to a story in my church back in Sweden. It was like the prodigal son. The story was about a son who had ran away from home; he had done something wrong in his family. One day he realised where he belonged and missed his family, and he wanted to come home again. But he was afraid that his father would not forgive him. Did his father really love him after all the things he had done? So he decided to write a letter to his father and ask.

The Son wrote: “If you want me to come home, hang up a hanky on the tree branch outside of our house. I will ride by on a train and if I see it I will know you have forgiven me and want me back, that you still love me. If there is no hanky, I will continue to sit on the train and pass the house without getting off.” So he sent the letter to his parents. One week later, he was sitting on the train nervous about whether he will be welcomed home or not. The train

stopped next to his house where he could see the tree. And guess what he sees? ... Instead of one hanky on the branch, he sees thousands of them on all the branches, and even sheets all over the trees. The boy was shocked, and felt loved again, more than ever. He could finally come home and be comforted in his Father's arms.

Then I just burst into even more tears, sitting on the bench in the airport at Sydney, wondering what was happening to me. I realised from that story that God didn't just send me one dolphin as proof of his love for me. God sent ten more dolphin angels to make me realise how loved I am of my Father. In that particular moment I felt so much love. When I got back to Sweden I met a friend who believed in God and the Bible too where she shared that God would even send thousands of angels for your sake if you were in trouble.

I stood up from the bench, trying to find the airport WC. I went to the receptionist to ask. She asked me back, "Do you need a hanky?" and showed me a box filled with them. Then, of course, I couldn't stop thinking about the hankies hung up on the tree where the Father is proving that He wants you back. I said to God "Ok alright, I give up, you win." I believe He really wanted to teach me a lesson.

I remembered the time Fred was calling from behind me: "Niklas! Why did you stop? Keep going man!" He had said it three times while the dolphin was swimming closer and closer towards me. I was reminded of when Jesus had asked Peter three times after his denial, "Simon, Son of John, do you love me?" As I thought about this, more light and love flooded my mind. And I thought to myself, "Yes Jesus, I love you back."

Proverbs 9:10. The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.

Hard-Hearted or a Broken Spirit?

Belle

While I was still in Australia working on a vegetable farm, I met a new friend named Belle. We started to have some interesting conversations. She told me that she believed somehow in a higher power, and she was practising yoga. I asked her if she wanted to go to a Christian meeting with my friends and I. She was open to coming as she liked spiritual things.

During this meeting something was opening her mind. She went to talk with the Christian people around. There she met Gabriella, and they discussed the topic of yoga. Gabriella had done the same as Belle for a long time and was more experienced, and she knew exactly what kind of yoga Belle was participating in. Gabriella shared with Belle about where yoga came from and how it is used today. Belle started to have further questions.

When my friend Fred, his wife, and I were giving Belle a ride back to her home, Belle had so many spiritual questions which Fred tried to help her find the answers to. Belle seemed to be so curious and open-minded, but still it seemed she was not so sure what to think.

When we arrived at her destination, Belle still had some more questions she wanted to ask, and there were three of them that seemed vital. The first question was, *“Do we really need God? Isn't it enough to have food and we'll survive anyway; I mean I don't have to feed my spirit with God, right?”* I think this question tells us a lot about how we live and how we mostly care about what we can see and touch. But Fred gave her an answer showing he understood where this thought was coming from. *“You can't live without food. It is the same thing with our spirit. Why is that? Because like how you are doing yoga, you are trying to fill the emptiness in your life with different things and trying to find out what is worth living for. There it is the same thing with God. We shall not live by bread alone but daily from the word of God. And Jesus said that He is that bread.”* (Matt 4:4, John 6:48)

She looked surprised, because it seemed Fred had struck her old wineskins to be able to give her new wine. So she asked a second question: *“One night I came home to my room drunk and I took off my clothes so I was fully naked.”*

Then I fell asleep on my bed. The next morning I could feel someone in my room looking at me; I was too weak and too tired to be awake, but the moment I felt someone was looking at me I brought my pillow close to me, trying to hide and cover my nakedness. Later when I woke up, nobody was there, but I could see the door was a bit open. I realised somebody had been in my room. I was pretty sure that I closed the door when I came home last night. I felt so ashamed! I felt like this male roommate had seen right through me, seen my nakedness, seen my shame and my weaknesses. And to be honest it feels like you somehow see through me too a bit, by answering all my questions.” Fred looked at her with pity, and answered her. “There is a difference with Jesus. When He comes to you and finds you naked, weak, or ashamed, He would take off his royal robe of righteousness from himself and He would cover your body so you don’t have to be ashamed anymore (Matt 25:36).

Belle looked amazed; she put her hand on her mouth and said loudly to herself that she should shut up with the questions. I started to think if she was wondering if there really was somebody who cares for her. Then she said her third and last question: *“A lot of bad things have happened in my life. At a yoga camp in India a test was done on me, and they showed me that we have different auras and colours around us. This aura shows your personality or what has happened in your life to form you. It shows different colours around a human being. My colour was almost fully red, except one place, one spot, one piece of me was yellow?”* Fred was touching his beard while he was thinking what this could mean. “I know that yellow stands for change,” Fred said, as he picked up his pocket sword (bible app on his phone) and searched for different words about yellow and colours. Then after some moments Fred was marvelling at what he had found. “Woah, take this like God is speaking to you now!” And Fred read to her this text:

Isaiah 1:18. Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.

Belle didn't know what to say. She gratefully took a Bible from us. Then she asked where she should start reading. Fred advised her to start with the gospel of John. When we took off and said goodbye, I was a bit astonished by what just happened. “Where did you find such words speaking through your beard bro!?” I asked him. Fred simply answered “It is Christ in me” (Gal 2:20), which he normally said when he wanted to honour God. So that is how the LORD can

work through people. Belle seemed to be such an open-hearted person, but also having a broken spirit. I started to wonder how many more are broken out there.

Cain

We said goodbye to Belle and drove back home to the rainforest. It was dark and late in the evening. We were driving uphill on a curvy road, surrounded by trees. Suddenly Fred just stopped the car. From the light of the car we could see a body on the side of the road, with a blanket over its head. We started to wonder if it was a dead body. After a few seconds discussing in the car, the body raised its head like someone had just been resurrected! We panicked, or at least I did. The body took off its blanket and we could see a red-haired bearded man who had just woken up. He looked troubled, so Fred stepped out of his car, walked to him, and started talking to him. After about 10-15 minutes of talking, the red-haired man started to walk away. Then Fred stepped back into the car with a surprised look on his face. We who were in the car were wondering what just happened. Then Fred started to explain:

“His name is Cain. He told me that he had been robbed and needed to find the police station and the hospital. I was offering him a drive, but he insisted that he didn’t want any help. I even offered him a bed to sleep in, but he didn’t want that either. He also had alcohol with him and seemed to be confused. When he stood up he said he was going to take off; he wobbled a bit on the road; then he looked down on the ground, saw that he was barefooted, and said to himself that the ground felt hard. After he realised that, he looked up slowly and said to himself, “*Yep, I’ll take the hard way.*” And then he took off.

We were very surprised and laughing nervously. But still we were wondering what was going to happen to this man. He seemed to be some kind of hard man. He didn’t want to receive any help at all. Then we remembered his name was Cain, and out of curiosity we went to read about Cain from the Bible. Gen 4:9-17. We could really see the similarities of these two Cains. Could it really be the same Fred?! Naaah!! I wondered how many out there might need help, but whose hearts had been hardened until they didn’t want to receive any help.

Psalm 51:17. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, A broken and a contrite heart — These, O God, You will not despise.

Finding the Way Back Home

My grandparents

My grandparents told me something important to remember before I left on my travels. This was prior to my experiencing God's love with the dolphins.

I often visited my grandparents. I looked up to them very much. My grandpa is wise, very intelligent, has a sense of humour, and he knows how to catch the listener because they know he has something important to say. I particularly like him because of the love he has in his heart for God and his family. He cares. He thinks before he speaks. My grandma also cooks food fit for kings every time the rest of the family visits them.

I was sitting alone together with my grandpa one day and we were having a discussion about life. It was normal for him to share experiences from his life and give advice. Ukki (means grandpa) was talking about something that he valued very much in life and had shaped his worldview. He was talking about *finding the way back home*. Home is your fortress, a place where your life is stable. There warmth and safety are sure. Most importantly, it is where you should find *comfort* and love. It's a place where you simply feel at home.

There are many who are lost and some who don't even have homes at all. There are a lot of people who don't know God and don't know how to find him. According to my grandpa, the meaning of life is to seek Him, to find the way back home so that, where we once were lost, we now were found with God. And Ukki was pointing with his finger up to the sky, to our personal Father when he was explaining this value. Therefore there must be a will, an inner wish, a hope to want to find the way back home.

One year later after my experience in Australia

I remembered the words of my grandpa after my journey to Australia about one year later, around the time of Christmas. I had decided to find my way back home. One of the things that I learned from my trip was "*time, friends, and family.*" *Time* for me is how I used it. *Friends* that I valued, where to hang out with them. And *family* – the reason I decided to fly back to Sweden was I

had received the news that I had a little nephew who was born into the world. This helped me realise the importance of family.

So I flew from Australia back to Sweden. My family had no idea I was coming back. When I arrived, I stayed one night at my friend's place, who lived next door to my grandparents. I could observe them from one of the windows. I was also spying on my own parents who lived in the same area. It was such a strange feeling to see them without them knowing I was there. The feeling was indescribable, except as a longing to run towards them and hug them.

The day before Christmas I clothed myself as Santa Claus, with a white beard, sunglasses, and a big long red hat. First, I walked to my own father when mother wasn't at home and was presented to him as Santa Claus. But my father recognized me immediately from my movement and my voice and he just came and hugged me hard. He said that I needed to be more like an old man if I wanted to not be recognized. It was such a grateful moment!

Then I went to my grandparents and took my father's advice. My grandparents could not recognize me at all, because this time I was acting like I was moving and speaking like an old man. I asked them if they could read a special note for me. Then my dear grandparent started to read:

"There was a boy who had been away on his journey for a long time. He learned about time, friends and family. But most of all he learned about what it means to find the way back home."

When my grandpa finished the note, (grandma standing next to his side) they both had huge question marks over their heads. My grandpa said this was something he knows about, for he valued it very much. "Who are you?! How do you know the importance of finding the way back home?" After some moments of acting, I could not hold myself anymore. I took off my mask and said, "Because my home is here," and I hugged them. Tears of joys streamed out from my grandparents.

On the same evening I did the same with my mother, who had come home late, and her joy was another indescribable moment. May you who read this continue to find your way, all the way back home.

Jeremiah 29:13. And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart.

Righteousness by Faith

An important question

One warm day in the rainforest I was helping my friend Fred build his deck. It was to be a more stable place to set his tent. I asked Fred about the *1888 message* which he had mentioned while he was talking with one of his friends on the phone, and it seemed important as I heard it mentioned multiple times. At first Fred was uncertain, but after a moment of trust and conviction he told me it was a topic regarding Ellen G. White, a conference in 1888, and what happened there, to make it short. It had to do something with “righteousness by faith” - really interesting stuff!

I started to wonder what “righteousness by faith” really means. It seemed to be so important. I decided to go deeper into it, and in the Book of Revelation I found a verse which Fred said was connected to the “1888 message.”

Revelation 14:12. Here is the patience of the saints: here *are* they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus. (KJV)

So it has to do with *the faith of Jesus*?? Fred added that there were Bible translations that say it differently. For example, other Bibles read “*faith IN Jesus*” or “*faithful TO Jesus*”. I didn't know which one was the most correct, and I didn't understand the difference, nor why it mattered. Fred asked me what I believed righteousness by faith was. I guessed that it meant Jesus had died for us.

Then I asked Fred what he thought. He said that he believed the 1888 message had to do with the faith OF Jesus. That there was something Jesus believed. Not our faith in Jesus. But Jesus's faith in something. Then I understood the difference. It changed my picture of the verse regarding the “patience of the saints.” The saints will keep His faith. But what was His faith? What was it Jesus really believed in that we must keep??

Then Fred asked me again. “What was it Jesus said to His Father about the cup He was going to drink before going to die?” I was out of answers, so Fred shared another bible verse:

Matthew 26:39. And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou *wilt*.

Of course! Jesus’s faith was to do His Father’s will. That sounded more like righteousness by faith! For me it was an eye-opener. It seemed to be important above all things, even Jesus's own will when He asked His Father to take away this cup. Jesus had faith in His Father; to let His Father’s will come first before Jesus’s own will. I had formerly thought that Jesus Himself was doing His own will on earth. But this highlighted the importance of the Father-Son relationship, and caused me to have more questions.

This chapter should help you understand righteousness by faith. If it did then you have an important key for how to turn back home, that this life is not all about what we want, but what our heavenly Father wants for us. This started to become a battle within myself: do I want to do my will more, or my Father’s will? This battle was won by the faith of Jesus in His Father – Jesus was willing to give up His own will because He had perfect trust and confidence in His Dad.

Dear Father, I pray may your will be done.

Matthew 7:21. *Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.*

The Chiasm

My guitar

My guitar has a great sound. When I play it, I hear tones that fill my empty room with music. One special night I wanted to play some music on it. But when I played it that moment, I felt instead that my guitar wanted to play me. I think there was something that God wanted to show me, leading me to want to play the strings differently as a kind of experiment. Without playing any chords with my left hand, I played with my right hand alone. The only notes I could play on the strings were E A D G C E. I played the lowest and the highest string at the same time (The low E and high E); there was no special sound doing that. When it was silent, I played the next string above the lowest note (the A string) while at the same time playing the string under the highest tone (the C string). It was nice, but still there was no special sound. After the silence I decided to play the two strings in the middle (D and G). Suddenly, there was a special sound! Like a pulse <3, almost like the sound of a heartbeat.

A close friend

The very next day, a close friend of mine told me something interesting. During the same night that I was experimenting on my guitar, she had discovered something new about the heartbeat. The first sound in the heart is the two chambers that are closing, like closing a door. Then there is a pressure that is created in the chambers of the heart. The second sound makes the other doors open up, so that blood can flow further around in our bodies.

We started to discuss our heartbeats and the pulse sound of my guitar. But what kind of heartbeat was God trying to show me?

The Comforter

Earlier I had mentioned about the Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit. Since I went to Australia I had been wondering what it is, why it was important to us, and how we could receive it. In John 14:16 and 15:26 the Holy Spirit is mentioned as *the comforter*. In these verses it really sounds like it is a mysterious someone that I have had a hard time grasping and understanding. So I had been investigating the role of The Holy Spirit as our comforter. Two weeks later, after my

discussion with my close friend about the heartbeat and the experiment with my guitar giving a special sound, I was digging deeper in John chapter 14 studying about the Holy Spirit.

There I found a very unique section where verses were parallel and in line with each other. It was like the lines were leading to a middle point – the heart of the context. From John 14:15-21 I have marked the verses with different letters: A belongs to the other A (verse 15 with 21), B with the other coming B (verse 16 with 20), and getting closer to the middle with C and C (verse 17 with 19), and at last locking up at the heart <3 (verse 18) of the context. Here is the Chiasm of John 14:15-21:

(A) 15 If ye love me, keep my commandments.

(B) 16 And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another*
Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;

(C) 17 Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive,
because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know
him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

(<3) 18 I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to
you.

(C) 19 Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but
ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also.

(B) 20 At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me,
and I in you.

(A) 21 He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth
me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and
will manifest myself to him.

The meaning of Chiasm

As you may be sceptical of these verses being a chiasm, I have underlined the words that show why it looks like it is one. For example, Jesus is talking about his commandments and our love for Him in verses 15 and 21. And that the

world can't see Him in verses 17 and 19. In the paralleled verses 16 and 20 it might be a bit harder to understand, because the Father will give us another comforter. The word another* in greek is "Allos", which can also be understood as a different kind. A friend explained it to me that as Jesus left us from the earth, promising that He will come back to us, Jesus was risen in *another* form or as a *different kind*, as Jesus also explains that He was not to be touched before He was going to His Father (John 20:17). Then when we receive this different Comforter, "at that day", we shall know that Jesus is in His Father; we in Jesus, and Jesus in us! Therefore, in verse 18, the heart of the chiasm, I believe it is for us to understand that Jesus is to be our beloved Comforter.

When we talk about the Holy Spirit, we tend to think it is someone else other than Jesus. But in these verses, it explains to us that somehow the Father and the Son are in the same spirit, and that Jesus is the one who comes to us as a comforter.

An explanation of Chiasm

When the verses reflect on each other they bind like a code that meet in the middle of the context, emphasizing the heartbeat. In the middle is found the deep knowledge, the point of these verses, the nail on the head. It is the key (Chi) in this formed code, called "Chiasm".

At first I didn't know what a Chiasm was when I discovered the verses reflecting each other, until a friend explained that these verses must be a Chiasm. Then I asked a pastor if he had heard about chiasms before, and his answer was the following:

"Yes, I have heard of 'chiasm'. It is a common Hebrew poetic tool. The name comes from the Greek letter "chi" which looks like our 'X', hence the way it all meets in the middle. It's interesting too that X is the first letter of the name of Christ (it's also where the abbreviation of Christmas, 'Xmas', came from)."

God bless you and may you be drawn nearer to Jesus.

John 14:18. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.

God's Heart

The bridge

I was biking as fast as I could in a state of confusion, feeling like I had a heavy stone inside my chest. I was desperate to find a solitary place to pray. Night was coming, and the stars were finding their place in the dark blue sky, one by one they were kindled. I stopped at a bridge passing over a river. There was no sound and it was completely still. The path was too small for cars to go through, and very rarely would people walk there at night.

The water was reflecting like a mirror. I looked over the long river, and then over the huge field with trees at the end making an open space, almost like a circle between God and myself. I closed my eyes and knelt on the wooden bridge. I refused to be angry with God, believing that everything He put me through must have meaning. I didn't know why my close friend didn't want to hang out anymore.

I began to pray. "God, why is she acting like this? Why does she suddenly treat me like a stranger, putting me at a distance? Everything we went through together, how far we've come to know each other, and the trust we've built – now all of a sudden she's just cutting me off and not treating me seriously (like I'm nobody). Nothing of this makes sense."

I knew something wasn't right. I wanted to help my friend, for I had seen some sort of fear in her eyes. But she wouldn't tell me why. She gave me a short explanation that made me feel confused, something like we couldn't be around each other anymore. Why!? It was an explanation that wasn't honest in her eyes and to my ears. I was not blind, I only wanted the truth!

So I prayed to God, and I prayed for a long time, and I didn't want to go away from the bridge until I could get an understanding of what was happening. I asked God for wisdom, seeking for comfort and shelter under my Father's wings. The time passed by. It started to get colder and darker, but I refused to move. I looked up in the sky several times to where the stars were shining, talking and trying to communicate my deepest heartfelt thoughts to God. I wanted to understand God – I was about to lose someone that meant a lot to me over an issue about Him. But I knew my Father's love for me. I knew that

nothing was impossible for God. I decided to be patient, and I started to become still inside myself. I knew my Father loves me more than I love Him. The hours I prayed that night could be counted.

The hunger

I believed I was completely alone in wild nature, that it was only God and I out there. But then I thought I heard something in the bushes from a distance off my right shoulder, just a tiny noise. I continued to pray. But the noise started to become louder from the same place. I ignored it. I felt completely safe, and I was so focused on my prayer that I had decided not to get distracted. Suddenly I heard something groan like a hungry beast. It was like it wanted to feast on something and tear its prey in pieces. The noise became louder and louder from the same place. I wasn't sure if it was real or not. I started to wonder if I was crazy; how could it be getting louder in my head? But then I realized that the noise was coming closer to me.

Shivers crawled up my spine, and the hair on my neck stood on end. But I didn't move. I chose to be still in my prayer, and I closed my eyes again. Still the hungry beast was coming closer and closer. I refused to let the fear take a hold on me; I prayed to my heavenly Father, asking for His protection. I knew that God could have allowed me to die a long time ago to the sharks. But instead God had sent dolphins as protection. I had nothing to fear, except God. Now it felt like the noise was not further than 5 meters from me, if not less. I still wondered if I was imagining it, but it felt so real and close.

I don't dare to describe how close the noise came to me. But I prayed in God's Son's name for protection that the hungry beast would not attack me, and when I had done that the noise started to disappear. After a few seconds, it was quiet again. And I thanked my God and I continued to pray.

The Deer

After some more time talking to God I heard the beast groan again, but this time from a longer distance. What had got the beast's attention? I looked up

from the bridge, over the high grass and open field, and because the moon was now out I could see it. I saw a hungry animal chasing after a reindeer!

The beast was huge! It was only a bit shorter than the deer. In my surprise I didn't recognize the animal at first. But as I analysed it, it looked like a dog – then I realised, it was a wolf! This wolf was hunting the deer, and the deer was just a little bit faster.

But at certain moments it wasn't faster. As the deer was running it would take breaks, and instead of running into the forest it was like the wolf and the deer were running in circles, and it was like the deer didn't know where to go. As the wolf was sneaking towards the deer again while the deer was resting and catching its breath, something moved my heart.

My eyes opened wide and I started to run after them. I had such adrenalin and my heart was pounding hard. I didn't dare to go between the deer and the wolf though. I ran instead to the edge of their confrontation.

It was like sitting in a movie theatre, for they were really close to me. The wolf almost caught the deer several times. Still running hard, I came closer and suddenly yelled with all my might, roaring like a lion in anger: "DON'T YOU TOUCH HER! GO AWAY!" I even made moves with my body and roared as loud as I could, trying to scare the wolf away from this beautiful creature.

Suddenly it became quiet and I lost sight of them. I was scared that the deer might have been caught by this beast. To my relief, I saw her running slowly around the field. It was still alive; it seemed to be alright. But then, to my surprise, the wolf came out from its hiding place in the high grass and they resumed their chase. I started to yell after the wolf again: "WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE?! GO AWAY FROM HER!" I was roaring and roaring over and over again. I wanted to jump into the battlefield. But I had no idea what would happen if I did.

Finally the deer escaped into the forest. The wolf looked tired and stopped for a while. It looked hungry and then sad. I could see the wolf clearly from where I was. Suddenly I felt pity for this beast, for it looked like it was starving when it was breathing heavily, almost broken and tired because it didn't reach its prey. After some moments, the wolf raised himself up from the ground and began running at a slow pace towards the forest. Before it was gone, I noticed the wolf take one last look back at me. Then it ran off into the forest.

The Wolf, the Deer and the Lion

I ran back to my praying place and I thanked God for this experience. I took my bike from the side of the bridge and began the way back home. Thoughts were flying around my head. What just happened? Was there really a wolf? I almost couldn't believe it. I had always dreamt of being in the presence of a wolf and maybe one day seeing a real wild one too – and this was the day I saw it. How incredible. But why this moment? Why during my confusion and difficulty with my friend? Why couldn't it have been another day when I was in a better mood? Yet it actually felt like a comfort to me.

Was God trying to tell me something? I started to test the thought. I called the deer “HER”. What if this deer was a symbol of my friend who was in fear? I pursued this line of reasoning to see if this could mean something. I thought of a few different theories:

Theory 1: The Deer was my friend, the Wolf was fear, and I was the Lion, for I roared like one.

I believed God was trying to say something to me. I continued to pray about it. I decided to find out what my dear friend was afraid of, so I wrote letters and persisted to fight for her.

The investigation

I wrote a long letter, choosing my words carefully. You could say I put my cards on the table and I told her I knew something was not right between us. One week later, I received a letter back from her. In her reply she said she had decided to be honest and that we couldn't be friends anymore like we were previously.

It was because I didn't believe in the Trinity. That was why she was running away from me. Then everything fell into place, and I understood what was going on. I realized she was a strong Trinitarian, and it would mean trouble for her if she spent too much time with me.

I felt shattered. I still wanted to fight for understanding, acceptance and friendship. At the same time I didn't want to cause her more trouble. I realized there was only one thing I could do – let her go. After I read her letter I went for a walk in the forest; I felt tired and disappointed so I sought some space and comfort with God.

The wolf

A short while after that special night with the deer and the wolf, I found out something interesting about one of my middle names. My middle name “Ralf” means “Advice and Wolf”. When I found this out, I thought of another theory.

Theory 2: On that night, *The deer was a symbol of my friend and the wolf a symbol of myself.*

How could this be? I thought about it more. The wolf had a hard time letting go of the deer, as they were running in circles. I also had a hard time letting go of her, as I was constantly chasing. This made sense. But then who was the symbol of me when I was roaring at the real wolf? I remembered that I roared because I was thinking a lion would scare him.

Now, as you might know, in the Bible both God and Satan are symbolized as a lion. And one of them is “The Lion of Judah”.

God as a lion:

Hosea 11:10. They shall walk after the LORD: he shall roar like a lion: when he shall roar, then the children shall tremble from the west.

Satan as a lion:

1 Peter 5:8. Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:

This leads to Theory 3. Who was I a symbol of on the battlefield with the wolf and the deer? Satan or God?

The heart of God

I came to realise that Satan is doing everything he can to split people from God and people from each other. How this serpent tries to break God's heart! If we can understand the pain of losing a friend, a partner, a family member or even a child, how much more should God understand our pain? He gave His only-begotten Son to die for us, so we might live, and how much pain it causes Him to see the gift of His Son rejected every day! It's hard to comprehend, isn't it?

When there is confusion or pain in a relationship, then there is often some misunderstanding. The ego or the fear has taken over so the relationship becomes infected, which leads on to a broken spirit or a hard heart. We often turn to someone to find comfort and to be safe. But who will give us this comfort? Who will give true love? And what is true love? I once heard a pastor preaching about a boat which need two oars to move forward. With only one of them you'll go in circles, so it is the same with truth and love. That's how you move forward. When we are called to follow the Lamb where ever He goes (Rev 14:4), we can learn how to use these two oars that we may discover this perfect love. Then we'll find Jesus the Comforter who is ready to take out our pain and drive away the fear. My acceptance of the true God and His Son revealed my wolf like characteristics when I faced the loss of an earthly friend. Part of the process of coming to know the true God is beginning to see more of your own flaws and this can be very confronting. As we draw into a closer relationship with the true God, we realise that in the past we have tried to find comfort from people and things in ways that are actually harmful.

As I reflect on this event in my life, I see that many people in the church are being called to the worship of the true God, but when they are rejected by family and friends it brings out the wolf in them. This rejection exposes their seeking for and depending on others for comfort that only God can truly give. There is a great risk that people become bitter and angry towards the church when no one listens to them. In the stillness of the night you can hear the wolf-like traits of character in plenty of people and ministries that claim to present the truth of God and His Son. Let us be humble and ask Jesus to help us let the wolf go, and do no harm to those in the church who are not yet willing to take the journey into the truth of God and His Son.

Today there is a great controversy that not many are aware of. And it is about our God and whether He is truly loving. People often view God based on how

they are treated by other people. When they are hurt or offended, or when things go bad (maybe because of our own mistakes), we blame God. People can become so depressed when they feel no love, which can be the result of saying “there is no God” or “God doesn’t care about me.” Life then can feel so meaningless. That’s why it’s so important to be there for each other, to help and take care of each other. We can pray to God that He may use us in a right way and to help us in our unbelief.

But who is God? Isn’t it important that we understand who He is? Or shall we continue to say He cannot be understood and see Him as a mystery? Do you not believe that God, as a Father, would want us to find Him?

There is also an evil force trying to blur our senses and make it harder to find our God. Satan wants the worship and prayers that are meant for God. Satan does this by deceiving us into believing that God is something other than what He actually is, so we become easy to manipulate and can be led into darkness. Here is my conclusion regarding the wolf and the deer:

God was the Lion for trying to stop me from hurting my friend, or it was Satan for doing everything he can to come between the wolf and the deer.

Then there comes a huge confusion: who is God then? And who do we pray to when Satan and God’s identities are muddled in our mind?

Isaiah 11:6. The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them.

A Matter of Worship

When I was still in Australia I was constantly hungry for the wisdom of God. One of Ellen G. White's visions was presented to me. When I heard this vision, I marvelled, and it had a big impact on me. Then I started to wonder who we actually worship and pray to. This has helped me take my faith more seriously, and I hope that this will help your faith too. I have marked some words that I think are extra important. I present to you one of EGW's visions, 'the end of 2300 days':

End of the 2300 Days

*I saw a throne, and on it sat the Father and the Son. I gazed on Jesus' countenance and admired His lovely person. The Father's person I could not behold, for a cloud of glorious light covered Him. I asked Jesus if His Father had a form like Himself. He said He had, but I could not behold it, for said He, "If you should once behold the glory of His person, you would cease to exist." Before the throne I saw the Advent people--the church and the world. I saw two companies, one bowed down before the throne, deeply interested, while the other stood uninterested and careless. **Those who were bowed before the throne would offer up their prayers and look to Jesus; then He would look to His Father, and appear to be pleading with Him. A light would come from the Father to the Son and from the Son to the praying company. Then I saw an exceeding bright light come from the Father to the Son, and from the Son it waved over the people before the throne. But few would receive this great light.** Many came out from under it and immediately resisted it; others were careless and did not cherish the light, and it moved off from them. Some cherished it, and went and bowed down with the little praying company. This company all received the light and rejoiced in it, and their countenances shone with its glory. - {EW 54.2}*

I saw the Father rise from the throne, [see page 92.] and in a flaming chariot go into the holy of holies within the veil, and sit down. Then Jesus rose up from the throne, and the most of those who were bowed down arose with Him. I did not see one ray of light pass from Jesus to the careless multitude after He arose, and they were left in perfect darkness. Those who arose when Jesus did, kept their eyes fixed on Him

as He left the throne and led them out a little way. Then He raised His right arm, and we heard His lovely voice saying, "Wait here; I am going to My Father to receive the kingdom; keep your garments spotless, and in a little while I will return from the wedding and receive you to Myself." Then a cloudy chariot, with wheels like flaming fire, surrounded by angels, came to where Jesus was. He stepped into the chariot and was borne to the holiest, where the Father sat. There I beheld Jesus, a great High Priest, standing before the Father. On the hem of His garment was a bell and a pomegranate, a bell and a pomegranate. Those who rose up with Jesus would send up their faith to Him in the holiest, and pray, "My Father, give us Thy Spirit." Then Jesus would breathe upon them the Holy Ghost. In that breath was light, power, and much love, joy, and peace. - {EW 55.1}

*I turned to look at the company who were still bowed before the throne; they did not know that Jesus had left it. Satan appeared to be by the throne, trying to carry on the work of God. I saw them look up to the throne, and pray, "Father, give us Thy Spirit." **Satan would then breathe upon them an unholy influence; in it there was light and much power, but no sweet love, joy, and peace.** Satan's object was to keep them deceived and to draw back and deceive God's children. - {EW 56.1}*

Here are some Bible verses that I think are connected to this vision. May they bless you and keep you.

Daniel 8:13-14. Then I heard one saint speaking, and another saint said unto that certain *saint* which spake, How long *shall be* the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, and the transgression of desolation, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot? And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.

1 Corinthians 8:5-6. For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many,) But to us *there is but* one God, the Father, of whom *are* all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom *are* all things, and we by him.

John 17:3. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.

Revelation 7:10. And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.

Revelation 3:21. To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.

1 John 2:22. Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son.

1 John 1:3. That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 2:18. For through him [Jesus] we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.

John 20:22. And when he had said this, he breathed on *them*, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost:

Galatians 5:22-23. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

If you see the connection, I think you might understand where this is leading. We don't want to have the wrong spirit. Because, apparently, to pray to the wrong person, a person who you might even think could be God, has bad consequences. This vision of 'the end of 2300 days' describes to us mistaken worship, where we imagine God to be there but actually it is idolatry and Satan moves in to deceive. So the question is, how do we know we are praying to the right person? And how are we led today in our churches to the one true God?

Matthew 22:37. *Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.*

Lukas 11:9-10. *And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.*

The Unseen Elephant

A discussion

We all have a different picture of God. There is this typical parable of our describing God being like we are blindfolded and are trying to describe an elephant. Some can feel the nose, other the ears, tail and etc, and each thinks his part is the entire elephant. But when there are those who don't want to touch it or describe it at all, whether out of fear or whether they think it is impossible to describe... then it is hard for the boat to move forward.

One day, I had a discussion with a Seventh-Day Adventist friend about God. We had differing views on God. We both noticed that there can be a high tension between Christian people who look at God differently. It can be hard to have common ground between particular views because how we picture God is so personally valuable.

Who can tell what God looks like, except Jesus Himself? A strong Trinitarian believer and a strong Non-Trinitarian believer really seem to have a hard time understanding each other. Do both of them really put themselves in their opponent's shoes to empathize with what and how the other person believes? Or are they both just trying to make the other person with the different perspective think like themselves? If this is so, then there is little point discussing with each other as it becomes a war and not a dialogue, and pushing each other just causes more tension. But in this discussion I had with a friend about this, I learnt something new.

Regarding who God is and the Godhead, we both could agree that we weren't in agreement. I told her that I had thought about the many Trinitarian methods of believing in God before, and I suggested she try to test and see the other point of view. Why go immediately on the defensive against the other perspective?

My friend answered that she didn't want to take a look at it at all, nor try to understand it. Her reason was because she was afraid of going out of the church. Then I became surprised and wondered why we should be afraid of these things just because we understood the Bible differently. If you believe in the Bible, what could possibly make you scared of leaving the church? Must

fear so triumph over truth that we can't even look at the foundations of what we believe?

My friend said that it doesn't have to be like that and we simply have different points of view. She explained that it was like the following example. Suppose we were both looking outside the window:

I (the author) say, "hey look, there's a pink elephant over there."

"No its not, I only see a stone," she replies.

"It is fine if you think you see it differently; I simply don't agree with you," she explained. For me, I could of course accept what she said or agree to disagree. But that attitude was puzzling to me. I thought that we shouldn't stop there and come unto fast conclusions as to whether it's an elephant or not (or whether it is pink or not!), because then we could miss analysing it in greater detail. We could go nearer to the window and take a closer look at what's hiding in the mist of that high grass. Then you might actually start to see that it seemed instead to be some kind of an animal...

This is a parable I call the 'unseen elephant'. It is where there are two people who have many similar values and are searchers, but suddenly there is a disagreement. One has something new and wants to share, but the other person tends to stay with their previously held opinion, thinking the other person's information is unsafe because it begins to contradict their own information. In their mind, there shouldn't be an elephant there. But the Bible encourages us to test all things and keep what is good.

1 Thessalonians 5:21. Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.

I realised this fear of what is different to what our community accepts leads to the insular, defensive attitude that is widespread in the church. If we can't test all things and keep what is good, then I questioned whether the worldview in our church was truly formed on the solid rock. This was especially so if it is supposed to be based on the Bible. When we are scared of taking a closer look to see that it possibly could be an elephant, we often fall onto one of two sides. Either we tend to stay with things we assume are good but which we won't test to truly prove their value, or we continue to move onto proving new things without ever truly recognizing their value and holding fast to what is good.

Building on solid rock

The more I discussed this with Adventists and with Christians of other denominations, the more puzzled I became. It seemed so many of us are too comfortable with where we are and that we are scared of testing the truth. I believe that when we are in a weak position we tend to go with the stream (the way where there is many). Is that where we are safe?

Not always. Dead fish will also go with the stream. I once heard a man say this in another way: "Just because there are many on the sand doesn't mean that you are safe." Another example where you see this is in Daniel 3 in the Bible. There were only three men who stood up and refused to bend the knee to the golden statue. The rest did it out of fear. The huge majority probably thought that these three men were crazy for not bowing to the golden statue of Nebuchadnezzar. They didn't want to see what the three Hebrews saw, nor did they want to know the reasons for why they made their stand.

These three Israelites were not crazy. They were building their foundation on a solid rock. When they were thrown into that fire, Nebuchadnezzar could suddenly see that they were not three anymore but four.

Daniel 3:25. He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.

Here Nebuchadnezzar saw the identity of Christ. And if we see Christ for who He really is and want to follow Him and not a golden statue or any other false god, we start to build our foundation on a solid rock. For in the end, as God tests what is sustainable, those who don't build on the true cornerstone ("that the builders rejected") will be unable to survive when all things come to the light.

Matthew 21:42-44. Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes?

Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.

And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.

Lukewarm

So what options do I have as an Adventist or a Christian? I have been reflecting and talking with many people about what it means to be a searcher for truth, and how to deal with the truth once you find it. Firstly, never stop looking for it (even if you think you have the truth) and always strive to be humble and open, as we ought to be willing to accept we have something to learn and may have been mistaken previously. We should be stable in our faith, especially in practical matters. If you are not stable in your faith, then there is no anchor and the ship will never have rest. Therefore you need to find your anchor.

You might have heard that the SDA church is called Laodicea. In Rev 3 there is a description of believers being hot, cold or lukewarm. If you are lukewarm, your toxic Christianity will cause Jesus so much sorrow that He [Jesus) is forced to spew you out from His mouth, because you refuse to work in harmony with Him. Here is how I have understood these terms from the Counsel to Laodicea as they relate to truth:

Hot - Burning for it/passion.

Lukewarm - Sweeping it under the carpet/careless.

Cold - Fighting against it/scepticism.

Burning for the truth is what we should be like, right? We want to share and spread the gospel. But sometimes the truth hurts. So then people can tend to sweep the truth under a carpet and pretend nothing is wrong; they decide to stay in a normal comfort zone, often bound to where they are by habit and culture. On the other hand, people who really believe the opposite are fighting against it, trying to stop the ones who are hot by proving them wrong. I admire that, because I believe God can work with them from there, or sometimes He might need to bring some who are little bit too hot back down to earth...

Earlier in the discussion we mentioned that when people don't see an elephant (which is actually there), it either makes us careless or sceptical. Being lukewarm/careless could allow us to keep the good we already have (at least

for a while), but it would mean not testing all things that come to us. Those who are cold/sceptical could test all things, yet not necessarily keep what is good.

It is sad that too often Christians categorize those who see elephants as crazy and stay away from them as much as possible. This should not be the case. Hasn't it always been the case that the truth was something the minority of people had, and that truth was strange to the majority of people? Why are we determined to be lukewarm, willing to be careless and not wanting to test all things? What can we win by that?

In this we possibly could also see a connection to the parable where Jesus talked of the seed landing on different types of soil (Matt 13). The question is, which type of soil are you? And then, are you cold, hot, or are you the one who is lukewarm?

The truth

John 8:32. And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

Jesus says the truth shall set you free. What does this mean in our day-to-day life? When we have found the truth, why do we then sometimes pretend we don't know it? I believe what stops us most is fear. Therefore I want to encourage everyone to not to be afraid, because if Christ really is the truth (Joh 14:6) and He calls us to come unto Him (Matt 11:28), then He will protect us in our search for truth and our sharing of truth. If we are sincerely obeying the truth, we shall not be afraid of asking Him anything. But this sense of security comes from continuous prayer and study of His word, with the purpose that we may come closer to Him by testing all things and keeping what He has given us. For the truth shall set us free, shall it not? Through this process we learn how to build on the solid rock and not on a wrong foundation.

Building on the wrong foundation will lead to mixing error with truth. Therefore the mind starts to change and focus on the wrong things. Imagine how the majority of people in Babylon saw the three Hebrews who were thrown into the fiery furnace – they could think that the fire was symbolic for “hell”, and the three Hebrews were thrown into “hell” because they didn't

worship the golden statue which the majority had to believe is God. How is it with us? Do we have a similar idea to the majority of what will send us to hell? Do we allow ourselves to be paralysed from doing the right thing by letting our imagination run wild of the potential consequences of going against the stream? Here we need courage and faith that God will take care of us – we don't need to let the devil scare us from examining ourselves and what we believe.

When the young Hebrew men were thrown into the fire, God saved them. This story is a test for us today. What is truth and what is not? If a third of the angels in heaven were deceived and finally “judged themselves unworthy” (Acts 13:46) through the rumours and gossip which Satan spread, how can we as humans know what is right to believe?

Today we live at the end of time, symbolized in Daniel's dream by the statue's feet which are a mixture of iron and clay, a time when more and more knowledge is coming to light. As the fire of God's truth increases, those whose hearts are iron will finally melt and they will accept the truth. But to those with clay hearts the increased heat from God, His appeals of love, only causes them to harden more and more. The same truth causes some to harden and others to soften. How are we being prepared for the second coming of Christ?

Some theories and reactions from people in my church have raised my eyebrows. I have felt the need to raise some questions which I believe touch on the truth, so I could prove it all and see what is good that I should keep. Here are some things that I have seen:

1. As I described my discovery about the Spirit to some friends in church, I wanted them to check for themselves what it means in Greek and Hebrew and if they got the same impression as me. While we looked into it together, suddenly one of them yells... “AHA, RUACH, BREATH! Now I see where you are going. Show me more of these examples in the Bible and I believe you”.

2. When I was in Australia there was a Bible study leader who was teaching that Jesus never actually died on the cross, because He is God the Father Himself, and that He raised Himself from the dead. I couldn't contain myself and asked, “didn't He address the Father in Heaven when He said ‘Father why have You forsaken Me?’” Then the Bible study leader said that Jesus was only quoting from David's words in Psalm 22:1, like a prophesy, that Jesus only said

it to make it true. Such a teaching made me wonder. I asked, “who then is the voice from above saying ‘this is My beloved son, listen to Him whom I have sent,’ which occurred at His baptism and His transfiguration?” Suddenly the Bible study leader didn’t have an answer.

3. I was once reading in the Spirit of Prophecy and I found a quote that I wanted share with a friend who was a strong Trinitarian.

“There is no comforter like Christ, so tender and so true.” (RH October 26, 1897 Par. 15)

My friend’s reaction was the following: “WHERE DID YOU FIND THAT?” From his body language, his surprise, and his eyes wide open, it looked like he knew what this could mean...

4. I had a long discussion with another friend who said that she didn’t believe EGW had written that God was speaking to His own son when He said that they would create man in their [The Father’s and the Son’s] image. We both knew that it would be more problematic for a Trinitarian position if it was two persons that were created in the image of two persons, rather than three. My response was that I had the E.G. White quote in my hand and you can see it for yourself. But she replied that she didn’t want to see it, and she still may not want to believe Ellen White wrote this:

*“After the earth was created, and the beasts upon it, the Father and Son carried out their purpose, which was designed before the fall of Satan, to make man in their own image. They had wrought together in the creation of earth and every living thing upon it. **And now God said to His Son. ‘Let us make man in our image.’** As Adam came forth from the hand of his Creator he was of noble height and of beautiful symmetry. He was more than twice as tall as men now living upon the earth, and was well proportioned. His features were perfect and beautiful. His complexion was neither white nor sallow, but ruddy, glowing with rich tint and health. Eve was not quite as tall as Adam. Her head reached a little above his shoulders. She, too, was noble, perfect in symmetry, and very beautiful. {SR 20.2}*

This left me with a question mark: why does she not want to see the elephant?

5. Here is another quotation that was very significant to me:

“Never before had the angels listened to such a prayer as Christ offered at his baptism, and they were solicitous to be the bearers of the message from the

Father to his Son. But, no! Direct from the Father issues the light of his glory. The heavens were opened, and beams of glory rested upon the Son of God and assumed the form of a dove, in appearance like burnished gold. The dove-like form was emblematical of the meekness and gentleness of Christ. While the people stood spell-bound with amazement, their eyes fastened upon Christ, from the opening heavens came these words: 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. The words of confirmation that Christ is the Son of God were given to inspire faith in those who witnessed the scene, and to sustain the Son of God in his arduous work. Notwithstanding the Son of God was clothed with humanity, yet Jehovah, with his own voice, assures him of his sonship with the Eternal. In this manifestation to his Son, God accepts humanity as exalted through the excellence of his Son, God accepts humanity as exalted through the excellence of his beloved Son.' (RH, January 21, 1873 par. 5)

How many of them at this scene rejected Jesus as the Son of God? You might see the parallel with people today declaring that Jesus is not really the Son of God, but something else. We know that there is a lot of denial about the identity of Jesus from those who have walked with Him, just as there were many people that witnessed the majestic moment of Christ's baptism. Yet later on, when the Father reconfirmed the glory of His Son, they proclaim they heard something else and denied the voice of God.

John 12:28-29. Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again. The people therefore, that stood by, and heard it, said that it thundered: others said, An angel spake to him.

Our greatest enemy

How come those people denied Jesus being the Son of God, pretending they had not heard or heard something else when the mighty voice from heaven clearly said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased"? People will believe that there is no such thing as elephants, even when it is crystal clear in front of them. It sadly shows that our hearts are hardened. The greatest enemy we have is our self (the ego). I am not saying we should immediately accept new ideas, because the Bible tells us to prove all things, but we should realize that we don't know ourselves as Jesus does and that He has the bigger picture.

I think often of Peter, who was so sure he would follow Jesus where ever He went. EGW explains the following:

“When Peter said he would follow his Lord to prison and to death, he meant it, every word of it; but he did not know himself... Peter needed to distrust himself, and to have a deeper faith in Christ. Had he in humility received the warning, he would have appealed to the Shepherd of the flock to keep His sheep. When on the Sea of Galilee he was about to sink, he cried, “Lord, save me.” Matthew 14:30. Then the hand of Christ was outstretched to grasp his hand. So now if he had cried to Jesus, Save me from myself, he would have been kept. But Peter felt that he was distrusted, and he thought it cruel. He was already offended, and he became more persistent in his self-confidence. – {DA 673.3}

Many times I have prayed, God save me from myself, and it works! But only if you really believe He can, and you have to let Him. He will come to your rescue, comfort you and He will save you from your shame.

Romans 9:33. As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

Sometimes there are those moments when we think we see the unseen elephant. But then we have a hard time letting go of our preconceived ideas, especially when we feel offended, or if the picture doesn't fit as we think it should. This challenges our identity.

We need to ask God to discern according to how He sees, not as how man sees. In our flesh we don't want to see through God's eyes, because then we will see the sinfulness in ourselves. Through God's eyes we would see that Jesus has overcome this world (John 16:33), it belongs to Him, and we would be forced to make decisions and change how we act. We would see the suffering of the Son of God everywhere as he bares us (Isaiah 63:9), and we would be forced to contemplate His sacrifice all the time. I pray that we have faith to drink from the truth so that God can open our eyes, through Christ, and see what God wants us to see.

1 Corinthians 10:4. And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.

A Decision

My confusion

When I was still in Australia and had travelled to Sydney, I felt a great eagerness to know more about the Holy Spirit and what it means to us. I had a great impression that I had found a beautiful understanding. Still, as I was wondering why this was such a difficult topic for many, I decided to ask a pastor what he knew about it. This pastor also had great passion for this topic, and we had a meeting where he presented the book *Evangelism* to me in which was compiled EG White quotes about the Holy Spirit. I wondered if I should just accept them as they were written there. Some seemed to directly say that the Holy Spirit must be a separate person; it is the third person of the Godhead (three persons in the heavenly trio), and that silence is golden. I was struck by this and I wondered about the other information I had found, if it just was not true or too hard to talk about. Then I felt unsure what to believe about the Holy Spirit.

The return

As I went back to the rainforest to visit my friends one more time, I decided I wanted to know if this was really true. As I felt split about the information, I began to fast for the first time in my life; so I fasted for one and a half days until Sabbath evening came. During my fasting I was praying and I drank only water.

Then when Sabbath came Friday evening I was so hungry! Fred was coming home late. Fred's wife and I had been waiting for him with the evening meal. While we were waiting, I could see she was really stressed. She told me it was a long day with the customers at the Café where she had been working. When Fred came home and got out of his car, we could see sadness in his eyes. To make the long story short, he didn't have a good day.

We ate that Friday evening with each of us carrying a different kind of burden. Fred's wife was stressed out, Fred was low, and I was still confused. So we started the Sabbath with a prayer about our burdens; we wanted to welcome God and have Him bless the food. After we ate Fred took out a small heart-shaped box containing many small scrolls. These scrolls were organized into different colors. Fred looked at me and asked me to pick one. I saw my favourite colour yellow, and I chose the smallest scroll that was stuck in between the thicker ones. I thought to myself, "God looks to the smallest," so I want that one! I unrolled it and I saw a Bible verse and a comment from EGW under it.

Fred's wife picked one as well, and Fred picked one afterwards. Before he picked it up he was praying extra hard and quiet for himself. It was similar for them, a Bible verse and a comment from EGW under it. I can't tell you what comment from EGW they got as I have forgotten it now. Fred's wife's Bible verse was the following:

Isaiah 26:3. Thou wilt keep *him* in perfect peace, *whose* mind is stayed *on thee*: because he trusteth in thee.

She told me that her scroll meant much to her, and she didn't have to feel stressed anymore. Fred's Bible verse was the following:

Isaiah 30:21. And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This *is* the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left.

He told me it was a comfort for him, and he didn't have to feel sadness anymore. My verse was the following, together with a quote from EGW:

Exodus 33:14. And he said, My presence shall go *with thee*, and I will give thee rest.

"Christ's spirit, his love, softens the heart, subdues the soul, and raises the thoughts and desires towards God and heaven. - (SC 72-73)

I felt I was not confused anymore. Peace and calm came to us that Sabbath evening. Together we all were comforted! So often we find that God, through

trial and seeming confusion, leads us into truth if we are humble and teachable. The following days I decided to dig deeper, and I found a lot more information I didn't know that made me astonished. A few years later in 2017, there was a quarterly Bible study in the Seventh-Day Adventist church about the Holy Spirit and spirituality. I felt it was only presenting one side. Then I made a decision to write and lift up the perspective on the other side of the coin. This book, 'How the Comforter Changed My Life', links my first book, 'Understanding the relationship between the Father & the Son through their image' and third book, 'The Comparison', together. These two other books go deeper into the theology of what I was studying. The reason I wrote them is because I strongly believe in my church and care for my friends. Many of them don't agree with me and that's ok, as long as they know the information is there to be found. I know there are those who will feel puzzled by this book, because many think EGW is clear that 'silence is golden' regarding the Holy Spirit. This subject I go into in depth in my third book 'The Comparison'. Therefore, I encourage you to read my two other books that reveal exactly how I came to believe, and that it is not as simple as how the scriptures have been presented to us.

I'm not asking you to agree with me, but I want to encourage you to ask God, to test all things and keep what is good. You just have to determine your will to know the truth and ask in the spirit of humility, sincerity, and love for others, and He will show you what your heart needs. I pray that you may have an open mind and that He will take away your fear. Please don't be afraid to search for the truth, John 8:32. He loves you, and nothing is impossible for Him, which I believe into all my bones. He can show you His mysteries when needed. May He give you rest in all of this, not the superficial rest that comes from the world, but the life-giving rest that comes from the One true God and His Son, which He [The Father] has sent (John 17:3).

“The Lord will teach us our duty just as willingly as He will teach somebody else. If we come to Him in faith, He will speak His mysteries to us personally. Our hearts will often burn within us as One draws nigh to commune with us as He did with Enoch. – {DA 668.4}

Ps: There is much more information I would like to share that is in my other two books, therefore I have chosen these last three quotes from EGW as an encouragement for further reading. Through these I could truly say, The Holy Spirit is the presence of God.

“I will not leave you comfortless; I will come to you.” The divine Spirit that the world's Redeemer promised to send, is the presence and power of God.” {ST November 23, 1891 Par. 1}

“And the Saviour promised that His presence would be with them always. Through the Holy Spirit He would be even nearer than when He walked visibly among them.” {MHH 48.5}

“After the passing of the time in 1844 we searched for the truth as for hidden treasure. I met with the brethren, and we studied and prayed earnestly. Often we remained together until late at night and sometimes through the entire night praying for light and studying the Word. [...] When they came to the point in their study where they said, “we can do nothing more,” the Spirit of the Lord would come upon me. I would be taken off in vision, and a clear explanation of the passages we had been studying would be given me, with instruction as to how we were to labour and teach effectively. Thus light was given that helped us to understand the scriptures in regard to Christ, his mission, and his priesthood. A line of truth extending from that time to the time when we shall enter the city of God, was made plain to me, and I gave to others the instruction that the Lord had given me.” {RH, May 25, 1905 par. 24}

Conclusion

By Niklas Smårs

I hope this book is an encouragement for people to start writing their testimonies so we can spread the word and be drawn closer to Jesus. That's why the introduction of this book gives the illustration of a pen as the greatest weapon on earth. When we understand the deep love God has for man, we can become changed from the inside out to start the adventure with Him and letting Jesus form our character.

The challenge is if we are hardening our hearts, then we won't let God help us overcome. Therefore, sometimes we need an experience to first become a broken spirit that realizes the need for help. If we let God melt our hardening hearts and comfort our brokenness, then I believe God can truly begin to work with us. We all have a background and a story to tell, when we share and listen to each other we become part of making the bigger picture of the temple of God, of whom we are all stones (1 Peter 2:5).

I hope the story of finding our way back home can help us grow a deep inner will where we're looking more for God. If we simply don't care, the will and motivation become very low. I do believe we all long for having a place where we can find rest, warmth and a safe environment where we can lay our heads. To be able to find that true rest, we have to understand that we are constantly in a spiritual battle to do less of our will and more of our Father's will. When we do pray and practise the Father's will in our lives, then we hold a golden key that leads to heaven.

The closer we come to God and process a relationship with Him, the more we understand not only what lays in our heart, but we also care more for what lays in the heart of God. This should give us greater wisdom and an eagerness to work more for Him. As we are in a time where there are great philosophies and forces that are trying to pull us back from God, we always need to test all things and keep what is good. As we continue to test all things, moving forward, following the Lamb wherever He goes, we will discover that perfect love which comfort us and fills our void.

This book became a piece of art of what God has done in my life. Through prayer and by being inspired by the book of Daniel, I wrote chapters that were happening in different times of my life, while still giving a chronological

perspective. May you find and start writing your piece of art that God may lay in your heart.

By Danutasn (Danny) Brown

And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death. (Revelation 12:11)

Unlike Niklas, I wasn't born a Christian, nor did I have any Christian friends growing up in Thailand. When I first started going to church in my 20s, one of the things that intrigued me most was the idea of *giving a testimony*. I loved the honesty of it, the rawness, the uniqueness to each person's experience. We cannot see God, but God can express His working in our world through the people who love Him and walk with Him.

It can seem daunting to change our sinful habits. God promises that He will do it in us through Christ, but how can I take hold of this promise by faith? For me, I could not stop drinking alcohol until I met a missionary named Josh who had successfully quit. His life experience was like mine. Through my interaction and friendship with him, I came to believe I didn't need alcohol to be fulfilled – I didn't need it as my comforter. His case seemed more difficult than mine to change, yet God had helped him. Encouraged by his life and his words I gained the strength to determine to quit, believing that God would perform this in me. I haven't drunk alcohol now for many years. This is the power of the testimony.

Christ placed His seal on the words that Peter spoke in His defense. Close beside the disciple, as a convincing witness, stood the man who had been so miraculously healed. The appearance of this man, a few hours before a helpless cripple, but now restored to soundness of health, added a weight of testimony to Peter's words. (AA 65.2)

I have noticed that many of us don't acknowledge our past. People often act like they've always known what they know now and that they have overcome their bad tendencies through sheer self-will. I have asked people, "what Pastor do you like, or what books have you read on that subject?" A common response is "the Bible, that's enough." Or they mention famous pastors whom they have never met. This type of thinking makes the Christian walk a very impersonal one, where relationships among Christian brethren seem unimportant and we have little to learn from each other. I have always felt that

we should put more value in listening to the people God has put in our lives and the events that happen to us.

It is on this issue that I really like Niklas' book. He cares for the people he meets and acknowledges the things they have taught him. Special events like the wolf and the deer are prayed over, asking God what would you teach me by this? It makes the lessons much more concrete. In the events, the conversations, and the reflections Niklas had of what has happened, we see the hand of the divine. God willing more of us would be humble enough to share our experiences, openly admitting our original ignorance and explaining how we were able to grow in faith. We are all Christ's children, and as brothers and sisters we can learn from each other without comparing "which of us should be the greatest." Through hearing each other's testimonies we get more glimpses of our Lord Jesus, as we each have unique experiences with our beloved Shepherd.

Christ had bidden the first disciples love one another as He had loved them. Thus they were to bear testimony to the world that Christ was formed within, the hope of glory. "A new commandment I give unto you," He had said, "That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another." John 13:34. (AA 547.1)

When I first became a Christian, I thought all my friends would join me and we would walk the road together. This didn't happen. I remember being upset with God that my friends weren't interested. God should make them interested! They should help me preach and share! But God told me that I had to first overcome my sins; I had to first walk the path and truly see that Christ was good, then my testimony would have power – but as a baby Christian, I had no testimony for my friends because reformation had yet to happen in my life. I began to understand my solemn responsibility. If I didn't follow my convictions, if I gave up, then my friends would think that it all was a passing phase. I had to stay with Christ not only for my soul, but for theirs also, working out the great truths of the plan of salvation so that when they were interested, I would be ready to share with them.

Faithfulness in preaching the word, united with a pure, consistent life, can alone make the efforts of ministers acceptable to God and profitable to souls... Paul regarded the Corinthian brethren as his testimonial. "Ye are our epistle," he said, "written in our hearts, known and read of all men: forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ

ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart.” (AA 326-327)

Being the first on a path is scary. The road ahead seems dark. That is how it is for many of us Father-Son Adventist Christians. Stepping outside of the creed of our community of faith is like walking out on water. If we don't keep our eye on Jesus and get proud that we know new truth, we sink. We bear a big responsibility also to our brothers and sisters, who watch us to see what the doctrine and presence of the begotten Son will do for us and in us.

The devil tries to shake our faith by giving us false imaginings that this path will be lonely, joyless, and hopeless. But if we truly believe that Christ is with us, how can it ever be those things? For in Christ is fellowship, in Christ is joy, and in Christ is all hope. But those things are only in Christ in a New Covenant experience, when we rest in Him and keep moving forward.

And such trust have we through Christ to God-ward: Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God; Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life. (2 Cor 3:4-5)

This is why Niklas' book is so special to me. He shares, in great detail, how he came to learn this truth, how it affected him, and how it caused him struggles. We read what happened to him and we don't feel alone. We see that God is good. We see that God has taken care of him and led him and our faith is increased.

I pray we had more books that could testify to the goodness and graciousness of God! Surely it would help us to overcome, surely it would help us not to love our lives unto death. I praise God for this and I pray that anybody who reads this can feel that they can write and share with us. In much of the great doctrinal controversies over the centuries, it was the practical Christians of humble faith who were in the right, not the great teachers of philosophy whose names are remembered where the names of the simple are lost. Therefore I consider it my greatest honour as an editor to help get books made by those who don't think themselves writers.

May we continue to testify for God and His Son. Let us "run, that we might obtain." (1 Cor 9:24)

How the Comforter Changed My Life

What do we do when we don't dare to speak up, yet there is a fire within that needs to be shared? When God challenges us with His love through new ideas that go against our preconceived beliefs, how can we know if they are true? And if they are true, how do we incorporate them into our lives? As a 21-year old, Niklas left Sweden to travel the world. He was challenged by many things along the way, but what challenged him most were the ideas and experiences he learned of beautiful new Bible truths and discovering how much God loved him. Then he couldn't be silenced anymore and had to learn how to write, to share a testimony where he was drawn closer to Jesus.

It is not easy to stand up for what you believe while also respecting the beliefs of others. It is a path that is not mapped out, and there are few teachers. Yet these are truths about God! God Himself would guide the light of truth in Niklas' life. But how?

This book is a collection of encounters, dialogues, and reflections that outline a journey that many of us can relate to. May it encourage us and help us to reflect on our own walk with Christ, our comforter.

*There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear:
because fear hath torment.*

He that feareth is not made perfect in love.

1 John 4:18