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Weekly Encourager – 23 August 2009

**IF HOPE IS EVER LOST, REMEMBER THAT GOD IS HOLDING ON TO YOU - A FACT THAT WILL HELP CARRY YOU THROUGH**

***"But now, Lord, what do I look for? My hope is in you." Psalm 39 verse 7. "Be strong and take heart, all you who hope in the Lord". Psalm 31 verse 24***

How important it is for you as a born-again schizophrenic to keep hope of becoming free ALIVE each and every day. It is no easy matter to stay away from the edge where all hope is lost and life just sinks into darkness. But faith in Jesus can keep hope alive!! Thank God that through His Son, Jesus Christ you have a hope that is steadfast and certain – He is well able to inspire a living hope and impart a victorious fighting chance to turn the tables on the most embroiled spiritual darkness of all ....schizophrenia.

I feel constrained to return to the message of inspiring hope for your freedom. Just to say a new thing this time - that when you feel all hope has gone and it seems that God himself has left you, know this ... He is still hanging on to you. The experience you may be even going through right now of abandonment and isolation does not mean that God has left you. The fact is when you lose your hope and hold on God, He never loses his hold of you.

I well remember such a particular time of utter abandonment in the psychiatric hospital. It followed suffering a psychotic episode after a period of extreme pressure at work. Life was at the lowest ebb. As I sat in the corridor waiting for my turn to see the psychiatrist, I well remember that there was not a trace of hope in my heart. Every bit had gone. Faith seemed to have disappeared. I tried to encourage myself in the Lord but as I looked within it was despair and not faith I found.

All I could do throughout the length it lasted was to think that though I could not hold on to God, I knew He was holding on to me. As a Christian, you will have been encouraged to have living faith in God and not to depend on your feelings. "Faith, precious faith is what your Christian walk is all about - so don't rely on your feelings because they vacillate all the time," someone may have told you or it may have been preached in a sermon. But what do you do when both faith and feelings disappear? And it is very common in the life of a born-again schizophrenic. What is the action required to carry you through? Simply this, hang on to God - yes, hang on no matter what you are facing or feel.

Remember to keep the desire of hope alive too. Never shut down on hope. Don't settle in the slough of despair where you say that to hope is no good because things have been the same now for far too long. I could have done that after 26 years in a schizophrenic prison. Some said the longer you have had the bondage the less likely you are to come out of it. But these people do not reckon with God. "All things are possible to him that can in Jesu's name believe." Faith, powerful faith linked to mighty prevailing prayer always comes up with an answer to prove such declarations wrong. Jesus waits to prove Himself strong on behalf of those who wait on Him!!

When you think that ONLY Jesus can bring you through the dark bondage of schizophrenia, how important it is to keep that hope alive!! Your hope and faith are being placed in no less a Person than God Himself who defeated the demonic bondage that is behind schizophrenia. Hope may be as dim as dim can be but it is not a poor deceptive thing. Knowing that as long as there is Jesus there is hope, hope of freedom to come out of schizophrenia will grow and grow within your heart until you know it is much nearer to realisation - then it will become yours as Jesus moves into your life and the demonic presence is driven out.

"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God." 2 Corinthians 1 verse 3-4

Throughout more than 50 years of following Jesus, it's been a tremendous comfort to receive words of encouragement from the Bible, numerous preachers and individual Christians. Those words came during many crises of life when an invasion of spiritual light and truth was needed to pull me back to a state of equilibrium in God.

As a born-again Christian who is earnestly seeking total freedom from schizophrenia through Jesus Christ, you too will need words of spiritual comfort to strengthen you in the fight to become free. As someone set free by Jesus after 26 years of schizophrenia (and now been off all medication for 21 years), my testimony may provide that comfort you need from time to time to pursue your freedom.

Do remember every testimony belongs to Jesus. It is His Name and the power of His Name that is always glorified when acts of salvation, deliverance or healing are experienced. It always thrills me that we can comfort one another with the comfort that we have received from God himself, even the comfort contained in powerful testimony.

The comfort I wish to pour into your life right now is that there is real hope of freedom for you to defeat schizophrenia because Jesus proved He can do in my life. What He did for me, He can do for you. You may have thought that you are going to have to live a limited lifestyle with the freedom you long for out of your reach. Not so!! Hold on to the precious words of comfort of Jesus, receive the words He has spoken as prayer ammunition in your fight to be free. He can pierce the spiritual darkness of schizophrenia - of that there is no doubt.

We receive regular expressions of thanks from schizophrenics whose hope of becoming permanently free has been re-ignited in their spirit. And when we receive a letter of excitement from someone - as we did last week - who has freshly been delivered and healed by Jesus it fills us with inexpressible joy and delight!!

***PRAYER: Dear Heavenly Father, thank you for the promise made by your Son Jesus Christ that you will never leave me nor forsake me. In those times when I don't feel your presence, help me remember that you are still holding on to me and will continue doing so throughout my life. Thank you for your faithfulness and for your power which is able to lift me up and make me strong to go on to seek your face and freedom. Amen***

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