

## **There may be pain in the night, but joy comes in the morning.**

The last 12 months for us have been months of trial and challenge and testimony and grace and breakthrough.

While in Canada last year for a Harvest School Reunion we heard of an “attempted coup” in our church, which we planted in 2011. The immediate feeling in that situation was one of betrayal and loss. The young men who turned on us were our spiritual sons who we had spent many years of time and energy pouring our lives into. Everything we had done to give them a foot up, to provide for them and support them was turned on us in anger. But even so, in the midst of the fall out we felt quite peaceful and protected and we were able to draw on many of the painful lessons we have learnt here over the years. The church lost those men and their families and it seemed to affect our group of young people but otherwise we carried on with only minor ripples. Satan was trying to rob our peace in church leadership that Jesus had brought us to since Harvest School in 2015.

Just as we were recovering from ‘the coup’ we discovered that our three foster sons had been playing an intricate game with us. Mohau, our son, who had been struggling through his life of rejection and addiction and gang membership had done one of his fence jumping endeavours and gone off to get drunk. On sobering he told us everything that had been going on with the three young men and it was heart-breakingly horrid. Again, we felt deeply hurt and betrayed particularly by Mzwakke, who has been in church since we began and has taken leadership responsibility in the church. He was the one we were counting on to demonstrate something different to the street kids. All three of them left the house within 24 hours. Leaving us feeling beaten and exhausted.

Now it seemed like everyone we had invested in, everyone we had believed that Jesus was changing and bringing to beautiful freedom had crashed and burned themselves and us. It began to feel like this was all a waste of time.

We continued through to Christmas, mainly surviving and just getting on but around Christmas time we began to unravel. The strain was on our marriage and our peace was disappearing fast.

Over the time between July and January the sense of isolation and disappointment was cemented by a painful succession of amazing people coming and voicing a desire to come and join with us and support us in leading the church. Each time we would begin to get our hopes up that we were going to get some partners in the call, and each time it did not happen leaving us feeling bewildered.

We went back to the UK to be with family but at the same time Laura’s dad was undergoing tests for suspected cancer, which added to the weight and pressure on Laura and I. I returned to SA before Laura and had a week to deal with my heart and faith and dig around for Jesus’ heart. When Laura arrived back she did not want to be back. She had had enough. This was all too hard and pointless.

We eventually came to Jesus together and called out, "Jesus, what do you want for us? What have you called us to?" We asked him to confirm the call to us. Which he began to do in such a faithful and gentle and loving way.

He began to speak into the disappointment. He spoke about success and failure and faith for the impossible. He gave us stories that made us laugh they were so similar to ours, stories of people taking in delinquent teenagers and seeing nothing for years. He gave us books about great people persevering in a call that seemed futile and was deeply frustrating. He prophetically brought us three times on the same day through different people to the song, Do It Again. The lyrics of which start with –

"Walking around these walls, I thought by now they'd fall, but you have never failed me yet. Waiting for change to come, I know the battle is won."

And then Jesus brought Mohau home.



One Sunday morning I got a call from a church member asking if I would go to the hospital because her son had been stabbed. As I was driving there I had a strong sense that I would see Mohau and as I pulled into the car park I saw someone standing outside with his head in the window and immediately recognized his pants. He was in bad shape with blood running from two head

wounds, sunken eyes and anger underneath. As I spoke with him he told me what he had been doing and the tears of our wonderful softhearted son began to flow. I asked him if he was going to come with me to church and he turned and ran off.

He came to see us the next day and has been here now solidly since then, the longest continuous time in two years.

Mohau has been doing so miraculously well. We thank Jesus daily for him and for his transforming work in His life. We still have the occasional teenage parent disagreements but peace is reigning in his heart and he is becoming more the Mohau Jesus made and much less the hard cover-up he had developed. He is learning what family really means and what love looks like. He began to learn the guitar and last week lead worship in church for the first time. That boy loves to worship.

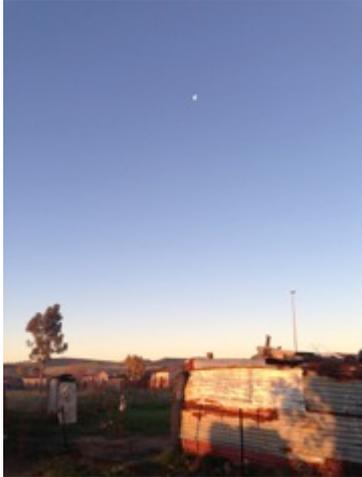
In January we were asking Jesus for some helpful prophetic utterances, having felt that we had been in a prophetic desert for many years and then we had two months of him speaking through others to us.

Heidi Baker came to Johannesburg and we travelled up to receive from her. She was typically very late but we had a wonderful time worshipping and it was refreshing to be in the place of that fervent, faith-filled holy spirit language and atmosphere again.

A few weeks later, we had a team from Bethel School of Supernatural Ministry come to visit our church for four meetings over one weekend. Every time I collected them from the hotel they would spend the journey prophesying over me! The first day was comedic. Every word they spoke was a confirmation of

every prophetic call we have ever been given. I was filled with tearful joy as Jesus confirmed our call.

And then a week after that Eric Johnson and Banning Liebscher were also in Johannesburg for a Kingdom Come Conference. We were not able to go as a family but I went with a friend who leads a church down the road and had such an incredible time worshipping and feeling Jesus knead my heart with His love and direction.



We continue to trust Jesus as He builds His church with us here in the township of Bethlehem. We acknowledge that we are the wrong people for the job and embrace His greater wisdom. Jesus repeatedly turns up among us as we worship and this group of poor believers is learning how to worship with the angels in adoration. *He* is discipling the people. *He* is bringing them to mature faith.

Three weeks ago we had a shock regarding the building we rent for church. Some people turned up a while ago saying it was for sale. I checked with the municipality and they said they knew nothing. Then some more people turned up saying the municipality had given them permission to use the building and we had to move out. What was so amazing was that the previous night as we had been worshipping at the church we felt very clearly that we should pray for the building and land, something we do not often do. I felt a bit of fear rise up when we got the call about the people turning up and so Laura and I drove down to the building to worship with the ladies who do crèche there. As we were worshipping I played a song I had discovered on YouTube that morning, "Psalm 23 I am not Alone". We all loved the song and sang it a few times. As we were preparing to go home I told one of the ladies I would Bluetooth it to her phone but as I was doing it I could hear the song playing. The lady stuck her head out of the door to her shack and smiled. She had just switched on the TV and the music video of that song was on the channel the TV was on! A hilarious miracle and Jesus saying, "I am your shepherd, I am with you!"

Laura has recently begun the first steps in starting a pregnancy and baby support ministry. She has felt called to this for a long time and has now walked with a few young women through their pregnancies but not really known where to go from there or who would walk with her in it! But the church now has a great group of younger woman with babies so we are gathering as a mum and babies group to learn together, to enjoy our babies and give them the best foundations we can. We have been able to invite and add in other mums from the community and are growing a group of pregnant women to assist in the months leading up to birth and hopefully beyond! We are excited to see where Jesus will take this and dreaming for great things and asking Jesus to send people to us to help!

Phoebe, Abigail and Joy are our great delight. They are such beautiful people whom God is preparing for a life of fullness and Joy in Him.

Phoebe is becoming a beautiful, thoughtful and creative young woman. Out of the blue, Phoebe qualified to represent the Northern Free State at gymnastics two weeks ago, having only begun gymnastics classes in February! So we are went to Pietermaritzburg as a family for the competition last weekend and had a lot of fun at the beach together.



Abigail is a wonderfully unique personality, full of passion and energy. She desires lots of attention and cuddles and is easily affected emotionally by things that go on around us. She is learning to be the wonderful, unique little girl Jesus designed.

Joy is now 18 months and the most adorable and fun and loving little sprogget ever! You would love the cuddles you get from this one. She is running around and chatting a lot and now knows all the animal noises any little person could need!

Laura's dad's lump was not cancer and he under went a successful operation to remove it.

Our visas expire in November, which means reapplying in September. Please pray for uncomplicated application and renewal.

So that is our last 12 months. We thank Jesus for all that he is doing in us. We are so grateful that He loves us so much that He refuses to leave us as we are.

Despite the distance, our hearts are with you all and for you. We would love to hear from you all, maybe plan in some visits? We need our family.

All our love

Jeremy, Laura, Mohau, Phoebe, Abigail and Joy