

{Slide: Logo}

## FOUNDATIONS

I grew up in a household that had a tool shed  
My father, built up a collection of tools and other stuff over the years that literally filled a whole room with items, some of which I'm sure are over 30 or 40 years old.  
And you don't dare touch his stuff.  
Or threaten to throw it away.  
Or even ask him to consider the question, "if you haven't used something for 20 years ..."

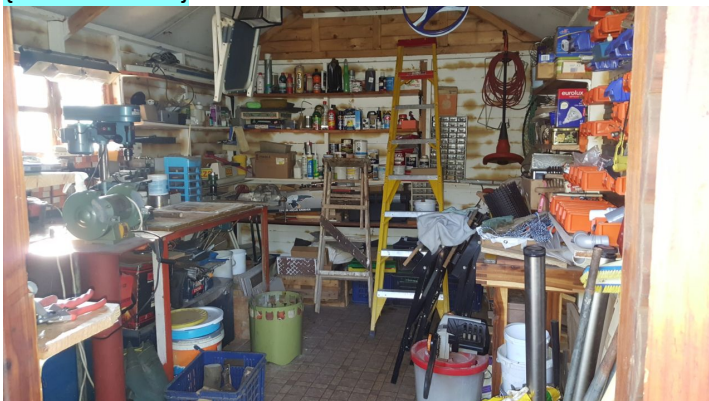
He taught me my DIY skills in that shed  
If anything had to be done at home, we did it.  
Occasionally we were forced to ask professional help, plumber, electrician ... but it was seldom  
That tool shed has always been and still is my goto place when I have any DIY job to do.

I brought some pictures along to show you what the current version of the shed looks like:

{Slide: Shed Master}



{Slide: Shed 1}



{Slide: Shed 2}



{Slide: Shed 3}



{Slide: Shed 4}



Here is the process  
Something DIY needs to be done.  
Go to the shed and find the right tools and other stuff,  
Go to the job  
Realise that something else is needed  
Go back to shed and find it or make it  
Go back to job  
And so on until the job is done

In Capetown I have a tool corner of the cupboard and a set of drawers at my desk that are **my drawers**, Marc's drawers, with Marc's stuff in the drawers.

You don't mess with my stuff.  
Every single item in there is there for a reason.  
A very good reason  
I may not always know what the reason is, but whatever it is, it's a good reason.  
If something needs to be done, guess where our first port of call is?  
My stuff  
Just saying

### 1) All about God

The Christian life is similar  
And yet obviously infinitely deeper.  
Over the next two weeks we are going to talk about the phrase, "Love one another".  
It's a seemingly simple to understand phrase and yet  
When it comes to the human character, exceedingly complicated to implement  
**Because we continually get in the way.**  
To be able to do this better we need to build a healthy appreciation of the Christian tool shed that God has given us.  
What's a Christian tool shed?  
It's a well defined place where you can go to,  
Where your Christian life begins  
Where you will be going back to for the rest of your life  
As you deal with life  
to get what you need,  
To help us keep our eyes fixed on Jesus

And next week we are going to look at how to use the tools in the shed.  
The reason we are going to follow this path is this:

{Slide}

If we don't have a proper respect for God and His Word,  
We CANNOT  
Have a healthy respect for each other  
OR  
Anything else Christian  
For that matter

Why is that?  
Because the Word of God is:  
the root  
the foundation  
the core  
Of our very existence as a disciple of Jesus.

Our 'goto' Scripture for this series is Joh 13v34

{Slide: Joh 13v34}

<sup>34</sup>"A new command I give you: Love one another.  
***As I have loved you, so you must love one another.***

A Scripture that at first seems easy to understand  
But as we try and make sense of it we will see that it has an infinite depth to it that will keep us going till Jesus comes.

Jesus says He has a new command for us  
He says we need to, "*love one another*".  
That makes sense, few would argue with, it is certainly the core of the Christian faith.  
The command is new, because Jesus has now been around a while and has been able to model this love for us and therefore He continues the sentence with  
***"As I have loved you, so you must love one another"***

And so today we will unpack a little what the, "*as I have loved you*" could mean  
**Because us loving others, hinges on our understanding of us being loved by God  
If we don't get the one, we won't have the foundation to do the other.**

And so next week we will continue with, "*so you must love one another*".

One person that embodied the relationship between God and Man is David  
He said things in the Psalms  
About His relationship with God  
That were spiritually deep  
And when I read them I feel the shallowness of my faith.  
David gets God in a way that is just breathtaking  
Fortunately he wrote it down in black and white for us.

We just have to read the words of David to get an appreciation of how the King of Israel regarded his relationship with God and His Word.

Why is it important to learn from some great examples.  
Because they were great examples because of their attitude towards all things Godly.  
When we read about how other people thought about their relationship with God it helps us see where we are at.  
It should awaken something in us.

A desire  
An eagerness  
An excitement  
As we realise that we have a way to go when it comes to a relationship with God.  
So as we read this, put yourself in the role of the speaker.

{Slide: Psa 18v30-36}

<sup>30</sup>As for God, his way is **perfect**:  
The LORD's word is **flawless**;

*he **shields** all who take refuge in him.*  
*<sup>31</sup>For who is God besides the LORD?  
And who is the Rock except our God?*  
*<sup>32</sup>It is God who arms me with **strength**  
and keeps my way **secure**.*  
*<sup>33</sup>He makes my feet **like the feet of a deer**;  
he causes me to **stand on the heights**.*  
*<sup>34</sup>He **trains my hands** for battle;  
my arms can **bend a bow of bronze**.*  
*<sup>35</sup>You make your saving help **my shield**,  
and your right hand **sustains me**;  
**your help has made me great**.*  
*<sup>36</sup>You provide **a broad path for my feet**,  
so that **my ankles do not give way**.*

This is someone whose very life is lived with God as His everything  
He starts off by putting God in the right place in the Christian hierarchy

{Slide: Psa 18v30}

*<sup>30</sup>As for God, his way is **perfect**;  
The LORD's word is **flawless**;*

His says, "*his way is perfect*" and, "*the Lord's word is flawless*".  
When you make that statement, you draw a line in the sand immediately.  
On the one side stands David (or you and I) with our pile of thoughts and opinions.  
On the other side is God and His Way.  
David says that God's Way is perfect and His Word is flawless.  
That is like saying the same thing twice, just for extra emphasis.  
That is really the starting point for all Christians isn't?

Before Christ, you lived a life based around what you thought was best.  
You handled relationships as your opinions and your emotions led you.  
Then you read the Bible and meet some real Christians and you realise that there is a much better way to do life,  
God's Way,  
a way so holy and radical that God's Son died for it so that this Good News could be shared with the whole world.  
But the bad news is, it's not the way you have been living, you have to give up something don't you.  
Your own life to be exact.  
The way you thought life had to be lived  
That one, you have to give up.

Jesus put it clearly in Luke:

{Slide: Luk 9v23-24}



<sup>23</sup>*Then he said to them all: "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me. <sup>24</sup>For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will save it.*

That is an all or nothing statement  
If you want to save the life that you had  
The way you have always done things  
Then this life is not for you.  
God is loving us enough to tell us what we need to do.  
He's just being honest.

The moment we commit to God  
The moment we acknowledge that Jesus is Lord  
We say God's Word is perfect and flawless, we lose our lives don't we?  
Because now everything that I come up with is secondary.  
Everything has to be subordinate to God's Word.  
It's not me and then God's Word  
It's God's Word only  
That is what becoming a disciple means.

You may be wondering what this has to do with the title of our series because we haven't spoken much about love yet. There is a good reason for that.  
No-one just gets love.  
If we did, we wouldn't need God.  
Love does not just happen.  
It has to be modeled, taught, motivated

And we are going to build the foundation of love first before we any idea how to love or why we should love.  
All of that can only happen through a deepening relationship with God.  
God gave us the tool shed, through His grace and kindness and mercy  
Nothing to do with us  
But we have to recognise that this is the **only** place to go for everything.

Jesus said the same thing didn't He when He was asked what the greatest commandment of the Law was:

{Slide: Mat 22v37}

*'Love the Lord your God with **all** your heart and with **all** your soul and with **all** your mind.'*

This is an 'everything in' commitment.  
A let go and let God life.  
Because here is the thing:  
There is a disconnect between where I think I'm at and where I am actually at.  
When I read these verses and when I hear them from the pulpit I agree wholeheartedly.  
I think, absolutely.  
**Then life happens** and I don't react well to it

And if I am self aware enough ...

I realise there is a gap between what I agree with and what I am actually living out.  
I need help.

So we are settled with the fact that we are going to lose our lives.

The life that used to be the 'goto' place.

We need to lose it.

And so now we are going to look towards the Lord who is flawless and perfect.

So flawless and perfect that He gave us the perfect demonstration of His love

{Slide: Joh 3v16}

<sup>16</sup> ***For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.***

He so loved the world THAT

His love for the undeserving was so great THAT

In spite of who are He still gave His one and only Son

And so believe in Him and His great Love

and become a Christian.

## 2) And His Love

Why does David start with telling us about the perfection of God?

Because only then does the rest make sense.

Perfect God first

Not imperfect me

Not my experiences

Not my culture

Not what my family taught me

Not what popular Christian thought or sentiment is.

Because if I believe that God is perfect and flawless

Then

The rest will follow

The rest of v30 keeps opening up the process of this relationship with God:

{Slide: Psa 18v30}

*he **shields** all **who take refuge in him.***

Once we have taken refuge

What does that mean?

Once we are overwhelmed and convinced by the love that God has for us

Well when we decided His Word is perfect and flawless and we want to live according to it  
and

be held accountable for that.

Because remember, as a Christian I have made the choice to lose my life so that I could gain my real one.

The one that takes refuge in Him

And now He shields me.

How?

Because now I process the world through God's filter.

And I deal with the world in the same way.

(Example

I have some time with God in the morning and I read Mat 5v5 which says, "*blessed are the Meek*"

I think what does that mean?

I study out blessed and understand that it means that God looks on them favourably

I study out meek, I mean who wants to be meek

It sounds like the noise a sheep makes, meeeeeeek!!!!

I understand that God looks favourably on those who are gentle and quiet

I start being aware of how I interact with others during the day

Is it meek, I want it to be meek, because I want God to look on me favourably, to be blessed)

Because now, regardless of my circumstances, I have pledged to live according to His word

Which is perfect

Not my opinion.

And now when I interact with the world, the world sees God, in whom I find my refuge.

What do you mean the world sees God?

It's what Paul said

{Slide: 2 Cor 3v17-18}

<sup>17</sup>Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. <sup>18</sup>And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate<sup>a</sup> the Lord's glory, **are being transformed into his image** with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

We all,

the Christians who have made Jesus Lord,  
who consider His word perfect and flawless,  
who have chosen to let go of their lives

**The ones who, "*contemplate the Lord's glory*"**

**"Are being transformed into his image"**

Not everyone

So when the world looks at us, what should they see?

Here's another view

{Slide: Gal 3v26-27}



<sup>26</sup>*So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith,* <sup>27</sup>***for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.***

So when the world looks at us, what should they see?  
Someone clothed in Christ

So how does He shield us?  
Because as we are being transformed into His image, clothed in Christ  
We think differently (our minds are transformed) and therefore  
We behave differently (clothed in Christ)  
Instead of responding to situations and people the way we did before Christ  
We respond to them from the point of someone transformed and clothed in Christ.  
**God shields us from us.**  
**He shields us from future sinful outcomes and consequences.**

Not from illness  
Or the aches and pains of old age  
Or financial calamity  
Or a tough boss

But those who take refuge in him are shielded.  
Because what else is there?  
David carries on.

{Slide: Psa 18v31 }

<sup>31</sup>*For who is God besides the LORD?  
And who is the Rock except our God?*

What else is there?  
*For who is God?*  
We've established that it's not me.  
It's not you  
It's not even my wife.  
It's not my parents  
It's definitely not my children  
And it's very important to establish a concrete faith in this.

Because mankind naturally finds gods in many places.  
Alcohol can be quite comforting  
Culture can be demanding  
Some get addicted to media  
Others find an escape in porn.  
Some lose their lives in work  
The love of Money is a favourite pursuit  
Staying comfortable.  
Opinion is high on the list  
Emotions are on the top ten as well.

But Davis says, "*Who is God besides the Lord, who is the Rock except our God?*"  
If we don't have the right God to go to we will never understand His love for us.

Once we get our heads and hearts behind the first few verses, then the good stuff comes  
Now God's love starts flowing out in abundance.  
And the benefits that come with this love are immeasurable.

{Slide: Psa 18v32-36}

- <sup>32</sup>*It is God who arms me with **strength**  
and keeps my way **secure**.*
- <sup>33</sup>*He makes my feet **like the feet of a deer**;  
he causes me to **stand on the heights**.*
- <sup>34</sup>*He **trains my hands** for battle;  
my arms can **bend a bow of bronze**.*
- <sup>35</sup>*You make your saving help **my shield**,  
and your right hand **sustains me**;  
**your help has made me great**.*
- <sup>36</sup>*You provide **a broad path for my feet**,  
so that **my ankles do not give way**.*

If I fully embrace the first few verses  
Then  
The next few verses is what happens.  
Who wouldn't want that?

But here's the thing.  
Part 2 cannot happen if I don't get Part 1  
Because Part 2 flows from Part 1, it doesn't stand in isolation from it.  
We want Part 2, we expect Part 2, we Pray for Part 2  
But Part 2 cannot happen without Part 1  
Part 2 happens because of Part 1.

Let's look at Part 2  
David uses many physical attributes to describe his God embraced life  
Let's try and understand this from a spiritual point of view.

I'm armed with spiritual strength  
My ways are secure  
My feet are sure footed like a deer's.  
I can handle extreme conditions  
He trains me for battle  
All God's help is a shield  
God's hand sustains him  
This help has made him spiritually strong  
The path ahead is easier to navigate

That's what God's love does.  
But only if my focus is correct.

This is what love looks like doesn't it.  
God's love for us.  
Now imagine that this is how I loved people.  
So let's turn this around a little  
Reword it to help us understand the process.  
And then we will be ready for next week

{Slide: Psa 18v30-36 - modified}

*As for God, his way is **perfect**:  
The LORD's word is **flawless and Christian's are made in His image**;  
Through refuge in Him, they are clothed in Christ and are His ambassadors  
We have no other gods  
The Rock is our God*

*When you interact with a Christian, you interact with Christ  
Because a Christian who loves God  
And is obedient to His Word  
And loves Him with all His heart and mind and soul  
Reaps the full benefit of God's love*

*He helps me deal with my character, which helps me grow in spiritual strength  
The way I deal with life is becoming more secure  
I know where to tread  
I am able to handle challenging situations  
Constant spiritual training readies me for battle  
God's help is my shield  
His right hand sustains me  
I am growing spiritually  
My life path appears wider and flatter  
And I stumble less*

And so now I better understand the verse, "As I have loved you" from God's perspective.

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