

Allegories

In a lot of the documents I have written, allegories have been included to emphasise the main point of the document and also to add a blessing to what information has been given. Sometimes when we see our trial depicted in story form we do understand better our current circumstances. Our Saviour, while on earth taught a lot in parables and I would like to follow His example and emphasise my points in a similar form. Most of these allegories will be found in my documents already on this internet site and I have quoted which document they can be found so you can read the allegory in its original context. A few stand alone without a document, these ones I have labeled from my personal file. I have gathered them all together so my readers can read them individually and obtain a blessing from them. I pray they impress your mind and help to bring you to a knowledge of Jesus. Amen

Jesus is our refuge

“Picture, if you will, yourself on a ship way out to sea. During the night a fierce storm hits, the ship is tossed about like a feather in the wind, there is no controlling the boat. Everyone pulls for the shore and just when all hope is lost the ship slides into a little cove. The very first thing the pilot does is to drop anchor to steady the ship. Everyone goes to thank the pilot, only to find he isn’t on deck. Who saved the ship? Yes friends, it was Jesus, Jesus was the pilot and the anchor. Jesus guided the ship into the cove and Jesus dropped the anchor, He held and anchored us all during the storm, all through the night Jesus was at the helm guiding us to a safe port. So too Jesus will pilot and anchor you my friend, just put your hand in His and your faith into His guidance and tender mercy.”

Psalm 46:1 “...God *is* our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.” Jesus is always there my friends, never for a moment doubt, Jesus is our anchor and when the storms threaten to overwhelm us and the waves threaten to wash us overboard and sink the ship, look to Jesus.

(Document:- In Times of Need)

Jesus leads

“Two sheep are walking side by side when they come to a deep ravine. One sheep pauses too afraid to cross, the other moves cautiously ahead and is soon lost to view. The sheep that paused sits down to wait for a better time to try to cross and is soon fast asleep. The sheep that has pressed on finds itself completely surrounded by fog and blackness. The darkness is so thick it cannot see the way, but through the darkness it hears a voice, gently

calling. 'Tis the shepherd's voice it hears, closing its eyes the sheep allows the shepherd to guide it expecting to soon have its feet on solid ground. But the shepherd has other ideas. This sheep shows promise, promise of a good leader, someone willing to go through the fires of affliction to strengthen others to pass the gulf. So the path out isn't direct, first one trial, then another, steadily the sheep passes through the fire. There are protectors on either side of the sheep protecting it from the gulf beneath and these protectors have become deeply attached to their charge. Tenderly they watch and protect as their charge navigates the rocky path. Questions are being asked, "why? why is this particular sheep being asked to carry such a heavy burden?" Then the answer comes from heaven, look back, look back to the beginning of the ravine. Like a light from heaven the path behind is lighted up and there at the beginning of the ravine is not one but many sheep, waiting, too afraid to cross. The sheep has now passed through the fires of affliction but instead of moving forward to safety she goes back, back through the fog and darkness to the beginning of the ravine where she tenderly collects the rest of the flock and guides them across the gulf to safety. Understanding comes, one sheep allowing herself to be purged in the fires of affliction has opened the door for others to follow in her footsteps, she now guides others through the storm to the safety of the fold."

Jesus took this lamb through the furnace that by her example she can help others who would never have had a chance without her help. Jesus will never leave any of His sheep to struggle alone. He always has someone at hand ready to steady them and guide them through.

(From My Personal File)

Jesus prepared the way

"A father and his son are taking a road trip. The trip is long and the car is packed to the hilt with provisions for the journey. The son assumes they have everything required for their journey and is surprised when his father tells him to pull into the next service station. Questioning his father's request the boy assures his father they don't need anything. Gently the boy's father insists they stop. To the boy's surprise his father alone enters the shop, says a few short words to the attendant, then leaves and they are on their way again. Again and again along the way the father repeats this performance. The boy questions the father's actions but he says nothing to his father. As they approach the end of their journey the boy starts to get emotional as he knows this was a one way trip for his father, seeing his son's tears welling up the father places a gentle hand on his boy's shoulders. "Son," he says with emotion in his voice, "son, when have I ever left you, I have always been with you and I always will be with you. Just because I am going away for a little while doesn't mean I am leaving you. You will always be my son and I will always be by your side even if you cannot see me. Son, you may have been prepared for the journey here but you are not prepared for the return journey alone. Remember son all the stops we made? I have left my love and provisions for you at every point, wherever you stop you will receive refreshment and strength for your journey ahead. Always remember son, I love you and have prepared the way for your journeys on this earth. I am coming again, to redeem every soul, so till that

day please son, don't forget to stop at the service station and be refreshed with my love and assurance. Till we meet in the clouds of glory stand strong and remember I am always with you, even unto the end of the world.”

In case you haven't grasped the moral of the story here it is in a nutshell. Jesus is our Father, He travels with us every step of the way, but most importantly He has taken this journey before us and He has prepared the way. Every step of the way Jesus is with us and He has left us with all the provisions we need for the journey, all we have to do is make the stops.

(From My Personal File)

Jesus is pilot & lighthouse

“Picture if you will, a boat lost at sea, the night is dark and the waves are stormy. The little boat is being tossed about at the mercy of the wind. There are four passengers on board, a family, mum, dad and two young children. It all started out as a family holiday, the weather was fine and the day was filled with laughter. It had all changed so suddenly, one minute the boat rang with laughter, then suddenly the clouds had closed around them and the storm set in. It was night now and everybody was frightened, mum was trying to calm the children's cries, dad was desperately trying to steer the boat, but dad knew deep down he was fighting a losing battle. There was a rock bed up ahead, dad had seen it on the map and now hopelessly lost he could only hope he was going to avoid it. Gathering his family about him on deck, dad explained as gently as he could the dire situation the family was in. Drawing everyone to their knees this father poured his heart out to his God in heaven, beseeching heaven for help and guidance. One by one the family added their prayers to heaven, each child saying a simple prayer with mum closing with prayer herself. Not sure how to proceed or what to do the family stayed on their knees. A loud banging noise at the front of the boat startled everyone, it sounded like they had hit something. Rushing to the front of the boat they were surprised to see a man at the wheel of the boat, questioning the man he said he was the pilot of this area, he had seen their boat through the flashes of lightning and come aboard to guide them around the rocks. The father was skeptical but grateful and wondered if this man had come in answer to their prayers, see the father knew there were no pilots in this area. Hour after hour the pilot guided the little boat through the treacherous waters, hour after hour the father stood by his side. Finally curiosity got the better of the father and he asked the pilot what he was guiding the boat by, the father could see nothing. Pointing to the left of the boat, a little way ahead the pilot directed the father's gaze to a beam of light, it was the pilot said, the lighthouse and he was guiding the boat by that light. Once again the father was skeptical but grateful, once again the father knew there were no lighthouses in the area. Thanking the pilot the father went to the back of the boat to check on his family. They were fine, sleeping soundly with their faith in Jesus and grateful to the pilot guiding their craft. The father sat down with them, he only meant to sit for a moment but weariness overtook him and he was soon fast asleep. Waking with a start the entire family arose to their feet, looking around them they could see the sun shining, the waters calm and their little boat bobbing up and down gently on the waters. With one accord

the family rushed to the front of the boat, no-one there. Glancing out to sea the children noticed a large boat approaching, it was the coast guard. Coming alongside the little boat the coast guard questioned the father, their boat had been reported missing, were they ok? and how had they managed to survive the storm? The father assured the coast guard they were ok and thanked them for providing them with the pilot to guide them through the storm. The coast guard was surprised and puzzled, he was also a man of God, gently the coast guard pointed out to the father he hadn't provided a pilot, there was no pilot or lighthouse in this area and the only answer was Jesus had intervened and provided a pilot and guiding beacon. The family and coast guard bowed to give thanks to Jesus for saving their lives."

Jesus is the pilot, and Jesus is the lighthouse. Step away from the wheel my friend, give control to Jesus and He will always guide you away from the rocks.

(From My Personal File)

Jesus' refining process

"A very poor fisherman is trolling the sea bed. Today his little daughter has joined him. As he scours the sea bed looking for anything he can salvage or sell, his daughter copies him, following her father's every move. As her father moves on she espies a small, very rough pebble. The stone attracts her attention, but as she reaches out for it her father stops her. "It's rubbish," he says and asks her to leave it behind. Seeing the disappointed look in his daughter's eyes, the father relents and allows his daughter to take the pebble home. The pebble first sits in a prized place on the bookshelf. Then as the years go by ends up forgotten and abandoned. Time goes by, the girl now an adult stumbles upon the stone. The stone now chipped and damaged shows promise of being a beautiful gem. Bright colours are shining through. The girl takes the stone to a specialist and the process begins. This my friend, is the refining process, the stone is chipped away at, removing any flaws, it is cut, sanded and polished, and finally turned into a beautiful gem."

When the young girl first picked up the pebble she had no idea that a beautiful gemstone was hiding just below the surface, so it is with us. We are that pebble, our potential lies just beneath that hard crusted surface. Yes friends, Jesus uses the 'refining' process to chip away at our flaws, we are cut, sanded and polished to finally reveal the image of Jesus.

(From Document:- Without a Intercessor)

Jesus knows the way

"A shepherd and his flock were traveling the rocky pathway of the desert. The shepherd was in fact trying to find pasture and water for his charges. He was deeply attached to his sheep and he knew them all by name. His concern for his flock grew by the moment as he could see no relief in sight. He tried to calm his growing concern and his mind went back to how he ended up here in the first place. It was by his father's direction that he had set out in the first place. His home town had been attacked, the enemy had come

in and obliterated all. Being on the outskirts of town his family had a chance to escape, but what of his precious sheep. The father and son loved their charges dearly and desired to protect them from the enemy, so under the cover of darkness the father aided his son in rounding up the sheep. The father held his son close and with tender emotion he charged his son to protect the sheep. It wasn't going to be easy, the father knew the path the son was going to have to follow, and he knew it was fraught with danger. The father's heart went out to his son and he began to have second thoughts. Maybe his son shouldn't risk it, he was putting his life on the line as well trying to save these sheep, maybe it wasn't worth it. The sheep may find their way to safety, it was highly unlikely, but they might. It would be better if his son stayed with him and they fled together. Yes, he was attached to his sheep, but he was even more attached to his son. The father's mind was in a turmoil, what to do? It was his son that solved the dilemma they were in, the son loved his father dearly and knew his father would be safe. The sheep on the other hand would not, unless someone guided them to safety. The son was going to guide them, regardless of his and his father's fears, the path they both knew had the potential to kill them all. Under the cover of darkness the father and son said their goodbyes, the father was accepting the plan even though he had fears for his son, the father did love the sheep and desired them to be saved also. As morning broke it found the father gone and his son with the sheep well on their way. The enemy came, but no-one was there. The son's attention was suddenly brought back to the present, a lamb was bleating. Looking around his flock he knew he had to find shelter, food and water soon. He looked to the horizon but as far as he could see there was only desert. In distress the son fell to his knees and petitioned the God of his father. He didn't know the God of his father very well but he had been brought up to believe in him. Would God hear him? would he come to his aid? The son broke down in tears, where was the God of his father now? A gentle breeze blew across his face, looking up the son saw that the winds had changed. What was that? the son could smell something. On the gentle breeze the son realised he could smell water, he wasn't the only one. With one accord the sheep turned their noses into the wind and trotted quickly in the direction of the smell. The son was concerned, they were going in the wrong direction. Should he let them continue to the life saving water or should he insist they follow the direct path to safety? He was in a dilemma, the sheep needed refreshing, so did he, but to what cost? The son bowed his head again, feeling that this was the answer to his prayers, the son reasoned it was ok to take a detour if it was to the saving of his sheep. He hurried to the front of the flock and led the way. The smell grew stronger but the son still could not see any sign of water. His faith was beginning to waiver. Just when he was about to give up and turn his sheep onward the ground gave away beneath him. There in a deep depression was a oasis, the sheep were already drinking their fill and being refreshed from the dry desert they were ready to proceed, onward bound to safety. The God of his father had been with him, He knew this oasis was here and had turned the flock in the nick of time with that gentle breeze."

Please remember the allegory above, Jesus knows the way, He knows where the oasis is, He knows where you can stop and be refreshed. As the shepherd/son in the allegory was protective of his flock so our heavenly Father is protective of us. Jesus is out to protect us from the enemy, He will tell us when to leave and when to turn. It is important that we listen to Him, the desert is dangerous and all walking in this path do have the potential to die. But

with Jesus leading there is no danger as He will tell us when to leave and when to turn.
Please, when the breeze blows please, turn into the wind.
(From My Personal File)

Jesus pushes us to shore

“Picture it if you will a boat overturned at sea, the passengers drowning. There is a island within reach but the night is dark and the sea is choppy. Wave after wave crashes over your head and pushes you under, it is a swim for your life or sink in the billows. You put your all into the fight and swim for the shore. Just when you think life is lost and you feel you can go no further your feet touch the sand of that blessed island, you made it. Looking back the way you just came you see the ship is sunk but shining in the night are the angels who just carried you to shore. Yes Jesus was there all through the night and it was Jesus who carried us to safety.”

(From Document:- Hand to Hand Conflict)

Jesus is always with us

“A man and his child were walking down a rough country path. They were in fact looking for a little lost lamb. There had been a storm the previous night and the lamb had been separated from its mother and the rest of the flock. Trudging down the rough country road the small child soon became weary. Her Father, seeing her tiredness suggested she sit down to rest, the path up ahead he said was rather rugged. So her father said he would take the top, roughest road to look for the lamb and she could rest in the shade. The father knew the road he was about to take was a dead end so he assured his child that he had to come back this way and she was to just rest in the grass and wait for him. The father left his child and was soon lost to view as he continued up the rugged path. The child sat down to wait, she had uttermost trust in her father, he had never let her down and the child knew he would return. Time passed and the child grew sleepy. Making a little nest in the grass the child lay down to rest and was soon fast asleep. Night came and with it darkness, now the child wasn't necessarily afraid of the dark but then her father had always been with her, where was he now? She peered into the gathering gloom but could see nothing, where was her father? Was he safe? She began to fret, she was getting rather scared. Thunder clouds started gathering in the skies above and lightning was lighting up the night. The child curled herself up into a tight ball and crying, tried to wait out the storm. The night was dark and she wanted her father, exhaustion brought sleep. A wet nose was nudging her awake and upon rising the child found the lost lamb snuggling up to her, the clouds were dispersed and the sun shone through. Looking up she saw her father sitting on the bank beside her, gently taking her hand the father pointed out that she had slept long enough and it was time to go home. As her father arose the child noted the depression in the grass where he had been sitting, questioning her father she found out he had been there all night. The father was surprised at his daughter's questions and gently talking to her he pointed out he had been

there all along, all through the storm, all through the black and lonely night her father had been by her side.”

In this allegory Jesus is the Father and we are the child. Jesus is always with us, all through the night, throughout all the storms, when struggles weigh us down and we cannot feel Him, then He is closest, He loves us and He will never leave us to fight and struggle alone. Jesus has redeemed us and we are His.

(From My Personal File)

Just trust Jesus

“A father and his child are sitting down to dinner. Times are tough at the moment and the father hasn’t been paid for a while. The meal isn’t fancy but it is sufficient. The child is young but she has noticed they don’t have the fancy food her friends have. She questions her father “why?” The father is wise and doesn’t want to cause any concern to his young daughter so he gives a evasive answer. The child, however won’t be put off and presses her father for more information. The father is in a conundrum, does he tell his young daughter the truth? Or does he palm her off again? he knows she is too young to share in his worries. She wouldn’t understand now, she might later but right now her mind is young and tender, she doesn’t need to be concerned about these matters. So the father turns to his child and tenderly taking her hand in his, he gently explains that right now she just needs to trust him. Hasn’t he always supplied her needs? has she ever been hungry? She is young and these concerns are too overwhelming for her fragile mind, so right now all she needs to do is to trust in her father. He will protect her and supply her needs. She may learn the truth later, she may not, but right now her father has her by the hand and he will always be with her, protecting and providing. She only needs to have faith in him.”

Friends, the father is Jesus and we are the child. How often in our lives do we ask our children to just trust us without giving a reason why. We can see the answer and we can see our children don’t need to shoulder that concern, so we protect them by ‘hiding’ the truth and just asking our children to trust us. Friends, as parents we expect our children to respect our decisions and to trust us - but - do we give our Father in heaven the same courtesy? (From Document:- How Can I Believe?)

Learning to earn trust

“A farmer and his child were making their way down a dusty trail on their property when they came upon a flock of sheep. The child was playful and full of energy, racing toward the sheep she expected soon to be cuddling up to one of the young lambs, but instead found herself standing alone in the field with the sheep scattered. Her father came alongside her and taking her by the hand drew her down to the earth. Very quietly and tenderly the father pointed out that the sheep didn’t ‘know’ them, any rushed or hasty movements would only frighten them away. The father gently pointed out that they needed to gain the sheep’s trust before they could approach them. The farmer and his child gathered the most tenderest

of grass shoots they could find and settled down to patiently wait. The sheep were curious and timidly ventured forward, the child's excitement burst forth like a thunder clap and again the sheep scattered. Disappointed and downhearted the child was ready to leave, didn't she love the sheep? Hadn't she gathered the most tenderest of grass shoots for them? Why didn't they trust her? She meant them no harm, she only wanted to cuddle them. The farmer was wise and he knew the nature of sheep, tenderly he gathered his distressed daughter in his arms and gently pointed out that while she knew she wasn't going to harm the sheep, the sheep did not and she would have to gain their trust more fully before they were going to let her close to them. The daughter understood it was by her demeanour, her quiet, calm persona that was going to draw the sheep to her, she must give no reason for the sheep to mistrust her but to quietly, and calmly entreat the sheep to venture toward her. She mustn't chase the sheep or speak harshly, she can only draw them to her by exposing the truth, she loves the sheep and means them no harm. Once the sheep see her for what she is, a beautiful, kind hearted girl they will venture toward her. It is by quiet, calm movements she can prove to the sheep that she is only out for their good, not to harm them. The farmer taught his child well, and she learnt the ways of tender shepherding."

Trust is only going to come if we treat these 'sheep' we are working for like in the parable above. We have to draw out of them their fear and their instinct to run. We must gain their trust and draw them gently toward the word of God and bring to them the blessed truths of Jesus.

(From My Personal File)

Jesus drawing us home

"A farmer has two cows, both are dearly beloved of him. One stormy night the fence breaks and in their terror the two cows run away. The farmer searches high and low till he finds his beloved cows, then placing a rope around their necks he tenderly guides them home, drawing them into the safety of the barn. This isn't easy, the cows are frightened and pull away, but with the master's voice gently calling, the strain on the rope gently pulling, the farmer eventually guides them in. He uses no force, no harsh language, he stays beside the cows through the blackness of the storm, comforting and protecting them till they respond to his calling and allow their master to lead them home, into the safety of his home."

Jesus is the farmer and He always stays by our side, He knows when we are lost and He is always drawing us home, home into His ever open arms. Jesus loves us dearly and whatever the process He has His rope around us tenderly drawing us in. Tenderly calling us in to a closer relationship with Him.

(From My Personal File)

Are you listening?

“You are walking down a busy boulevard, your day has been busy and you are very tired. Distracted by a ‘important’ text message, exhausted, and in pain you don’t notice you have come to a busy intersection. Here we need to stop and press the pause button. Firstly let’s look behind the scene, let’s go a few steps back. You are tired, in pain, if you could see the angels around you, you would see Satan’s angels in your ear drumming up how tired and sore you are. If you could see Jesus’ angels, you would see them with their arms around you holding you up, giving you strength. The text message comes in, the first impulse in your ear is the devil, “answer it now, it’s important”. This impression comes in with much urgency and a overwhelming compelling, you must answer the text message now. The other impression you feel almost at the same time is a feeling of hesitancy, can’t it wait? Do you really need to answer it now? You’re walking down a busy road, there’s danger about, wait for a safer time to respond. This response is from Jesus’ angels. The argument goes back and forth, both sides striving for the mastery. Jesus is out to protect you, He knows the road is dangerous, Satan also knows the road is dangerous and he is out to destroy you. Let’s hit the play button. You have answered the text and you are not watching what you are doing, the busy intersection looms ahead of you and common sense dictates you to stop. But this is where the contest between Jesus and Satan becomes intense. Jesus is urging you to stop, Satan is urging you forward. What do you do? Are you listening?”

Jesus has us in the palm of His hands, it is so important to listen. Even in the trials of everyday life Jesus is there, please friend listen to Him.
(From Document:- Interactions of Angels Good and Bad)

Jesus is watching

“Two children were playing in a dusty street. Intent on their play they failed to notice the horse drawn carriage, too late, as the carriage bore down upon them the elder of the two children reached out and pushed her sister to safety. Darkness enveloped the child on the road. Bystanders rushed to attend but precious little could be done. The young girl on the side was destitute, her sister had been her only family. Forlorn and destitute the child blindly ambled along the dusty track, nowhere to go, no one to help her. Finding her way under a bridge the child curled up and sobbed herself to sleep. Gentle hands were shaking her, tender hands were lifting her up and guiding her along the path. She could hardly see, she was so despondent, but someone was urging her along. Finally coming to her senses and looking around her she found herself surrounded by other children. People who had seen what happened and cared had followed her under the bridge and brought her out. She was now in a home for children who had nowhere else to go. Someone cared, someone had given her a new lease on life, she didn’t know who. Time passed and the child grew, but she never quite could put out of her mind the horrors of that fateful day. She needed answers. Leaving the security of her dwelling the child, now a young lady went back to where it all happened so many years before. Walking up and down the path the girl noticed things she hadn’t seen before. The main object of her attention was the little white church on the corner. Something was drawing her to the church, drawing her inside. All was quiet and calm in the building, she wandered around till on one of the pews the young lady noticed a

picture. It was like no other she had ever seen before, it was a picture of a man on a cross. Puzzled she glanced around, a pastor was moving through the church at the time and noticing the girl's distress, moved over and offered his assistance. Pointing to the picture the young girl requested explanation. Gently laying his hand on the young girl's shoulder the pastor pointed out that it was Jesus. Jesus had died on the cross to save all from sin and it was Jesus who leads the way. Going back to that fateful day the young girl asked the pastor if he remembered. The pastor did remember the child, after all it had been him who guided her to safety. After careful instruction the child, through tear stained eye understood. Yes, there had been a tragedy, but God in His providence had someone on hand to guide the child to safety."

There is a parallel to this story, Jesus is the older sister and it is Jesus that pushes us to safety. He gave His life that we may live. It is by Jesus' representatives on earth we can be led to safety, led to the cross and to life. Remember, as you walk this rough highway, remember the girl in the allegory above, Jesus will push us to safety and He will carry us home and He will always have someone watching, ready to stand in as His representative and guide us to the cross.

(From My Personal File)

Saved in the nick of time

"Two fish were swimming side by side in the deepest section of the ocean. Although they were vastly different they were in fact best of friends. They were travelling together to 'better' feeding grounds. As they swam they talked about times gone by. The elder and larger of the two fish was the leader, he had sworn at the beginning of their friendship that he would always look out for and protect his friend. He felt responsible for his friend, after all he was larger, older and wiser in the ways of the ocean. As they swam they reminisced, enjoying each other's company. Time went by and the fish ventured further and further towards their destination. Eventually they paused, they had come to the most dangerous part of their journey. They had to pass through enemy territory, the larger of the two fish wasn't particularly bothered as the area wasn't a danger to him. His smaller companion on the other hand was terrified, after all he was a clown fish and highly prized in the world of humans. Hadn't a few of his family ended up in aquariums. He had no desire to lose his freedom and paused at the beginning of the 'fishing zone'. His friend however had no fear, after all he wasn't a fisherman's prized catch. Assuring his friend (the clown fish) he would protect him, he encouraged his friend to venture forward. Together, side by side, they ventured forward, keeping to the shadows and hiding behind anything available. They were making progress when suddenly, out of the blue shot a fisherman's net, entrapping both of them. Violently thrashing about the larger of the two fish tried desperately to free them both but in vain. They were hauled onboard the fishing vessel and tossed roughly onto the sorting table. Fish were tossed here and there into separate buckets of water, with the unwanted fish tipped back into the ocean. The larger of the two friends found himself unceremoniously dumped back into the ocean, frantically he searched for his friend but to no avail. His friend (the clown fish) was in a separate bowl of water, the fisherman wanted to keep him and take him

home to his son for a pet. The fish left in the ocean was devastated, hadn't he promised to protect his friend? hadn't they started this journey at his bidding?, now his friend was lost and it was all his fault. In despair and discouragement he slipped under a rock and tried to hide. But hiding wasn't easy for a fish of his size and pretty soon other fish were gathering around asking questions. After learning his predicament one of the larger, older and wiser fish pointed out that the particular boat that captured his friend was heading north and into a violent storm. If he hurried he might just be able to catch up with the boat and rescue his friend during the wild weather of the storm. Now while the boat wasn't necessarily equipped to manage the storm, he (the larger of the two friends) was. Thanking his benefactor the larger fish asked if he would come with him to guide him on his journey, the larger fish counselling him declined saying he had other fish he needed to help but he would always be with him. The clown fish's friend thanked him then turned into the storm in an attempt to rescue his friend. Night came on and the waters grew dark, the storm hit with fury, waves crashed over the boat and the little vessel rocked dangerously. The captain and crew were in fear of their lives and started to lighten the boat by throwing overboard their 'catch' of the day. The clown fish's friend circling under the boat watched intently, expecting to see his friend dropped overboard at any moment. Nothing, no clown fish, becoming frantic he started to thump the front of the boat with his body. Looking up he suddenly glimpsed his friend in a bowl, balanced precariously on the side of the boat, he thumped the boat harder but to no avail. In desperation he backed up, then surged forward and thumped the boat with all he had, darkness closed in around him as he lost consciousness. Then faintly through blurry vision, he watched stunned as his counsellor friend from before surged past and gave the boat a really hard shove, just in the nick of time. The bowl holding his friend (clown fish) tumbled from the side of the boat and the two friends were reunited once more. The storm waves were violently rough but the larger fish (counsellor) sheltered the clown fish and his friend and guided them to safety."

How many times friend have we been saved 'in the nick of time'? How many times friend have we been caught in Satan's net and trapped in his vessel? Time and time again friends have tried to break us free, braving the storm and desperately trying to release us, but to no avail, Satan's grasp is tight but friends, we do have a beautiful Saviour, Jesus will come and Jesus will save us. Just in the nick of time friends, Jesus will thump Satan's boat and set us free. Please friend, if you are caught in Satan's net, please, listen to your friends (Jesus will send people to help) and please don't forget to call upon Jesus, He will 'thump' the boat for you. Amen

(From document In the nick of time)

The devil's trap

"Two boys are walking together along a lone dusty road. It's getting late and they both desire to turn in for the night. Coming upon a clearing they find a theatre has been set up offering all manner of entertainment. Both boys enter the grounds and start to look around. It's dark now and the valley where the theatre has set up camp has been lit up by gaudy lights. Entranced they walk from one display to another, each one beckoning them in,

each one more exciting than the previous one. As the boys wander round entranced, they notice a old man, shabbily dressed watching them with a keen eye. They pay him no mind and finally stop in front of the most exciting display of the entire valley. There is a gaily dressed person at the door urging them to come in, the 'show' he says is free, you only have to come in and take a seat. Time beckons you (the boys) to move on and go home, your families are waiting, but the doorman seeing your hesitation urges you more forcefully to enter the tent, "you can leave at any time" he argues. At this stage the old man previously watching the boys approaches, there is a conflict between the doorman and the old man, they obviously know each other and clearly don't get along. The old man puts a tender hand on each boy and urges them to move on, "it's dangerous" is his argument, "it's a snare, please don't stop, please don't go in" is his admonishment. The boys are young, experience is not on their side and the lure of excitement is strong. Ignoring the old man's pleas and to the obvious glee of the doorman the boys enter the theatre and find seats. At the beginning the show is exciting and entertaining but as they look closer each boy realises all is not as it seems, they are sitting together but they are watching separate shows. Each boy looks closer at the stage and realises they themselves are on stage, they are the main actors and the show is their wildest fantasy. They both relax and throw themselves into the 'enjoyment' of the show, each part being tailored to their individual desires. Time passes, the boys become more and more deeply involved, people move around them but they hardly notice. Then both boys feel a hand on their arms, it's the old man, he urges them to come with him and taking them by the hand leads them to the back of the theatre. Once backstage the old man lifts the curtain and to the boys horror they see the actors they were just engaging with are in fact puppets on a string. On closer examination the boys trace the strings to the control box where to their consternation they see the devil at the controls. Looking down on the stage they themselves were just playing on they see the 'puppets' are in fact the devil's angels. It's a trap, and has been so from the beginning, the devil and his scheming angels have been playing with them the whole time. In their shame the boys are confused and distressed, they see the door out only opens one way and while it was easy to get in they now cannot get out. The old man urges them to follow him, he knows a way out, but something is holding them, they are riveted to the stage. The old man is becoming more insistent urging the boys to leave and it is here the fight begins. One boy sees the common sense of the old man and desires to leave, the other boy is drawn to the cabaret. He knows who is pulling the puppet strings, he now knows he is 'dancing with the devil', but his desire to stay and play is stronger than his desire to leave. His friend is heartbroken and regrets the day they ever passed this way, but his friend has turned his back on him and returned to the theatre. He now has to make his own decision, should he stay with his friend and try to reason with him or should he just leave? The old man notices his indecision and asks the boy to wait where he is. The boy watches as the old man re-enters the theatre and sits next to his friend. The old man urges the boy to leave over and over again, but the boy, now fully entranced by the show, perceives not the old man's pleas. The old man's pleas are in vain, the boy watching the show doesn't even realise the old man is there. The old man cries many tears then arises and goes back to the other boy still waiting backstage of the theatre. Taking this boy by the hand the old man leads him out via the back door. Just when the boy finally thinks he is about to be free, oh horror, there at the back door stands the doorman from the front door. A

argument ensues, both the doorman and the old man claim the boy as property of their own. The doorman claims the boy entered the theatre of his own choice and now cannot leave, while the old man claims the boy was tricked and has a desire to leave. The battle is fierce and the boy is pulled from pillar to post, the anguish of his soul is crushing him. He knows it is by his sin he is now in the tug of war, he knows he has been dancing with the devil and with bitter tears he pleads for mercy and release. The old man suddenly lifts up his two hands and to the boy's surprise he clearly sees in the palm of the old man's hands, nail scars. The old man says, "enough, this child is mine, by My blood he is saved", light floods the scene and the doorman and the old man stand unmasked. The boy hides his face in horror and shame, the doorman is the devil and the old man is Jesus. The doorman beats a hasty retreat, he knows he has lost, but the old man now reveals his true character - Jesus. Jesus was with the boys from the beginning, in the guise of a old man Jesus tried to prevent them from entering the theatre in the first place and it was Jesus who led them out. Having seen the light the boy is now more determined than ever to retrieve his friend and get home. Blocking his eyes and ears to the show the boy goes back in and tries to get the attention of his friend but to no avail. His friend has surrendered to the show and has no recollection of his friend or even of his former life. The old man (Jesus) is urging the boy to leave, the longer he lingers the more dangerous is his position, the devil has already tricked him into staying once, there is a danger he can be tricked again. Following his Saviour the boy allows himself to be led out. Again at the back door the doorman (the devil) and the old man (Jesus) meet. This time there is no conflict, the doorman knows he has lost. Tenderly the old man (Jesus) leads the boy home, home to the safety of the fold. The boy mourns the loss of his friend but is grateful to the old man. Turning to face the old man and with tears in his eyes he thanks the old man for bringing him home and urges him to stay. The old man (Jesus) raises His hands in blessing and promises the boy he will always be with him, then He turns to leave. The boy is afraid and pleads with him to stay, but the old man gently assures the boy, comfort, guidance, strength will always be with him. Jesus Himself will always have His eyes and tender hand over the boy, did He not just lead him out of temptation? He will never desert this precious charge of His, and He commissions His angels to always be at the side of the boy. The boy understands, help will always be within reach but he still questions why the old man must go. The old man (Jesus) raises His battle scared hands and with a voice full of emotion quietly says, "my child, I saw you before you entered the theatre and urged you not to go in, I sat by you throughout your ordeal and persuaded you to leave. I fought the devil for you and saved you by my blood. You may be free my friend but others are not, I am returning to save them."

My friend, no matter what kind of strife we are in Jesus is always by our side. We may not see Him, like the old man in the allegory He may be in disguise, but trust me my friend, Jesus is always with us.

(From Document:- Dancing With The Devil)

Jesus can 'see'

“The baby bear cub looked tentatively over the hedge, yes, the way was clear as she saw it and with the energy of youth she bounded over the hedge, only to be stuck all four legs swinging in mid air. Mother bear had her by the scruff of her neck and further movement was futile. Looking around her from this ‘new’ perspective baby bear could ‘see’ that the path wasn’t clear and if she had landed on the other side she would have lost her life, but not to worry, mother bear was watching out for her, and would continue to do so for her entire life. See mother bear is really Jesus and baby bear is us. Time and time again Jesus lifts us out from danger and guides us away from trouble.”

This allegory is vital to our wellbeing, Jesus can ‘see’ around that corner, Jesus will keep us out of harm’s way but I can’t stress just how important it is for us to listen, we may not understand but we don’t have to, Jesus is leading and we just need to trust Him.
(From my personal file.)

Walking through storms with Jesus

“A young girl is walking down a deserted jungle path, there are strong vines weaving through the trees in this forest and the young girl takes notice of their thickness and strength. Looking around her the young girl takes notice of the beauty of the jungle and the beautiful things Jesus had made. Not too confident in the path she was taking the young girl bent to her knees and prayed for guidance. Continuing down the path she soon came to a fork in the road, there were two signposts pointing to either direction. On the straight wide path the sign read “straight to heaven, no stopping, fast express, no trials, easy road”. The other sign post read “pathway to heaven via the training ground, then working to help Jesus”. This path was very narrow and as she strained to see along the path she could just make out in the distance rugged mountains and mirky pits. The girl stood still, pondering which path she would take. She loved her Saviour dearly but she could see the narrow path was blood stained. The wide path on the other hand looked inviting, she knew there was no shame in taking the wide road and she would easily glide into heaven. But at what cost? Someone would have to pave the way, someone would have to help her glide in. Did heaven have enough workers? She turned in the direction of the narrow path and wondered if she had what it took to devote her life to Jesus and the cause. Undecided and wavering in faith she again turned her attention to the ‘easy’ path. She knew there was no reproach in taking this path, Jesus had provided it for others like herself, and everyone was invited to tread this path. Heaven was for everyone and Jesus in His wisdom has provided a way for all to enter. Undecided she sat to think over her dilemma, which way to go? She loved Jesus dearly, but she was mindful of her weakness and was fearful she might fall on the narrow path. The wide path was safer, but Jesus had given His life for hers, surely He would keep her safe. Moving to her knees the young girl bowed in prayer. Praying for strength and wisdom the girl made a pledge with God, yes, she would walk the narrow way, she would take on any task, devote her life to Jesus, her only condition - Jesus must promise to save her soul. If all goes horribly wrong and she couldn’t make the grade, heaven would still save her soul. Arising from her knees the young girl felt refreshed and a quiet peace entered her heart.

Starting along the narrow path the girl wondered what was in store for her. She had flaws she knew, and her health wasn't going to be doing her any favours. Heaven looked down on this young girl who had just dedicated her life to them, this girl showed promise. Night comes quickly in the jungle and this jungle was no different. The young girl soon found herself in pitch blackness. Not being accustomed to being on her own, in the jungle, in the dead of night, the young girl began to be afraid. Now fear can be one of your worst enemies, the rising tide of fear in you if left unchecked can cause unreasonable panic which in turn if left to run rampant, can cause people to lose control. You can control fear, we need to remember it's no shame to be afraid, it's what you do with it that counts. Once fear has control the victim/person is out of control of their faculties, sensibility and rationalism is gone, there is no reasoning with them and tragedy nearly always follows. So returning to our young girl, fear is growing within her. She stops in her tracks and bows her head in prayer. A lighting bolt in the distance lights up the path ahead for a moment and the young girl sees shelter. Hurrying to the spot the girl finds adequate shelter for the night, praying for help the young girl manages to stem the rising tide of fear and resting in her Saviour's promise she settles down for the night. Test one - control fear, passed.

Morning dawned, but with it came a new challenge, during the night the young girl had become cold, her muscles were tightening up and she could hardly move. Realising that she needed to get going the young girl put her faith in Jesus and struggled to stand, with her effort to move came strength from heaven to do so. She learnt of the power of our Saviour and felt His sustaining strength, she knew if heaven wanted her to be somewhere and do something heaven would get her there. Day after day the young girl traversed the narrow path of the jungle and gradually she learnt of her Saviour's love and watchcare, gradually she learnt that she could place her entire trust in Him and He would take care of her. Basics learnt, but a fair way to go. Heaven saw promise with this girl, heaven saw she had a holding ability like no other.

Still travelling down the jungle trail, but much stronger now, the young girl started her training to work for Jesus. But Satan was now on the bandwagon, Satan had been watching and he could now see what Jesus was doing. Satan wasn't impressed and set about to destroy everything Jesus had worked toward. This is what the jungle trail is all about, training, teaching us to be on guard and to fight against the wiles of the devil. In order to be able to help someone else the young girl must first be able to detect the devil and resist him. This is what the rest of the jungle training was all about. Jesus knew from the beginning the potential of this young girl and Jesus personally led her through each trial, He was beside her all the way."

As we walk through the jungle I can personally attest to how bitter the path can be. I have walked this jungle trail and I know of a surety Jesus does save, I am only still standing because of my Saviour's love. I have fought with the devil, and I have learnt with bitter tears how violent, cruel and treacherous he is. I know from experience that unless you have Jesus in your corner you have Buckley's to none in the fight against him. He is a murderer, and will stop at nothing in his endeavours to destroy you. But to what avail? Although I have had many a fight with the devil I'm still standing. I have learnt to walk through the storm, with my hand in Jesus' hand, together we have traversed the jungle and together we

have beaten it. I now stand ready, equipped, and willing to take on the devil in this final battle for our lives.

(From my personal file)

The guidance of God

“Two sheep are walking side by side, they are lost and homeless. Coming upon a farm they notice other sheep happily abiding in a lush, green, grassy pasture. Upon approaching the group the sheep find themselves surrounded by other sheep and both are readily welcomed into the group. Peace reigns for a while and the two lost sheep relax in a welcoming environment, time passes and things change. See it hasn't rained for a while and the grass is starting to dry up, tensions start to mount and finally one day it boils over, someone has to go, there isn't enough grass and there is precious little water. The two lost sheep feel the pressure on them, after all they don't belong in the group, they are not part of the herd by blood only as intruders. Both sheep leave early in the morning, heading out of the grassland and head to the mountains, both believe if they can conquer the mountain there will be grass and water abundant on the other side. One sheep is slightly larger and older than the other and he takes the lead. As they enter the dark foliage of the mountain the smaller of the two sheep cowers back, the larger sheep gently encourages his friend on and staying close by his side guides the smaller sheep through the darkness of the foliage. The night comes on and the blackness of the night can be felt, the smaller of the two sheep shivers. The larger sheep suddenly changes sides with the smaller sheep, and keeping very close the larger sheep rubs up gently to the smaller sheep so his presence can be felt. Feeling somewhat comforted the smaller sheep allows itself to be guided by the larger sheep but does question why his friend changed sides. The night draws on and it is really starting to get cold, it is the hour just before dawn, the darkest and always the coldest, finding a little hollow in the ground, up against a sprawling tree the larger sheep settles the smaller one deep within the hollow then lays down close beside it, sheltering it. In the darkness of the early morning the smaller sheep finds peace and comfort, his friend, the larger sheep is guiding the way, the small sheep has realised this and right now his friend (the larger sheep) is protecting him from the cold and comforting him in the darkness. The younger sheep determined that in the morning he would thank his friend, but right now he was dozing off to sleep. The morning dawned bright and cheery, the smaller sheep woke and stretched, looking down the path he could see a beautiful pasture, lots of lush grass and plenty of water, they had made it. Glancing at his friend the smaller sheep thought his friend was still asleep, shaking him gently the younger sheep tried to wake his friend. But to his dismay his friend was gone, he had given his life to protect his friend. The younger sheep was devastated and searched his friend over carefully, what had caused his death? He came upon scar after scar, in the darkness of the night his friend had bumped against many a object in his attempt to protect his friend, there were deep gouge marks along his legs and looking back across the path they had come the smaller sheep could see a deep ravine, his friend had changed sides to protect him from the deep descent but had from time to time fallen himself causing the gouge marks, then finally in the coldness of the night his friend had given his life sheltering

him (the smaller sheep) from the tempest. The smaller sheep sat down and cried bitterly, why hadn't he noticed what his friend was doing, now his friend was gone. Looking forward the young sheep realised that his friend had given his life to save him, he could see the life saving grass and water and his mind went back to the sheep he had left behind, the very ones who had cast them out. They were in danger of dying where they were, the path out had been frightful indeed and the younger sheep was terrified of passing it again but did this mean he should leave the other sheep to perish. The other sheep on the other hand had mercilessly cast them out, what right did they have of being saved. The young sheep sat down, put his head in his hands and cried, there was really only one answer. Rising from his place in the path the young sheep turned to his departed friend and talking to him as if he were still alive the young sheep poured out his heart, thanking him for the sacrifice he had made the young friend determined to 'follow' in his footsteps. The young sheep turned and trotted back down the path he had just come, he was going to get the others, to guide them, if he could, back along the path he had just conquered, but this time he would be walking on the side of the gulf."

I believe you get the message and import of this allegory, Jesus is the larger of the two sheep and we are the younger, "yes I gave My life for you and I was with you every step of the way, I comforted you in the darkness, I protected you from the deep ravine and I sheltered you in the cold darkness of the morning 'just before dawn', I have walked with you every step of the way, and I promise you I will always be beside you."

(From my personal file)

Being watchful & helping others

"Two girls, about the same age were walking down a dusty track. Best of friends but worlds apart. See one of the girls was a orphan, and lived day to day jumping from one house to the next. Someone in the town would put her up one week then the next week another family would. The two girls had become fast friends at school and although (we'll call her girl 1) was a orphan, she had a bubbly, friendly and kind personality. She didn't let her situation bother her, and she kept a positive outlook on life.

Today the two girls were going to the fair, girl two had been given a bit of pocket money and was going to buy some ribbons for her hair. Girl one (the orphan) had also been given a little bit of money, but she didn't know what she was going to spend her money on. The fair was amazing, there were so many exciting stalls, the girls went from one exciting booth to another. Lunch time came and went but still the girls were excitedly wandering around. Time was becoming a issue, girl two had seen some ribbons she had decided on but they were quite a few stalls back, girl one on the other hand had seen something else. They decided to split up, buy their respective purchases and meet back at the entrance of the fair to walk home together. Girl two hurried off, she was excited, found her ribbons and hurried off to the entrance of the fair grounds. Meeting up with her friend the two started off together, girl two chattering away excitedly about her ribbons. Quite startling girl two noticed girl one wasn't carrying anything and questioned what she had spent her money on. Girl one didn't want to talk about it. They both said their goodbyes and went to their

respective homes. Girl two went inside to find her aunt there with her little baby. Aunty wasn't feeling well, see she also had gone to the fair but the hot weather had made her take 'one of her turns'. Sitting on the ground with baby on her lap Aunty was wondering what to do when a young girl had shown up with a tall glass of cold orange juice. The young girl had sat on the ground beside her and offered to hold the baby so she could drink the orange juice. Feeling refreshed Aunty thanked the girl and the young girl disappeared into the crowd."

How often in our busy days do we become 'girl two', we traverse this path looking only to please ourselves. But heaven has many a 'girl one' out there, waiting for their opportunity to help, looking for instances where they can step in and help. Jesus also has His angels out looking for suffering people, or just people who need help, they will see 'Aunty' and they will send a 'girl one' to the rescue. As we travel this earth it is important that we keep our eyes open, there are always opportunities to help and you never know one day you may be helping someone you love.

(From my personal file)

Jesus saves

"We'll call him Rob. Rob was major excited, he was going with the school on an excursion, today they were going to the beach. Rob sat in the bus along with the other students and listened rather impatiently to the teacher. The teacher was standing at the front of the bus giving out instructions. The plan, the teacher said, was all laid out and the children only had to follow it. The teachers had spent plenty of time going over this excursion with a fine tooth comb, every scenario was checked just to make sure of the safety of the kids, after all the beach could be a dangerous place. The teacher at the front of the bus droned on and after a while Rob's mind wandered and he thought of all the fun he was about to have. The teacher suddenly brought Rob's mind back to the present, the teacher had asked everyone to put up their hand if they understood her instructions but Rob hadn't been listening. Seeing everyone else with their hand up Rob quickly put up his. The bus started and all the children shouted for joy. Rob felt a little guilty but quickly shoved the feeling aside, he was going to have fun. The bus arrived at the beach and all the students piled out, first stop was the lifeguard tower. Man, that was interesting but Rob hadn't paid too much attention to what the lifeguard was saying, he was too interested in looking at all the cool stuff. Well, that over there was only one thing left to do, swim, and Rob took full advantage of his time in the sea. He imagined himself to be a good swimmer, hadn't he won awards at school swim meets? So when he saw the lifeguard waving to him he just waved back, once again he saw the lifeguard trying to get his attention and once again Rob ignored him. Time passed and Rob began to feel tired, he was also getting hungry, surely it must be lunchtime. Rob turned toward the shore, strange, it looked a lot further away than he expected, never mind he was a good swimmer so surely he would be back at the shore soon. Rob also noticed to his dismay that he had drifted a fair way apart from his fellow classmates. He kept swimming but he didn't seem to be getting any closer. Rob really started to tire and slowly panic started to envelop him. What had the teacher said? what had

the lifeguard said? Rob groaned, if only he had listened, the plan had been laid out, there was a contingency in place for this scenario but Rob had been so absorbed with his own thoughts he hadn't listened. Now he was in serious trouble, Rob put his head in his hands and tried to remember what to do. In the meantime one of the lifeguards in the tower had noticed Rob and was watching him carefully, did this boy need help? The lifeguard had tried to warn Rob earlier but Rob hadn't heeded him, the lifeguard had also noticed Rob during the morning talk and he could see Rob was in a world of his own and not listening. Taking a final look at Rob's location the lifeguard grabbed a rescue board and headed out. Rob in the meantime was in peril, panic had set in and he was floundering about, suddenly he remembered and raised his hand, waving it about in a desperate attempt to be noticed. Little did Rob know that help was already on the way."

Friends, I believe the moral of this story is easy to see. The teachers had the 'plan' all laid out, the teachers warned the students of the dangers and how to stay safe. Rob strayed as I believe we all have from time to time, but friends there is always a lifeguard watching and when we are at our lowest and the waves of the storm are washing over our heads remember the lifeguard, Jesus is already on the way.
(From Bible Study document:- A trail worth taking)

Jesus will help

"Sally was a executive and living a rather luxurious life, but this was about to change for Sally. The night of the 'office party' went off a bit too well for Sally and to her dismay a few weeks later she discovered she was pregnant. The 'father' didn't want anything to do with it and urged Sally to abort. But somewhere in the back of Sally's mind she heard her mother (who had by now passed on) reminding her of her 'Christian principles', Sally also deep down really did want to keep the child. So, fronting up to her boss she told him she was pregnant, was going to keep the baby and put in for maternity leave. What she didn't realise was that the 'father' was the boss's son and neither were willing to take any responsibility.

The first few months were wonderful for Sally, she really enjoyed her role as a parent, then realising that 'funds' weren't going to hold out forever Sally made plans to go back to work, but to her surprise her job no longer existed. Sally was in despair, and the 'corners' started enclosing her. Starting with a lack of funds, a baby to care for, still not at full health (the birth was quite difficult and Sally was taking a while to recover), bit by bit Sally started to slide downhill and suddenly she found herself 'in a corner', whichever way she looked a wall of circumstance loomed up in front of her.

Sally was a Christian and turned to Jesus, bit by bit help came through. Firstly her aunt rang out of the blue saying she was in town, after hearing Sally's story she moved in for a while which gave Sally a much needed break. Soon other help started coming Sally's way and the walls confining Sally came tumbling down. Sally looked back over the past few events, her aunt for instance just happening to come at that exact moment, a coincidence? I think not, Sally knew Jesus had timed it, the new job, a coincidence? once again, Sally knew it wasn't. Looking back over the path she had just come Sally could 'see' every step of the

way where Jesus had sent help just in the nick of time. The experience had been rough indeed and Sally had spent many a night in tears, fearful for the future. Everything was on track again, but Sally was changed, she now knew for a fact, by sight and not by faith, that no matter what happened in life Jesus was more than capable of bringing her through. Sally felt closer than ever before to her Saviour, Jesus had carried her through, bowing her head Sally thanked her Saviour for carrying her through and then thanked Jesus for the experience, she then went forward to seek out others 'in a corner' so she could pass on what she had learned and so she could help them and bring them to Jesus."

Friends, Jesus always knows just where we are and He will always have help ready to step in at the moment it is needed. Please friends, lift your voice and heart to Jesus, He is always there and He is always ready and willing to help.

(From Bible Study document:- In a corner)

Redeemed

"Two boys, best friends, grew up together in a small country town (for ease of identification we will call them boy 1 and boy 2). Entering adulthood they went separate ways, one boy (boy 1) content to stay in the country town entered his desired profession, married his girlfriend and started a family. He was a Christian and led his family to the love of Jesus. His friend (boy 2) on the other hand wanted the limelight, his friend had a loose hold on Jesus but it wasn't strong enough and when temptation came knocking he didn't have the desire to block it. Leaving the country, he (boy 2) embarked upon indulging in pleasures and finding his desired profession. But things for this boy didn't go as planned, to start with life was fun. The first few years of work doing what he loved was easy to find, and he indulged in his pleasures. But things started to take a darker turn, his pleasures were becoming obsessions, longer and longer he wanted to indulge, shorter and shorter were his working hours, debts started piling up. He was in too deep, unable to withhold his passions and unable to hold down a job, he found himself evicted and lost in a town that didn't care. His 'pleasure' friends quickly moved on not caring if he had a home or not. The troubled boy started walking, not intent on where he was going he soon found himself wandering about lost in the forest on the outskirts of town. Wandering along, the night seemed to close in around him, darkness and despair engulfed him and in desperation he sought a spot to 'end it all'. The moon was rising and the boy saw before him the opportunity he was so desperately looking for, in front of him was a very deep pond and he couldn't swim. Moving out to the very edge of the pond the boy lost in despair prepared to jump, but in the moonlight something stopped him. There spread out across the pond was a shadow, yes, it was the shadow of a cross. Looking up into the sky the boy could see the outline of trees with a moonbeam shining through making the shadow of a cross. The boy froze in his tracks, he did remember his mother's God, maybe it wasn't too late for him. Retracing his steps he found his way out of the forest and to a public phone, feeling around in his pocket he withdrew his last dime. The phone rang late that night in boy one's house but it didn't matter to him, his friend needed him. A late night road trip soon found both friends together, at the local church, both kneeling at the foot of the cross. The boy from town in tears, how

good it felt to know there was a Saviour. All his wasted years he was never happy, but too afraid, too stubborn to acknowledge it. Years of darkness and oppression, pressing him down, holding him. Finally he knew what it meant to be free, peace came, yes, the path of recovery was going to be tough he knew, but he now had the strength of the blessed Saviour by his side. His depression, discouragement and despair departed like a sunbeam bursting through the storm. He felt encouraged and for the first time loved, yes, Jesus loved him. The darkness and gloom of the past seemed to lift and at the foot of the cross this troubled boy finally found the love of his Saviour, Jesus had found him and brought him home and nothing could now break his hold on his Saviour. Yes, he had been redeemed.”

Come to the cross today friends, give your heart to Jesus today. No matter how deeply you are in the devil’s den friend, Jesus can lift you out. Please, find the cross and come to Jesus today.

(From Bible Study document:- To be redeemed)

Going astray, Jesus saves

“Benji rose from his bed with his head in his hands. What had happened the night before? he really couldn’t remember. Filling up his coffee cup from the kettle Benji sat down at the table and tried to calm his foggy head. What had happened? Rubbing his hand over his eyes Benji let his mind roam over the events leading up to the night before.

It had all started about six months ago. It seemed innocent enough, just a game of cards at a friend of a friend’s place. As soon as Benji had got there though warning bells started to ring. Benji wasn’t a bad person, he had been raised in a religious environment but he had never really taken much notice, after all he reasoned, religion was for the older folk, he himself had a lot of ‘living’ to do. He had got himself a rather good paying job in the centre of town and although he didn’t normally go to the pub his ‘friends’, as he had called them at the time, assured him it was harmless and ‘just a meeting place’. This is where the ‘needling’, as he called it, had really started. He had heard this ‘needling’ before, whenever he was about to do or go someplace bad, his mother referred to it as ‘the Holy Spirit’, gently prompting him that he was about to enter into enemy territory. “Jesus was with him”, his mother always said and she always reminded him that “Jesus was his Saviour and would help him along the way”. There was that voice again gently remonstrating with him not to pursue the path he was about to enter. He was at the door of the pub and his (Benji’s) friends were admonishing forcefully with him to come in and take a seat, someone had already brought him a beer and was pushing it into his hands. Benji never drank, but feeling cornered, sat down. The warning bells rang louder and became more persistent, Benji’s ‘friends’ became noisy and obnoxious.

Let’s put this scene (allegory) on hold and have a look at what is going on behind the scenes. Basically the devil is tempting Benji to enter his playground and Jesus, via His ministering angels and the Holy Spirit, are trying to protect Benji and keep him out of harm’s way. The difference here is the devil and his angels use force, ‘they pushed the beer into Benji’s hands’, while Jesus and His angels can only use reason, they cannot physically pick up Benji and remove him from the scene, it’s totally Benji’s choice. The warning bells

ringing louder are Jesus' angels, while the noisy and obnoxious 'friends' are being driven by Satan. Friends, always remember when you find yourself in a compromised position that Satan is somewhere in the mix. He is always behind someone urging them on to destruction and if possible using them to tempt you into the mix as well. It would be wise to pull back from the scenario and just observe for a while, you will soon see the devil in the detail. But let's go back to Benji.

Benji is in the fight of his life and the outcome here could change his life. How many disasters, jail terms, fights could be avoided? how many lives saved if we just took a step back and thought about what we are doing. Reason could save many a person. But the devil is bent on his victim and Benji isn't listening to his guardian angel friends, oh yes, he put up bit of a fight, reasoning to himself that he was in control of himself and he definitely wasn't going to do anything stupid or embarrassing. Benji had been 'fighting with sin'. He had heard the Holy Spirit prompting him to leave, he had also heard the devil (via his friends) urging him to stay and the battle had gone on for a while. But instead of getting up and leaving the environment, Benji stayed. This indecision gave the devil a advantage and Satan (once again via his (Benji's) friends) gained the victory in this fight. Satan managed to convince Benji that he was in control of himself in a situation where the devil ran rampant.

But back to Benji. Benji was, as he made himself to believe, actually having a really good time. He shouted himself and his friends to a few rounds and before he knew it he was laughing as loud as any of them, but that persistent nagging was still going on in his mind. Benji had shrugged it off and joined wholeheartedly into the card games. The manager of the pub came over and curtly told the boys that the pub was closing and it was time to go home. They all raucously tramped out and the night was over. The next day at work Benji's head felt a little light and his boss questioned if he felt ok. Benji assured him that he was, but halfway through the day the boss came back to give a little 'fatherly advice' (via the impression of the Holy Spirit). The boss gently admonished Benji, he did know Benji had come to work with a hangover and it was impacting on his ability to do his job satisfactorily. It was just a gentle warning, smooth, like a father would give. So Benji took notice and when his friends called him that night he politely declined. But the devil wasn't going to let Benji go without a fight. Benji plunged into the fight head on, he was determined to keep his job and to do it to the best of his abilities. But late one night when he was feeling down the devil came knocking again. His friends were at the door pleading with him to join them. This time they wouldn't go to the pub, they would go to a mate's house and just play a few rounds of cards. The needling and warning bells rang again, louder this time. Benji put his head in his hands as the war raged in his mind. He was fighting with sin again. He reasoned it out in his mind, yes he knew it was wrong, yes he knew he was taking himself out of Jesus' protection. The battle raged on, his friends were getting impatient. Finally with threats of abandoning him his friends cast down the ultimatum, to come now or be left behind. Benji picked himself up, left his house and closed the door behind him. Once again he put his faith in himself, shut out the Holy Spirit and gave a ear to the devil, he had lost the fight with sin. The Holy Spirit had given Benji every opportunity and while the fight had been vicious Benji did have within himself the ability to withhold the devil. Jesus was with Benji, strengthening him for the fight, giving him power to withstand the temptations of the

devil, but Benji discerned Him not. Benji went out into the night unaware that his life would change forever that night.

The abrupt banging on the front door brought Benji back from his reverie, slipping into the bedroom Benji looked out the window. It was as he suspected, flashing red and blue lights and blue uniforms demanding entrance. He hung his head in shame, he hadn't been in control and his 'friends' had driven him to ruin. Benji's heart ached, if only he had listened to the needling and pleading he wouldn't be in the position he was now. Somewhere in the back of his mind he heard the Holy Spirit again, maybe it wasn't too late? yes, he was in a mess, but just maybe? The banging on the door became more insistent and Benji knew he had to face up to his fate. Moving towards the door he banged into a object just sticking out from under his bed. Bending over and picking it up he realised it was his mother's Bible, he had forgotten he even had it. The Bible had fallen open and with tears in his eyes Benji realised yes, the night had been bad but it wasn't over, there was still hope yet. Benji clasped the Bible close to his chest and peace came to his soul as he recalled the words he had just read.

Isaiah 43:1 "...Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine."

Friends, it doesn't matter how black the night is, it doesn't matter where you are or what has happened. Friends, Jesus knows your pain, He sees your struggles, Jesus knows the fight with sin can bring us to our knees. Jesus knows us intimately and Jesus will succour us, He has walked this path before us, He can empathise with us, He can redeem us. It doesn't matter friends how black the night or how bad you have lost the fight, please friends, turn to Jesus, He will carry you out of the dark and into the day. Put your hand in the hand of our blessed Redeemer and let Him lead you home. And next time you hear the 'needling', please friends, listen.

(From Bible Study document:- Fighting with sin)

Army training

Let's look at army training and see how it relates to us. Now while cadets are drilled in the field, up a wall, through hoops etc they are also called out to the field for practice runs. One team against another, testing their knowledge, testing their physical ability, but all this is predictable. What about the unpredictability?

"The night was dark and Sally was afraid, why had she agreed to join this command? Why hadn't she stayed at her desk job. Trying to think Sally peered into the gloomy darkness, nobody had prepared her for this, and no, she wasn't ready. Trying to remember basic training Sally tried to make her way to where she believed the 'safe' line was, but the whine of bullets, the smell of gunfire held her petrified. Something hit her, she laid down and crawled toward what she thought was safety, unfortunately she was going the wrong way. Falling into a ditch she curled up as best she could and hoped to 'wait it out'. Her mind travelled back down memory lane, how in the world had she ended up here.

“Oh it’s fun”, her brother had said. We play games, get to march in parades, have make believe skirmishes with our mates, “come on join the army, you’ll like it”. So Sally joined but she didn’t take it seriously, after all who was going to war? No, that would never happen in this day and age, no these were all just training games, something to train the body to get fit, no, she would never have to actually use these skills in real battle, would she?

Time in army training passed and Sally really enjoyed the ‘events’. She had passed most training events but still she didn’t take it seriously, after all she would never need it. She enjoyed the skirmishes the most, when she went out on the field and had to tactfully defeat the other team, sometimes her team won and sometimes it didn’t, but still she didn’t take it seriously.

Her commander noticed in Sally that she wasn’t taking this army training seriously and called her before him to explain. Sally expressed her point of view, yes, she wanted to fight for her country, her king, but she never expected to need to do so. Sally’s commander gently explained that if Sally didn’t prepare herself for battle she would have no chance of surviving it. War was real and one day it would come to them, Sally needed to stay ready. The commander dismissed Sally then quietly contemplated Sally’s outlook, no Sally wasn’t ready he knew. But he also knew that training for Sally’s battalion was about to go up a notch.

Midnight, and the sirens blared. Sally groaned, yes the generals had told them there would be a training session tonight. They were going to war, but it was only a drill so why bother? Right? Sally dug down into her bunk and didn’t bother to go, training huh! A few nights later it happened again, though this time they hadn’t been informed of a drill. Oh well, better go anyway, she had been brought up for report for not appearing for the other drill. But still Sally didn’t take it to heart, and yes, it was another drill, yawn, yawn and back to bed. Over the next few months these drills kept happening and Sally started to question the ethics of her commanders. Really? Night after second night, nothing is happening, nothing is going to happen but the commanders still roused them to drill, drill drill, sometimes twice in one night. Sally really started to question the ethics of her commander, every time they were so serious, everyone really believed them, today, yes today they really were under attack, but day after day they came back, another drill, Sally was growing tired and distrustful, were her commanders lying to her? After all they said each time that it is really happening now. Sally found herself really starting to distrust her commanders and started checking everything out for herself. If they were ‘lying’ to her about the drills maybe they couldn’t be trusted on other grounds either?

Although Sally hadn’t noticed, other cadets also had come to the same conclusion as Sally and they had disregarded any attempt of the generals for reform but the generals had a very good reason to their training regime. They needed to know just how ready their cadets were, could they hold themselves up in battle, could they even get to the starting line in time, a sudden event, especially one that brings a high level of shock and fear, does have the ability to override any training they have had and render them powerless. The generals put their head in their hands and sighed deeply. Many of their cadets understood what they were doing, they didn’t accuse them of lying, they understood that these drills must be run, how else could the generals see how the enemy would respond? If their cadets were ready for the

battle? Safety to their battalion was paramount, no-one was to be left behind but if these cadets were going to survive they needed to be prepared whether it is a drill or not.

Lying in the ditch Sally was shaking, fulling believing she was about to die. Why hadn't she listened to her trainer? Why hadn't she taken him seriously and trusted his judgement? Maybe if she had just trusted his judgement and accepted the training she would have been prepared for this moment. Sally put her head in her hands and waited for the fatal blow. The night sky lit up like daylight, floodlights shone on the scene around her and she, with painful alacrity, realised that it was all another drill. Around her were her battalion, most had made it to safety, they had heeded their training and were ready to face the fight, to her shame Sally was not, along with a few others Sally was just cowering where she had started from. If it had been a real event Sally would be dead, she had failed to take the drills seriously, she had harboured ill feelings toward her commanders, even accusing them of lying. Sally hadn't been drafted into the army, she had chosen to fight for her king and country but she had failed to take their training and guidance seriously. The constant drills in the night were to prepare her for the onslaught, was she ready? No she wasn't. The on and off again drills, well, some were real drills but were cancelled by higher authorities but many were practice runs, they were also what her commander called 'info gathering runs'. These runs were vital to the survival of the unit and to learning the fighting tactics of the enemy. It was vital to gather this info against the enemy so they could plan their attack knowing how the enemy would respond. They needed to test the loyalty of their cadets, would their cadets follow and obey even though they knew it could be another dummy run? There was one other tactic in this training that nobody saw, not even the generals.

The top leading Commander (Jesus) laid His pen on His desk, His one hundred and forty four thousand army was made up. These were the finest and strongest of cadets, faithful to the end regardless of what He asked of them. He wiped a tear from His eye, yes the path had been bitter and His cadets had been bitterly tried, the process had hurt Him greatly, He didn't like to see His children suffer, especially as they were working so hard for Him. He straightened up and went out to address His battalion. All were worn and battle weary but all were ready, they would follow their Commander no matter what, they would believe His word and trust His love, they were ready for the battle. Tenderly calling them around Him He gently explained the training process. Yes, they had been in the army training for war. They had been called, chosen by their Commander, He had faith in them. The training had been difficult indeed but everyone had come out of the furnace shining like gold and all stood ready and willing, faithful to their trust, to their Commander no matter the outlook, no matter the darkness these people had followed their Commander. He stood erect and foreboding as He, the leading Commander, addressed His battalion, training was over and war was about to break out, this time for real, no more dummy runs. A hand went up but the Commander waved it away, after all He knew what the question was going to be. Yes, one of the hardest training to master was the drills, the dummy runs and many people within the group wanted to know why? Some like Sally had started to think their Commander was lying, it wasn't going to happen. Their Commander laid it all out but first He started with a apology, thanks for enduring, promises of full explanations once the war was over and rewards for helping in the war. Firstly their blessed Commander explained that He couldn't tell them that some of the drills were 'dummy runs' (some of which were really going to

happen) as they wouldn't have taken the training seriously (there is a Sally in all of us). He needed to know exactly how the enemy would respond (that's Satan) and this could only be done by experience. He needed to know if we were ready, how much we could take and if our faith was steadfast, after all He was in no ways putting us into battle to fail, oh no, He would rather pass us by and try someone else than lose a child, no, we had to be tested. The distance we could hold on for also grew longer as battle after battle was won, could we hold for the distance? The enemy would also be targeting His cadets with mean, ruthless, evil and unfair tactics, His children must be able to stand. Training over and over again, no He wasn't lying He was using the age old tactic of drilling. These tactics have been used in armies down through the ages but it initially originated in heaven, in the very first war this universe ever witnessed this tactic has been used. Jesus had the angels go through these dummy runs over and over again and they can attest to their effectiveness. No it is not a lie, that is a accusation from the devil and we are not the first to hear it, he (Satan) also used it against the angels of God, as he (Satan) witnessed them training for their fight for heaven he (Satan) also whispered in their ear, "Jesus is lying, it isn't going to happen and these 'drills' are just deceit", but friends, Satan is the deceitful one and it is Satan lying to us. Jesus would never lie, this training has been vital to our survival and Jesus in His mercy has taken us over and over the grounds till we mastered the course. We now stand ready to defeat the devil on all angles. The Commander had one more word of counsel for His battalion and He waited for silence before He gave His last counsel. Now His battalion was ready to stand on call, unshaken and whether the event happened or not they were ready to weather the storm, they would not falter if the event didn't happen or if a delay occurred, they would hold their ground without question. This training ability was the pinnacle of the Commander's training and He was so proud they had all reached this standard, this was immensely important to the Saviour's tactics - see now heaven can hold us ready for the event but Satan won't know if it is going to happen or not, see Satan was watching us and he was taking his cue from us, as soon as we stood ready and waiting Satan would rally his troops and stand ready to oppose us but now we may be standing ready but Satan won't know if it is going to go ahead or not, now Jesus can outwit the devil. The devil cannot be constantly beside us lined up for a fight, he has other people to distress and he has his army to get ready. But now we have the advantage as we can now stand ready, accept it if it doesn't happen but be prepared if it does, the only down side is we won't know when it is going to happen either so we will just have to stay ready for battle but prepared for delay knowing that we are now deep in a battle of wits with Satan.

Sally curled up in the corner of the bus on the way back to the barracks, she was embarrassed and ashamed, after all she had been loudest in denouncing these 'drills'. Her commander came over and sat beside her, yes it had been a bitter experience but it was one that Sally could learn from, after all she wasn't dead, it had been a practice run. But her commander did warn and impress upon her the fact that war really was coming this way and she needed to be prepared, if she was willing to train and put her total faith in her commander he would help her through. Sally sat up straighter in her chair, her commander was right, she would train, she would put her trust in her commanders and not doubt or accuse them of injustice or deceit, after all she could now see it as it really was, it was like a cloud had been swept away from her eyes and she saw the situation as it really was.

Strengthening her resolve Sally went to her battalion team mates, she wanted to share with them what she had just learnt.”

I believe at some stage we have all been Sally’s but it is not too late. We can now fully understand what Jesus has been doing. He is ever compassionate and He loves us dearly. The training has been frightful indeed but in order to pass through the fire we must fully understand the terrible atrocities of the devil, we need to be able to stand through the fire and this cannot be done without intensive training. Jesus I believe is putting us to the test, trying us in the furnace of affliction, can we stand? Do we have what it is going to take to defeat the devil? I urge everyone to pick up your sword and shield and stand ready for war.

(From my personal file)

My Story in a Allegory, Bear

“A young child was sitting in the grass by the side of the road, her parents had placed her there so mother could attend to the baby and father needed to change a flat tyre. While the child was young she could comprehend and understand what was going on around her. They were moving, she had said goodbye to her friends (that had been particularly hard), they had packed up their house. The removalist team had come the night before and taken all their stuff, they had all her precious toys except one. A long loved teddy bear was clasped in her arms, held tight as if the child was afraid of losing it. This bear had been through a lot with her and the child would not let it go for anything, mother had tried to pack it with their belongings but the young child would have nothing of it. Bear, as she called him, was staying with her. Seeing that they were not going anywhere fast the child lay down in the grass and with ‘Bear’ by her side she let her mind wander down memory lane, putting together the pieces as to how they ended up here in the first place.

Health hadn’t been kind to Bear (Bear was her alias, she was in fact referring to herself), cancer coupled with septicaemia at a early age had almost claimed her life and Bear had seen and endured the most horrific scenes a hospital could offer, especially to a seven year old. Closing her eyes tight, as if to shut ‘it all out’, the child couldn’t help but remember ‘those’ days. She could still ‘smell’ the hot greasy food that was dinner, the whine of the linear radiation machine, the constant visits to clinic sessions, the endless fingerpicks for blood tests and having to lay still for the lumbar punctures, yes she still remembered it all. She had given up making friends, after all what was the point, they all died. Doctors visits, hospitals, they only meant one thing for her, pain, pain and more pain. It was hard to get ahead, after all it was early days with cancer treatment (the treatment and medication given her is not used anymore, it is considered too toxic. Precious little comfort for her), life threatening drug reactions, drug side affects, she knew she would never be ‘whole’, yes, she knew it all.

Picking Bear up off the grass the young child searched him over, yes, he was ok, yes he was still alive, hugging him closely to her chest the child knew Bear was a survivor. Looking him closely in the eye the child asked the ultimate question “how was he, really? And how did he do it?” Deep down the child knew the answers to both of these questions,

after all she was Bear, the real question to be asked was, “was Bear ready to talk about it?” Bear wasn’t, she wasn’t sure if Bear ever would, the pain ran too deep. Mother was calling, it was time to move on, picking Bear up the young girl tenderly placed him on the seat beside her and allowed her mother to fasten her seatbelt. Picking up Bear she held him close, only he knew her real pain, only he could understand, so she thought at the time.

Years rolled by, Bear became a long forgotten pastime and the memory of his painful past was pushed to the back of the girl’s mind, but as age caught up with the girl Bear’s past came back to haunt her. Time spent crying over a family that never eventuated, intense crippling physical pain, organs vital for life failing - yes, she knew it was all Bear’s fault. If only he hadn’t survived (the other children didn’t) she knew she wouldn’t be in the pain she was in today. There was only one thing holding her, her faith in Jesus, after all Bear had a strong faith in Jesus, even as a cub Bear had loved Jesus. Now today the girl knew it was her love for Jesus and her desire to work for him that was holding her up. One aspect of her being still held strong and that was her mind. Throughout all her torturous treatment, meant to save her life, her mind had held steady. That again she credited to Bear, somehow through the black night, even as a small child, Bear had found Jesus and she had held on no matter what. Bear wasn’t afraid of death like some of the other children had been, Bear knew heaven awaited her if she didn’t make it. But during the night, throughout the storms Bear knew it was Jesus carrying her through, Jesus had given her the strength to ‘keep going’, Jesus had comforted her, Jesus had held her hand during every fingerpick (blood-test), every lumbar puncture, Jesus had been with her all along. It was Jesus that gave her the strength to stand and she fully believed the only reason Bear was alive today was because of Jesus. She remembered the fear and terror those children and their parents had of death and wondered if anyone had told them of the love of Jesus.

Turning to face the mirror, the now aged girl knew that Bear was long gone. Pondering her reflection she knew her life had been one of trial and pain, but through it all Jesus had stood by her side. She knew her body was weak, battered and bruised, she had been through the fires of affliction and come out the other side shining like gold. The thought of those people not knowing about her loving Saviour weighed heavily upon her mind, she loved her Saviour dearly, He had always been there for her. Facing the mirror front on the now aged girl made a pledge, she would tell the world of her Saviour and Redeemer’s love. Her body was broken and bruised but her mind was strong, years of pain had built a resolve deep within her that no-one could break. So with head held high, a resolve that could not be broken and her hand in the hand of her Saviour, the girl turned away from the mirror and entered the commission of her life, to show the world her loving, kind and compassionate Saviour.”

(From my personal file)

Learning to work with others

“Let’s call her Sally. Sally was in what we would call a ‘bad space’. Let’s hear it from her but just to ‘put you in the picture’ we will need her background history and just what led to her ending up here. Sally was a Christian and she loved her Saviour dearly. She was fully ‘versed’ in the concept of the Holy Spirit always ready to guide you and she ‘thought’ she was well grounded in her Saviour’s love, but her faith was about to be

severely put to the test. See, Sally was a 'lounge chair Christian', very comfortable, never had any 'problems' so to speak and as a result her faith had never been tested and when trial came she wasn't prepared.

Sally was a teacher, kindergarten. She was dearly loved by her students and she loved her job. That is till one day when little Johnny walked into her classroom. Now little Johnny wasn't necessarily bad but his life so far hadn't been a 'bed of roses', oh no, far from it. See little Johnny's father was a alcoholic and often came home drunk and little Johnny, though he was supposed to be in bed, often witnessed his father's treatment to his mother. So understandably little Johnny was bitter and angry underneath his cheerful outward appearance. Now this was all something that Sally didn't know and when little Johnny often did come to school at times a little smelly and dishevelled Sally just put it down to the fact that his lot in life was a bit unfortunate, maybe bordering on poverty and she made it her mission to 'correct' little Johnny not realising just how much pain little Johnny was actually bearing. So when Sally carelessly chided little Johnny, when other classmates could hear, and told him gently, or so she thought, that a bath would be in order little Johnny's resentment meter started to rise. Oh dear, then came the morning of the all important test, important people were in the room monitoring just how well Sally had been doing as a teacher and as you can imagine Sally was nervous, she wanted them to have a good impression. Little Johnny had had a rather bad night, dad had come home late and well, we'll draw the curtain on what exactly took place there, but little Johnny was tired and had done no study. Well as you can imagine when the test questions came to him he didn't stand a chance, he was also more dishevelled than normal and became a 'embarrassment' to Sally. Once again in front of the whole class this time little Johnny was chastised and sent in shame to the 'naughty corner'. As far as little Johnny was concerned it was now all out war and he set his sights to make Sally's life miserable. Sally on the other hand didn't understand what could have possibly gotten into little Johnny, after all wasn't she giving him all the possible care and attention she could? often going out of her way to spend extra time with him? what could she have possibly done? no, it wasn't her, something was wrong with little Johnny. Sally's faith muscle was in for real testing and over the next few weeks it became more and more difficult to control her class as little Johnny was making life hell and disrupting the entire class. Sally dropped more and more into despair. She did try and reach out to Jesus but as she was a 'lounge chair' Christian and had never had any experience in putting her faith in Jesus, she was having trouble 'hearing' Jesus and Sally found herself in one of those vicious circles.

Let's digress here and explain just what these 'circles' are. They are the circle of circumstance that many people find themselves in for various reasons and seemingly have no way to break the cycle. These 'circles' are very dangerous indeed and do have the power to make the mind break, literally. Many a person has lost their sanity because of these 'circles of circumstance', the mind just cannot cope with the level of pressure and it really does just break, You've heard the expression 'bound by circumstance', let's look it up.

Firstly the definition of the word 'bound'.

“Compelled or obliged to act, behave, or think in a particular way, as by duty, circumstance, or convention.”

And the definition of circumstance.

“A fact or event that makes a situation the way it is.”

So Sally is ‘bound’ by ‘circumstance’. These ‘circles’ are the situations surrounding us that we cannot control and have a ‘binding’ effect on us, we are ‘bound’ to traverse this path because of the situations surrounding us. Friends, these circles can be vicious, but let’s go back to Sally.

The circle begins. Sally’s going round in a circle, you know - bad day, (thanks to little Johnny) broken down, (crying in despair) expecting change (after praying to Jesus) - didn’t happen, broken again, (in despair) don’t want to do it all again, (can’t face tomorrow) don’t know why or what Jesus is doing, (why hasn’t He made little Johnny good). Gets some reassurance, a solution maybe, hope, peace for a season, (doesn’t work, little Johnny is worse than ever) then straight back to the start and she does it all over again, just like a circle - it doesn’t end - round and round she goes.

Well friends, there are two ways this can end and the circle gets broken, one - Sally breaks, her spirit is crushed and her will power and desire to carry on is broken beyond repair (I mean how many times can she raise her hope for tomorrow, believing, only to have them crushed, despair), her mind finally telling her not to hope at all. Or two - heaven breaks the circle, and faith becomes sight.

Sally is despondent, she feels alone and she tells herself that she has worked so hard and for what? The pain runs deep and Sally sinks further into despair and the circle tightens around her like a noose. She questions “where is her Saviour now?” Unbeknownst to Sally Jesus is right beside her, she just needs to turn to Him in prayer and cast herself upon His mercy, compassion and guidance, she also needs to realise that the devil is in the room and is pushing Sally deeper and deeper into despair in a circle she cannot control - or can she? Sally’s mind is in a turmoil and tears are threatening to take control again, she can’t hope anything is going to change, and her pain just runs deep, she has failed - or so the devil is telling her.

See friends, the devil is in the detail here and he is driving Sally to destruction, he is the one telling her “there is no hope” and “she has worked for nothing”. He is also telling Sally that Jesus has left her and isn’t helping, I mean why isn’t He making little Johnny be good? The devil is out for the destruction of all but let’s see how this pans out for Sally.

But somewhere deep inside Sally she knows Jesus wouldn’t abandon her, she knows He is beside her, waiting in the wings for her to ‘come round’ and fall into His embrace. She knows He wouldn’t let her fall completely and she knows He would save her and she seems

to hear Jesus saying “My grace is sufficient for you”. Sally draws peace from this and starts to look for answers.

She first looks into just what ‘games’ her mind is playing with her. She realises now that the devil is in this ‘circle’ and he is playing a major part in bringing her down, she also realises that Jesus is in the circle too and He is playing a major part in lifting her up. So just what is the mind doing in all of this with the battle raging so fiercely?

Friends, let’s digress again, I have mentioned in other presentations just how the mind works but let’s have a refresher here as it is very relevant to this document.

See this is how the mind works. When a tragedy, pain or trauma happens the mind automatically looks for something to blame it on. Take for example a broken arm, the physical pain has been caused by the broken arm but it was the accident that caused it, therefore the mind blames the accident. More intense trauma goes deeper. Take for example a cancer survivor, their physical pain for instance was caused by the chemotherapy therefore their mind blames the cancer, this is the mind’s natural defence mechanism, it needs to find something to ‘pin’ the trauma on, something to blame. This is for the protection of our very sanity.

Now in real time this ‘protection’ imbedded in human nature is for our benefit. See the human nature will blame whatever it sees as the cause, this will steady the mind and allow it to grab hold of a foundation. Then with time, the right environment, maybe counselling and sometimes medication the mind will heal and understanding and reason will be enough to stabilise the mind and return it to its natural state. So this human nature trait is a blessing.

Now in Sally’s case she has worked herself up into a really distressed state and her mind has gone into ‘lockdown’ mode, it is desperately searching for reasons and solutions and it is blaming little Johnny, hence the next part of the cycle - tears are gone and anger takes their place. Sally is angry and it is all little Johnny’s fault. Sally decides to confront little Johnny’s mother too, ‘lay it out straight’. But something stops her before she reaches the door, oh dear, little Johnny’s father is home early and Sally can clearly hear the ruckus going on inside. Tears fill her eyes. It’s not little Johnny’s fault, it’s hers, she realises that Jesus in His compassion and mercy has brought her to the house at the exact moment the ruckus occurred so she could witness the truth of what is going on. Sally by now is blinded by her own tears as she realises the pain and embarrassment she must have caused little Johnny with her careless words and she is filled with remorse. Suddenly, like a lightning bolt from heaven, Sally’s ‘circle of circumstance’ is broken and for the first time in a long time Sally feels free. She wipes the tears from her eyes and there in the street Sally drops to her knees and thanks Jesus for helping her to ‘see the light’, the truth surrounding little Johnny. She realises that for the first time she has had her faith muscle tested, but she also feels ever the stronger for it, she feels closer to Jesus and she is more reliant on His strength and less on her own. Thanking heaven for the insight Sally arises from her knees and sets about to make things right. Tomorrow would be different Sally knew and for the first time in a long time Sally felt release and relief. She knew Jesus had walked her through the darkness of the night. She understood that the devil had been in the detail trying to destroy

her but Jesus had come to the rescue and had saved her from his (Satan's) grasp. She felt closer to her Saviour than ever before and she knew the circle had been broken by Him. She slipped her hand into the hand of her Saviour Jesus Christ and ever vowed to walk by His side.

Friends, this is the end of Sally's allegory but there are many more out there and maybe, just maybe, one of them may be yours? It is vital we listen when Jesus speaks. He loves us dearly and He is ever out to save us from the devil's snare. Yes sometimes He speaks in warning but more often it is in love, guiding us through this path we tread, helping us to avoid the devil's pitfalls and tenderly leading us to heaven.

(From document When God Speaks)

To Fight With Sin (In a Allegory)

I have put this message into a allegory depicting the fight with sin. The characters in this allegory are completely fictitious. The story/details may differ but the moral of the allegory itself is very real. I believe we have all been here at some point in our lives and the lessons to be learned and the outcome obtained can belong to everyone struggling in the mire today. As you read this allegory maybe you can place yourself or someone you know in the picture, remember the struggle is very real, the fight frightening, but please remember the outcome is eternal.

Benji rose from his bed with his head in his hands. What had happened the night before? he really couldn't remember. Filling up his coffee cup from the kettle Benji sat down at the table and tried to calm his foggy head. What had happened? Rubbing his hand over his eyes Benji let his mind roam over the events leading up to the night before. It had all started about six months ago. It seemed innocent enough, just a game of cards at a friend of a friend's place. As soon as Benji had got there though warning bells started to ring. Benji wasn't a bad person, he had been raised in a religious environment but he had never really taken much notice, after all he reasoned, religion was for the older folk, he himself had a lot of 'living' to do. He had got himself a rather good paying job in the centre of town and although he didn't normally go to the pub his 'friends', as he had called them at the time, assured him it was harmless and 'just a meeting place'. This is where the 'needling', as he called it, had really started. He had heard this 'needling' before, whenever he was about to do or go someplace bad, his mother referred it to 'The Holy Spirit', gently prompting him that he was about to enter into enemy territory. "Jesus was with him", his mother always said and she always reminded him that "Jesus was his Saviour and would help him along the way". There was that voice again gently remonstrating with him not to pursue the path he was about to enter. He was at the door of the pub and his (Benji's) friends were admonishing forcefully with him to come in and take a seat, someone had already brought him a beer and was pushing it into his hands. Benji never drank, but feeling cornered, sat down. The warning bells rang louder and became more persistent, Benji's 'friends' became noisy and obnoxious.

Let's put this scene on hold and have a look at what is going on behind the scenes. Basically the devil is tempting Benji to enter his playground and Jesus, via His ministering angels and The Holy Spirit, are trying to protect Benji and keep him out of harm's way. The difference here is the devil and his angels use force, 'they pushed the beer into Benji's hands', while Jesus and His angels can only use reason, they cannot physically pick up Benji and remove him from the scene, it's totally Benji's choice. The warning bells ringing louder are Jesus' angels, while the noisy and obnoxious 'friends' are being driven by Satan. Always remember when you find yourself in a compromised position that Satan is somewhere in the mix. He is always behind someone urging them on to destruction and if possible using them to tempt you into the mix as well. It would be wise to pull back from the scenario and just observe for a while, you will soon see the devil in the detail. But let's go back to Benji.

Benji is in the fight of his life and the outcome here could change his life. How many disasters, jail terms, fights could be avoided? how many lives saved if we just took a step back and thought about what we are doing. Reason could save many a person. But the devil is bent on his victim and Benji isn't listening to his guardian angel friends, oh yes, he put up bit of a fight, reasoning to himself that he was in control of himself and he definitely wasn't going to do anything stupid or embarrassing. Benji had been 'fighting with sin'. He had heard The Holy Spirit prompting him to leave, he had also heard the devil (via his friends) urging him to stay and the battle had gone on for a while. But instead of getting up and leaving the environment, Benji stayed. This indecision gave the devil a advantage and Satan (once again via Benji's friends) gained the victory in this fight. Satan managed to convince Benji that he was in control of himself in a situation where the devil ran rampant.

But back to Benji. Benji was, as he made himself to believe, actually having a really good time. He shouted himself and his friends to a few rounds and before he knew it he was laughing as loud as any of them, but that persistent nagging was still going on in his mind. Benji had shrugged it off and joined wholeheartedly into the card games. The manager of the pub came over and curtly told the boys that the pub was closing and it was time to go home. They all raucously tramped out and the night was over. The next day at work Benji's head felt a little light and his boss questioned if he felt ok. Benji assured him that he was, but halfway through the day the boss came back to give a little 'fatherly advice' (via the impression of The Holy Spirit). The boss gently admonished Benji, he did know Benji had come to work with a hangover and it was impacting on his ability to do his job satisfactorily. It was just a gentle warning, smooth, like a father would give. So Benji took notice and when his friends called him that night he politely declined. But the devil wasn't going to let Benji go without a fight. Benji plunged into the fight head on, he was determined to keep his job and to do it to the best of his abilities. But late one night when he was feeling down the devil came knocking again. His friends were at the door pleading with him to join them. This time they wouldn't go to the pub, they would go to a mate's house and just play a few rounds of cards. The needling and warning bells rang again, louder this time. Benji put his head in his hands as the war raged in his mind. He was fighting with sin again. He reasoned it out in his mind, yes he knew it was wrong, yes he knew he was taking himself out of Jesus' protection. The battle raged on, his friends were getting impatient. Finally with

threats of abandoning him his friends cast down the ultimatum, to come now or be left behind. Benji picked himself up, left his house and closed the door behind him. Once again he put his faith in himself, shut out The Holy Spirit and gave a ear to the devil, he had lost the fight with sin. The Holy Spirit had given Benji every opportunity and while the fight had been vicious Benji did have within himself the ability to withhold the devil. Jesus was with Benji, strengthening him for the fight, giving him power to withstand the temptations of the devil, but Benji discerned Him not. Benji went out into the night unaware that his life would change forever that night.

The abrupt banging on the front door brought Benji back from his reverie, slipping into the bedroom Benji looked out the window. It was as he suspected, flashing red and blue lights and blue uniforms demanding entrance. He hung his head in shame, he hadn't been in control and his 'friends' had driven him to ruin. Benji's heart ached, if only he had listened to the needling and pleading he wouldn't be in the position he was now. Somewhere in the back of his mind he heard The Holy Spirit again, maybe it wasn't too late? Yes, he was in a mess, but just maybe? The banging on the door became more insistent and Benji knew he had to face up to his fate. Moving towards the door he banged into a object just sticking out from under his bed. Bending over and picking it up he realised it was his mother's Bible, he had forgotten he even had it. The Bible had fallen open and with tears in his eyes Benji realised yes, the night had been bad but it wasn't over, there was still hope yet. Benji clasped the Bible close to his chest and peace came to his soul as he recalled the words he had just read.

Isaiah 43:1 "...Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine."

Friends, it doesn't matter how black the night is, it doesn't matter where you are or what has happened. Jesus knows your pain, He sees your struggles, Jesus knows the fight with sin can bring us to our knees. Jesus knows us intimately and Jesus will succour us, He has walked this path before us, He can empathise with us, He can redeem us. It doesn't matter how black the night or how bad you have lost the fight, please, turn to Jesus, He will carry you out of the dark and into the day. Put your hand in the hand of our blessed Redeemer and let Him lead you home. And next time you hear the 'needling', please listen. I'd like to point you to our beautiful Saviour and leave you with one of the most beautiful of Bible promises.

23rd Psalm

"...The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: He leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul: He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever."

(From Document:- Fighting with the devil)

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