

Seven strong foundation stones.

“If you feel that God is calling you to be a lamp, then come to the front, and the Pastor and his team will pray for you.” This, or a similar invitation, has faced every lamp. As I have said to everyone, there is no follow up book, no group to join, no videos, cd's dvd's. Lamps step forward, knowing that this is an open ended contract. We agree to do this, knowing that we really do not know what we are doing, or what is being asked of us.

The Church can make it too complex to respond to the call of God. There are prayers to pray, responses to be made, courses to attend – and I have nothing against these, except they can hide from us the basic simplicity of faith - ***God calls, and we respond, regardless of the cost or consequences.*** We respond, and then wait for our instructions from the Holy Spirit.

To support the lamps I have written and made available this new material. As I have prayed and waited on God, I have become aware that we all need to know the foundation on which we stand – the foundation stones of the lamps ministry into which we have entered.

1. Waiting: “A forgotten weapon.” Habakkuk Ch 3:1-19

A prayer of Habakkuk the prophet.

Lord, I have heard of your fame;
I stand in awe of your deeds, O Lord.
Renew them in our day,
in our time make them known;
in wrath remember mercy.

God came from Teman,
the Holy One from Mount Paran.

His glory covered the heavens
and his praise filled the earth.

His splendour was like the sunrise;
rays flashed from his hand,
where his power was hidden.

Plague went before him;
pestilence followed his steps.

He stood, and shook the earth;
he looked, and made the nations tremble.
The ancient mountains crumbled
and the age-old hills collapsed.
His ways are eternal.

I saw the tents of Cushan in distress,
the dwellings of Midian in anguish.

Were you angry with the rivers, O Lord ?

Was your wrath against the streams?
Did you rage against the sea
when you rode with your horses
and your victorious chariots?

You uncovered your bow,
you called for many arrows.

You split the earth with rivers;
the mountains saw you and writhed.
Torrents of water swept by;
the deep roared
and lifted its waves on high.

Sun and moon stood still in the heavens
at the glint of your flying arrows,
at the lightning of your flashing spear.

In wrath you strode through the earth
and in anger you threshed the nations.

You came out to deliver your people,
to save your anointed one.
You crushed the leader of the land of wickedness,
you stripped him from head to foot.

With his own spear you pierced his head
when his warriors stormed out to scatter us,
gloating as though about to devour
the wretched who were in hiding.

You trampled the sea with your horses,
churning the great waters.

I heard and my heart pounded,
my lips quivered at the sound;
decay crept into my bones,
and my legs trembled.

***Yet I will wait patiently for the day of calamity
to come on the nation invading us.***

***Though the fig tree does not bud
and there are no grapes on the vines,
though the olive crop fails
and the fields produce no food,
though there are no sheep in the pen
and no cattle in the stalls,***

***yet I will rejoice in the Lord,
I will be joyful in God my Saviour.***

Habakkuk saw a great vision of the Lord, coming in power to rescue his people. John, the writer of Revelation saw a similar vision of the might of the Lord:-

“Then I saw in the right hand of him who sat on the throne a scroll with writing on both sides and sealed with seven seals. And I saw a mighty angel proclaiming in a loud voice, “Who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll?” But no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth could open the scroll or even look inside it. I wept and wept because no one was found who was worthy to open the scroll or look inside. Then one of the elders said to me, “Do not weep! See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has triumphed. He is able to open the scroll and its seven seals.”

Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing in the centre of the throne, encircled by the four living creatures and the elders. He had seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth. He came and took the scroll from the right hand of him who sat on the throne. And when he had taken it, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb. Each one had a harp and they were holding golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. And they sang a new song:

“You are worthy to take the scroll
and to open its seals,
because you were slain,
and with your blood you purchased men for God
from every tribe and language and people and nation.
You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God,
and they will reign on the earth.”

Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand. They encircled the throne and the living creatures and the elders. In a loud voice they sang:

“Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain,
to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength
and honour and glory and praise!”

Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, singing:

“To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb
be praise and honour and glory and power,
for ever and ever!” The four living creatures said, “Amen,” and the elders fell
down and worshiped.” (Rev 5)

We, who are lamps, have the same feeling of the might and power of God. We know that He could change the situation in Europe in a moment, in the flash of an eye (1 Cor 15:52). Habakkuk was expecting God to act, and so was John, **but they had to wait**. I don't like waiting - I want to see the Lord's power now! But as a lamp, I have to learn the skill of waiting, just as Habakkuk had to learn it.

Why do we have to wait?

God's appointed time

For the revelation awaits an appointed time;
it speaks of the end
and will not prove false.
Though it linger, wait for it;
it will certainly come and will not delay.

Every vision, revelation and word from the Lord has an appointed time. (Acts 1:7) It is not always easy for us to understand this. We see something, or feel something, and we feel we need to act now! God is timeless, so everything feels "now" to us. But we have to live in space and time. ***There is a moment for God to act, and part of our task as intercessors is to wait for that time, and to pray towards it.*** We have to pray towards and into that time, ***as if it were now***, but accepting that it might be many years, even centuries away. Daniel, the Apostle Paul and the writer of the Revelation both saw the end times, and the coming of the Lord. All expected it, and in many ways, prayed into it and proclaimed it. Now we are believing the same, but waiting the appointed time. This is not so complex if we have a relaxed view of time – that everything is "NOW" in the spiritual, but things are "to come" here in the earthly places.

God's way

The writer of Proverbs said this:- "There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death." (Prov.14:12) Isaiah said: "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the Lord." (Isaiah 55:8)

When urged to act, Jesus said "My ***time*** has not yet come."(John 2:4) It's clear that there is "God's way", but we find this hard to accept, because it doesn't fit in with our ways. Peter struggled with this:- "He then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again. He spoke plainly about this, and Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. But when Jesus turned and looked at his disciples, he rebuked Peter. "Get behind me, Satan!" he said. "You do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men." (Mark 8:31-33)

Lamps have to accept that things must be done God's way, and that we do not always, in the short term, understand those ways. We must not be thrown into confusion because our prayers are not answered, or because we see things happening that are contrary to our prayers. God has his way. If we can open our minds and hearts to this concept, we will be more secure as lamps.

The spiritual battle

"I, Daniel, was the only one who saw the vision; the men with me did not see it, but such terror overwhelmed them that they fled and hid themselves. So I was left alone, gazing at this great vision; I had no strength left, my face turned deathly pale and I

was helpless. Then I heard him speaking, and as I listened to him, I fell into a deep sleep, my face to the ground.

A hand touched me and set me trembling on my hands and knees. He said, "Daniel, you who are highly esteemed, consider carefully the words I am about to speak to you, and stand up, for I have now been sent to you." And when he said this to me, I stood up trembling.

Then he continued, "Do not be afraid, Daniel. Since the first day that you set your mind to gain understanding and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to them. But the prince of the Persian kingdom resisted me twenty-one days. Then Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, because I was detained there with the king of Persia. Now I have come to explain to you what will happen to your people in the future, for the vision concerns a time yet to come." (Dan 10:7-12:14)

Intercession is spiritual warfare, and sometimes, we have to wait for God's time in the spiritual battle, before we can see our breakthrough. Daniel had to wait. Moses had to wait until the enemy was committed to attack before he, and God could act. (Ex 14: 13-25) Jesus also had to wait. (John 2:4) ***Waiting is a spiritual weapon.***

2. Accepting: "Only one way." Mary

"In the sixth month, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you."

Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favour with God. You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end."

"How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?"

The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be barren is in her sixth month. For nothing is impossible with God."

"I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May it be to me as you have said." Then the angel left her." (Luke 1:26-37)

Having an accepting heart is not easy for an intercessor, because it might mean accepting a really hard path. It was relatively easy for Mary to hear from the Lord, but a tremendous challenge to accept what he said, to accept it into her heart, without any reservation, or any compromise.

If we are going to be lamps, then we too must learn to accept the word, will and direction of the Lord, without question. ***This will often open up a very lonely path for us.*** Look at the willingness of Jesus to accept the cross in Gethsemane - and how hard it was for him.

But this willingness to accept God's way is a foundation stone of the life of a lamp. It is what we can expect. It is what we are called to. (Esther 4:14)

Knowing this helps us to reject the attacks of the enemy, and to defeat his lies. When he whispers, "This is too much to ask", we can be sure that we are on the right foundation.

3. Enduring: A generational view. Hebrews 11:1-8

“Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. This is what the ancients were commended for.

By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible. By faith Abel offered God a better sacrifice than Cain did. By faith he was commended as a righteous man, when God spoke well of his offerings. And by faith he still speaks, even though he is dead.

By faith Enoch was taken from this life, so that he did not experience death; he could not be found, because God had taken him away. For before he was taken, he was commended as one who pleased God. And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

By faith Noah, when warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear built an ark to save his family. By his faith he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness that comes by faith.

By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going. By faith he made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God.”

As lamps, we have to learn to take a long term view. If we expect everything to come to pass in our generation we will be disappointed. I had to wait 15 years before any of the European word came to life, and the Lord would say that I was fortunate. Isaiah had to wait more than 600 years to see his prophecy fulfilled! (Isaiah 7:14)

In our lamp intercession we are dealing with generational prayer, generational intercession and generational change. We have to set ourselves to this goal, to this way of thinking, to this attitude, or we will be lost.

We have to take our intercession into our hands, and throw our prayers, our promises, our strong convictions, down the generations, until they root and seed. We do this at the same time as we believe that God will answer our

prayers today. Christians have to live and intercede in two times, - the present and the future. If we do this, we cannot be discouraged, because nothing is lost. If we see the fruit of our intercession, as Hannah did,(1 Samuel 2:21) then we can rejoice. But if not, then our intercession will carry on down the generations, to bless those as yet unborn. What a victorious way of interceding!

4. Pushing through: The “man's hand” cloud. Elijah. 1 Kings 18:41-46

“And Elijah said to Ahab, “Go, eat and drink, for there is the sound of a heavy rain.” So Ahab went off to eat and drink, but Elijah climbed to the top of Carmel, bent down to the ground and put his face between his knees.

“Go and look toward the sea,” he told his servant. And he went up and looked. “There is nothing there,” he said. Seven times Elijah said, “Go back.”

The seventh time the servant reported, “A cloud as small as a man's hand is rising from the sea.” So Elijah said, “Go and tell Ahab, 'Hitch up your chariot and go down before the rain stops you.'” Meanwhile, the sky grew black with clouds, the wind rose, a heavy rain came on and Ahab rode off to Jezreel. The power of the Lord came upon Elijah and, tucking his cloak into his belt, he ran ahead of Ahab all the way to Jezreel.”

Elijah’s servant must have got very tired. Each time he came back from his climb, he was sent back up the mountain again. As lamps, we will get very tired, as again and again we intercede for the same thing. But it is most important that we act as Elijah did - and persevere in our prayers. ***Pushing through should be second nature to us.*** Even though we might be like this:- “These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised”, (Hebs 11:39) we must adopt the Apostles position – “Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.” (Ephesians 6:13)

There is nothing the enemy hates more than God’s people who are determined to push through to victory, whatever it takes.

5. Sacrifice “Behold the lamb of God.” Jesus. John 1:29

Our Faith is founded on sacrifice, and there will be much need for sacrificial living in the coming years. Jesus knew that he was the sacrificial lamb, and the writer to the Hebrews makes it clear:- “When Christ came as high priest of the good things that are already here, he went through the greater and more perfect tabernacle that is not man-made, that is to say, not a part of this creation. He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption. The blood of goats and bulls and the

ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean. How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!" (Hebrews 9:11-14)

When we intercede at this deep level, we have to accept the need for sacrifice:-

- * Sacrificial living. (Acts 2:42-47)
- * Sacrificial praying. (Acts 12:5)
- * Sacrificial giving. (Acts 4:36-37)
- * Sacrificial yielding of our hearts and lives. (John 15:13)

Sacrifice was part of the character of Jesus. Apostle Paul makes this clear:-

"And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross!" (Philippians 2:8)

We have to be sacrificial intercessors. If we cannot accept this, our intercession will have little effect.

6. Satan "The dangerous loser. Revelation 13:1-18

"Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour." (1 Peter 5:8)

"No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us." (Romans 8:37)

We are victorious, through the blood of Jesus. The enemy is a loser. But even in defeat, he is a dangerous enemy. He does not like lamps, and will do everything to spoil our intercession, and our vision. We need to have the full armour of God, and that armour is listed in Ephesians 6: 10-18. But there is more protection available than just that in Ephesians 6, and lamps need more!

*** We need the power of the blood of Jesus:**

"In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace." (Ephesians 1:7)

"And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross." (Colossians 2:15)

"Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil." (Hebrews 2:14)

*** We need the victory of the cross.**

“but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.” (1 Corinthians 1:23-24)

***We need the release of the Holy Spirit.**

“because our gospel came to you not simply with words, but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and with deep conviction. You know how we lived among you for your sake.” (1 Thessalonians 1:5)

7. Proclamation “King of Kings!” Revelation 19:16

“On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.”

“Then I heard what sounded like a great multitude, like the roar of rushing waters and like loud peals of thunder, shouting:

”Hallelujah!

For our Lord God Almighty reigns.

Let us rejoice and be glad

and give him glory!

For the wedding of the Lamb has come,

and his bride has made herself ready. (Revelation 19:6-7)

This is the final foundation stone, and in many ways the greatest of all. It is the great proclamation that “Jesus is Lord!” The great proclamation that “at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow.” ***Lamps need to know how to proclaim the victory of the lamb.*** This kind of proclamation gives us courage, links us with the eternal history of our Faith, and frightens the enemy. This is our great battle cry - and a cry of victory. We must let it strengthen our souls.