Week of Prayer 2024: Tuesday

God’s Relentless Search

**By G. Alexander Bryant**

Simply put, the gospel is the power of God to transform lives. The good news of the gospel is the essence of God’s Word. Paul declares in Romans 1:16, “I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also to the Greek.” The Word of God unveils and demonstrates His boundless love, reveals His mercy, and shows His relentless pursuit of all His children.

Notice that Paul lists two groups of people to whom this power of salvation is directed. The gospel is for the Jews and for the Greeks. I see the Jews as representing the household of faith, those who grew up in the church. The Greeks represent those who were never part of the church. Both groups, however, need the gospel. They are both of equal value to God, both are pursued by God, and both groups would be lost without His search.

The most remarkable theme and story of the Bible is the exploration and evidence of God’s power to save. Spanning from the book of Genesis through Revelation is God’s substantiated quest and resolute efforts to save humanity. The Bible provides a kaleidoscope of characters testifying to the transformative and saving power of the gospel—from the uttermost to the “guttermost.” God always initiates this salvific process.

**God’s Search**

Sometimes, in referring to their salvation, people say, “When I found the Lord . . .” While I understand their intent and the message, it is not an accurate portrayal of the salvation story, which is never about humans searching for God, but about God’s relentless pursuit of humans. The Lord was not lost; He did not need to be found. We did not find God; He found us.

In the Garden of Eden God calls, “Adam, where are you?” God searching for the lost is exemplified throughout the Scriptures. He found Abraham on Mount Moriah, Joseph in a pit, Moses at the burning bush, Elijah in a cave, David tending his father’s sheep, and Paul riding on a donkey. The theme of God’s Word is God’s search. The Word of God encapsulates God’s search for humanity and lists His many redemptive acts in the plan of salvation.

The stories that God has revealed through His Word provide encouragement and insight of what God is doing even now in the lives of all His created beings. God does not passively wait for us to come to Him; instead, He actively and aggressively pursues us. Luke 15 gives a concise yet comprehensive account of God seeking to save His creatures. God is the active agent. Ellen White reminds us, “God is no respecter of person, and He has an equal care for all the souls He has created.”1

We do not often see how God is searching, but He is relentlessly doing so. God initiated His redemptive plan to find and save me. He orchestrated a set of circumstances that steered me down a certain path to give me an opportunity to choose Him and be transformed by the power of the gospel.

**Orchestrating Events**

It started with Adventist church members coming to my neighborhood conducting a survey to identify those interested in taking Bible studies. My family was not home, but our next-door neighbor, Mrs. Jones, signed up. When she found out the folks were Adventists, she requested them not to return, but instead to check with the family next door. They came to our house, and my family consented to taking Bible studies. They presented the Sabbath message, and the evidence that Saturday is the Sabbath was overwhelming and irrefutable to me.

I was 14 years old, however, and seriously involved in sports, playing basketball, football, and baseball at the neighborhood boys’ club. With all games scheduled on Saturdays, I was unprepared to give that up or join the church. Then something strange happened. My parents abruptly decided to move out of the four-family flat into a single-family dwelling, taking me out of the neighborhood, away from the boys’ club and the sports that I loved to play on Saturdays.

About a year after our relocating, the deacons who gave us Bible studies came by to check on us and invited us to visit their church again, but I was still reluctant. A few weeks later one of them got sick, and my dad and I visited him in the hospital. He was extremely ill, and when he asked if I would do him a favor, I said yes, thinking he wanted water or needed the nurse. Instead, he asked if I would go to church for him that Sabbath. Well, I had already said yes (which he reminded me), so I kept my word. God found me, and I was later baptized into the church.

My story chronicles God’s search for me. I was not looking for Him. He was looking for me. Who prompted the Adventists to survey the neighborhood? Who guided Mrs. Jones to refer them to my family? Who influenced my parents’ decision to move out of that neighborhood? Who impressed the deacons to come by later? Who inspired my father to visit the deacon in the hospital? Who led the deacon to ask me to do him a favor? Who gave me the will to say yes? It was God orchestrating the events of my life to position me for an opportunity to receive the gospel!

Therefore, for every living person God is searching. God is still orchestrating the events in our lives to bring us salvation. It does not matter if you grew up within or outside the church; God is seeking and searching to save you. There is no one so evil or corrupted that God does not pursue. There is no life so damaged that the power of the gospel cannot redeem! There is no one who has sunk so low that the power of the gospel cannot uplift. There is no life so sin-stained that the power of the gospel cannot cleanse. Where sin did abound, grace did much more abound.2

The Bible is a rich tapestry of stories of God’s search for humankind to give us hope in the potency of the gospel. God is no respecter of persons. The good news of the gospel is that God is in search of you! Has He found you? If not, He is still looking!

1 Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1898, 1940), p. 639.

2 A reference to Romans 5:20.

**G. Alexander Bryant**, D.Min., is president of the North American Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Questions for Reflection:

What verses speak to you about God’s relentless pursuit of you?

How have you seen God’s grace poured out toward you?