

A Mustard Seed

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Faith Like Potatoes

A Farmer's Year

Come of Age

A Mustard Seed

A DAILY DEVOTIONAL

Angus Buchan

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Tel: +44 (0)1865 302750 Fax: +44 (0)1865 302757

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this book to my grandchildren:

Kyla Rae Buchan
Jaimee Kate Buchan
Kai Reece Praschma
Callum Gregor Hull
Emma Jayne Porée
and
Caleb James Porée

My prayer for my grandchildren is that they will walk by faith and not by sight (2 Corinthians 5:7), and that they will trust the Lord Jesus Christ all of their lives.



I was recently sent a photograph taken at the Mighty Men Conference that was held at Shalom in April 2007, which shows a white light descending upon and spreading out over the tent. I can only describe it as looking like hot butter melting and flowing over the whole roof of the tent.

I've not yet met Bruno, the man who took the photograph; he comes from Phalaborwa, a town in the northern part of South Africa. He wept when he first saw the photograph and he was reluctant to send it to me because he wasn't sure what my reaction would be. I choose to believe that it was the glory of God that descended upon the tent, which was filled to capacity, totalling 7,400 men. We were speaking about the light of God, about the glory of God's presence, at the very time this photo was taken.

His email appears below:

Good evening Angus

My apologies for not emailing this magnificent photograph to you [before now]. To be honest, I have been hesitant to pass it on, as I do not want people to "think" that this photograph has been fabricated. I am totally convinced this is "the light" that you mentioned in the Conference that some people had witnessed over Shalom MMC.

I was overjoyed of what was revealed to me when I downloaded my photographs from my digital camera on Tuesday afternoon after the MMC 2007. I sat in front of my computer while the photographs downloaded; at first I thought the photograph was overexposed/poor quality. As I marveled at the photograph it became a reality to me that this is possible the Presence of our Lord. I wept, it was with utter amazement what I was looking at ... the manifestation of our Lord. We arrived a bit late on Friday night at Shalom Farm. As we approached the food tent I took photographs; this one was the first one. I DID NOT SEE ANY "LIGHT" WHEN TAKING THIS PHOTOGRAPH. The Conference had just started and most of the flock were in the main tent.

When analysing the photograph, the light came way above the natural lights that were on top of the tent. I did a comparison with one of the other photographs that had been taken during the day. Therefore, I have no doubt that this is "the Light" of the Lord.

Is this called a Glory Cloud? Some close friends have seen this photograph and have been skeptical. I have prayed about sending this photograph to you knowing that the Lord will bless you mightily!

For me it is a big AMEN.

God Bless

Just another boy for Jesus

Bruno Bargiacchi
Phalaborwa

Acknowledgments

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Yvonne Ashwell, my faithful and dedicated typist;
Ann Roux, my editor;
Laetitia le Roux for the original cover design and layout.

With our best wishes and special love
from
Angus and Jill Buchan

I am deeply grateful to the many others whose lives and writings have helped to shape this book. Among others they include:

Streams in the Desert by L. B. Cowman, *The Complete Gathered Gold* by John Blanchard, *Glimpses of God Through the Ages* by Esther Carls Dodgen, *The Pursuit of God* by A. W. Tozer and *Prayer* by Philip Yancey.

About Shalom Ministries...

Jill and I found Jesus as our personal Lord and Saviour on 18 February 1979, just two years after settling in Greytown, Kwa-Zulu Natal Midlands, South Africa. Originally from Zambia, we bought a piece of land on which we planned to farm crops and livestock. We had very little to start with, but even as brand new Christians, we were content with our farm, which we later called SHALOM.

In 1980, the Lord gave us a clear vision. Very simply and clearly through His Word, we believed our responsibility to be the following:

- 1 The Great Commission – Mark 16:15
- 2 Caring for Orphans and Widows – James 1:27
- 3 Equipping Saints for the Work of Ministry – Matthew 28:20.

In November 1989 we felt the Lord call us to hire town halls and preach the Gospel, wherever He would lead. In 1990, we held our first campaign in Ladysmith, Kwa-Zulu Natal. I remember the feeling of pure excitement and anxiety as I walked into the municipal office to hire the town hall. Since then, we haven't turned back and our Lord has remained faithful. We have started using the media as a tool to spread the Gospel as well, through books, TV, magazines, radio stations and so on.

Our children's home, Beth-Hatlam (house of lambs), was opened in 1995 and we have been blessed with children. We have faced many challenges, deaths and much joy since we started, but again, the Lord has never let us down. We thoroughly enjoy each personality that the Lord sends us to care for. Our four eldest have already left home to study in Durban, while our youngest has just started to walk. It is amazing to watch them grow so quickly and to show and teach them our Saviour's love.

The Shalom Fellowship started as local folk met to worship God. We meet on Sundays and during the week. We are involved in various community projects and outreach programmes in our area, to equip the saints.

As we look back over the years, we are so blessed to see how our Lord has and is fulfilling His vision in our lives. We trust you will also be able to seek God for your vision, that He will make it plain and write it on your heart (Habakkuk 2:2-3) and that you will run with it. Never forget the focus, JESUS CHRIST. He is your first priority... then family... then the work of the Lord.

Angus and Jill Buchan

For more information on Angus Buchan and Shalom Ministries please visit <http://www.shalomtrust.co.za/>.

Preface

As I waited on the Lord before writing another devotional, God laid it on my heart that in these last days, we need to live by faith like never before. The Lord led me to that beautiful Scripture which says that if we have faith the size of a mustard seed we can tell a mountain to be removed into the sea (Matthew 17:20). Then I looked at the Gospel of Mark, where the Lord says to us very clearly, “To what shall we liken the kingdom of God?... It is like a mustard seed” (Mark 4:30–31, NKJV). It is the smallest of seeds but when it is planted in good soil, it germinates and grows into a great tree. The branches are so big that the birds of the air can come and lodge in it and rest in its shadow.

God is showing us that if we walk by faith the kingdom of God will be very near us. We will walk and live in His strength. However, if we are determined to make a plan (“the farmer makes a plan”), we can rest assured that we are going to experience hell on earth.

This book of daily devotions is dedicated to the foot soldiers of the Lord – not necessarily the generals, officers, and super-spiritual – but to those who say, “Lord, if You don’t meet me every day I’m just not going to make it.” It is dedicated to those Christians who have to get up every morning and walk the talk, go through the daily grind and face the day-to-day challenges. The Lord has laid it upon my heart that each one of us needs a mustard seed of faith to get through every day so that we can walk in the fullness of what God has prepared for us in His kingdom.

May God bless you richly as you read these words every day and may it give you the strength and the stamina, the perseverance and the joy to see your mustard seed of faith moving mountains for you every day.

Angus Buchan

Shalom Ministries PO Box 373 Greytown
South Africa
3250
Email: shalom@futuregtn.co.za
www.shalomtrust.co.za

Foreword

One element contained within the Lord's Prayer is the petition we are to make for "daily bread". Here Jesus, by implication, reminds us of the miracle of provision during the exodus when the daily ration of manna rained upon the Israelites which they were commanded to consume on the day. They were prohibited from retaining any of it for the following day. They were to feed off God's abundant, fresh and daily supernatural supply. Their very survival depended on their obedience in this regard.

Much like Moses, Angus has a deep passion and concern for God's people to embrace both the gravity and glory of this principle – our profound need of God's daily bread; time spent in His presence to hear His voice and sense His heart.

There are times when, after meeting with someone, one could walk away from a potentially inspiring moment feeling somewhat deflated. The whole experience is made worse by the fact that one would approach the encounter with a raised level of expectancy. One of a few people with whom this is never the case is the author of this treasure trove. Angus epitomizes the metaphor of the biblical broken vessel of grace whose intimacy with, and vulnerability before, God renders him an inspirational person in the best sense. He is, in a figurative sense, a well of salvation from which so many thirsty souls have come to draw living water, freely.

Spending time with the streams of life which God graciously causes to flow through him is guaranteed to leave you not only challenged, but changed through the love of the Father, who would draw you near to Himself as you, through these meditations, would draw near to Him.

Fred May

Senior Pastor of Shofar Christian Church, Stellenbosch, South Africa

1 January

The just shall live by faith

Romans 1:17

For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.

Hopefully we will all have had the chance to sit down and rest during the Christmas season. But when faced with a new year, it is so easy to be filled with anxiety as we contemplate the massive challenges awaiting us over the next twelve months.

The only way to overcome fear and anxiety is with faith. When faith moves in, anxiety and fear move out. How do we get faith? Faith comes with attentive listening, and listening should be rooted in the Word of God (Romans 10:17). John Wesley (1703–91) was a professional theologian who tried to do everything he could to live the life of a holy man. He tried to discipline his body, to fast, to go without the normal comforts of every day living, but he failed miserably every time. He therefore became dejected and completely disillusioned with life. It was only when, just as Martin Luther (1483–1546) had, he discovered that the just shall live by faith that he was liberated and found total freedom.

The outcome of this year does not depend on you but on God, and He promises you an abundant life (John 10:10). Your ability to get through this year is not even dependent on your faith. It is only when you trust in God's faithfulness that He will see you through. Not only will you get through the year, but you will excel while doing so! You will find that if you walk by faith you'll make very few wrong decisions. You will have more time on your hands and even be able to accomplish more.

Towards the end of his life, when he became extremely tired, Charles Haddon Spurgeon (1834–92) said that he was going to try and attempt less and accomplish more. This year God is telling us to strive less and trust Him more. If you do this you will see the difference in your lives.

"Attempt great things from God and expect great things for God," said William Carey, a man who made a decision to walk by faith and not by sight. In 1793, he went to India with his young family, where he expected to be an evangelist. He failed miserably – I don't think he led a single soul to Christ. The man was at the end of his tether having buried most of his children, one next to the other (they had died of tropical diseases), and his wife had gone insane.

Maybe you are there today as you face this new year? I encourage you to do what William Carey did. He remained faithful. He kept his eyes fixed on Jesus, the Author and the Finisher of his faith. God honoured his faithfulness and Carey

found his vocation in life. He had an incredible ability with languages and he began translating the Bible from English into Sanskrit, Hindustani, and Burmese. He later started a huge printing press and became the chief interpreter for the British government in the New Delhi High Court. As a result of William Carey's faithfulness, there are countless millions of Indians today who know Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour, and the Bible is written in all of their languages.

So, as you face this new year, do it with faith in God and get ready for an incredible journey of excitement, of challenge – and most of all, of fulfilment in God.

2 January

The mustard seed

Matthew 17:20

If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you.

When considering history, especially in a biblical sense, it is amazing how the Lord has a habit of always taking the smallest, weakest, and the most unimportant to glorify Him!

The mustard seed is the smallest of seeds. As a farmer, I'm familiar with seed. When buying seed to plant my crop, I normally pick big, healthy seed with the greatest potential for germination. I would never pick the smallest seed. But Jesus does. He picks the smallest seed – people like you and me whom the world has cast aside, deeming us to be hopeless.

The good news is that the Lord promises that if our faith is but the size of a mustard seed we will be able to tell a mountain to throw itself into the sea. I have experienced this not once but many times in my own life and, as you start this new year and sow that seed of faith, you too can expect a huge return. Why? Because that's God's principle! It's the way He designed life. If you plant a grain of corn (maize) you can expect a 300–400 per cent return, because that is how God created its genetic composition. If you plant a seed in earnest faith – whether it is seeds of money, effort, your lifestyle, or the amount of time you dedicate towards your family, your business and most of all, toward your Christian walk with the Lord – you can expect a 400 per cent return this year.

In other words, what I am implying is that it is impossible to out-bless God. The more you dedicate your time, your prayer, your reading of the Word and, yes indeed, your finances to God, the more He will give back to you. Take heed though: don't give it with the aim of receiving a return. Give it because you love and trust Him. Then you can tell that mountain to be moved into the sea and it will happen.

Remember when the prophet Elijah asked the widow with a young child to feed him, though she only had enough oil and oatmeal to make one last cake? She was planning on lying down with her little son to die together after enjoying their last meal. However, she sowed that seed of faith and made an oatcake for the man of God and fed him. When she returned there were enough ingredients to make food for her and for her son. So the miraculous provision of meals continued until the new season arrived.

God is no respecter of persons. If any man or woman chooses to put their faith in God, even if it be the size of a mustard seed, He will multiply it a hundredfold.

In closing, a little boy took his mustard seed of faith: two small fish and five barley loaves of bread, and gave them to the Master. The Master prayed over the food, handed it to His disciples and 5,000 men (this did not include the women and children) were fed, after which twelve baskets were filled with leftovers! Do you honestly believe that this boy was the only person among 5,000 who brought food with him? I don't believe that for a minute. He was, however, the only one who was willing to put his trust in the Lord Jesus Christ and the Lord blessed him.

This year, start to walk by faith and not by sight (2 Corinthians 5:7) and see what God will do with your mustard seed of faith. If you keep it in the storeroom, it will remain the same size until this time next year. In fact it will go mouldy and probably die, but if you sow it in good soil you are bound to reap an abundant crop.