

Breaking Free From Containment: 3

Stretch Out Your Curtains

Isaiah 54.1-3

The word *containment* means to 'control or prevent something from moving, increasing or extending'

Too often we become contained by things in our lives that prevent us from moving on and going forward:

- we like things to be comfortable
- we like them just right
- we don't like anything that rocks the boat

– and if that's the way we are, then we are in danger of being contained .

God has a purpose for each one of us and while ever we are contained we will not complete our purpose or fulfill our destiny in God.

The reason many of us get contained is because we have become content with our lot, we have become used to things they way they are and no longer expect things to be any different.

This mind-set will contain us and shatter any hope, dream, vision or aspiration that we may have once had.

Stretching out our curtains means we have to overcome that mind-set and keep those visions alive in our spirit.

Elisha - 2 Kings 4.32-35

- This woman partnered with Elisha, she supported the ministry, provided hospitality for him; and her child was the fruit of faith in the word of the prophet of God (v16).
- When the news first came, Elisha makes a statement (v27) “the Lord has hidden it from me”.
- He was the prophet of God, He was the one who heard from God, He was God's spokesperson and he hadn't heard from God concerning this matter. His ministry and office was on the line and the honour of God was at stake here.
- Gehazi went ahead and laid the prophet's staff on the child yet he did not revive (v31) – what was happening? Elisha had some soul-searching to do
-
- He faced the child and stretched himself out – this boy was only a young lad, perhaps 7-10 years, Elisha a grown man – was this stretching just physical?
- I would say that this stretching was not just physical but something much deeper, something spiritual
- I suggest that to break free from being contained, he stretched back over his calling and ministry, he dug deep into what God had said, re-evaluated the promises, dreams and vision – so that he could pick them up again.

In order to break free from containment and prevent that 'same old things' mind-set, we need to go and stretch back over our calling, rehearse the promise of God once again.

John the Baptist - Luke 7.19-28

- John sends two of his disciples to Jesus asking “Are you the Coming One, or should we look for another?”
- Jesus' response to their question is to heal many that are infirm, afflicted, possessed and blind. He then sent the two men back with the message: “Go tell John the things you have seen and heard – the blind see, *the* lame walk, *the* lepers are cleansed, *the* deaf hear, *the* dead are raised, *the* poor have the gospel preached to them” (v22)
- After the messengers leave, Jesus begins to speak to the people about John. He says:
 - he was a prophet – not just a prophet but the greatest prophet
 - he is the one who was to prepare the way for the coming of the Lord

Surely it would have been good for the two messengers to hear that sermon – that would have reassured John and answered his questions.

John was becoming contained and need to break free from containment. So Jesus message to John was that the blind see, the lame walk, the deaf hear..

Why?

John knew his calling as the 'voice of one crying in the wilderness, prepare the way of the Lord' (John 1.22-23 ; Isaiah 40.3)

Let us turn to ***Isaiah 35.3-6***

- John knew Isaiah 40, his calling; He would have also know Isaiah 35. The message that Jesus gave him would have ignited his spirit more than the words that were spoken by Jesus later.
- John needed to stretch back over his calling and ministry – and that message was just the thing he needed to hear – he dug deep into what God had said, re-evaluated the promises, dreams and vision – so that he could pick them up again.

To prevent that 'same old same old' and 'things won't change' mind-set and break free from containment we need to re-evaluate what God has said and promised.

It will mean some stretching back over our calling, over our lives, remembering what God has done and said, to let God bring back to life the dreams and visions so we can pick them up and run with them once more.