

# HOPE FOR THE FAMILY

# AROUND the FIRE

Spring 2019

RESCUE the Equine ★ MENTOR the Child ★ HOPE for the Family ★ EMPOWER the Ministry

## No Words at All

BY JUDY JEFFERY

In Kim Meeder's new book *Encountering Our Wild God* she writes: "God's will is not hidden from those who seek it. He has made a way for us to not only know His will but to know Him—by relying on His Spirit within us. He wants us to trust Him enough to obey Him. When we do this, we become the vessels through which He releases His purpose. The beauty, power and authority of His Spirit, the Holy Spirit, pours through us into our present environment. Quite literally, when we discipline ourselves to obey His voice, we release His will on earth as it is in heaven.

This is when we will see and experience—literally live within—the loving, glorious untamable nature of our God."

If I never read another word from her book, the truth of this single paragraph would be enough to encourage a budding heart of obedience like mine.

I've made it my ambition to apply this truth—*His truth*—not only to my job in the speaking ministry with Kim, but to every aspect of my life.

A while ago, Kim and I were invited to join a speaking tour with an organization called Beautiful Gate Translations.

This group interprets Bible study materials into different languages and distributes them primarily in Eastern Europe. They had requested us to travel with them to Moldova and Romania for two weeks of events.

Prior to the trip, Kim asked what Jesus was telling me. I shared how I'd asked Him to place on my heart 'a call' to go to the Moldovan and Romanian people. I recalled stories of how missionaries just *knew* they were to serve Jesus overseas. They spoke of hearing a *call* to a specific nation, tribe or people. I felt a bit disconcerted because I hadn't yet received a clear answer, but my heart was still at peace to go.

Kim added, "I'm learning to simply follow the Holy Spirit where He leads. It's like seeing a green light—and until it turns red—you keep moving forward in boldness, TRUSTING that He is in control."

Together we prayed and made the decision to take the next step—a confirming phone conference with the host.

The next day, I was praying over our upcoming meeting and pondered my lack of a 'call' to Eastern Europe. Feeling warmth flooding through my office window, I turned toward the sun. Pouring over my soul, I heard the Lord say, "*I haven't called you to a particular place or people; I've called you to a woman's heart.*"

*Continued on page 2*



As He spoke, tears of understanding filled my eyes. Years prior, He had nurtured a desire within me to come alongside women, encouraging them with the truth of His Word. I realized it didn't matter where He sent me, it only mattered that I would be willing to go where He asked.

After clarifying details with the host, Kim and I spent time in prayer. We sensed the Lord's favor and confirmed the speaking tour. We also felt led to make a fourteen-week commitment—one week for each day overseas—to pray diligently and fast as the Lord directed.

Because I'm a person of detail, my initial prayer over the trip leaned toward praying into the cracks of potential problems and for Kim and the messages. In the following weeks, pressing into greater closeness within His Presence brought clarity. The Holy Spirit urged me to set aside the details and spend time with Him *listening* . . . rather than *asking*.

I soon discovered that listening isn't one of my strong suits. It took practice to settle into being still. Within this sweet time, I experienced a slow transformation as the quietness became more restful. Knowing that prayer over the details wasn't what the Holy Spirit desired—I patiently waited for what He did desire.

While fasting one day, the Lord started to show images of a petite elderly woman with a dark head covering. He wanted me to see her—*really see her*. An odd mix of deep loss and hope filled her eyes.

In the remaining weeks, Jesus revealed more of this woman. With my hands gently placed in hers, I saw myself sitting beside her. The Holy Spirit revealed that we would have no need for a translator because no words would be spoken between us. He made it clear I was to watch, wait and follow Him.

Kim and I departed American soil with full confidence that the Lord was in control. During our two weeks overseas, we daily experienced His loving miracles as the Spirit went out before us redeeming hearts and healing bodies. We witnessed chronic pain vanish. We cheered with the lame as they walked before our eyes. We prayed and rejoiced with many as truth broke through oppressed, broken, fearful hearts. Hope was restored as lives were forever changed through the freedom that only Jesus Christ offers. By following His lead, our every encounter was unique and special.

It didn't take Kim long to settle into delivering messages through her translators. The intricate waltz between speaking God's Word and the translated Romanian/Russian language was beautifully unforgettable. So were the endearing souls we met along the way—knowing that we'd never see again most of them this side of heaven. During this powerful time, we overcame challenges and moments of uncertainty, while fully dependent on the One who has charge over our very lives.

Each day, I looked intently into the faces of those we contacted—expecting to gaze upon 'the eyes' the Lord had earlier revealed to me. Every night before I fell asleep, I prayed over this woman. Every morning I woke up with excitement that today I would find her.

After nearly two weeks, our time was coming to an end.

The last day was jam-packed. Starting early, we drove an hour from Arad to Timisoara for an interview with Radio Voice of the Gospel-Europe. This was followed by another long drive to an equestrian center outside the city. Later that afternoon, we returned to our motel room to quickly pack and then we headed downstairs to meet our team for an evening women's event. While Kim and I waited, my thoughts returned to the woman I had yet to meet.



*Photos by Genoveva Schuster, Paulete Carson and Judy Jeffery*



Maybe I hadn't heard God clearly or I had missed the woman along the way? I rebuked my momentary doubt and replaced it with faith that the Lord just wasn't done yet.

Once our team gathered, our host gave us directions to walk to the church where Kim would be speaking. However, we mistakenly walked several blocks past and had to backtrack. Arriving at the church minutes later than expected, I caught a glimpse of a tiny figure with a black scarf on her head. She was a small, quick footed woman that moved with purpose—and she was purposefully moving toward me.

Without pausing, she closed the distance between us and reached out to take my hands in hers. I looked at her face—and into her eyes. It was her, the one He wanted me to see.

Still holding hands, we walked the short distance toward the fellowship hall. I could feel my eyes filling with tears as we passed through the entrance doors.

## **"SINCE WE ARE LIVING BY THE SPIRIT, LET US FOLLOW THE SPIRIT'S LEADING IN EVERY PART OF OUR LIVES."**

**GALATIANS 5:25 (NLT)**

Once inside, the pastor's wife kindly asked if we would move forward and take our place in the front row. I glanced at Kim, silently letting her know I wanted to stay with the small woman at my side. Kim returned a knowing smile and said, "Yes friend, I believe you're right where you're supposed to be."

I took my seat beside this precious soul and once more, she gathered up my hands in hers. Again, I looked at her eyes. The unusual expression of loss and hope that returned my gaze was unmistakable and compelling. I asked the Holy Spirit to move through me in whatever way He desired. I could sense His presence pour a flow of deep, intense love from His heart to hers. Tears streamed down my face throughout the short time of worship and Kim's message. All the while, Jesus' indescribable love kept pouring out. The Holy Spirit was supernaturally encouraging her in a way that was beyond my understanding. Although we had never met, had no relationship, and didn't even speak the same language, I believe *His love* was breaking through her pain and imparting *His hope*.

After a powerful Spirit-filled message, Kim closed with prayer. The Pastor's wife released everyone for refreshments in the back of the room. I sat forward on the edge of my chair and turned toward this dear woman. I wanted desperately to share my heart with her. I wanted to know her name before we had to say good bye. There was an American woman named Carolyn who was with our team. She spoke Romanian. Hopeful that she could help, I gently motioned for her to join us. After a brief dialog between them, Carolyn looked puzzled and said, "She's speaking Romanian—but I don't understand what she is saying."

Suddenly, I remembered what the Lord had told me earlier, "*There will be no spoken words.*"

As the Pastor's wife walked by with a plate of cake in each hand, she leaned in and said, "Her name is Rujah. Her husband just died a week ago. He was an elder of our church for many years. They are both strong Believers."

Jesus gave me the information my heart desired. Her eyes that were filled with the strange mix of loss and hope suddenly made sense.

Rujah stood up, indicating it was time for her to leave. I walked with her toward the door, then placed my arm around her shoulders. I embraced my new sister in Christ. Looking up at me, her understandable expression of both loss and hope flooded her eyes with tears. The endearing look on her face conveyed that what the Lord had done between us was deeply meaningful to her.

Though there were no spoken words, Jesus poured life into her grieving heart with His unfathomable love. As our hug released, she let go of my hand and pushed open the door. She glanced back at me one more time and smiled. With one last look at the eyes the Lord had shown me weeks before, I smiled back.

Jesus didn't call me to a 'people.' In a unique way, He called me to a woman's heart. Although I didn't fully understand how—the reality was—I didn't need to know. I simply needed to obey Him and follow closely where He wanted to go.

For this heart, obedience was the key that unlocked the door to a more purposeful life—a life dependent on following the Holy Spirit.

Deuteronomy 30:19-20 says, "*Today I have given you the choice between life and death, between blessings and curses. Now I call on heaven and earth to witness the choice you make. Oh, that you would choose life, so that you and your descendants might live! You can make this choice by loving the Lord your God, obeying him, and committing yourself firmly to him. This is the key to your life . . .*" (NLT)

Friend, I didn't need to travel to the other side of the world to find a soul in need of Jesus' love—and neither do you. We are surrounded every day by those whose eyes are filled with grief, pain, shame, anger and fear. All we need to do is ask the Holy Spirit to show us and look—*really look*—and we will see them everywhere. And seeing the hurting is the first step in releasing Jesus' healing love into their painful places.

God's will for His people is NOT hidden. Sometimes, I hear Kim say, "If you want to know God's plan for your life. It's simple, James 1:5 basically says to Pray—Listen—Do. Each of us has the choice to ask Him, listen for His answer and then do what He says." When we follow Him, everything changes because *His will* becomes our actions.

The path to a human heart is usually through another human heart—a heart like yours. Will you commit to allow Him to pass on His hope through *you*? Will you commit to release His relentless message of love through *you*? Jesus has entrusted *you* to carry all that He is into this hurting world—and often giving His hope and love—*needs no words at all*.



# REFUGE

BY TROY MEEDER

**“This valley has served Me before . . . it will do it again.”**

This prophetic promise was given to Kim in 1998 during a time of extended fasting and prayer. My bride faithfully tucked that word into her heart 21 years ago, knowing that God always keeps His promises.

*“Not a single one of all the good promises the Lord had given to the family of Israel was left unfulfilled; everything he had spoken came true.”* (Joshua 21:4, NLT).

In 1995, when Kim and I purchased the original 8.92-acres that founded Crystal Peaks Youth Ranch, we had no idea of its prior history. Nearly two decades later we uncovered something profound. We learned that one of the original Tumalo patriarchs—the Innes family—used to hold church services on top of the butte that overlooks our ranch in the early years of the 20th century. Worship songs and prayers of the faithful poured over and filled the valley where our ministry now resides. We didn’t know that the current 105-acre campus of Crystal Peaks Youth Ranch is located in a very special place—a place with a deep anointing of gratitude that far precedes us. This anointing of worship has continued to pour out over the valley from the hand of the One who created it.

For almost 50 years, the old West Ranch barn was home to dairy cows, performance horses, pack rats and the occasional badger. The enormity of the required restoration was staggering. It was hard to see beyond the obvious: half a century of equine manure and urine was ground into the wooden walls. The concrete floor was filthy. Many of the old timbers were broken. The stall siding was chewed into oblivion and the expansive roof had more leaks than one could count.

When I first walked into the aged building with Frank, our General Contractor, his trademark boyish manner was skeptical. “I’ve been in the construction business for over 40 years. This . . . is going to be a challenge.” While the actual construction project was daunting, the layered maze of county code bureaucracy proved to be equally challenging. In that moment, I wondered if it wouldn’t be easier to call in a fleet of bulldozers and just start over.

But that thought was only a human temporal fix, not His eternal solution.

Restoration . . . reclamation . . . redemption of the impossible—redeeming what is hopeless . . . this is the beat within our Father’s heart.

It is His unfathomable love that sees the brokenhearted—and meets us in our darkness with His light of hope. He gazes beyond what we currently are—and sees all that we can become. His eyes do not get stuck on our ugly wreckage. His nose does not linger over the stench of our sin. His ears hear more than our selfish pleas. He is a good Father and His senses for His sons and daughters knows only who we are when we stand washed in the unstoppable tide of Jesus’ love. It is this cleansing flood that sluices our darkness away and creates something beautiful in His sight (Ps. 51:10).

When lost in a deep valley of darkness, King David cried out to God for redemption. His heart reflected the years of wear and tear and unresolved sin. Within those painful seasons, not unlike the broken beams of the old barn, or the broken places of our heart, it might seem reasonable to simply give up. The voice of our enemy seethes that the way is too hard and the journey too long. His black voice beckons us to let go of our Father’s hope.

But our Father’s hope never lets go of us.

The journey of restoring the old barn has been nothing less than miraculous. An army of subcontractors, volunteers, staff, and neighbors have all joined together in a strong harmony of effort—with a singular goal—restoration of what originally seemed impossible. But nothing is impossible for God or in God’s people when they believe Him. After three years, the once broken, filthy, smelly old barn has been given new life—His life.

This is no ordinary building. Nothing is ordinary in God’s perfect plan of redemption. The completion of the “Refuge Barn” is another decade, another layer of ‘Deep calling out to Deep’ and welcoming the presence of the Holy Spirit back into this valley. On April 9th, we will join together in celebration of God’s restoration in this new place He has provided for His people to worship Him.

What a beautiful wonder that the heart of Jesus beats in rhythm with the promise of restoration. When we believe we are beyond redemption, we can all call out to the “General Contractor.” He is the creator of our soul and when we cry out to Him amidst our pain, He comes. He steps in and begins the restoration process, a journey that moves us beyond hope . . . into life anew.

*“I have swept away your offenses like a cloud, your sins like the morning mist. Return to me, for I have redeemed you.”* (Isa. 44:22, NIV).

“I have redeemed you.” His sacrifice on the cross was the history-altering expression of love—for you. For many, the wear and tear of this life has left us battered, broken and like the old barn. The wreckage of our heart feels beyond redemption, with little left for the bulldozers to demolish.

But friend—redemption is the passion of our Savior Jesus Christ—for you.

*“In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God’s grace”* (Eph. 1:7, NIV).

He shed His blood on the cross to provide His refuge of new life—of new hope—for all who choose it.

“This valley has served Me before . . . it will do it again.”

Like the battered old barn, will you choose Jesus’ love to restore your broken foundations? Like the barren Tumalo valley, will you choose to fill the empty valley of your heart with praise and adoration of the One who redeems? May this be the day you choose His presence to become your refuge—the refuge of His loving heart within yours.

**“BUT OUR FATHER’S HOPE NEVER LETS GO OF US.”**

*Photos by Troy Meeder*





# HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

By Stephanie Voth

The problem of suffering in our world is timeless. Whether you live in America where individuals are rich with religious and cultural freedoms, or in a third world country that has few liberties—suffering will strike all of us in this life. Thankfully, because of Jesus' death on the cross, suffering isn't where the story ends. Our story has hope.

One thing I love about the Word of God is that it's "living and active" as described in Hebrews 4:12. Though it was written centuries ago by numerous authors, God's Word applies to each of us on this earth despite any and all circumstances that we face. One man's story in scripture particularly comes to mind when I think about suffering and hope—Job.

The book of Job begins by stating what an incredible man he was. God himself described him as "*my servant Job, there is none like him on earth, a blameless and upright man, who feared God and turns away from evil...*" (Job 1:8, ESV). He was considered

"the greatest of all the people of the east . . . and had 7,000 sheep, 3,000 camels, 500 yoke of oxen, 500 female donkeys, and many servants." (Job 1:3) In short, Job was blessed in family and possessions, and his life embodied the fear of God, both for himself and on behalf of his children. (Job 1:1-5)

Then, in one single day all of that changed. Job was stripped of all of the blessings God had given him—his children, his property, his animals—all of it gone in *one day*.

He lost his 7 sons and 3 daughters, his sheep, oxen, donkeys, camels, and many of his servants. (Job 1:14-19). In the wake of his loss, Job "arose and tore his robe and shaved his head, and fell on the ground and worshiped." (Job 1:20). Yes, you read that right. Amidst seemingly insurmountable grief, Job showed his sorrow and fell to the ground to *worship his King*.

When I first dove into this scripture, I couldn't help but stop and wonder . . . Would I respond as Job did? If the Lord took away all that I had, would I worship God by saying "*The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.*" (Job 1:21)

Job's story wasn't over yet. It simply wasn't that easy. For forty-two chapters, the author goes on to explain how he was tempted and tested time and time again by his three friends, and even his own wife. Yet, Job persevered. He never gave up hope, and he still considered the Lord his "Redeemer" in the thick of his trials. (Job 19:25)

In the end, Job's friends were rebuked by the Lord. (Job 42:7-9) "*And the Lord restored the fortunes of Job, when he had prayed for his friends. And the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before...The Lord blessed the latter part of Job's life more than the former part. He had 14,000 sheep, 6,000 camels, 1,000 yoke of oxen, and 1,000 donkeys. And he also had seven sons and three daughters...After this, Job lived a hundred and forty years;*

*he saw his children and their children to the fourth generation. And so Job died an old man and full of years.*" (Job 42:10-17)

**"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope."**

**Romans 15:13**

This time last year, my husband and I had committed to following the

Lord's call back to Bend. God had opened a door for me to return to Crystal Peaks for the upcoming season. My husband secured a position at a local church here in Central Oregon and needed to leave Kansas much sooner than I could . . . 40 days sooner to be exact.

Weeks prior to my husband's departure west, we knew it would be hard on our relationship and our family to be apart for 40 days. In just a few short years, we had built a life with each other. We were blessed with our two-year-old son, our church family, our extended family, and, of course our pets. We had so many loose ends to tie up if we were actually going to move halfway across the country. "*Ok, Lord. If this is your plan, help us find a way,*" we prayed.

We decided it would be best for me to stay behind with our son so that I could prepare our home to sell. In addition, I needed to continue working at my own job, plus temporarily continue the responsibilities of my husband's full-time job at the church until they could fill his position. "*No big deal,*" I thought. "*I've got this.*"





My husband was able to move in with sweet, generous friends of mine in the Bend area, but he knew very few people. He had to navigate life completely on his own for those 40 days. No more playing with toys in the evening with our son. No more help with household chores. No more cooking meals together in our home. No more—home.

All we could cling to was the occasional phone call in the midst of our busy work week. We'd send once-in-a-while text messages to check for signs of life. Yes, we knew from the beginning that this season would be difficult for both of us. At the same time, we didn't have a clue what the Lord was orchestrating in our hearts.

About a week into being apart, I started to notice that I wasn't as strong and independent as I thought. As an extreme extrovert, it was difficult for me to live alone. I did have my son to talk to; however, he preferred to only talk about Legos, his favorite cartoon characters and how to avoid green vegetables in his food. It wasn't an easy situation for our little boy, my husband, or me. When the time came for all of us to pack up the trailer and head out west, I was more than ready to enter into the next chapter of life that God had written for our family.

This 40-day season gave me only a glimpse of the suffering that Job experienced. Yet, I now know that it took less than 40 days to change my entire focus from how big my circumstances are to how BIG my God is. He is the only One who can provide everything that we need (2 Peter 1:3, ESV), and true hope comes from our Living Hope which is Jesus Christ. (1 Peter 1:3, ESV)

My need for Jesus was more evident in those 40 days than I'd realized since accepting Christ. I spent much more time in the morning immersing myself in God's Word to feel prepared for all that life would throw at me. I felt myself praying every free moment I had. Yes, it was one of the most difficult times of my life. Looking back, it was also one of the most freeing experiences I've gone through. I was finally in a place that I knew I couldn't do everything on my own. I knew I needed Jesus for my daily strength. What the enemy uses to destroy, the Lord uses for good—good that caused growth, humility, and hope despite life's circumstances.

"FOR THE WORD OF GOD  
IS LIVING AND ACTIVE . . ."  
HEBREWS 4:12

You see, hope offers us never-ending encouragement when hardships inevitably come. Friends, I don't know what suffering the Lord is allowing in your life right now. I don't know what you've endured in your past or what circumstances you're experiencing right now. What I do know is that because of what Jesus did for you and for me on the Cross, we aren't expected to navigate any of it on our own.

Because of who Jesus is, we are not without hope. He will provide for you—like He did for Job—and like he continues to do for me and my family every single day.

*Family photo by Katie Guerrero*

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TO LEARN HOW TO START A NEW  
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<https://www.crystalpeaksyouthranch.org/what-we-do/similar-ministries-development/information-clinic/>

All stories written in "Around the Fire" newsletter are true. Some of the names have been changed to protect individual privacy.  
"Around the Fire" newsletter stands on the Word of God. Multiple translations of the Holy Bible are used to assure clarity for our readership.  
Each author is afforded the right to choose the translation that best suits their submission.

