

Greetings in Christ our Lord and Savior

I felt so honored and blessed to be asked to share something with you today. I would call it the afternoon or even evening, but I know for some of you it is actually mid day.

I would like to give a special greeting to you among us who are living on an island

Right now I live on an island in the northern part of Norway called Nordland. My island's name is Angel Island with direct translation. In Norwegian it is Engeløya.

I am 53 years old and work as a teacher for 5th to 7th graders in elementary school. I am married to Ronny and we have three grown kids on 22, 23 and 24 years old. Two boys and a daughter.

We have started a homegroup or a house church if you will here on the Island and we have 10 "members" by now. As for myself I would like to give you an introduction so you get to know me a little bit. That will say I will share my testimony on how I came to Christ.

This is not to brag of myself but if it is bragging it is bragging about what the Lord can do. Because if he could save me and give me a brand new life both for this world and for the next to come - anybody can get saved and helped to a new life. Because of John 3:16

So I grew up in the capital of Norway Oslo. Small city in international measures - about 500,000

citizens. Maybe a little less when I grew up. I have an older sister who is ten years older than me, and

because we did not have a warm and welcoming home she moved out as soon as she was mature

enough. Leaving me with two parents who we today will say were sick with several psychological diseases.

My father was violent and my mother was full of anxiety and bitterness at the same time. I was called names and beaten on a regular basis all my childhood. By the age of 13 I was just a wreck inside believing that no one will ever love me, nor like me. My family was not a Christian family although my father went crazy when I told him I would not get confirmed in church (nor outside for that matter)

I always had a passion for horses so for a few years I escaped my very sad life into the world of big brown eyes. Fury coats and I even made some friends - which I was not able to get in school. Always on the outside, always bullied, or totally ignored.

Because of my brokenness it all had to go wrong at some point and so it did, my mom died, I had to put down my horse my so called boyfriend ditched me and from that point on everything took a turn for the

worse. After short time maybe a year or so I was good and well into drugs, crime, gangs and

prostitution. Tried to kill myself a few times and overdosed some times. And so - something happened.

I was 24, Had an overdose and then some health care workers from social security found me in a horrible state and they arranged for me to get into a Christian detox- place. I absolutely had no relationship with the Lord, but in my distress and fear of dying I prayed to all the Gods I could name to help me out of my misery and I figured in my twisted head that maybe this was sort of an answered prayer. Anyway I felt I had no choice. It was rehab, kill myself or wait on death to come by along with some gang members who was not my friends anymore.

Wonder over all wonders. When I reached the rehab I fell asleep instantly and I basically slept for three days and nights, just waking to use the bathroom, drink and eat with the meals. No abstinence, no cramps, no sleeplessness - just blissful sleep and a sense of security. No-one - not even my closest family knew where I was. What a relief.

Days went by and as I listened to other drug addicts testify how they felt about the Lord, and we received teaching on what the Lord had done for us on the cross, I came to sort of a conclusion. I decided that if there was a devil, there had to be a god. And I was pretty sure there was a devil. He had spent 24 years trying to ruin my life (I helped him a little with the ruining part though, Cant blame it all on him.) I came to a conclusion that if the devil spent 24 years trying to ruin my life I would give God the chance in one year to fix it. So I decided to ask for more help and I applied for a program for 12 months on a farm far out in the countryside.

In the next weeks my mind was bombarded with thoughts of doubt and fear and anxiety. But I held fast on my decision to go to the rehab program. I kept saying to myself - this is your chance, you will not get another one, if you go back you are dead in a couple of days. And this kept me from going back. As soon as I felt better physically I contacted my closest family my sister and my father and told them about my plans. I also forgave my father as I felt the Lord told me to. So I forgave him and told him that it was not his fault that I ended up as a drug-user. As I said to him. You did not force me to take any drugs. That decision was mine alone. He never asked forgiveness for how he handled me when I was little, but I was so determined to follow God so I did not give that any attention. I just did what God asked me to do. And he blessed my obedience.

I am going to talk about being led by the holy spirit and hearing the voice of the Lord. Our life does not end with the confession of our salvation - that is only when it starts.

Romans 10:9-10.

We take out on a journey. A journey we could never imagine how wonderful and beautiful or tuff it will be. Because we simply can not fathom that His ways are greater and higher than any of our ways and his thoughts for us is to prosper us not to harm us. Isaiah 55:9 and Jeremiah 29:11

How difficult it is to grasp this concept when the image you have of a good father is not there, when you think a father is a person that constantly put you down, scare you, make you feel worthless and stupid. How is it possible to grasp the concept of a good father and his love and care for us. But I will tell you. Nothing is to hard for the Lord. and he speaks to us in mysterious ways so only we will understand. But he speaks in his own time - so we need to be patient and wait for him and then he will tell us. Ask and you shall receive. Matthew 7:7-11 even if it takes time. At one time the angel with a message had to fight for 21 days to reach the receiver. the Israelites in Egypt called out to God for 400 years. But if you do not shrink back - he will answer you. For if you shrink back it is impossible to please God. Or without faith it is impossible to please him.

The first time he spoke to me about my really off image of the farther was a few weeks into rehab and the theme in our daily bible-study was probably the love of a father.

I had so many problems in my mind focusing because of the drug-use. But God showed me in a picture how God as a father would help a little boy to start walking and I saw in my mind how he lifted that little boy up on his feet again and again and again. Not angry, not impatient just lovingly and encouraging. And when I finally understood that image with both my mind and also my spirit, I got such a revelation out of that that I started laughing. And I could not stop laughing for many days. I was probably very annoying. But it was so strong and lifechanging for me that I could not hold back the laughter. Bless the Lord for speaking to me in such a manner that I could understand with both heart, soul and mind. So this time God spoke to me in a picture in my mind.

Because my mind had all the trouble focusing it was hard for me to read and remember, so many days the word of the Lord came to me in songs. Specially songs containing bible verses. And just singing a song again and again and again gave me power to get through the days. For example- Jani Grein - his righteousness is like a robe upon you, praise him,

I struggled with fear and anxiety. Fear that someone from the gang would find me and either try to get me back or just kill me for not being with them anymore. Anxiety - probably just for getting off the drugs and not knowing really who I was or what I wanted with my life.

With some difficulties I spent the hole year reading the bible, doing chores, worshipping and seeking him. Trying to get to know him more and more. many wonderful things happened to me spiritually but maybe the best part was that God in his wisdom found me a new spiritual father and mother. So then I could have someone to look up to as role models. My extra set of parents lived close by and they followed med closely for years first when I was alone and also when I met Ronny and we started a family together. They

showed me and Ronny a different way of parenting than what we had experienced and that was so helpful for us. They really lived out the life in Christ, not just believing but also acted on it.

Jakob 1:22 vær ordets gjører - ikke bare dets hører.

If you want to be led by the spirit you need to know how to hear from the lord so here I have three questions for you.

Just a few questions before we start:

a) Does God really want to take part in our lives? how do we know?

b) Does God really want to share his thoughts with us? How do we know?

c) Does God really want to speak to us on a daily basis? How do we know?

God absolutely want to take part in our lives , share his thoughts with us and he wants to have conversations with us. To explore if this really is true. We should turn to his word and examine what the scripture says about this. Because we can hear and experience God in different ways like I just told you, in pictures and in songs, but to really be sure we need the confirmation from the word of the Lord.

yes God absolutely want to be a part of our lives. I says in Genesis that he created Adam and Eve in his image, and for a long time he enjoyed to fellowship with them in the garden. he used to walk with them in the evenings. Before they were banned. But already God had started to work on a plan to bring them back into his relationship - therefore Jesus, crucified with all the sins of the world. and it says in John 3:16 that

Everything in the scripture is useful for something 2. timothy 3:16-17, even for a joke so here it is.

So if a man and a wife fights over who should start the coffee pot in the morning. do you know which part of the bible they should read to get an answer to that. Hebrews.

Genesis 18-16 17 Then the Lord said, "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do?"

How does God speak, violently, like a storm, like an earthquake, - no he speaks in the quiet after the storm, after the earthquake - 1 Kings 19:11-13

New International Version

11 The Lord said, "Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the Lord, for the Lord is about to pass by." Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake.

12 After the earthquake came a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper.

13 When Elijah heard it, he pulled his cloak over his face and went out and stood at the mouth of the cave. Then a voice said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

Can his voice be heard - absolutely- when he calls Samuel- he hears his name loud and clear. Can he speak through people - absolutely.

Can he speak through people:

Proverbs 25:13

New International Version

13 Like a snow-cooled drink at harvest time

is a trustworthy messenger to the one who sends him;

he refreshes the spirit of his master.

Can he speak through pictures - of course I just told you how he gave me a revelation through a mental picture,

Can he speak through feeling. Yes sometimes, but remember that we are a spirit living in a body and we have a soul. our feelings is closely attached to our body and our body contains mortal limbs, according to romans 8 in these limbs we have the law - the law awakes the sin and so in our flesh there is nothing good according to the word of God until we receive our heavenly bodies from above.

In our spirit it is like a steering wheel to navigate by the peace of the lord, distress is also a guide not to go through with a thing until you "feel" the peace.

Feelings can be deceitful and specially if your life has been off course, we probably do not have a healthy environment inside and this can cause whole range of feelings not leading us anywhere but in circle at best and into trouble at worst.

Can I feel anxiety even if I am doing the right thing? Yes you can. For example a couple of weeks ago I decided to buy a house on the Angel island. At the same time I saw a picture inside of me - it was me preaching for a much larger crowd than I normally preach to. Shortly after this I started to feel short breath, tightness in my chest, feeling like there is something going on spiritually that will hit me hard. So I try to analyze where the feelings come from. And I choose the most obvious in my eyes. It has to be the house. Was its right, was it wrong. Have I done something stupid? Millions of thoughts trying to connect my distressed feelings with the house. Getting me nowhere and just giving me a hard time.

Suddenly I saw a silly picture on Facebook. A woman in distress pointing to everything around her with the text - are you growing spiritually? and at that moment it hit me. my feelings had nothing to do with the house, but everything to do with the next sermon I am going to hold.

Still puzzles me after all this years that I can be so wrong. Do I know the Lord at all? But he is the keeper of my faith. Hebrews 12:2 the founder and perfecter of my faith, the author and finisher of our faith.

When the spirit changes your course -

What happens when you think you heard from God – you received confirmation either through people or through the word. And things does not turn out the way you want it to.

Three years ago my husband and I decided to apply for a bible study in Hawaii at youth with a mission university at Kona. We got all our vaccines. I quit my job because my boss would not give me permission to leave for this school. Ronny got permission for a leave of 6 months and it was pretty much all set. So we applied for a visa to the US and we waited and we waited and we waited.

We were so discouraged – tried to call the embassy every day for weeks, postponed our flights several times and we kept hoping and praying. Two weeks into the bible school we realized that we would not get our visas in time and that we would not be able to go to Hawaii as planned.

We were of course devastated, but as the holy spirit started to encourage us. We contacted our local church and just explained to them what had happened. So we have 6 month with nothing to do. Can we offer you help in any way. Just put us into whatever work you needs to be done and we will do it.

At this time it was such a comfort to dig into the bible and more specifically acts. Acts 16:6

6 Paul and his companions traveled throughout the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia. 7 When they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to. 8 So they passed by Mysia and went down to Troas.

Then you need to dig into acts. It was such a comfort to us seeing that the Holy spirit changed even the disciples plans. Then we could find the strength to endure it to.

And shortly after this the Lord started to open doors for us in the ministry. We were invited to preach in our smaller communities in some "rural" places, villages with small churches. And we were so blessed and happy with that. God also called us to two mission- trips to Wales in Great Britain, but this I will tell you about another time - and it will be tightly knitted together with prayer and fasting.

Just want to share one more thing with you on how the Lord can reveal himself to you in difficult situations. Please do not think I am crazy about sharing this. It is to encourage you.

so during the period of time Ronny and I were on the leave from work (I was actually without work) we got sick with corona. We both were quite sick - not bad enough to go to hospital, but I had 4 days and nights were I struggled to breath all the time. And through this distress God sent me a comforter to sit by my bed and encourage me. Maybe you think now that this was a relative or close friend, but I tell you it was a lion. First time I saw him I was sitting lying on a ton of pillows on the couch to keep the airways open I could not lie down, and suddenly he came walking through the apartment and sat down by the couch. He was so close I could touch him, but I was too weak to even try. A lion is also a very big animal and the appearance was also a

little scary. I knew I saw him in the spirit and I knew right away that he was there to strengthen me. Just so grateful for this. He came to me several times a day and in the night he was there all the time. Just sitting there. At first I got scared and wondered if something bad was going to happen, that I would just die or something. When I got well I did not see him for two years, and then I got really sick again. Alone on the Island and then I saw him again. Sitting there for me. Giving me strength and ensuring that God is present in every situation - no matter what the trouble is.

So this is a few parts of my story. Ronny and I have prayed for years that everything that happens to us. Please God - let this be a testimony of your faithfulness.

God is faithful, he speaks to us, in pictures, songs, visions, circumstances, through his word, other Christians and directly. Stay connected, never stop seeking him, always pray, give him honor and praise - he is so worth it.

Thank you for letting me share with you today. Hope the Holy spirit speaks to your heart.

If God could save me in all my misery, he can save you and your loved ones. Never give up, do not shrink back, step forward in faith, you are totally forgiven and accepted by the creator of the universe. Nothing can separate you from his love: romans 8: