

**The Gospel ... the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes
(Romans 1:16)**

Half past twelve that morning my phone woke me up. I could hear the surprise in the man's voice when I told him that it was pastor Lategan that he was talking to. I also became aware of the tenseness in his voice when he told me his story. He is alone in a hotel room in Cape Town, on the verge of committing suicide. Next to his bed was a loaded pistol. However, before continuing with his act of despair, he asks the Lord for one last chance in his life. He would blindly dial numbers on the telephone next to his bed. If somebody answers the phone at that number, and that person is able to help him in his need, then he would abandon his suicide attempt. "Pastor, can you help me immediately, I do not want to listen to a sermon, I need help".

In return I stood surprised and somewhat confused. What am I supposed to do? As if on the spur of the moment I hear myself saying: "Do you have a Bible with you?" "No!" is the response. After a moment of silence, "Yes, in fact – here in front of me on the table in front of my bed is a Bible that was placed here by the Gideons in S.A." Again, as if on the spur of the moment, I asked him to take that Bible, and to start reading right where ever it opens up. Should he not be convinced after five minutes that it is the Lord Himself talking to him, then he may close the Bible and continue with his suicide attempt.

When my wife reprimanded me from where she was still in bed that I cannot say something like that, then I was frightened for my own words, even though there was nothing I could do. On the other side the person has already summarily hanged up the phone.

Two evenings later I arrived back home around half past ten after home visits and in my study is waiting for me a handsome and well-dressed man of about forty years old. I knew he would come. Very rich business man with business interests around the world, with a good Christian upbringing in his parents' home. However, later on money, alcohol, women, etc. etc. Married, beautiful wife and two daughters. He just was not seeing his way any longer to this life of hypocrisy and fraud. He takes my Bible and opens it up to Proverbs 6:20 - "Pastor, this is where the Bible of the Gideons opened up and I started reading. Now I know how big my sin is, and now for the first time, I am really looking to be saved from it." Then he and myself paged through the Bible and prayed till almost four o'clock in the morning. Then I made fresh coffee because a new day has dawned for him.

There in Acts 8:26-40 it all started with God and a man who started reading His Word, and kept on reading it. To God all the Glory!!

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