



# BLESSED CHRISTMAS GREETINGS FROM MIKE & CINDY HALEY BOTSWANA AFRICA

It's already Christmas Eve (day) here in Botswana. I'm writing this at 9 am. For weeks we have *endured* temperatures of over 100 and an absence of the rain so desperately needed this time of year. We're not expecting a "white Christmas" anytime soon 😭 But, even though they have come very late, we are THRILLED that this past week the rains finally came and the intense temperatures have subsided a bit. For us, here in Southern Africa, that's WONDERFUL Christmas weather. Even now a gentle rain is falling and the bush is alive and glowing with the green of new life. Yesterday Cindy and I enjoyed an amazing African sunset from atop the water tower here at the Grace Oasis. This has truly been an incredible year. This time last year we were Stateside at the end of our furlough, ready to get back to Botswana and "dig in" to the renovations and repairs at the Grace Oasis property. A year later, I sit here in contemplative awe at the faithfulness of God and how He has orchestrated the hearts and hands of His people (so many of them) to accomplish so much in a years time. It really is "something only God can do."

We're experiencing a strange dynamic this year. Normally our capital city Gaborone becomes a ghost town at Christmas as a mass exodus of people returning to their home villages for the holidays takes place every year. This year – the city is packed and the traffic has been nuts. Seems that economic downturns did not allow people to travel like they usually do. This past Sunday church attendance was strong, we had four visitors, and three people professing Christ as Saviour! That's a great way to enter into Christmas! I preached on "God Sent A Saviour" emphasizing the Depths of our Sin and the Greatness of our Saviour! Mom Cindy and I will enjoy a few days of "quiet" and some good food and I always enjoy the week between Christmas and the New Year as a special time to get alone with the Lord in preparation for the year ahead. And, undoubtedly the clouds will clear and it will get hot again and we'll enjoy some time cooling off in the pool – swimming IN DECEMBER! You gotta love living in Africa!

We pray that you and your family and your church family have a blessed Christmas Day filled with joy at the presence of our Lord Jesus. May 2025 bring you abundant grace, blessing, strength, hope, and joy as we continue to press on in the furtherance of the gospel with great anticipation of our Lord coming in the clouds for His church and then coming again to reign on the earth. A cradle and a crown! A babe in a manger and a King on a throne!

Even so, come Lord Jesus!

## A TRULY MIRACULOUS CHRISTMAS STORY

I love a real life story of God's grace and this one will bless your heart. Let me share it with you in closing. Margaret Dintwa, one of our older widows, is the "Granny" of our church. She is a sweet and Godly woman who has known a lot of suffering. For years she has prayed for her son Boni to be saved. Boni has struggled to trust God. He was a prominent, popular, and successful daily radio host for many years. Some "political" issues resulted in him losing his job unfairly and plunged he and his family into financial ruin. He went from posterity to poverty just trying to make ends meet. They now live with Granny in a small house and he recently had to sell his car just to pay bills and keep food on the table. Boni and his wife Mimi (who got saved as a teenager) started attending church regularly. A few months back Boni got saved and a few weeks back both were baptized into church membership. With a change in political parties here in Botswana Boni hopes to find a

new career in communications with the government and we're praying that God will bring that to pass in this coming year. But for now – they're broke, and it's Christmas, and they have two little girls. Our church family provided a food package for them and Granny and they were so thankful for it. But yesterday Boni texted me and asked if there was any way we could arrange a small cash loan for him so that he could buy his girls and his wife something for Christmas. He explained that he had done some side work earlier in the year for a company but they had only paid him the equivalent of \$500 and owed about \$350 more. He had tried many times over the past several weeks to contact the man responsible for payment but to no avail (this is a very common issue in Botswana). Boni asked if he could borrow the equivalent of \$150. As a matter of policy we do not "loan" money to our people as it creates a precedent and a dependency that is problematic. Rather I asked Boni if he would be willing to let me prepay him the \$150 and then come after Christmas and work it off at the Grace Oasis to which he gladly agreed. So, I met Boni in town and gave him the money and though he was very thankful he was also very frustrated that he had to ask for help. I told him to stay encouraged. That he has given his life to Christ and God is a just God and though he may never see the money owed him that God will prove Himself faithful even if it's in another way. I told him we would continue to be in prayer about it as we are with his employment situation and we went our separate ways – he to go Christmas shopping. Two hours later I received a text from Boni which I'll share with you here:

*"Pastor, he paid. I have your money. I can't believe it, he just deposited the cash." I replied, "Praise the Lord man!!! How good is God!" Boni replied, "Jesus is my Lord and Saviour. He heard me and got my kids through. I got the gifts they asked for, so it's going to be a happy Christmas."*

Can I say that most of us know well what it's like to see God come through for us and it's an amazing thing to experience, especially if we've experienced it over the course of a lifetime of loving and serving the Lord. But I think it's a greater joy to see God do it for someone who is brand new in their faith in Christ. It's like watching your small kids open their gifts on Christmas morning knowing you've done your best as a parent to express your love for them. It's just something really special. **Something only God can do! Glory to His name!!**

We love you all! Please keep us in your prayers and know that you are in our hearts and we thank God at every remembrance of you!

