

Morning Communion with God
by Dr. Doug Resler

The following epiphanies were received by Dr. Resler during his time on the mission field in Uganda, South Sudan, and Ethiopia during May and June 2021.. We are blessed as he continues to share his times with God after he returned home. These came during his morning devotional times and he shares what he heard from God during these times - for us to take into our hearts.

May 29

“God, as Creator, formed me to be a vessel in which He could show forth His power and goodness. As such, I am not to have in myself a fountain of life, or strength, or happiness but am to look to my Creator to provide all these things and more. My glory and blessing does not come through independence or self-dependence but through my complete dependence on God. I am created to experience the joy of living every moment in the fullness and infinite richness and immeasurable love of God.”

May 31

The primary reason God gave me life was to show forth in me His wisdom, power, and goodness. It is only in Him that I find joy and happiness for each moment. And it is only by Him that I receive – according to the capacity He created within me – the riches of His grace and love. It is the very nature of God to be the unceasing supply for every need of His beloved child and it is my very nature as a beloved child to wait on God and receive from Him what He alone can give, what He delights to give.

June 1

What I’m learning from Jesus and my new friends from Uganda and South Sudan...
There is nothing I need more than to cultivate a spirit of dependence on God and confidence in Him. I am nothing without the grace and strength He supplies. I have nothing without the grace and strength He provides. I gain nothing except by the grace and strength He freely gives.

June 2

My Heavenly Father is attentive to me as His beloved child and He longs to keep my life at every step in the center of His will and love. He knows well my weaknesses. He knows well that I am unable to do what is holy and heavenly except as He works these things in me. As I surrender my life into His hands, His demands become promises of what He will do as He watches over and leads me through each day. Not only in special difficulties and times of confusion but in the common course of everyday life, I may count on Him to teach me His way and show me His path.

June 3

God is enough. His presence is where I find peace. Fear and anxiety and worry are symptoms of a lack of awareness that He is always by my side. With Him at my side, I am relieved of the pressure to figure things out or have it all together. When things go sideways or get chaotic – like they tend to do here in Africa – I can trust Him to lead me beside still waters where there is peace. I only need to close my eyes, take a deep breath, and wait for Him to make His will known.

June 4

An essential part of my time with Jesus is praying for others. My family. My church family. My community. My nation. My brothers and sisters around the world. The love of God for me is inseparably linked with my love for those around me. Just as Christ did not seek to enjoy the Father's love for Himself alone but passed it on to me so I must pass the love Christ has for me onto others. As I pray in the name of Jesus and in the way of Jesus, my heart is knit together with those I am praying for. Prayer made in the name of Jesus stirs up a deep love for them and a desire to see them lifted up, encouraged, strengthened, comforted, convicted, and set free by the grace of Christ. Prayer also creates a new condition to which God may choose to respond in miraculous ways, providing healing and hope for those who are lost and wandering. Perhaps most of all, in prayer I find myself helping to bear another's burdens and I fulfill the law of Christ which is the law of unconditional love.

June 5

The more I draw near to God, the more exposed I am. The more I wait on God, the more naked I become. The more I am silent before Him, the more the voices in my head clamor for my attention. True surrender seems so far away. That's when God reminds me that His nearness in no way depends on me. If I draw near to God, He will draw near to me. And it is by simply abiding in His presence that I am drawn deeper and deeper into His perfect will and surrender becomes the most natural thing in the world. A soul entirely given up to God experiences only joy and peace and love for these things are the byproduct of His presence revealed to us in Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit.

June 6

Waiting on God is not easy. Especially in the face of suffering or distress or great need. I am often tempted to fear that my faith is too feeble. My heart too impure. My devotion not as earnest as it should be. My surrender incomplete. My strength almost always fails. But then I gather with the saints here in Uganda. I gather with the poorest of the poor. The hungry. The thirsty. The sick. The afflicted. The broken-hearted. I see them dance. I see them sing. I see them pray. I see them receive the Word with humility and deep faith. And my heart is lifted up. My strength renews like the eagle's. My eyes rise above the cares and worries of this world. God is here! He is with me! There is nothing in heaven or earth or hell that will keep Him from coming to His child's side.

June 8

It is with the heart that I must wait upon God. As my heart is, so am I before God. I can advance no further or deeper into the holy place of God's presence to wait on Him there than my heart is prepared for it by the Holy Spirit. "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not upon your own understanding." Faith depends on two powers. The mind has to gather knowledge from God's Word and prepare the food by which the heart is to be nourished. But here comes in a terrible danger. I can start to trust my own understanding more than I trust God. I too often imagine if I will just meditate on the Truth of God that my spiritual life will be strengthened. It's not always the case. It is with the heart that I believe and come in touch with God. It is in my heart that God takes up His residence. My faith requires engagement from the heart so that I can love and trust and worship and obey Jesus.
(Adapted from Andrew Murray)

June 9

God's eyes are always on me. My eyes need to be on Him. When I intentionally wait for God, my eyes looking up to Him meet His eyes looking down in me. The primary blessing of waiting on God is that it takes my eyes off myself – my needs, my wants, my desires – and my circumstances – my struggles, my anxieties, my fears - and occupies my attention with God alone. I worship Him in His glory and love, trusting His all-seeing eye to watch over me and supply my every need. "The eye of the Lord is on them who fear Him, on them who hope in His mercy...my soul waits for the Lord; He is my help and shield so my heart shall rejoice in Him." (Adapted from Andrew Murray)

June 10

I have as little power to increase or strengthen my spiritual life as I have to originate it. Even so, all the exercises of the spiritual life, my reading and praying, my willing and doing, have great value. Their value lies in their ability to point the way and prepare my heart in humility to look to and depend on God Himself. They give me patience to wait on His good timing and great mercy. This waiting teaches me about my absolute dependence on God's mighty working and to place myself continually at His disposal, to do with me as He wills. "Rest in the Lord and wait patiently for Him." Wait for God. Not just the gift or the help I need but for Him alone. This patience honors Him greatly; it leaves Him, as God, on the throne to do His work and it yields my "self" into His capable hands.

June 13

"Dr. Doug, why do we have to suffer and die? Why doesn't God protect us?" It was gut-wrenching. Heart-breaking. Deeply convicting. The truth from Scripture is that death lies at the heart of the gospel. The death of Jesus. The death of the Jesus-follower. The death of self. Only those who lose their lives for Jesus' sake will find them. Only those who take up their cross can follow Him. Christians are crucified with Christ and therefore no longer live for themselves. Our lives are not our own. Longevity is life or in ministry cannot be the goal. Physical health and safety cannot be the goal. Avoiding suffering cannot be the goal. The goal of the Christian life is to offer our bodies as living sacrifices for the advancement of the Kingdom of God. Nothing more. Nothing less. Nothing else. The loud "amen" I received from the over 300 church planters I was training let me know they understood this deep truth. Far more than I do. They live it daily in ways I cannot begin to fathom. The reality is God never promised us an easy life. Quite the opposite. Those who follow Him faithfully are promised trials and hardship. Suffering and pain. The world killed Jesus for what He preached and it's been killing His followers ever since. Our hope lies not in our comfort or safety but in the fact that we belong – body and soul – to God.

June 14

My power is made perfect in your weakness. I reveal Myself in those whose souls sink into helplessness. Those who come to the end of their resources and strength. The path to divine power is deep humility. A meekness to know nothing but Me and that which I choose to reveal to you. Becoming My vessel requires the complete resignation of your will so that My will might hold sway over your life. Every day, the church planters you serve come face to face with their own powerlessness. Theirs is a life of deep hardship and suffering. They know weakness and despair intimately. They have been emptied of "self" and pour their lives out as an offering before Me. As they pour out, I pour in. I become their strength. I become their wisdom. I become their help. I become their hope. My power is made perfect in their weakness. Continue to wait patiently on Me. Continue to abide faithfully in My presence. I will break your will and make you a servant of My will. Then you will know the power I promise to all those who seek Me with all of their heart.

June 16

My whole relationship with God is rooted in this essential truth. His will is to be done in me and through me as it is in heaven. My life is not my own. Not one square inch. Not one brief second. Not a bit of what I have is mine to hold onto. All of it comes as a gift to further God's will. The good news is He has promised to reveal His will to me by His Spirit if I am patient enough and quiet enough and still enough to hear His voice. My posture is to be that of waiting for His counsel as the only guide in my thoughts and actions. Cultivating an abiding awareness of His presence at the beginning of each day. In everything I say or do, my first object must be to seek to the mind of Christ for God always works according to the counsel of His will. The more I seek and honor and obey His counsel, the more surely and mightily God will do His work in me and through me. God has made this quite clear and obvious in the lives of the people before me. Their stories bear witness to the power of a life fully surrendered to Him. Their testimonies inspire me. Their courage humbles me. Their faithfulness in the face of great persecution is awe-inspiring. I am quite certain the jewels in their heavenly crowns will far outshine my own and I rejoice in the opportunity I have to serve them.

June 17

"My soul waits for the Lord more than watchman wait for the morning." These words take on new meaning as I continue to wake up around 2AM each morning. In those dark hours, I've found myself waiting for the morning. Trying to pass the time. Reading. Studying. Praying. And then I spend time talking to the church planters we're training. The darkness they live in is real. It is the darkness of poverty. The darkness of disease. The darkness of death. The darkness is even deeper spiritually. They are contending against spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. They are persecuted. They are imprisoned. They are beaten. They are stoned. Some of them even die for their faith. They too are waiting, longing, praying for the morning to come. For the light of God to dawn on the villages where they are sent and the people they are called to serve. So what gives them the strength to persevere? To endure? To remain resilient in the midst of their suffering? It's the light of Christ that shines in their hearts. You see, they understand that in Christ, the morning has already dawned! Unlike the watchman, they no longer have to wait! He is here! He is with us! Just as the sun rises in the east each morning, giving life and light to the earth, so God shines in my heart. Shining the light of His glory, His love, His grace and driving away the darkness of my internal experience and my external circumstances. God is light, infinitely brighter than the sun. God is light, the Father as light eternal and inaccessible. The Son as light made manifest, light embodied, light made concrete. The Spirit as indwelling light, light shining eternally in my heart through faith.

June 19

Flying over the North Atlantic on my way home. It's early in the morning where I am going. It's almost noonday where I've been for the past three weeks. As I spend time with Jesus, I am reminded He stands outside of time. Time is His creation and under His control. So no matter what time it may be, He is always available to spend time with me. Here are His words for me today...

Human beings are creatures of irreducible complexity. Made in the very image of an infinite God, there is a depth to them that cannot be plumbed except by the Spirit. Their passions are fierce. Their desires seem endless. Their capabilities great. Especially when they join together for common cause. Sometimes those causes are godly and the good they accomplish is awe-inspiring. Sometimes those causes are sinful and the trauma that results is devastating. We are eternal beings trapped in a ruined, temporal world of our own making. Forever trying to avoid the divine responsibilities laid upon us by our Creator at the dawn of time. Called to live in harmony, we choose alienation. Called to live in peace, we choose conflict. Called to live in grace, we choose condemnation. It's overwhelming when I stop to think about the magnitude of it all. It's especially discouraging when I become aware of how deep these same, sinful dynamics run in my own heart. So what does it mean for me to turn from my sin and follow Christ in the midst of all the brokenness? It's to be still in God's presence. It's to be silent before Him. It's to wait on Him in prayer for this world is ultimately His to save. The people I love are ultimately His to save. The people I am tempted to hate are ultimately His to save. I myself am ultimately His to save. The problems of this world and the problems of my life are ultimately His to solve. Rather than spend my energy in fruitless pursuits, endless arguments, lashing out in a prophetic rage, relentlessly pursuing self-discipline; it is far better to spend such time on my knees. Surrendering my heart and my life to Him. Interceding for saints and sinners. Friends and enemies. Lovers and haters. Allies and opponents. All are beloved by God. All are made in His image. Not a single one broken beyond His repair.

June 20 2021

Took my first sips of Harar coffee early this morning and prayed for the 743 church planters I had the privilege of meeting over the past three weeks. Also thinking about the privilege it is for me to serve my own church family here at PEPC. The promises of God know no national boundaries. They are not limited to borders or certain geographical barriers. The same God who accomplishes the impossible through church planters in South Sudan, Uganda, and Ethiopia can accomplish the impossible through ordinary people living in Parker, CO. Can't wait to worship the God of the impossible alongside you this morning! If you don't have a church to call home, I hope you'll join us! 8:30 and 10:30! See you there!

June 21 2021

Jet lag creates wonderful opportunities to meet with Jesus. The house is quiet. It's dark outside. No one else is up. Stillness. Silence. Solitude. I can hear the whispers of God's voice...

The same God who is at work among my dear brothers and sisters in Africa is at work in my life, my church, my city. The same God who works miracles abroad is the same God who desires to work miracles here at home. His promises are as true for me as they are for them. So if I lack boldness or power or authority or passion. If I lack grace or mercy or tenderness or compassion. If I lack energy or zeal or joy or excitement. I must continue to wait on God. I must seek Him for these things. I must ask Him to reveal to me in judgment. Judgment on the sin that so easily entangles. Judgment on the sin that so easily trips me up and robs me of my confidence. Waiting on God is not about self-indulgence. It's object is to let God enter into my life with His holy fire, burning away all the impurities of my soul. It's to let Christ into my life with His healing love, tenderly filling those spaces left raw by His judgment. It's to let the Spirit into my life to take possession, inspiring and empowering me to live anew.

June 22 2021

Waiting on God is not a one way street. Andrew Murray points out that God waits on us more than we wait on Him. I cannot get the image of God waiting patiently on His throne for me His child to come to Him out of my mind. He waits with all the longings of a father's heart. It humbles me. God is so gracious and good to me. He is love and as such, holds in His own heart an unceasing and inexpressible desire to reveal more and more of Himself to me. He longs and delights to bless. He longs to share with me the glorious purposes He has for my life. He is faithfully working to complete what He began in me the day He lifted me up out of the pit and saved me. Every time I come to wait on Him, I find Him ready to meet with me. There is never a moment when His door is closed. Never a moment when He is distracted. Never a moment when I catch Him off guard. I never have to worry about the reception I will receive. Never have to enter His presence ashamed. Never have to hide my face. My Father is safe. My Father is secure. My Father is patient. My Father is gracious. My Father understands. My Father listens. My Father forgives. My Father is faithful. My Father's love is everlasting.

June 23 2021

"Why does God wait?" "Why does God delay?" These are some of the questions I brought to Jesus this morning. They lay especially heavy on my heart having just come back from a trip where I was exposed yet again to the great poverty and suffering in our world. Here was His answer...

Doug, you are waiting on me but I am waiting on you. I have entrusted this world and all that is in it into your hands. I have charged my people with the stewardship and care over all I have made. You have all the resources you need to alleviate suffering and put an end to life-threatening poverty. But humanity chooses selfishness. Humanity chooses greed. Humanity chooses oppression and injustice. You are not immune, Doug. You choose these things as well. Following my path requires self-denial. It requires self-emptying. It requires the relinquishment of all you hold dear so you have nothing left to hold onto but Me. I am enough. I am sufficient. I am love. What am I waiting for? I am waiting for humanity to exhaust herself. I am waiting for humanity to wake up from the nightmare she has created. I am waiting for humanity to finally come to her senses and return to My embrace. I will not gather the fruit until it is ripe. I will not pour out my blessings until she is ready. I wait in love for My beloved to return. Even as I wait, you can trust I am at work. I make my power known in weakness. I reveal my beauty in brokenness. I lift high the lowly and humble in heart. This is what you have seen. This is what you have experienced. And the invitation is always open for you to join Me in making all things new.

June 24 2021

As I seek to meet with God each morning, He is faithful to reveal Himself to me which makes my waiting on Him all the sweeter...

"Have you not known? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable." My God is worthy to be waited upon. He is worthy of all my attention. He is worthy of the time I give Him. He is worthy of all the sacrifices I make. He is worthy of my first thoughts. My first steps. My first love. His worth cannot be compared to anything else in my life. Not my marriage. Not my family. Not my work. Not my passions. Not my hobbies. Nothing I spend time on. Nothing I give myself to. Nothing I dedicate my resources to can be compared to Him. He alone is worthy of all honor and glory and praise in my life. The amazing truth that sinks into my soul this morning is that this all-worthy God loves to spend time with me. Loves to give Himself to me. Loves to meet me in my places of deepest need. "He gives power to the faint, and to him who has no might he increases strength. Even youths shall faint and be weary, and young men shall fall exhausted; but they who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint." The strength the Lord imparts is not my own. The wings on which I soar are not my own. The only way I can run and not grow weary, walk and not faint is if I let God's power be made perfect in my weakness. So today I am praying for God to shatter all my self-confidence. Help me see my weakness and helplessness. Disappoint my hopes and dreams. Push me out of the comfortable nest I have made for myself so that as I fall, I will feel His strong wings spread beneath me. I will feel His everlasting arms around me. I will rest in His ability to carry me through each and every moment of my day.

June 25 2021

Sitting in silence and solitude before the Lord each morning reframes my expectations. Reorients my desires. Reorders my priorities. It is not easy. It doesn't feel natural. And yet it is essential if I am to hear the voice of Jesus. Here's what He said to me this morning...

Doug, do not give in to anxiety. Do not give in to fear. Do not give in to impatience. Do you not yet trust me to work my plans out for your life in My own time? I have promised those who wait on Me will never be ashamed. I have promised to bless those who continually rest in My presence and My love. Yes, you are living in difficult days. Yes, the state of world is incredibly sad. There is so much to mourn over and I grieve alongside you for the pain and suffering so many experience. But you can trust in My promises. I am near the broken-hearted and crushed in spirit. I lift up those who fall. I chase down every lost sheep. I welcome every sinner home. I am at work drawing all people to Myself. I am at work drawing all of human history to a close. My Kingdom is nearer today than it was yesterday. Doug, who can measure the difference between the great sun and a little blade of grass? And yet that little blade of grass has all of the sun it can ever need or hold. You are like a blade of grass. You are so little. So fragile. So weak. And yet you have all of Me you could ever need or hold. As you wait on Me, My greatness will meet your littleness in the most wonderful way. So simply open your hands. Open your heart in humility, meekness, and surrender and I will fill your soul.

June 26 2021

My wife and children are asleep. Even the dogs have not yet stirred. The coffee is hot. The morning is cool and crisp. The birds are starting to sing. It's a new day and I am reminded yet again that God's mercies are new every morning as I meet with Him...

I have this chorus running through my head - "Praise the Lord! His mercies are more! Stronger than darkness, new every morn; our sins they are many, His mercies are more." I need to enlarge my heart. I need to expand my thinking. God's greatness is greater than I have imagined. "From of old no one has heard or perceived by the ear, no eye has seen a God besides you, who acts for those who wait for him." (Isaiah 64:4) God is able to do far more than I could ever ask or imagine. So why don't I ask? What keeps me from believing God can and will do the impossible? Why are my hopes and dreams and ambitions so earth-bound? Why do I limit God? God alone reigns sovereign over the earth. Over the church. Over my life as a Christian. God alone holds all power and authority in heaven and on earth. He privileges no person, no tribe, no nation but desires all to be saved and come to a knowledge of His truth. He is at work even now to bring His will to pass. When I look at the world around me I see so much injustice, hatred, outrage, depression, and fear and I often despair. But when I look at Jesus I see compassion, selfless love, ultimate sacrifice, faithful dedication, patient endurance and hope that springs eternal. My heart is stirred yet again to pray and work with faith that God will do yet unlooked-for things. God will perform signs and wonders. God will surpass my small and weak and finite expectations and do abundantly more than I could ever ask or imagine for the sake of His glory, His Kingdom, and His great name.

June 28 2021

"The Lord is good even though His children often do not know it for they wait not in quietness for Him to reveal it...When we first begin to wait on God, our heart is chiefly set on the blessings which we wait for from Him. God graciously uses our need and desire for help to teach us to look for something even higher and greater than what we were thinking of. We were seeking gifts while He - the Giver - longs to give Himself to us and satisfy us with His goodness." (Adapted from Andrew Murray)

It's taken me a long time to realize God's goodness is what my heart longs for. To know God's goodness. To trust God's goodness. To believe God's goodness means He is always good to me and He works for my good continually. My good is not always synonymous with my desires. My good is often at odds with what I may think is best in the moment. My good cannot come at the expense of others but is inextricably bound to the good of those around me. When I take the time to wait on God and reflect on His goodness, I find my heart escaping the gravitational pull of this world to find it's truest and deepest satisfaction in God alone. Sent from my iPad