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Serving the Lord in Zimbabwe

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There are many lessons to be learnt from nature, one of them being the seasons. Wherever we are, seasons exist. In some countries, the seasons are more distinct than in others, but they are still there.

Here in Zimbabwe, all of Africa is north of us except South Africa. We have only two distinct seasons, the dry season, winter and the rainy season or summer. Winter, around May to August, can be quite cold. White potatoes and wheat prevail then but must be irrigated. During the summer, the Country receives most of its rainfall supplied mostly by the Indian Ocean cyclones. Some crops, for example maize, soya, sorghum, and tobacco are grown in the summer. It is not unusual for the rains to be minimal or delayed. Sometimes, there can also be quite a lapse between the changing seasons often resulting in drought.

Another feature here is the changing landscape. Every season brings with it a variety of flowering trees and shrubs. For example, as winter fades, a local shade tree, the msasa, drops all its leaves (some call it Fall) and almost immediately begins to sprout new leaves in various hues of red/orange/rust/tan etc. This lasts but a few days until it is replaced by new leaves in tender shades of green. The blue/purple jacaranda appears before long and sheds its flowers on the street, sidewalk, or yard beneath. What sights to behold!

Isn't natural life like that too? Every stage has its own distinctive features – tuming, creeping, walking, teething, growing into adulthood, getting into midlife, becoming seniors, and so on. Some phases are characterized by the need for help, others by an independent streak. But they all go to make up a life.

So too is spiritual life. We may recall our beginning often marked by uncertainty, sometimes doubt, and our need for reassurance. Then we embarked on what is usually called the Christian life – participation in a local church and its activities, self-confidence, busyness, perhaps years in some form of well-intentioned ministry. It is then we might begin to sense a shallowness in our relationship with the Lord and might ask ourselves: 'Is this all?', 'Have I been on the right track?', 'Has it been worthwhile?'. Then perhaps fear that we had been walking in only the shadow of something far more real and greater than we had experienced grips us as we contemplate the approaching dim light of the evening of our days here on earth.

In the Lord's grace, we begin to see our Lord Jesus Christ as the Reality of our salvation and wish we had more time to explore the depth of His riches which, sadly, were missed during most of our Christian life. We read again Colossians 2:9, 10 from the New Living Translation – "For in Christ lives all the fullness of God in a human body. So, you are complete through your union with Christ...." Other passages of Scripture lead us to conclude, 'Yes, that's what it's about Christ!', for "He is the sum of all things"; and the kind of Christians we are and the measure of His fullness in us will be determined exclusively by our knowledge of Him. As we contemplate further, perhaps we reflect on how we might be eulogized by our loved ones and we fear they might just present a brighter picture of our walk with the Lord than it really was.

This was our motivation when we hosted a four-day Retreat last month for nine persons some of whom we had been meeting with face-to-face, pre-Covid. This, together with our continuing online group meetings, has been the highlight of our last three years here. Not only was there good participation, but we are excited by the level of discussion via What's App that has followed.

To those of you who have been a part of this ministry, we thank God for you and your faithfulness. May He continue to provide all your needs – spiritual and physical – and may we daily grow in appreciation of His abundant grace towards us. Let us hold on to that grace so that we will appropriate all that He has purposed for us, His children. And may we, unashamedly, cry out to Him that He might grant us a clearer vision of Who He really is. This might just be one of the most meaningful seasons of our lives!