



Women of the Way Report of the August 2016 Annual Retreat

Faylene Sparkes, our guest presenter wooed us right from the start. She came with a prophetic word telling us that God delighted in us and wanted to restore us and empower us. She told us that it is the time to receive. And she told us that we have the ear of God, His hand of grace, of love and of blessing extended over us.

If that was not enough, Faylene went on to tell us that God loves us lavishly. She encouraged us to ponder on this. I had never considered being loved lavishly. I googled it and delighted to read that it meant 'sumptuously, richly, expansively, unstintingly.....'. And this was just Friday night, the weekend promised much!

The expression 'glass ceiling' is one that is often used to explain why it is still hard for women to climb up into the higher echelons of management. When Faylene prophesied that 'the Lord is going to break the glass ceiling over peoples' lives' however, she had a meaning far greater than this, one that is supported by scripture. God tells us in John 10:10 that He came to bring life, life in abundance. Faylene wanted us to know that God wants to take us further, empower us and bring us into greater prosperity and blessings than we have ever known. He wants us to dare to break through our own imposed glass ceiling. God wants us to be open to embrace all He has for us. Faylene then preached from the book of Ruth to bring home this truth.

This small book of Ruth in the old Testament is one that speaks of the rewards gained from being faithful and obedient. As Faylene explained there are four chapters in the book of Ruth and she calls each by name.

First there is the chapter of 'Weeping' where we are told of the sorrow and hardship faced by Ruth and Naomi. Next, is the time of 'Working' where Ruth must go into the fields and glean the pickings left by the harvesters. This working time bears fruit when a way forward is recognised. The third chapter, the 'Waiting' chapter tells of the time Ruth waits with obedience for the fulfillment of God's plan.

Finally, there is the 'Wedding' chapter and all that was lost to Ruth and Naomi is restored with blessings that break through the glass ceiling. Ruth and Boaz wed and Ruth's land is restored to her. They have a son, Obed, the grandfather of King David, of whose royal lineage Jesus the Messiah is born. Can there be no greater blessing than to be a forebear to Christ the King?

Faylene promised us that God wants to also break through our glass ceilings and give us blessings like Ruth, blessings we could never dream of. Wow!

Right now, however what many of us dream about and long for is that our children will return to walking with the Lord. Faylene not only prophesied from Jeremiah 31:16-17 that our children will return from the enemies' land but she bears witness to this with her own daughter. Peta had come along with her mother and she told us her story. She was struggling with depression and an eating disorder, but from that place of darkness and despair God rescued her and gave her His Spirit. Peta is now on fire for the Lord. She gave us hope, telling us that our 'prodigals too will be coming home'.

All through the weekend there was opportunity for Faylene and her daughter Peta to generously exercise their spiritual gifts over the women present. There were physical healings and the unleashing of spiritual gifts. Many received a word of prophesy, for some it gave them hope and reassurance, for others it confirmed their purpose and plan; all were blest.

Father Chima from the Petrie Parish also journeyed over the weekend with us providing Mass, Reconciliation and Benediction. His words of wisdom and counsel were greatly appreciated.

The music ministry helped us lift our voices in praise. We sang and danced and waved our colours and, just like King David when bringing the Ark of the Covenant home, we were bringing the Lord home into our hearts. What joy we had!

It was also my final retreat as part of the Women of the Way Planning Committee and so I wish to acknowledge the hard work that my sisters on this committee put into making such a glorious weekend happen. Every detail is accounted for. We pray in advance each year for our speakers, our priest, the venue, the women God will call to come and their families back home. Nothing about the weekend happens without prayer and planning. Then we step aside and believe that God will pour out His Spirit and bless us. And each year He does, bountifully.

May God continue to pour out His Spirit over the Women of the Way.

Julie Borger