



St Philip's Church Kenwyn – Home Worship
Sunday 9 Aug 2020 – Women's Day Service

Sing: Make a way & Defender

INTRODUCTION

A warm welcome to you viewing today's special Service with a difference as we commemorate Women's Day, and reflect on the different insights from a biblical viewpoint but also, **WHAT** has transpired since the march to the Union Buildings on 9 August 1956, 64 years ago.

Let me firstly recount **WHAT** happened on that day :

On 9 August 1956, more than 20,000 South African women of all races staged a march on the Union Buildings in protest against the proposed amendments to the Urban Areas Act of 1950, commonly referred to as the dreaded "pass laws".

The march was led by Lillian Ngoyi, Helen Joseph, Rahima Moosa and Sophia Williams. Other participants included Frances Baard, a statue of whom was unveiled by Northern Cape Premier Hazel Jenkins in Kimberley (Frances Baard District Municipality) on National Women's Day 2009.

The women left 14,000 petitions at the office doors of then prime minister J. G. Strijdom.

The women stood silently for 30 minutes and then started singing a protest anti-apartheid song that was composed in honour of the occasion: Wathint'Abafazi Wathint'imbokodo! (You strike a woman, you strike a rock)

In the years since, the phrase or its latest incarnation: "you strike a woman, you strike a rock", has come to represent women's courage and strength in South Africa.

But having taken place 64 yrs ago, **what** is being done today to celebrate the plight of women, with Gender Based Violence reaching pandemic proportions, **ESPECIALLY REARING ITS UGLY HEAD DURING THE Covid-19 pandemic**. Civil Society must seek innovative and real meaningful ways to protect women in the workplace, in public areas, in their homes and in the church.

WHY?

This issue is not a woman's issue, it's a HUMAN RIGHTS issue. We need to start looking at everything THROUGH A DIFFERENT LENS. We must ALL take responsibility and fiercely oppose GBV. We cannot deny the fact that we have through the ages been living in a patriarchal society, and that needs to change. As men, we may feel uncomfortable, and even resist this paradigm shift, but it is inevitable, men **MUST** change their innate attitude and perspective towards women in all walks of life.

The big question is : What is the Church's response to ordained and lay Anglican women and scholars?

Eight clergy women have compiled a powerful and stark document, titled, "Gatvol Yet Hopeful! Women Call the Anglican Church of Southern Africa to Action". It is thought-provoking and challenging, calling on the Church to condemn its death-dealing beliefs, doctrines and practices which prejudices women. Our speakers will reflect on some of the issues contained in the document, underscored by Scripture highlighting the abuse and GBV emanating from the Holy Bible. We will listen to real life testimonies from those who have suffered abuse, rape and assault - these forms of GBV, perpetrated by men.

WHEN?

We can't only be talking about this now, GBV is a sin and we need to lament it every day.

Statistics show that in 2018/19, a total of [2,771 women](#) were murdered in South Africa. This means a woman is murdered every three hours, and a rape every 26 seconds.

According to a statement from Pres Ramaphosa, 51 percent of South African women have experienced violence at the hands of someone with whom they are in a relationship.

The rate of **sexual violence in South Africa** is among the highest in the world.

In any other country, a national disaster would have been declared.

[Sexual violence](#) : During 2015/16, there were 51,895 crimes of a sexual nature reported to the [South African Police Service](#). Less than 5% of the perpetrators are convicted or jailed.

Government legislation and the judiciary has sadly failed the vulnerability of women in SA.

And currently while the coronavirus pandemic and anti-racism protests have been dominating global consciousness, in South Africa a recent spike in femicides has caused fresh horror and public outcry.

The biblical accounts by our presenters will reveal how women in the Bible such as Tamar and Ester suffered sexual abuse and endured horrific brutality at the hands of some of the prominent male figures.

All forms of violence, sexual abuse and GBV is SINFUL. Real men don't rape. These messages may sound like hackneyed clichés, but we must internalize these messages

The Bible teaches us to LOVE the SINNER, but not the SIN. This in itself is a tough challenge and a bitter pill to swallow.

A befitting tribute to all women is found in Proverbs 31 : 10 - **A wife of noble character who can find? She is worth far more than rubies. " Her husband has full confidence in her and lacks nothing of value.**

It's as true today as it was 200 years ago-- when Irish statesman, [Edmund Burke](#) stated :

"The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing."

To all Men, we say collectively, **ENOUGH IS ENOUGH.**

Let's put an end and #StopGBV

Our Prayer is that you will find meaning in this presentation, and may God protect you and all those dear to you. Wishing A Blessed Women's Day. Amen

CONFESSION

Man: Let us confess our sins:
We have denied the authority of women
And limited their gifts;
we have locked away women's power,
and chosen to hide their pain.
But nothing is veiled that will not be revealed

**Men: and nothing is hidden
that will not be made known.**

Woman: We have denied the authority of women
And limited our gifts;
we have locked away women's power,
and chosen to hide our pain.
But nothing is veiled that will not be revealed

**Women: and nothing is hidden
that will not be made known.**

Man: We have feared those who are not like us;
We have refused to know our weakness.
We have locked away part of ourselves.
But nothing is veiled that will not be revealed

**Men: and nothing is hidden
that will not be made known.**

Woman: We have feared those who are like us;
We have refused to know our strength.
We have locked away part of ourselves.
But nothing is veiled that will not be revealed

**Women: and nothing is hidden
that will not be made known.**

Man: We have resisted the Wisdom of God
and refused to seek her face.

Woman: We have turned aside from her image
and hidden our knowledge of her.
But have no fear: for nothing is veiled that will not be revealed

**All: and nothing is hidden
that will not be made known.**

TESTIMONY

Why Now?

I am that woman... That woman who has been a wife, mother and homemaker. I raise my children in a Christian household and I walk the journeys in their lives with them and did the same with my husband. I work full time, when I get home I start supper, get busy with the kids and their homework, drop off and pick up kids and their friends drop off and pick up my husband from training sessions and games. I am devoted to keeping my family together and functioning.

But I am also that woman who has accepted a life of abuse for a long time. Physical abuse, verbal abuse, emotional abuse and financial abuse. I was accused of many things that I was not guilty of.

I broke my back, to keep going and to keep our family of four together. Sometimes I think I lived in a dream and someone woke me and said it was all just a dream, like in the movies. I am also that woman who endured a lot and believed that I am strong enough to handle the violent situations. But no matter how much I tried, there was always that feeling inside of me
" I am not enough"

Then to keep myself sane and not be gobbled up by that frightful fear of " I am not enough" I kept going on, building a home, but the more I built the more it fell apart. I realise and knew in my heart, Marriage has and needs two people, who work together as one.

I would do lots of family orientated things, in order to build memories for our children that will last forever. I arranged family vacations with extended family. I availed myself to my family and extended family. I tried to build family legacy's. I committed my life to God and believed that I was doing the right thing, by keeping our family together, who was whole on the outside of our doors...but on the inside behind our closed doors we were broken. Me being the fixer helper that I am, I tried to fix the brokenness.

The past year, there has been so much in the media and all over, about Gender Based Violence, about leaders and prominent people abusing those who look up to them and people who are known to the person being, their abuser, murdered or raped.

A culture of standing up for yourself was slowly taking off more than before. This affected me a lot, because I also wanted to stand up, I had a need to break the chains that was holding me back. It saddened me greatly as more and more the abuse and gruesome murders started becoming an everyday occurrence.

Last year right here in St Philips women of all ages lamented and Real Men cried tears, and that was encouraging, there was a presence felt that day...a somewhat embracing spirit.

This happened at a time when I was picking myself up, the broken pieces brought on by abuse and infidelity and putting up a heck of a fight against that feeling inside of me "I am not enough"

Back at home, prior to 2018 there was that tug of war pulling and tugging and at times winning the war, between being good enough for God, but not good enough as a wife and spouse. I supported my husband through out his sporting career, as a player at provincial and national level and there after as a coach at provincial and national level. He has travelled to many countries representing national teams. He also headed up youth development. Parents and players alike respect and love him. And there were many times that I wanted to tell them who he really was, but I knew I would pay for doing that.

I tried to speak to leaders of this sporting code, I was told that it is a domestic dispute and is not part of sport. My concern was for the youth he was working with, because I know what my own children were going through.

Women and children who are abused, are often asked why they take so long to speak up and put a stop to the abuse.

I am that woman who kept quiet and endured the abuse in a marriage of 20 odd years. I remained in the shadows and often did not want people to know who I am. My husband has worked hard for all his achievements, to get where he is and I did not want to ruin it for him because that is not who I am.

So, I supported him to the best of my ability. I thought of him and respected him through it all.

I kept quiet and believed that I could help him with his violent temper, that I could help him deal with his own childhood demons, that I could help him with his violent temper that would come out, behind our closed doors. My children witnessed a lot and has been exposed to a lot.

And I let it go on for too long and now they live with that brokenness. I struggle with self-forgiveness because of that.

Family and friends knew about his temper and knew how some nights I would have to run to save myself from getting physically hurt.

People knew and they would support the kids and me in so many ways. I think some of the support was to make up for where he lacked as a husband and father. But, I know that, I needed to make the change. Nobody could do that for me. We have gained many people who support us and pray for our healing.

As a child of God, he heard my cries, God knew the fear I felt when I would lay awake wondering... "when is he coming home and how he would behave or what he would break when he eventually did come home." God our Father, saw my tears as I would cry myself to sleep after a long day of trying to keep up a brave front.

Through prayer and quiet time with God he assured me that I am enough. With my manager and his wife mentoring and supporting me, I grew closer to God and He strengthened me and prepared me for the journey ahead.

How many people are aware of abuse and keep quiet and turn a blind eye?

Why don't people say "Sorry dude I can't have a drink with you, because what you doing is wrong. Or I can't play a round of golf with you because you are an abuser. Or you need to stop all the elicited affairs. Or, you need to get help. I don't even think that I have seen a movie with that context.

I feel that victims of abuse need more than just support.

Women cannot raise awareness about Gender Based Violence, by themselves.

Help us women and children to speak out, speak out to our abuser, make our abuser feel the alienation that we feel.

Not all men are abusers. We have Real Men amongst us, who support our Gender Based Violence, who hear our Women & children's cries.

Know that your support is appreciated, more than you will ever know.

But the time has come for more.

No more words, action is needed.

We need to create a Real Man Syndrome, that can stand up to our abusers and oppressors. That do not look the other way.

People generally have a fear of meddling.

But, how about we break that FEAR? That FEAR that Real Men have too.... To stand up and not look the other way, instead of our women and children living in their FEAR that has become a pandemic in our society and killing our women and children.

I got my night, where I stood up for me and my children and I ran for the last time in October 2018. I broke my silence and I am taking my life back. I am still haunted by my fears and I am learning every day that I AM good enough for me and that tug of war, is dissipating. I tell my children all the time that they are good enough and that I love them. I thank God for loving me and for talking to me through his prayer warriors and sending me angels who protected me when I did not even realise it.

I am a huge supporter of the Kolisi Foundation and in the week on Instagram IGTV. There was a clip called Men in Conversation. I was totally blown away.

#STRONGER TOGETHER Words from a captain on and off the field.

PRAYERS

Good morning everyone, please join me in praying for:

Women's Shelters and places of Safety:

Lord God, this morning we are acutely aware of the fact that we are celebrating Women's Day, which should be a time to celebrate women, specifically their contributions to society and their achievements on every level; yet we are plagued by the scourge of Gender-based Violence, specifically against women and children. We ask Lord for your intervention, we beseege You Lord to protect those places that offer a safe haven to women and children, when they have nowhere to turn. We pray for the Women's Shelters, Children's Homes and other places of safety, where those who are abused may find a refuge. Grant Lord that men specifically may realize the harm that they cause when they are either the perpetrators or just simply ignore the plight of the victims of gender-based violence. We ask Lord that you open our men's hearts and minds so that we are willing to do more in order to assist with alleviating the plight of abused women and children.

Lord, we bring our political leaders before You, open their hearts and minds so that they may become more interested in providing assistance to these Places of Safety and Women's Shelters.

We know that more needs to be done in order to ensure that enough food supplies are delivered, clothing and personal hygiene products are in short supply and even more bedding is needed, grant that our Minister of Social Development, Lindiwe Zulu, may highlight these needs and actively campaign for the provision of all required equipment and products, in order to enable all Women's Shelters and Places of Safety, to provide an improved service to those who are so desperately in need of their services. We also beseech thee Lord, that the government will provide more facilities that could be used as Places of Safety, fully equipped and ready to accept victims of abuse who so desperately need access to such facilities.

We pray that all those seeking shelter and a place of safety may feel protected and safe when they enter these places; Safe, because the necessary measures are in place to protect their identities and whereabouts from those who seek to harm them and Protected, because those in charge of the facilities, have the necessary skills and knowledge to deal with victims of abuse.

We hear so many stories of victims feeling even more abused because of the way they are treated and made to feel as if the situation they find themselves in, are due to their own doing. Lord we bring all those households before you that are always willing to assist victims of abuse, we thank You for the role they play, in providing a safe haven, grant them the necessary insight to know who to contact and where to access assistance, as and when needed. Grant that all victims of abuse, both women, men and children, may stop suffering in silence, to not allow the stigma associated with being a victim of gender-based violence, to prevent them from speaking out, in this way they will be able to access the necessary assistance and break the cycle of violence.

Lord we pray that You will provide the correct access to all those in need, especially the victims of violence and all forms of abuse, so that they may know that Your Word is true, as the Psalmist states in Psalm 12 verse 5: “Because of the oppression of the poor, because of the groaning of the needy: I will arise, says the Lord and set them in safety – from those that snarl after them.”

Amen.

We pray for funding for all NGO’s who assist the victims of Gender-based Violence:

Lord Jesus Christ, we now bring before You all those Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO’s) who so unselfishly assist the victims of Gender-Based Violence, no matter whether they have enough funding or equipment. We ask Lord that You come into the hearts and minds of all those that are able to assist, financially or otherwise, grant that they may provide the necessary requirements to these NGO’s, so that these organisations may be assisted in much needed service provision. We ask that these NGO’s may realize that the assistance provided places a responsibility upon them to use the donations wisely, so that these donations may allow them to assist more victims of abuse.

Lord God, we also pray for the assistance of government, knowing that the organisations, who are assisting the victims of violence, are in need of facilities and funds, in order for them to provide an optimal service. Grant that our political leaders may realize that simply talking about the plight of our women and children, is not nearly enough but that action is needed. Allow the political leaders to listen to the plight of these organisations, so that the right forms of assistance are provided. We so often hear that government are sending officials to investigate the needs of the organisations requesting assistance, yet we hardly ever hear what the outcomes of these investigations were or how government plans to react to the outcomes. Grant, Lord that our government may show us how serious they are about providing a means to an end for the victims of gender-based violence. Our President has declared the scourge of Gender-based Violence a pandemic and promised that government will do everything in their power to change the narrative, help our government to put their money where their “mouths are” so that these NGO’s may see the result of governments deeds, specifically funding to be utilised towards the alleviation of the plight of victims of gender-based violence.

Lord, our God, please help all of us, as ordinary citizens, wanting to see an end to gender-based violence, to do all we can to assist these NGO’s who are working so tirelessly to ensure that those who need their assistance, are able to access their services at any time of the day or night.

Thank you Lord, for all those who are already donating, for the funding that are already

provided and yet Lord, we know that more is needed, grant that government and private business may consider more funding so that more can be done by way of assistance. We pray that soon we may be able to experience, together with all victims of gender-based violence, the words of Psalm 27 verse 16 which states “But I believe that I shall surely see the goodness of the Lord: in the land of the living.” Amen.

Prayers for women in government, healthcare, justice and police, public servants and for women in academia, religious organisations, mining, and farming

- Great God we give you thanks that you call us out of silence to name hidden abuses like economic, psychological, and mental abuse of women by men and women
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- We pray for women in the teaching profession, for those who work hard to qualify to become heads of departments and principals of schools but are being side lined because they are women, mothers, or guardians
- We pray for women who lecture at universities and colleges. Although more women are progressing into academia, they are often not granted all the benefits of tenure that their male counterparts are offered. They are also overlooked in fields of study where males have dominated, like mathematics and science
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- We pray for women who have been appointed to positions of influence and leadership; although it is known that they have been placed there as tokens. We pray for their mental health and their self-confidence; give them the encouragement that they need to rise above these challenges; and the support system of friends, family, and mentors to journey with them.

We pray for women who have a distinct call to serve the Creator around religion

- For the women who are called to be priests, preachers and prophets, rabbis, and imams. As they work with the holy things of scripture and the spiritual lives of the people in their care; may they believe the sacred texts that say we are equal in the sight of God. May they be reminded of the biblical women like Deborah who served her people as a judge and Anna the prophetess who prophesied about Jesus. May they not put too much pressure on themselves when they often must make decisions at the cost of their families and the expectations of being a mother and a spouse.
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- As the industries of mining and farming are becoming more advanced and technological; we pray for the women who are trailblazers in these areas. We pray for their physical safety as they go underground into mines and deal with the elements of wild animals, drought, and floods in the farming sector. Give them a double portion of your grace to see what others do not see, so that they may outshine those who are waiting for them to fail.

Jesus you were perceived by many as an agitator because you believed in and practiced justice for all

- We pray for the woman who have positions and influence in government. We pray especially for those who may be compromised to follow the money and power rather than the call to

lead as the servants of the people in their care. We pray for the women who may be married to spouses who are also in government positions, who may not agree with their ideas and leadership style. We pray for the women who have spoken out and who continue to speak truth to power; they are often targeted as troublemakers and rabble rousers. Bless them abundantly and may your holy spirit guide them.

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- As the coronavirus continues to spread in certain parts of our country and the world; we pray for the women, mothers, wives, aunts, and sisters who are working in healthcare. We pray for those who are doctors and specialists, for those who are specialist nurses and those who are physiotherapists and radiographers. We pray also for the support staff, for the women who must clean, cook, and care for the patients and the medical staff. As they put their lives in danger to protect our people; may they be aware of your love and care for them; may they know of our gratitude for their sacrifices.

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- Jesus our protector, in a country like ours where violence, murder and rape is on the increase, we pray for the women who work in law enforcement. We pray for their safety amongst their male colleagues who may feel that they do not belong in that space; we pray for their safety as they face the danger and violence of perpetrators who want to steal and kill. Encircle these women who must physically fight criminals and then also fight against discrimination in the workplace. We also pray for the women who are judges and magistrates. So many of them are targeted by disgruntled family members and gang members who are dissatisfied with their judgements. We pray for the families of these woman who also face danger as criminals retaliate against the rule of law.

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- As we conclude the prayers we pray that you will open the hearts and minds of men that they may know and believe that women are not here to undermine them; that you created men and women equally and no one of us should be dominant over the other. We pray these prayers and the silent prayers of our hearts in the name of Jesus who is our friend and saviour. Amen

Concluding song: Broken Vessels