

# Short and Sweet: Come and Rest by Mary Kane



Refreshment and nourishment  
for your soul!

*"Then Jesus said, "Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest."*

If you are tired and weary, Jesus is calling you to *come*. In the Greek, *come* is an interjection, which means we must take immediate action. It is not God's will for us to live in chaos and turmoil. He is the God of Peace. Our health and our relationship with God will suffer if we are torn apart by stress.

*Weary* refers to those who are exhausted from physical labor or grief. *Heavy burdens*, (in Greek: *phortizo*) means *a load, a load with a consciousness of sin*.

Carrying our sin is a heavy load ... one which we cannot carry. Knowing our weakness, Jesus calls us to come to Him, permanently lay down our sin at the foot of the cross, and rest in Him.

Our daily responsibilities can become a burden if we do not take time each day in God's Presence to regain strength and

courage to carry on. I notice my responsibilities become burdens when I start living in the future; trying to figure out how I will manage this present situation for the next 2 weeks, 6 months, or 10 years. The questions roll through my mind; How can I do this another day? Where will the money come from for tomorrow? Living in the future drains my energy and causes me to squander God's provision for the present day.

If you are feeling overwhelmed, take time to rest in God's presence. Open His word and find healing for your soul. Ask Him to provide for you. Thank Him for how He is helping you. Rest in Him.

**Action Step:**

1. Get a note card and list the situation that is causing you stress.
2. Look up a scripture that applies to your situation and write it down on the card.
3. Pray the scripture out loud into your situation throughout the day.
4. Thank God for how He is already working (even if you can't see it yet).

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## **How To Measure Up to God's Standard, Part 2**

***"Therefore, this is what the Sovereign LORD says:  
'Look! I am placing a foundation stone in  
Jerusalem, a firm and tested stone. It is a***

***precious cornerstone that is safe to build on. Whoever believes need never be shaken. I will test you with the measuring line of justice and the plumb line of righteousness.” (Isaiah 28:16-17a NLT)***

In Part 1 of this post, we left Israel in limbo waiting through 400 years of silence from God. I can't imagine living my whole life without any sign or word from God. Finally, God breaks His silence, and He does it through a series of spectacular angelic visitations.

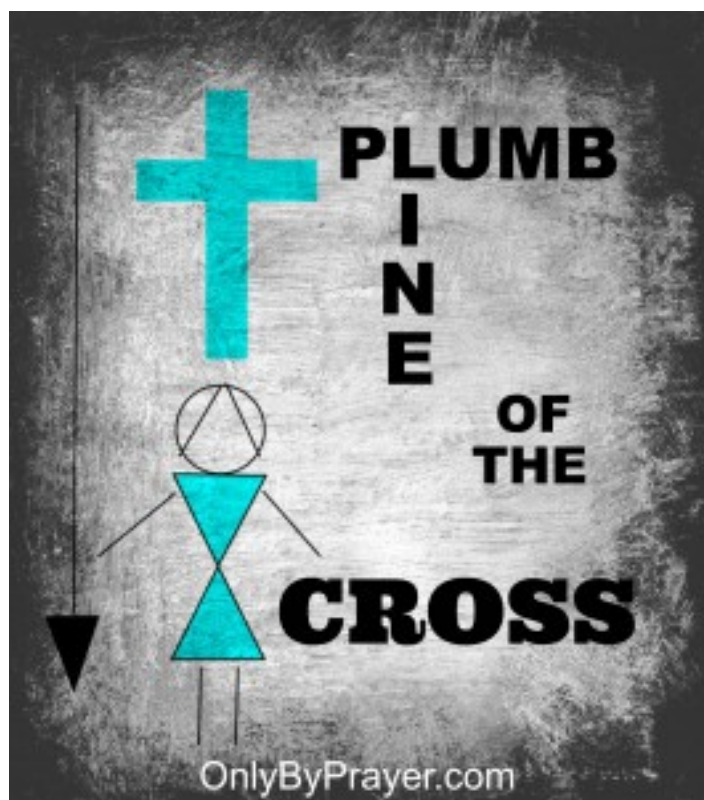
- The angel Gabriel appears to Zacharias the priest when Zacharias is burning incense in the temple of the Lord. Gabriel explains that Zacharias and Elizabeth (who are elderly and childless) will be blessed with a baby who will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God. ( Luke 1:5-25)
- Appearing with even more astounding news, Gabriel also visits a virgin Mary to tell her that she is blessed among women because she has found favor with God and will bear the Son of the Highest. (Luke 1: 26-38)
- An angel of the Lord appears to Mary's fiancé, Joseph, in a dream and tells him to not be afraid to take Mary as his wife, because the child she carries is conceived by the Holy Spirit. (Matthew 1:18-25)
- An angel of the Lord appears to shepherds in a field to tell them of the Savior's birth, and then a whole host of angels lights up the sky before them rejoicing. (Luke 2:8-20)
- Three wise men from the East are divinely warned in a dream not to return to Herod after they have seen the baby Jesus. (Matthew 2:12)

### **Exit Law Enter the Grace of the Cross**

To our eternal benefit, God sends a heavenly baby to earth and in that action He does away with the law as a means of

forgiving sin. No one had been able to keep the law until, that is, Jesus came to earth and lived a sinless life. Jesus did what no one before Him was able to do and no one after Him will ever be able to do. God put the penalty of the world's sin on Jesus. His death on the cross included payment for my sin and your sin. God then forever broke the power of sin and death with Jesus's spectacular Resurrection three days after His death.

**We now have a new plumb line: the cross.**



When we confess our sins and accept Jesus' payment for them on the cross, we are forever in true with God because of the plumb line of the cross! And each day, we can align ourselves with Jesus and the Holy Spirit to make sure we are continually transformed into the image of Christ (2 Corinthians 3:18).

**God has always provided a plumb line for us. For the rest of history, that plumb line is Jesus and the cross.**

No matter how crooked your life may look right now, the plumb line of the cross can straighten you out with God. You can start your journey with God by praying this simple prayer:

*Dear God,*

*I admit that I am a sinner. I ask that you forgive me for my sins. I realize on my own I can do nothing to make up for them. I accept Jesus' death on the cross as payment for my sins, and I ask Him to take charge of my life. Amen.*

If you just prayed that prayer and you are able to do so, please leave us a message below in the comments. God bless you.

Pray on!

*Jane*

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## **How To Measure Up to God's Standard, part 1**

*Then he showed me another vision. I saw the Lord standing beside a wall that had been built using a plumb line. He was using a plumb line to see if it was still straight. And the*

**Lord said to me, "Amos, what do you see?"**



**I answered, "A plumb line."**

**And the Lord replied, "I will test my people with this plumb line. I will no longer ignore all their sins. The pagan shrines of your ancestors[a] will be ruined, and the temples of Israel will be destroyed; I will bring the dynasty of King Jeroboam to a sudden end."**

**Amos 7:7-9**

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(Just in case you've never used a plumb line, let me explain how it works. Basically a plumb line is a long string with a weight at the end. When you want to establish what is perfectly true or vertical, you suspend the string from the top of a structure and then let it unfurl itself so that the weight dangles straight down without touching the wall or object you're trying to align. When it stops moving the vertical line or true has been established. I used one years ago when I was wallpapering my kitchen.)

I am so taken with these scriptures today. I can just picture

God

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a plumb line from his hand and then turning his gaze upon His children Israel to see how they line up. Now that makes me nervous. Why? Because I know I could very well be next on the test list!

## **Stickler for Perfection**

Well, we can clearly see that God who created our world and everything in it is a stickler for perfection. We need only consider the beauty of creation in Genesis 1 to see that. Unfortunately, the perfect world God created didn't last too long. Sin marred the garden and all of creation including people, and we haven't been the same since. It bothered God that His world and His people were out of true.

At the stage of history that Amos finds himself in, the Israelites were a crooked mess. They had set up pagan shrines and were worshiping false gods, among many other things. We may wonder if they were helpless to do anything about it. After all, the perfect world God made was gone.

**The simple answer is "No."**

God had given the Israelites a **plumb line to align themselves with**, and that plumb line was the law – the rules, regulations, commandments, worship, and sacrifices that God had taught them. This was the way for them to atone for their sins so that they could continue to stay in relationship with Him. We can see that throughout the Old Testament, the Israelites spent a good amount of time in and out of true and suffering the consequences for it: wandering in the desert for 40 years, enduring the rule of evil kings, and being defeated and taken as captives to Babylon.

Throughout these many years, God sent prophets calling the Israelites to return to the Lord, to get back in true. When they obeyed the law, God would bless them. When they ignored the call to repentance, He would allow bad things like enemy

attacks to draw them back to Him, to straighten them out. Sometimes they did. Many times they didn't. Can't you just see Israel swinging back and forth like a pendulum on a clock? Something had to give.

Finally, God is silent for 400 years. I can't imagine going 400 years without hearing from God, but that's what happened. **The Israelites had to wait that long for the next plumb line to appear.**

We'll talk about that in How To Measure Up to God's Standard, Part 2.

In the meantime, share your thoughts in the comments below about why the plumb line of the law didn't work so well for the Israelites.

Pray on!

A stylized, cursive signature in a light blue color that reads "Jane".

photo credit: Wayne Hatcher via photopin cc

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## Five Weeks in Africa

*I was so touched by the insights in this blog from Kelsey Williams that I had to share her post. Although only 20, Kelsey has insight and maturity that is rare for her years. So many stories she relays challenge me to go deeper in my faith. She has allowed me to share this post from her recent mission trip to Africa.*



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By Kelsey Williams

**The three weeks spent living at Our Own Home In Jinja, Uganda, has come with a lot of beautiful opportunities that have birthed a deep weightiness in my heart.**

The raw realities of life have stripped away the blinders from my eyes to things I've never before seen. Every day promises a new story of boundless tragedy and penetrating pain that pierces me to the core. The resounding question that leaks from my lips heavenward, "Abba, how is it that sincerely abundant life is found in a place where death prominently persists?"

I have seen more effects of death in three weeks than I've seen in my life of twenty years. Even still, I've seen a people full of life and joy, a people who hold nothing back but give freely.

### **Sixteen-Year Old Girl**

A sixteen-year-old girl who lives at the home vomited at school yesterday. She also had a fever; both are classic signs of malaria. She was taken to a nearby clinic and sent home on a boda, a motorcycle taxi, with an IV in her arm. She had no paperwork or knowledge of the sickness she had nor what medication she had been given. To add to the confusion, she was suddenly losing her vision and hearing. This sent nurse Tina out at 7 p.m. to find the clinic to uncover the record. It turned out to be malaria and she had been started on a medication through an IV (a very aggressive treatment especially for her case). The particular drug has very intense

side effects and explained the loss of vision and hearing. Tina got the situation under control but the reality of fact that these things can be done without anyone being notified is alarming in my American mind.

### **Neema, a Mighty Prayer Warrior**

There is a twenty-five year old woman, Neema that I have been rooming with for the past three weeks. She told me of her sister who passed away less than a year ago. She was nineteen years old when she was bit by a cat and infected with rabies. Neema told me her sister's last words, "Do not cry or be sad for me, I am going Home."

Neema is an incredible woman of God. Every night I have heard her get out of bed at three and she wouldn't return for an hour. I asked her about it one day and she told me she arose to pray. I asked if she set an alarm and she smiled and said, "No. Somethings are just meant to be by God." Her faithful devotion took the air from my lungs.

### **Milton, the Giver**

When I was in Nebbi, Ben, my beloved friend, gave a young man, Milton, about thirteen years old, a bag of seeds for eating. He thanked Ben and then dug out a handful of seeds and places them in the palm of eagerly waiting children around. He dug out another handful, one after another, until he reached the end of the bag. The final handful was placed into the last set of anxiously cupped fingers. Milton took not a single seed for himself, but gave it all away. I looked at Ben in bewilderment, and he pulled another bag of seeds from his backpack. Milton was able to enjoy them this time but he had held nothing back for himself, not being sure that there would be some for him.

I later learned that Milton was not one of the kids living at Acres of Hope (where they get three meals a day). Milton lives in the village and is probably fortunate to have one meal a

day.

Milton was willing to give every last seed away to kids who would eat three meals that day while he suffered from hunger pangs. There was no declaration of his entitlement to the bag of seeds since it was given to him; there was no argument as to who deserved the food.

I could go on and on with stories of both death and life. My heart is wrecked. **I cling to Abba's arm because there are great heights and depths that I cannot understand but I know He can.** He is sovereign through it all and His love is a well that won't run dry – and I've seen dry wells.

### **Sole Hope Ministry**

I had the opportunity to visit Sole Hope Ministry today. Sole Hope is a God centered ministry that brings relief to people, mainly children, infected with jiggers. Jiggers are tiny bugs (considered a flea) that burrow mostly into human feet – in severe cases they can be found all over the legs and body. Jiggers dwell in and eat the flesh, leaving oozy wounds on the host.

Many people in the villages have never been taught good hygiene, something most of us would consider common sense, but how can you know if you've never learned? They don't have much access to running water and even less access to soap. They also do not have facilities to excrete bodily waste so people are walking barefoot through feces, both human and animal, a good place for jiggers to breed.

Sole Hope is focused on reducing the bugs living in human flesh. On the compound, they have dorms where they bring twelve children to live for a couple weeks. During this time, the children have the jiggers cut out, a painful process that can last multiple hours for four days in a row. They are taught good hygiene, given shoes made at Sole Hope, and a basin and soap for washing in.

Sole Hope also has clinic days where they spend a few hours in the village washing feet, removing jiggers, and passing out shoes. I tried to go to two of these days but both times there had been too much rain and the village was a mud hole.

On the compound though, we got to see the shoemakers. Shoes are made from old tires, fabric, and milk cartons. I was amazed at the quality of the shoes and very encouraged by the ministry and people running it.

The shoemakers.



The seamstress who sews the upper part of the shoe.



The final product.



**In spite of the hardships I have witnessed, I am overwhelmed by the beauty**

## of what God is doing here in Uganda and all over the world.

Abba is actively loving His people back to Himself and I am so thankful to be apart of what He's up to because I know it is good.

I am unlikely to have any Internet in Fort Portal so just be praying through that time with me for open ears and open hearts, both for the Americans and Ugandans. Hoping to get another email or two out when I return to Jinja but, if not, I'll be sure to send something out upon my return.

Much love,  
Kelsey

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*Kelsey has given us so much to think about. One of the stories that really affected me is Neema's story. Just a year ago she lost her sister to rabies – something that is treatable if medicine is available. I was astounded at her 3 a.m. prayer meetings with God every night. What a powerful prayer warrior she is!*

*What has touched you from Kelsey's words? Please share below.*



*Today's guest post was written by Kelsey Williams, a college student studying nursing. She says, "The Lord has laid it on my heart to bring nursing skills into international missions and words cannot describe how passionate I have become about this calling on my life. In the mean time, I enjoy getting to know new people and letting them know how dearly they are loved by their Father in heaven. I also enjoy talking to people about my experiences in Africa and recruiting them to come with me."*

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## The Sacred Everyday #4: Words of Hope in the Storm



Over the weekend, **violent storms** pummeled part of the **Midwest**, including my community. Although the morning started out sunshiny and beautiful, by the time the afternoon rolled around, I definitely had my eye to the sky as angry, black clouds played hide and seek with the sunshine and warning sirens echoed through our neighborhood.

The worst of the storms passed slightly to our north, but some friends of my son, Jesse, weren't so lucky. Trinity's family home was hit and partially destroyed by a **tornado**. The storm took out two rooms of their home and a salon that was also on their property that they used for a home business.

Jesse, Cameron, Trinity, and Heather headed north to see if they could help Trinity's family, bringing along a pack of water bottles. The area was hit hard, and the four of them ended up joining a crowd of people helping a neighbor whose

barn was destroyed. They ordered pizzas for the family and worked in the dark trying to bring some order to the chaos.

**Even though Trinity's family was hurting, they reached out to help others, becoming the hands and feet of Jesus. Bringing hope and healing into despair and destruction.**

The message carved in the mud on Trinity's house is a testament of faith, words of hope in the midst of a storm where The Sacred is intersecting the not so Everyday.





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# Freely Give by Kelsey Williams



I recently spent two weeks in Uganda, Africa on a mission trip. Being my third trip to Africa, I have seen more poverty than I imagined existed in this century. I have watched women bake rolls in an underground oven lined with handmade bricks. I have also had the humbling privilege of helping place brand new Bibles in the hands of nearly 200 Africans. Before we gifted the Bibles during my latest trip, my team leader asked if any of them already had

a Bible of their own and, out of forty kids, only two raised their hand. When they bowed to thank us, their knees nearly touched the ground.

## **Humbled. Privileged. Blessed.**

These words have shaped my life since my first trip to Africa. My heart aches and my eyes burn with tears even as I write this. Even so, pity is not in their vocabulary. They are a strong, beautiful people who trust the Lord to provide for their needs even in the midst of their trials and hardships, like maybe getting one meal a day. They believe fully in God's faithfulness even as they watch their parents, siblings, and friends die of AIDS and other diseases. God has shown me many new facets of His love through these orphans. They have shown me how to love freely and unconditionally under the conditions of losing loved ones and suffering from many broken hearts. These children hold nothing back from each other. They share

every material possession that they have to the point that you truly do not know to whom it belongs. They surround each other in such a way that you would think they are *all* brothers and sisters.

## Loving Hearts

Something the Lord revealed to me through their love for each other is how much more closed off I become to people with each scar a person leaves on my heart. I quit giving freely because I want to protect myself. These orphans *expect* to lose the people they love but I have never seen it hinder the way they surround each other and continue to give freely from their heart in spite of the hurt to come. The Lord has been whispering to my soul, "I am your strength and defense (Psalm 118:14). You have nothing to fear (John 14:27) for fear cannot coexist with love (1John 4:18). Now give My love freely (Matt. 10:18)." This calls for a complete shift in my own actions as Jesus said His disciples would be known by *love*. And Jesus' example of love was not cheap or convenient; it was costly and sacrificial.



During my time in Uganda this past August, the Lord showed me how He is a Father to the fatherless and His heart is for such as these. Satan, from the very beginning, has been trying to destroy God's family, and he's trying especially hard with the AIDs pandemic in Africa. Praise God that the story doesn't end there, though, and we have hope for us and hope to offer the orphans. God has defeated Satan and is gathering His family

together as a mother hen gathers her chicks. John 14:18 says, "I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you."

## God's Heartbeat

There is so much that God revealed to me during those weeks about myself, about people, and about my passion for Africa but I consider the most precious what He revealed about Himself. The first morning in Uganda, He gave me an image of me sitting in His lap with my head against His chest, listening to His heartbeat. Generally we, as people, don't lay our heads on just any random chest but only on the chest of someone we love and feel deeply connected to and intimate with. I knew He was telling me that, unless I was that close to Him, I would never hear His heartbeat. It is not until we're able to hear His heartbeat that we'll know what it beats FOR. Since then, I've also realized He's trying to give me a heart transplant. It is an incredibly painful process that requires sacrifice and denial of self but a beautiful, genuine love is the outcome that can only take root in the fertile soil of God's heart in me. This is only the beginning of a



lifelong process, but I will consider the goal attained if He never stops breaking me apart and transforming me to be more like Him in all things. For it is in the places I feel the most broken apart that I feel the most alive in Him.

## Rivers of Life

Our heavenly Father yearns for us to curl up in His lap and listen to His heartbeat. He has made us to be bearers of His love and Jeremiah 31:3 says He has drawn us with love, and He wants to continue to bring us to Him through each other. There

is a dried up riverbed inside of many of us because we have built a dam, hindering the water flow. At our request, the Lord is prepared to demolish the dam and allow His waters of love to gush forth, up and out of us. He then nourishes our heart with His love; it flows freely into us and freely out as we begin to feel His heart beat. We have the humbling privilege and blessing of *knowing* what His heart beats for; we need only to start asking and listening.

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