

# **(South Africa) Nailed for Us, Raised in Victory, Go! \_Wits UBF South Africa**

## **(By Lesedi Masisi)**

Chapter: Wits UBF, South Africa, Johannesburg

Date: April 11-13, 2025

Location: Stoney Ridge Scripture Union Camp Site, Hekpoort, Gauteng Province

Total Participants: 51, including 7 children, 24 students, 6 graduates, 4 NUL UBF visitors (2 students, 2 shepherds), 3 helpers and 7 shepherds

This was our first off-campus conference at a campsite venue in the past three years, simply because it had not been financially viable. However, we thank God that the ministry funds were able to accumulate enough to make this possible. Senior brothers and sisters served as group Bible study leaders, with about six Bible study groups in total. The theme of the conference was “Nailed For Us, Raised in Victory, Go!” based on Matthew 27:32–28:20. We had four conference messages: the opening message was delivered by Shepherd Lesedi; Message I by Brother Ivan; Message II by Shepherd Tsibela; and the closing message by Shepherd Desmond. Our prayer was for a renewed faith in what Jesus accomplished for us on the cross, faith that does not remain idle, but moves us to go forth in obedience. Many attendees participated actively in the conference, from designing the banner to serving as presiders, prayer servants, and members of the worship team, students were deeply involved throughout.

On the 11th of April, the main program was centered on an opening message and ended with worship and prayer. On the 12th, we had two bible studies, Message I and II. The Bible studies were based on Message I and Message II. The studies were based on Matt 27:32-56 and Matt 27:57-28:20. Study two covered both Message II and the closing Message. The lord also answered our prayers for a kids' program that was led by Shepherd Khomo. Only two kids could join the kids program, the rest were too young. Before Message II was delivered we had a shepherd appointment ceremony, b. Ivan was appointed as a campus shepherd where he also shared his testimony on his journey with the lord leading to this conviction and decision of faith. It was so wonderful and graceful, that his family came over, step mother, mother, father and two of his siblings. After dinner, we then wrote bible testimonies and closed off the

day with a live drama play. On Sunday, the 13th, we opened the day with testimony sharing per fellowship.

The opening message was based on Jer 17:7, “But blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in him.” One prayer here was to set the tone of the conference, that Jesus was nailed to the cross, died for us and was raised in victory. What remained for us to do is to simply trust Him and place our confidence in Him. This is a blessed life where we never have to worry but will live fruitful lives for God’s glory, if we could but trust and place our confidence in Jesus. I could resonate with this passage because my family and I are confronted with a big decision to make, from two incomes to a single income. My wife is convinced all will be well, that the lord will provide. However, I am struggling to trust and accept because we still have big debts. Ultimately, it seems we are led towards a single income. And instead of drawing in stress and anxiety, I am comforted by verse 7, blessings to my family is based on trusting in Jesus and placing my confidence in him. So, when I delivered this message at the conference, I was also delivering it to myself.

Message I was based on Matthew 27:46, “About three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, “Eli, Eli, lemasabachthani?” (which means “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”) brother Ivan emphasized that, though Jesus had experienced emotional and physical pain he still remained silent, what made Jesus cry out was separation from God, when the holy transaction took place, our sin fully imparted on Jesus. B. Ivan left us with the assurance that, through the cross, Jesus got separated from God so that we will not, but rather have personal and lasting relationship with God. And that this was all God’s will and Love.

Message II was based on Matthew 28:6, “He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay.” Through Shepherd Tsibela’s message we could learn that, Jesus’ death appeared to be a tragic defeat, a moment of shame and sorrow. But in reality, it was the greatest victory ever won. His sacrifice on the cross was not the end, it was the beginning of a new and glorious hope. That Jesus resurrection is proof that He is the living hope for all who believe, signifying victory over sin and death.

After Saturday dinner, we wrote our testimonies and shared them on Sunday morning by our respective fellowships. It was clear that God in the hearts of the attendants for the testimonies

were sincere and graceful. It was also observed that due to the conference being off campus, students could encourage one another while in the conference venue to meditate more and write deep testimony.

Many students shared that though have identified as Christians before, they did not fully understand the cost that Jesus had to go through to give us the privilege to be called Christian. They shared how they were convicted to change their view of Christianity, to live with reverence, Thanksgiving and to take a life of sin very seriously. They were also moved by the faith of women who went to Jesus tomb, and they were encouraged to follow their example to go to the tomb to anoint Jesus' body even though it was impossible for them to enter the tomb which was secure with a large stone and guards. Students shared various obstacles/challenges in their lives, such as studies, participating in ministry (compromising ministry), some senior members also shared their challenges with co-working with other members, some shared relationship challenges with their family and were encouraged to tackle them with the faith of the woman. They were encouraged by the power of the blood of Jesus.

One brother shared how he struggles with feelings of not been loved by those around him. Worse part he realized that because of a tragedy in his life, it made him doubt God's love, even have a form of hatred for God. However, through the word of God, he could realize that, it is not man's love that he needs, rather God's love. He could realize that the best thing he could do for himself is to trust God. One sister shared that last year she lost her father. That made her feel so forsaken especially by God. She also felt betrayed by her friends. However, the risen Jesus signifies hope in her heart. She will struggle to continually hold to word of God for continued hope and direction in life. Another sister realized that she has not been taking sin seriously in her life. Through the message she learned that Jesus did not die for a part time relationship. She finds herself more worried about, career, relationships and how she could go about life apart from God. However, through the message she is realizing that, worst thing is not losing things but being separated from God. Through God's word she has developed new desire, to hate sin not because of fear of punishment, but because she wants to love the one who died for her.

Now that we were moved by Jesus, God's graceful work, that Jesus was Nailed for us and

Raised in Victory, what was next? How could we respond? After conference we were returning to our busy schedules and busy lives. Shepherd Desmond closing message was based on Matthew 28:19a, “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations.” In his message we could learn that, because of hope planted in our hearts, we could now get going and live for God. Though that means it is work and will not be easy. We will face all kinds of challenges and trials, as we go and live as Jesus followers in our families, work and secular life. However, shepherd Desmond shared how it was comforting to receive Jesus word, “I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” That this showed that Jesus knew our every day life challenges however still, in spite of our troubles, Jesus will help us succeed in fulfilling His command to make disciples of all nations. He was thankful that through what Jesus did on the cross, his family has clear purpose and meaning in this life. Shepherd Desmond prayer was for his family may continually seek wisdom and help from Jesus, to manage their household schedule and trust Jesus for provision, so they can effectively be used to serve campus students and be good support for God’s co-workers.

We really thank God for His son Jesus Christ. He was nailed for us, and rose in victory. God turned useless and sinful people like us to be children of God, to be disciples of Jesus. What an honor and privilege, moreover through Jesus, we have been given new life direction, which brings meaning and purpose in our lives. I thank and praise God who still loves his precious people at the Wits UBF ministry. It was a beautiful thing to see, when God’s word works in hearts of people. One word, Nailed for us, Raised in Victory, Go!



