

'Parables' of Today

In the Spanish language, the New Testament is often named “*Dios habla al hombre*” - God speaks to man”. What a lovely title! What a marvellous privilege to be spoken to by the Living God – words of comfort, words of love, words of wisdom, discipline, direction and so on. God's pouring out of His heart to us is infinite. One thing I have learned through my experiences of God is that He wants to be involved in *every* detail of our lives and it is a real treat if you come to recognise when it is God speaking to you! Does God speak to us with words that we can actually hear or do we 'feel' the words in our head? Or maybe we see words on a page somewhere, or a signpost or something like that? Or does God perhaps use pictures ...?

THE GOD OF ENCOURAGEMENT

I am standing ankle deep in the shallows of a wide sandy beach. It is like one I remember from my childhood where you could walk a long way out before the water got any deeper. I used to love those beaches, I felt so free and brave wading forward, so sure of my safety. As I look way out across the water I see Jesus standing, large and welcoming in the distance. He is beckoning to me and encouraging me to move out towards Him. I long to go and meet Him there but feel the sadness in my heart at not being able to. Despite the vast space between us He easily hears my mumbled plea: “I haven't come very far, have I?” I sadly declare to Him and I hang my head as I feel shame and inadequacy engulfing me. Instantly He gives me a heartening reply, “Just turn around and look back and see how far you've already come!” I do so. It's true. Though still in the shallows, I have actually progressed quite a way and the beach looks so far from me already.

I move forward inch by inch with lightness in my spirit and joy in my heart.

How easily I become discouraged, looking down at my stumbling walk with God, focusing on all my mistakes, counting myself hopeless and thinking I will never make it.

“Why are you downcast, o my soul, why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise Him, my Saviour and my God.” (Psalm 42.5)