

The Lighthouse of Asaph

UNFORGETTABLE CHRISTIAN
REFLECTIONS

ROBERTO ORNAN ROCHE

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DEDICATION

Firstly, to God and my Savior Jesus Christ who is the main “Lighthouse”.
To my wife Marlene and my son Jorge Roberto who have "dazzled" my life.

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And to my brother Alain and my cousin Reinaldo, for their encouragement.

Thanks to all those who in one way or another one, have given importance to my humble book and what I have to express.

FOREWORD

Thanks to the Grace of God I met Roberto Ornan Roche, a young man blessed by Christ's beautiful blood, who fights in the Power of the Holy Spirit to remain victorious in this Hard fight, that all the believers who want to exalt and glorify the name of Christ face.

By means of an exchange of Christian matters, one day the result of a prodigious pen was available to me and reached my hands as evidence of a skilled and talented mind which had been provided by God.

His writings were inspiring, his thoughts were rough, grievous and truthful expression of the reality of those who fight and shed tears to give Christ the first place in their lives because they have understood that He in His Grace and Mercy shed His blood and offered His life to give to all of us eternal existence.

When reading our dear Roberto's words, there is no doubt that they are the result of a soul redeemed by Christ and even when suffering tremendous victories and defeats, he knows how to express sincerely and with transparency what our Saviour is able to make.

Today, these meditations have been of tremendous encouragement and comfort for us because we live in a convulsed world managed by the forces of the wicked ones who walk as roaring lions that look for someone to devour but that at the same time, such meditations have an intense and deep desire of making Jesus Christ be the target and the full governor of our lives.

THE LIGHTHOUSE OF ASAPH

I encourage all of you to be part of this beautiful work that I hope it will fill your everyday lives with blessings and it will be considered as inspiration to be a luminary in this world that is about to disappear.

Pastor José Mallén Malla

Pastor since 1982 in the Church Convertidos a Cristo, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic.

Author of the book "Romanos", de la serie Bosquejos Comentados para Predicadores (Editorial Portavoz).

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UNFORGETTABLE CHRISTIAN REFLECTIONS

Some years ago I wrote a series of stories. I wrote them without thinking about publishing them, much less to share this set of stories with so many people; I only experienced that with my closest friends and some relatives.

Little by little those stories were increasing, not only in number but also concerning the amount of personal feelings and creative and fancy options that were able to get out of my own heart. Then a Pastor from the Dominican Republic, who placed on me his confidence, prayers and support, encouraged me to continue writing them, with the fact that they could be good to help others.

My life was full of sadness. I could see people everywhere receiving apparently undeserved miracles, but my miracle seemed to be completely impossible, without understanding that a miracle was also happening to me. The sort of facts that I was waiting for, events of the past thought to be dead that could revive again in the present, never really happened, but outstanding things did, so I could change my life and see many other good things.

Then, one day I gathered all those stories into a book which I entitled ***"The Lighthouse of Asaf"***, because I like lighthouses a lot, and the name of Asaf due to a man of the Bible who was sad and discouraged. That biblical name had been engraved on my mind when one night one of the young people of my church came to visit me accompanied by others. He wanted to encourage me spiritually and used an illustration based on Asaf. I used to visit lighthouses of Cuba and

made reports for pleasure; and as the lighthouses are generally associated with the guide of Jesus for us, I made the decision to use that allegory.

Every year, when arriving the terrible and threatening hurricanes of the Caribbean, I lose sleep and the happiness, fearing that the strong winds could pull up the trees that my father planted almost forty years ago; some of them are already rootless, but there are still many in foot and this fact is one of the best memories that I have of him. Many times my mother and I were praying next to the door while the wind blew irresistibly outdoors. When I think of something like that, I also imagine that our faith can be considered as trees which are looked after by other people, new ones can be planted as renovated reasons and good actions and ideals to be fed, comparable with lovely kept seeds of those old demolished trees. A new way to rescue the faith from the mean of the pain that exists around us may be thought as well.

Many times my memories and thoughts transformed into dry leaves, then they were gathered as ashes, but one day, miraculously, all those ideals began to hold testimonies, varied texts and memories that could be good for others to begin again. It was not a simply personal game of learning how to use words but of reviving myself when using them.

JESUS

There is nothing sadder than to ignore the best and the most beautiful thing that exists and that will exist. For that reason, Jesus reigns in my heart and though I am unworthy, I always have an unconditional friend who forgives my iniquities.

In the saddest moments, when tears come to my eyes, He reminds me that I will never be alone and that I can hold on firmly to His shoulder. His word is an endless spring, and a parchment that never ages.

He is who laughs and cries with me; He is who rejoices at the happiest moments of my life as well as who makes my small advances in life become news where The Father is. He has a young heart and is always ready to be my shield, the face that appears not only in the crowd but also in solitary and dark places, He is who picks me up when I do not even want to get up. He is such a priceless hug that heals my heart.

Though I feel hopeless and lost, Jesus is constantly cheering me up, He remembers me every moment. For Him, we are always his greatest achievement, His main concern. Jesus is who makes us valuable and He is who draws a smile in our lips when we only feel pain. I surely know that no matter how hard my life can be, He will never turn His back or even point at me; on the other hand, I will see His open hands offering consolation and peace.

It is sad to want more than Jesus himself, His hug of unspeakable feeling and His voice full of hope, He is able to light up each heart as difficult as it may seem. It is Jesus who touches our hearts every day, and who calms our thirst.

I never bore Jesus with my sadness and my errors because He lives to cheer up my spirit, to forgive me and to tell me what I need to listen to. When He calms my thirst I feel that He also cures my wounds. His word is perfect because when He speaks to me everything makes sense.

That is the smile that I want to portrait all my life, the person that I want to feel knocking on my door. I want Him to be the visitor who is seen when descending on the way to my house. I know that once, He died for me, and eternity will live to give continuity to my life.

And there are more things to say but I just have to mention: Jesus.

THE HUG OF DAVID

Returning to my “world”, this Sunday morning, I hugged the Bible in my room; I lifted it with my hands, while I prayed and my heart groaned full of regret and desolation. I had not even touched it for an extremely significant time.

Now, the beatings of my heart and my sadness tell me that I need a hug, a prodigal son's hug, a hug of angels who take care of their children. Maybe the redeeming hug of the Lord for David, who after collapsing in pain due to the consequences of his sin, humbled and cried until the unspeakable thing.

I want that comfortable hug that only God can give me. I need the restful waters and the green grass that my Pastor preaches. My upset and confused soul needs the end of my pain for years and the light that is missing from my life, it is not that of a home, not even that of the Sun, it is the transparent and calm peace of the Lord.

David is returning to the Lord, he is remembering Goliath's times, his victories and his great blessings of the past. However, this time he prays from the bottom of his heart, for the mercy of that God who made him King, and who blessed him when he was a simple and insignificant shepherd.

I discover how important humility is in the things that come from the Lord when a longsuffering prisoner, who is Christian, fills me up with hopes in his letters but hundreds of people surrounding me are not neither able nor want to do such things.

The Lord is good. He remembers a sort of David full of errors and pain. Although the consequences of the sin are only a shade on his forehead, the Lord raises him high again and heals his heart.

God, remember when we defeated Goliath, when we pastured sheep or we threw, in vain, the nets, and You chose us. Do not remember neither our iniquities nor our transgressions, throw them away at the bottom of the sea. Do not allow us to become drowned in water when we walk towards You, and keep us away from the perverse road so that we deny You nevermore.

If we are full of rebellions, as your people are in the desert, mercy upon us so as to accept our grievous errors and confess our sins; we need to learn the potter's precept because it is only Your hands which can amend and state our fate.

It does not matter that we feel Peter's crying or Pablo's sorrow and grief, give us the blessing that You sowed for ever in their hearts; give us the hug that You gave to David when he humbled himself before You, and once our hearts have been healed, we could be able to give them to others as well. Give us the miracle of being touched by Your hand again.

*O LORD, you have searched me
and you know me.
You know when I sit and when I rise;
you perceive my thoughts from afar.
You discern my going out and my lying down;
you are familiar with all my ways.
Before a word is on my tongue
you know it completely, O LORD.
You hem me in—behind and before;
you have laid your hand upon me.
Such knowledge is too wonderful for me,
too lofty for me to attain.*
Psalm 139

DINNING WITH THE LORD

I have wandered over the streets at nights looking for somebody to talk to. Some nights have been dark and a drizzle has made my clothes humid. Sometimes, the Christians who have always encouraged and advised me have already gone to bed; their houses are dark and silent; then, without bothering them and being a little sad, I have followed my way and I have headed to mine, then, I have attempted, by means of the prayer, to have an encounter with The Lord.

I imagine that it is a night of surprises; I am having dinner with The Lord. There are neither inhibitions nor protocols; The Lord is in front of me, and despite I feel His presence and Himself so familiar, my whole being is full of a great joy that I had not felt before. I do not even have any desire to complain about something, I simply feel His presence in my life, and it is the greatest and only miracle that I need in that moment.

A happy day is not common; it is as a clearing in the sky amid a storm, it is as an oasis in a desert. The Bible does not make a lot of honor to the word *happiness*, even to the word *happy*. It is easy to notice that as incredible as it might seem, there are more important and durable things that have to do with the joy and the experiences of obedience and worship to the Lord.

I would like my happy day full of human events. I would like to go through all the stages of life which may show me that I am alive, that I have accomplished all my goals, and that everything goes well in a general sense. But due to all my experiences, I have realized that God has a better concept and plans about my

happiness which are demonstrated in expressions of His love, and they have another meaning and influence in my own heart. Although those human experiences are still important for me and I wait for them with faith, I keep on searching happiness in other things, close to my brethren, trying to discover what implies being a servant of The Lord.

I also try not to focus only on myself. I try to discover what would give joy to others; I also try to offer something that sometimes has no meaning to me but maybe it will fill someone else's heart with joy because a currency reaches a higher value in a hand of someone who needs it or in a grateful heart although this currency has no real value for most of the people.

Every day of our Christian life is a happy day, it does not matter if we feel sad and surrounded by tests and adverse circumstances. We are quiet only because God is in us, and we have the promise of eternal life in our heart, which yearns all the benefits of the faith. Then, we are willing to give a word of encouragement to somebody, we pray for our brother, although we are undergoing tests and worse necessities. We assist the brethren who seem cold and down because they will lift us in the future.

It was one of those dark nights in which I needed to speak about my problems with any brother, and when I was heading home feeling all frustrated, I found a missionary friend in somebody's front porch. It was summer, and a seasonal rain was falling; there was no electricity and he patiently expected a transport to return home in another town.

It was an immense blessing to stop and talk to him about my tests, to share our thoughts, our experiences of a Christian life and the things that please God to see in His sons and daughters. I felt as if I were having dinner with The Lord that night but it was much more beautiful and significant to imagine, to feel and to be sure that The Lord prepared everything for me. That was merely a happy day in my life, and I was no longer sad.

Jesus replied: "A certain man was preparing a great banquet and invited many guests. At the time of the banquet he sent his servant to tell those who had been invited, 'Come, for everything is now ready.'

"But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said, 'I have just bought a field, and I must go and see it. Please excuse me.'

"Another said, 'I have just bought five yoke of oxen, and I'm on my way to try them out. Please excuse me.'

"Still another said, 'I just got married, so I can't come.'

"The servant came back and reported this to his master. Then the owner of the house became angry and ordered his servant, 'Go out quickly into the streets and alleys of the town and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame.'

" 'Sir,' the servant said, 'what you ordered has been done, but there is still room.'

"Then the master told his servant, 'Go out to the roads and country lanes and make them come in, so that my house will be full. I tell you, not one of those men who were invited will get a taste of my banquet.' "

Luke 14:16-24

THE PERFECT STORY

They wanted the “perfect” story, without miracles and without churches, so that sin did not seem so bad neither the Christians so good; where the suffering one, the abandoned one and the ordinary one did not count any story. A story to give meaning to the vanity of the World and to open the doors equally to all the experiences.

They wanted clearly understood, the reason why evil covers and overcomes good so easily; the reason why the man who has abandoned his wife can hardly remember her affection, her tender cares and her love without measures; and while she is thinking that she is present in his mind, she is for him only a vagrant and uncomfortable memory that never appears in the most meritorious moments of the day.

They wanted a story full of peace and harmony; with a God who does not abide by all His promises; and with many children who claim not to believe in Him; but with capable men who are willing to substitute Him with their songs.

They intended a story of long roads without shades, all of them built by man's hands and with the blood of others, they also intended to step on the grass without noticing the dead butterflies; that the forbidden fruit would be a trophy, and the mantle of iniquity that human beings take inside would be similar to their own freedom.

They imagined a story where sinners and their blasphemies were applauded and fully accepted because there are always new rights to conceive. A story of new experiences, without prodigal children, which never forgives the past, and

follows a new road without looking backwards. A story where errors did not count and they were taken as lived experiences.

They wanted a story without tears or pain, without cancer, without thorns or angels.

They wanted a story without me, without my brethren, without regrets or redemption; besides, a story without Heaven

They wanted a “perfect” story, without Psalms, a Godless eternity, but they only had the story of The Saviour who died in the cross of the Calvary, and they did not really like that story very much.

GOD BLESS YOU ALL!

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Roberto Ornan Roche is a Christian writer from Cuba. In 1995 he won a prize for his text "Sand in my Eyes". Since 2004 his texts have appeared in national magazines of the different Christian denominations of Cuba, some cases are the titles "Jesus", "A Vessel Forever", "Sand in my Eyes" and "The Perfect Story". In the year 2009 the author intends to make his stories known internationally. That is how the English version of "The Perfect Story" is published and diffused in U.S. by Living Stones News and In Touch Maga

4 Sample Chapter:

Roberto Ornan Roche, a Christian writer from Cuba, is an internationally recognized author with stories published in English and Spanish. His book, **A Lighthouse of Asaph**, is a story collection capturing the emotions and longings of a Cuban heart. The stories were written in an attempt to reconcile the author's life of faith with a society that discourages it. Born out of fear and sadness, sadness from praying for dreams that were never realized, **A Lighthouse of Asaph** is a book to encourage you and help you find meaning in your circumstances.

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