The Parable of Barry

Ross Gillespie 26 June 2018



Recently, a team of us from Joshua Generation Church's (JoshGen) Wynberg congregation had the privilege of sending a team of five people into Zimbabwe to encourage and build up a congregation very close to our heart: JoshGen Harare. What a great time we had as they opened their hearts and lives to us, blowing us away with their sincere love, generosity and humility.

There was much that we experienced and shared together during the week in Harare, but one testimony has stood out as a reminder of how personally the Father calls us to Himself.

> The Father loves it when we make ourselves available to serve Him in the nations.

On a Saturday morning, we gathered as a team for a time of street evangelism in Chisipiti, a well-to-do suburb in which JoshGen Harare now meets. The congregation has recently relocated there in the hope of bridging the massive cultural, social and racial divides which Zimbabwe faces. In line with this vision, it was our prayer that the Father would use us to witness to unbelievers in the area and invite them to church. In the few minutes of prayer before we headed out, one of the team members felt a name drop into his spirit, which he shared with the team. The name was 'Barry'. We didn't take too much notice and then we were on our way.

As we walked, chatted to people and invited them to church, the group naturally split up into smaller groups. One group came to a stop and was chatting when one of the deacons from

JoshGen Harare felt led to ring the intercom of a nearby house (about a kilometre from the school where the church meets). Initially, there was no answer, so they rang again. Just as the team was walking away, a voice crackled over the intercom and was heard by one of the group. Martin (a deacon from JoshGen Harare) pushed my wife Leigh towards the speaker, telling her she had to talk because if he did, the owner of the house would probably think he was asking for a job and turn him away. She introduced herself and explained that there was a new church nearby which she'd like to tell them about. The owner of the house paused briefly, then opened the gate.

> That togetherness overcame fear and released courage.

He came out and chatted with the team for a few minutes. Pleasantries were exchanged, and Leigh explained why the team was in Harare. In the midst of the conversation, she recognised the brand of fishing gear he was wearing (yes, God can even use fishing gear for His glory!), which also made him relax and realise that the team was 'normal' and sincere. An invite to church the following day was well received.

As the team said goodbye, one of the Cape Town team, Shar-lee, realised no-one had asked his name. She asked, only for him to respond, 'Barry'.

Everyone was amazed. Out of all the homes in Harare, and all the possible people in the city, Jesus had led us to the home of Barry! The team was then able to share that they had prayed earlier, and God had given them the name 'Barry', and that clearly God was speaking to him so personally that He had called him by name. He looked more than surprised!

The following morning, Barry visited JoshGen Harare and enjoyed the service. The following afternoon, Leigh and I, plus fellow elders Nevil (from Harare) and Robin (from Wynberg), were warmly welcomed into their home for a time of connecting and coffee, and the story continues to unfold.

It was truly an amazing experience. Here are a few points I brought back home from the parable of Barry:

1. The Father loves it when we make ourselves available to serve Him in the nations. As I like to say, 'God is in our going.'
2. If we take time to listen, even just for a few moments, we might just hear the whisper of heaven. When that happens, anything is possible.
3. There was something special about doing this together, with the Father using multiple people and personalities to weave together a wonderful testimony for His glory.

4. That togetherness overcame fear and released courage. And that courage, even to ask a person's name, can release the Kingdom of heaven upon earth.

May you be filled with joy as you partner with the Father to disciple nations, one Barry at a time.

'Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine' (Isaiah 43:1)