

80 Year Special God's Surprises

I am one of those people who are surprised by what life throws up. I guess I've always been curious, even as a kid growing up on our family farm, even though I wasn't all that interested in farm life. I was more into reading or listening to the radio. My love for broadcasting started back then as an 8-year-old.

And today, 1st April 2022, is a special day for this radio segment "Morning Devotions", because today we here at Hope 1032 celebrate 80 years of this segment. Amazing as it sounds, this program has been going since 1942. Now, I wasn't born until 1950, so I wasn't around at the start of all this. But I did want to share some detail today and give praise to God for His surprises.

This segment wasn't always called "Morning Devotions". It originated on 4BC Brisbane on Wednesday 1st April 1942 and was known as "Morning Interlude", then later "Counsellor". We are not sure who the host was – people in the know haven't been able to find out who he/she was. But then in 1949, a young Presbyterian minister named Vernon Turner was asked to take over as the host.

It lasted 15 minutes, had 2 hymns, and a prayer. On air at 9am, Vernon's friends said, "Not too much religion or they'll switch off". But there was an audience of about 200,000 people in Brisbane who used to listen, and soon the mail came in. People liked his voice, and the friendly message of hope and love found in Jesus Christ. He wasn't preaching a sermon like they did in church. It was a friendly chat with many of his friends. In 1953 Vernon moved to Sydney and still recorded "Morning Devotions" and sent them back to 4BC.

When this radio station you're listening to now commenced in 1979, "Morning Devotions" was a daily feature at 9am. And it's still going, presented by yours truly. I was given a wonderful opportunity to be the CEO of 2CBA as it was then known – the Christian Broadcasting Association – from 1996 to early 2000. I inherited Morning Devotions from the wonderful man himself, Vernon Turner, with whom I worked for 2 years prior to his retirement.

I learned so much and was very nervous presenting my first episode in July 1996. It seems such a long time ago. Who would have thought 26 years later I would still be here for 5 minutes after the 9am news? A fantastic opportunity to meet with you each morning on Hope 1032. So today, 80 years later, a Christian radio program still is being enjoyed not only here in Sydney, but through modern media available 24/7 in various ways. The small part I have played is part of God's surprise for me.

I wonder if you are the sort of person who likes surprises. Do you enjoy surprise parties, do you like receiving surprise Christmas or birthday presents when you don't know what you're getting?

If you're the sort of person who doesn't like surprises, it's probably because you like life to be under control, well-planned, everything time-tabled to your satisfaction. And let's face it, most of us are a bit like that because we like to be in control of what's happening—if we're honest.

Every day we face the possibility of being surprised. Life is full of surprises—you never know who will surprise you or how it will happen. Everyday when you wake up you could be confronted with a life-changing day. This is the reason you need to know how to handle life's surprises. But there's another angle to this: **that God's ways are often surprises because his ways are not our ways.**

In your life, always full of the unexpected, you can bank on God to:

- move in surprising ways as He fulfills His purposes and His sovereign will
- love you unconditionally
- hear and answer prayer
- have all the resources you need to live life triumphantly, no matter what
- do all He has promised in His Word
- be all He says He is.

We need to get in step with God. Walking with God in our life's journey makes a tremendous difference in how we experience and come out of life's disappointments and wonderful surprises.

Back in 1985 Father Gerard Hughes wrote a book called *God of Surprises*, and in it he says God breaks into the human heart and soul with new understanding. He says, "God has often surprised me, but he has never disappointed me". And I agree—it's absolutely true. *God will never disappoint you.*

Psalm 57:2 says, "I cry out to God Most High, to God who will fulfill his purpose for me". The writer of Proverbs says, "We can make our plans, but the Lord determines our steps" (Proverbs 16:9). So don't be alarmed with what may happen. God's surprises can happen anytime. They don't happen every day, but when they do, you know it. I'm not talking of coincidences. It might be an answer to prayers from many years ago—but He has come to you. Ephesians 3:20 says, "...his power at work in us can do far more than we ask or imagine".

*I know who holds the future,
And I know who holds my hand;
With God things don't just happen—
Everything by Him is planned.* (Albert B. Smith)

PRAYER: Help me, dear Lord, to be open to Your surprises. May I see the small ones so I might accept them with a grateful heart. I want to be open also to the big surprises. Amen.