



TLM Daily Devotions

August 2016





*We'll walk for truth
Speak out for love
In Jesus' name we shall be strong
To lift the fallen
To save the children
To fill the nation with your song
Let the flame burn brighter
In the heart of the darkness
Turning night to glorious day
Let the song grow louder
As our love grows stronger,
Let it shine, let it shine!
(Graham Kendrick)*

Blessed reading, TLM!



The man carrying a jar of water

*'As you enter the city a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him to the house he enters'
(Luke 22.10)*

Sometimes the most mundane events can have the most profound consequences.

A man carrying a jar of water led the disciples, Peter and John, to a house in whose room the most important meal in history took place. Did this man, about whom we know nothing other than he was carrying a jar of water, realise he was being followed? Did he know the owner of the house into which the disciples went? Did he know the significance of his journey that day? Had he ever met Jesus?

As we start a new day, are we expecting it to be just another ordinary day when we go about our business unaware that, in ways we don't understand, God is planning to use our ordinary life to demonstrate His extraordinary power?

Or, if we are reading this and are reflecting on the day that has just passed, is it possible that God has used us as part of His plans for us, plans to prosper us and give us hope and a future? (Jeremiah 29:11).

Be encouraged. Even though we may not understand how or when, the most mundane activities in our day-to-day lives could have the most profound consequences for God's Kingdom.

David Parry

Former Chairman of TLM International



Majesty of God

"O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is Your name in all the earth!" (Psalm 8,1)

On March 23, 1743, when "The Messiah" was first performed in London, the king was present in the great audience. When the majesty of the Lord was proclaimed by the now famous words of the Hallelujah Chorus, "For the Lord God omnipotent reigneth", everyone was so deeply moved that they rose, as one, to their feet--including the king -- to show their respect and to worship the Sovereign of the Universe.

But today, I wonder if our view of God has suffered from our failure to capture a sense of His Majesty. The God of contemporary evangelicalism is a very personal God--someone with whom we can enjoy intimate fellowship. He is our best friend and the one to whom we can bring all of our troubles.

But in stressing our closeness to God I wonder if we have lost sight of His majesty -- the great gulf that exists between God and us because of His greatness. After all, He is not like us -- God is not limited in His wisdom, in His might, in His power, in His effectiveness. He is eternal, infinite, almighty.

Psalm 8 explores the theme of God's majestic splendour and our puny insignificance by way of comparison. And yet, at the same time, God has created us in His image and graciously crowned us with glory and majesty. He has assigned us the role of ruling over His creation. All of these thoughts should lead us, as the psalm both begins and ends (Ps. 8:1, 9), to declare in worship, *"O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is Your name in all the earth!"*

Sir Isaac Newton had an exact replica of our solar system made in miniature. At its centre was a large golden ball representing the sun. Revolving around it were small spheres representing the planets, attached at the ends of rods of varying lengths. They were all geared together by cogs and belts to make them move around the sun in harmony.

One day as Newton was studying the model, a friend who did not believe in the biblical account of creation stopped by. Marvelling at the device and watching as Newton made the heavenly bodies move in their orbits, the man exclaimed, "My, Newton, what an exquisite thing! Who made it for you?"

Without looking up, Newton replied, "Nobody." "Nobody?" his friend asked. "That's right! I said nobody! All of these balls and cogs and belts and gears just happened to come together and wonder of wonders, by chance, they began revolving in their set orbits and with perfect timing!" His unbelieving friend got the message!

May we capture a sense of the majesty of God, The Creator, and let us embrace the words of King David, *"O Lord, our Lord", how majestic is Your name in all the earth."*

Gordon Brown

Scotland - 2008-2011 Vice Chair of TLM Scotland, 2011-2015 Honorary Treasurer of TLM International



Jesus, the One who is different

See my servant, whom I uphold; my Chosen One in whom I delight. I have put my Spirit upon him; he will reveal justice to the nations of the world. He will be gentle—he will not shout nor quarrel in the streets. He will not break the bruised reed, nor quench the dimly burning flame. He will encourage the fainthearted, those tempted to despair. He will see full justice given to all who have been wronged. Isaiah 42.1-3 (Living Bible)

Isaiah spoke about Jesus, the Messiah (see Matthew 12.15-21).

Jesus, the One that God said: This is my son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased (Matthew 3.17)

Jesus the Messiah doesn't fight nor shout (Matthew 12.19)

Jesus taught the crowds and healed the sick but he didn't make speeches like politicians.

He wanted to remain discreet – he cautioned them against spreading the news about his miracles (Matthew 12.16). He didn't try to make a good impression but to build true relationships.

He said: "Come to me and I will give you rest ... for I am gentle and humble" (Matthew 11.28-30)

Let us take time to really rest in him.

Jesus the Messiah doesn't crush the weak, or quench the smallest hope (Matthew 12.20)

Jesus is close to the poorest, close to those who suffer, close to those whose hearts are breaking – he is close to you and me. He welcomes those who are despised, those who are rejected; him, who was rejected, abandoned by all.

Take courage, Jesus is the One who will restore us whatever our state of crushing.

Jesus the Messiah will bring forth justice

Jesus Prince of peace has done everything to establish a kingdom of peace.

So we can experiment peace with God our Father and with our neighbours.

Jesus will end all conflict with his final victory and his name shall be the hope of all the world. (Matthew 12.20b-21 Living Bible)

Let us proclaim his name to bring hope around us.

*We'll walk for truth - speak out for love, In Jesus' name we shall be strong
To lift the fallen - to save the children, To fill the nation with your song
Let the flame burn brighter In the heart of the darkness
Turning night to glorious day Let the song grow louder
As our love grows stronger, Let it shine, let it shine!
(Graham Kendrick)*



A Prayer Walk

I wonder what these words suggest to you.

I had a very interesting experience when I joined some folks in another town in one of their prayer walks. I knew that this church, as do many others, prayed regularly for the folks in the parish street by street. I happened to be visiting when they were about to embark on one of their prayer walks – they were not content to sit in the church hall and pray, they actually walked up and down the street pausing here and there to pray for the people in the houses around them. There was a grassy small park area in this fairly short street – it was really just a patch of grass that one of the residents kept tidy. I was told that the prayer group would meet at this grassy area. When I got there they had set up a portable Bar-B-Que and had brought some bottles of water and juice. While the Bar-B-Que was heating up, the knelt together and prayed for the people who lived on the street, thinking about each of the houses there. The group were aware that no one in that street came to church, at least to their church.

While we were praying this gentleman came from one of the houses to ask what we were doing and why we had set up the Bar-B-Que on this patch of ground (I wonder if he was the person who kept it tidy). One of the group explained who we were and why we were there and also invited him to join the Bar-B-Que. The Holy Spirit was already at work and the man said he would come back in a few minutes. He duly returned with some sausages and rolls, his wife and son and the neighbours next door. Eventually nearly everyone in the street was there, chatting and discussing – no not the British weather but why Jesus would be interested in them and what the church had to offer to them as individuals and a whole lot more.

I had returned home by the following Sunday but was told that several of the families in that street had come along to the lively morning worship service – and some months later I enquired and they are still coming.

I have regular prayer walks of my own where as I walk along the prom and praise God for the beautiful place to which He led me, I pray for different people using particular seats or dustbins as markers but I was excited and challenged by the group I was privileged to join for one evening to start to walk differently on some occasions and instead of walking the prom to get into the town, I try to walk along different streets and to pray for the people in that street.

Please let God challenge your hearts and minds about how, when, for whom and for what you pray. Please let the Holy Spirit lead and guide your praying.

Please don't be surprised by the results!!!

Read Luke 5:12-16

"Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean."... "Jesus put out His hand and touched him."

A simple prayer but a miraculous answer. Be inspired.

Loving God, you awaken our minds and our hearts. Your faithfulness is so great, deeper than the sea, higher than the sky, wider than the world. Please be with us, please be near us, within us, beside us, inspire us as we seek to draw near to You.



Solitude transforming me

Matthew 11:28-30 (The Message)

“Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you’ll recover your life. I’ll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won’t lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you’ll learn to live freely and lightly.”

I continue sharing my discoveries about solitude: spending time in quiet with our Abba Father and expecting to experience inner transformation in my soul. The invitation of Jesus has the potential to transform me:

- *“Come to me”*: When I become quiet enough to hear this invitation, I become aware how personal it is, that it speaks to a deep level of my soul, to my core being. Father God wants to connect with the real me, including my gifts and my shortcomings.
- *“Get away with me and you’ll recover your life”*: Remember that fulfilled feeling when you have a heart to heart talk with a soul mate? I’m usually so glad that I ‘sacrificed’ the time because getting away to a place of solitude relieves me from stress, big worries and feelings of being unfulfilled. I now realise that this getting away with Father God asks for my commitment to give the time, but also to open up myself to him, so my life will be “recovered”.
- *“Learn the unforced rhythms of grace”*: It seems to me that in order to recover from the hardships of life, I have to learn even more about grace. I have to keep practicing allowing God’s grace to seep into *everything*, all the troubles of my life, the big worries and the so called small issues. And slowly but surely, once more, but at a deeper level now, on this long journey of Christian walk, my view on life is transformed through the lens of grace.
- *“Keep company with me”*: What an invitation! In the quiet I can’t resist it.

Erna Möller is a social worker with TLM South Africa since 1987.



'Take Courage' (Matthew 14: 1-32)

'But Jesus immediately said to them; "take courage! It's I. Don't be afraid' (Matthew 14: 27) (NIV)

Chapter 14 of gospel of Matthew started with the story of the beheading of John the Baptist by King Herod; followed by the story of Jesus asking the disciples to feed the crowd after they pleaded with Jesus to send the crowd away because is getting late and there is no sufficient food that could go round. *'They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat'* was Jesus reply to his disciples (vs. 16). The disciples gave to Jesus what was available; Jesus blessed it and the food was sufficient to meet the need of over 5,000 people with some left over. The disciple's job was to serve the crowd and picked up the left over.

Above task must have been very overwhelming and challenging for the disciples in a day.

As the day was spent Jesus order them to ride on the boat to another side of the lake; (may be to take a rest); only for them to be confronted again with a boisterous wind that is against their journey as if that's not enough they suddenly saw someone walking on the water; they were terrified and cried out in fear. This is just too much to bear!

But what seems in the disciples eyes to be a ghost was Jesus who has come to calm their storm and encourage them.

Today we are also face with a lot of challenging issues in our personal lives and at work, like disciples of Jesus we are troubled and terrified when we look at situations that surrounds us; such as the world becoming more hostile and cruel with news of Islamic terrorist groups committing havoc and shedding blood; lack of security of lives and properties even in developed countries that once seems to be secure. We are face with economic pressures; and various uncertainty of future (example is Brexit). All around us it seems crisis of lives is buffeting us and our boat seems to be sinking or like Peter we are also sinking.

In spite of all these challenges we have a word of assurance from our Lord and saviour who said we should *'take courage and don't be afraid'*!

As we believe His words; He will bid us to come and we shall walk on the water even in the boisterous storm of life, for Jesus we take hold of our hand and lead us gently and calm the storm for us. Let us therefore worship Him who has power to calm the storm of our lives.

Truly Jesus you are the Son of God!

Bunmi Oluloto

TLM Country Leader Niger & Chad



“Could you men not keep watch with me for one hour?”

Matthew 26:36-46

This verse really moves me. I hear the pain in Jesus voice as He returns to his friends to find them sleeping. He has been in agonised prayer, He knew that He had to face it alone but he wanted the comfort of His friends supporting Him. They missed it completely. Sure they were tired, it had been a long day and they'd had a good meal and some wine so they were sleepy. However, it was the lack of empathy and their having absolutely no idea of what Jesus was going through, that gets to me. I guess we are often like this with our leaders, we expect them to look after us but have no sense that they too might need help and support.

It's a question of being in tune and sensitive. Robert Pierce who started “World Vision” and “Samaritans Purse” talked about letting his heart be broken with the things that break the heart of God. What a prayer that is. Are we willing to recognise the pain that God feels and to share it with Him? We have a wounded God, a God who cries and He asks us to share in that. Philippians 3:10 says “That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death;” I find I like the idea of the power of the resurrection but the fellowship of His sufferings is much more of a challenge.

Yet that is our calling. We need to have our eyes wide open and be in tune with God. There is so much in scripture about the things that break God's heart or make Him angry. I need to allow myself to feel the way He does about these things and get into action.

Father, forgive me when I am tired and confused and blind to the way you are feeling. Sometimes I am like the disciples asleep when I should be watching and standing beside you. Give me the courage to be more in tune with you and let my heart break with the things that break your heart. Help me not to just pray about them but also to be the answer to those prayers.

June Nash

I have worked for the Leprosy Mission for 35 years. At first I was on the mission field in Papua New Guinea and then Ethiopia. In the beginning I did leprosy control but then moved into the training of health workers. It was a privilege to serve overseas with TLM for 20 years. I returned to be part of the team in Brentford, firstly as global training adviser, then HR Director and lastly as Knowledge Management Director. I am now retired but being a part of the Leprosy Mission never really leaves you. I continue to hold the work in my heart through prayer and visits to Brentford.



God Answers Prayer

'Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up.' (Luke 18:1 NIV)

That's Luke's explanation for the parable that follows. It's about the persistent widow who keeps pleading with the judge, and she gets her way.

I can't tell you about a persistent widow, but I know a group of orphaned children who understood the importance of prayer. They were at *The Haven*, a Salvation Army home for women and children in Chennai, south India.

'If you want prayers answered,' we were told, 'ask The Haven!' We often called there on our way to the station before embarking on a journey, usually just to greet the superintendent, and for a cup of our favourite Indian tea. This time we needed to make an overnight journey to the Hebron School graduation. My wife, Margaret, was the guest speaker. But a state-wide *bandh* had been called across Tamil Nadu. It was to start at six next morning. All transport would stop. There would be little chance of reaching the school. In those days people who breached such organised stoppages risked violent opposition. 'You go, uncle,' said the girls, 'we'll pray!'

We arrived in Coimbatore at six next morning. There was still the 50 mile road journey ahead of us. We got down from the train, dressed in our (informal) Salvation Army uniforms, only to be saluted by a man in military dress. Immediately I suspected he was from the Defence Services Staff College in Wellington, not far from the Hebron School. It is one of a kind, providing, under one roof, staff training to officers of Army, Navy and Air Force, not only from India but other Commonwealth and friendly foreign countries.

'I'm here to meet you, sir,' he said, nodding his head from side to side.

'No, no,' I protested. 'We're not here for Wellington. We are Salvation Army.' I realised that he was thinking we were arrivals for the next course about to start at the staff college.

'No, no,' he replied, 'I was sent to collect you, sir. I always obey orders. You come, sir.'

And then it dawned. The Haven girls' prayer was being answered.

We were feted to a splendid Indian breakfast in a nearby marquee, and then escorted in the military bus. We arrived at Hebron in good time. The school staff were amazed. They hadn't expected us.

Not all our prayers have been answered in as dramatic fashion, but that hasn't stopped us. We need always to pray. Always means just that. TLM knows all about prayer. It creates another kind of bridge between people, and with God.

Paul du Plessis Dr After a lifetime of service with The Salvation Army, including India, South African born Dr Paul du Plessis and his wife, Margaret, have retired in the UK. Paul has had a number of honorary roles with TLM dating back to his work at TLM Field Representative for TLM for Zambia in the 1970s. He is a former vice-president of TLM.



Bearing fruits is command of Jesus

Many people at different times in their life ask question- what is the purpose of my life? We find answer to this in different passages of Bible but in *John 15 (verse 1-17)*, Jesus makes us to understand this very clearly that, Bearing fruits is one of the very purpose of our life (verse 16) besides obeying His commands of love and forgiveness.

A tree bears fruits, not for himself but for others. People enjoy the fruits and appreciate the taste & quality. How do we know that our life is bearing fruits (the good one like the fruits of spirit) or not. We will not know this ourselves but other people will experience this from our life, behavior action and day today practical life. Other people are like mirror, they will notice & know well about our life whether bearing good fruits or not?

There are conditions to bear fruit. Jesus said that we cannot bear fruit by our own strength. We need to live and remain in Jesus to bear fruit. Remaining in Jesus in one main condition and the second one is to love each other as Jesus has loved us. So the question is..... are we (our life) bearing fruits which other people are witnessing & enjoying or not? Then we have to check ourselves that are we connected to Jesus on daily basis or not and following His command of loving others.

What others (the family members, co-workers, Church members and neighbours & friends) say and feel about me and my daily life (attitude, conduct, behaviour, action). We must pay attention to that. This was a great challenge to me during my professional life while working with TLM. Should I just do my work as per the job description only or I must go little out of way to be helpful to the employees, patients and community members. It was easy for me to just follow the rules and say it is written like that, I can do only this much (and not being helpful at all). But I want to share that I found great results (satisfaction, happiness, achievements & good relationship) when I went beyond my job description to be able to help someone needy (of course not putting the institution and my job at risk). This attitude helped me bear fruits which people noticed there.

Fruits of the spirit and some instruction of sermon of the mount are the scales to check our fruit bearing life. It is said that two questions will be asked at the gate of heaven.....1. Did we enjoy JOY in this life? 2. Did we give JOY to others in this life? It is important for us as Christian that we have to prepare ourselves to answer question no. 2.

Pradeep & Sarah Failbus

Worked for 39 years and 29 years with TLM(most at Anandaban,Nepal) Now retired and settled at: Kathgodam, District Nainital Uttarakhand, India M - 8853551227



Forgiveness

It could be said that the most distinctive thing about Christianity (as opposed to other major religions) is its central belief in forgiveness. The belief that forgiveness is possible through grace. Not only that God can forgive our sins (through the atoning death of Jesus), but that we can be enabled to forgive others who sin against us... and that we should do so! We are taught to pray *“forgive us as we forgive others...”* (Matthew ch 6, verses 12, 14)

If a person has suffered ill health and struggled with disability, through no fault of his own, and instead of receiving aid from his near and dear ones he received censure, insult, hostility... it is hard for him to forgive that “sin against him”. If a person has been deprived -of on account of illness- of his civil rights, his right to live in the community, his right to choose a marriage partner, his right to seek employment..... then it is hard for him to forgive those who have hurt him. If a person has trusted a health worker with his symptoms and anxieties then been misdiagnosed or inadequately treated or been given incorrect medication and become worse... it is hard for him to forgive the one whose ignorance, carelessness or wilful neglect caused him harm.

A person who has experienced leprosy has often also endured ill treatment at the hands of relatives, neighbours, influential people in society, even health workers. These bad experiences damage his spirit. Whilst a well trained considerate health professional may be able to give good physical care for the patient's damaged body, his damaged spirit can be healed only through divine intervention. Only the grace of Christ can enable a man to forgive those who hurt him. This is the point at which a Christian organisation like TLM differs from a secular Non government organisation serving leprosy-affected people. TLM can bring leprosy affected people into contact with the gospel of Christ.

In Nepal, 40-50 years ago the earliest Christian churches had a high proportion of leprosy affected people because leprosy hospitals were amongst the few places where the gospel was preached and heard. Maybe among those admitted, their suffering sensitised some of them to their own spiritual needs.

In Japan's Oshima leprosy hospital there was a Christian poetry club: one of its members must have learnt from the Holy Spirit how to forgive, for he wrote this:

*Men hate me for the curse I bear
(I know it well).
But shall I heed them,
Since my heart can be
a holy temple
where my God can dwell?*

Dr. Cynthia Ruth Butlin, known as Ruth. British (63). My service with TLM is as follows: 1981- 1982: sponsored by TLM for 1 academic year at All Nations Christian College in Hertfordshire, UK. 6 weeks of linguistics course. 1982- 1991: Medical officer at Richardson Leprosy Hospital Miraj, in India, under Dr PD Samson. 1991- 2001: medical superintendent at Anandaban Leprosy hospital in Nepal. March - June 2001: Furlough. June 2001- 2003: Superintendent Purulia leprosy hospital and homes, West Bengal in India. 2003- 2007: Medical advisor at DBLM (hospital and field programme), Nilphamari, Bangladesh (then ended my time as expatriate staff). 2007-now Voluntary speaker for TLMEW. 2013- now, skilled volunteer, sponsored by TLMEW, mainly working for DBLM hospital and rural health programmes in Bangladesh (also some work for TLMNepal)



"Who is my neighbour?"

"..... I was a stranger and you invited me in." Matthew 25:35

My 16 year old grandson and I were in a great mood. The scenery in that part of Namibia south of "Solitaire" on the way to Sossusvlei is grandiose. Our 4x4 camper van was well equipped, we had plenty of food and we were looking forward to a memorable camping experience.

The gravel road was in good condition, we had more than adequate fuel supplies and we even had 2 spare tyres just in case ... nothing could possibly go wrong

About 80 kms from that night's destination we heard an unusual noise from the rear of the vehicle and our speed dropped perceptibly. Our investigation revealed a "blow-out" - the one back tyre was irreparably damaged.

Oh well - there was still about 1 1/2 hours before sunset and darkness ... and we had 2 spares

There was only a "small" problem, the spare in better condition was attached under the chassis and held up by a chain. Trying to work out the mechanism to release the tyre while sliding on your back on hundreds of stones of varying shape, size and sharpness proved more challenging than envisaged.

Our vehicle had come to a stop near a turn off to a safari lodge. While we were struggling to release the tyre, a local guide drove onto the main road, stopped and asked if he could help. Responding to my request on advice as to how to free the tyre, he got under the car and did the work for us, then proceeded to change the tyre and stow everything away. An exercise that entailed 20 minutes, getting all covered in dust and dirt and picking up a few cuts and scratches from the stones.

When I thanked him and offered to give him something for his trouble, he refused. I persisted saying "You altered your programme, gave time and energy, got dirty and cut to help a stranger of another race, language and culture.

His response was "You are not a stranger, your need made you my neighbour and now you are my friend." With that he shook my hand and drove off.

Read the parable of the good Samaritan.

Silvano Perotti

Secretary for Europe then Deputy International Director and Director for Support and Development TLMI

Born in Italy - retired in Switzerland.

Worked with TLMI until 1990.



All we need to do is show them Jesus!

When God appeared to Moses from within the burning bush, Moses hid his face because he was afraid to look at God (*Exodus 3:6*). And he is sent to rescue God's people from Egypt. Likewise in Isaiah 6:1-5, when Isaiah sees a vision of God seated on His throne in His holiness and glory and worshiped by seraphs, Isaiah immediately exclaims "Woe to me! I am a man of unclean lips" When they are touched with a burning coal from the altar his guilt and sin is taken away and he is sent to tell the people Gods message.

In modern evangelism there is a tendency to suppose that we must convince people of their sin in order to encourage them to repent. But Jesus seldom did this. John the Baptist called for repentance and turning from sins and there is a place for this. But...

Jesus simply showed people Himself and asked them to decide who He was and how they would respond. There is a story in Luke 5:4-11 where Jesus tells the disciples to let down their nets for a catch after a night of catching nothing. After a miraculously huge catch that filled and nearly sank two boats, Peter falls at Jesus' feet and confesses "Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!" And Jesus immediately goes on to say "Don't be afraid; from now on you will catch men".

I had an experience many years ago when God gave me a vision of Himself as a solid ingot (bar) of pure gold (3D, about the size of a brick, floating in the air in front of me). My instant response was to be convicted of and confess my sin which was clear in comparison to his purity. But it was also encouraging to know that God is the most pure, holy, good, glorious, exalted, powerful, trustworthy, loving and forgiving Being we can possibly imagine.

We do not have to show people their sins to prompt repentance. We simply have to show them God! And if we show people this holy, pure, good, loving God by the way we live our lives, we don't have to worry about convincing them of their sin. That will just happen. Then we can give them the message "Don't be afraid, from now on".

Susan Maiava

TLMNZ Board member and former TLMI Board member.



The Lord Jesus Christ, our supreme Evangelist

John's Gospel Chapter 4 is well-known to all budding evangelists! In this chapter, our Lord Jesus Christ is our supreme Evangelist in action! Brilliantly, He engages and enlivens, a lost and hurting person at the well of Sychar. To help us to remain outward focused today, let us reflect on a few of His winsome principles:

(v4) "But He needed to go through Samaria"

The evangelist has a God-given BURDEN to reach a certain person or people group. Are you burdened for someone 'around the corner, or around the world'?

(v14) "But whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst."

But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing into eternal life." The evangelist must always remember, that he has the greatest BLESSING to impart to his hearers! Are you still experiencing this blessing yourself today? If so, please pass it on.....

(v24) "God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and Truth."

The evangelist is only satisfied, when his 'new convert' is worshipping his new-found Lord in spirit and in Truth – this is the BOTTOM-LINE in all evangelism! Worshipping God in spirit and Truth alone gives one the where with all to evangelise others productively anywhere in the world.

(v34) "Jesus said to them, My food is to do the will of Him Who sent Me, and to finish His work."

"The evangelist remains BUSY 24/7 in winning souls to Christ throughout his lifetime! He is always using new and innovative ways to reach the lost in his area: Take the opportunities given, and make opportunities too, if necessary!

(v44) "For Jesus Himself testified that a prophet has no honour in his own country."

The evangelist must beware not to become BELEAGUERED in his own backyard! Remain accountable to your sending church – this is healthy; but don't get side-tracked from your primary calling!

(v54) "This again is the second sign Jesus did when He had come out of Judea into Galilee."

The evangelist's ministry should include BOTH: Salvations and practical breakthroughs! Such results follow those who reach out to others in humble dependence upon God.

Thank You Lord, for the evangelist You used, to win me to Yourself!

Please Lord, help me to win someone to You today. In Jesus' Name, Amen.



What is mankind...

For the director of music. According to gittith.^[b] A psalm of David.

¹ *LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory in the heavens.*

² *Through the praise of children and infants you have established a stronghold against your enemies, to silence the foe and the avenger.*

³ *When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place,*

⁴ *what is mankind that you are mindful of them, human beings that you care for them?^[c]*

⁵ *You have made them^[d] a little lower than the angels^[e] and crowned them^[f] with glory and honour.*

⁶ *You made them rulers over the works of your hands; you put everything under their^[g] feet:*

⁷ *all flocks and herds, and the animals of the wild,*

⁸ *the birds in the sky, and the fish in the sea, all that swim the paths of the seas.*

⁹ *LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! (Psalm 8 NIV)*

Thought for pause. The legendary Dr Paul Brand says:

"I pray that when my time comes I may not grumble that my body has worn out too soon, but hold on to gratitude that I have been so long at the helm of the most wonderful creation the world has ever known, and look forward to meeting the designer face to face."

Great words from a physician describing the awesome creation that is the human body.

Dr Paul Brand OBE

1914-2003. American. Born and raised in India, as son of missionaries. During their joint careers with his wife Margaret, international fame came to Paul for his pioneering and perfecting work in techniques of tendon transfer surgery. Margaret won high esteem from both peers and patients, specializing in eye problems of leprosy. They have been staff members at Vellore Christian Hospital, India, were among the founders of Schieffelin Leprosy Hospital and Training Centre in Karigiri, India. Paul was director and Margaret the head of the eye work at the U.S. Public Health Service's Gillis W. Long Hansen's Disease Center in Carville, Louisiana. Recipient of the Albert Lasker Award, Commander of the Order of the British Empire.



The Word of the Lord

On the Monday 15th August Geoff Warne steps down as International Director of The Leprosy Mission after ten years of dedicated service as our General Director. Throughout those years Geoff has led with a deep commitment, not only to serving people affected by leprosy, but to a deepening of our spiritual ministry.

Leadership in a Christian mission is not just about good administration, excellent financial planning or skilled staff management; it is about recognizing that first and foremost our call comes from God.

Some years ago I heard the best message on the book of Jonah I ever heard. It was given by Bishop John Reid, the then Chairman of Interserve International. At the beginning of Jonah in verses 1 & 2 it says *"The word of the Lord came to Jonah son of Amittai: Go to the great city of Nineveh and preach against it because its wickedness has come up before me"*.

True mission always begins with the words *"The word of the Lord"*. It was the call of God that came to Wellesley Bailey all those years ago as he was confronted by the suffering of people with leprosy and it has been the motivation of countless men and women ever since. Without that deep motivation we can still do good things.....but not in a way that builds the Kingdom of Heaven.

The other point I recall from that sermon was Jonah's disappointment when God preserved Nineveh after they repented. He was angry with God and vented his frustration in verse 1 of chapter 4. *"But Jonah was greatly displeased and became angry. He prayed to the Lord, is this not what I said when I was still at home? That is why I was quick to flee to Tarshish. I knew that you are a gracious and compassionate God, who relents from sending calamity"*. This verse says a lot about Jonah.....but much more about the God he served. Why was Jonah so angry with God? Bishop Reid suggested that it was because he was a prophet who predicted doom....and it just didn't happen as he thought it should. In other words, he got his identity from what he did....not from the Lord.

No matter what position of leadership we hold....no matter how elevated or menial, it must never be allowed to shape our identity. That identity as believers comes directly from our standing in Christ...not from what we do. We pray for Geoff as he moves into new areas of ministry and he goes with our prayers and thanks. We also pray for Brent as he takes up the role of International Director this month.



Proof of the Kingdom of God through healing a man with leprosy (Part 1)

Matthew 8: 1-4 and 5-17

1 When Jesus came down from the mountainside, large crowds followed him 2 A man with leprosy came and knelt before him and said, "Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean." 3 Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. "I am willing", he said. "Be clean!" Immediately he was cleansed of his leprosy. 4 Then Jesus said to him, "See that you don't tell anyone. But go, show yourself to the priest and offer the gift Moses commended, as a testimony to them."

Related passages: Lev.13 and 14; Ps.68; Isaiah 53: 1-12; Mat.20: 28; Rev. 21: 1-8

Two weeks ago I heard a sermon on a Bible passage that is well known to most of us, related to the healing of a man suffering from leprosy. A few interesting viewpoints:

1. Leprosy was not only incurable then, but also made a person religiously unclean (Lev.13: 45-59, because it was seen as punishment and judgement from God, Num.12:10,12 and Job 18:13). So a person suffering from leprosy would have to live outside the community, actually even apart from God. The person had to speak out that he was carrying the disease, so he wouldn't infect others and risk loading more guilt and judgement upon himself. He went therefore with torn clothes, bare head and a band around the upper lip, and he had to constantly call "unclean" as he saw people. Next to the physical suffering, it led to a very high psychological distress: leprosy made you an outcast, actually, a living dead man.
2. This man, however, does not remain in judgment, but he comes to Jesus. This is extraordinary because a person with leprosy was allowed not closer than two meters to others and if there was a wind, not even closer than 45 meters. Some rabbis even hid behind a wall, not out of fear of contamination, but more to show a religious disgust. They thought a person with leprosy carried a heavy punishment from God because of a particular sin. They acted as if the 'friends of Job' were not yet extinct in the time of Jesus. Jesus was not afraid of infection and this even shows something of his calling. (Math.8: 17 and Luk.19:10). The man comes to Jesus with more of a confession of faith than a question. What a powerful appearance must have radiated from Jesus as Saviour: Jesus will not send me away. He loves me and He can do anything!

Henno Couprie - Henno is Country leader of TLM Netherlands since 2004. Before he worked in Christian development work in several countries.



Proof of the Kingdom of God through healing a man with leprosy (Part 2)

Matthew 8: 1-4 and 5-17

Related passages: Lev.13 and 14; Ps.68; Isaiah 53: 1-12; Mat.20: 28; Rev. 21: 1-8

3. The man says something wonderful: "if you are willing ... ". He apparently knows about the power and authority of Jesus. He sees only one obstacle for his salvation: if Jesus would not be willing. But this is not the case: yes, He can do it, He is willing to do it and He does it (Ps.68). Jesus stretched out His hand to touch this 'untouchable'. "I am willing; be clean!" This word indicates much more than just healing. It involves a thorough cleansing, that will make you clean deep inside. So this man is not only healed, but also clean again and acceptable to meet God. It is significant that the words of Jesus also point towards His authority, (the authority on earth) to cure disease and to lift curses. Only God can heal a person with leprosy, but what a wonderful revelation: Jesus can do it also, so ... Jesus is God the Lord, who came to earth, for you and me, for each of us!
4. In his new purity the man can now and must go to show himself to the priests (Lev.13: 23). So there may be witnesses to the greatness of Jesus' power. At the same time this miraculous healing must remain a secret, precisely because Jesus wants to be known not only as a "healer", but as the Son who lives the Kingdom. There are greater gifts than only to find health! But this miracle is a clear testimony that the Kingdom has come with Jesus (Mat. 4:17). He can do much more than the priests of the Old Covenant, who could only record the severity of the disease, or whether it was cured. But the Lord Jesus can also heal and bring fullness of life! We need to go to Him!
5. Matthew explains how the miracles of Jesus in chapter 8 are all related to the prophecy of Isaiah 53: 5. It reveals the deepest layer of the Kingdom. Jesus does not only come as our Healer, but as the doctor of our souls. He wants to save our lives! That is why he has taken all our burdens, including our diseases upon Himself. The curse of our sins has been placed on Him, and thus we owe our freedom to Him. On the cross He shows how this has come about: He really has taken our illnesses, our punishment, and our curse upon Himself.

APPLICATION: This passage shows how Jesus fulfills the law and the prophets: He seeks and heals even the most terrible disease. He has taken our sins and diseases upon Himself to deliver us! He teaches us to be (and remain) disciples and to grow in faith. In his descent He also seeks us. He invites us to Himself at the table. He gives what we need: sanctifying love!

Praise Him for that!

Henno Couprie - Henno is Country leader of TLM Netherlands since 2004. Before he worked in Christian development work in several countries.



Right mind-set

Rom 12:2a do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.

She is small in stature but a great character. I met her during an assessment we did recently. She bears the evidence of having had leprosy. All her nerves were damaged and she has to live with the consequences of the disease. She cannot close her eyes due to lagophthalmos, no hands and her feet are just stumps as well. But her mind and spirit have not been crushed by the disease.

She takes care of her house, bakes her own 'injera' that look like big spongy pancakes. She washes the coffee beans, fries them and pounds them in preparation for the coffee ceremony. But that is not all. She weaves the big flat 'sefed' mat of a kind of grass to put the baked injera on as well a kind of bowl for the snack during the coffee ceremony. It is significant to do all those things without any fingers. Members of the same association who are begging scoff at her and mock her because their physical condition is much better than hers but she puts them to shame by what she does. She leads a dignified life.

I admire and respect her. I had to think about my mind-set, about renewing the mind. The mind can be a battle field. Satan knows our weaknesses and he knows how to attack us through attacking the mind.

Renewing the mind is feeding on God's word, meditating on it. Taking the truth and apply it in our lives. When I learned to do so, it was so liberating for me to know that God really loves me and cares about me. To know that nothing can separate me from His love and feel so secure in His love Rm 8: 38-39. Also at times, when fear crept in to recall bible verses and hold on to its truth as a life saver. True transformation is when we allow the Holy Spirit to work in us and show us the areas of our lives that need changing. It is an ongoing process in our lives.

Tanny Hagens

Dutch national. Working with TLM since 1983; First in Thailand, moved to Indonesia; worked in Myanmar and PNG; at the moment working in Ethiopia as Interim Country Representative of TLMI-Ethiopia.



Pieces

Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind; and, Love your neighbour as yourself. Luke 10:27

Several months ago, I came across a song from a popular American worship band. The song is called Pieces.

The song talks about how God's love is not given to us in pieces, it is not reserved, restricted or ashamed. After listening to the song on numerous occasions, feeling uplifted by hearing of this love that knows no bounds, it then struck me that this song wasn't only about how much God loves you and cares about you, this was also about how much you care about Him.

The song talks of a love which is not broken, insecure or selfish. As I listened, the message became clear to me. God gives you all of Himself and He wants all of you.

He wants you to love Him with all your heart, soul and mind just as He loves you with all of His being. He doesn't want you in pieces, He wants you to submit every part of yourself to Him.

This is a hard task for everyone, there are parts of us we feel are unworthy, we struggle against the desires of our heart which are not in line with God's will but if you consider how much God works in your broken life, how much more can He work in it if you give it to Him whole?

With the help of the Holy Spirit we can surrender more and more to Him.

Pray that by God's Grace He will help you to bring your broken life to Him in one piece.

Mhairi Dawson

Support Services Administrator at TLM Scotland since 2014



WHAT DO WE DESERVE?

Matthew 20: 1-16

It wasn't like a modern recruitment office! There were no computers, no advisors, no job applications. A denarius, a penny a day – that was the standard pay for a daily labourer. It represented a bare living wage for people lucky enough to find work.

The landowner got up at dawn and went down to the market place. He hired everyone who was there. They agreed the standard terms, happy to have the opportunity to work. No-one suggested it was slave labour, no-one tried to negotiate a higher rate. They were grateful for what was offered.

Later in the day he hired others. We don't know why they had not been there at dawn. Maybe some had to care for a child or sick relative; maybe they were disabled themselves; maybe some were sleeping off a hangover, and others may have lived chaotic lives for any number of reasons.

And at the end of the day, he paid them all the same amount.

Should the early birds have got more for their twelve hours' work? No, they had agreed the standard rate. They were unhappy because the landowner was generous.

No-one deserves what Jesus offers – forgiveness, salvation, a relationship with God. We are all undeserving, however long we have toiled in the vineyard. The Kingdom of Heaven is all about grace, God's undeserved generosity to us. As we look at the cross of Christ, we see amazing grace.

On the other hand, is it wise to ask God to give us what we deserve? On the cross, Christ takes upon himself what we deserve – punishment and separation from God.

In the world around us you have to work for what you want, strive for it. We've worked hard, we deserve... But in Kingdom terms it's not about what we have earned, it is about what God has given us; not what we deserve, but what God in his grace provides for us.

"So the last will be first, and the first will be last".

Paul and Niki Jakeman

served as TLM missionaries from 1979-1994, successively in Mongar, Lhuntse and Thimphu (Bhutan) and then in Singapore. They returned to the UK and worked in the east end of London for ten years, moving to Wiltshire where they continued medicine and midwifery for another decade. They have both recently retired.



Life's challenges and faith

Is a challenge in life a test of faith? An interesting question to ponder in life, especially when the challenge seems daunting. Challenges unnerve us. We feel powerless. Energy drains out of us. Future looks bleak. We are against a wall. There is no way to go. All my knowledge and expertise have failed me. Each of us had faced such situations and would possibly do so in future!

What is God telling us through the scriptures on this?

My thoughts go to Jehoshaphat's predicament when he was faced with possible disaster (*2 Chronicles, Ch.20*). Defeat and annihilation stared in his face. His response shows us how to respond. He brought all his people together in prayer to God. He shared his situation with all in his kingdom. He did not rally them for a fight with the enemy but for prayer! It shows his faith in the unfailing God and His mercies. (Jehoshaphat did not send an email but sent a knee-mail). He brought them all together to the temple and thanked God for the protection He gave to His people, many times in the past. He recounted the promises God had made for the Israelites.

The story of the Israelites was one of God's protection and provision. By being grateful to God, Jehoshaphat invoked God's protection once again on the Israelites. He humbled himself before God. He put God first and let God take charge of his problem. Gratitude and humility appear to be the means through which he communicated with God. Isn't true that in our self-acclaimed achievements, we put ourselves ahead of God and negate what He wants to do in our lives? When we put Him first, He speaks to us, through the means He chooses. How often do we decide how God should respond and when? It is our job to listen to Him. When we do so, He opens up new paths of victory for us. Let us praise Him, thank Him in all circumstances and receive His bountiful provision, as did Jehoshaphat.

In praise to Him

Dr PLN Raju

Director (Resource Mobilization)
The Leprosy Mission Trust India



Running the Race: 1

Faith To Run

Last year, during our staff Christmas dinner, one of my colleagues suggested that we should participate in the local fun run. Hundreds of people run in it each year, some competitively others just for fun, many of them raising funds for local charities. Perhaps it was the Christmas spirit that made me drop my guard and lead me to agree. The reasons that 'it would be great to do something as a team' and 'it would be a good opportunity to raise awareness and raise funds for The Leprosy Mission' were convincing. As Director and Country Leader how could I not agree!

But you see, I hate running. As a young person I hated sports at school, especially athletics where teachers made us run around the track numerous times during class. I was always last and often embarrassed for being the last one to cross the finish line.

Over the next 5 days, we are going to focus on God's call upon each of us to 'run the race' and consider what this might mean for us personally and in our roles within TLM. My prayer is that you would hear God's voice speak to you, that you would be challenged to 'throw off everything that hinders' and be encouraged to 'not grow weary and lose heart'.

Read Hebrews 12:1-3

The passage opens with the word 'Therefore'. The writer is referring back to what he has said previously and applying the lessons learned from the great 'ancients' (Noah, Abraham, Joseph, Moses, Gideon, David to name a few) who were all commended for their faith. If you have time, you can read Hebrews 11 and find out more about these 'ancients of faith'.

The very names of these 'ancients' or giants of faith immediately conjure up images of strength, determination, faithful obedience to God and agents of deliverance for God's people. I often feel very insignificant when I consider these individuals and all that they did whilst on earth.

Yet it is not what they achieved that is commended but their faith in God. They each heard God speak and chose to listen, obey and follow His leading even when circumstantially or in human terms it looked impossible. Noah built an ark when it wasn't raining. Abraham, whose descendants would be as numerous as the stars, was as good as dead and his wife Sara was barren. Yet, they were 'sure of what they hoped for and certain of what they could not see'. It was this certainty in God that compelled them onwards. This assurance that enabled them to face hardships and affliction and ultimately enabled great things to be done through them. Whilst I can't compare my running adventure to the parting of the red sea (☺ LOL!) I did need to start out believing that with God's help I could do it!

Belief and faith are essential elements of participating in any race.

What is God asking you to do today? What is He calling you onto? I am sure that it is something that will stretch you, something that perhaps will make you feel weak and vulnerable, that will push you outside what is familiar and comfortable. Something that perhaps you are scared to try in case you fail.

God asks that you have faith in Him, 'The great I AM', not in your own abilities, experience and skills. He is faithful. The impossible is possible. *"Truly I tell you, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you." Matthew 17:20*

Joanne Briggs – country leader, TLM Northern Ireland



Running the Race: 2

The Cheering Crowd

Hebrews 12:1a *'Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses ...' (NIV)*

Imagine the scene: the track is set, the runners are limbering up and focusing on the race. Crowds fill the stadium. You can almost feel the excitement & sense of anticipation in the air. Spectators press in and eagerly watch the competitors in their contest for the prize. The gun sounds marking the start of the race and the runners are off, cheered on by the crowd of spectators. What difference does a cheering crowd make?

Two sets down against Richard Gasquet, Andy Murray seemed dead and buried. But backed by a vociferous crowd he turned it around and won the match on Wimbledon's Centre Court. He paid great tribute to the influence of the crowd afterwards saying that it was because of their support and cheers that he won the tennis match.

There is plenty of research which concludes that crowds have an effect on an athlete's performance. It doesn't need a survey to tell you that the vast majority of sport fans believe in the power of home advantage, and believe that the crowd has the key role in that advantage. In footballing terms it's often referred to as the "12th Man", the power of the crowd to amplify the abilities of the home team and weaken the away team.

In January, I realised that it was not a dream and that I had actually agreed, with my colleagues, to run in a race. Given that I had never ran publically before (apart from trying to catch a bus!) I decided that I might need to do some training and quickly downloaded the Couch to 5K running programme which takes people from only being able to sit on a couch or chair to successfully running 5 kilometres. As part of the downloadable 9 week plan you get a personal trainer called 'Laura' who explains to you what you are going to do and when you need to walk or run. But Laura is much more than that. She is an encourager. Your personal motivator who keeps you focused on the goal and encourages you when it seems too difficult and you feel like giving up.

In today's verse, we are told that 'we are surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses'. Eugene Peterson's The Message translates it as 'we are cheered on by veterans' of the faith. Those ancients and giants of faith that have gone before us, that we reflected on yesterday, surround us and are cheering us on eager that we would run well, finish the race and win the prize. What an amazing thought, especially in times when things are difficult and we might feel like giving up. ***A cheering crowd can make the difference in any race.***

In TLM, we are all part of a team. You might work in a team that has a particular medical or fundraising focus. You might be part of a national staff team. All of us are part of the Global Fellowship family. As such, we all have a role to encourage and cheer one another on from our different parts of the mission as we work towards a common goal of defeating leprosy and transforming lives.

Who can you encourage today? Who can you cheer on? Your cheers of encouragement might just be the thing that helps another to keep going, to focus on the end goal and to cross the finishing line. ***Anxiety in a man's heart weighs it down, but an encouraging word makes it glad, Proverbs 12:25***



Running the Race: 3

The 'Lettuce' Talks (Let Us)

Hebrews 12: 1-2 In these verses, the writer of Hebrews encourages his listeners to do 3 things:

1. Throw off everything that hinders
2. Run the race with perseverance
3. Fix our eyes upon Jesus

At the start of each thing he says 'Let us' implying that it is within our power and capabilities to do the thing which he is telling us to do. It is our responsibility and requires action on our part.

'Let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles': Have you ever seen a runner wearing a heavy rain coat, woollen sweater and trousers, boots, hat and scarf? Of course not! Why not? Because it would slow him or her down. If you want to run in a race and win the prize then you will remove anything that will hold you back or trip you up. It should be the same in our Christian lives. Inordinate care for the present life or disproportionate fondness for it can be a dead weight upon our souls and can distract us from our true calling as disciples of Christ. Any area in our life that does not honour and glorify God will always hold us back and cause hurt or harm like an injury that you would receive if you tripped over something and fell. To finish the race well, we need to deal with weaknesses and sins that tangle us up. This involves confession and repentance. It isn't always pretty or easy but, in order to run well, these things have to be dealt with.

In our roles within TLM it is important that we also remove anything that entangles or hinders us from achieving our vision and mission. There are lots of 'good' things that can occupy our time and energies but we must not let anything, no matter how noble or worthy, distract us from our goal of seeing Leprosy Defeated and Lives Transformed.

'Let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us': One of the reasons why I don't like running is that it is hard work. It doesn't come easily to me and I definitely do not have a natural talent for it! As I have followed the running training programme, I have had to choose to persevere, especially on days when my body and mind wanted to give up.

Nowhere in the Bible are we told that choosing to submit ourselves to God or following in the footsteps of Christ will be easy or will come naturally to us. In fact we are told the opposite. So why are we surprised when trials and suffering come? Why do we often give up when we have to work hard to change sinful behaviours and thoughts or falter when we have to persevere with a particular relationship or task? The writer urges us to 'run with perseverance'. We could choose not to. However, if we are to run in such a way as to cross the finish line and win the prize then 'perseverance' is essential. It is a fundamental part of following Jesus.

Bill Hybels, Founder & Senior Pastor of Willow Creek Community Church, encourages Christian leaders to develop 'grit' in their ministries, which he defines as passion & perseverance over the long haul (*The 5 Intangibles of Great Leaders*). He says, "Grit can be developed, but its archenemy is ease. We must assign ourselves difficult tasks (lots of mountains!) to grow grit. After all, gritty organizations are unstoppable and gritty people can change the world!"

**Running the Race: 4*****The 'Lettuce' Talks Continued******Hebrews 12: 2-3***

Following on from yesterday, the writer of Hebrews asks us to do a third thing,

1. *'Let us fix our eyes on Jesus':*

Whilst following the Couch to 5K running programme, I learnt that running is just as much a mental challenge as a physical one.

Believing that I could do it when my body was aching and telling me to stop was important. Being determined and choosing to persevere even when I wanted to give up was essential. Focusing on the goal kept me motivated and encouraged me to keep going.

When running, I would often choose a tree or building ahead in the path and fix my eyes on it. When I got to it, I would choose another and then another until I finished. Fixing my eyes on something focused my mind on the goal and caused all the anxieties and feelings of inadequacy to quieten.

In today's verses, the writer encourages us to 'fix our eyes' on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith. In The Message translation it says, 'Study how he (Jesus) did it. Because he never lost sight of where he was headed'.

When was the last time you focused on Jesus, studied his life and reflected on His words and instructions? It amazes me how today many Christians can know a lot about Jesus but know Him very little personally. Perhaps if we focused more on Jesus then we wouldn't lose sight of the important things, of what matters to God and where we are headed.

To 'fix our eyes on Jesus' indicates the action of one who, aware of rival attractions, deliberately looks away from distracting things at the beginning and throughout the race.

Fixing our eyes on Jesus will cause our anxieties and feelings of inadequacies to quieten. It will give us perspective. When things are tough it will encourage us to persevere and keep running the race marked out for us. When you find yourselves flagging in your faith or when things are tough, the writer encourages us to go over Jesus's story again and again, item by item. The result will be, '...so that you will not grow weary and lose heart'. The promise is that we won't grow weary or lose heart in the race. We won't lose integrity or perspective

Have you lost heart? Feeling weary? Perhaps you have lost your way? Focus on Jesus. He is the answer. That is the key to winning the prize or even finishing at all; we must 'consider Him'.



Running the Race: 5

Finishing Well

Hebrews 12:1-3

Most people who fail to 'finish well' in scripture, failed in the last half of their lives. The reasons vary, but at the core, something caused a lack of zeal, resolve and love for Christ. Bobby Clinton in his book, *Connecting* says, "For some it was a clear point of decision or an experience that became a fork in the road ..and they did not choose the correct fork (eg: Judas). For others it was an accumulation of small choices that moved them further away from being Christ's Disciple (eg: Demas, 2 Timothy 4:10).

I am greatly saddened when I hear of great Christian leaders who have done wonderful things in their ministry but do not end well and often wonder how is it possible that one who has had such influence and impact for Christ can fall so far?

The apostle Paul was obsessed with finishing well. He saw life as a race. When meeting with the Ephesian elders for the last time, he said 'I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me' (Acts 20:24). He challenged the Corinthians to 'run the race in such a way as to get the prize ..not ..running aimlessly' (1 Cor.9:24-26). Paul was motivated to press on, to persevere, to go all the way to the finish line.

As we think about our end goal of defeating leprosy, we too are motivated to press on and persevere until we see 'a leprosy free world.'

What are the characteristics of those who finish well? From the verses in Hebrews 12 and my readings from Christian books I propose that there are 6 key things. People who finish well:

- Have a network of meaningful relationships with peers and important mentors during their lifetime (v 1a)
- Are honest and confessional about their weaknesses and sins (v 1b)
- Have persevered in difficult times and were disciplined in important areas of their lives (v 1c)
- Have perspective that enables them to focus (v 2)
- Enjoy intimacy with Christ and experience repeated times of inner renewal (v 3)
- Maintain a positive learning attitude and life-style throughout their lives, and are committed to Jesus and the Bible as the main source of that learning (v 2, 2 Timothy 3:16)

To finish well does not mean to reach perfection any time during the race, but like Paul, to keep pressing toward it (Philippians 3:10-15a). The 6 things listed above will help us do that.

The day of our staff running race came. We joined with hundreds of others and ran around our local town. I didn't go as fast as I had hoped and at times I wanted to just stop but I finished the race! Amazing! What a feeling to cross the finish line! The hard work and perseverance was definitely worth it. The joyful and exuberant celebrations with family, friends, colleagues and complete strangers changed my perspective: the goal of the race is not the running but to finish. Do you want to finish well?

Train hard, surround yourself with encouragers, keep going and win the race! Joyful celebrations await! 😊

Joanne Briggs – country leader, TLM Northern Ireland



Our Inseparable Parent

*Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne?
Though she may forget, I will not forget you!" Is. 49 : 15.*

The first time I remember reading this verse, I must have been 11 or 12 years old, 2,000 miles away from home in boarding school in South India. I read the first part of the verse, in my little Authorised Version of the Bible, "Can a woman forget her sucking child?", and in my mind I completed the sentence, "No, and in the same way, I the Lord, love you and will never forget you". I thought of my mother's letters, faithfully written every week, the long hot journeys she undertook to drop us to school after the holidays, and to collect us, at the end of each term. Her joy whenever she met us, after 4 long months apart, and all the ways she (along with my father) looked after us, and made sacrifices for us, on top of her very demanding work as an obstetrician in rural North India. Then I read on, "Though she may forget..."...! The force of those words hit me hard – a mother as loving as mine might forget us, or fail us in some way?! I became conscious of the fallibility of every human being that day. But as I finished the verse, "I will not forget you!", God's unfailing love and ever-present parenthood was impressed on my young heart with a force that perhaps, it would not have been, without the measure of longing brought to our family relationships by long months of separation each school term. And now, as an adult, I am eternally grateful for a school that reinforced the Christian teachings we'd been brought up with: For our teachers who genuinely cared, and who met regularly to pray for all the pupils. For the many visitors who came to our chapel services on Sunday nights and shared their testimonies of this same unfailing love of God in their lives; and for friends alongside whom, each of us grew and were moulded and shaped in our faith. We were privileged to be enabled to lay firm foundations for our faith in Christ Jesus, which I know have helped me to prove the reliability of the words from Isaiah that God impressed on me all those years ago.

Others, with very different childhoods from mine, may sense a true echo of their life experiences right from the start of the verse. They may have missed out on the security of a loving childhood home, and of good influences around them. Yet for them too, the Lord gently and firmly dispels any sense of loss or rejection. "I will not forget you! See, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands; your walls are ever before me" (v 16). One imagines that being carved or engraved could be painful. Yet the Lord uses hurt and insecurity, illness and anxiety in ways beyond our imagining. He, who is no stranger to suffering and rejection, uses such words to impress even more strongly on those who may feel overlooked, His inseparable relationship with them, and His unfathomable faithfulness and love.

Kirsteen Dutton (née Thompson)

I am British, (but feel more Indian, having been born in Bihar and schooled in Tamil Nadu!), and I worked as an ophthalmic surgeon in Purulia (with regular visits to Bankura, Saldoha and Muzaffarpur) with TLM from 1993 - 1998. I was on the TLM Scotland Board of trustees from 2006 - 2013, and still maintain informal links with TLM Scotland. I also keep in touch with TLM Purulia, as I have a god daughter there - an orphan brought to the hospital when she was 8 years old, and who now has her own little family. My current role is as an NHS consultant ophthalmic surgeon here in the West of Scotland and I am on the board of trustees of a small Indian church in Glasgow city centre.



At the feet of the Lord

Luke 10:38-42 Text from Today's English version and NIV

Jesus and His disciples were on their way home. Martha, a woman in a village they went into, welcomed Him in her home. Martha had a sister called Mary. Mary, instead of helping Martha with all the work, sat down at the feet of Jesus and listened to what he said.

I can think that part of Martha's work was to prepare food for the guests and of course, Martha expected that Mary should help her. Mary instead, choose to do something else, to sit down and listen to Jesus. What Mary did was probably something unusual for a woman at that time, as the women then were not supposed to be interested in what a religious leader had to say.

Maybe Martha and Mary had heard about Jesus, and that He was different? Anyway, Mary sat there at the feet of the Lord, listening. What did Jesus teach her? How did it feel to sit down at the feet of the Lord? We don't know; only that this was the right thing to do. Jesus said: *"Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her."* You and I have a choice too. Go on with our busy lives as usual or take a break and take time to sit down close to Jesus, listening to Him.

Close to Jesus is peace and rest. *"Come to me, all of you who are tired from carrying heavy loads and I will give you rest."* Matthew 11:28. Jesus gives us this rest; it comes from a divine source. This rest gives peace in our lives; it is different from everything we try to achieve through work or being busy all the time. It is something we are in desperate need of if we want to be more like Jesus.

Close to Jesus we can hear His voice and understand his teaching. There at that peaceful place, our mind can be open and, through the Holy Spirit, we understand His word much better. We understand better what He wants us to be. Today we cannot literally sit down at the feet of Jesus like Mary did, but we can find time and places where we can take a break from everything that keeps us so busy. Take time for the right thing; the most important thing. Take time for Jesus.

15 years ago I had major surgery on my hip. For three months, I had to rest, sit, and do nothing! It was very difficult for me to accept this situation with doing nothing. Anyhow, I used my "free" time to read books, among others one about Job and his suffering. I was very touched by the book and somehow I could feel that Jesus was there, close to me. It was as if He spoke to me with all His love about the need of rest, the need of taking time with Him, that these months of rehabilitation were a great opportunity for me.

After this experience I was able to rest in another way, with peace in my heart, knowing that to be with Jesus is the *better* thing.

Still when I'm very busy, I have to remind myself of that special moment. That helps me to choose the right thing.

Martha did good things; she worked, just like us. We work and do good things for other people, but sometimes these good things rule over us, instead of us ruling over them and there is no time for rest in our lives; no time for Jesus to talk to us in His special way. The Lord has become an employer.

This text reminds us, in a very gentle way, that there is a place for you and me at the feet of the Lord. It also reminds us that you and I have to make the choice.



Domine, quo vadis?

Reading: John 13: 30 – 38

Picture this ... just south of the ancient city of Rome is a church near the well-known Via Appia Antica with a fascinating name: “Domine, Quo Vadis?” meaning “Lord, where are you going?”

This church was built to mark the spot where according to tradition the apostle Peter met Jesus in a vision when he was about to flee from Rome during the cruel persecution of Christian believers orchestrated by Caesar Nero. On meeting Jesus, Peter asked this question: “Domine, quo vadis?” (“Lord, where are you going?” Upon which Jesus answered: “Eo Romam iterum crucifigi” (“I am going to Rome to be crucified again”).

Imagining this conversation, one would rather expect Jesus to ask Peter the question: “Where are you going, Peter?” This though is often the question we ask ourselves during times of chaos and uncertainty: “Where am I going now?” “What now?” These questions are raised when we wrestle with our purpose and priorities during various stages of our journey through life.

In this legend, the *quo vadis* question is raised by Peter while he is leaving Rome in fear, but with Jesus heading into danger! The question asked by Peter is actually the right one to ask, because of the importance of knowing where the Lord is going, so that I may follow Him. Maybe He is moving in a direction opposite to where I am heading? Heading off in my own direction may mean abandoning my post or the place where He wants me to be. When Paul writes about the armour of God in Ephesians 6, he mentions *standing firm/taking a stand* three times, i.e. hold your position! In the midst of serious persecution Peter was about to leave his post as leader of the church in Rome.

Much earlier, as a disciple of Jesus, Peter heard these words from the mouth of Jesus: “Come, follow me, and I will send you out to fish for people” (Matthew 4:19). In His further teaching and instructions given to His disciples, Jesus prepared them for their important role after His death on the cross, the resurrection and ascension, which was to be in the life of the early church.

In the Upper Room, shortly before Jesus’ arrest, mistrial and crucifixion, He shares the Passover meal with His disciples. After washing the feet of His disciples and Judas Iscariot’s departure, He tells them: “Where I’m going, you (plural) cannot come. A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another...” It is almost as though Peter doesn’t hear the love commandment and only focuses on Jesus’ pending departure, because he wants to follow Him come what may! Immediately Peter asks: “Lord, where are you going?” (Domine, quo vadis?). Jesus’ response is personally addressed to Peter: “Where I am going, you (singular) cannot follow now, but you will follow later.”

Only Jesus could walk the journey of the cross and through His death brought us forgiveness for our sins and new life in Him. Because of His death bringing us salvation and now with the power of the Holy Spirit enabling us, you and I are able to follow Jesus. When during our life’s journey we ask, “Domine, quo vadis?” we do so to make sure that we are going in the same direction as our Lord’s leading. This is the safest place to be!



The Global Fellowship - One Body

*We break this bread
To share in the body of Christ
Though we are many, we are one body,
because we all share in one bread.
All*

Being the wife of a Church Of England Vicar, these words are almost too familiar, as they are used in the Communion Service every week. However, as my mind turns to the Global Fellowship Members Meeting in September, I'm reminded how these words always come alive for me in a fresh ways during these meetings.

The first way is through the shared conversations-we frequently form groups of people from all corners of the globe, to discuss and explore some of the key issues and decisions facing The Mission. Despite our different cultures and backgrounds, views and opinions, we always remain able to worship and break bread together on the Sunday, recognising Jesus in each other; for me, this is always an incredibly moving and profound experience.

The second way is sharing about 3 days with more than 30 other leaders from across the different countries where The Leprosy Mission serves. Spending time together means we share several meals, as well as taking Communion, and again it gives that real sense of being united because of our common faith and trust in Jesus, despite all the different cultural and theological understandings that there may be within the group.

I pray, says Jesus, that they be 'one'. Not the same, not identical, but 'one'. Able to recognise, rejoice and celebrate the reality of the Risen Jesus in each other, despite our differences, as we share in bread together. That's been my experience, on those special Global Fellowship occasions. I pray that it might be yours as well. Not just at Fellowship Meetings, but as you meet, share and serve The Lord with your TLM friends and colleagues day in day out, in the office, in the hospitals, in the projects, in church, by skype or wherever you are.

Jo-Anne Thomson -The Leprosy Mission Trading



A bigger shovel

“Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.” 2 Corinthians

Chapter 9 verses 6 and 7



It must be that time of year. The minister is using that Bible passage: “God loves a cheerful giver” to encourage us to open our chequebooks, wallets and purses to support God’s work.

Every year, our Minister invites us to consider our stewardship of God’s resources. For some, this is the time to miss a Sunday and count the contents of their piggybank. Or like me you go along, curious to see the new perspective the minister brings. This year, we thought about fruits of the Spirit – not bananas and oranges, but gifts of the Holy Spirit. The sixth fruit of the Spirit is generosity (some Bible translations call this goodness).

Jesus taught more about money than any other subject. He regularly spoke of money as generous giving rather than greedy gaining. As followers of Jesus, we should give generously of the resources that God has given to us. We should invest in God’s kingdom to express our thanks for His blessings. When we give, we shouldn’t worry about our own finances, but trust God to provide and care for tomorrow: *“Do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.”* (Matth 6 ,34).

Preacher Charles Spurgeon learned about this trust when he was fundraising for poor children in London. He had an ambitious target of £300 (already I can sympathise with him!). After a week’s fundraising, he’d reached his target, which would transform the lives of children. Giving thanks to God for reaching his target, Spurgeon felt God was prompting him to give the money to another preacher called George Mueller.

Imagine the scene: you’ve met your fundraising target, then sense God wants you to give it all away. I would struggle. Well, Spurgeon placed his trust in God and gave the money away to the needy cause God had told him about.

When Spurgeon returned to London, God had gone ahead of him, providing not just the £300, but a little bit more. Spurgeon’s trust had been rewarded.

Spurgeon had discovered what Christian author Joe Stowell calls ‘a bigger shovel’! *“I shovel out, and God shovels in, and He has a bigger shovel than I have.”*

Spend time to think how generous you are with your time, talents and treasure. Remember, we can never give more than God gives us.



Authors in Alphabetical Order

Textuarium

Anne-Claude Jonah	3 August		Exode 3,6	12 August
Bunmi Oluloto Dr	6 August		2 Chron 20	21 August
Christine Osman	4 August		Psalms 8	2 August
David Parry	1 August		Isaiah 42,1-3	3 August
Erna Moeller	5 August		Isaiah 49,15	27 August
Gordon Brown	2 August		Jonah 1,1-2	15 August
Gunnel Ericson	28 August		Matthew 6,12-14	10 August
Henno Couprie	16-17 August		Matthew 8,14	16, 17 August
Jamie McIntosh	31 August		Matthew 11,28-30	5 August
Jo-Ann Thomson	30 August		Matthew 14,27	6 August
Joanne Briggs	22-26 August		Matthew 20,1-16	20 August
June Nash	7 August		Matthew 25,35	11 August
Ken Martin	15 August		Matthew 26,36-46	7 August
Kirsteeb Dutton Dr	27 August		Luke 5,12-16	4 August
Mhairi Dawson	19 August		Luke 10,27	19 August
Niki and Paul Jakeman Dr	20 August		Luke 10,38-42	28 August
Otto Kingsley	13 August		Luke 18,1	8 August
Paul Brand Dr	14 August		Luke 22,10	1 August
Paul du Plessis Dr	8 August		John 4	13 August
PLN Raju Dr	21 August		John 13,30-38	29 August
Pradeep and Sarah Failbus	9 August		John 15,1-17	9 August
Ruth Butlin Dr	10 August		Romans 12,2/a	18 August

Silvano Perotti	11 August		2 Cor 9,6-7	31 August
Susan Maiava Dr	12 August		Hebr 12,1-3	22,23,24,25,26 August
Tanny Hagens	18 August			
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