



TLM Daily Devotions

October 2016





*“We go in faith
our own great weakness feeling,
and needing more each day
Thy grace to know;
yet from our hearts
a song of triumph pealing,
We rest on Thee,
and in Thy name we go.”
(Edith Gilling Cherry)*

Amen.



Leaving a Lasting Legacy! - Part 1.

Looking at Life:

1) Beautiful young people are Acts of Nature.....

But beautiful old people are Works of Art!

2) GOD gives every bird its food.....

But HE doesn't throw it into its nest!

3) Learn from the mistakes of others.....

You can't live long enough to make them all yourself!

4) Anger.....

Is only one letter short of Danger!

5) To handle yourself – use your head.....

To handle others – use your heart!

6) Many people will walk into your life.....

But only true friends will leave footprints in your heart!

7) Great age minds discuss events.....

Small minds discuss people!

8) He who loses money loses much.....

He who loses a friend loses more.....

He who loses faith loses all!

Otto Kingsley is the Cape Regional Director of TLM(SA), operating from Cape Town, RSA.

Recommended for further thinking in Biblical context and for prayer.



Leaving a Lasting Legacy! - Part 2.

Living THE Life:

- 1) Living with purpose is the only way to live (Acts 13:36)
 - 2) Living life is all about Jesus/GOD.....it's NOT about me (Rom 11:36; Col 1:16b)
- 3) I'm NOT an accident (Is 44:2)
 - 4) Life is a TRUST, a TEST, a TEMP. ASSIGNMENT, a TRANSFORMATION (2Cor 4:18)
- 5) I was planned for God's pleasure (Psalm 147:11;1 Cor 10:31)
 - 6) GOD wants to be my BEST Friend (Psalm25:14; James 4:8)
- 7) GOD is REAL – no matter how I feel (Mark 12:30; Heb 13:5)
 - 8) I was formed for GOD'S Family (Eph 1:5; Eph 4:12)
- 9) Life is all about AGAPE-love (Gal 5:14)
 - 10) I was created to become like Christ (Rom 12:2;Philp 2:5)
- 11) There is a purpose behind every problem (Rom 8:28)
 - 12) Every temptation has an EXIT or an OPPORTUNITY TO DO GOOD (1 Cor 10:13)
- 13) I was uniquely SHAPed for serving GOD –
Spiritual gifts - Heart's desires - Abilities - Personality - Experiences
 - 14) Serve GOD by serving others with a servant-heart (Matt 10:42;1 Cor 15:
Available - Attentive - Uncomplaining – Humble - Dedicated - Faithful
- 15) GOD works best when I admit my weakness (2Cor 12:9)

In conclusion, please read Exodus 33:11-15 – Amen.



The Seal

A short while ago my daughter Lydia was going in to get her tonsils out. Being 7, her biggest concern was that she wouldn't be able to have breakfast on the morning of the operation. Her mother and I were a lot more nervous about the operation than she was, and so the evening before it I turned to scripture for some words of comfort.

I found myself studying *Revelation 7*, a chapter which describes the survivors of the Great Tribulation! Oh dear, I thought, what lies ahead of us with this operation!

But after some study, I read of how in verse 3, the 'seal of God on the foreheads of his servants' acted as a sign of ownership to those who belong to God. This concept of a seal can be referenced to a particular scene from *Ezekiel 9:4-7*, which talks of a seal on the head of those who were to be under God's protection at a time of punishment for the wicked. The sign that was to be used in Ezekiel's account was a Phoenician symbol which looked very similar to a cross. It was a symbol which the early Christians adopted as it reminded them of Jesus' sacrifice, as well as giving them assurance of God's ownership, and seal of protection of them. John no doubt would have understood the significance of this connection as he received this revelation from God.

As I sought God's voice that evening, I felt God speaking to me very clearly too. Reading all of this brought to my mind her Baptism, and how as a baby the minister had placed the sign of the cross on her forehead.

It gave me a great sense of peace, as I realised that she was a child of God, under his ownership and protection. I am happy to report that the operation went well, and she is making a good recovery. The message God spoke to me that evening is a message that we all need to hear and be reminded of. We are all children of God, under his ownership and protection, and the seal of the cross on our foreheads is a practical and powerful protection for us as we face all measure of trials, doubts and problems.

You may wish to take some time to pray for one another, and for yourself, affirming God's seal of ownership and protection which he offers to you through the work of the resurrected Christ in all areas and responsibilities of your life.

Peter Hilton, Church and School Engagement Officer, TLM Northern Ireland



A woman anoints Jesus with expensive perfume

This passage is related in Matthew, Mark and John with few differences.

Let us set the scene:

Jesus arrived in Bethany, at the home of Simon – the man affected by leprosy with his disciples and his friends. A banquet was prepared in Jesus' honour. Martha served (as usual!), Lazarus sat at the table with him.

Then Mary took a jar of costly perfume made from essence of nard and anointed Jesus from the head to the feet with it and wiped them with her hair.

We don't know **Simon's** story, how he got leprosy, how he was healed and rehabilitated (otherwise I imagine he couldn't organise a banquet at his home) but we know his name. In God's eyes whatever you face (disease, rejection) you are a Very Important Person.

Mary didn't respect the good manners – she came while Jesus was eating.

I heard once that young ladies kept a bottle of perfume for their wedding. I like to think that Mary took this precious perfume – precious on financial but especially on sentimental terms.

Mary gave to Jesus what she had the most valuable.

At that time (and today in some countries) a girl left her father's home to live in her husband's home.

Mary, by this dedication showed that she put all her trust for her future in Jesus.

Some of those at the table (Judas ahead) were indignant among themselves about this "waste" as they called it. "Why, she could have sold that perfume for a fortune and given it to the poor."

What a good idea! Dare to confess that sometimes this idea passed through our fundraiser's mind: instead of wasting money for this or that, this person could have given the money for the Leprosy Mission as we support the poorest of the poor! Imagine: receiving a donation of one-year salary of a worker – it's the price of this perfume! But this perfume wasn't for sale but to be poured.

But Jesus said: "Let her alone; why berate her for doing a good thing? You always have the poor among you, and they need your help and you can aid them whenever you want to; but I won't be here much longer.

Once more Jesus recognised that Mary has chosen the good part; she has done the right choice (see [Luke 10.38-42](#)). Jesus is not saying that it's not good to help the poor. But maybe sometimes I have to upset the "good manners", to upset my schedule spending time alone with my Lord.

"She has poured this perfume on me to prepare my body for burial. Wherever the Good News is preached throughout the world, this woman's deed will be remembered and praised."

Oh Lord I would love that we remember me for doing the good thing and being so close to you.



Gone, not forgotten

“Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses...” Hebrews 12:1

Bassey and I live near a cemetery and some mornings I walk around it. I enjoy reading what is written on the gravestones. The newer part of the graveyard has simple stones, but nearer the church is the oldest part of the graveyard, with large and ornate gravestones, some with statues of angels etc. on them, many with large stone crosses standing much taller than me. Some have very little information except name and dates of birth and death. Others have more information and tell you a little about the person – father, beloved husband, much-missed mother, etc. Others tell you something of what they did in life – ‘councillor’, ‘mayor of Leeds’, ‘fought for his country’. All of the people buried here will have influenced the development of Leeds in the industrial revolution, as a university city, and more recently as a global financial centre. The names on the stones also reflect the multi-cultured mix that makes up the people of Leeds.

As I walk around the cemetery, the words ‘we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses’ often come into my mind. I thank God for the people buried in this graveyard, for the contribution each one has made while they were alive.

In the Leprosy Mission, we also have those who have gone before. There are those who have retired from active service, but are very much part of our ministry – praying for us each day, writing for this Bridge devotional and volunteering services to our various offices. There are those who have been called Home and are now with the LORD in heaven. Like the gravestones in the cemetery, some had a more prominent/more visible role than others, but all played a part in the ministry of the Leprosy Mission.

Today, take a moment to thank God for those who have laid the foundations on which you and I stand.

Thank God for the pioneers of the Mission who established the great work that we do. Thank God for those who developed medical and surgical procedures for the management of the disease that we still use now. Thank God for those who took the light of the Gospel of Christ into unreached areas as they ministered to those affected by leprosy. Thank God not just for those whose names we know, whose pictures are on the walls of our hospitals and offices, but also those who faithfully served in less visible roles. Looking back 142 years, there are many people to thank God for.

If you know someone who has moved on from the Mission -is retired or in another ministry - why not write them a letter, an email, pick up the phone or visit them? What a blessing that would be for both of you! You can be an encouragement to one another.

Jannine Ebenso.

With TLM since 1991. Served in Nigeria for 16 years. At TLMI since 2008. Head of Quality Assurance at TLMI since May 2014.



Daily love

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonour others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. 1 Corinthians 13:4-7

When we moved house we had to find a new plumber. It wasn't easy getting one, but when Jim turned up he was very helpful. He's a competent, conscientious and cheerful worker, and a conversationalist. He told us a lot about his family. There's a teenage son, tragically hit by multiple sclerosis, and a wife Jim obviously adores. "She's a great woman, my wife," he said, "and we've got a good marriage. In 30 years she's never run out of coffee or toilet paper." We laughed.

There are many ways of showing love. The glossy magazines say diamonds are best. The slightly more modest weeklies advise us to say it with flowers. A hug, a kiss, a held hand, all help.

And there's the coffee and toilet paper way. I'm not suggesting this is women's work, but the faithful, quiet work that keeps homes going, keeps relationships good. The attention to detail, making sure that the everyday things are cared for. It may be earthy, but it's no less valuable for that.

The cup of coffee, and the rest, speak for themselves. Speak of looking ahead, anticipating needs, meeting them with loving ordinariness.

"Love is patient; love is kind..." writes Paul to Christians at Corinth, "Love will never come to an end." And whether we write books about it, or express it simply through the weekly shopping list, it all has meaning. Love expressed in an infinity of ways, mostly quiet.

Love is still at the centre of the universe. Still available. And God, who is love, is still trying to pour it into our lives.

So many ways, Lord, in which you show your love.

Sometimes, its very ordinariness surprises me.

No drama here, no lightning flash or thunder-clap.

Just faithfulness, in spite of all I do to make it difficult.

I make myself unlovely, yet still your love surrounds me, seeks out the cracks in the hard shell of my ego, and seeps in unrecognised.

(Extract from Facing the Storm, first published 1989. with the kind permission of Jo-Anne Thomson and Judith Merrell from TLM Trading)

Eddie Askew (1927-2007) devoted half a century to leprosy and its consequences. In 1950 he and his wife Barbara set sail for India. Eddie's first placement was in Purulia, West Bengal. In 1965 Eddie took up the post of executive secretary at TLM's office in London. His first overseas visit in this new role was to Ethiopia, where he learned of plans to set up a leprosy training centre that would benefit patients and medics throughout Africa. He offered to become a founding member and signed TLM up to support what was to become ALERT (All Africa Leprosy and Rehabilitation Training Centre). The following year, the organisation now known as the International Federation of Anti-Leprosy Associations (ILEP) was set up. In 1974 Eddie became general director of TLM. He was keen to develop TLM's work elsewhere, and took a team into the closed land of Bhutan in response to a request from its government. - Inspired by his travels and his Christian faith, Eddie found an outlet for his creativity in painting and poetry. He retired in 1987. From 1998 until his death he was TLM- vice-president, and in 2000 he was awarded an OBE. (Fiona Spence)



Therefore we do not lose heart

2 Corinthians 4

As I write this piece, a dear friend of mine is very sick. In recent weeks I have seen her lose weight and become weaker, her body is failing. She has fought cancer before but it has returned and this time there is little that can be done.

It is a curious thing to feel the immense sadness of seeing my friend suffer, to know how short her time with us may be, but also to know deep in my heart that this is not the end and that the glory of eternity awaits her. In our humanity, grief can be overwhelming. I think that is why our loving God has taken me to 2 Corinthians 4 this morning. And for you, as you experience the pain of loved ones struggling with sickness and disease, Abba says “do not lose heart”.

„Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. ¹⁷ For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. ¹⁸ So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal. (2 Cor 4:16-18)

It occurs to me that as our bodies age, and as sickness takes hold, outwardly as we waste away something miraculous is happening inside. Inside, we are growing closer to glory. By the grace of God, we are being renewed – daily made new. ‘Renewed’ means repaired and healed, mended, restored, refreshed, and revived! In God’s sight – made new.

¹⁸ And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord’s glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit. (2 Cor 3:18)

As we gaze on the glory of our risen saviour we cannot help but be transformed into his likeness. Our ‘wasting away’ bodies, hide an incredibly beautiful transformation inside. ‘Ever-increasing glory’ means that it doesn’t stop – not ever. Another translation says we are being transformed “from one degree of glory to another”. On and on, daily renewed, transformed with ever-increasing glory, until we receive the eternal glory lavished upon us by our Abba, through the blood of the lamb.

The eternal glory that awaits our dear friends and loved ones far outweighs the pain, suffering and sickness of this life. And for us, when our bodies fail, we can fix our eyes on the unseen, but eternal, transformation within us.

We can love our friends in and through their sickness and their suffering. Just as Jesus grieved for his friend, so we will grieve and feel the immense and searing pain of losing those precious to us. But because of Jesus, we need not lose heart. Because of Jesus, in our grief we can whisper *“Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?” (1 Cor 15:55).*

Earlier in this chapter, Paul writing to the believers at Corinth, says:

„we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead will also raise us with Jesus and present us with you to himself.” (V14).



What the Word of God means to us

Being a fellowship that believes in the Word of God as presented to us as "The Bible", a presentation, collection of heavens guidelines for our salvation, for knowing God's will and for living a righteous life.

It consists of 66 books, 39 in the Old Testament and 27 in New Testament. May we allow the words of The Bible touch your hearts.

Psalm 119 has great insights and responses to what The Word, God's Word to us, has for us. Let's explore it together.

Psalm 119:1-8 NIVUK

"Blessed are those whose ways are blameless, who walk according to the law of the LORD. Blessed are those who keep his statutes and seek him with all their heart – they do no wrong but follow his ways".

- The term "law of the LORD" and "his statutes" are a reference to The Bible and the injunctions, recommendations and directions that are to be followed, this brings blessings and right standing with God and others.

You have laid down precepts that are to be fully obeyed. Oh, that my ways were steadfast in obeying your decrees! Then I would not be put to shame when I consider all your commands.

- Here we have more terms that are about The Bible, "precepts, decrees and commands".
- If we believe and trust God's Word the choice is for us to obey them. David said: *"I delight to do thy will, O my God. I will praise you with an upright heart as I learn your righteous laws. I will obey your decrees; do not utterly forsake me."*
- Again we have another term for God's Word, "righteous laws".
- The writer makes a statement of responsibility and desire saying that he will obey God's Word and I think that he understood that disobedience to The Word puts distance between God and us and the last thing he wanted to happen was to be away from his Heavenly Father.

God bless n keep you as you grow and feed on His Word!

Dan Izzett - Zimbabwe. Retired pastor. I was diagnosed with lepomatous leprosy in 1972. Served on TLMI board for eight years and on the Zimbabwe board for 15 years. I now serve on the ALM board and do advocacy for them.



By His wounds we are healed

“Open our eyes Lord, we want to see Jesus, to reach out and touch Him, to show that we love Him... open our ears Lord and help us to listen, open our ears Lord, we want to hear Jesus...”

Since I came back to Bangladesh in 2013 as a skilled volunteer under the auspices of TLMEW, one of the things I have been doing is to organise an annual Workshop for TLMBangladesh doctors. This year it happened just after Easter. Since Good Friday, I had been musing on one of the frequently sung Bengali hymns, based on the verse “By His wounds we are healed”.

By coincidence the theme of our Workshop (chosen long ago before discussing the date) was “Wounded Feet”, so we had just spent three days thinking and talking about injuries to feet, how to prevent them, how to get them healed with minimal scarring, how to reduce the time a person was “off his feet” waiting for the wound to heal.

As soon as I returned from the training centre to the hospital after our Workshop, the Chaplain accosted me with a request to lead morning prayers the very next day. Inevitably the first thought which came to mind was “the wounded feet & hands of Jesus”, so I prepared a meditation on Thomas who said “unless I touch the wound in His hand, I will not believe” (*John ch 20 v 25*).

And then in the evening, amongst various emails asking for information, advice or practical assistance, was one soliciting contributions for the Bridge. So it seemed right to share with you some thoughts about the wounded Jesus

Thomas had a sceptical attitude to life, he wanted evidence, to see things with his own eyes, not just to hear second-hand reports of sightings of the risen Lord, he wanted objective proof of the physical resurrection of Jesus. But when Jesus did appear before him personally, inviting the doubting disciple to touch His wounded hands, Thomas was completely overcome with the realisation that this Person before him was God incarnate. He exclaimed “my Lord and my God!” (*John ch 20 v 28*) and refrained from touching Jesus. I suspect he actually drew back, feeling that his corrupt humanity should not make direct contact with the divine holiness of Jesus. This recognition of God in Jesus which overwhelmed the sceptic Thomas was a real revelation. Before that Jesus was generally acknowledged as Master and often called Lord, but rarely addressed as “God”.

Incidentally, Thomas’ reaction to meeting Jesus contrasts with Mary’s of the week before. Mary, had she known the modern chorus (above), might have thought “I’ll reach out and touch Him, to show that I love Him...” but Jesus did not invite her touch, in fact He forbade it (*John ch 20. V 17*). He perceived that with Mary the desire was to catch hold of Him, to keep Him with her in that place in that moment. He perceived that such a touching would not strengthen her faith in His resurrection, it would not help her to see that the human Jesus who had shown her the mercy of God, was also God Himself. What He offered Mary was the reassurance that she was known to God by her name.

Lord Jesus open our eyes and let us see you, our God.

Lord Jesus open our ears and let us hear Your call.

Lord Jesus, what we really need is not for us to touch You, but for You to touch us,

Let us feel the touch of Your hand upon our lives....

For the gracious touch of your wounded hand brings us healing. Amen

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)



No turning back – Part 1.

John 15:1-8

It's so refreshing when new light is shed on a very familiar passage of scripture. Jamie McIntosh contribution on 17 June reminded me of a retreat day which we organised many years back for the International office staff. Unfortunately I forget the speakers name, but I remember well that he was a Jew who had found Christ. So as he opened this passage, he was able to give wonderful insights from a Jewish perspective, helping us to see how Jesus disciples may have understood it.

The vine is a powerful image and most of us will have heard helpful sermons encouraging us to remain firmly fixed in Jesus so that we can be nurtured, as Jamie also explains. But our speaker at the retreat day reminded us that the imagery of the vine has a very special place in the Old Testament – most notably in Isaiah 5:1-7 where clearly the prophecy likens the “House of Israel” to a vine which was loved and tended by the Lord Almighty (see also Psalm 80 and Ezekiel 17). These prophecies and images had obviously struck a chord with the people of the Old Testament – especially those who, after the Babylonian exile, ended up in Jerusalem and the surrounding region of Judea. By Jesus time it had become a sort of national emblem.

In my last contribution to the Bridge I wrote about the different temples built on Temple Mount in Jerusalem. The last one, the one that King Herod built, was designed to impress in every way. It was a magnificent 150 feet tall and like European medieval cathedrals it was designed with imagery that pointed to God and to help his people understand scriptural truths.

As you walked through the entrance of the temple building itself you entered a very large atrium area. In front of you was the entrance to the sanctuary, but before you got to that y, you would have been struck by the wonderful gold covered carving on the wall directly in front of you. The carving was an enormous vine. The contemporary Jewish historian Josephus describes it: “The gate opening into the building was, as I say, completely overlaid with gold, as was the whole wall around it. It had, moreover, above it those golden vines, from which hung grape-clusters (each one) as tall as a man”. That's huge! It was all very impressive – and indeed Jesus disciples said as much when they visited (Matt 24:1). So in Jesus time, the vine was very clearly established as the symbol of the nationhood of Israel, and for any Jew there would have been an immediate association with the nation of Israel – just as the cross has an immediate association for us as the symbol of Christianity.

Jesus had already been teaching his disciples that the Kingdom of God was now revealed in a new light – new wine in new wineskins (Matthew 9:17). And he clearly referred to what was past as the old order – like an old garment (Matthew 9:16). Now in the emotionally charged context of the Last Supper, Jesus chooses the image of the vine to reveal the wonderful truth about himself... “I am the true vine...”. We can only guess the impact on his disciples, but I think it would have been very deep. Jesus surpasses the outdated vine image of the old Israel. this is the new order of God's Kingdom There is no turning back now.



No turning back – Part 2

John 15:1-8

I wonder – when exactly was the point of no return for the disciples? Was it when they left their nets and followed this wandering teacher? Was it when Peter blurted out his recognition that Jesus was the Messiah? Was it when this small group set out resolutely for Jerusalem and Thomas declared his willingness to go on even if it meant death? Or was it at the Last Supper when Jesus made it as plain as he could that this was indeed a new order and everything would be different from now on – as indeed it was. But we can only speculate about such things.

It seems to me that there is a point of no return for every follower of Jesus, and I can reflect on my own story. Church life was always part of my experience, and provided a very secure social group as I grew up – a thriving Sunday School and then youth activities during the teenage years. On one occasion I recall being challenged and took up regular Bible reading – naively starting at Genesis and trying to read a chapter a day (definitely not to be recommended in this age when study guides and Bible notes are so readily available!).

I was sincere in many ways and would always have described myself as a Christian. But the combination of university life, and moving around to different locations when Jan and I were first married demonstrated that I could easily drift away from all this – and indeed I nearly did in the early 1970s. We had just moved to a new town and the church we tried out did not in any way match our earlier experience or expectations. We just didn't go to church for a few months.

But God in his great mercy didn't let go! Jan and I decided to give church one more try. And for the first time we realised that we were among Christians who shone like stars in their faith. Jesus was alive for them and it showed. At first we found it rather troubling – even disturbing. Then we found it increasingly challenging – did we want to be part of this or not? Then I guess we took the plunge – we said our first “yes” to God which as we probably all know opens the gate to many other challenges and many other “yesses”. That was my point of no return.

Actually it's been rather moving recalling all this – and maybe that's a good thing. Whenever we feel weak, or are confronted again with our human failings, remember that point of no return when you said “yes” to following Jesus. This is the new order of life – there is no turning back on it.

As I wrote earlier, Jesus illustration of the vine is a powerful image, and his message is clear – we must stay as close as we can and receive its nurture with grateful hearts.

Trevor Durston - General Director 1993 – 2006. Now retired and working as a volunteer Area Representative in the UK



God's complete care

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. Psalm 139:1-4

This psalm, written by David, is one of my favourite ones! It has given me strength in difficult situations and it has comforted me. **God's complete care for you and me.** The text tells us that He knows all our ways and actions, He knows our thoughts and words, even before we speak! Maybe this complete knowledge can scare us? How is God reacting if He knows everything about me? Will He condemn me?

As Mission Secretary for an old Swedish Mission organisation, KMA (before I joined TLM) I travelled regularly to India. Once I visited a church and its mission in the state of Assam. The bishop's wife was a wonderful lady, running the Bible School and all the social work belonging to the church. The love that "emanated" from her, I will never forget. The last night we prayed together with the students and they shared their life stories with me. With their words ringing in my mind I travelled back to Kolkata (Calcutta). At the airport I opened my mobile, phoned my husband as usual then I closed it again. On my way to the hotel I wanted to reopen the mobile, but then I had forgotten my code! I became a little worried; nobody knew where I was staying in Kolkata.

Next day I walked into down town and looked for a book. I found one called "Acts of Faith." Its content was about a priest and a rabbi. In the book the text from Psalm 139 were quoted where king David says: *"You are familiar with all my ways."* It was just like those words were written specially for me, to comfort me! That night I slept well. The following morning, I started my journey back to Sweden. The checks at the gate were done and I was sitting waiting for my flight to Bangkok and then Sweden. Not many people had arrived yet except one woman who came and sat down close to me and we started to talk. The woman told me that she was from far away and that she was afraid to go by aeroplane.

Suddenly, a thought came into my mind: this woman is a Christian! So I asked her about the purpose of her visit in Bangkok. "To participate in a Christian conference for women" was her answer and she added that her husband, that morning, had told her by phone that she should not be worried because there would be a woman at the gate to help her! In my notes I just had one name for someone in Kolkata. For some reason which I don't know, I showed this address to the woman sitting there close to me. To my great astonishment the woman had visited that very person!

Why am I telling all these details? Because I believe that God in His great love and complete knowledge about us, wanted to tell me through all those small episodes: I'm with you every day, everywhere. I'm familiar with all your ways! In the same way He is familiar with all **your** ways, even the most difficult and hurting ones. His care about you is complete.

We also read in Psalm 139 this: **we are His wonderful creation.** *"For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made."*

When we are sick or in difficulties, do wrong or feel like an outcast, it can be very hard to believe that the Almighty God has created us, made us wonderful. I cannot see it in other people's eyes and I do not see it in the mirror! We easily condemn ourselves thinking that we are not precious. I have often met this thinking in my counselling. But if we think like that, it is like we are saying to the Lord: your creation was not good!

The Bible tells us that He created every part of you and me. He saw you and me before we were born. You can trust these words. You can also remind God about this when you don't understand the difficulties you meet. His knowledge about you is complete. You, His creation, are wonderful.



'Find rest for your soul'

(Matthew 11: 27-30)

'COME TO METake My yoke upon you and learn of Me, for I am gentle (meek) and humble (lowly) in heart, and you will find rest for your soul' (Matthew 11, 28- 29) (Amplified)

We are all aware of the various things happening in the world we live in at this moment. All it takes is for us to switch on our radio, TV or browse internet for news and we are served with horrible, terrible and discouraging news of what goes on around the globe; if it is not earthquake, it will be war, or famine or hurricane, suicide bomb/terrorist attack, riot, refugee crisis, economic recession and many more. Just as we look at calamity at the global level, we also have crises at local level such as domestic violence, family broken apart, divorce, child abuse, slavery, discrimination, loss of loved ones, loneliness, stigma as a result of Leprosy and disability to name a few. You will agree with me that the world we live in at the moment is severely under attack; and it's from every front - nowhere is spared and nowhere is safe.

But thanks be to God, as Christians we are not surprised or uniformed about the events happening in our days. The scriptures predicted all these and tells us to prepare for even worse. The world is looking for peace but we have been given Jesus the Prince of Peace. He has prepared Himself as a refuge for us and all He demands from us is to 'COME' (Matt' 11:28)

In vs 27 of our text Jesus made it clear to us that He only understands the Father and He has the ability to grant us knowledge of the Father as we come to Him. The foundation of human problems comes from the loss of our identity and knowledge of our creator (God the Father); since we do not know the Father there is no way we could understand how to fellowship with Him and manifest His nature that will bring rest and peace to our soul and the world we live in; that is why Jesus invites us to 'COME'

As we come to Jesus He has promised to give us rest by taking away all our fears, burdens and heavy yoke. And as we take His yoke (which is useful, good – not harsh, hard, sharp or pressing, but comfortable, gracious and pleasant) and His burden which is very light and easy to be borne, we will find rest for our soul.

Dear Lord Jesus, as we come to you today, we take your yoke and your burden upon ourselves and receive the promised 'REST for our soul'. Please open the eyes of our loved ones, friends, co-workers and the Leprosy affected people you have called us to serve, so that they may also COME to you and received true REST. Amen!

Bunmi Oluloto

TLM Country Leader Niger & Chad



Troubled Waters

'When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you.' (Isaiah 43:2 NIV)

We'd always interpreted this verse figuratively, recognising the challenges that could come our way, and they did. But then we got another take on it living in India.

We'd been in Chennai just five months when we experienced our first major natural disaster there. We lived round the corner from the cyclone monitoring centre, but were a hundred miles north of the city when colleagues informed us of news of an impending cyclone. We needed to head home, so drove the four hour journey through the pouring rain, driven already by high winds, arriving well after midnight.

Next morning came the news that the area north of us in coastal Andhra Pradesh was badly affected. Preliminary reports indicated that many Salvation Army churches and schools had been seriously damaged, if not destroyed. We called a meeting of key staff and arranged funds for emergency rations. Staff went out in twos to affected districts. A few days later we ourselves travelled into the affected areas, extensive flooding visible as we flew overhead. Reports from the emissaries spoke of immense needs. Our own impressions confirmed these as we met the people, waded through flooded compounds, sat beside flooded rivers, saw bridges destroyed, smelt the stench of the rotting flesh of cattle, chicken and other livestock. We saw people housed in cyclone shelters, in churches and schools, their own houses destroyed. Their resilience was remarkable. They would soon be out mending what they could or rebuilding their pole and mud houses. Could we just assist by providing *palmyra* palm leaves for thatching, was one of the requests.

Local resources were limited. If we could communicate with the international office there might be some hope. Phone lines were down, but we eventually found a public call box and armed with a pile of coins managed to speak to colleagues in London. That began a sequence of tranches that would ultimately exceed US\$ 1.5m, enabling the extensive rebuilding over the next 18 months of staff houses, schools and churches. Of course there were requests we were unable to fulfil. But often we would hear people say: 'Never mind, we were just glad you were here with us.'

It was we who represented God, who promises to be with us when we need him.

'When you pass through the waters, I will be with you.'

But we could not have done this alone. We needed the support of fellow-believers both locally and internationally. That network bridges continents.

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 TLMI.



FIX THE "HOLE"! - 1.

'If anyone, then, knows the good they ought to do and doesn't do it, it is sin for them' James 4:17 (NIV)

I would like to share this touching story which I have received from my former mentor and it has really challenged, me especially during this time of economic turmoil in my country. Painting boats was all Joe ever did for a living. He had established a reputation for being very good at his craft even if it barely met his needs. One day, he was invited to paint a boat that had lost its paint to constant use on salty waters. In their conversation, the boat owner had specified the colour he wanted the boat painted in. So Joe came with the required tools and paint. He set to work as soon as he arrived.

However, while painting the boat, he had noticed a hole in the boat's hull. The hole was big enough to cause havoc if the boat sailed without mending it. He wondered if the boat owner had seen the hole and why he never said anything about it. Well, he initially thought to himself, I am a painter, not a boat repairer. Maybe the boat owner had someone else in mind to fix the hole. But on further thought, he felt he had nothing to lose by fixing the hole since it was something he could easily do even though it was not part of his brief. He went ahead to paint the boat and fix the hole as well without mentioning anything about the extra work to his client. As soon as he was done, he received his cheque for the painting job and left.

Early in the morning a few days later, the owner of the boat came to the painter's house and with tear-moistened eyes, presented him with another cheque, this time for more than double the amount he had paid for the painting job. The poor painter could not believe his eyes. He asked himself if he was dreaming. Then he turned to the client and stuttered,

"Bbbbbbut sir, you've already paid me well for painting the boat!"

"Yes I know", said the client, "but this is not for the paint job. This is specially for having repaired the hole in the boat".

To which Joe replied, *"Ah! Sir, it was such a small service. Why would you want to pay me such a huge amount for something so insignificant compared to the actual work you hired me to do?"*

The boat-owner smiled and said,

"My dear friend, I know you would not understand. But let me tell you what happened. When I asked you to paint the boat, I forgot to mention about the hole. It totally escaped my mind even though I knew it was something you could fix. When the paint job dried, my kids took the boat and went on a fishing trip. They did not know that there was a hole in the hull of the boat and I was not at home at that time. I had not even remembered to tell them. When I returned and noticed they had taken the boat, I was desperate because I remembered that the boat had a hole. I was almost losing my mind from imagining terrible things that could have happened to them. Imagine my relief and joy when I saw them returning from fishing. Then, I examined the boat and found that you had repaired the hole! Do you now see what you did? You saved the life of my children! No amount of money is too much to pay for your "small" good deed."



FIX THE "HOLE"! - 2.

'If anyone, then, knows the good they ought to do and doesn't do it, it is sin for them' James 4:17 (NIV)

Our world is in dire need of "small" good deeds that have potential to make a great difference. To do nothing because you feel that you cannot do much is to forfeit the opportunity to contribute a significant quota to social transformation. It does not require special intelligence to ignore things that you believe do not directly concern you, especially when you feel that it is someone else's job. Those who only do what they are paid to do or what is naturally expected of them never raise the bar. They never make the difference that makes a difference. Neither do those who only complain.

The key to greatness is problem-solving. Those who constantly make themselves problem solvers will never be derelict no matter how tough the times are. When times are hard, problems are created. Problems provide the raw materials for every great achiever to work with. The world's current socio-economic climate has caused and continues to cause many "holes" in the boats of supporting and implementing nation's economies and lives.

You do not need a university degree to be a critic. Most of the "best" ideas about moving a nation forward are found in beer parlours where the discussants hardly get involved in providing any meaningful solution. The world was never created to reward those who only see what is wrong and what can be done. Rewards are only guaranteed to flow in the direction of those who actually do something to solve problems.

For every "boat hole" you repair, you never can tell how many lives you will save. A seemingly small gesture can go a long way to prevent monumental tragedy.

Don't just stop at doing your regular "painting job" Go beyond the call of duty. Keep your eyes open. Wherever you find a "leak" that is not beyond your competence around you, in the organization, in someone you know, fix it! No matter how many times that happens, keep at it.

To have all you want, according to the wisdom of Zig Ziglar, help as many people as possible to get what they need!

Now go find a "hole" you can fix!

This has been adopted from my former mentor,

Yousif Deng - Country leader TLM Sudan and South Sudan. With TLM since 2001



“I am with you...”

¹⁸ Then Jesus came to them and said, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.’ Matthew 28,18-20

The words above are of course from The Great Commission. I do however take great comfort from them in all that I seek to achieve in God’s name.

As I write this many of you from around the world will have received a large bundle of papers as preparation for the global fellowship meetings in September, and that was quickly followed by a further 30 pages making up the 5 year fellowship review. If you are like me it is a daunting prospect to read, understand and prepare for the discussions in time for the meeting at Lane End. I believe that the work of The Leprosy Mission is a part of The Great Commission and so I hang on to the promises Jesus made to us as His disciples.

Some will be travelling from overseas and will feel the pressure of needing to spend time with family before travelling to the UK. Some are volunteers and will feel the pressure of needing to be up to date with their day jobs before turning their minds to their time at Lane End. Some will be fully employed by TLM and will be busy preparing their teams for their absence as well as ensuring that they are fully up to date with the agenda items. To ease the burden that these busy times place upon us I would like to share 2 things with you

- 1 I often look at big tasks that I face as something that I need to tackle in my own strength and so the task looks rather like an immovable object (A mountain). Once I get to the other side of the mountain I often realise that God was working through me and it was a lot easier than I thought it would be as a result. I now draw on the strength of past knowledge and when facing a seemingly difficult task I acknowledge that God is with me from the start and this gives me the confidence to march forward in God’s strength and not my own.
- 2 I know when Jesus gave that authority to his Disciples he did this in the sure knowledge that they would make mistakes, and that through these mistakes we would continue to learn and become more like Jesus. Making mistakes okay and is part of our growing maturity in Christ

I know that sometimes this walk with Jesus is both scary and exciting, but Jesus has promised to be with us always, and to the very end of the age, so whatever trials and tribulations that you face in the future do it with the knowledge that Jesus will see you through.

Peter Waddup – Chairman of the Leprosy Mission England and Wales



Clothed in His righteousness

"And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labour or spin. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendour was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you, you of little faith?" Matthew 6:28-30

The Cape Spring flower season is drawing to a close. For a few weeks during September and October, the arid Cape West Coast is awash with colour as it wakes from its winter hibernation.

Flowers appear everywhere, even in disbanded industrial wastelands, but it is the national park along the coast which draws people in their thousands to admire the daisies, before they are swept away by the harsh summer winds.

I was driving north through Namaqualand, as this region is known, glancing at the bleak landscape, when I noticed bright flashes of colour in my rear-view mirror. I pulled off the road at a viewing point and looked around. The landscape was drab, but when I turned and looked south, I was met with a blaze of colour. Pink, crimson, violet, yellow and purple flowers danced, bobbed and swayed to the wind gusting across the plains.

The flowers were facing the Sun and burst into view when I looked back at them, with the Sun behind me. It was strange to look at the road ahead, knowing that the flowers were there, yet only visible when I glanced at my rear-view mirror. Many people are disappointed when they visit Namaqualand – as soon as clouds cover the sun, the flowers close and shrivel and if you don't plan your route, you'll find yourself driving away from the colourful banks of the flowers, rather than towards them.

We're called to be Son-ward facing people, illuminated by His holiness, radiating His love [Philippians 2:15]. Easier said than done? Of course, but I take comfort from the Namaqualand daisies – no terrain is too rough, too harsh or too grim for them. Give them winter rains and the warmth of spring and they will delight you in the most unexpected ways and places. Over the years I've met some of His people working in bleak places, whose joy and hope is irrepressible. They are people who drink from the spring of the water of life [Rev 21:6], and His glory is their light [Rev 21:23]. You know when you meet them that if you turn around and face the direction in which they're facing, you will see the Lord.

"Father, may my focus be on You today, reflecting Your beauty. May others thirst for the waters of your spring because of my saltiness."

Peter Laubscher - Country Leader, Southern Africa. Peter and Elizabeth Laubscher have worked with the Leprosy Mission since 1981. They are blessed with three children. Peter cruises the waters of False Bay when he's not trying to polish scratches out of telescope mirrors.



Taste and See

Psalm 34:8 'Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good! Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him!'

I have been pondering this verse in the light of a recent encounter with my friend Karen who had been born blind. In this well-known verse it is a seemingly contradictory mix of senses; tasting and seeing. How can you taste something that relates to seeing?

Earlier this year I went away for a weekend star gazing off the East coast of England at a Christian retreat centre. It was an isolated place, located well off the beaten track. After a journey of multiple trains and buses and a nondescript meeting point to be picked up for the last few miles, I felt very happy to finally arrive at my destination. I was immediately welcomed into the group; many of whom had attended various holiday events at the centre for decades. Being new to the place I wanted to explore the local area and a couple; Karen and Mark kindly invited me to join them for a walk.

Karen had been born blind and Mark was partially sighted. I was immediately struck by the words they used to describe the local beach as being 'beautiful'. Karen went on to describe the different types of the sand and the rock she could feel beneath her feet whenever she went swimming or walking around different beaches around the UK and that this local one was especially 'beautiful'.

I thought about the way that I used the term 'beautiful'. Often I use it in relation to things that I see like a beautiful sunset, sunrise, bird, flower, landscape, jewellery. I thought that maybe I had been limiting my own understanding of what else beautiful could mean. Perhaps experiencing beauty through other means rather than just sight; for example how I could feel beauty through my other senses. I wonder if this is what Jesus also meant when he defends the actions of the woman who poured an expensive jar of perfume over him. Jesus says *'Why are you bothering this woman? She has done a beautiful thing to me.'* (Jesus anointed at Bethany Matthew 26:6-13). I am thankful for what Karen has helped me to see and understand from our conversation and walk and how to better understand Psalm 34:8.

John Piper, the American author and pastor writes as part of his devotional book 'Taste and See; Savoring the Supremacy of God in All of Life'

"God's omnipotent exuberance to do us good is one of the most freeing discoveries a human can make. Oh, that we might believe it and savour it and bring it to mind again and again until it is our very nature to feel the truth that the godly are designed for unknown and inconceivable happiness."—John Piper. Spend some time reflecting and sharing your understanding of experiencing beauty and how you can *'taste and see that the Lord is good'*.

Sara Kandiah. Global Support Officer at TLMI.

Sara has been with the mission since February 2015 and has a particular interest in networking and building connections with the local church across the Global Fellowship.



Generosity

2 Cor.9: 6-8. "Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work."

I was recently talking to a friend whose son had just started to work as a junior doctor in a remote mission hospital. This was the first time he was living independently so far from home, and so his parents gave him some advice on how to manage his finances. "Make a budget for the month, calculating what you will need for your expenses, and every week check that you are on track. Bank the extra money so that you will have something to fall back on in emergencies".

The parents were surprised when the young man said he planned to set aside a third of his salary for charity. This was something that he and all his young colleagues had decided to do, after they became aware of the poverty and hardship faced by many of their patients. Gently the parents advised him, saying, "one third of your salary is a large amount, and you may not have enough left to meet your own needs. Most people feel that giving a tithe (or a tenth) is enough to please God".

The young man said that he was aware of many of his friends who gave one-third of their salary, and who managed to live quite comfortably. They had found that God did look after them and they found their reward in the satisfaction of being able to help those less fortunate.

We are all called to give generously and cheerfully. We cannot do otherwise when we remember that Jesus gave his life for our salvation. Many times we give to the church or to charity out of a sense of duty. Giving with joy and gratitude enhances our gift, and brings us deep satisfaction and fulfillment as we are blessed by being in partnership with God in His work of salvation.

*"Look to God, be radiant,
Let God's love shine from you.
In the cause of peace and justice,
Look to God be radiant.
Let God's love flow from you.
To the sick, the oppressed and homeless.
God is light, God is love,
Opening hidden treasure
Love that knows no measure." (Joachim Neander)*

Joyce Ponnaiya. I am a pathologist and worked for many years , till my retirement at the Christian Medical College and Hospital in Vellore, India. Apart from my academic appointment, I have served as the Principal (Dean) of the college and later as the Director (CEO) of the organisation. From 2006 to 2011 after retiring from CMC, I worked as Consultant Pathologist at the Schieffelin Institute of Health Research and Leprosy Centre (SIHR &LC), at Karigiri in India. Thereafter, I continue to work at Karigiri in an honorary part-time position as pathologist. I have served on the Board of Governors of both the TLM India Trust and TLM International.



When we walk with God, the best is yet to come.

“The eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms.” —Deuteronomy 33:27

My visit to Nepal last May was not new to me, but when I compared the country where I had lived around 16 years ago, it became so strange to me. Living condition had been improved in the urban areas, many foreign products are available in many shops, some high - rise apartment buildings and big shopping malls are built up. Many private hospitals and clinics had been set up with more facilities, but I was told that one health post still only serving around 8000 population in the rural area, the medical gap is still so big like the old days. Mobile phones and internet coverage are common. Public toilets were set up in most of the places I visited, not like in the old days we just went to the bush. However, the habit of throwing rubbish everywhere has not changed; because I could find them in every corner of the street. The local churches are growing very fast, I have seen at least four to five churches on my way back from the village. I did not have the time to visit the church in Surkhet valley of Mid-Western Nepal. But according to the information from their pastor, I realized there were thirty two churches now. When comparing with the old days, there were only three churches during my time. Amazing to see how fast the church growth in this country, and the increasing growth of Christian Non-government organizations everywhere, especially in the capital city.

I was so happy to meet up with some expatriates and Nepali old friends after 16 to 18 years; they recognized me in the first sight, we shared about our past related to our ups and downs. Especially when I met my first Nepali teacher, who had taught me 23 years ago had become the Community Director of a local Non-Government organization with his highly qualification.

Hong Kong has about thirty- five thousands of Nepali people; there is a big community in some areas of the city, and thirteen Nepali churches had been built up in last 20 years. I never thought I have the chance to meet up with a Nepali couple, whom I met in Nepal 23 years ago when I just started my first term there. Now this couple has been serving the Nepali church in Hong Kong for many years, I can see how God guide them to a strange country and shared the gospel to the Nepali community. It is amazing to meet each other after so many years, with their request; I started helping the pastor wife to teach English and Chinese to the Nepali women, it became part of my ministry here.

“Life is not about my particular achievement or experience. The most important task of your life is not what you do, but who you become.” - John Ortberg.

Yuek Ming Poon (Hong Kong)

Worked with The Leprosy Mission for 22 years. 1993 – 2000 seconded to INF to work in Nepal in leprosy clinic as Clinic Manager. 2002 – 2004 worked with TLM as POID Technical Officer in India, 2005 – 2012 worked with TLM as Country Leader in China and Laos, 2013 -2015 worked with TLM in PNG as TLMPNG Capacity Building Advisor. June 2015 left TLM and then studied in Vancouver Regent Bible College from September 15 to April 2016. Now back to HK and involving in Nepali ministry in HK.



Psalm 22

For the director of music. To the tune of 'The Doe of the Morning'. A psalm of David.

¹ My God, my God, why have you forsaken me, Why are you so far from saving me,
so far from my cries of anguish?

² My God, I cry out by day, but you do not answer, by night, but I find no rest. ^[b]

³ Yet you are enthroned as the Holy One; you are the one Israel praises. ^[c]

⁴ In you our ancestors put their trust; they trusted and you delivered them.

⁵ To you they cried out and were saved; in you they trusted and were not put to shame.

⁶ But I am a worm and not a man, scorned by everyone, despised by the people.

⁷ All who see me mock me; they hurl insults, shaking their heads.

⁸ 'He trusts in the LORD,' they say, 'let the LORD rescue him.
Let him deliver him, since he delights in him.'

⁹ Yet you brought me out of the womb; you made me trust in you, even at my mother's breast.

¹⁰ From birth I was cast on you, from my mother's womb you have been my God.

¹¹ Do not be far from me, for trouble is near and there is no one to help.

¹² Many bulls surround me, strong bulls of Bashan encircle me.

¹³ Roaring lions that tear their prey open their mouths wide against me.

¹⁴ I am poured out like water and all my bones are out of joint.

My heart has turned to wax it has melted within me.

¹⁵ My mouth ^[d] is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth;
you lay me in the dust of death.

¹⁶ Dogs surround me, a pack of villains encircles me; they pierce ^[e] my hands and my feet.

¹⁷ All my bones are on display; people stare and gloat over me.

¹⁸ They divide my clothes among them and cast lots for my garment.

¹⁹ But you, LORD, do not be far from me. You are my strength; come quickly to help me.

²⁰ Deliver me from the sword, my precious life from the power of the dogs.

²¹ Rescue me from the mouth of the lions; save me from the horns of the wild oxen.

²² I will declare your name to my people; in the assembly I will praise you.

²³ You who fear the LORD, praise him! All you descendants of Jacob, honour him!
Revere him, all you descendants of Israel! ²⁴ For he has not despised or scorned the suffering of the
afflicted one; he has not hidden his face from him but has listened to his cry for help.

²⁵ From you comes the theme of my praise in the great assembly;
before those who fear you^[f] I will fulfil my vows.

²⁶ The poor will eat and be satisfied; those who seek the LORD will praise him –
may your hearts live for ever!

²⁷ All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the LORD,
and all the families of the nations will bow down before him,

²⁸ for dominion belongs to the LORD and he rules over the nations.

²⁹ All the rich of the earth will feast and worship;
all who go down to the dust will kneel before him –
those who cannot keep themselves alive.

³⁰ Posterity will serve him; future generations will be told about the Lord.

³¹ They will proclaim his righteousness, declaring to a people yet unborn:
He has done it!



„Father, forgive them!”

Jesus said: Father, forgive them for they do not know what they are doing!” Luke 23,34

As a pastor in communist Hungary in the 1950's he suffered many restrictions and humiliations. When the students' and intellectuals' insurrection against the regime flared up in 1956, one of his sons was among the first to take part and become one of the early victims.

Before the Soviet tanks came in and crushed the rebellion, the students were more than holding their own in the fierce street fighting Budapest. The young communist soldier who had killed the pastor's son found himself running for his life. In desperation he rushed into the pastor's house and asked for protection.

The 'rebels' stormed into the room and demanded that the young soldier be handed over to them for execution. Imagine the father's predicament. He could get revenge on the man who had killed his son. If he tried to protect him, he risked being shot as a collaborator by the angry mob. What should he do?

He stood in front of his son's killer to protect him and facing the others he said: „If you want to shoot him, you must kill me first. Forgive him, he did not know what he was doing. There have been enough deaths already.”

They all left and for many years „the pastor who had risked his life to protect his son's killer” went through the country preaching God's love and forgiveness. His life gave credibility to his message and many turned to Christ.

Two thousand years ago Jesus died in our place. Through His sacrifice He paid the price for our sins. On the cross He said: „Father, forgive them!”

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.

Be patient, God at work



“Live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so you are not to do whatever you want.

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.”

Galatians Chapter 5 verses 16-17, 22-23.

In my last devotion for The Bridge, I was thinking about a fruit of the Spirit. Can you remember which one? Ten points if you remember it was Generosity. 😊

In our Leprosy Mission office, a volunteer has the fruits of the Spirit displayed at her desk, so I'm reminded of them on a daily basis! Today I will consider another gift of the Holy Spirit.

We've all heard the prayer: “Lord, make me more patient ... now!” Perhaps it's something we have prayed ourselves?

My gran regularly quoted, “Patience is a virtue, find it where you can. Found seldom in a woman and never in a man.” Whether you're male or female, nobody likes to wait. Whether you are sitting in a traffic jam, standing in a supermarket queue or waiting for your next holiday, waiting is not easy.

Being patient can be a challenge. But it's clear that God wants us to develop this characteristic. After all, patience is more than a virtue ... it's a fruit of the Spirit. Patience reflects God's presence in our lives, because without His help, it's not possible to be patient.

If you struggle with patience, it might be because you're focussing on others and not yourself. You're waiting for that car to move so you can continue driving, or you're waiting for the person counting out loose change at the supermarket till so you can be served next. But the issue is not the people who push us to the edge; instead it's our inability to focus on what God is doing in our lives. God wants us to wait patiently for Him, because He's hard at work.

God might be making us wait ... on purpose! Whether we like it or not, we grow in times of crisis. When everything is going well, we happily coast through life. We might not talk to God as much as we should. But when a crisis comes, we get worried and look to God for help. It's at these difficult times that we draw close to God. Only then, can God develop His character in our lives.

We can always rely on God's timing. Patience is not about waiting for other people, it is learning to wait on God and to willingly let Him work in our lives - in His time, not ours.



Remembering to fly

One sunny Saturday in early autumn, Grace and I were sitting at the kitchen table eating lunch. Outside on the patio, a magpie was hopping around. We watched him as he hopped all the way along to the end, then all the way back, then onto the grass, then back onto the patio.

“What’s that bird doing, Mummy?” Grace asked.

“He’s probably looking for some lunch,” I said.

“But why is he walking?” she asked me. “Does he not know he’s got wings, or has he just forgotten how to fly?”

Sometimes I forget that I have wings, that I can fly. I disregard the promise of eagles’ wings in favour of slogging through the grime under my own steam. I dream small, put God in a box, limit myself in all sorts of different ways.

I tell myself I can’t do it, it won’t work, I’m not able to. Even worse, somewhere inside I wonder whether even if I pray, nothing will change.

Does that sound familiar? Perhaps you and I need a reminder.

I will fly on wings like eagles.	Isaiah 40:31
My strength will be renewed.	Isaiah 40:31
I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.	Phil. 4:13
His power is made perfect in my weakness.	2 Cor. 12:10
He makes my feet like the feet of a deer; he enables me to tread on the heights.	Habakkuk 3:19
His Spirit does not make me timid, but gives me power, love and self-discipline.	2 Tim. 1:7
The Lord is faithful, and he will strengthen me and protect me from the evil one.	2 Thess .3:3
He is able to do immeasurably more than all I ask or imagine.	Eph. 3:21
I will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on me.	Acts 1:8

Psalm 18 (NLT) I love you, Lord; you are my strength. The Lord is my rock, my fortress, and my saviour; my God is my rock, in whom I find protection. He is my shield, the power that saves me, and my place of safety.



Changeless in a changing world

Hebrews 13:8

We live in a time of constant change whether its world events (Brexit), or people coming or going in our lives, a sudden job role change or health issues which leave us challenged and struggling to remain at peace. I had the challenge of one of my best friends moving to Telford recently (not a million miles away you say) but her absence has been a real adjustment for me. It may be a close working colleague is leaving for a new job or the news of a sudden death. Certain moments in our lives can throw us off track at times and at these times I find myself running to the fountain of all grace and peace for stability.

Culture is always shifting. Seasons change. What we consider relevant in one season can quickly become outdated in the next. The most relevant truth is not what changes when seasons come and go, but the truth of One who remains the same regardless of what continues to shift and change around us. The author of Hebrews reminds us of the timelessness of Jesus: *'Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever' (Hebrews 13:8)*

In this scripture, we receive the strategy for always remaining relevant – regardless of the changes that will constantly take place around us. The key is standing upon, and drawing strength from the unchanging One. The only One who can keep us steadfast and grounded is the One who remains forever steadfast Himself. This is JESUS!

When we, through empowerment of the Holy Spirit, begin to model Christ, we show the world who the Father is. As we represent who God is, we become what the world longs for. This has the ability to break off the scales that prevent eyes from beholding the Desire of All Nations. He alone is peace personified.

Prayer: *Jesus, You are the same yesterday, today and forever! You never change. You are always current and Your example is always relevant. Despite the challenges of living in a state of constant change I can draw strength and peace from the One who remains unchanging.*

Elizabeth Allen is the Executive Assistant to the National Director at TLM England & Wales



Slow to anger and abounding in lovingkindness

*'For He Himself knows our frame;
He is mindful that we are but dust.'*

Psalm 103:14 NASB

When I read Psalm 103 I cannot escape the overwhelming truth that God is completely gracious and compassionate towards me. He covers all of my weaknesses and failures with His forgiveness and grace. I am forever grateful that He is 'slow to anger and abounding in lovingkindness'. In our relationship, He truly lifts me up, and I need to remember how far He reaches down to catch me, and how high He wants to lift me.

Mixed into this amazing truth is the reassurance that 'He Himself knows our frame'. Our God understands just how weak we are, He understands how frail our bodies can be, the physical struggles we face and the mental battles that can consume us. When we are at our lowest point, He understands; when we mess up again, He still understands. I am always encouraged to know that the weaknesses and failings I experience are not a surprise to God, and that He is still 'slow to anger and abounding in lovingkindness' towards me.

As a father, I am always learning how to best love and encourage my 3 children. I often need to revise my 'Parenting 101 Class' when I am reminded for the thousandth time that when it comes to kids, one size does not fit all.

I need to remember how each one is wired; what each one finds encouraging, and what they may find harsh. I need to be mindful of what they are handling in life, at school, at church, at football training, with friends and with each other.

When I make the effort to understand my children better, I am equipped to change my behaviour. I can cover their particular weaknesses with grace, instead of bringing unrealistic expectation. I can reach out further to the one that is in difficulty or be considerate when one succeeds while another stumbles.

An even greater challenge is to be similarly gracious in all our relationships.

How great it is, that while we still have to work at this every day, our Heavenly Father never fails to understand us, or what we can bear. He is a truly compassionate Father, who understands our struggles and wants to lift us up when we fall.

He knows your frame, He is abounding in lovingkindness towards you, and He will never let you go.



In Thy Name We Go

When I was reading recently the event of Mary of Bethany anointing Jesus' feet with expensive perfume whilst having a meal with Simon the Leper, some of those present expressed disquiet at what she had done. Jesus reply to her 'jumped out at me' - *"she did what she could"* (Mark 14 v 6)

I thought of the numerous times over the years I had said "I can't" when confronted with various challenges. One of these was being given the opportunity and privilege to go as a volunteer to the DBLM Hospital in Nilphamari, Bangladesh, for three months, though fearful of the unknown. With God's help and human encouragement I did what I could and completed the project assigned to me.

Whilst there I saw many instances of leprosy affected people who had been cured and were involved in doing what they could in the self-help groups set up in the villages to encourage others to do what they could to improve their own lives.

Coming up-to-date the ParaOlympics have shown what the many participants could do for the honour of their countries.

The world is full of people being in need but Jesus takes the brunt of the negativity when we are His and enables us to do what we can for Him.

*"We go in faith
our own great weakness feeling,
and needing more each day
Thy grace to know;
yet from our hearts
a song of triumph pealing,
We rest on Thee,
and in Thy name we go."
(Edith Gilling Cherry)*

Pat Adlam

is a long term supporter of TLM, who has visited the field work on different occasions in Maharashtra, Nepal, West Bengal and Bangladesh, as well as spending 3months as a volunteer at DBLM hospital in Nilphamari



A Quietness of Soul

Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him – Psalm 37:7a

Be still and know that I am God – Psalm 46:10

I probably like 'peace and quiet' as much as anybody. But when I am driving in my car or am home by myself in what could be an oasis of quiet amid life's noise and rush, I tend to turn on the radio or tv, or pick up my mobile phone to keep up with what is happening in the world around me. I rarely just sit in silence. And even when I sit in silence, inner voices grab my attention. The day's undone activities cry out. There is little stillness within or without. Maybe this sounds familiar to you.

How frequently this happens when we pause for prayer. We want to spend time with God, but feel distracted by rush, wordiness, and emotional clutter. Prayer becomes a project. We long for something more satisfying. We want to come to God with more than a ruffled, uncollected spirit. So we wonder *Is there a way through the noise? How do we silence the clamouring voices within us?*

One of the simplest and most profound things we can do when we talk to God is simply to sit still. Many people, including myself, often begin prayer with the idea that they have to say or do something – anything. But God usually intends for us to find rest or replenishment. Or simple to pause and *be*. I don't have to perform or achieve.

How can we make more room for such an approach to prayer – and daily life? Learning quietness should not become another burdensome project, of course. The purpose of quiet is not the mere absence of sound, or to eliminate thought, but to make room for God's presence. The goal is to become more familiar with Him. We learn the art of not talking in order to hear what God has to say.

Only very recently I have started to make room for more quiet times with God. It is a journey. When quiet, my thoughts tend to wander away to my daily activities. What helps me to focus my thoughts is to say and repeat a few words, like "*Lord, hear my prayer*" or a few lines of a Bible verse or song. "*Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, have mercy on me.*"

Progress in prayer, whether cultivating a quiet heart or asking God for help is of course not a formula, but comes as a gift.

Henry Nouwen writes: This way of simple prayer.. when we are faithful to it and practice it at regular times, slowly leads us to an experience of rest and opens us to God's active presence. Moreover, we can take this prayer with us into a very busy day. When, for instance, we have spent twenty minutes sitting in the presence of God with the words "*The Lord is my shepherd*", they may slowly build a little nest for themselves in our heart and stay there for the rest of our busy day. Even while we are talking, studying, gardening or building, the prayer can continue in our heart and keep us aware of God's ever-present guidance."

I pray that whatever your circumstances, you may find a quiet soul with God today!

Lord, I am not good at slowing down. I like to see things "happen". I've become hurried and harried. And I like to fill the silences with sound. Draw me to the rest I find in you. Remind me that time with you can re-create me and fill my life with all I need. Amen. (Adapted from The Art of Prayer, by Timothy Jones)

Henno Couprie Henno is Country leader of TLM Netherlands since 2004. Before he worked in Christian development work in Indonesia, PNG and Ivory Coast.



Psalm 30

A psalm. A song. For the dedication of the temple. Of David.

¹ I will exalt you, LORD,
for you lifted me out of the depths
and did not let my enemies gloat over me.

² LORD my God, I called to you for help,
and you healed me.

³ You, LORD, brought me up from the realm of the dead;
you spared me from going down to the pit.

⁴ Sing the praises of the LORD, you his faithful people;
praise his holy name.

⁵ For his anger lasts only a moment,
but his favour lasts a lifetime;
weeping may stay for the night,
but rejoicing comes in the morning.

⁶ When I felt secure, I said,
'I shall never be shaken.'

⁷ LORD, when you favoured me,
you made my royal mountain^[c] stand firm;
but when you hid your face,
I was dismayed.

⁸ To you, LORD, I called;
to the Lord I cried for mercy:

⁹ 'What is gained if I am silenced,
if I go down to the pit?
Will the dust praise you?

Will it proclaim your faithfulness?

¹⁰ Hear, LORD, and be merciful to me;
LORD, be my help.'

¹¹ You turned my wailing into dancing;
you removed my sackcloth and clothed me with joy,
¹² that my heart may sing your praises and not be silent.
LORD my God, I will praise you for ever.



Reformation – 31 Oct 1517

Extracts from Martin Luther's 95 Theses

Out of love for the truth and from desire to elucidate it, the Reverend Father Martin Luther, Master of Arts and Sacred Theology, and ordinary lecturer therein at Wittenberg, intends to defend the following statements and to dispute on them in that place.

Therefore he asks that those who cannot be present and dispute with him orally shall do so in their absence by letter. In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.

When our Lord and Master Jesus Christ said, "Repent" (Mt 4:17), he willed the entire life of believers to be one of repentance.

This word cannot be understood as referring to the sacrament of penance, that is, confession and satisfaction, as administered by the clergy.

Yet it does not mean solely inner repentance; such inner repentance is worthless unless it produces various outward mortification of the flesh.

The penalty of sin remains as long as the hatred of self (that is, true inner repentance), namely till our entrance into the kingdom of heaven.

God remits guilt to no one unless at the same time he humbles him in all things and makes him submissive to the vicar, the priest.

Any truly repentant Christian has a right to full remission of penalty and guilt, even without indulgence letters.

Any true Christian, whether living or dead, participates in all the blessings of Christ and the church; and this is granted him by God, even without indulgence letters.

Christians are to be taught that he who gives to the poor or lends to the needy does a better deed than he who buys indulgences.

Because love grows by works of love, man thereby becomes better. Man does not, however, become better by means of indulgences but is merely freed from penalties.

Christians are to be taught that, unless they have more than they need, they must reserve enough for their family needs and by no means squander it on indulgences.

The true treasure of the church is the most holy gospel of the glory and grace of God.

But this treasure is naturally most odious, for it makes the first to be last (Mt. 20:16).

And thus be confident of entering into heaven through many tribulations rather than through the false security of peace (Acts 14:22).



Authors in Alphabetical Order

Textuarium

Anne-Claude Jonah	4 Oct		Ex,11-15	2 Oct
Becky Calcraft	25 Oct		Deut 33,27	21 Oct
Bunmi Oluloto	13 Oct		Psalms 22	22 Oct
Dan Izzett	8 Oct		Psalms 30	30 Oct
David, King of Israel	30 Oct		Psalms 34,8	19 Oct
Eddie Askew	6 Oct		Psalms 37,7/a	29 Oct
Elizabeth Allen	26 Oct		Psalms 103,14	27 Oct
Gunnel Ericson	12 Oct		Psalms 119,1-8	8 Oct
Henno Couprie	29 Oct		Psalms 139,1-4	12 Oct
Jamie McIntosh	24 Oct		Isaiah 40,31	25 Oct
Jannine Ebenso	5 Oct		Isaiah 43,2	14 Oct
Joyce Ponnaiya Dr	20 Oct		Matth 6,28-30	18 Oct
Martin Luther	31 Oct		Matth 11,28-29	13 Oct
Otto Kingsley	1,2 Oct		Matth 28,18-20	17 Oct
Pat Adlam	28 Oct		Mark 14,6	28 Oct
Paul du Plessis Dr	14 Oct		Luke 10,38-42	4 Oct
Peter Hilton	3 Oct		Luke 23,34	23 Oct
Peter Laubscher	18 Oct		John 15,1-8	10,11 Oct
Peter Waddup	17 Oct		John 20,25	9 Oct
Ruth Butlin Dr	9 Oct		1 Cor 13,4-7	6 Oct
Sara Kandiah	19 Oct		2 Cor 4	7 Oct
Silvano Perotti	23 Oct		2 Cor 9,6-8	20 Oct
Tim Reed	27 Oct		Gal 5,16-17 and 22-23	24 Oct
Trevor Durston	10,11 Oct		Hebr 12,1	5 Oct
Yousif Deng Dr	15,16 Oct		Hebr 13,8	26 Oct
Yuek Ming Poon	21 Oct		James 4,17	15,16 Oct
Zoe Bunter	7 Oct		Rev 4,17	3 Oct