



TLM Daily Devotions

April 2017





A Gentle Reminder...

This polite and soft English wording often reaches us from different ends reminding us on deadlines and delays.

Lent and the period preceeding Easter is God's gentle reminder on what He had planned, prepared, acted and completely fulfilled for our sake, our abundant life, our eternal life, through the Shame of the Cross, through the Victory and Glory of the Cross.

Let ourselves be reminded, let us remember, let us give thanks, let us praise Him, our Lord and our King!

With sincere thanks to each Bridge - contributor, and to Mo, Christine and Allan for the grammar-and theological proof: blessed Easter, TLMers!

Marta

Christ Jesus

⁶ Who, being in very nature^[a] God,
did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;

⁷ rather, he made himself nothing
by taking the very nature^[b] of a servant,
being made in human likeness.

⁸ And being found in appearance as a man,
he humbled himself
by becoming obedient to death—
even death on a cross!

⁹ Therefore God exalted him to the highest place
and gave him the name that is above every name,

¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

¹¹ and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

Philippians 2,6-11



Following the right path

This season God calls us to a radical way of living. We are called to be more than just moral: God calls us to be virtuous. Matthew emphasizes the close relationship between Jewish Law and the teaching of Jesus. Here Jesus teaches with examples that He has not come to abolish the law and the prophets but to bring them to completion. *You have heard that it was said to the men of old; but I say to you Matthew 5: 17-37.*

Sirach affirms that God knows every human action. He the wise teacher urges His listeners to make the right choice in life. They have the commandments to guide them. St. Paul also reminds the Corinthians that God has many riches for those who love Him and tells us that the rules of this age failed to recognize God's wisdom in Christ crucified. The wisdom however is revealed to us by the Holy Spirit. He has not commanded anyone to be ungodly; Sirach 15: 15-20 ¹

Essentially the scriptures speak about true freedom and urge us to find true wisdom. We soon come to realize in this life that the free choices we have to make to become moral people are not always black and white. Freedom is an eminently Christian virtue and value. But then life and its choices is complex. *Blessed are those who walk in the law of the Lord; Psalm 119: 1-2,4-5*

To be wise means to choose carefully what choices we make, not through blind obedience, but through thought and prayer. With Christ there is no new standard, but there is a higher standard that places Christianity heights above the world's measures. It is definitely harder and not just higher because many of us have not fully understood what true freedom entails. It requires so much discipline and regularity only then it becomes spontaneous in the sense that we cannot spontaneously choose Christ anytime, anyplace over everything and anything else. The meaning of spontaneity is not wild abandonment. Instead, it is a freedom to spontaneously choose God above all else.

"Blessed are they who follow the law of the Lord!"

And this is the good news of the season.

Moses Onoh is the country leader of TLM Nigeria

¹ The Book of Sirach is one of the "deuterocanonical books" (literally meaning a second canon.) A term used since 1546, the Synod of Trent in the Catholic Church and Eastern Christianity to describe certain books and passages that are not part of the Hebrew Bible. The term is used in contrast to the "protocanonical books" (the first canon), which are contained in the Hebrew Bible.

The deuterocanonical books are considered canonical by Catholics, Eastern Orthodox, Oriental Orthodox and the Church of the East. They are considered non-canonical by most Protestants.



In Unity, Spirit and Love

Good morning dear colleagues. May these practical aspects from Paul's letter to the Ephesians go with you into the day today!

1) WALK IN UNITY

"I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." (Eph.4:1-3)

2) WALK IN THE SPIRIT

"And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by Whom you were sealed for the Day of Redemption. Let all bitterness be put away from you and be kind to one another forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you." (Eph.4:30-32)

3) WALK IN LOVE

"Therefore be imitators of God as dear children. And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, An offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma." (Eph.5:1,2)

4) WALK IN LIGHT

"For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and Truth." (Eph.5:8,9)

5) WALK IN WISDOM

"See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is." (Eph.5:15-17)

6) WALK IN SUBMISSION

"Wives submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the Church and gave Himself for her Children, obey your parents in the Lord Bond servants, be obedient to those who are your masters not with eye-service, as men-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ doing the will of God from the heart.....And you masters, do the same knowing that your own Master also is in Heaven no partiality with Him." (Eph.5:22ff)

7) WALK IN STRENGTH

"...be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armour of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil." (Eph.6:10,11)

8) WALK IN GRACE

(Eph.6:24) "Grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen." (cf. Eph.1:2, Eph.2:8)

Otto Kingsley is the Cape Regional Director of TLM(SA).



“I cling to you”

Psalm 63:8

My key turned in the lock and the front door opened. Before I could even step inside my house a small blur ran at me, gripping my waist with his arms and burying his face in my coat. I had just returned from three days away at the Global Fellowship Fundraising Meeting in Brentford, and the blur was my 10-year-old son Patrick. I had to shuffle my way into the house with Patrick still gripping me tightly, like a limpet attached to a rock at the seashore. It was some time before I was able to prise him off, and after a hello kiss he happily returned to his X-Box!

It strikes me that this is the type of ‘clinging’ to God that David speaks of in Psalm 63. In verse 1 David writes:

*You, God, are my God,
earnestly I seek you;
I thirst for you,
my whole being longs for you...*

David clings to the Lord because his need of him is so very great.

“your love is better than life,” David sings to God (verse 3).

David clings to his heavenly Father because there is no place he’d rather be. The Lord is his source of fresh water and satisfying food, He is his help and support whatever David may be faced with, and He is his refuge, protection, and safe place.

The same is true of us, but we do not always realise it. We try to manage on our own when we need to be a little 10-year-old child, clinging to a loving parent. We don’t earnestly seek God until we find we are in danger, alone, helpless and desperate. The heart of our Father God is that we should be like Patrick and other little ones, clinging on with all our might, burying our faces into the warm embrace of the Father – all the time.



" La douceur des gestes "

The gentle gestures (" la douceur des gestes " impossible to translate the idea of this expression in english)

"He knew what is in the heart of man" (John 2:25)

Jesus is not a supervisor who dictates the rules of good conduct. He calmly says all these requirements as a call.

"He knew what is in the heart of man" (Jn 2:25). Yes, Jesus knows our human faults, but he also knows all that is possible for us. He sees what we are, but also what we can become: survivors for his cause.

It is a path of resurrection that he offers us. A path that concerns our whole being. Jesus gives three examples. They concern the hands, the eyes and the mouth; Gestures, gaze and speech. It touches the whole man in his relations with others: the man who acts, desires and communicates. Thus he appeals to the gentleness of gestures, to the straightness of his gaze, to the sincerity of his words. "Go first to reconcile you ... If your right eye causes your fall, tear it away ... Let your yes be yes ..."

Sweetness and harmony in relationships are difficult things. Tensions and resentments are not lacking. Yet we can still give the best of ourselves if we live in prayer and in fraternal reconciliation.

Why is it so difficult for us to look at others without our eyes being disturbed by covetousness or jealousy?

As Jesus knows what is in our hearts, he makes us this gift to see the world as he sees it: by a look that grows up the other and never enslaves it.

The true word, the clear language and without fear are ultimate conditions and necessary to live together in confidence. This sincerity, however, is not so frequent. But Jesus offers everyone a path of light and truth, far from "official language ".

Before, being in the gesture that hurts, hatred, contempt and the instinct of domination corrupt the heart of man. But God is the guarantor of the quality of our human relationships. You must be reconciled with your opponent before praying.

How not to be grasped by the authority of the word of Jesus? It is opposed to the drivelling of the scribes, to the formulas of the preachers. It is a creative word: that goodness be, that love be beautiful, that language be true. It is a word that leads man to the heart of himself.

Yes, if you want, you can observe the commandments.



“If a man loves me...”

“If a man loves me, he will do what my Word says” John 14: 23

This morning, before church, I took my mum’s dog, Jake for a long walk in local woods and fields. When we reached a large field and I saw that there were no other dogs around, I let him off his lead so he could have a good run. Every couple of minutes I shouted him and he obediently came running back to me. Being in Lancashire (where it rains a lot!) there were a lot of puddles - Jake found a huge one in the middle of the field and had great fun playing in it and finding things to drag out of it - bits of wood, plastic bottles, a flower pot etc. Seeing that time was going on and I needed to get home to get ready for church, I called him. He continued playing. I called him again, and again, and again... In the end, I had to wade into the puddle, and drag him out by his collar. Both of us returned home a lot wetter than muddier than I would have liked!

Normally obedient, Jake was having so much fun, that he disobeyed me and ignored my voice.

Jake’s behaviour started me thinking about the times when I disobey God, when I don’t listen when He is saying something to me. In John 14: 23, Jesus says *“If a man loves me, he will do what my Word says”*

Why don’t we always obey God?

- **Distractions** - so many things to do. I am sure many (most? all?) of you reading this can relate to this one.

“The seed falling among the thorns refers to someone who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, making it unfruitful.” Matthew 13: 22

I am not saying that our other activities are about deceitfulness of wealth, but are we really listening to know what God’s priorities are for our lives?

- **It’s hard to obey** - it takes effort. It is easier to continue on the easy path we have chosen
“Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.” Matthew 7:13-14
- **It’s uncomfortable.** Recently in a TLM meeting I attended, we were encouraged to ‘learn to be comfortable with being uncomfortable’.

Is God challenging you to step out of your comfort zone and step out for Him? It might be more than uncomfortable, it might be down-right dangerous, but if God is calling us to it, then it is something we must do.

When we disobey God or refuse to prioritise Him and His will, He withholds the blessings. When we obey God, He blesses us and gives us a glimpse of His Glory.

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Transforming solitude: Finding intimacy with God

We love him, because God first loved us. 1 John 4: 19

I discovered a new place of solitude. . . in my own big garden, where I don't get too often!

So recently I took my chair to the furthest corner and sat under the shady trees to spend time with God.

I keep practising to talk less and listen more also in sharing this little meditation with less words

From the verse in 1 John, the following thoughts came to mind:

- I am invited to allow God's passionate desire for me, to touch my heart.
- His touch may help me also to get in touch with my deepest self.
- An intimate reciprocity between God and me as His beloved can grow.
- This deep connection is open for everyone, for all those around me, but in the first place I am the one to respond to it.

I asked myself, and I share the question:

How will my life be different when I more often come to this reciprocal connection?

Erna Moeller is a social worker with TLM South Africa

Don't get cross, get the Cross!

Matthew 5:21-24

My two daughters convinced me to let them paint my face. They'd got some children's make-up at Christmas, and had been itching to share their new-found skills with me. They used red, and covered my whole face completely! This became a new favourite activity, for them at least! They informed me with some joy and glee that I was now 'Anger', the character from a film called *Inside Out*. As you can see from this picture of Anger, I'm not sure this characterisation was a compliment!



Anger, however, turned to Panic one afternoon when my phone went mid painting. It was our Director, Joanne. She needed some material for a meeting that evening, and requested to meet me and collect it. I started to furiously scrub and wash my face clean of the makeup before I left to meet her!

During the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus speaks about some more dramatic situations that involve anger. Picture this situation: The night before you come and listen to Jesus, you have a horrible fight with your brother. You'd called him, with emphatic passion, a FOOL! Then Jesus says these words: anyone who is angry with their brother and calls them a fool is in danger of the fires of hell. Whoops!

Immediately you picture the place that Jesus is referring to (the fires of hell is literally interpreted 'the valley of Hinnom'). That horrible ravine south of Jerusalem, once used for pagan worship, and now a dumping ground, a rubbish pit, a very literal hell, disgusting smelling, a sheer drop, littered by many burning fires. You decide it is probably best to apologise to your brother after all!

Jesus here is warning us about the cost of a word spoken in anger. The anger in our heart can spill out and have disastrous results. I wonder today if you can think back to a time that you've spoken in anger, and afterwards deeply regretted the hurt and the pain that your words caused? I know I can.

Picture this next scene...you've come on pilgrimage, travelling for the past week on foot, the 70 miles from where Jesus was speaking in Galilee to Jerusalem. You are kneeling at the alter of the Temple in Jerusalem, about to perform this solemn act of worship and sacrifice, and suddenly a strong conviction grips you – you must make it up with your estranged brother before you make this sacrifice. Imagine the trip home. Imagine the dread of trying to explain that you haven't completed the required sacrifice, and that you'll need to go back. Imagine the regret that you might feel for having let things get the way that they have. Your broken relationship is going to prove very costly for you to fix. - Jesus here is challenging us to reconcile with those who we've fallen out with – even if the cost of doing so is great. So often, it is difficult to forgive, to forget, to let go of the past. It comes at a great cost. This cost might mean our time, our money, our energy, our pride. Can you think of someone who you need to reconcile with today? Perhaps God is calling you to reach out to them, regardless of how much it might cost.

In this short passage, Jesus is working out in practical terms some of what the Cross means in our lives. The Cross is the ultimate means of reconciliation for humanity, offered to us at the great cost of Jesus. So, remember next time your face gets all red, don't get cross, instead, *get* the Cross, and apply Jesus' teaching on anger to the situation you find yourself in!



Life Worthy of the Gospel

²⁷ Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ.

Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence,

I will know that you stand firm in the one Spirit,

striving together as one for the faith of the gospel

²⁸ without being frightened in any way by those who oppose you.

This is a sign to them that they will be destroyed, but that you will be saved—and that by God.

²⁹ For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe in him,

but also to suffer for him, ³⁰ since you are going through the same struggle you saw I had,

and now hear that I still have.

Philippians 1,27-30



See how Your King Comes

John 12:12-19

¹²⁻¹⁵ The next day the huge crowd that had arrived for the Feast heard that Jesus was entering Jerusalem. They broke off palm branches and went out to meet him. And they cheered:

Hosanna!

Blessed is he who comes in God's name!

Yes! The King of Israel!

Jesus got a young donkey and rode it, just as the Scripture has it:

*No fear, Daughter Zion:
See how your king comes,
riding a donkey's colt.*

¹⁶ The disciples didn't notice the fulfillment of many Scriptures at the time, but after Jesus was glorified, they remembered that what was written about him matched what was done to him.



Differences in the Family

For when one says, "I follow Paul," and another, "I follow Apollos," are you not mere human beings? What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe ... 1 Corinthians 3:4-5 (NIV)

She was just 59, with advanced kidney cancer, facing increasing pain and weakness. She had had strong connections with the local Methodist Church but after losing her husband three years earlier had found it difficult to retain those links. A year earlier she decided to move home in order to be nearer her daughter, married with a young family. Self-care was proving increasingly difficult; the daughter lived 25 miles away, so our patient was admitted to the hospice for symptom control and to provide psycho-social support. Nursing staff had found her to be both anxious and withdrawn. She spoke often of the loss of her husband, her desire to be near her daughter, but not wanting to be 'a nuisance'. She also expressed disappointment that her daughter had become 'too charismatic'. This had brought estrangement. She declined the offer a visit from the chaplain or the local Methodist minister.

Her condition deteriorated and it was clear she was dying. On the weekly ward round with the nurse I noticed a book with a dark cover and also a picture of Christ on the bedside locker.

'That's obviously a book of importance to you,' I remarked, 'and the picture too.'

'Indeed,' she replied weakly.

'I gather you've not had much contact with your church recently.'

'That's true,' was her reply. 'It's probably too late to set that right now, and ...,' after a pause, 'Even my daughter's Christianity doesn't suit me.'

'Well the Christ of your church and hers is still with you,' was my response.

All she could do was to smile faintly.

'You're not well, are you,' I said. 'I need to talk with your daughter. Is that okay?'

'That's fine,' she replied.

We met with the daughter in private to apprise her of her mother's deterioration. There were many questions but towards the end of the conversation she expressed the hope that there might be some way of engaging with her mother on spiritual matters.

'You're probably an atheist yourself,' she said to me, 'but you may be able to open up conversation in a way that I can't.'

My response was immediate and clear: 'Well actually I'm a believer myself. Let's try.'

We returned to the bedside with an agreed plan.

I began: 'We've been having a chat about you, about the future, about ourselves and even about faith. Your daughter would like to read a passage of scripture for you. How about that?' 'Fine,' she replied.

We listened to the reading, the daughter concluding with the words: 'May the Lord add his blessing.' Her mother stretched out her hand. There were tears, but the silence remained unbroken until I said: 'We'd better be on our way, but what about a prayer together first?' She nodded her agreement, the daughter still holding her mother's hand. It was the briefest of prayers: *'The Lord bless thee and keep thee; the Lord make his face shine upon thee and be gracious unto thee; the Lord lift up the light of his countenance upon thee and give thee peace.'* We left mother and daughter together.

Paul du Plessis - After a lifetime of service with The Salvation Army, South African born Paul and his wife, Margaret, have retired in the UK. Paul has had a number of honorary roles with TLM. In later years he worked as a palliative care physician in the UK.



Returning to the Fold

I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent. Luke 15: 7 (New International Version)

He was a 65- year-old gentleman with lung cancer which was producing a great deal of chest pain. We'll call him John. Chemotherapy and radiotherapy had had their turn. Now it was up to the palliative care team to support him and his family through their shared experience of suffering. Increasing doses of pain-killers at home had made little difference, so he was admitted to the hospice. Little seemed to be helping; the doses were going up and up.

Opposite him in the four-bedded ward was another patient. We'll call him David. He too had lung cancer. Breathlessness was his main complaint. Despite this, he engaged in conversation across the ward.

John's pain had continued, but a couple of days later as the nurse and I went round to see the patients, I remarked:

'You look so much better,'

'I feel it,' was John's reply.

'So what's suddenly made the difference?' I asked.

John paused for a moment and then said: 'I don't know how to put it; but I guess it's what you might call a sort of spiritual experience.' He paused, and then added as though by way of afterthought: 'Oh I'm sure you've got the dose of pain-killers right.'

I smiled. 'I'm delighted to hear what you've just said. We know there's more to pain relief than our medicines.'

I was about to walk on to the next bed, but curiosity got the better of me. What had happened, I wondered.

'It may be something very personal and private, John, but I'd really love to know more about this spiritual experience,' I ventured.

John hesitated but he soon had the explanation coming.

'You see David across there. He's a devout Catholic, and he's been talking to me about his own faith. I've known for some time that there are some things I needed to put right. He has a nice priest visiting him, so he came to speak with me, and I've done it. In fact he's left this book here for me: *'While You Were Gone: A Handbook for Returning Catholics.'*

I moved across the ward to have a word with David. 'I wish you could do for some of the other patients what you've done for John,' I said. David beamed.

Next morning when John woke up he found the bed opposite empty. David had died in his sleep.

'I'm just so glad I met him,' was John's rather matter of fact comment.

He was discharged home the following week – still much better.

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Through a Glass Darkly

For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face. 1 Corinthians 13:12 (King James Version)

She was in her early 70s when I visited for the last time. Of German parents, missionaries in South America, she was Bolivian-born, and proudly so. She and her husband had spent a lifetime in full-time Christian service during which she demonstrated her grace and kindness, her profound faith and deep spirituality.

A year earlier she knew things were not right, but it was as yet unclear exactly what was wrong. The day before the diagnosis of an inoperable carcinoma of the pancreas was made she was in the Sunday morning service. As it came to an end, she received a powerful assurance that God would be with her and that all would be well. A lot had happened over the following months.

Our final conversation ranged over several topics, but she kept coming back to childhood experiences. She spoke repeatedly of revolutions, uprisings and strikes which always started in the university next door to where they'd lived in Bolivia's capital city, La Paz. Hand grenades and gunfire were the order of the day. Alone in the house while parents were on the Lord's business 'up-country', she and her brother often went to bed barricading the windows. They were clearly disturbing memories.

'Is it wrong to imagine?' she asked.

I stopped to think, but then replied: 'Not at all. I regard imagination as the handmaiden of faith, but why do you ask?'

She called for a frig magnet with two words inscribed on it: '*Imagine Peace!*'

'Is that what you're doing as you think of those days long ago?' I asked.

She nodded.

And even for the situation here now?'

Again she nodded.

'Then why not also imagine the Prince of Peace himself?' I asked. 'There weren't hand grenades and gunfire in his day, but he knew all about the sword and a spear, and a hammer and nails. Of course he died, but now he's alive. And he's here with us. Imagine him here!'

Her face was emaciated, but it glowed as her eyes brightened. But I could see the brow wrinkle slightly, as though to say: 'Really?' If there were doubts, that was understandable.

I believe the Prince of Peace was there, although I sensed that she was seeing him 'through a glass darkly'.

She died a few days later. But our faith and hope assure me that she will see him face to face.

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“Could you not watch with me one hour?”

Matthew 26:40 During Holy Week and Easter I’m touched by Christ’s challenge, *“Could you not watch with me?”* It is hard to ‘get into’ the depth and enormity of Christ’s Passion, but perhaps one way is through those who were there, by hearing their words, trying to imagine the ‘watch’ through their eyes.

Take Peter and Thomas, two of the more bold and outspoken disciples. Peter: so insightful in recognising ‘The Christ’, so crushed by the rebukes when he got things wrong, yet so committed. He may have denied Christ in the courtyard, -but at least he got there! And poor Thomas: forever labelled as the doubter because of his longing to touch the risen Christ for himself; but he it is who declares loyalty to death (John 11:16), and puts the key question after Peter is silenced (John 14:5).

Or take John and the group of women around the cross. As they watch with Christ, what is going through their minds? How do they hear and receive Jesus’ loving words (John 19:26-7)? What life changing effect is brought about by Jesus’ dying provision for those he loved?

And what of those who in some way or another were *against* Jesus? They were watching too. Judas: why did he turn against Jesus; what of his subsequent repentance and death? And Annas and Caiaphas: relatives, puppets, captives to an uneasy balance of religion, politics and self-interest. They were watchers of Christ too, but from a distance, from a different angle. Little could Caiaphas have known the significance of his words of unwitting prophecy (John 11:49-52), spoken in fear and hatred, yet inspired by the God of whom he had lost sight, ‘though he was watching God Incarnate. It is he who accuses Jesus (Matthew 26:65), yet chooses not to go with those taking him before Pilate (John 18:28). I wonder how Annas and Caiaphas ‘watched’ after the resurrection! (Acts 4:1-7; 5:27-39)

Our ‘watch’ with our Lord at this holy time of year need not stop at the cross. I am intrigued by the mysterious but attractive figures of Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus. Joseph *“had himself become a disciple of Jesus”* (Matthew 27:57), *“but secretly because he feared the Jewish leaders”* (John 19:38). He was *“a prominent member of the Council, who was himself waiting for the kingdom of God”* (Mark 15:43). He *“had not consented to”* the condemning of Jesus (Luke 23:51). It is understandable that, perhaps in remorse, he had gone, now boldly, to Pilate for the body of Jesus, to be laid in his own tomb. Nicodemus too, whose shadowy presence weaves through John’s gospel, was there in defence (John 7:50-51) and is there now, in grief (John 19:39-40).

In ‘watching with’ these characters we see something of their profiles, something of our own, and something of the various views of Jesus Christ around us. I ask in which of these characters do I most find myself, -and in their words and actions, my own. How can I watch with my Lord in my Gethsemane, my upper room, my place at the foot of the cross or at the empty tomb? *“Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.”* (Matthew 26:41).

The hymn-writer Katherine Kelly has it: *“O make me understand it, help me to take it in; what it meant to Thee, the Holy One, to bear away my sin.”*

David Beazley began involvement with The Leprosy Mission in 1992 when he came as Minister to a Church near the International Office in Brentford. He acted as an informal ‘chaplain’ to the Office, and served on the International General Council for some years. At the same time he became a member of TLM England and Wales Board, serving as Chairman for six years and on various committees. He now pastors a Church in South-West England part time, freeing time for TLM as a volunteer speaker and continuing on the E&W Board. He chairs the Spiritual Ministry MAWG, and is also able to serve TLM by leading retreat days and other such things as opportunity allows.



Isaiah 53

Who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?

² He grew up before him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of dry ground. He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him.

³ He was despised and rejected by mankind a man of suffering, and familiar with pain. Like one from whom people hide their faces he was despised, and we held him in low esteem.

⁴ Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering, yet we considered him punished by God, stricken by him, and afflicted.

⁵ But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed.

⁶ We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

⁷ He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth.

⁸ By oppression^[a] and judgment he was taken away.

Yet who of his generation protested?

For he was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people he was punished.^[b]

⁹ He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, though he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth.

¹⁰ Yet it was the LORD's will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the LORD makes^[c] his life an offering for sin, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the LORD will prosper in his hand.

¹¹ After he has suffered, he will see the light of life^[d] and be satisfied^[e]; by his knowledge^[f] my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities.

¹² Therefore I will give him a portion among the great,^[g] and he will divide the spoils with the strong,^[h] because he poured out his life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors.

For he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.



Stand Still At the Tomb of Jesus

Be still for the presence of the Lord
The Holy One is here
Come bow before Him now
With reverence and fear

In Him no sin is found
We stand on holy ground
Be still for the presence of the Lord
The Holy One is here

Be still for the glory of the Lord
Is shining all around
He burns with holy fire
With splendor He is crowned

How awesome is the sight
Our radiant King of Light
Be still for the glory of the Lord
Is shining all around

Be still for the power of the Lord
Is moving in this place
He comes to cleanse and heal
To minister His grace

No work too hard for Him
In faith receive from Him
Be still for the power of the Lord
Is moving in this place



Easter – the culmination of our hope

Faith belongs to St Paul's trio in I Corinthians 13 : faith hope and love - a subtle grouping because hope can look only to the future, love involves self-abandonment and faith is incompatible with certainty. To be certain means that what we know is right, that we have learnt or experienced something and that it may be useful though it is less likely to be exciting. In Catholic doctrine faith is also the gift of God and we do not acquire faith for ourselves. The uncertainty of faith and the view that it is a gift are a good theme as Lent, which commemorates Jesus in the desert, moves into Easter with its suffering and Resurrection.

About fifty years ago, Harry Williams, the Dean of Trinity College Cambridge, preached a sermon called « The true wilderness » on the first Sunday of Lent. He said that Lent is a time to remember Jesus in the desert. We do well to share it metaphorically. Harry Williams explained it by saying, *Or perhaps I have been robbed, robbed of my easy certainties, my unthinking convictions that black is black, that white is white, that uncle George is a saint and that all is well in the world.*

In the desert of Judea the sand extends for kilometre after kilometre. In the days before the magnetic compass and with no watch to determine the South by the sun, only the River Jordan could give a sense of place and direction.

For Jesus, just about the only company was Satan. In Hebrew Satan is not a proper name because Satan means an « adversary. » or opponent. It is Satan who imposed three trials (the Greek word πειρασμος is not quite about temptation). Jesus had the power to turn the stones into bread, throw himself down from the pinnacle of the temple or take possession of the kingdoms of the earth. Satan's blandishment was that there was an opportunity for short term advantage. Turning stones into bread would have been to pursue personal gain. To throw Himself down from the pinnacle of the Temple would have been to perform an « exhibition miracle » as the Pharisees would ask for a sign (Matthew 12:38) and to accept the kingdoms of the earth would have befitted the political Messiah that many sought. Jesus was not a conjurer and more seriously the concomitant certainty would have been a dead end, that is a road that does not go on.

In the sermon isolation, loneliness disorientation in the wilderness precluded the certainty of unthinking convictions. All was not well with the world and God in his heaven was pretty remote. The privation was not like the negative Lent in which people give up what they like as inappropriate self denial. That too easily leads to the paralysis of doing nothing and sometimes to feel good about it or at other times to disbelieve in what we are. The Bible offers another way in the first letter of Peter. The writer reminds us not to be surprised by the ordeal (the trial or πειρασμος that is not a temptation), but to rejoice in Christ's sufferings as we may be glad when his glory is revealed I Peter 4:13).

It follows that it is in the integrity of uncertainty that we may « *turn from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it.* » *Psalm 34: 14* » The Psalm implies that God will answer us but the active request contains a vision, a faith but also the uncertainty of abandoning ourselves to God. That is prayer far beyond a shopping list of requests for the easy solution proposed by the adversary because it leads to serious reflection, a definition of our hopes and an assessment of our capacities.

As for the forty days and forty nights, we have a lot to find out. It is easy to be misled or even bamboozled. The truth is that the providence of God is usually more evident in retrospect than in prospect. It is the retrospect, perhaps particularly the retrospect of old age, that enables us to understand faith as the substance of things hoped for the evidence of things unseen (Hebrews 11).

So Lent followed by Easter becomes the retrospect interpreted by Resurrection. For Jesus the sometimes uncharted journey to Resurrection was the consequence of reflection well done, of perseverance without paralysis, of confidence in his Heavenly Father. That is not the result of a facile and sometimes self-imposed certainty that denies hope and stifles faith. The reason is that faith must be the substance of things hoped for the evidence of things unseen. That is not just because we read it in Hebrews 11, but also because it is a philosophical necessity.

So - on Easter Day look back and be grateful and look forward with the hope that expresses our faith.

James Barnett is an Anglican priest. He was involved in syllabus development and theological education in secondary schools and in preparing men and women for Christian ministry. He was Archbishop of Canterbury's Representative at the European Institutions and currently represents the Intereuropean Commission on Church and School at the Council of Europe. With his wife Elisabeth, he is secretary of the Mission Lèpre France.



The Cross-Resurrection Event

At the place where Jesus was crucified, there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb, in which no one had ever been laid. John 19:41 (NIV)

Serving with international and Zambian staff at Chikankata, and twelve Easters become a merged memory.

Holy Week meditations in the hospital chapel might have included foot-washing or an agape love-feast, but always concluding with prayer in our back garden looking out onto the little hill across the stream - Kalvali. In later years it would host the enactment of the crucifixion, Oberammergau-style.

That same garden would be where we would gather for a Saturday evening party, one year feasting on lamb, the gift of a grateful local farmer.

But that was not before we had gathered for the Good-Friday meditation on the cross in the chapel or school hall. A floral arrangement would include a local hunting spear and Christ Thorn, picked from the garden. The atmosphere was sombre.

But then came the joys of Easter morning, with drums and flags starting off from nearby congregations well before dawn and leading Salvationists from different directions to converge on Kalvali. There we gathered to celebrate the resurrection, facing the eastern horizon in anticipation of a sunrise that was not always visible. The Easter hymn, sung to a local tune, seemed to go on and on with endless 'hallelujahs'. But then a concluding greeting in the local vernacular - *Ulapona!* 'He is well'. With a slight tonal variation *Ulapona* can also mean: 'You are well'.

And then back to the garden with rabbits let out of their cage for the occasion, and entertaining the children. A fire is lit and if we were lucky with the catch from the nearby dam, a few bream would be on the grill. 'Come and dine,' would be the call. But before you've had a mouthful there's a nurse from the hospital. 'You're wanted urgently on E Ward.' So off you go.

As you walk across to the hospital you reflect on this meeting of life, death, and life again that is Easter. Many stories become one. I'm part of it.

Ulapona.

Paul du Plessis - After a lifetime of service with The Salvation Army, South African born Paul 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 Zambia in the 1970s when based at Chikankata Hospital



He has risen!

Luke- 24:1-12

It is a fascinating passage. Jesus has risen! In this world this kind of happening is neither had happen before nor would be happening in future. Christmas is celebrated with great joy and happiness in memory of Jesus' birth but there is no such joy and happiness for the event of crucifixion and resurrection.

Paul the apostle declared " *.....that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures, that he was buried , that he was raised on the third day according to the scriptures," (1 Corinthians 15:3-4)* This Bible verse state that it is equally important to see the mission of Jesus Christ being fulfilled in order to be our Lord and Savior accepting death and rising again. It should be event like our cherished dream come to pass in our life and as a result reason for us to feel delighted and rejoice. Moreover, without resurrection the Gospel of salvation would be incomplete.

The power of resurrection of Jesus has made great impact in the history of human life. As we understand this fact and implement in our life there is all possibility of being ourselves getting rid of the captivity of sinful nature. Resurrection is not feature of Christianity but it is an essential truth. Jesus is the truth and He is not defeated. His resurrection is the proof of the universal truth that reality comes out sooner or later. This truth gives us a new life and hope. God sees the truth but waits. His resurrection enables us to stick to the truth even though sometimes it seems that our cause of life is not being justified.

So, the claim of resurrection is vital to Christianity. If Christ had not been raised from the dead putting hope and faith in God would go in vain. As there would be no possibility to be justified in the sight of God after confessing our wrong doings if Jesus had not been risen. The spirit of Christ would testify in us of having no condemnation at all after sincere confession of our sin.

Now what a privilege we have now to serve people having ourselves been freed

from the guilt conscience and making ourselves always available to set people free by His grace and guidance and thereby we could glorify Him.

Ganesh Maya (Ruth) Shrestha - Counselor of Anandaban Hospital, Nepal



For to me to live is Christ, and die is gain

Philippians 1:21

One Monday afternoon in January, an unexpected phone call from our friend in the Netherlands rekindled in my wife Jan and in myself deep bonds of closeness. We lived and worked alongside this lovely couple as mission partners in Nepal 30 years before, and were often as one family, sharing in the joys, the challenges, and the sorrows of mission field work.

But this phone call revealed that they had been trying to contact us for some time, but had lost our number. Only now they managed to trace it by some astute detective work.

The news was not good. The husband had been living with an aggressive brain tumour for over a year. Two surgeries, radiotherapy and chemotherapy later, the doctors say there is nothing more they can do. The same evening of the phone call, Jan and I booked seats on a plane and were with them by Saturday lunchtime.

Our two days together were deep and sweet – as if there had been no gap at all since we last saw them some years before. But also understandably they were sad days, recognising the seriousness of the husband's condition. The closeness of our bonds enabled some very deep talk – especially around the question – are you ready for what lies ahead?

It's a hard question to ask ourselves or others, but such an important one for every Christian. How do we think about our own life's end – for surely it will come one day. Do we embrace it; do we resist it; or do we just try not to think about it?

I think Paul's letter to the Philippians is deeply personal, and this is one of the passages which marks it out as such. Paul is clearly not shying away from the challenge that we will all face one day. In fact on his missionary travels he has already been in situations where he thought death was just around the corner. At one level he wants to embrace it – to be with Christ. At another level he knows his calling, and that there is work still to be done – to live as a light for Christ, and share his love and his message.

None of us knows when our Lord will finally take us home. In the face of medically incurable illness, sometimes he chooses to keep us here by a miracle. Sometimes when we are fit and well and in our prime, he chooses to take us to himself by some tragic accident. The question is, are we ready for that time – and the challenge is how to live our lives now in the light of eternity, so that every moment resounds with Paul's words *"for me to live is Christ"*.

Trevor Durston

General Director from 1993-2006. Now retired and working as a volunteer speaker for TLM.



“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future”. [Jeremiah 29:11]

My neighbours have a set of bamboo wind-chimes hanging on their garden wall - facing our bedroom window...Elizabeth and I have taken to calling them clonkers rather than chimes, a tribute to their dull clonking sound.

Cape Town gets about one thousand windy days a year, which means that the clonkers are hard at work most of the time, their discordant thud forming part of our urban sound-scape.

This week has been particularly windy, the wind reaching 130 kilometres and hour, and I thought [hoped!] that the clonkers would break, but they survived. Last night the wind became so fierce that it drowned out the clonkers - a Pyrrhic victory for the Laubschers? As the wind intensified and as I lay there, trying to shut out their thudding, it occurred to me that no matter how hard or how long the wind blows, the clonkers don't produce even the briefest recognisable melody. The elements of music are there and I am sure if the bamboo tubes were arranged in a row, whilst you wouldn't get Pachelbel's Canon, you'd be able to tap out a passable version of "Twinkle, twinkle"; but left to their own devices and the wind, all you get is a random sound. Thousands of years of wind would give you thousands of years of clonking, but not the briefest hint of a tune.

If you want a tune, you need a logical arrangement of tubes, struck in an ordered way. Without purposeful direction, all you get is noise and sometimes it's even too much for my neighbours, who banish the clonkers to their shed for weeks at a time. - I find it interesting that the Bible, listing the achievements of Cain's descendents, records the introduction of music in Genesis 4: 21, before describing the development of metalwork. Did our ancestors need to learn how to order the elements of music into something meaningful before they could learn to order natural elements like iron, copper and tin into useful tools? From the beginning, our forebears are presented as skilful, talented, masterful, with an ability to play and plan, laying out ordered cities, delighting in the arts.

At the outset of the Bible, we are told how God created order out of chaos and that seems to be one of the attributes with which He has clothed us – a desire bring order to so many areas of our individual and communal lives. It's that desire for order which gave birth to Vivaldi's "Four Seasons", the Taj Mahal and churches hewn into the rock in Ethiopia. And today you may also be looking at raw material like data and trying to draw information from it, to create from it a plan that will prevent disabilities, lead to earlier treatment or raise more money. Take heart. The data may seem overwhelming, confusing, but He who counts the stars and calls them all by name is at work within you. He has a plan for you and you are part of His plan. Rejoice in your work today. Take delight in planning. Find joy in serving the Mission, our beneficiaries, supporters, your colleagues. We don't work aimlessly, like the clonkers thudding in the breeze – we work in the tradition of J S Bach, Pasteur and Lister – I hope that you're excited about what this day holds for you. May your plans prosper indeed.

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.



This is my story... 12.

See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. ² Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears,^[a] we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. 1 John 3,1-2

I don't come from a Christian family or background. You will not be surprised to know that I got into church through singing. After several months of going and learning, what was to me, a completely new story of who God was and what He had done for me. I went to a rally and heard the testimony of a young nurse. She had been thrown out by her mother because she would not give up God. I was astounded that anybody would do that and that God's love could be so real. That was the final trigger and the beginning of my surrender and love affair with Jesus.

Because I didn't have a Christian background I was hungry to read the Bible and Christian books. One of the books I read was "Take my Hands" by Dr Mary Verghese. She was my introduction to Leprosy work, I was fascinated and moved. It was through this book that God called me into nursing and the Leprosy Mission. It was a big step to become a nurse because everyone at school said I would be a great teacher. What have I spent most of my TLM career doing? Teaching and training, of course, The Alpha and Omega knew what He was doing and particularly that my teaching skills were more for adults than children.

When some years later I went to Papua New Guinea with the Leprosy Mission I was initially placed in a place called Madang. Jacquie Eldred, an experienced missionary who had spent several years in PNG before working with the Leprosy Mission was to help me with my orientation and learning pigeon. One evening we decided we would share testimonies. It is always exciting to hear how the Lord has worked in other peoples lives. Jackie's testimony was awe-inspiring and as I thought about it, it had a familiar ring. So I asked her if she had attended the rally in Brighton and given her testimony. Yes, you've guessed it, she had. It was her testimony that was at the beginning of my path to walk with the Lord and work for the Leprosy mission.

Isn't that amazing? The more I walk with the Lord, the more I see His hand and purpose that does - "*work everything together for good.*" (Romans 8:28) One of the advantages of being a bit 'long in the tooth' is that as you look back you can see how the Lord has His hand on things even when you haven't realised it. It is such a relief to follow Him and although obedience and surrender can seem tough at times the fruit that they bring is extraordinary.

What an amazing God. What a privilege to be a part of His team and family.

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.



Empty Promises

John 20,1-10

A young man from a wealthy family was about to graduate from university. It was the custom in the family for the parents to give the graduate a new car. Bill and his father had spent months looking at cars, and the week before graduation, they found the perfect car.

On the day of his graduation, his father handed him a gift wrapped Bible. Bill was so angry that he threw the Bible down and stormed out of the house. He and his father never saw each other again.

It was the news of his father's death that brought Bill home again. As he sat one night going through his father's possessions that he was to inherit, he came across the Bible his father had given him.

He brushed away the dust and opened it to find a cheque, dated the day of his graduation - for the exact amount of the car they had chosen together.

As I thought about this story, I couldn't help but wonder how many people in this world have done the same thing to God. Literally tossed aside a wonderful promise, because they didn't understand it, or they didn't believe that it was possible.

In our world, we are taught that; "if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is." So many of us have been taken in by "empty promises," that we are wary of anything, or anyone, that tells us we can have something for nothing.

But, you know what? God does. God never made a promise that was too good to be true.

The truth of the matter is, the world is full of empty promises. We watch TV, and the adverts tell us that we can be happy, rich, or famous, if we only purchase a certain product. It doesn't take long before we have been fooled enough to know that the world's promises are full of emptiness.

But, God is different. Instead of promises full of emptiness, he gave us emptiness that is full of promise. An empty cross, an empty tomb, and empty burial clothes.

Praise God for the promise of sins forgiven, the promise of eternal life, and the promise of a living relationship with our Lord Jesus.

Gordon Brown

Scotland - 2008-2011 Vice Chair of TLM Scotland, 2011-2015 Honorary Treasurer of TLM International. Kindly sending his good wishes to the TLM family!



Different Emphases

And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise them up. If they have sinned, they will be forgiven. Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. James 5:15-16 (New International Version)

Her faith status was recorded on the hospice notes as: 'Church of England – important'. We'll call her Lillian. She was a 65-year-old single woman who 20 years earlier had developed a hereditary disease causing muscle weakness. It had progressed so that she had been confined to bed for 15 years. She shared a bedroom with, and was cared for by her sister. 18 months earlier Lillian developed breast cancer which she knew had now spread to the bones, with significant, but well-controlled pain. Although she was reassured by her doctors to the contrary, she anticipated she would be dying imminently. She was admitted to the hospice, partly to give her sister a break, and partly to provide additional support to Lillian herself.

She remained stable and pain diminished. Steps were taken during the admission to improve her care at home so that she would be able to sit out in a chair for part of the day.

I heard she had been very disturbed by overhearing conversations with a patient opposite her. She too had widespread breast cancer. A pastor had visited and, in keeping with her own faith tradition, he had spoken with her. He had urged further confession of sin and acceptance of the blood of Jesus for cleansing and healing. He had left a book entitled: '*Cancer Can Be Healed*'.

My conversation with Lillian went something like this as the nurse and I stopped at her bedside on the weekly round: 'I hear you've had a disturbed night.'

'Indeed I have; all this talk about blood and the cross. It shouldn't happen here in a public place.'

'I'm sorry it's disturbed you, but we try to respect all variations of faith and no faith here. Would you like us to ask her to make sure it doesn't happen again?'

'No, that wouldn't be right.'

After a short pause Lillian asked: 'Do you believe this – that you can be healed if you only confess your sin, and ask for the blood of Jesus to touch you?'

'Well the suffering of Jesus means a lot to me,' I replied, 'In fact it's a central part of my own faith. But as important to me is to know that the risen Jesus can be at our side, even when we face the most difficult experiences of uncertainty, weakness and pain. We have to believe that too, and can ask him to be with us.'

'Oh, that makes me feel so much better. Please will you just hold my hand.'

A minute later Lillian smiled and withdrew her hand.

'Thank you. I feel more relaxed about it now. But I still wish it would happen quickly.'

'He'll know the time. It's obviously not quite yet,' was my response.

She sighed and whispered back: 'Probably not. I'll try to be patient.'

Lillian and Jenny were discharged home. Both were a little better. Their disease continued; I suspect the different emphases and interpretation of a verse of scripture did too.

Paul du Plessis - After a lifetime of service with The Salvation Army, South African born Paul and his wife, Margaret, have retired in the UK. Paul has had a number of honorary roles with TLM. In later years he worked as a palliative care physician in the UK.



My Lord and my God!

Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!" (John 20:19-30)

Thomas represents what the scientific world view has taught us. He does not uncritically embrace what people tell him. Think for yourself, make your own choices, decide for yourself what is true or false. Thomas wants to see the evidence – see for himself, do his own research.

But Thomas is also a man who is grieving, deeply disappointed by Jesus's death. Thomas had been ready to be a bodyguard for Jesus and protect him with his life (Jn 11:16) but he had failed. Thomas had seen others raised from the dead, but how could Jesus raise himself? His death was the end of the project they had been working on together – the end of all hope for change.

So Thomas was not in the mood for joyful noise. They came to him on Monday morning and said: The Lord is alive! Last night he was with us behind locked doors. He wants us to continue his work! Thomas had responded angrily: We all saw that Jesus was arrested; Peter and John saw how he was beaten; at Pilate's palace we saw how he had been tortured; we saw him hanging on the cross and die; we saw how they stuck a spear into his dead body. Those are the irreversible facts. Don't talk to me about resurrection. It is cruel to raise false hopes. There is no such thing.

Thomas's anger sprang from his great love for Jesus. And so he could not help thinking: What if it's true? What if he did come back? It weighed on his mind day and night, the whole week in fact.

And then Jesus appears again, bringing them peace. And he goes straight for Thomas and says: Come, feel for yourself. Move your fingers over my hands and feel the crusted wounds. Come with your hand and feel my side. Can you feel that big gash there? In that intimate moment, Thomas suddenly saw Jesus for who he really was: God.

Thomas had been with Jesus for three years. He had followed him through miracles, joys, exhaustion, conflicts, threats... And here Jesus stood before him: Radiant, free, at peace, tangible – and everything about him spoke of his love for Thomas. Thomas looked in the eyes of a man who was unaffected by the suffering and death he had just been through. Yet, the scars proved he had not by some clever trick avoided death. He had gone through it and overcome. In that intimate moment, Thomas suddenly saw Jesus for who he really was: God.

We may well wonder why Jesus kept his wounds after the resurrection. Why did he need them? Was it not shameful? But for him, those scars became a mark of honor. They point to the cosmic significance of his suffering. In Revelations 5 Jesus appears in heaven as a lamb "looking as if it had been slain". And he is praised with these words: *"You were slain, and with your blood you purchased for God persons from every tribe and language and people and nation"*. Thomas's doubts evaporated; his grief turned into joy; his loss into fulfilment. No words can accurately describe the mystery of Jesus who is 100% human and 100% divine. Thomas saw it and came no further than to say: *'My Lord, my God'*.

May we, like Thomas, come to see the love of Jesus by which he wants to reach out and find us - to take away our doubt, fear, pain and shame; to share with us his victory over death and to turn our grief into joy.

Johan Velema headed TLM's Evaluation & Monitoring Service from 1999 to 2007, co-ordinating evaluations of projects and programmes and collecting statistical data from all centres. He did research & development work for TLM International from 2007 to 2011.



“Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?”

Isaiah 6:8

The stigma, discrimination and exclusion that can result from the misconceptions of having leprosy is something that appals us all. I'm so glad to be part of a mission that speaks up for the weak and marginalised to challenge this injustice, and better yet stands squarely behind those who are willing and able to stand up for themselves. The stories I hear from across the Fellowship of this happening are truly inspiring.

Living in the UK I know that I will not catch leprosy here. I am a product of a society with the means to eat well, have access to clean water, sanitation and inoculations, with good shelter, and with healthy immune systems, I see it as an injustice that leprosy still exists in the world today. As much as it excites me to be a part of the ongoing fight to seek justice for those today who are living with the effects of leprosy, it also excites me to be part of the fight to end leprosy, to seek justice for those who have not yet even been born and who as a result of our efforts will never even need to think about leprosy.

Martin Niemöller was a pastor in Germany who spent seven years in a concentration camp. He is attributed with the following writing:

*“Firstly they came for the communists,
and I did not speak out because I was not a communist.
Then they came for the socialists,
and I did not speak out because I was not a socialist.
Then they came for the trade unionists,
and I did not speak out because I was not a trade unionist.
Then they came for the Jews,
and I did not speak out because I was not a Jew.
Then they came for me,
and there was no one left to speak out for me,”*

Who are we going to speak up for today? Persons affected by leprosy? People who don't yet have leprosy but could get it? Yes, there are many injustices left for us to challenge. Onward Christian soldiers!

Pete Garratt

Head of Operations Support



The Church - 1 - In today's world arena

Have you ever looked around at the events taking place around the world and wondered if the world was on a collision course with itself? I've noticed many Christian commentators declaring the demise and diminishing effect of the Church, the Bride of Christ, the Blood washed Saints as has been declared in the book of Revelation 5:9-10 NIVUK

“And they sang a new song, saying: ‘You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased for God persons from every tribe and language and people and nation. You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth.’”

The Church belongs to our Heavenly Father! It was His idea! It has faced oppression, opposition and been hounded by forces opposed to the rule of the Kingdom of God yet has never been defeated only purified! Whenever God moves to purify His Bride, when He challenges our compromises, our lukewarm attitudes and while we drift from the distillate and directness of His Word, He will allow this unshakable Kingdom to be shaken.

Hebrews 12:25-29 NIVUK *“See to it that you do not refuse him who speaks. If they did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, how much less will we, if we turn away from him who warns us from heaven? At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, ‘Once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens.’ The words ‘once more’ indicate the removing of what can be shaken – that is, created things – so that what cannot be shaken may remain. Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, for our ‘God is a consuming fire.’”*

So hold fast Church, the Bride of Christ, the Blood washed Saints; allow the violent shaking to happen, but don't loose sight of who is the King of all kings; the Lord of all lords: our Bridegroom, our soon returning Saviour - Jesus!

Psalm 121:1-8

*I lift up my eyes to the mountains— where does my help come from?
My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth. He
will not let your foot slip— he who watches over you will not
slumber; indeed, he who watches over Israel will neither slumber
nor sleep. The Lord watches over you— the Lord is your shade at
your right hand; the sun will not harm you by day, nor the moon by
night. The Lord will keep you from all harm— he will watch over your
life; the Lord will watch over your coming and going both now and
forevermore.”*

Dan Izzett - Zimbabwe. Retired pastor. I was diagnosed with lepromatous 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.



The Church - 2 - A reflection through the ages

The stories in the Old Testament give us some indication of the many challenges the Church will face as we wait with the whole of creation for the return of Jesus.

Romans 8:19-21 GNT "All of creation waits with eager longing for God to reveal his children. For creation was condemned to lose its purpose, not of its own will, but because God willed it to be so. Yet there was the hope that creation itself would one day be set free from its slavery to decay and would share the glorious freedom of the children of God."

Israel had "kingdom breakthroughs" throughout their recorded history and it's the same for us we will face failure, defeat, challenges, loss, correction and victories. Victory always comes when we're obedient and faithful to our Heavenly Father, His ways and Word. Two examples: *Numbers 13:32-33 NIVUK*

"And they spread among the Israelites a bad report about the land they had explored. They said, 'The land we explored devours those living in it. All the people we saw there are of great size. We saw the Nephilim there (the descendants of Anak come from the Nephilim). We seemed like grasshoppers in our own eyes, and we looked the same to them.'"

Today there are multiple Christian reports that the enemies against the Church are more dangerous, bigger and stronger, it may appear to be so, but our Heavenly Father is calling us to view life through heaven's eyes and be Caleb's to our generation. *Numbers 13:30 NIVU "Then Caleb silenced the people before Moses and said, 'We should go up and take possession of the land, for we can certainly do it.'"*

Yes there are giants in this world but the Lord promised us that He will always be with us. Need I say anything about David and Goliath? For 40 days the giant Goliath had scared the living wits out of the army of Israel and all it took was one young boy, who knew his God, who'd pursued a relationship with his God, who had understood that "through his God" he could have victory over giants. Israel's army had forgotten that! *1 Samuel 17:34-37 NIVUK "But David said to Saul, 'Your servant has been keeping his father's sheep. When a lion or a bear came and carried off a sheep from the flock, I went after it, struck it and rescued the sheep from its mouth. When it turned on me, I seized it by its hair, struck it and killed it. Your servant has killed both the lion and the bear; this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, because he has defied the armies of the living God. The LORD who rescued me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will rescue me from the hand of this Philistine.' Saul said to David, 'Go, and the LORD be with you.'"*

1 Samuel 17:43-45 NIVUK "He said to David, 'Am I a dog, that you come at me with sticks?' And the Philistine cursed David by his gods. 'Come here,' he said, 'and I'll give your flesh to the birds and the wild animals!' David said to the Philistine, 'You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the LORD Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied.'"

It's a dangerous thing to defile Jehovah, the only true God!

Church: the Bride of Christ, the Blood washed Saints have you forgotten who our God is?

- The Lord mighty in power!
- Never knowing defeat!
- Living in you! The greater one than the one in the world!
- Let God arise, let His enemies be scattered!

Can I end with this quote: *Deuteronomy 31:6 NIVUK "Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the LORD your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you."*

Dan Izzett - Zimbabwe. Retired pastor. I was diagnosed with lepromatous 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.



**“I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper,
to be with you forever”**

John 14,16

Today I saw a video clip taken by a mother whose young son has cerebral palsy. On school sports day the teachers said he did not need to compete in the class run around the field, but he wished to do so. Within a few metres his awkward gait meant he was lagging way behind the group, and after some more distance he began to stagger and slow. The mother was about to turn the video off and let him have his disappointment in private, when she saw the gym teacher cross the field and fall in alongside her son and urge him on further. Soon the view of both of them was blocked as students of various grades, one by one, also joined in behind him on the track, and encouraged him to keep going. The mother ran across the field to the end of the track and caught the video of her happy son leading the cheering group across the finish line.

Through my tears I read that the boy said “They encouraged me to keep going”. And I thought of many different leprosy patients I have known who struggled through marathons of reaction and disability and who expressed gratitude for the same thing.

There are times in our race when we stagger and slow down and want to give up. We need to recognize the One who “comes with strength” and runs with us. He is the Holy Spirit, The Helper, the Comforter. John 14 tells us how He helps us to know Jesus’ presence, His love and His truth, giving us what we need for today’s race.

Can we learn from Him to be those who can provide the gift of encouragement to others today? To be like Barnabas, “son of encouragement”, who went to walk alongside the newly converted Paul when others in the church avoided him (Acts 9:26-27). He insisted on running with Mark when Paul gave up on him (Acts 15:37-9). He saw beyond the weakness and failures, and reached out to encourage the potential...as Father God does for us every day.

As a result, we, and others too, may be encouraged to “finish well”

Heather Smith

TLM cross cultural worker in Thailand 1969-2009, and with husband Trevor, continuing work in McKean Rehabilitation Center under the Thai national church.



A splash of colour

“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

Another cold winter morning, and not many smiles about. I walked through the echoing concrete tunnel under the road from the car park. Halfway down there was a door. ‘Emergency Exit’ it said and, underneath, ‘This Door Is Alarmed’. “Well, me too,” I thought, alone and with no-one else in sight.

But then, as I emerged safely into the light at the other end of the tunnel, the first thing I saw was a flower stall. The flowers were gorgeous, bucketsful of colour, a whole live rainbow just standing there to lift my spirits. It may have been a struggle to grow them, although they’ve probably been reared under acres of heated glass in Holland or flown in from Kenya, but they were singing a song without words. A song about the beauty of life and creation.

It’s so easy in these dark, dull days to concentrate on the negative - and some folk honestly can’t help it and deserve our sympathy - but as I walk around with my own problems, I try to catch a bit of that colour and beauty, most of it unexpected, that adds a little cheer to the day. Thank God for it.

*Gracious Lord, your presence colours my life with joy;
and when clouds gather help me hold your beauty close.*

Extract from Dabbling with Ducks, first published 2007.

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)



Do Everything Without Grumbling

Philippians 2, ¹² Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—

not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—

continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling,

¹³ for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose.

¹⁴ Do everything without grumbling or arguing,

¹⁵ so that you may become blameless and pure,

“children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation.”

Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky

¹⁶ as you hold firmly to the word of life. And then I will be able to boast on the day of Christ

that I did not run or labor in vain.

¹⁷ But even if I am being poured out like a drink offering

on the sacrifice and service coming from your faith, I am glad and rejoice with all of you.

¹⁸ So you too should be glad and rejoice with me.



Authors in Alphabetical Order

Textuarium

Dan Izzett	26, 27 April		Ps 34,14	16 April
David Beazley	13 April		Ps 63,8	3 April
Eddie Askew	29 April		Ps 119,1-2, 4-5	1 April
Erna Moeller	6 April		Isaiah 6,8	25 April
Heather Smith	28 April		Isaiah 53	14 April
Isaiah, Prophet	14 April		Jer 29,11	20 April
James Barnett	16 April		Matthew 5,17-37	1 April
Jannine Ebenso	5 April		Matthew 5,21-24	7 April
Johan Velema Dr	24 April		Matthew 6,28-30	29 April
June Nash	21 April		Matthew 26,40	13 April
Moses Onoh	1 April		Luke 15,7	11 April
Pascal Machefer	4 April		Luke 24,1-12	18 April
John, disciple of Jesus	9 April		John 2,25	4 April
Gordon Brown	22 April		John 12,12-19	9 April
Paul du Plessis Dr	10, 11, 12, 17, 23 April		John 14,23	5 April
Pete Garratt	25 April		John 14,16	28 April
Otto Kingsley	2 April		John 19,41	17 April
Peter Hilton	7 April		John 20,1-10	22 April
Peter Laubscher	20 April		John 20,19-30	24 April
Ruth Shrestha	18 April		Romans 8,19-21	27 April
Silvano Perotti	22 April		1 Cor 3,4-5	10 April
Trevor Durston	19 April		1 Cor 13,12	12 April
Zoe Bunter	3 April		Eph 4,5-6	2 April
			Phil 1,21	19 April

			Philippians 2,12-18	30 April
			Philippians 1,27-30	8 April
			1 John 3,1-2	21 April
			1 John 4,19	6 April
			James 5,15-16	23 April
			Rev 5,9-10	26 April

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