



TLM Daily Devotions

October 2017





Word of thanks

.... to each author contributing to The Bridge with writing,
.... to Christine and Mo for their faithful lecturing „non-English speaking” pieces,
... to Allan for his reviewing theological appropriateness,
... to the Living God Almighty for His Spirit of inspiration.

Joyful bridging, TLM!

Marta Risko



Psalm 9

For the director of music. To the tune of "The Death of the Son." A psalm of David.

¹ I will give thanks to you, LORD, with all my heart;
I will tell of all your wonderful deeds.

² I will be glad and rejoice in you;
I will sing the praises of your name, O Most High.

³ My enemies turn back;
they stumble and perish before you.

⁴ For you have upheld my right and my cause,
sitting enthroned as the righteous judge.

⁵ You have rebuked the nations and destroyed the wicked;
you have blotted out their name for ever and ever.

⁶ Endless ruin has overtaken my enemies,
you have uprooted their cities;
even the memory of them has perished.

⁷ The LORD reigns forever;
he has established his throne for judgment.

⁸ He rules the world in righteousness
and judges the peoples with equity.

⁹ The LORD is a refuge for the oppressed,
a stronghold in times of trouble.

¹⁰ Those who know your name trust in you,
for you, LORD, have never forsaken those who seek you.

¹¹ Sing the praises of the LORD, enthroned in Zion;
proclaim among the nations what he has done.

¹² For he who avenges blood remembers;
he does not ignore the cries of the afflicted.

¹³ LORD, see how my enemies persecute me!
Have mercy and lift me up from the gates of death,

¹⁴ that I may declare your praises
in the gates of Daughter Zion,
and there rejoice in your salvation.

¹⁵ The nations have fallen into the pit they have dug;
their feet are caught in the net they have hidden.

¹⁶ The LORD is known by his acts of justice;

the wicked are ensnared by the work of their hands.

¹⁷ The wicked go down to the realm of the dead,
all the nations that forget God.

¹⁸ But God will never forget the needy;
the hope of the afflicted will never perish.

¹⁹ Arise, LORD, do not let mortals triumph;
let the nations be judged in your presence.

²⁰ Strike them with terror, LORD;
let the nations know they are only mortal.



Power, poise and perseverance

Good morning dear colleagues.

How can you/I live another day for God with power, poise and perseverance?

Surely we shall be assailed again today with problems, people and pressures!

But tap into these promises from God's Word, before you go any further today:

Matthew 1:21 – OUR PROMISED MESSIAH !

"She shall bear a Son, and you shall call His Name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins."

Philippians 1:21 - OUR PERSONAL PLEASURE !

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

John 2:2 - OUR PRIZED PROCLAMATION !

"When He was raised from the dead, His disciples remembered that He had said this, and they believed the Scripture and the Word that Jesus had spoken."

Ephesians 2:22 – OUR PRECIOUS PARACLETE !

"In Him you also are being built together into a dwelling-place for God by the Spirit."

Romans 3:23 - OUR OLD PERSON !

"For all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God."

Colossians 3:23 – OUR NEW PERSON !

"Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the LORD + not for men."

John 4:24 - OUR PRIMARY PURPOSE !

"God is Spirit, + those who worship Him must worship Him in Spirit and in Truth."

Galatians 5:25 - OUR POWER, POISE, AND PERSEVERANCE !

"If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit."

Well there you are: Just keep marching on, in step with Jesus, throughout today!

Amen.



The “if only’s” of life – 1.

John 11:21 & 32 Lord," Martha said to Jesus, "**if you** had been here, my brother would not have died
 ...Mary fell at his feet and said, "Lord, **if you** had been here, my brother would not have died

Can I tell you a little secret that I have experienced in the years that I’ve lived:

- The ‘if only’ – ‘should of’ – ‘what if’ – never end & are never answered!
- The ‘if only’ statement is often expressed in a time of regret, confusion or pain

The above quotes are from the sisters of Lazarus who had died 4 days earlier.

- This family were great friends of Jesus & had enjoyed visits from Him & had firsthand experience of His powerful ministry *Please read: John 11:1-6 and 17-22*

In their time of need Jesus was *less than two miles’* away & He deliberately did nothing about His good friend!

- So often it seems as if Jesus is not there when needed!

Typical ‘If only’ statements:

- ‘If only’ - I’d given up smoking – stopped drinking – overeating...
- ‘If only’ - We’d said goodbye – sorry – talked it through...
- ‘If only’ - Said I love you once more – thank you – I appreciate you...
- ‘If only’ - He’d missed that plane...
 - Self-inflicted pain – this is controllable!

There is also uncontrolled, non-self-inflicted pain – that comes to us in life – for this God helps us to get through it.

There is also ‘God allowed problems – pain – suffering’ – as in the case of Lazarus.

Please read: 2 Corinthians 1:8-11

- In the case of Mary & Martha the problem was not a lack of faith

John 11:27

Yes, Lord," she told him, "I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who was to come into the world." - Child-like faith in Jesus

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 “if only’s” of life – 2.

See the picture:

- Lazarus is dead!
- His sisters have faith for the resurrection – it will be okay in the future – but now also counts *-if you had been here*
- The visiting mourners are mocking –

John 11:37 But some of them said, "Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?"

- Jesus is standing before a smelly tomb, full of faith for the future, for his sisters and before taunting friends
- Tension fills the air
 - ‡ Jesus is crying!
 - ‡ The grave is smelling!
 - ‡ Jesus takes command – Open the tomb!

John 11:41-42: So they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said, "Father, I thank you that you have heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me."

Jesus has the mixed bag of people around Him suspended between the reality of death & life!

- Jesus has prays – the next thing He does is shout! - *Lazarus, come out!*
- Jesus is in control – over death

Genesis 18:14 "Is anything too hard for the LORD?"

- The God-man – God Himself has your life in His hands today
- Is anything too hard for the LORD?

Jeremiah 32:17-21

Ah, Sovereign LORD, you have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and outstretched arm. Nothing is too hard for you.

Today you could be suspended between:

- Sickness & health...
- In & out of poverty – trouble – difficulty...
- Facing pain – hard hearts....
- Troublesome people...

There is a God in heaven & ‘*Nothing is too hard for Him*’

- His eye is on the sparrow & He watches over me!
- Jesus knows your address – He’s on His way over to you – TODAY

1 John 3:8: He who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work

1 John 4:4: You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world

It’s no longer: ‘if only’ – ‘should of’ – ‘what if’ It’s a new day, it’s a new hour, it’s time to leave the past behind – our Heavenly Father has your address and is on His way.

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Share Jesus love over a meal

Jesus liked to meet people, at home, and eat with them.

The account of the multiplication of the loaves shows us the importance of Jesus in sharing meals. The wedding feast of Cana is another example: "On the third day there was a wedding at Cana of Galilee. The mother of Jesus was there. Jesus was also invited to these nuptials, as well as his disciples. "There was no more wine." Let us also recall that unworthy Matthew, whom Jesus has just called: *"While he was sitting at the table in the house, many publicans and sinners came and sat down with him and his disciples"* (Matthew 9). And the facetious Zacchaeus, perched on a tree to see Jesus: *"Jesus lifted up his eyes and said to him, 'Zacchaeus, come down quickly, for I must dwell in your house today' ... and Zacchaeus received him with joy"* (Luke 19). Jesus also liked to meet Lazarus, Martha and Mary in Bethany.

Let us also remember meals at Simon the Pharisee, where the forgiven sinner who bathes Jesus' feet with her tears, and anoints the Lord with a precious nard (Luke 7). Then there is the last Easter meal on Holy Thursday, the day before his death. *"When the hour came he sat down with his disciples and said to them, 'I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer'"* (Luke 22).

In each of these scenes, the incredible humanity of Jesus is manifested.

And if He needed these moments of calm, it is because He often confront the hostility of the crowd, religious leaders, and even his own family. Everyone knows where will end for him.

But the gentle, the humble of heart, the sinners who repent: they were happy, at peace when, without knowing it, they received God himself eating and drinking with them ...

It is not only the past: if we understood, even if only for a moment, that what is given us to live in the sharing of the Word is The same intimacy with the Lord as existed at the time of the Last Supper. Worship time is also the place where everyone comes to gather, to find solace and consolation in worship and praise.

This Jesus who was hungry and thirsty is the same Jesus who is here today and who is thirsty and hungry to share with us the treasures of the Kingdom of God so that we share them in our turn. And it is precisely for us that Jesus repeats: *"You give them something to eat"* our five loaves and our two fishes, or only a few crumbs if we do not have that much ... He will do the rest.



Walking with Jesus – Part 2

John 4:1-15

In the previous reflection on Walking with Jesus I looked at Jesus healing ministry and how the disciples might have grappled with that. Here we go on a walk brought about by specific circumstances. During his ministry in Galilee, Jesus challenged and was challenged many times by the Pharisees – the Jewish leaders. While the crowds loved these confrontations, the tension and hostility between Jesus and the leaders at this time became too intense. Jesus took the disciples out of town for a while – way out of town. What a walk that must have been, as they covered many miles, listening, talking and discussing with Jesus! This was a valuable time as the disciples tried to come to terms with the hostility of the Jewish leaders, who Jesus was, their own ideas of the future with Jesus, and Jesus explanations of why He really had come into their world.

They headed north towards the shores of the Mediterranean Sea and the Gentile regions of Tyre and Sidon. Jesus was not running away, but the disciples were curious about why Jesus was taking his ministry to those who were Gentiles. He told the disciples 'I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and they will hear my voice and they will become one flock with one Shepherd'. He was trying to tell them that a place in God's kingdom was awaiting not only Jews but Gentiles as well.

Jesus reputation preceded Him and in the weeks He spent in that area he ministered to those who were hungry, desperately hungry for hope and for Him. This was to be an example for the Apostles after Pentecost, as they took the message of the Gospel and the risen Christ not just to the Jews...but to the ends of the earth.

Remember to pray for those working outside their own environment whether overseas, or with people of different background or nationality. But remember that even where you live there are people of different background and nationality. Pray that each day as they (and every one of us) meet and talk with people, as they talk of Jesus they will know God's presence with them, and the words given to them by the Holy Spirit. Pray too that they will grow in faith as they trust in God for their protection and provision of their physical needs.

Returning to the scripture passage, can you imagine yourself in the shoes of that woman who had just met Jesus and is now running back into her village where she is not well regarded to tell them of Jesus – this time they must have seen a change in her because they listened and came. As you think of that lady or yourself in her shoes, think too (for example) of the pastor who imprisoned for his faith uses that opportunity to witness to his fellow prisoners and his guards. Whatever your situation today, whether you feel comfortable or you are being confronted with hostility, use that situation to witness whether in the words, or deeds given you by the Holy Spirit.

God bless you as you serve the Lord today.

The walk will continue next month!



Psalm 10

¹ Why, LORD, do you stand far off?
Why do you hide yourself in times of trouble?

² In his arrogance the wicked man hunts down the weak,
who are caught in the schemes he devises.

³ He boasts about the cravings of his heart;
he blesses the greedy and reviles the LORD.

⁴ In his pride the wicked man does not seek him;
in all his thoughts there is no room for God.

⁵ His ways are always prosperous;
your laws are rejected by^[b] him;
he sneers at all his enemies.

⁶ He says to himself, "Nothing will ever shake me."
He swears, "No one will ever do me harm."

⁷ His mouth is full of lies and threats;
trouble and evil are under his tongue.

⁸ He lies in wait near the villages;
from ambush he murders the innocent.
His eyes watch in secret for his victims;

⁹ like a lion in cover he lies in wait.
He lies in wait to catch the helpless;
he catches the helpless and drags them off in his net.

¹⁰ His victims are crushed, they collapse;
they fall under his strength.

¹¹ He says to himself, "God will never notice;
he covers his face and never sees."

¹² Arise, LORD! Lift up your hand, O God.
Do not forget the helpless.

¹³ Why does the wicked man revile God?
Why does he say to himself,
"He won't call me to account"?

¹⁴ But you, God, see the trouble of the afflicted;
you consider their grief and take it in hand.
The victims commit themselves to you;
you are the helper of the fatherless.

¹⁵ Break the arm of the wicked man;
call the evildoer to account for his wickedness
that would not otherwise be found out.

¹⁶ The LORD is King for ever and ever;
the nations will perish from his land.

¹⁷ You, LORD, hear the desire of the afflicted;
you encourage them, and you listen to their cry,

¹⁸ defending the fatherless and the oppressed,
so that mere earthly mortals
will never again strike terror.



Psalm 11

For the director of music. Of David.

- ¹ In the LORD I take refuge.
How then can you say to me:
“Flee like a bird to your mountain.
² For look, the wicked bend their bows;
they set their arrows against the strings
to shoot from the shadows
at the upright in heart.
³ When the foundations are being destroyed,
what can the righteous do?”
- ⁴ The LORD is in his holy temple;
the LORD is on his heavenly throne.
He observes everyone on earth;
his eyes examine them.
⁵ The LORD examines the righteous,
but the wicked, those who love violence,
he hates with a passion.
⁶ On the wicked he will rain
fiery coals and burning sulfur;
a scorching wind will be their lot.
- ⁷ For the LORD is righteous,
he loves justice;
the upright will see his face.



Emulating the faith of the canaanite woman – Part 1

“Woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish”-Matthew 15: 21-28

Mahatma Gandhi in his autobiography tells how, during his student days, he read the Gospel and saw in the teachings of Jesus the answer to the major problem facing the people of India, the caste system. Seriously considering embracing the Christian faith, Gandhi attended church one Sunday intending to talk to the minister about the idea. On entering the church, however, however, the usher refused to give him a seat and told him to worship with his own people. Gandhi left the church and never returned. “ If Christians have caste differences also,” he said, “I might as well remain a Hindu.”

The believe that God’s blessings are somewhat limited to peoples of certain nationalities or cultures has been around for a very long time. Such a belief was very much alive in the society in which Jesus grew up.

When Jesus said in the Gospel reading, *“ I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel” (Matthew 15:24)* he was expressing a popular belief. It is not clear whether he really believed it himself or whether he said it in order to expose and correct its false claims. Every people and culture has a handful of such prejudices and myths – from the myths of the Jews as the only people of God to that of no salvation outside the Church, from the prejudice of the caste system in India to that of racial superiority in Nazi Germany, from the myth of the superiority of men over women to that the superiority of Western cultures.

We are today invited to expose such myths and correct their false and exaggerated claims.

It took the active intervention of a complete outsider, a Canaanite woman, to create the awareness among early Jewish Christians that the belief in the exclusive divine prerogative of the Jewish people did not stand up to reason. Probably you and I owe the fact that we are Christians today to the heroism of this unnamed woman who dismantled the dividing wall of intolerance between the Jews and the Gentiles.

We need to consult this woman in today’s service, asking her to teach us how to go about dismantling the structures that create undue division among God’s Children, the human race that God has loved into being.

Moses Onoh MD is the Country Leader of TLM Nigeria



Emulating the faith of the canaanite woman – Part 2

“Woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish”-Matthew 15: 21-28

The first thing she teaches us in our Christian vocation to reconcile all humankind to God is COURAGE. Given her position as a foreigner and as a woman, it took phenomenal courage on her part to decide to take on the all-Jewish and all-male company of Jesus and his disciples. She was so small that even though she addresses Jesus by his proper Messianic titles: *“Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David” (Matthew 15:22)*, Jesus still ignored her: *“He did not answer her at all” (Matthew 15:23a)*. Most people at this point will give up and accept defeat. But not our Canaanite sister; rather she intensifies her efforts and embarks on a one –woman demonstration to the point that the disciples have to ask Jesus to do something about it: *“Send her away, for she keeps shouting after us” (Matthew 15:23b)*. Her courage and her refusal to take no for an answer finally paid off.

The second thing we can learn from this woman is FOCUS or what the civil rights movement calls “keep your eyes on the prize.” *When Jesus spoke to her in language that demeaned her people: “It is not fair to take the children’s food and throw it to the dogs” (Matthew 15:26)* she did not lose her cool but kept her eyes on the goal of her mission, which is to show that even Non-Jews are entitled to God’s blessings in Christ. Our sister knew that if she gave Jesus a piece of her mind at that moment, that would jeopardize her mission and she might lose what she came for. But with focus in with her eyes on the prize, she made it. She is a model of non-violence, if you figure that the words of Jesus to her were unjustified verbal assault on her and her people.

Finally it was Jesus who gave in: *“Woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish” (Matthew 15:28)* and the woman got what she wanted. The message of this woman to every one of us today is:

BE NOT AFRAID. Be not afraid to challenge prejudice and falsity even in high places, even in religious high places. The least among us can be a vehicle that

God can use to bring Justice and healing to all of God’s disadvantaged daughters and sons all over the world.

Moses Onoh MD is the Country Leader of TLM Nigeria



Black and white

John 9:1-12

Recently our youngest granddaughter, Evie, asked her Mother if Grandma and Grandpa saw in black and white when they were little.

After we had finished rolling around laughing I began reflecting a little more on her comments. Actually I did see in black and white when I was young. Right was right and wrong was wrong. (By my own understanding (learnt?) of course). It was not until I was a little older that I came to understand 'grey'. And though she would not realize it, Evie currently sees in black and white too.

This year Willow, Evie's sister, has been very unhappy at school as a girl sitting close to her has been particularly mean and unkind. It has now been found that this little girl was quite ill and has now commenced medication to correct her condition. It is not hard to understand how, feeling unwell, she lashed out at the one closest to her.

What the girl did was wrong, but now we understand why it happened, and suddenly what could have been black and white is very grey.

In the above passage, when the disciples asked '*Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind*' they thought the situation was black and white. Someone had sinned and an unfortunate situation had occurred (in this case blindness). (And we know that in some cultures this thinking is still current, people have developed leprosy because they or their family have done something wrong/deserve it.)

But back to the disciples and Jesus. Jesus challenges and corrects their understanding/assumptions saying that neither the man nor his parents had sinned. Jesus then continues with more and deeper teaching. However, the only thing I would like to note from this exchange is that here is another good example of 'grey'.

Sometimes our understanding of the connection between actions and consequences are not correct. Of course some things are just black and white. Right or wrong.

Yet it is good to keep our minds open to grey. When there might be more to a situation than we can currently see or understand.

This may impact how we 'judge' a person or a situation, may make us kinder or more compassionate, and perhaps open our eyes to see 'that the work of God might be displayed...'

Yet I still have one question – when did I start to see in colour?

Today ask Jesus to give you wisdom to know when black is black and white is white or if grey may be involved. May God's glory be displayed by our actions and reactions towards the people and events we meet during this day.

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Pioneers You, I, Who?

These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: 'Go nowhere among the Gentiles, and enter no town of the Samaritans, 6 but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Matt 10 v 5-6 see also Geneses, 18 1 - 15 and Matthew, 9 v 35 - 38 and 10 v 1 - 23

Who are pioneers? Sadhu Sundar Singh, Abraham, the 12 disciples mentioned in the gospel reading, and us; except for Abraham the rest in that list are / or became pioneers because of their faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. Of course you don't need to be a Christian to be a pioneer.

A pioneer opens up or prepares the way. A person prepared to take risks, prepared to try out something new, and original. A researcher who develops new cures or methods of producing energy. Some are praised for their branching out, others squashed and prevented from stepping into the unknown. At the end of the list of heroes of faith in Hebrews chapter 11 Jesus is referred to as *the pioneer and perfecter of our faith. 12 v 2*

Sadhu Sunda Singh known by his yellow robe, was great pioneer, pushing the Indian church out from Victorian : Edwardian colonialism to something much greater and wider. He did not fit in at theological college, and refused ordination as he did not want to be pinned to a parish. He an Indian Sadhu called to wander the country with no spare clothes, could not express his faith if restricted within 4 walls with rules and regulations set by westerners. Sunda was a mystic, who could fast for days. His visions and experiences were remarkable. In his short life he Indianised Christianity. A pioneer who set off on journeys to the unknown.

Maybe the sign of a pioneer is they are criticised, laughed at and mocked. Abraham's family probably thought he was completely cracked to leave a city and go a-wandering. There are families who are horrified by what their young do, maybe our families are shocked by what we have done.

In Genesis 18, Abraham gives an Eastern welcome to 3 unknown passers by, gives them a real meal. This is followed by their sharing unbelievable news, "Sarah will bear a son." She finds the idea ridiculous, *After I have grown old, and my husband is old, shall I have pleasure?* Sarah is a pioneer.

The twelve pioneers who Jesus sent *'Go nowhere among the Gentiles, and enter no town of the Samaritans,7 As you go, proclaim the good news, "The kingdom of heaven has come near." 8 Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. You received without payment; give without payment. There must have been other wandering preachers and healers. But the real pioneering is in the instructions 9 Take no gold, or silver, or copper in your belts, 10 no bag for your journey, or two tunics, or sandals, or a staff; for labourers deserve their food.*

This is different, Go empty handed, have trust, you will be provided for; Sadhu Sunda Singh believed that and took nothing when he walked up above the snow-line into Nepal and Tibet.

The disciples went on journeys, traveling though the Roman Empire. Philip to Samaria, Peter to Rome, Thomas maybe to India, John Ephesus. They were pioneers, going beyond the Promised land and preached to Samaritans and Gentiles. Without them would the gospel, the Good News that Jesus is Lord have reached, Asia, Europe and the world. They also saw different ways to express their faith.

Recently a friend asked me why 4 different Gospels? then he said *You know Lisbeth, it is like journalists, they see and report things differently.* They saw things differently and explained the gospel to different groups of people.

Maybe that is one way we can be pioneers, in the different ways we talk and demonstrate our faith.

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Who is my Neighbour?

Luke 10: 25 – 37 The experts in the law or scribes (a designation used by Luke) were mostly Pharisees. Here one of them asks a common question (see Luke 18: 18) either to take issue with Jesus or to see what kind of teacher He is. His question "What must I do... ?" shows that he is thinking of some form of salvation by works and that he has no understanding of the Lord's grace.

The scribe answers Jesus' question about the law, by quoting and putting two Scriptures together: Deut 6: 5 and Lev 19: 18. "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind" and "Love your neighbour as you love yourself". The fourfold love means that devotion of the total person is demanded.

Deut 6: 5 is part of verses 4 – 9, known as the Shema, the Hebrew word for "hear". Please read these verses. These words need to be like a screensaver on our notebook! Our love for the Lord (and for our neighbour) is built on the love that the Lord has for his people and his identification with them (1 John 4: 19 – 21). See also John 13: 34 – 35 (a new commandment).

Lev 19: 18 contains the words: "Love your neighbour as yourself". These words are quoted by the expert in the law, but also by Paul (Rom 13: 8 – 10 and Gal 5: 14) and by James (2: 8). In Romans 13 Paul speaks of our debt to love, i.e. to love is a debt that is never paid off. No matters how much one has loved, we need to keep on loving. "One another" includes not only fellow Christians, but all people as the second half of verse 8 makes clear: fellow man. Our neighbour is anyone in need and loving our neighbour encompasses all our social responsibilities. "As yourself" is not a command to love ourselves, but recognises the fact that we naturally do so. A person should love to do an abundance of good for his fellow human being, as he does for himself.

A strict group of Pharisees (school of Shammai) added to the command in Leviticus to love your neighbour as yourself, and "hate your enemy". Jesus' reaction to this school of thought is recorded in Matthew 5: 43 – 48, as He adds the instruction: "Love your enemies", in line with OT teaching, see Lev 19: 17 & 33 – 34. Neighbour does not mean one who lives nearby or next door, but anyone with whom one comes in contact.

In answer to the scribe's question: "And who is my neighbour?", Jesus tells a story... In conclusion He turns the question around: "Which of these three do you think was a neighbour to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?" The priest and the Levite did everything that the law required to keep themselves ritually pure, but did they really keep the law (by loving their neighbour!)?

According to William Barclay, Jesus showed the scribe three things through the parable about being a neighbour:

- We must help someone even when he or she brought trouble on themselves, as the traveller had done through his reckless choice to travel alone on a dangerous road
- Any man or woman of any nation, who is in need, is our neighbour. Our help should be as wide as the love of God
- The help must be practical, and must not just consist merely in feeling sorry. No doubt the priest and Levite felt a pang of pity for the wounded man, but did nothing. Compassion, to be real compassion, shows itself in deeds



Psalm 12

For the director of music. According to sheminith. A psalm of David.

¹ Help, LORD, for no one is faithful anymore;
those who are loyal have vanished from the human race.

² Everyone lies to their neighbor;
they flatter with their lips
but harbor deception in their hearts.

³ May the LORD silence all flattering lips
and every boastful tongue—

⁴ those who say,
“By our tongues we will prevail;
our own lips will defend us—who is lord over us?”

⁵ “Because the poor are plundered and the needy groan,
I will now arise,” says the LORD.

“I will protect them from those who malign them.”

⁶ And the words of the LORD are flawless,
like silver purified in a crucible,
like gold^[c] refined seven times.

⁷ You, LORD, will keep the needy safe
and will protect us forever from the wicked,

⁸ who freely strut about
when what is vile is honored by the human race.



"One day after a long journey, I rested in front of a house.

Suddenly a sparrow came towards me blown helplessly by a strong wind. From another direction, an eagle dived to catch the panicky sparrow. Threatened from different directions, the sparrow flew into my lap. By choice, it would not normally do that. However, the little bird was seeking for a refuge from a great danger.

Likewise, the violent winds of suffering and trouble blow us into the Lord's protective hands."

Psalm 139,5

Sadhu Sundar Singh – 1889-1929



To learn from the life of sportsman - Part 1

Our Christian life is like running a race in the sport event. Like sportsman, we have keep trying on, not once but all the time and not to give up. We have to trust completely in Jesus and obey his commands on daily basis to get salvation. We have keep focusing on our eyes on Jesus then only we will win race of Christian life. This process has to be lifelong time. In our daily life there are worldly and spiritual races. The reward of the Christian race will be in haven.

1Corinth 9:24 Paul says that we have run to win the race. When we read further verses we came know....There could be hindrances on our path, like weakness difficult path, injury, fat body, low spiritual life, lack of faith, sinful life and laziness etc. If sin keeps us occupied then we will not able to run well to win the race. We need to get rid of all these hindrances to win the race. We need to make ourselves free from these harmful things. Like sportsman has to make his body easy and lighter to run well, we also have to work hard to have no sin any more in our life.

Test for the spiritual life will also come - like extra weight in the body of sportsman will not help to win the race, like that if we have still are involved in sinful life, then we will not pass the spiritual tests. We have overcome these shortcomings.

Running gives us experience, we like to go forward in our life. We become stronger when we pass the spiritual tests. We need to pray to God for the sins we are involved. God will help us that slowly we will get rid of these sins. This will help to run efficiently our Christian race. He gave His only son Jesus Christ to us who ran and came first in the race. He was sinless and obeyed God's commands. We have to learn from Jesus Christ that He was not sad because He had to take the cross finally.

We could be example to others in Christian life and race. Fellowship with other Christians also makes us strong in our faith. Faith helps us in our Christian race, like sportsman does many things regularly- exercise, diet control, practice, body weight control, focus on the goal etc. We also need to do (practice) many things in our life to keep us fit to win the spiritual life.

We learn about SELF CONTROL in **1Corinth. 9,25-26**. Sportsman also has to have self control on daily practice, diet control and avoid unhealthy things. We also have to have self control and avoid sins in our life. Sportsman run the race with a goal in his eyes and focus on the goal of winning, like that we also must have goal (obey His commands) in our spiritual life.

We need to run with patients and to run on daily basis, not to be discouraged in the race. Focus on goal, regular practice, self control are very important for sportsman, like that daily Bible reading, Christian fellowship, prayerful life and following God's command and avoiding sin in our daily life are some of the daily exercises in our spiritual life. Our aim must to win the spiritual life.



Hard bites in faith 2 – apology

“...forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.” Ephesians 4,32/b

“Never explain, never complain!” – this well-known saying of Disraeli is regarded by many people as one of the main directives for life. They regard it as a key to keep the backbone straight in all circumstances and protect integrity, provoking permanent respect from others. They maybe think it comes directly from the Bible?!

I do not like this saying and especially not when hearing it as view of Christian people. Honestly, I like to explain myself. I like to apologise and I consciously like to beg pardon. When bringing up my daughters or taught young children on catechism: I very often begged their pardon, too. Not just asking them to accept openly the clear fact that I had been wrong, made a mistake or wrong decision. But also to demonstrate that I am a fellow-sinner, not a god! I never regarded it as “shame” to apologise and beg pardon even from children. Often it happened that this opened lifelong spiritual relationships and a blessed way before counselling.

Why is it beautiful to apologise, explaining ourselves?

1.This expresses our real status before God. How could my seeking God’s pardon be genuine, unless I am not practicing it, just in a selected way: just towards people who are “higher positioned” than me, but also to younger, feebler ones? Without begging pardon, or apologising we pretend to be perfect, ultimate, stepping in the place of God. And what is worse still is: neglecting apology and begging pardon, Satan makes us truly believe that we are right! This belongs to his worst of tactics! Even my age may not be used as a reason to pretend to be “better” than a child!

2. As this expresses our real status before men. I am not better than my fellowmen, just my sins, guilts and wickednesses may be different ones from theirs. Keeping myself strong in my “righteousness”, creates inaccessible separation: I don’t apologise + you don’t apologise = we never pardon each other!

3. My explaining, apologising and seeking pardon creates bonds. Strong bonds of love, as it is about opening my heart and confessing my weakness, which in all case results the same attitude in the other party, too. Real sincere spiritual bonds can be bound only by apologising to and pardoning each other. This needs the greatest amount of love.

4. My explaining, apologising and seeking pardon strengthens me and helps me to climb up the ladder of my failed status where I had fallen through my mistake, error, guilt or sin.

5. My explaining, apologising and seeking pardon strengthens and lifts up the other party, offering him/her opportunity to grow in the equally hard job of bowing down, releasing me and pulling me out through his/her generous pardoning!

*And in the midway: we meet with each other, embrace each other, and love each other!
Happy apologising!*



Jesus the living water

“Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again,¹⁴ but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life.” (John 4:13-14)

No water!

It was Sunday morning and I woke up to discover the water supply to our home had stopped. I quickly realised that in our comfortable western world where we take water for granted this was the first time I had experienced such a situation in the UK. But I had to smile to myself as I recalled our many years living in Nepal when an empty house water tank was not uncommon; and that most people in that country had to collect their water from a village tap or spring - some having to walk quite a distance to do so.

Water is precious, but we tend not to think about that so much till our own water supply is interrupted. As humans we can last a few weeks without food but only a few days without water. And generally we need to drink several times a day - the latest recommendation in the UK is as high as 3 litres a day!

John’s account of Jesus encounter with the woman at the well in Samaria is a wonderful example of how a simple conversation can turn into an opportunity to witness to the power of God – and Jesus was quick to do that. The woman is also responsive as Jesus steers the conversation, and it becomes clear that she is spiritually thirsty. In a very short time Jesus leads her to the wellspring of life itself.

Commentators on this passage tell us that filling her water jar in the middle of the day was a clear sign she feared joining the other women early in the morning for this daily chore. And as the conversation develops it’s not difficult to see why she wanted to do that.

But the question is how thirsty are we? I think it’s possible sometimes to carry on in life’s journey without noticing that our spiritual resources are slowly draining away. Maybe like the woman at the well, we don’t want a confrontation so we try to top up a little bit here and there, - but only when no one else is looking. And I guess that if that’s how we go about things we’ll be running on nearly empty all the time.

That’s not what Jesus is offering here – he is inviting us to experience so much more. A few chapters later John describes Jesus visit to Jerusalem for the festival of tabernacles when, building on Isaiah 55, he declares:

“Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. ³⁸ Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them.

Jesus is not offering us just a small top up – it’s an abundant flooding gushing out to bless others.

Of course we need to drink plenty of water to stay alive. But Jesus offers us so much more when he gives us the water of life.



Paying it forward

Romans 13: 1 – 14

Some among us will be familiar with the concept of 'paying it forward'.

For the uninitiated consider the scenario: you are in a line in the bakery or the coffee shop. You get to the front and place your order, but when it comes to paying you are told, "no need to pay, the person before you has paid for it"! Has this ever happened to you?

So someone, somewhere in the line has decided to not only pay for their own bread or coffee but has also paid for the person behind them. In turn each person has then 'paid it forward' – paying for the person behind them. What a refreshing concept; doing something for someone else with no expectation of thanks, with no expectation of repayment from the person behind, not because they have done something for you first. What joy is spread through a simple act of love and kindness.

Romans 13 makes it clear that we owe a debt to rulers and authorities, not because of something they have done for us but more for what they represent. In the same way God calls us to show love to those around us, not in response to something they have done for us to earn that love, but because God loves us.

We benefit from the ultimate 'paying it forward'. God loves us, unworthy as we are, he's done it all for us. We owe him a tremendous debt of love, but he asks us to pay that debt forward to others. V.9 sums it up as "love your neighbour as yourself".

With no expectation of repayment, what can we do today to 'pay it forward'?

Pete Garratt – Head of Operations Support



Who is wisdom?

No, not is 'what is wisdom?' or 'where is wisdom?' but 'WHO is wisdom?'

In 1 Corinthians 1:20-24 we read: *Where is the wise person? Where is the teacher of the law? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe. Jews demand signs and Greeks look for wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.*

In our work and in our lives, many of us yearn for wisdom. We want to make the right decisions, choose the right path, and be wise in our work to help leprosy-affected people. We pray earnestly for wisdom. I know that I often imagine wisdom is 'out there' somewhere, an ethereal thing like wisps of smoke on the wind that I just can't grasp hold of! But the Bible says something different.

The Bible says that wisdom is a person. Colossians 2:3 says that in Jesus Christ *"are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge"*. And 1 Corinthians 1:24 says that Christ is *"the wisdom of God"*.

If we hunger for wisdom, there is a very real and solid place to go – to our Lord Jesus Christ. It is He who is wisdom. In practice, what might we do to meet with the one who is wisdom?

- We can read the words Jesus spoke in the scriptures and learn about Him. This is one precious way we can encounter wisdom.
- We gain wisdom as we listen to Jesus in prayer, our ear turned to hear Him as he speaks into our lives and our problems.
- We practice wisdom as we keep step with Jesus, daily (sometimes hourly!) bringing our decisions before Him.

Isn't it reassuring to know that wisdom isn't a mystery that is kept from us? Jesus says to us:

"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." Matthew 11:28-30

When we are burdened with decisions and choices, when we don't know which way to go, Jesus says 'Come to me'.

We are invited to learn from Jesus – the one who is wisdom – and in this we will find divine rest.



Psalm 14

For the director of music. Of David.

¹ The fool says in his heart,
“There is no God.”
They are corrupt, their deeds are vile;
there is no one who does good.

² The LORD looks down from heaven
on all mankind
to see if there are any who understand,
any who seek God.

³ All have turned away, all have become corrupt;
there is no one who does good,
not even one.

⁴ Do all these evildoers know nothing?

They devour my people as though eating bread;
they never call on the LORD.

⁵ But there they are, overwhelmed with dread,
for God is present in the company of the righteous.

⁶ You evildoers frustrate the plans of the poor,
but the LORD is their refuge.

⁷ Oh, that salvation for Israel would come out of Zion!
When the LORD restores his people,
let Jacob rejoice and Israel be glad!



Psalm 15

A psalm of David.

¹ LORD, who may dwell in your sacred tent?
Who may live on your holy mountain?

² The one whose walk is blameless,
who does what is righteous,
who speaks the truth from their heart;

³ whose tongue utters no slander,
who does no wrong to a neighbor,
and casts no slur on others;

⁴ who despises a vile person
but honors those who fear the LORD;
who keeps an oath even when it hurts,
and does not change their mind;

⁵ who lends money to the poor without interest;
who does not accept a bribe against the innocent.

Whoever does these things
will never be shaken.



God's Grace 1 – Receive and Respond

Luke: 17: 11-14 – Receive Grace in Faith & Obedience

Nothing Jesus does is at random or without purpose. Every road He travels opens the doors for the seekers to receive His grace and rejoice. In the lives of the 10 people affected by leprosy, a ray of hope came into their lives amidst their misery. Just as they live now-a-days in many places across the world, at the time of Jesus also they were required to live apart from rest of the community. They were the outcasts. More than the disease it is the exclusion which was painful for them. They were isolated by others and felt hopeless. They stood at a distance as required by the law so that Jesus and his disciplines (the Jews) were not defiled and made unclean.

But there was an expectation and hope in their approach to Jesus. They did not let go the opportunity that came their way. In faith and hope they approached him. Jesus was their last hope; if none else, Jesus would surely heal them. Their cry for mercy reflects their social and spiritual reality. Their agonizing cry signified their pitiable condition. That lamentation did not go unheard by Jesus. A cry for help from the depths of their heart, in faith, did not go without an appropriate response from Jesus.

Jesus' response was not pronouncing immediate healing to them. There is uniqueness in Jesus's response. Jesus did not say "you be healed". He did not touch them. He did not heal them then and there, but asked them to go and show themselves to the priests. Jesus addresses each one's needs uniquely. Under the law of that time, those who were healed of leprosy should go and be declared clean by the priests. It signified that a leprosy affected person is made pure again and accepted back into the society. They would no longer carry the stigma and are excluded from the society. Every need of ours has a solution in Jesus, uniquely. We are unique and our needs are unique. Jesus does not follow the one size fits all approach. His solutions are tailor made.

The solution that Jesus gave to their problem could have elicited diverse reactions from the 10 people. They could have been disappointed because he did wave a hand over them or touch them or say that you are made well, as he did in some other instances. Many questions would have run through their minds when Jesus had said, "go and show yourselves to the priests". One could say that the 10 had gone because they had nothing to lose. Not true, they have had much to lose; ridicule and chastisement by the priests. Their minds were troubled; if they were not healed by the time they reached the priests, they would look like fools; their very last hope had failed them. *This had put the faith and obedience of the leprosy affected persons to test.*

Which was a better option, to remain in unbelief and suffer or step out in faith and obey what Jesus commanded them to do? Irrespective of our situation, the choice is ours, to obey Jesus in faith or do what we want. The exercise of free will is not only when the situation is comfortable, but when all doors seem closed. Whether in a state of delight or despair, it is obedience to the Lord's voice that matters.

Whether it is in faith or in desperation, the 10 did obey Jesus. This act of obedience delivered them for the disease even before they had reached the priests! There is no record that the 10 people had earlier been in any way been touched by Jesus nor have been witnesses to Jesus' miracles. They would have possibly heard but not seen what Jesus can do. They believed in Jesus from what they had heard. That is faith. *They were cleansed by God's grace through their faith in Jesus.* Man's desire and God's will have to match for healing. Only through faith do we receive Jesus. No one has done anything for them other than the word that Jesus had released over them. God's grace had manifested in their lives because they had obeyed Jesus.

Faith and obedience to Jesus releases God's grace.



God's Grace 2 - Respond to Grace with Gratitude and Joy

Luke: 17: 15-19 – Jesus asked, “Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine? Was no-one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?” Jesus knew that all the 10 were healed. He points out that someone who possibly did not know God earlier came to know God through Jesus.

How does human nature respond to God's grace is amply demonstrated by the responses of the 10 people who had received the healing from leprosy. Interestingly Jesus did not ask them to show themselves to the priests and come back. The choice is ours, to get back to Him with thanksgiving or not. Our God never compels. Free will is his character, He gave us Jesus, He created the world, He created man and woman out of His free will. So free will is an inherent characteristic of man at the spirit level. To be grateful, I must get in touch with the spirit of God in me. Logic makes me relate to the physical world, the spirit of God helps me to get connected with the almighty God in heavenly realms.

Only one of the 10 people who were healed of leprosy came back to Jesus. Only one among them truly understood the heart of God. The blessings of obedience were enjoyed by the person affected by leprosy. He was a Samaritan. Samaritans were outside the convent community, rejected and despised by the Jews. A gentile, a lesser person, not a follower of the law. The one person who came back to Jesus, did so worshipping Jesus. He realized that the cleansing is by the Grace of God in and through Jesus Christ. He received a gift. It is the experience of love of Jesus that broke all chains for him. He was exuberant. He came back excited. He was touched in his heart. It was not a formality that he had to fulfil but an expression of genuine joy. He gave glory to who it was due. He came in person, confessed his gratitude with his mouth. It is a one-to-one relationship with Jesus. Instant grace, instant healing, instant praise. He did not send a thank you letter or an email.

Everyone around him must have heard his loud praises and come to know the love and power of Jesus. It is a public testimony, not a private one behind closed doors. What an amazing demonstration of freedom in Christ. Gospel is preached by the new believer without any teaching or coaching. He wanted to tell the whole world what happened to him, and who did it for him. He wanted the whole wide world to know how grateful he truly was. You receive grace, you respond to it yourself though words and deeds (dancing).

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God's Grace 3 - In closing

It is interesting to speculate (as one author did) why the 9 did not come back:

One (1) waited to see if the cure was real and it would last;

one (2) no longer had the stigma of a leprosy affected person and his heart was hardened that he would not say "thank you" to anyone anymore;

one (3) simply forgot because he was too happy;

one (4) was separated from his family for a long time, so he turned back home;

one (5) gave glory to the priests;

one (6) believed that he would have gotten well anyway, meeting Jesus was only coincidental;

one (7) thought that he would see Jesus later on;

one (8) decided that he actually never had leprosy but some other disease;

one (9) had questions of how and why he was cured, he was lost in self-doubt and existence of God. The other 9 were also equally blessed materially, but their souls were lost because they did not have the heart of gratitude. Many receive the blessings of God and rationalize that it is their own doing.

Rationalization is the deceit of the devil. Gratitude establishes the relationship with God; deceit of self-dependency breaks it.

When God gives His grace, He is yearning for us to come back to him and enjoy his fellowship. God loves our praises of him because that strengthens our bonding with him. The expression of gratitude brings glory to God. Glory belongs to the one who gives us grace. Doing what God tells us to do must be done in faith. In expressing his gratitude, the leprosy cured person received inner healing, peace and joy.

In closing

Obedience to God's word is for our benefit. The answer to the question "what is in it for me if I obey God, is the Blessing. The grace of God is for us to be blessed in this world and manifest His grace. A truly faithful person always responds to God's love and compassion through gratitude. Are we Christ-centered like the Samaritan or self-centered like the 9 others? Nine have received physical healing; one in addition received salvation of the soul. We must be witnesses without hesitation to God's Grace. Thanking Jesus is praising God. *Jesus is pleased by our witnessing, testifying and worshiping.* In praise, we become whole; Spirit, Soul and Body; Spiritual, Emotional and Temporal needs of our existence are met. Our soul is saved spiritually through faith and gratitude.

Attitude of Gratitude is a characteristic integral to the Christian walk.

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Southern rights and wrongs

September is prime whale season in the Cape, so I wasn't surprised when I arrived at the beach yesterday evening and saw a southern right¹ whale a short distance from the shore. Sadly, it was immediately evident that this magnificent animal was in terrible distress, entangled in fishing lines and was thrashing about, bellowing in rage as it sought to throw off the weight that was anchored to its tail. Brave rescue teams drew alongside the whale and dodging the whipping fins, managed to cut the cables and after half an hour of life-threatening work, the whale was free and it dived out of sight.

As we watched from the shore, we willed the whale to be still for just a few moments to give the rescuers a chance to get close with their cable-cutting equipment. We felt as if a weight had been lifted from our shoulders when the anchor fell away.

I don't know how many Wesleyans were amongst the crowd of onlookers yesterday, but if they were there, they were definitely singing *"And can it be that I should gain..."* I think the whale too was singing.

It's impossible to watch a scene like this without being reminded of *Acts 12: 6-7*. I suspect that few of you reading this would have personal experience of real chains and prisons [I'm excluding those of you engaged in prison ministry, of course...] but many of us have experienced the chains of sin, bad habits and negative patterns of thinking and the joy that comes from being released from those shackles. Many people can attest that bad habits are even more enslaving and destructive than physical manacles. It's natural to tug against those restraints, but often all we achieve is to worsen the situation [Isaiah 28:22] Yesterday, the southern right needed human hands to free it – this morning, you and I need the hands of the Saviour to untangle the mess which we so often create for ourselves.

How comforting are the words of Psalm 46. The psalmist invites us to see the mighty works of God in verses 8 and 9, but in verse 10, the tone changes abruptly and he says: *"Be still, and know that I am God."*

Yesterday, the southern right had to be still so that the surf rescue team could do their work. Sometimes, you and I need to be still so that He can do His work. Today may be one of those days. We live in an age which is so often enslaved to busy-ness. Mankind is becoming increasingly uneasy with silence and rest – it goes against the spirit of the age – "I'll do it my way." "I will free myself – I don't need your help, thank you." It is a wise person who rejects this bondage to self and receives the ministry of Him whom the psalmist addresses thus:

*"LORD, surely I am Your servant, I am Your servant, the son of Your handmaid,
You have loosed my bonds". [Psalm 116:16]*

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.

¹ They are called "right" whales because they were the right whales to hunt, as they stay surfaced when harpooned.



Integrating the values of the Kingdom of God

Read Matthew 16: 21-27) The reproach of Jesus to his disciple in this text may seem very hard. Go away ! Go behind me Satan. It is even more so if we remember what is contained in the preceding paragraph in which Jesus praises his disciple, for he has recognized in Jesus Christ, the Messiah whom the Jewish people are waiting for. He declares that it is not through human knowledge, but by a revelation from the Father (God himself) that he can affirm this truth.

But this revelation is still very partial. For Peter and his fellow disciples, the reconquest of power in Israel is on the march! But instead of a program of taking over, Jesus is telling them about his future suffering and even his violent death.

Jesus has a completely different notion of power. Wars and bloody battles are part of the history of the people of Israel. The accounts of these battles are so terrible that some are offended by the horror of a God without pity for the enemies of His people.

Yet many accounts testify to victories which owed nothing to the bravery of kings and generals. Let us think of the victory of Gideon with his 300 men against a Midianite army far more formidable than all that Gideon could muster. His first victory was to overthrow the statue of the Idol Baal. We could also evoke victory over the Philistines when David went alone, with his sling and his total trust in God, to overthrow the giant Goliath.

For Jesus, his triumph passes through his death on the cross. For Peter, this is simply unimaginable. A Messiah who goes to death rather than raising an army to drive the Roman invaders out of the country, is not how either he or his companions had envisaged the expected restoration. Peter can only rise vehemently against such a prospect. If Jesus is so severe with him, it is because the words he has just heard remind him no doubt of what he has experienced during his forty days in the desert.

If anyone wants to save his life ... Jesus must explain to his disciples that the values of the Kingdom he came to establish on earth do not follow the rules valid elsewhere. This is not the first time He has spoken to them. The sermon on the mountain was undoubtedly his first great exposition of the values that will be implemented there. It is possible that these words had not truly reached the hearts of the men and women for whom they were intended. Life, day by day with Jesus, would allow them to gradually enter this new reality.

What is our life on earth worth? This is not an end in itself. It is true that we are a simple link in the long chain of human history that goes on beyond our own lives. But real life is something quite different. For many of our contemporaries, material success matters. The question of Jesus is: "What would it be for a man to win over the whole world?" At the end of his life, what he has amassed is of no use to him.

By clinging to the values of this world, it is impossible to enter the Kingdom of God. The conquest of the new life, the citizenship of the Kingdom of God, involves renouncing the ambitions and values of this world. It is a radical change in our mentality.

Jesus speaks of carrying his cross to follow him. The place of our human intelligence is at the cross.

What about us? what determines our choices in everyday life? Have we given up our human vision of the realities to receive what corresponds to the kingdom that Jesus came to establish on earth?



Psalm 13

For the director of music. A psalm of David.

¹ How long, LORD? Will you forget me forever?
How long will you hide your face from me?

² How long must I wrestle with my thoughts
and day after day have sorrow in my heart?
How long will my enemy triumph over me?

³ Look on me and answer, LORD my God.

Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep in death,
⁴ and my enemy will say, "I have overcome him,"
and my foes will rejoice when I fall.

⁵ But I trust in your unfailing love;
my heart rejoices in your salvation.

⁶ I will sing the LORD's praise,
for he has been good to me.



"Let us touch the dying, the poor, the lonely and the unwanted
according to the graces we have received
and let us not be ashamed or slow to do the humble work."

Mother Teresa of Kolkata



Like a child!

To take a child in your arms, to rock him tenderly, what could be more beautiful? his small head which lies with confidence on your shoulder, you cannot refrain from covering it of affectionate kisses. How to explain this emotion? A symbiosis settles down between the child and you. So that the child is good, peaceful, you have to disregard all is unpleasant in you. No shouts, for fear of waking the kid, no moos swing that he could feel and stir in turn. No unfriendly words. Hurtful remarks would hurt only you, seized with shame to have pronounced them! you have in arms a being who gives himself entirely. He asks only to be loved. He is the demonstration of perfect love, without any judgement.

In understand better, when I have one of my grandchildren in my arms, why Jesus took them as an example.

Matthew 18: At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" He called a little child and him stand among them. And He said: "I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoever welcomes a little child like this in my name welcomes me."

Perfect love is in Christ. He welcomes us as we are. Let us find with Him the simplicity of a child. We can trust Him and be sure that He will never leave us alone.

Eric Chollet - I'm retired since three years. I used to work with TLM Switzerland for 32 years. During that time, I have had the privilege to stand in different committees (e.g. executive committee - directorate) with TLMI, which has been very rewarding. All along these years of service, I have met a lot of wonderful and dedicated people. May God continue to bless the mission for His glory.

As Eric provided his devotional in French, too (his mother tongue), it is a delight to edit it below also in its original form, hoping that The Bridge soon turns on being bilingual! Marta

Comme un enfant !

Prendre un enfant dans les bras, le bercer tendrement, quoi de plus beau ? Cette petite tête qui s'abandonne avec confiance sur votre épaule, vous ne pouvez vous empêcher de la couvrir de baisers affectueux. Comment expliquer cet attendrissement ? Une symbiose s'installe entre l'enfant et vous. Pour que l'enfant soit bien, paisible, vous devez faire abstraction de tout ce qui peut être désagréable en vous. Pas de cris, de peur de réveiller le petit, pas de saute d'humeur, il pourrait le ressentir et s'agiter à son tour. Pas de propos désobligeants. Des paroles blessantes ne blesseraient que vous, saisi de honte de les avoir prononcées ! Vous avez dans les bras un être qui se donne tout entier. Il ne demande qu'à être aimé. Il est la manifestation de l'amour parfait, exempt de tout jugement.

Je comprends mieux, lorsque j'ai un petit enfant dans les bras, pourquoi Jésus les cite en exemple. *"Jésus appela un petit enfant, le plaça au milieu de ses disciples et dit: Quiconque se rendra humble comme un petit enfant sera le plus grand dans le royaume des cieux. Et quiconque reçoit en mon nom un petit enfant comme celui-ci, me reçoit moi-même (Mat.18)*

L'amour parfait est en Christ. Il nous accueille tels que nous sommes. Retrouvons avec Lui la simplicité d'un enfant. Puisseons-nous nous reposer sur lui avec la confiance qu'Il ne nous lâchera pas !



A mighty fortress is our God

- Grateful commemoration on the Reformation and Martin Luther, 31st Oct 1517 -

A mighty fortress is our God,
A bulwark never failing;
Our helper He, amid the flood
Of mortal ills prevailing:
For still our ancient foe
Doth seek to work us woe;
His craft and power are great,
And, armed with cruel hate,
On earth is not his equal.

Did we in our own strength confide,
Our striving would be losing;
Were not the right Man on our side,
The Man of God's own choosing:
Dost ask who that may be?
Christ Jesus, it is He;
Lord Sabaoth, His name,
From age to age the same,
And He must win the battle.

And though this world, with devils filled,
Should threaten to undo us,
We will not fear, for God hath willed
His truth to triumph through us:
The Prince of Darkness grim,
We tremble not for him;
His rage we can endure,
For lo, his doom is sure,
One little word shall fell him.

That word above all earthly powers,
No thanks to them, abideth;
The Spirit and the gifts are ours
Through Him who with us sideth:
Let goods and kindred go,
This mortal life also;
The body they may kill:
God's truth abideth still,
His kingdom is forever.

Martin Luther, 1529 (Ein' feste Burg ist unser Gott) translated from German to English by Frederic H. Hedge, 1853. This song has been called the greatest hymn of the greatest man of the greatest period of German history and the Battle Hymn of the Reformation. It was sung at the funeral of American president Dwight Eisenhower at the National Cathedral in Washington, DC, March 1969.



Authors in Alphabetical Order

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Christine Osman	6 October		Psalm 9	1 Oct
Dan Izzett	3, 4 October		Psalm 10	7 Oct
David, King of Israel	1, 8, 14, 21, 22, 28 October		Psalm 11	8 Oct
Elisabeth Barnett	12 October		Psalm 12	14 Oct
Eric Chollet	30 October		Psalm 13	28 Oct
Marta Risko	17 October		Psalm 14	21 Oct
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Moses Onoh Dr	9, 10 October		Matthew 9,35-38	12 Oct
Mother Teresa	29 October		Matthew 15, 21-28	9 and 10 Oct
Otto Kingsley	2 October		Matthew 16, 21-17	27 Oct
Pam Packett	11 October		Matthew 18	30 Oct
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Peter Laubscher	26 October		Luke 17, 15-19	24 Oct
Pierre Geiser	27 October		John 4,13-14	18 Oct
Pradeep and Sarah Failbus	16 October		John 4,1-15	6 Oct
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Sadhu Sundar Singh	15 October		John 11	3 and 4 Oct
Theo de Villiers	13 October		Acts 12,6-7	26 Oct
Trevor Durston	18 October		Romans 13,1-14	19 Oct
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			1 Cor 9,24-26	16 Oct
			Ephesians 4,32/b	17 Oct

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