



TLM Daily Devotions

May 2018





Foreword

Veni Creator Spiritus! – Come, Holy Spirit!

“Come, Holy Ghost, Creator, come from thy bright heav'nly throne;
come, take possession of our souls, and make them all thine own.

Thou who art called the Paraclete, best gift of God above,
the living spring, the living fire, sweet unction and true love.

Thou who art sevenfold in thy grace, finger of God's right hand;
his promise, teaching little ones to speak and understand.

O guide our minds with thy blest light, with love our hearts inflame;
and with thy strength, which ne'er decays, confirm our mortal frame.

Far from us drive our deadly foe; true peace unto us bring;
and through all perils lead us safe beneath thy sacred wing.

Through thee may we the Father know, through thee th'eternal Son,
and thee the Spirit of them both, thrice-blessed three in One. Amen.”

Blessed Pentecost, TLM!

Marta Risko

“...as small as a mustard seed...”

“I have never before met a person so close to death”. This was my thought as I stepped outside the leprosy hospital in Chanchaga, Nigeria. Kelechi was extremely sick and I had just met him inside the men’s ward. To say that he looked skeletal would be an understatement. Leprosy had ravaged his body, he had lost the fingers on his hands and one leg had been amputated some years ago. But now he was also suffering from severe malnutrition caused by sickness and diarrhoea. Ulcers and wounds on his arm had become infected and his body had become weaker and weaker.

Inside the ward my colleagues and I had asked his permission to pray for him, and then we placed him before God, asking for his healing in the name of Jesus. I will be honest and tell you that I didn’t hold out much hope. I was expecting bad news imminently – later that day or in the days that followed. He was in such a serious condition that we cannot show his photograph.

On return to the UK I thought about Kelechi a lot – had he survived? What had happened to him? It wasn’t until six months later, that a colleague who had met Kelechi with me, saw him again.



The story then unfolded...

Kelechi had remained in the hospital after we left Nigeria and The Leprosy Mission team supported the hospital staff in ensuring that his nutrition was paid careful attention to in order for him to gain strength and weight. For three months there was no food supply to the hospital from the local government so we stepped in and provided all the food to the hospital to ensure that all the patients, including Kelechi, survived.

Five months after I had met him, Kelechi was finally strong enough for surgery. The wounds on his left arm were beyond recovery and the infections inside the wounds were putting his life at risk. The arm needed to be amputated. He had his operation at the operating theatre funded by supporters of The Leprosy Mission, and it saved his life. My colleague told of how he was sitting up (something that would have been unimaginable six months before), had put on weight, and was making a very good recovery from the operation. Over and over again Kelechi said, “thank you”, thanking us and everyone who has helped him to survive such serious sickness.

Kelechi has recovered well from the operation and is now a lot healthier.

I thank God for this miracle. I was so distressed by Kelechi’s dreadful condition when I met him that I lost sight of how big our God is – bigger than malnutrition, bigger than leprosy and bigger than death itself. Our prayers were answered by God’s wonderful grace and he used His Leprosy Mission to help.

When we are faced by a situation that is shocking, distressing or full of anguish, our prayers can be loaded with desperation. There is barely any hope or faith at all. But Jesus reminds us that a tiny amount of faith can achieve wonders:

“...Truly I tell you, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you.” (Matthew 17:20)

So, in the darkness, pray. Even when the situation seems hopeless. Kelechi is living testament to the power of God to protect, heal and restore, even when the darkness threatens to overwhelm us.

Zoë Bunter – Head of Mission Development at TLM England and Wales



St Francis of Assisi

Mark 1:41 "Filled with compassion, Jesus reached out His hand and touched the man (with Leprosy)..."

Until a few years ago, I would not have associated St Francis with people affected by Leprosy. I am sorry, that in my ignorance, I had associated St Francis with birds and animals and not so much with his ministry to people. However, I went on a trip to Rome and Assisi, and there learned so much more about St Francis.

As we toured around the town and area of Assisi following the footsteps of St Francis, one day from a monastery on the hillside we looked down in to the valley. Our guide pointed out a church and told us that was built on the site where St Francis and his associates had tended to those affected by Leprosy. Nothing more was said about this and a visit to the church was not on our schedule. On the last day of our trip, before we were to leave in the afternoon we had a free morning. I asked if the guide could arrange a taxi for me to visit this church. As the church is adjacent to a war grave site, quite a number of people joined in that little expedition.

The church was built over the crude huts that St Francis and the monks built as their shelters – yes the huts are still inside the church. We toured the inside of the church and when we came out we met a group of young people – mixed German and American – who were having their morning devotion service just outside. We were able to join with them – singing in German and hearing God's word in English. Yes, this passage from Mark was their reading for that day because of St Francis' association with those affected by Leprosy in that place.

Our guide led me to a statue and a nearby poster telling (in Italian) the story which inspired the statue. St Francis had been told about this group of people living by the stream, some miles from the town. They all suffered from Leprosy and had been left there to fend for themselves, occasionally some food being left for them. When St Francis and his team arrived they found the people ill-nourished and having none of the comforts of living appropriate to that time in history. The people generally looked after each other, washing themselves in the stream and tending to their ulcers as best they could. One man, however, refused all help from his fellows and indeed refused the help of the monks as well. However, Francis befriended him and eventually he allowed St Francis to wash him and as he did so, the leprosy left his body. This inspired the maker of the sculpture which reminded me so much of that symbol of TLM of Jesus bending down to touch the man affected by Leprosy.

Thank you, Jesus, for the many people down through the ages, and still today, who, inspired by you continue to reach out in love to touch those affected by Leprosy.

(I have photos of the statue and of the poster, in Italian, if anyone wants a copy)



Trustworthy 1.

'In you our fathers trusted; they trusted, and you delivered them. To you they cried and were rescued; in you they trusted and were not put to shame.' Psalm 22:4-5

Trust is foundational to experiencing the incredible life God offers us in relationship with him. Trust is a commodity of the heart that is only truly given when someone or something proves itself trustworthy. I can only trust you to the measure that I believe you are trustworthy. I can only trust my vehicle to the extent that I believe it will get me somewhere safely.

Scripture makes powerful declarations about those who choose to place their trust in God over the world or themselves. *Psalm 22:4-5 says, 'In you our fathers trusted; they trusted, and you delivered them. To you they cried and were rescued; in you they trusted and were not put to shame.'* *Isaiah 40:31 says, 'But they who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.'* *And Jeremiah 17:7 says simply, 'Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, whose trust is the Lord.'*

We serve a God who is perfectly trustworthy. We serve a God who *'so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life'* (John 3:16). God has already given us everything. He has done enough to earn our trust. But no matter how trustworthy God is, we still must make the decision to trust him. And no more important decision could be made.

Guided Prayer:

Meditate on the trustworthiness of your heavenly Father. Allow Scripture to stir up your faith to place your trust in God alone.

'For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.' John 3:16

'Be strong and courageous. Do not fear or be in dread of them, for it is the Lord your God who goes with you. He will not leave you or forsake you.' Deuteronomy 31:6

'Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.' Isaiah 41:10

Taken from First15 devotional resource

From **Helen Walton**, Community Development Manager, TLMEW



Trustworthy 2.

To place our trust in God is to found our lives on the unshakable, powerful, loving, and resourceful character of our heavenly Father. He alone has the ability to provide for us, heal us, love us, empower us, and save us. He alone is one to trust. When we place our hope in him, we anchor our lives, emotions, finances, relationships, and future in a God who wholly cares for us, loves us, and promises to provide for us.

God promises you in *Isaiah 41:10*, *'Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.'* You do not have to go through life on your own. You do not have to carve out your own way. You do not have to work to be loved, liked, or provided for. When you place your trust in God, give him your heart, and follow him, you will discover a wealth of abundant life unseen by those living for the world. The Creator of all, the Author and Perfecter of your faith, is beckoning you to place your trust in him alone. He is beckoning you to stop looking to the world and yourself for that which only he can truly and consistently provide. Place your trust in him alone today and experience a peace and joy that comes from casting off the weight you were never made to carry.

Guided prayer

Who or what are you placing your trust in? Who do you see as your provider, source of happiness, or foundation for your future?

Place your trust in God alone. Cast the cares of your life on his shoulders and receive his sustaining peace. Rest in his wonderful presence in faith that he will truly take care of you. *"Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, whose trust is the Lord."* *Jeremiah 17:7*

'In you our fathers trusted; they trusted, and you delivered them. To you they cried and were rescued; in you they trusted and were not put to shame.' *Psalm 22:4-5*

'Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths. Be not wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord, and turn away from evil. It will be healing to your flesh and refreshment to your bones.' *Proverbs 3:5-8*

May Matthew 11:28-30 lead you to a lifestyle of rest and peace through trust in your good Father:

'Come to me, all who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.'

Extended Reading: Psalm 107

Taken from First15 devotional resource

From **Helen Walton**, Community Development Manager, TLMEW



Psalm 32

Of David. A maskil.

¹ Blessed is the one
whose transgressions are forgiven,
whose sins are covered.

² Blessed is the one
whose sin the LORD does not count against them
and in whose spirit is no deceit.

³ When I kept silent,
my bones wasted away
through my groaning all day long.

⁴ For day and night
your hand was heavy on me;
my strength was sapped
as in the heat of summer.^l

⁵ Then I acknowledged my sin to you
and did not cover up my iniquity.
I said, "I will confess
my transgressions to the LORD."
And you forgave
the guilt of my sin.

⁶ Therefore let all the faithful pray to you
while you may be found;
surely the rising of the mighty waters
will not reach them.

⁷ You are my hiding place;
you will protect me from trouble
and surround me with songs of deliverance.

⁸ I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go;
I will counsel you with my loving eye on you.

⁹ Do not be like the horse or the mule,
which have no understanding
but must be controlled by bit and bridle
or they will not come to you.

¹⁰ Many are the woes of the wicked,
but the LORD's unfailing love
surrounds the one who trusts in him.

¹¹ Rejoice in the LORD and be glad, you righteous;
sing, all you who are upright in heart!



Psalm 33

¹ Sing joyfully to the LORD, you righteous;
it is fitting for the upright to praise him.

² Praise the LORD with the harp;
make music to him on the ten-stringed lyre.

³ Sing to him a new song;
play skillfully, and shout for joy.

⁴ For the word of the LORD is right and true;
he is faithful in all he does.

⁵ The LORD loves righteousness and justice;
the earth is full of his unfailing love.

⁶ By the word of the LORD the heavens were made,
their starry host by the breath of his mouth.

⁷ He gathers the waters of the sea into jars
he puts the deep into storehouses.

⁸ Let all the earth fear the LORD;
let all the people of the world revere him.

⁹ For he spoke, and it came to be;
he commanded, and it stood firm.

¹⁰ The LORD foils the plans of the nations;
he thwarts the purposes of the peoples.

¹¹ But the plans of the LORD stand firm forever,
the purposes of his heart through all generations.

¹² Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD,
the people he chose for his inheritance.

¹³ From heaven the LORD looks down
and sees all mankind;

¹⁴ from his dwelling place he watches
all who live on earth—

¹⁵ he who forms the hearts of all,
who considers everything they do.

¹⁶ No king is saved by the size of his army;
no warrior escapes by his great strength.

¹⁷ A horse is a vain hope for deliverance;
despite all its great strength it cannot save.

¹⁸ But the eyes of the LORD are on those who fear him,
on those whose hope is in his unfailing love,

¹⁹ to deliver them from death and keep them alive in famine.

²⁰ We wait in hope for the LORD; he is our help and our shield.

²¹ In him our hearts rejoice for we trust in his holy name.

²² May your unfailing love be with us, LORD,
even as we put our hope in you.



“Who is my neighbour?”

“I was a stranger and you invited me in.”

My 16 year old grandson and I were in a great mood. The scenery in that part of Namibia south of “Solitaire” on the way to Sossusvlei is grandiose. Our 4x4 camper van was well equipped, we had plenty of food and we were looking forward to a memorable camping experience. The gravel road was in good condition, we had more than adequate fuel supplies and we even had 2 spare tyres just in case... nothing could possibly go wrong....

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

Oh well – there was still about 1 ½ hours before sunset and darkness and we had 2 spares...

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

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

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

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

Read the parable of the good Samaritan.

Luke 10, 29-37

Silvano Perotti - Secretary for Europe then Deputy International Director and Director for Support and Development TLMI
Born in Italy - retired in Switzerland. Worked with TLMI until 1990.



It's a battlefield field

*Life is a battlefield my friend
It's not a recreation room
It's a fight & not a game - Run if you will - Run if you can
I came here to stay*

*Now the champion marched for 40 days
Crying send me a man to fight
Now the Israelites said:
We have a brave heart but our feet are full of fright
A little boy with a sling & a pocket full of rocks
Who knew how to trust n pray
You better run Goliath you better go now
Because I came here to stay*

*It's a battlefield my friend
It's not a recreation room
It's a fight & not a game - Run if you will - Run if you can
I came here to stay*

*A decree had been signed by the hand of the king
But Daniel still talked to The Lord
The lions were pacing on deck saying here comes supper on board
If you had been around anywhere close you may have heard Daniel say
If you're thinking about me boys, forget it
I came here to stay*

*It's a battlefield my friend
It's not a recreation room
It's a fight & not a game - Run if you will - Run if you can
I came here to stay*

*Now the boys wouldn't bow
So the king got mad*

*So he said: tie them up those Hebrew boys are going to fry
A little while later they looked in the furnace & they heard Shadreck say
If you're thinking about me boys
Forget it,
I've come here to stay*

*It's a battlefield my friend
It's not a recreation room
It's a fight & not a game - Run if you will - Run if you can
I came here to stay*

*I know a little boy who had leprosy
It was said to him: It'll will ruin your life
The disease did not; because there were people that loved him
They prayed for him, they cared for him
Today he stands before you and he can say
Leprosy where is your sting!*

*It's a battlefield my friend
It's not a recreation room
It's a fight & not a game - Run if you will - Run if you can
I came here to stay
The Leprosy Mission is here to stay!*

Leprosy where is your sting!

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.



'Don't be afraid; just believe.'

Mark 5 : 18-42 and Matthew 9:18-27

Have you sometimes felt like God was not answering your prayers, or in the way that you expected? In this passage we find 3 people within a short span of time, that each has an urgent plea to Jesus, even on their knees, but Jesus refuses to give them what they asked for...

The first is a man that has just been delivered from a multitude of demons. He begs to go with Jesus, but is refused.

The second is the Synagogue ruler Jairus. He urgently asks Jesus to come and save the life of his daughter, but even though Jesus could have healed her at a distance, he lets her die.

The last is a women with bleeding. She was seeking a quick and anonymous cure, but Jesus would not have that either.

What could have been some of the reasons behind their requests, and what could be the reasons for Jesus refusing to give them what they asked for, even though it all seems quite reasonable? The demon possessed man had a legion of reasons to follow Jesus, but likely also many reasons to leave. The town had just suffered the loss of 2000 pigs thanks to him, and it is likely he made many other enemies during his violent times. He is probably not well looked upon or trusted in his community, so it might feel like a good solution to leave all this behind and make a fresh start. God seldom lets us run away from our problems, and Jesus had another purpose for his life, exactly there where his previous life is known, and his new testimony can shine brightest.

The women with the bleeding was probably seen as "unclean" or "impure" in the community, and likely had a life of hiding, shame and stigma. Receiving an anonymous cure from Jesus would have permitted her to continue in this way, but Jesus knew she also had to face her fears in public and get freedom from the sense of shame or stigma that she had. Now she was able to receive a peace and freedom that would otherwise have continued to allude her.

Jairus also had a hard lesson to learn. It was probably increasingly difficult for him to associate with Jesus in a climate of growing opposition to Jesus from the religious leaders in that time. It is also interesting how the parallel passage in Mathew 9 of the same event, paints a somewhat different picture of Jairus. In Mathew 9 he is full of faith but in Mark 5 Jesus probably puts his finger on the issue as he hints to issues of Faith when he responds to the news of the child's death : *'Don't be afraid; just believe.'* It is likely that the Faith of Jairus grew as he learned he could trust in Him no matter what the apparent outcome or circumstances.

So when our prayers remain unanswered to our specifications, maybe we should look at the issues behind our request, and know that God loves us enough to give us what we need at the time that is just right.



I must have the mind of Christ!

(My personal thought and Reflection on studying Philippians 2:1-13 NKJV)

"Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 2:5 NKJV) There are loads of blessings we enjoy because of our relationship with Christ; Paul started his letter in Philippians 2 vs 1 by reminding us of what we truly experience in Christ: Benefits such as; consolation (encouragements), the comfort of Love, fellowship of the Spirit, affection, and mercy are confirmations of being a true follower of Jesus Christ.

Since I began truly following Christ I can say without a doubt that I experience these blessings on a daily basis, but this comes with a responsibility. The expectation of God is that I should reflect His glory by being likeminded by extending the same virtues I found in Christ to others. My greatest desire and prayer is that my life will constantly produce, encouragement, comfort of love, genuine fellowship, deep affection and mercy towards others. Especially towards my family, my team at work, my church, my neighbor, the community of TLM at the global level and other communities where I belong.

To effectively manifest these virtues I need to have no selfish ambition, work in humility like Christ did and esteem others better than myself; I must always look out not only for what pleases me or my personal interest but also I must be willing to seek to add value to others by seeking their interests as well.

Christ should be my role model and I must always think the way Christ thinks; I must seek to have the nature and character of Christ if I truly want to be known as a follower of Jesus; my actions and thoughts must be in conformity with Christ.

In following Christ daily I must prayerfully discover that even though Christ is God (because He possesses the fullness and attribute which make God, God), He did not think equality with God was something to claim or retain; but rather humbled Himself. He left the stage of God and became a man. Even in the form of a man he took the lowliest position as a poor servant who was publicly humiliated and eventually died a painful death that He did not deserve. I need to remind myself that Christ went through this road just to pay for my sin.

Because Christ demonstrated humility and complete obedience, He was highly exalted and was given a name that is above every name in heaven and on earth. Therefore in following Him, I can now enjoy those undeserved benefits stated above, so I must conform to His nature and be found in Him.

My obedience must be complete and not conditional, not subject to who is watching nor tied to men's approval or praises. I must, therefore, guard with all my life the salvation I receive in Christ with all sense of care and caution; I must be mindful of the grace of God and what it cost Christ to redeem me; I must make every effort to take caution against what can offend God and discredit the name of Christ.

This I will do not in my own power but by the power of Christ's Spirit that is in me, teaching and guiding me in all my ways. Since Christ is at the center of my heart and is working inside of me I can confidently without struggle obey Him. I can know and follow His will and my life will bring honor to His name, and my thoughts and deeds will bring Him pleasure. *I, therefore, resolve to know nothing but Christ and may my life give Him pleasure.*



The ten men healed by Jesus

Luke 17.11-19 Very often this passage is used to teach that we have to be thankful. For me it's not only this that we can learn from these verses. Let me share my thoughts with you.

We don't know how but these men heard about Jesus and his miracles. They called him Jesus (God is salvation), Master (they recognised his authority) and they prayed: "Have pity on us!" (cf v.13). It's as they asked him: "Do something!". Did they realise they were talking to the right person?

When I pray, do I realise that I talk to the Holy God, the Powerful God, the Loving God?

It's not mentioned that Jesus went to them, he stayed at a distance. He respected the "rules" given by the men (cf v.12). Jesus did not impose himself.

Jesus would like to be closer to me, but he will never force me.

Jesus asked them to go to the priests, to obey the law (cf Leviticus 14). They went before they were healed, they trusted Jesus. It's on the way that they were cleansed.

Only one came back to Jesus but let's talk about the other nine.

I think that Jesus questioned people around him and especially the religious leaders when he asked: "Where are the other nine?" (cf v. 17). The answer is: "They are busy respecting the regulations". They obeyed Jesus' order, everything is "perfect".

Jesus continued and as he did with the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10.25-37), he challenged the religious leaders: "Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?" (cf v. 18).

*Do I give praise to (or glorify) God by letting him be God in my life,
do I recognise his action in my life and thank him?*

One came back, he did not go all the way, he disobeyed Jesus' order. Why?

- Because as a Samaritan (cf v. 16), he could not go to the Jerusalem Temple. But mostly
- Because he realised what happened, he realised Jesus' action in his life and he could only turn away (convert) and praised God.
- Because he wanted to develop a relationship with Jesus.

This text is about having a relationship with Jesus. It's good to obey Jesus but it's important to come back to Him and to grow in my relationship with him, to be closer to him.

Then Jesus said to him: "Rise and go" (cf v. 19). I imagine that the man obeyed Jesus but it wasn't in the same way than before, it wasn't with the same motivations.

To obey Jesus without having a relationship with him is legalism.

Do I obey Jesus as a servant or as a friend?

"I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you... I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit – fruit that will last." John 15.14-16



Psalm 34

Of David. When he pretended to be insane before Abimelek, who drove him away, and he left.

¹ I will extol the LORD at all times;
his praise will always be on my lips.

² I will glory in the LORD;
let the afflicted hear and rejoice.

³ Glorify the LORD with me;
let us exalt his name together.

⁴ I sought the LORD, and he answered me;
he delivered me from all my fears.

⁵ Those who look to him are radiant;
their faces are never covered with shame.

⁶ This poor man called, and the LORD heard him;
he saved him out of all his troubles.

⁷ The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear him,
and he delivers them.

⁸ Taste and see that the LORD is good;
blessed is the one who takes refuge in him.

⁹ Fear the LORD, you his holy people,
for those who fear him lack nothing.

¹⁰ The lions may grow weak and hungry,
but those who seek the LORD lack no good thing.

¹¹ Come, my children, listen to me;
I will teach you the fear of the LORD.

¹² Whoever of you loves life
and desires to see many good days,

¹³ keep your tongue from evil
and your lips from telling lies.

¹⁴ Turn from evil and do good;
seek peace and pursue it.

¹⁵ The eyes of the LORD are on the righteous,
and his ears are attentive to their cry;

¹⁶ but the face of the LORD is against those who do evil,
to blot out their name from the earth.

¹⁷ The righteous cry out, and the LORD hears them;
he delivers them from all their troubles.

¹⁸ The LORD is close to the brokenhearted
and saves those who are crushed in spirit.

¹⁹ The righteous person may have many troubles,
but the LORD delivers him from them all;
²⁰ he protects all his bones,
not one of them will be broken.

²¹ Evil will slay the wicked;
the foes of the righteous will be condemned.

²² The LORD will rescue his servants;
no one who takes refuge in him will be condemned.



Psalm 35

Of David.

¹ Contend, LORD, with those who contend with me;
fight against those who fight against me.

² Take up shield and armor;
arise and come to my aid.

³ Brandish spear and javelin
against those who pursue me.

Say to me,
“I am your salvation.”

⁴ May those who seek my life
be disgraced and put to shame;
may those who plot my ruin
be turned back in dismay.

⁵ May they be like chaff before the wind,
with the angel of the LORD driving them away;

⁶ may their path be dark and slippery,
with the angel of the LORD pursuing them.

⁷ Since they hid their net for me without cause
and without cause dug a pit for me,

⁸ may ruin overtake them by surprise—
may the net they hid entangle them,
may they fall into the pit, to their ruin.

⁹ Then my soul will rejoice in the LORD
and delight in his salvation.

¹⁰ My whole being will exclaim,
“Who is like you, LORD?”

You rescue the poor from those too strong for them,
the poor and needy from those who rob them.”

¹¹ Ruthless witnesses come forward;
they question me on things I know nothing about.

¹² They repay me evil for good
and leave me like one bereaved.

¹³ Yet when they were ill, I put on sackcloth
and humbled myself with fasting.

When my prayers returned to me unanswered,

¹⁴ I went about mourning
as though for my friend or brother.

I bowed my head in grief
as though weeping for my mother.

¹⁵ But when I stumbled, they gathered in glee;
assailants gathered against me without my knowledge.

They slandered me without ceasing.

¹⁶ Like the ungodly they maliciously mocked;
they gnashed their teeth at me.

¹⁷ How long, Lord, will you look on?

Rescue me from their ravages,
my precious life from these lions.

¹⁸ I will give you thanks in the great assembly;
among the throngs I will praise you.

¹⁹ Do not let those gloat over me
who are my enemies without cause;
do not let those who hate me without reason
maliciously wink the eye.

²⁰ They do not speak peaceably,
but devise false accusations
against those who live quietly in the land.

²¹ They sneer at me and say, "Aha! Aha!
With our own eyes we have seen it."

²² LORD, you have seen this; do not be silent.
Do not be far from me, Lord.

²³ Awake, and rise to my defense!
Contend for me, my God and Lord.

²⁴ Vindicate me in your righteousness, LORD my God;
do not let them gloat over me.

²⁵ Do not let them think, "Aha, just what we wanted!"
or say, "We have swallowed him up."

²⁶ May all who gloat over my distress
be put to shame and confusion;
may all who exalt themselves over me
be clothed with shame and disgrace.

²⁷ May those who delight in my vindication
shout for joy and gladness;
may they always say, "The LORD be exalted,
who delights in the well-being of his servant."

²⁸ My tongue will proclaim your righteousness,
your praises all day long.



"We were struck by his teaching"

Mark, chapter 1, 21-28

Authority in the way of teaching, authority over evil spirits. But what is the meaning of "authority" in the case of Jesus? Jesus speaks from what *he is* in the depths of him, he speaks as he acts, he speaks with authority and His word awakens. "*We were struck by his teaching.*"

This is the complete opposite of the usual boring preaching. The rabbinical schools were studying commentaries that famous rabbis had given over the centuries. Teaching was above all a transmission and a tradition.

The authority of Jesus is different, it is inscribed in the line of the prophets, Jesus speaks from his experience of God. One of his listeners "tormented by an evil spirit" reacts to this Word with screams.

He no longer finds peace in himself because he is dominated by the dark realities that inhabit him. He is divided between the deep part of himself who wants to be loved and the evil spirit that dominates him and isolates him from everything.

He has lost his inner balance to the point that he can no longer say "I" but "we": "Did you come to loose us? His inner prison is more terrifying than those built by man. Faced with Jesus, he is torn between his desire to be saved and the revolt that is in him.

We know him well, this man, because we are like him.

There is in each one of us "masters". It is a fact: in each of us, as in all humanity, Evil remains a mystery and also a reality that no one can escape.

At best, we try to resist this inner enemy; but often we collaborate.

It's as if we do not want to be liberated: taking initiatives, making difficult choices, getting involved personally is more difficult than being dictated by our "inner enemies". We are sometimes accomplices of the forces of evil, simply because we are afraid of losing our false securities, we are afraid of having to pay the price of this release: "Did you come to loose us? We forget too often that one saves one's life only by losing it.

Jesus does not let himself be impressed by screams and threats. Behind the cries, he has already recognized the suffering of a "beloved of God" and the call for help he hides. The tormented man cries to him: "You are the Saint, the Holy of God! But Jesus knows that His only power is in love. And the power of love only makes sense in humility. "Silence! He said ... And it is from now on in this silence that this long-tormented man will be reborn and know the inner peace, the freedom and the control of himself.



A few weeks ago, I received an article written by a friend who is a consultant in an organization. It is entitled as follows:

The butterfly,

an example to be followed when everything seems motionless.

Can the flapping of wings of a butterfly in Brazil cause a tornado in Texas? A positive answer in this metaphoric question was given fifty years ago by a meteorologist, Edward Lorenz, who worked in Massachusetts Institute of Technology on digital models of meteo forecast. He has discovered the founding principle of the theory of the chaos, known as butterfly effect, namely that a tiny variation of parameter at some point can make the final result vary enormously.

The main issue of our thought at present at the Global Fellowship is our strategy for years to come. We have an ambitious goal focused on eradication of leprosy in the world. With such ambitious challenge we could be tempted to say: What is the point! We are in the utopia. But let us be taught by the example of the butterfly effect. Modest change can have big effects. After thinking about the little which we do ourselves, not the others, let us do as the butterfly: let us flap our wings. We are not going to activate a tornado. We shall be just surprised how our change will affect the people we are looking after in our work.

Gandhi said something very relevant: "be the change which you want to see in the world"

1 Corinthians 15:58 "Stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labour in the Lord is not in vain."

Eric Chollet - I'm retired since four 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.



Unless a grain of wheat dies

“If a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it bears much fruit.”-John 12: 20-33 The Greek philosopher Socrates is regarded as one of the wisest men of all time. This man who lived between 470 and 399 BC devoted his life to exposing ignorance, hypocrisy and conceit among his fellow Athenians and calling them to a radical re-examination of life. “The unexamined life,” he said, “is not worth living.” He challenged popular opinions regarding religion and politics as he sought to bring people to a better understanding of virtue, justice, piety and right conduct. He attracted many followers, especially among the youth. But those in power arrested him, tried him and sentenced him to death. He was charged with false teaching regarding the gods of the state, propagating revolutionary ideas and corrupting the youth of Athens. His family and friends wanted to intervene to overturn the sentence but he would not let them. He has the option to go into exile from Athens but he would not take it. Instead he accepted to drink the poison hemlock and die. Subsequent generations of Greeks came to regard Socrates as a martyr of truth. They resolved never again to persecute anyone on account of their beliefs.

By the time of Jesus the Greeks had become among the most broad-minded people in the world. Various religious and philosophical traditions flourished among them and vied for popularity. We see in the Gospel passage that among the huge crowds that have come to Jerusalem for the Passover feast were some Greeks. It did not take these Greeks long to see that all was not well in Jerusalem. So they came to see Jesus. Why did they come to see Jesus? Although John has somewhat spiritualized the story, thereby giving the impression that they came to seek admission into the “body” of Christ (*John 12: 32*), it is more probable that they came to alert Jesus to the seriousness of the danger surrounding him and to suggest to him to flee with them to Greece, the land of freedom. The response that Jesus gives to their request shows that it has to do with his impending death and that he has chosen to stay and face it rather than seek a way to escape it.

Many people see death as an interruption in their life and mission. But Jesus saw death as a fulfilment of his life and mission. Many times in the past the people have planned to entrap him but Jesus always escaped from their hands because *“his hour had not yet come” (John 7: 30; 8:20). But now his hour has come. “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified And what should I say ... ‘Father, save me from this hour’? No it is for this reason that I have come to this hour” (John 12:23, 27).*

Jesus uses the parable of the grain of wheat to explain that by shying away from death when the hour has come, one only reduces one’s life and mission (“remains just a single grain”) whereas by giving oneself up to death when the hour has come, one enhances it (“bears much fruit”). In this way Jesus flatly refuses to seek any help, human or divine, to prolong his earthly life beyond his Father’s will. The voice from heaven confirms that this decision is indeed God’s will and that for Jesus, the faithful servant of God, death and glory are indeed two sides of the same coin.

This must have been a powerful story of encouragement in the faith for the persecuted early Christians to whom John wrote. It shows that it is only through Jesus’ submission to an underserved death that they now have the benefit of faith and salvation. But then it goes on to remind them of the words of Jesus that his followers must follow in his steps even unto death. *“Those who love their life loose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also.” (John 12:25-26).* Where is Jesus? Jesus is in glory. But to get there he has to pass through the gates of death in faithfulness to God’s will. That is his story. That also should be our story.

Moses Onoh, MD, is a former Country Leader of TLM Nigeria. He currently works with USAID/KNCV Tuberculosis Foundation in Nigeria.



Psalm 27

David is declaring his trust in God, although he is faced with adversaries and risk of war, even the massing of armies cannot affect his experience of heart peace. The threat of conflict has no power to change his trust in God. He knows that God is his strength and protection. Even though David was surrounded by enemies his faith was so strong he could be completely at peace. If we think of all the things that make us fearful and make us lose our peace, perhaps we need to study all that David went through in his life.

David has a devout heart, and is determined to seek the abiding security and joy of Gods Presence. He wants to dwell with God and to see His beauty, not just in His temple, but in the secret places of David's heart. He longs for the intimate and felt Presence of the Lord. His knowledge and relationship with God was very deep, but he wants the security of Gods shelter, and to stand on the rock with Him. No enemy can hurt him when he is in the Presence of God. What a very wonderful place to be, and it is all available to us! It is our hiding place and a place of joy and delight as we wait on Him. David offers sacrifices of joy, and sings praises to God.

He goes on to pray for continual deliverance from danger, casting all the burden on God alone, and seeking His face. David seeks to know and do Gods will alone. Even if his parents forsake him he knows that God will take care of Him. He prays again for deliverance from his enemies, but all the time assured of Gods great goodness to him. God is all sufficient, and every one of us needs to have steadfast endurance and a faith that waits with confidence, as David did. The whole Psalm is a declaration of David's faith, and very worth meditating on. May you be blessed as you do.

Mollie Clark - English. Went to India in 1961, worked in Purulia for 8 years as a nurse, before being transferred to Bhutan. Worked for 18 years in four different areas in Bhutan until I was transferred to the international office in London as personnel director. I was there for eight years until I retired.



The princess and the frog

*“But a Samaritan, as he travelled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him.”
Luke 10:33*

A beautiful princess was walking through the palace garden with her sister when they saw a frog. The frog spoke. “I’m not really a frog,” he said. “I’ve been bewitched and if you’ll pick me up and kiss me I’ll turn back into a handsome prince. We’ll fall in love and live happily ever after.” The princess picked up the frog, looked at him and then put him in her handbag. “Why don’t you kiss him?” asked her sister. “Oh, said the princess. “There’s a handsome prince on every street corner but with a talking frog I can make a fortune.”

Love or money. Compassion or market forces? Which do we value most? A report on TV told of a couple who were running a successful business but they were giving all their profits away to help other people. One of them said, “We believe you become a millionaire when you’ve given a million pounds away not when you’ve got a million pounds in the bank.” I think that’s great.

Of course most of us would like the chance of choosing what to do with our first million, but the principle’s good. What do we do with what we’ve got, whether it’s money in the bank or our talents and abilities? We can use what we have for ourselves or we can use it to give something to the community we live in. It’s great to hear of people who put others first in such a positive and practical way as that business couple.

Really successful living can be counted by the folk we’ve helped along the way rather than by what we’ve squirreled away for ourselves.

Lord, giver of life and love, may I share as much in giving as in getting.

Extract from Love is a Wild Bird, first published 2003 - with the kind permission of Jo-Anne Thomson and Judith Merrell from TLM Trading)

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



Psalm 36

For the director of music. Of David the servant of the LORD.

¹ I have a message from God in my heart
concerning the sinfulness of the wicked:
There is no fear of God
before their eyes.

² In their own eyes they flatter themselves
too much to detect or hate their sin.

³ The words of their mouths are wicked and deceitful;
they fail to act wisely or do good.

⁴ Even on their beds they plot evil;
they commit themselves to a sinful course
and do not reject what is wrong.

⁵ Your love, LORD, reaches to the heavens,
your faithfulness to the skies.

⁶ Your righteousness is like the highest mountains,
your justice like the great deep.

You, LORD, preserve both people and animals.

⁷ How priceless is your unfailing love, O God!
People take refuge in the shadow of your wings.

⁸ They feast on the abundance of your house;
you give them drink from your river of delights.

⁹ For with you is the fountain of life;
in your light we see light.

¹⁰ Continue your love to those who know you,
your righteousness to the upright in heart.

¹¹ May the foot of the proud not come against me,
nor the hand of the wicked drive me away.

¹² See how the evildoers lie fallen—
thrown down, not able to rise!



“The Holy Spirit: The Great Transformer”

Romans 12 v1-2. (Be transformed by the renewing of your minds.... **Transformation** is a word hardly ever found in the Bible (this is one of only two instances identified by my concordance), but it is an idea found throughout OT and NT. It was chosen a few years ago by TLMEW as the theme of their Southwark Cathedral flower festival, and was a good concept to expound different aspects of TLM’s work. We are in the business of **transforming** leprosy from a feared and misunderstood affliction into a mild infection, from an inevitably progressive disability to a manageable disease, from an almost worldwide epidemic to a low level endemic illness affecting only a few people each year....

Transforming people from a state of hopelessness and helplessness into a position of confidence in their ability to deal with their disorder, from a state of loneliness to a position where mutual support from similarly affected people sustains them, from a state of spiritual despair to a position where they know they are valued members of the human race created by God and equal in His eyes, from a state of exclusion from social affairs to a position where they can exercise their civil rights, from a state of being passive recipients of reluctant almsgiving to a position of proudly making their own contribution to the society in which they live.

The key to this sort of **transformation** is knowledge: knowing the Truth about leprosy which is a matter of science but also the Truth about mankind which is a matter of theology. The Truth which makes men free. The Truth which is found in Jesus. If we are going to be able to bring **transformation** to others, we all (staff & supporters) need to be **transformed** ‘til we see ourselves as citizens of Kingdom of God, as Servants of The Most High, as Brethren made in image of God, as Sons of the Lord Almighty as Spirit-filled Ambassadors.....

What can **transform** us is only the Spirit of God, when He dwells in us and we allow Him to take over our lives. But I want to suggest that there is another sense in which the Holy Spirit can be described as **The Transformer!**

When I worked in Nepal at a hospital in a distant location away from other residential areas, there was a tall pylon at the end of our road from which high power cables brought electricity into the compound. We could not use it directly, we had to have a **transformer**, which somehow changed the high voltage electric current into a level of voltage safe for our appliances in hospital and staff quarters. So, we could access the national electricity supply. And in 1991 only the hospital had such power. At night, with its electric lighting, it shone like a beacon amongst hillsides where scattered homesteads had candles or kerosene lamps. Because we had the power supply we could also run medical equipment such as an anaesthetic machine & cautery, laboratory analysers, a nebuliser for patients with asthma, and so on. The electricity enabled us to serve the community much better than we could otherwise have done. One day when our transformer broke we were without electricity. The national supply was still running. It was nearby but we could not safely access that power without the **Transformer** in between it and us. I think the Holy Spirit is like a **transformer** acting as a safe conduit between us & heaven to bring God’s enormous high voltage power into our lives (which can only cope with low voltage power)! The administrative superintendent found out that to replace our unrepairable transformer would entail buying (at great expense) a new one from Thailand, having it shipped to Kolkata, then brought overland by truck into Nepal and finally (with difficulty) up our unmade road into the compound. So, we had a delay of a week or two (relying on the small amount of power produced by our own generator), before normal service could be resumed in our compound (and afterwards we appreciated having a transformer, more than we had ever done before!)

Fortunately, The Holy Spirit does not break down or fail or need replacing after a period of service. He is eternal and does not sleep nor go off duty, but is ever there for us, to link us safely to the unlimited power of God, to bring us power for the service we undertake in Jesus’ name. Jesus called Him the Counsellor or -in some translations- the Mediator (John 14, v 25-26), and the disciples could not have well understood His nature & role before He came

into their lives (Acts 2, v 1-4) bringing a rush of power, represented as flames and wind and extra-ordinary linguistic abilities (which they needed at that time to tell out the good news of their Lord). In a way, the Holy Spirit was making available to the disciples the power of God which had always been there but not been able to flow into their lives until they were safely “plugged in” to heaven through Him.

C Ruth Butlin Dr - A British doctor, previously TLM overseas staff but now retired and living in Sussex, who has not lost her concern for the leprosy work, so gives voluntary service whenever or wherever she can. Recently this has often entailed short visits to Bangladesh for capacity development or to support national staff with their research work”.



Freedom in Christ

⁵ It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.

² Mark my words! I, Paul, tell you that if you let yourselves be circumcised, Christ will be of no value to you at all. ³ Again I declare to every man who lets himself be circumcised that he is obligated to obey the whole law. ⁴ You who are trying to be justified by the law have been alienated from Christ; you have fallen away from grace. ⁵ For through the Spirit we eagerly await by faith the righteousness for which we hope. ⁶ For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value. The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love.

⁷ You were running a good race. Who cut in on you to keep you from obeying the truth? ⁸ That kind of persuasion does not come from the one who calls you. ⁹ "A little yeast works through the whole batch of dough." ¹⁰ I am confident in the Lord that you will take no other view. The one who is throwing you into confusion, whoever that may be, will have to pay the penalty. ¹¹ Brothers and sisters, if I am still preaching circumcision, why am I still being persecuted? In that case the offense of the cross has been abolished. ¹² As for those agitators, I wish they would go the whole way and emasculate themselves!

Life by the Spirit

¹³ You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love. ¹⁴ For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: "Love your neighbor as yourself." ¹⁵ If you bite and devour each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other.

¹⁶ So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. ¹⁷ For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever you want. ¹⁸ But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.

¹⁹ The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; ²⁰ idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions ²¹ and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. ²⁴ Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. ²⁵ Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. ²⁶ Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.



Over the years, Ireland has produced many sons of glory!

In the 5th Century, St. Patrick evangelised its native Picts!

Wellesley Bailey left its shores in the 19th Century, to begin our Leprosy Mission in India!

In the mid-20th Century, the unorthodox Rev. Ian R.K. Paisley preached throughout Northern Ireland, arousing a lot of public interest with his sermons:-

“GIVING THE PIGS A PERMANENT WAVE” - The parable of the Prodigal Son waving good-bye to the pigs when he returned to his father. *Luke 15*

“ONE MAN IN HELL AND 5 ON THE ROAD” - The account of the rich man who from hell prayed for his 5 brothers. *Luke 16*

“TWO FOOLS AND A HEN-PECKED HUSBAND” - The parable of the Great Supper and the invited guests who made groundless excuses not to attend. *Luke 14*

“HOW THE DEVIL’S POSTMAN GOT SAVED” - Paul’s conversion as he took letters of authority to persecute Christians in Damascus. *Acts 9*, etc.

Many people were converted in these services.

Through Mr. Paisley’s preaching listeners learned that Jesus Christ

- became poor that we might become rich (*James 2:5*)
- was born at Bethlehem that we might be born again (*John 1:14*)
- became a Servant that we might become sons of God (*Gal.4:6,7*)
- had no earthly home that we might have a Heavenly Home (*Matt.8:20*)
- was made sin that we might be made righteous (*2 Cor.5:21*)
- died on a cruel cross that we might live an abundant life (*John5:24,25*).

As a teenager in Belfast, Dr. Bill Woods (OBE), was someone greatly influenced by this ‘pulpiterring Parliamentarian’; Dr. Bill went on to become Brazil’s “Angel of the Amazon” - there God helped him to heal thousands of Leprosy patients!

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



Christ with us to Holy Spirit within us

- A reflection on John 16

Context

The ministry of Jesus must continue through His disciples after His departure. Jesus prepares them for the hard times ahead after His crucifixion. Disciples would be hated by Jews and non-Jews (John 16:2). The new Way would be a strange Way of divine Grace (1 Corinthians 1:23). Jesus, the Messiah would be an offence to the spiritually blind. The disciples would need the presence of the Holy Spirit to teach, guide, comfort and protect them. Jesus is passing on the care of His sheep to the Holy Spirit. He is with us till the return of Jesus. We must only receive Him into our hearts.

What does the Holy Spirit do?

Providing fellowship with God

Believers have joy or sorrow, according to whether they are in the presence with Jesus or not. They gave up everything to follow Jesus. The believers will not be left as orphans (John 14:18). Continuity of fellowship with God, which was their greatest need would be satisfied. They will have the joy of the presence of Jesus (John 16:7) in and through the person of Holy Spirit. He would be their Comforter so that neither sufferings in life nor in death would ever deprive them of their joy. There are many terms for the Holy Spirit – comforter, advocate, intercessor, counsellor etc. All these supports are needed for us to face multiple challenges in this world. Because the Holy Spirit rests within us, we can commune directly with Almighty God, the creator of heaven and earth (John 16:26-27).

Revealing God's Living Word

Scriptures can be understood only through revelation knowledge, just as Jesus has explained the hidden meanings of scriptures to his disciples (John 16:13, John 14:26, 1 Corinthians 2:10). Man's wisdom cannot discern spiritual truths because men are spiritually blind. Holy Spirit will lead us to the truth through divine experiences and revelation knowledge. He will make us aware of the righteousness of Jesus and His finished work on the Cross. The Holy Spirit is our Guide, not only to show us the way, but to walk along with us for right living, which is to rest in faith in Jesus Christ.

Proclaiming the Grace of God in Jesus Christ

The Holy Spirit convicts people of the fact of sin; the fault of sin; the folly of sin; the filth of sin and how we have been redeemed by the blood of Jesus (Acts 2:4, 14). It's not that God is unwilling to respond; it's that we are unable to receive His Grace. Conviction is a heart (spirit) matter and not a mind (intellectual) matter. So, it can be done by the Holy Spirit only when we allow Him to manifest in our lives. We are mere vessels for the pouring out of the Good News. The Holy Spirit will lead us into all truth, but we must follow. We should set our self-proclaimed abilities/inabilities aside (Jeremiah 1:9) and make ourselves available for the Holy Spirit do His work in and through us (Acts 18:9). As we yield ourselves to the Holy Spirit, we will have the joy of being used by Him in redeeming the sinners into God's kingdom.

For His glory



May 24: HEART STRANGELY WARMED

They triumphed over him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony Rev. 12:11

(This is a short extract from my faith testimony. I believe that we can encourage one another by sharing our testimonies.)

Today, 24th May, is my birthday. I share my birthday with a great many famous people - Queen Victoria; Eric Cantona (footballer); Bob Dylan (singer); Jacob Rees-Mogg (!) (UK politician). But a gift that I was given on my 21st birthday reminds me of a more significant event that happened on this day in 1738. The gift is a plate and hangs on the wall of the hallway in our house in Leeds. It is a commemorative souvenir of the 250th anniversary of the Aldersgate experience - the conversion of John Wesley.

In his journal, Wesley writes on 24th May 1738: *In the evening I went very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate Street, where one was reading Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans. About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for salvation; and an assurance was given me that He had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death.*

Every time I read those words, "**Heart strangely warmed**", my fingers and toes tingle. It reminds me of my own transition from darkness to light, from death to life when I accepted Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour at the age of 16yrs. I shared recently with someone that I did not feel anything like warmth, or see bright lights, or notice anything dramatic on the day of my conversion - but I did know that I had done the right thing. I knew that had put my life into the hands of He that loves me and will guide me. His Word promises that **He will never leave me nor forsake me** - and so it has proved. Now, 35 years since I became a Christian, I am grateful to God who has been faithful to me throughout my life. He is my 'Ebenezer' (1 Samuel 7:12).

God my protector: He was with me in Nigeria when I faced many challenges, even things that were life-threatening. *The Lord is my protector; he is my strong fortress. My God is my protection, and with him I am safe. He protects me like a shield; he defends me and keeps me safe. (Psalm 18:2)*

God my provider: *"And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:19)* He blew me away when He provided in full (and more!) for Basse's PhD expenses. That was a real lesson to me to 'not worry'. If it was God's will it would happen and he would provide. *"Look at the birds of the air, that they do not sow, nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they?" (Matthew 6:26)*

Last weekend, I went back to the church in Lancashire where I met Christ. There are many new people there, which is lovely to see, but I chose to sit next to a 94yr old lady who was one of those who took the time to show me the truth of Scripture and was so patient as I asked all my questions.

Reflection: 1. Think about your journey from first hearing about Jesus and then accepting him as your Lord and Saviour. Think about your faith journey since started following HIM. Thank God for His faithfulness to you (2 Tim2:13)
2. Thank God for those who opened up the truth of Scripture to you and were part of your coming to know Jesus

Action: Share your faith testimony with someone today.

Jannine Ebenso - Head of Quality Assurance, TLM International Office



“His yoke is easy and His burden is light”

Matthew 11.30

What do you hear when you read these words?

What do you think when you hear these words?

My mother has adopted this for her Aglow Fellowship and I have also quoted it many times to myself and to others while working for The Leprosy Mission.

Working here we hear so much of what is going on in the world. Do you sometimes feel “the yoke” is the weight of the world on our shoulders?

But Jesus reminds us His yoke is easy!

Can we see the yoke is what connects us to Him? A bond that will not let us be apart from Him? We can trust Him to hold up His side of this partnership and He is alongside us daily upholding us. That surely makes our side of the work “easier”?

Or in this passage, do you zero in on the word “burden” and see it as a real burden – even if it is deemed as “light?”

Jesus was a man of joy. In John 15:11, He said, *“I have told you these things so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.”* and in 16:24 *“Ask and you will receive, so that your joy may be made full.”*

Our mission is a joy! We are bringing healing and hope and transformation to many people around the world – what an awesome delight!

To put this passage further in context in the verse before it, 11:29, Jesus says *“Learn from me for I am gentle and humble of heart and you will find rest for your souls.”*

We can trust Him to be gentle with us and we can rest in that security.

How many times did He say *“Do not worry”*? Doesn't He also promise that He has conquered the world? (John 16:33)

Perhaps we can re-frame these ideas as: *“Together, with Jesus, the work is made easier. As we ask and receive from Him our joy is light and made full.”* Perhaps this approach, can help us further unwrap the fact that He came to give us all life and joy – to the FULL!

And, because of this, we bring life and joy to others.



Psalm 37

Of David.

¹ Do not fret because of those who are evil
or be envious of those who do wrong;
² for like the grass they will soon wither,
like green plants they will soon die away.

³ Trust in the LORD and do good;
dwell in the land and enjoy safe pasture.

⁴ Take delight in the LORD,
and he will give you the desires of your heart.

⁵ Commit your way to the LORD;
trust in him and he will do this:

⁶ He will make your righteous reward shine like the dawn,
your vindication like the noonday sun.

⁷ Be still before the LORD
and wait patiently for him;
do not fret when people succeed in their ways,
when they carry out their wicked schemes.

⁸ Refrain from anger and turn from wrath;
do not fret—it leads only to evil.

⁹ For those who are evil will be destroyed,
but those who hope in the LORD will inherit the land.

¹⁰ A little while, and the wicked will be no more;
though you look for them, they will not be found.

¹¹ But the meek will inherit the land
and enjoy peace and prosperity.

¹² The wicked plot against the righteous
and gnash their teeth at them;

¹³ but the Lord laughs at the wicked,
for he knows their day is coming.

¹⁴ The wicked draw the sword
and bend the bow

to bring down the poor and needy,
to slay those whose ways are upright.

¹⁵ But their swords will pierce their own hearts,
and their bows will be broken.

¹⁶ Better the little that the righteous have
than the wealth of many wicked;
¹⁷ for the power of the wicked will be broken,
but the LORD upholds the righteous.

¹⁸ The blameless spend their days under the LORD's care,
and their inheritance will endure forever.

¹⁹ In times of disaster they will not wither;
in days of famine they will enjoy plenty.

²⁰ But the wicked will perish:
Though the LORD's enemies are like the flowers of the field,
they will be consumed, they will go up in smoke.

²¹ The wicked borrow and do not repay,
but the righteous give generously;
²² those the LORD blesses will inherit the land,
but those he curses will be destroyed.

²³ The LORD makes firm the steps
of the one who delights in him;
²⁴ though he may stumble, he will not fall,
for the LORD upholds him with his hand.



Psalm 37 – Part 2

²⁵ I was young and now I am old,
yet I have never seen the righteous forsaken
or their children begging bread.

²⁶ They are always generous and lend freely;
their children will be a blessing.

²⁷ Turn from evil and do good;
then you will dwell in the land forever.

²⁸ For the LORD loves the just
and will not forsake his faithful ones.

Wrongdoers will be completely destroyed
the offspring of the wicked will perish.

²⁹ The righteous will inherit the land
and dwell in it forever.

³⁰ The mouths of the righteous utter wisdom,
and their tongues speak what is just.

³¹ The law of their God is in their hearts;
their feet do not slip.

³² The wicked lie in wait for the righteous,
intent on putting them to death;

³³ but the LORD will not leave them in the power of the wicked
or let them be condemned when brought to trial.

³⁴ Hope in the LORD
and keep his way.

He will exalt you to inherit the land;
when the wicked are destroyed, you will see it.

³⁵ I have seen a wicked and ruthless man
flourishing like a luxuriant native tree,
³⁶ but he soon passed away and was no more;
though I looked for him, he could not be found.

³⁷ Consider the blameless, observe the upright;
a future awaits those who seek peace.

³⁸ But all sinners will be destroyed;
there will be no future for the wicked.

³⁹ The salvation of the righteous comes from the LORD;
he is their stronghold in time of trouble.

⁴⁰ The LORD helps them and delivers them;
he delivers them from the wicked and saves them,
because they take refuge in him.



Never underestimate the influence your deeds can have on others

“For when we brought you the good news. It was not only with words but also with power, for the Holy Spirit gave you full assurance that what we said was true. And you know of our concern for you from the way we lived when we were with you.” 1 Thessalonians 1: 5

Since back to Nepal, I had a desire to return to Surkhet where I had worked for 7 years, but due to different reasons, it seemed no chance to visit. However, God has His own way; He gave my desire in His timing. By the end of March, I have had a good chance to visit Surkhet, and even spent my Easter weekend with the local church there. Only God was able to make my plan succeed. This visit was a very emotional time, I felt excited to see many changes in that valley, but it reminded me so much of my past in my first term as a new missionary 25 years ago. When I was told that my ex home-helper, who still remembered that I could not take any spicy food, I just wonder how much people remembered me in such detail even I have left 18 years ago. Many leprosy affected people, who were my patients in old days, came to church to welcome me, and the pastors let me share a bit of myself in the church service. The church was very small when I was there 25 years ago, a hut full of 50 believers, which was founded by an old leprosy believer; now congregations grow to 500 and spread out to 24 daughter churches around the valley. How amazing God’s kingdom extends from one small church to so many unreached.

After the church service I walked to the place where I had lived before, I met my landlord on the road, he recognized me at once and called my name, and then his family came out to have pictures with me, I felt very touching about their greetings and love. Another day I met a woman, who was sitting in her little shop near the old leprosy clinic house, she told me that she recognized me to be the Clinic manager in the old leprosy clinic 20 years ago, she told me she was the daughter of that house owner, and she knew me when she was young. What a surprise!

Another surprise was to meet another staff in the community activities in Nepalganj, he bowed down to me when he saw me, and I was totally shock with such respect and polite manner, and just thinking of who he was. At that moment a picture of a young man came to my mind, he was an office boy in Surkhet 20 years ago, but now I didn’t recognize him at all. He has been the father of two children and has changed from an office boy to a community worker. We felt so excited to meet again after such long time and tried to catch up with each other.

I realize we need to place a great deal of emphasis on how we live, not just on what we stand for. If God is at work in our life, people must notice. Word will spread; people will see no matter how many years has past. I never underestimate the influence my deeds can have on others. May others who see the difference in me will be influenced to love and serve God too!

Yuek Ming Poon (Hong Kong) Worked with TLMI for 22 years. 1993 – 2000 seconded to INF to work in Nepal in leprosy clinic as Clinic Manager. 2002 – 2004 worked with TLM as POID Technical Officer in India, 2005 – 2012 worked with TLM as Country Leader in China and Laos, 2013 -2015 worked with TLM in PNG as Capacity Building Advisor. June 2015 left TLM and then studied in Vancouver Regent Bible College from September 15 to April 2016, and then back to HK involving in Nepali ministry. 2017 back to Nepal as Leprosy Nursing Advisor in Green Pastures Hospital with INF.



The Luxury Of Idle Time In My Company

“You have no idea how pleased I am with you. You have no idea how much love I have for you. You have no idea how much joy and pleasure you bring to my heart. You have no idea just how much I treasure you. You have no idea, but as you listen to my words and engage with my heart, I will continue to reveal it to you again and again. And when you forget, do not worry for I will remind you. When you are tired I will pick you up. When you are confused I will be your answer. When you are angry, I will be your peace. When you are anxious I will calm your turmoil.

“I have been, and always will be, all you will need, for apart from me you can do nothing. While it is good to pursue and develop what I have given you, placed before you, and initiated within you, it is also good and necessary for you to engage with me in meaningless ways. There is great value in seeking me deliberately and intentionally but there is also great value and significance in wasting time with me, in the sentiments of my heart, and in yours. There is great significance as you encounter me in the unspoken realms, as I continue to minister to the issues of your heart, the things you can perceive but cannot understand, explain, articulate, or diagnose.

‘I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.’ John 15:5 (NIV)

“In these dimensions you will come to know me in trivial and also substantial expressions that will impact your heart. While your mind may not always understand every detail of what transpires between us, your heart most certainly will. As I inspire adventure and exploration from within your heart, you will begin to discover and experience the liberation you need but cannot always possess and manifest in your circumstances.

“Dismantle your scepticism and allow me to waste your days. Dismantle your busy agenda and allow yourself the luxury of idle time in my company. In our fellowship together, you will find joy unspeakable and joy immeasurable. You will find more joy than you can contain, and more peace than you can imagine setting your heart free from the cares, worries, and concerns that weigh you down unnecessarily.”

‘You make known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand.’ Psalm 16:11 (NIV)

‘And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.’ Philippians 4:7 (NIV)



On Being Pruned

John 15:1-17

Do you ever feel stuck in a bad situation? And then months or even years later you realised God used that experience to shape your life for the better.

A relationship came to an end. A program you were running ended in failure. A donor said no to you. The project you were working on seemed to collapse. And like Gungor, in their song Beautiful Things you thought “All this pain. I wonder if I’ll ever find my way. I wonder if my life could really change”.

But then something blossomed from that experience. You learned something from the failed project which transformed your life. As the relationship came to an end, a friend stepped up and showed you what love means in their care for you. Or your donor came back to you and said, “I appreciated how you reacted to my no. Can I talk to you about something else”?

And you realised, as the song Beautiful Things continues “out of chaos life is being found, in you”. With you, meaning our Heavenly Father who is “making beautiful things out of the dust”. I was reflecting on this as I read John 15 the other night. Especially on verse two. *“He cuts off every branch of me that doesn’t bear grapes. And every branch that is grape bearing he prunes back so it will bear even more.” (The Message Version).*

It might be easy to understand why God cuts off the branches which bear no fruit. But I didn’t understand why God pruned the branches which bore fruit. As I was preparing to speak on this passage once I rang my friend who’s a florist, and said “why do you prune things?” And she told me pruning removes the things which are preventing growth. It allows the plant or tree to direct new energy into older areas and help it to keep bearing fruit. And that was a helpful realisation.

While pruning may not be hurtful to a plant, it can bring deep pain and confusion to humans! We may not understand what God is doing in us for a long time. But when it becomes clear we realise how blessed we are. God has stepped in and enabled us to be more fruitful in the kingdom he is building.

And the encouraging thing is this: God prunes those who remain in Jesus. Pruning doesn’t mean God is rejecting you. It means God sees how you are honouring him, and is helping you become even more and more like the true vine, Jesus. To become a more and more fruitful part of the Kingdom as we stay focused on living like Jesus.

We have been hearing the results from other countries prayer and fasting days. The new five year strategy will still cause pain and confusion at times. Projects may not go the way we hope. Programs may flounder for no visible reason. Donors might say no. The apostle John is encouraging us to not give up in these times. God is not discarding us, in fact the opposite is true: God is preparing us to be more and more fruitful! So we need to remain in the true vine, Jesus.

*“All around, Hope is springing up from this old ground
Out of chaos life is being found, in you You make beautiful things out of us”*



Chosen instruments

This man is my chosen instrument to carry my name..." Acts 9,15

In the 1970s it was my privilege to visit Grenada in the south of Spain on several occasions to share God's word.

Some of the hills around the city contain a clay suitable for making pottery. For many years they have been excavated to produce a large number of flower pots, water pots, ornamental ones and beautiful vases.

The families transformed the excavated parts into rooms and lived there. The more successful the potter the bigger the cave and therefore the larger his house. It was my joy to spend a few days with one of the families and live in their beautifully equipped „cave“ and enjoy the modern comfort of their cool home.

One of the things that struck me as I watched the potter at work was that although he produced many pieces of pottery every day, he only signed a few. When I commented on this, he gave the following explanation:

„All the vessels are made with care, using the best material possible and serve some purpose. Some turn out much better than others. My name is my reputation – it stands for quality. Only the best vessels that meet my strict requirements and enhance my name deserve my signature. I cannot afford to be identified with inferior quality.“

Everyone who has received Christ into his life has become a member of His family and carries His name.

Though I call myself „Christian“ , He has accepted the risk of placing His reputation in my hands. What is the picture of Him I convey through my lifestyle, words and actions? Does it honour Him? Does it encourage others to want to discover Him?

Silvano Perotti - Secretary for Europe then Deputy International Director and Director for Support and Development TLMI
Born in Italy - retired in Switzerland. Worked with TLMI until 1990.



Authors in Alphabetical Order

Textuarium

Anne-Claude Jonah	11 May		Psalm 22,4-5	3 May
Arie de Kruijff MD	9 May		Psalm 27	17 May
Belinda Pettman	25 May		Psalm 32	5 May
Bunmi Oluloto	10 May		Psalm 33	6 May
Christine Osman	2 May		Psalm 34	12 May
Dan Izzett	8 May		Psalm 35	13 May
David, King of Israel	5, 12, 13, 19, 26 May		Psalm 36	19 May
Eddie Askew	18 May		Psalm 37	26, 27 May
Eric Chollet	15 May		Isaiah 41,10	4 May
Helen Walton	3, 4 May		Matthew 9,18-27	9 May
Jannine Ebenso	24 May		Matthew 11,30	25 May
Marie Arnachellum	29 May		Matthew 17,20	1 May
Mollie Clark	17 May		Mark 1,21-28	14 May
Moses Onoh Dr	16 May		Mark 1,41	2 May
Otto Kingsley	22 May		Mark 5,18-42	9 May
Pascal Machefer	14 May		Luke 10,33	18 May
Paul, apostle of Jesus Christ	21 May		Luke 10,29-37	7 May
Raju Dr PLN	23 May		Luke 17,22-29	11 May
Ruth Butlin Dr	20 May		John 12,20-33	16 May
Silvano Perotti	7, 31 May		John 15,1-17	30 May
Tim Collison	30 May		John 15,5	29 May
Yuek Ming Poon	28 May		John 16	23 May
Zoe Bunter	1 May		Acts 9,15	31 May
			Romans 12,1-2	20 May
			1 Cor 15,58	15 May
			Galatians 5	21 May
			Philippians 2,5	10 May
			1 Thess 1,5	28 May
			Revelation 12,11	24 May

The Bridge - TLM Daily Devotions

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